

Create a Positive Mindset

It is normal to feel anxious, nervous and hesitant about your upcoming surgery. Managing the stress of preparing for surgery can be challenging. However, there are things that you can do to help.

We encourage you to start by keeping a gratitude journal. Gratitude not only reduces stress, but helps increase your mental strength, and has been shown to improve your health. It can lower blood pressure, improve immune function, decrease pain and help you sleep better. A simple and well-known approach is called “Three Good Things.”

TO DO:

Keep a gratitude journal

Every evening, write down 3 things that went well for you. These can be things you are grateful for or events that brightened your day. For example:

I am grateful for...

- ~ a restful sleep last night,
- ~ being able to help my neighbor today, and
- ~ the support group I found in my community.



What additional strategies can help reduce stress, anxiety and pain?

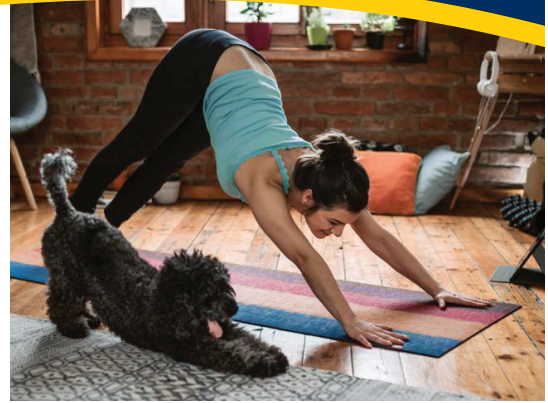
Mindful breathing - Practicing mindfulness can help you focus on the present, rather than worry about the future or regret the past. You can practice mindfulness sitting in a quiet space, while going for a walk or doing activities like yoga or tai chi.

Mindful breathing exercise:

- Breathe in through your nose for 5 seconds, hold the breath in for 2 seconds. Exhale for 5 seconds.
- Imagine breathing in positive feelings and blowing out stressful or negative feelings.
- Find a soothing mantra to repeat to yourself. Try, “I am relaxed and calm. I trust my surgeon. I see a life where I am strong and healthy, enjoying _____ (include something you enjoy doing now or hope to do after surgery).”

Mindful breathing exercise (cont.):

- When your mind gets distracted, or you experience anxious thoughts, simply recognize the thought briefly without making judgment. Then refocus on your breath. With practice, it becomes easier to focus your attention to the present.



Sleep – Aim for 7-9 hours a night to help your body and immune system work at its best.

Create a support system – Make time to see friends and family. Ask them to support you in your new healthy habits.

Laugh – Laughter releases tension and brings about positive physical changes in your body.

Doodle, draw or color – The repetitive and rhythmic motions can help you relax, quiet your mind or serve as a form of meditation. Create your own work, or use a mandalas coloring book. Mandalas are designs that are usually circular geometric patterns. These books, or coloring pages, are easily found in stores and online.

Get active – Walking can help you feel less stressed, improve your mood and help you sleep.

Listen to music – Music can help lower your threshold for pain, improve your mood, and relieve stress and anxiety.

Think positively – Positive self-talk can help shift your perspective. When you have a negative thought, take a moment to consider whether the thought is reasonable. Try to reframe the negative thought into something more positive. For example, “It will take me months to recover from this surgery,” might be replaced with, “I am doing everything I can to make my surgery go well. Joining MSHOP will help me take control of my recovery.”



Who can support me in creating a positive mindset? How?
