

DR CHATTERJEE'S GUIDE

TRANSFORM YOUR LIFE WITH BREATHING

Why Changing The Way You Breathe Will Transform Your Body and Mind





BREATHING

It is the first thing we do when we arrive in the world and the last thing we do before we leave.

It happens automatically 26,000 times a day without us even having to pay any attention to it, yet breathing is one of the only autonomic systems in our body that we can control, if we choose to.

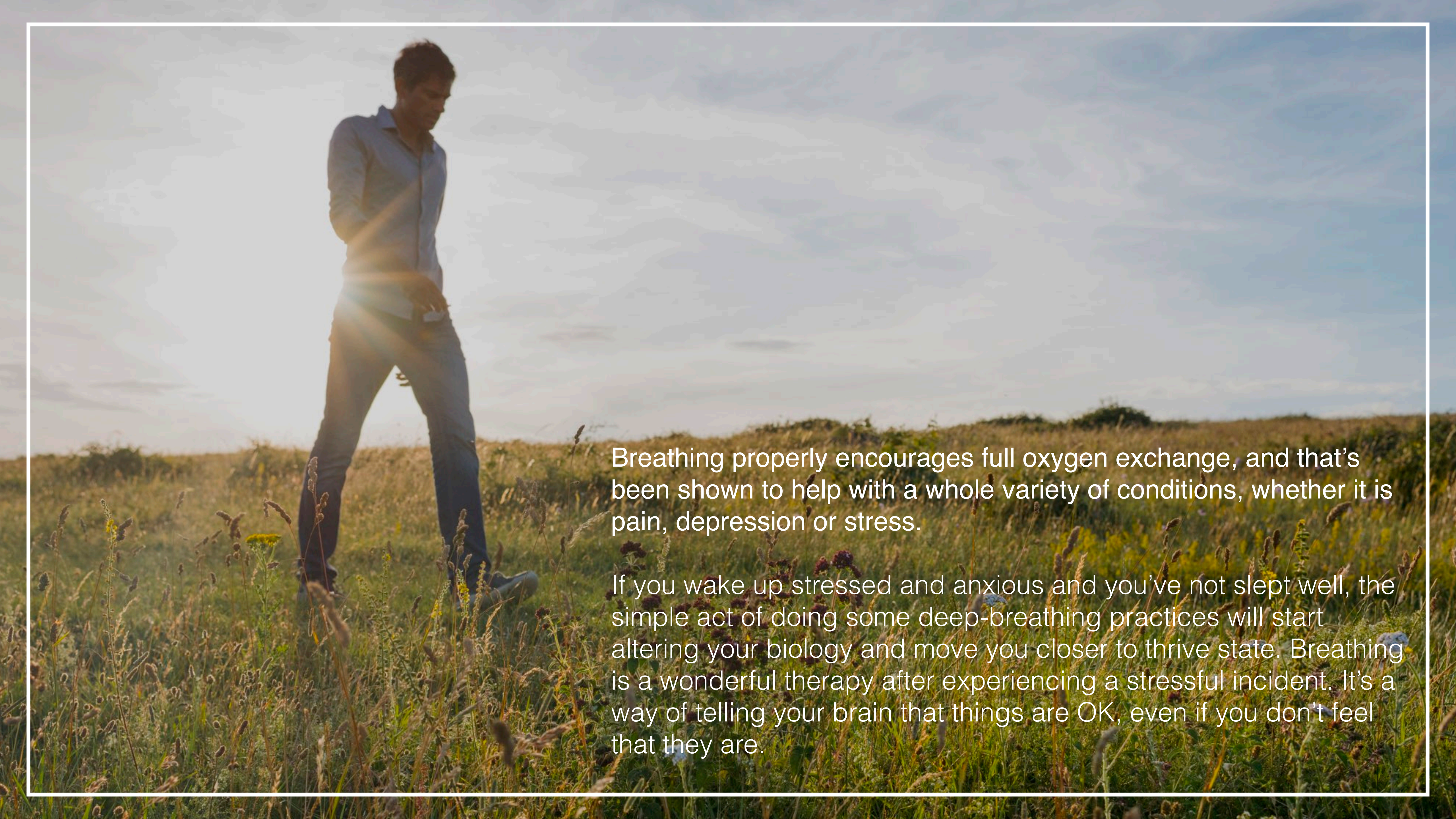
BREATHING IS INFORMATION

The more stressed you feel, the faster you breathe, and your brain will notice this and read it as a signal that things are not going well.

That fast, shallow breathing which happens when you're stressed is effectively telling your brain that you're running from a lion. But the reverse of this rule is also true: if you breathe slowly, you're giving your brain a signal that you're in a place of calm. You will start to feel less stressed.

