

— Stress Reduction Strategies for Lichen Planus —

Stress is a well-known trigger of lichen planus. People with lichen planus may have a difficult time managing this stress, especially since it can feel isolating to have this disorder. If you can find ways to reduce stress, then you may be able to have a better quality of life, less stress, and better controlled lichen planus, especially if you are able to maintain these strategies over time.

Below are some methods to reduce stress based on scientific evidence. Pick one or two to start with! Remember that different strategies work for different people, so you can experiment and find some that resonate with you. Try to do these strategies every day or during times where you feel stressed. By spending just a little time each day, you may be able to reduce the severity of your lichen planus and improve your overall quality of life.

Immediate Help

If you are struggling with your mental health and need immediate help, call or text **988** to reach the [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](https://988lifeline.org/). This **free and confidential** lifeline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You can also chat online at 988lifeline.org.



Focused Breathing

(Estimated Time: 1-5 minutes)

Focused breathing can help to slow your heart rate and control your stress. These techniques are quick and easy. You can use them throughout your day whenever you feel stressed. [Visit this website for instructions on different focused breathing strategies.](#)



Drinking Tea

(Estimated Time: 1-5 minutes)

Studies have found that drinking tea can reduce stress hormones, decrease anxiety, and improve sleep. There is growing evidence for the benefits of many teas, including black and green teas (which have caffeine) and herbal teas like chamomile and lavender tea (which do not have caffeine).



Tapping Therapy

(Estimated Time: 3 minutes)

Tapping therapy can help you to focus your thoughts and feelings during an emotional situation. It involves tapping on different parts of your body, like the points used in acupuncture. [This YouTube video shows you how to do a 3-minute tapping therapy session.](#)



White Noise

(Estimated Time: 5-10 minutes)

White noise apps can help you to relax and sleep better. There are many apps available, such as the Calm app (see below), that offer different white noise sounds. When you feel stressed, stop everything that you are doing, if possible. Then, simply listen to the white noise and breathe for 5-10 minutes.

There are also air purifiers that produce white noise, which can be helpful at night by simultaneously cleaning the air and helping you sleep.



Daily Journaling

(Estimated Time: 5-20 minutes)

Journaling can be a powerful way to cope with stress. It can help you to process your thoughts, prioritize your goals for the day, find happiness in small day-to-day events, and recognize patterns in what causes your stress and how you cope with it.

Below are a few ideas for getting started with journaling. Some people prefer a structured format while journaling, while others prefer writing whatever comes to mind – experiment and find what works best for you!

In the morning

- Write down any feelings you woke up with
- Set intentions or the mental approach you want to bring to your day
- Describe your goals for the day

In the evening

- Reflect on the day and how you are feeling
- Make note of things that brought you joy or made you happy (gratitude list)



Yoga

(Estimated Time: 10-30 minutes)

Physical activity and deep breathing exercises can greatly help to reduce stress. Check out “Yoga for Beginners, Mind and Body” (app icon to the right). This is a free yoga app that has daily yoga routines that match your goals and fitness level!



Tai Chi

(Estimated Time: 10-30 minutes)

Tai Chi is a low-impact, slow-motion exercise that can be adapted to anyone based on their needs and abilities. It helps build flexibility, balance, and strength, while easing stress and promoting sleep quality.

[This is a link to a 15-minute guided Tai Chi video](#) focused on relieving stress and calming the mind.



Guided Meditation

(Estimated Time: 20 minutes)

Guided meditation has a large impact on mental health. It can reduce anxiety/depression and even improve sleep quality. There are many guided meditation videos available online of different lengths. There are several options available on:

- YouTube (free with ads)
- Spotify (free with ads)
- Meditation apps like Insight Timer (free) and Mindfulness Coach (free).

[Here is a link to a free 20-minute guided meditation video](#). This could be a good starting place.





Jacobson's Progressive Muscular Relaxation

(Estimated Time: 20 minutes)

Jacobson's Progressive Muscular Relaxation (JPMR) technique is a well-studied technique. It guides patients through slowly relaxing different muscles. It also helps patients achieve a deep state of relaxation. **Patients with oral lichen planus who used JPMR reported to have less pain than patients with who did not use JPMR.** Patients with lichen planus may experience similar benefits. This technique also has other beneficial health effects, such as:

- Lowering blood pressure
- Improving sleep quality
- Reducing anxiety

[This is a link to a 20-minute free video](#) that guides you through progressive muscle relaxation. If you would prefer a shorter video, Johns Hopkins has developed a [5-minute JPMR video \(linked here\)](#).



Exercise and Spend Time Outdoors

(Estimated Time: 15-30 minutes)

It is well-known that consistent exercise has many benefits for both physical and mental health! Exercise can look different for different people and does not have to be strenuous – it can be simply taking a walk, doing yoga, or going for a swim. If you can find something that you enjoy and do it consistently, it will have major benefits on your life!

Spending time outdoors, even if you are not exercising, is also proven to improve quality of life. Studies have shown that the practice of “forest bathing” – or practicing mindfulness while in nature – improves sleep, reduces stress, and boosts the immune system. The goal is to calm your mind and focus on each of your senses, allowing you to be more present in the moment.



Calm App (Free)

The Calm app provides free resources for lowering stress. It includes:

- Guided meditation videos
- Calming music playlists
- Sleep stories
- Soundscapes



- Guided movement.

You can download the Calm app for free in the App Store on your phone. Feel free to browse through the app. For more focused content, go to the “Discover” tab at the bottom of the app. Then, scroll down to the categories like “Sleep”, “Meditation”, and “For Work”. Click on one of the categories for videos and resources related to those topics.



Therapy Options

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is a form of therapy that helps you identify and manage challenges in your life. CBT has many benefits for patients with lichen planus. One research study looked at how CBT affects oral lichen planus specifically. **The study found that people who had therapy had less severe symptoms during oral lichen planus flare-ups compared to people without therapy, which shows the benefits of therapy on oral lichen planus.** CBT may have similar effects for lichen planus as a whole.

Below are some affordable therapy options that may help you to control your stress and lichen planus flare-ups. Some places accept insurance, while some do not. Ask if these places accept your insurance. If you do not have insurance, ask how much it will cost.

- Search the web for “community mental health centers” near you. This should help you identify lower-cost options in your area.
- Contact your local university to inquire about affordable therapy options. Many universities have clinics where they offer free/subsidized therapy.
- You can use these links to find a local therapist.
 - [Psychology Today](#)
 - [Good Therapy](#)
 - [Open Path Collective](#)



Community Resources

We know that stress can be caused by challenges in your life that make it hard to access basic needs. If you are struggling with access to food, stable housing, or other related resources, below are some resources that may be helpful:

- [211](#): Calling 211 in the United States connects you to a free, confidential hotline that links you with local health, human, and social services. It’s



https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Food_basket.jpg

available 24 hours, 7 days per week, and is offered in English, Spanish, and over 180 other languages. You can also visit their [website](#) where you can enter your zip code and they will re-direct you to your state's specific 211 line. You can either call your state-specific 211 or browse their database of resources.

- [Find Help](#): A database of resources (including food, housing, healthcare, financial, and legal resources & more). Simply enter the type of resource you're looking for and your zip code to identify resources in your area.
- [Feeding America](#): Enter your zip code to identify food pantries near you.

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