

TWO HOUSEHOLD ITEMS REDUCE STRESS, IMPROVE MEMORY

Stress management is a health habit achieved through exercise, proper diet, getting enough rest, spiritual reflection and positive affirmations. No single change will manage stress on a long-term basis; you need a menu of options to respond to the hectic day to day factors which cause you stress.

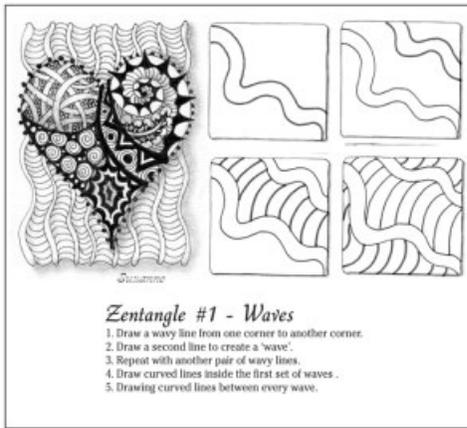


Researchers have examined the **stress and memory** connection for years. In some situations, stress seems to enhance memory, while in others it seems to impair memory. Tension and anxiety trigger several chemical changes in the body, and some of these have a significant impact on memory formation and retrieval. For people concerned about cognitive health, managing ongoing emotional strain is essential for wellness. ***The answer may be as close as your pen and a blank sheet of paper.***

Have you ever been at a meeting or distracted while on the phone and started doodling? What happens? You are absorbed in the doodle. Yet you may find yourself more focused, despite the apparent distraction. If you can identify with this, then you can easily understand the benefits of **Zentangles**. It's an art form that is becoming widely known as an effective way to reduce stress; some therapists have found it an effective **treatment for attention deficit, insomnia and anxiety**.

“WAIT” – I know what you're thinking – “I cannot draw.” Neither can I. Zentangle is judgment and failure free. Even if you make “mistakes” they are incorporated into the design. There is no right or wrong – it is free flowing with each stroke. The beauty of Zentangle is that it naturally reduces stress as you hone your focus and become absorbed in the creative process. It can improve breathing regulation, normalize heart rate, and provide an overall sense of relaxation. As you manage your stress, **your memory reaps the benefits**.

When I started Zentangles, I was a Brownie Girl Scout leader. We were planning our annual camporee event – translation: take dozens of girls into the woods for a weekend. My troop was a mix of 10 girls aged 6-8. Many had never slept anywhere other than their homes or a grandparents'. As I had anticipated, their excitement and energy levels were high at bedtime, even though we tired them out with physical activities during the day. It had occurred to me that Zentangles might be a way to help them calm down and relax before bed. Sure enough, after the sing-along with our guitar-playing camp chef, I pulled out my scrap papers and pens for everyone. I showed them some basic doodles. And they all loved it. We doodled for about 40 minutes – and they were all ready for bed (some needed supplemental cuddling, but I think you get the idea). Everyone fell asleep and all but one slept through the night. Perhaps it's not a scientific study, but this is data I'll rely on next time I'm planning a campout.



Although at this time there are no studies measuring Zentangles and memory, the benefits of art therapy and memory are well examined. Nothing will cure Alzheimer's (yet), but for people with cognitive issues, and for their caregivers, Zentangles is an easy and inexpensive, failure-free activity that can provide hours of stress relief. To get more information on Zentangles, there are lots of books

and e-books and websites. Try searching for images such as these and create your own. And let us know how you've used creative expression and any benefits you experience for stress management or memory.

Call us at 860.920.1810 or [contact us by email](#) to get your FREE GUIDE TO ZENTANGLES FOR DEMENTIA CARE today.