Studies have even shown that the right kind of breathing can reduce our perception of pain. Both the pace at which you breathe and how deeply you breathe change your stress response. If all you do for one minute is slow your breathing down and aim for six breaths (one breath is in and out) in that minute, it will reduce the stress state and stimulate the thrive state.





Breathing properly encourages full oxygen exchange, and that's been shown to help with a whole variety of conditions, whether it is pain, depression or stress.

If you wake up stressed and anxious and you've not slept well, the simple act of doing some deep-breathing practices will start altering your biology and move you closer to thrive state. Breathing is a wonderful therapy after experiencing a stressful incident. It's a way of telling your brain that things are OK, even if you don't feel that they are.

A DAILY PRACTICE OF BREATHING

Breathing practice is especially worth considering if you're the kind of person who finds meditation difficult.

You don't have to stick to the same practice each time. Play around. Listen to your body. Experiment. I'm sure that, within a few days, you'll find a technique that works for you. Aim to do at least one of these practices every day. Even one minute per day of focused, intentional breathing can make a big difference. Try one of the breathing techniques I outline overleaf.



BREATHING MENU

Try one of these breathing practices to reduce stress, calm your mind, or boost your energy. In the following pages I'll take you through instructions for each of the breathing techniques below:

3-4-5 BREATH

BOX BREATHING

NADI SHODHAN

KAPALABHATI

THE BEDTIME BREATHING PRACTICE

3-4-5 BREATH

I find that this breathing exercise can be extremely effective for patients who are prone to anxiety or stress. It could hardly be simpler.

Breathe in for three seconds
Hold for four seconds
Breathe out for five seconds

When your out-breath is longer than your in-breath, you reduce the activation of your stress state and encourage your body to move into a thrive state. You can do a few rounds of this breath or extend it to take five minutes.

Listen to your body and see what works for you.

 **WATCH THE VIDEO**

BOX BREATHING

This can be done at any time, but patients report to me that it's especially useful just before bedtime.

Breathe in for four seconds

Hold for four seconds

Breathe out for four seconds

Then hold for another four

Box breathing helps lower stress levels, calm the nervous system and take your mind away from distracting thoughts. It's reported that Navy Seals use this method to control their stress levels.



NADI SHODHAN

Alternate-nostril breathing can give a boost of energy as well as help you fall asleep.

Sit comfortably, with your shoulders relaxed. Place your right thumb on to your right nostril to block it and fully exhale through your left nostril.

Breathe in through your left nostril for a count of four. Place the ring finger and little finger of your right hand on to your left nostril to block it. Release your right thumb and breathe out through your right nostril for a count of four.

At the end of the breath, keep your fingers where they are and breathe in through the right nostril for four. Place the thumb back over the right nostril and breathe out through the left nostril. This is one cycle.

Start off by doing ten rounds. You can increase this as you become more familiar with the practice.

KAPALABHATI

Otherwise known as the ‘Skull Shining Breath’, this forced diaphragmatic breath is a pretty intense exercise but great for a quick pick-me-up.

As you take a full deep breath in through your nose, your abdomen will expand. As you exhale, pull your belly button in forcefully and actively, as if it’s going in towards the spine. (It can be helpful to think about throwing your breath out.)

After each exhale, as your abdomen expands again, you’ll automatically start to inhale. Do ten to twenty of these breaths. Afterwards, pay attention to how you feel.

It is always best to learn this one from a trained yoga instructor. Please avoid doing it on an empty stomach, if you’re pregnant, have a stent or pacemaker or a history of epilepsy or a hernia.



1

Breathe in through your nose for three seconds (breathing through your mouth is fine, if you are unable to use your nose).

2

Have a brief pause.

3

Breathe out through your nose for six seconds.

4

Repeat.

THE BEDTIME BREATHING PRACTICE

This is one of my favourite breathing techniques to practise before bed. I learned it from the brilliant US breathing researcher Brian Mackenzie. It's simple, but extremely powerful.

When you have a brief pause after inhaling, you help to switch your body into a state of relaxation. Counting your breath also helps redirect your mind away from any anxious thoughts that you might have swimming around.

Repeat this short breathing sequence as many times as required. Sometimes, you may only need to do 1 minute of this practice before you're ready to fall asleep. On other nights, you may be doing it for 5–10 minutes before you start yawning. Experiment and see what works best for you.

