

# well read

## FEELING GREAT

Jeanne Segal, Ph.D.

This new paperback shows 75 good exercises/experiences that bring about positive images and dynamic changes in life-style and well-being. The contents include methods which show how to:

1. make the most of your body;
2. manage stress in the midst of change;
3. balance and harmonize emotions;
4. enhance and utilize intelligence.
5. expand and release your sensual awareness.

## MIND AS HEALER, MIND AS SLAYER A Holistic Approach to Preventing

Stress Disorders  
Kenneth R. Pelletier, Ph.D.

Pelletier writes one of the best books describing the connection between stress, health and healing. It's four major sections include: 1) sources of stress; 2) guidelines for evaluating one's own stress levels; 3) profiles of various disease-prone personalities; 4) a practical section concerned with the prevention of stress-related diseases through such techniques as meditation and biofeedback. This book discusses how people can create a satisfying life and help prevent sickness by doing something positive about their own health.

## PSYCHOSOMATIC ILLNESS, STRESS, and BIOFEEDBACK

Dr. Pelletier has done much research on psychosomatic illness, stress, and mind/body interaction. Research and clinical practice with biofeedback and meditation have demonstrated that many autonomic (or involuntary nervous system) functions can be brought under conscious control if an individual obtains information about that process. These functions include brain waves, heart rate, muscle tension, body temperature and other more experimental applications such as stomach acidity and white blood cell levels.

In biofeedback training, the patient learns that breathing in a slow and regular manner or sitting in an upright posture helps to decelerate the heart rate. Slouching or breathing shallowly and quickly tends to accelerate it. When thinking of a pleasant or relaxing vacation, he notes that his heart rate begins to decelerate. Conversely, when he thinks about a perplexing or stress-inducing situation such as his income tax or an argument with a close friend, his heart rate accelerates. Feelings of heaviness and warmth in the area of the heart will allow the heart rate to decelerate, while feelings of lightness and constriction in the same area will actually produce acceleration.

The fundamental process in biofeedback is to move from an unconscious awareness of the effect stress has on brain waves, heart rate, muscle tension and body temperature to becoming consciously aware of these processes during relaxation. As the client progresses, they use the biofeedback instruments less and less.

## HYPERTENSION (High blood pressure)

Hypertension is a silent, mysterious killer - silent because it has no characteristic symptoms; mysterious because, in more than 90 percent of the cases, the cause is unknown and there is no cure. If hypertension is not controlled, serious cardiovascular complications may result, including stroke and congestive heart failure.

High blood pressure occurs when the blood vessels in the body get constricted either by nervous impulses or blocked by a buildup of plaque in the arteries. The heart then has to beat harder than normal to get the blood out and through the vascular system. This forceful beat increases the pressure of the blood flowing from the heart through the arteries and veins.

A sphygmomanometer measures two aspects of blood pressure: systolic and diastolic. Systolic is a measure of the pressure when the heart contracts; diastolic pressure is the heart's dilation phase. Blood pressure is recorded as:

$$\frac{\text{systolic}}{\text{diastolic}}$$

Normal blood pressure is approximately:

$$\frac{120}{80}$$

Once diagnosed, hypertension can be treated and managed. Sometimes diet and exercise alone can control it. Restriction of salt intake and medication are other forms of treatment.