

# Fact Sheet

## Mindfulness-Based Therapy

### Parkinson's Disease & Movement Disorders Center

#### *Mindfulness-Based Therapy*

The stress response of the body is under the control of the nervous system. Fear, anger, depression, anxiety, and other emotions are driven by chemicals released by either an overactive or underactive nervous system. Imbalance in this system can lead to impaired quality of life and can even impact motor symptoms. A simple example of this that most people notice is that tremors tend to worsen under stressful situations. Importantly, how the brain interprets and responds to internal stress can be shaped by certain activities.

Meditation and breathing exercises can actually reduce the release of chemicals which trigger the stress response. Tai Chi is a form of physical activity which may promote improvement in balance through the learning of certain choreographed postures, but it also involves meditation and breathing exercises that may counter the stress response. Yoga may have similar benefits, and in the non-PD population has been shown to improve symptoms such as pain, depression, and anxiety, and may even lower blood pressure. Expressive therapies such as art, music, or dance therapy may provide a different kind of outlet for emotional expression and in turn also facilitate movement, improve mood, and increase motivation.

***PD Specific Meditation, Tai Chi & Yoga Exercise Programs***  
can be found at:

- RIC Adaptive Sports & Fitness Program 312-238-5001
- NM Integrative Medicine at 312-926-8400
- [www.annayork.com](http://www.annayork.com)

Ken and Ruth Davee Department of  
Neurology and Clinical  
Neurological Sciences  
Galter Pavilion  
675 N. St. Clair St., Suite 20-100  
Chicago, IL 60611  
Phone: (312) 695-7950  
Fax: (312) 695-5474