A person is standing barefoot on a sandy beach. Their feet are resting on a dark, wet rock. The person is wearing blue jeans that are rolled up at the ankles. The background shows the sand and some water. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

BREATHING IS LIFE

Breathing is the first thing we do when we come into the world and the last thing we do before our hearts finally stop. Breathing is life. It's the simplest human action there is and yet the most fundamental. It brings fuel to the body and mood to the brain. It allows our hearts to beat.

We can't hope to bring our stress under control without first bringing our breath under control. Stress and breath are intimately linked. By spending just a few minutes each day consciously working with it, you'll feed your brain and body the information that life is calm. When you're strongly focusing on your breath you're creating a zone of stillness.

I want you to stop reading. For one minute, just breathe. Breathe in for four seconds, hold for another four, breathe out for four and hold for four more. Repeat four times.

**“THE MIND IS THE KING OF THE SENSES
THE BREATH IS THE KING OF THE MIND”**

- B.K.S IYENGAR

**FEEL
BETTER
LIVE
MORE**

FEEL BETTER LIVE MORE PODCAST

To learn more about the benefits of a breathing practice, I've picked out some episodes from my Feel Better, Live More podcast that will improve your breathing and transform your life.

Why Changing The Way You Breathe Will Transform Your Body and Mind with James Nestor

How we breathe affects every body system.

In this episode we discuss the long list of conditions breathing may improve and James reveals the therapeutic process behind some 'super breathing' techniques.

Whether you're already practising breathwork, you're curious or yet to be convinced, James has a no-nonsense, rigorous approach we can all take something from.



LISTEN TO THE PODCAST

<https://drchatterjee.com/124>

**FEEL
BETTER
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MORE**



By changing the way in which you breathe, you can actually change how your mind is processing thoughts, and feelings and emotions...

James Nestor

Science Journalist and Author

FEEL
BETTER
LIVE
MORE



To understand how you feel, you have to go in, you have to go to the base layer of what's going on, and at the fundamental layer of all this is breathing...

Brian Mackenzie

Human Performance Specialist

How Breathing Can Transform Your Life with Brian Mackenzie

We react to every single situation in life with our breath and we have the power to choose how we respond to any situation by controlling our breath. Amazingly, this can also affect how others will respond back to us.

I understand that starting a breathing practice can feel confusing. Brian's advice on this is reassuring. For him, breathwork is about giving it *all* a try, experimenting, learning and finding out what works for *you*. I think that is wonderfully freeing and exciting.



LISTEN TO THE PODCAST

<https://drchatterjee.com/113>

How Breathing Through Your Nose Will Change Your Life with Patrick McKeown

Patrick believes breathing correctly – that is, through your nose, lightly, and slowly – is the secret to better health, fitness and overall wellbeing. Yet many of us are breathing through our mouths, breathing fast and shallow, and our health is suffering as a result.

Patrick talks me through the science of exactly why it is that nasal breathing is so fundamental to health and he shares how learning it himself transformed his sleep and his anxiety levels.



LISTEN TO THE PODCAST

<https://drchatterjee.com/99>

**FEEL
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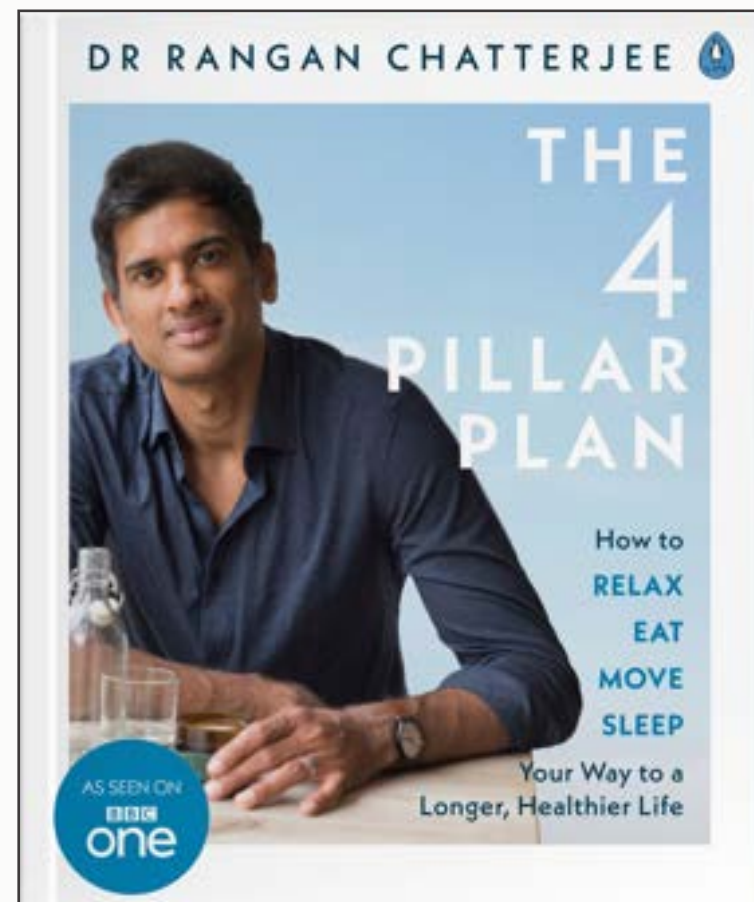


We have been trained how to think, but we have not been trained how to stop thinking...

