

## Natural Mood & Energy Boosters

### Gratitude

Did you know practicing gratitude causes real changes in your brain that enhance brain function and make you feel better? If you want your brain to work better, practice being grateful for the good things in your life. Writing down your grateful thoughts makes the practice that much more powerful.

- Every day, list three things you are grateful for – *See the Journal Daily Exercise*
- For additional information on Gratitude – *See the Practice Gratitude Handout*

### Meditation

Meditation is the practice of focusing your attention to help you feel calm and give you a clear awareness about your life. There are many types of meditation as well as relaxation techniques with meditation components. All share the same goal of achieving inner peace. Studies have shown that practicing meditation, even for just a few weeks, can bring a variety of physical, psychological, and social benefits including, but not limited to:

- reducing stress, soothing anxiety, and fostering relaxation
- improving emotional stability and giving you a bigger brain
- reducing depression and decreasing headaches and pain
- increasing your focus and memory

### Yoga

Many people think that yoga is just stretching. While stretching is certainly involved, yoga is really about creating balance in the body through developing strength and flexibility. This is done by practicing yoga poses or postures, each of which has specific physical benefits.

Not only does yoga decrease stress and improve flexibility, recent research found that 20 minutes of yoga stimulates brain function more than walking or jogging on the treadmill for the same amount of time. Other studies have found that practicing yoga had the same effect on reducing the risk factors of heart disease as did other forms of exercise, like brisk walking or cycling.

### Tai Chi

Tai chi (pronounced "tie chee") is a mind-body practice that began in China as a martial art. A person doing tai chi moves his or her body slowly and gently, while breathing deeply and meditating (tai chi is sometimes called "moving meditation"). The benefits of tai chi can include decreased stress and anxiety, increased energy, stamina and flexibility, strengthened muscles and tendons, improved sleep, and an enhanced immune system.