Patrick McKeown

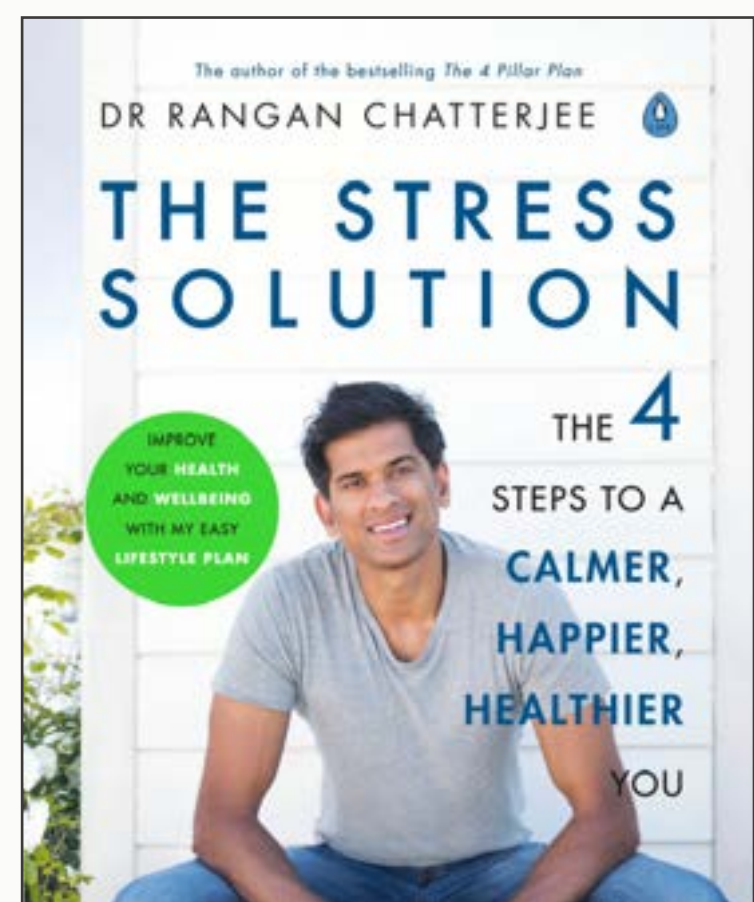
Author and Breathing Practitioner

MORE FROM DR CHATTERJEE



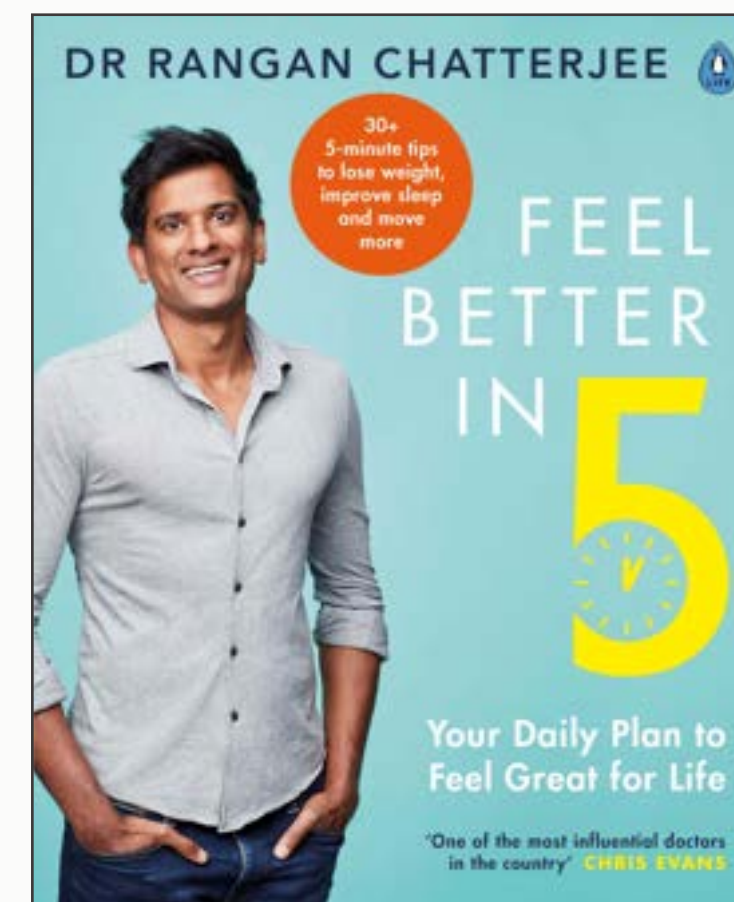
Everyone has the opportunity to live and feel better and in his Sunday Times bestselling book, *The 4 Pillar Plan*, BBC One's Dr Rangan Chatterjee creates an easily accessible plan for taking control of your health and your life. (US Version: *How To Make Disease Disappear*)

Dr Chatterjee believes that everyday health revolves around the following four pillars: relaxation, food, movement and sleep.



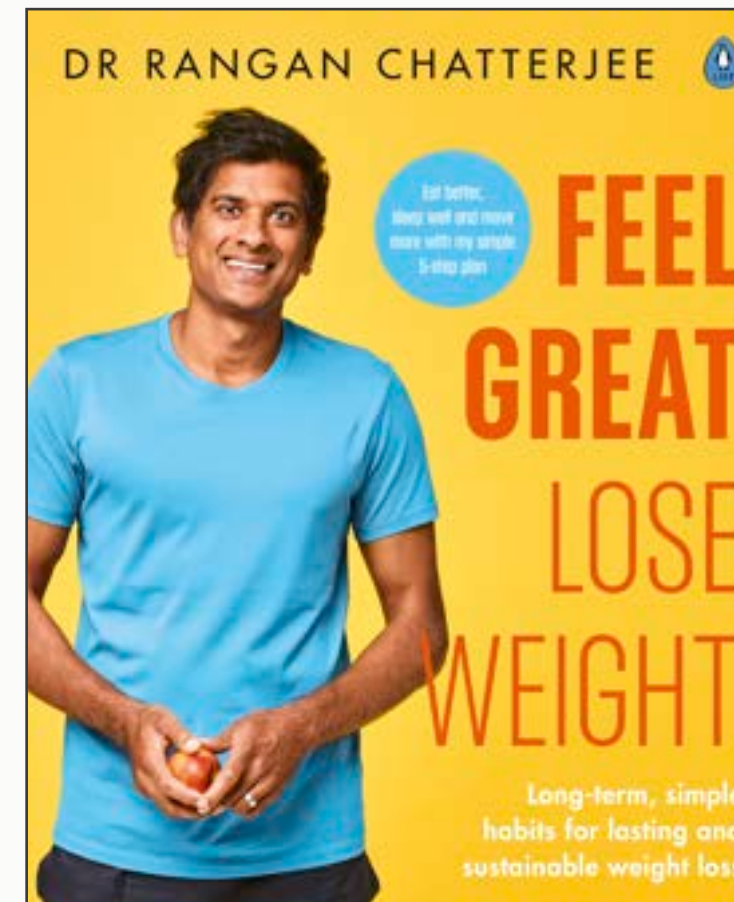
Become a calmer, happier and healthier you with Dr Rangan Chatterjee's *The Stress Solution*.

In this book, BBC One's Dr Rangan Chatterjee, draws on two decades of practice to show you how to make easy-to-follow and sustainable health and lifestyle improvements to your everyday life.



Drawing on Dr Rangan Chatterjee's 20 years of experience and real-life case studies from his GP practice, *Feel Better in 5* is your daily plan for a happier, healthier you.

Feel Better in 5 is the first daily five minute plan that is easy to maintain, easy-to-follow and requires only the smallest amount of willpower.

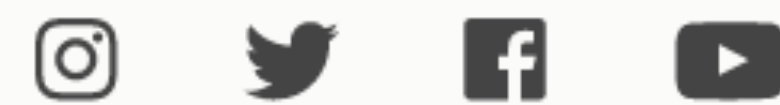


Drawing on 20 years of experience as a GP, Dr Rangan Chatterjee has created a conscious, long-lasting approach to weight loss that goes far beyond fad diets and helps to find the best solutions that work for you.

With *Feel Great, Lose Weight* you can make sustainable, medically approved lifestyle changes and become a more energised, confident and healthy you.



DR CHATTERJEE'S GUIDE



Website: <https://drchatterjee.com>

DISCLAIMER: The content in this document is not intended to constitute or be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your doctor or other qualified health care provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have read in this document.