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# We looked into cannabis as a chronic stress reliever and this is what we found.

By [Rachel Garland](#)  
on August 21, 2017




*Chronic stress will tear down your health fast. A little bit of cannabis can help!*

Feeling like you've reached your breaking point?

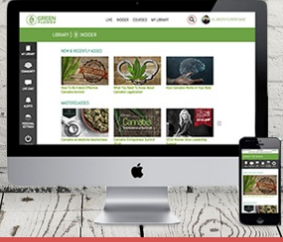
You're not alone. A survey from the [American Psychological Association](#) revealed stress levels are on the rise in the United States. In fact, since 2014, there has been a significant increase in the number of adults reporting extreme stress levels.

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Stress is a major contributing factor in the onset of deadly diseases such as **cancer**, **heart disease**, **depression**, and even **Alzheimer's disease**. Reducing stress is essential to our vitality.

Cannabis is a powerful tool for alleviating stress. Unlike Prozac or Xanax, **cannabis** itself is 100% natural and does not produce life-threatening side effects. Curious why cannabis is effective at reducing stress?

Here's what you need to know about cannabis and chronic stress.

## What Is Chronic Stress?



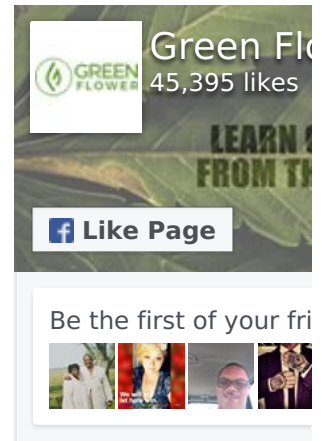
*How are you managing your stress levels these days?*

Not all stress is bad.

Some stress can actually be good. For example, stress before a job interview or big exam can be motivating.

Stress is a natural response in the human body. It increases **cortisol** and **adrenaline** levels, sharpening our flight or fight reaction.

The feeling of stress was designed for our survival.



At low levels, stress is actually associated with **improved attention and cognitive functioning**.

However, sometimes our stress response gets out of whack. If the stress response is prolonged, it can become chronic.

**Chronic stress** manifests itself in the body in a number of ways. Digestive, immune, and reproductive issues can arise from chronic stress. Feelings of anger and irritability are also common.

No one wants to live their life feeling stressed out all the time.

Is there a better solution?

Cannabis may not stop the source of stress. However, it can help us manage our stress more effectively.

## The ECS and Balancing Stress



*Your ECS helps manage a lot of processes in the body, including neurotransmitters.*

Why does cannabis reduce stress?

It has to do with the relationship between cannabis and the endocannabinoid system, or ECS.

The endocannabinoid system regulates vital functions such as appetite, sleep, motor control, memory, pain, mood, immune response and much more.

Research shows that the ECS is intimately integrated with our perception of external and internal stimuli. In fact, the ECS even helps regulate responses in our body like anxiety or stress.

The primary role of the endocannabinoid system is to maintain homeostasis or balance among all these processes.

When the ECS becomes unbalanced, disease, illness, or stress can develop. A balanced endocannabinoid system supports a healthy stress response.

Cannabis helps keep the **ECS** balanced by nourishing the body with cannabinoids like THC and CBD.

Cannabis also regulates the “fight or flight” response in the body, decreasing stress levels.

## Endocannabinoids and Brain Bliss



*Cannabinoid receptors are one of the most abundant protein receptors in the brain and central nervous system.*

One of the reasons cannabis reduces stress is because of the



neurotransmitter **anandamide**, also referred to as N-Arachidonylethanolamine or AEA. Anandamide is an endocannabinoid – a cannabinoid our body produces.

While our understanding of AEA is still developing, we know that it helps regulate sensations of pleasure or reward. In fact, the name anandamide is derived from ananda, which is the Sanskrit word for bliss.

Aptly referred to as the bliss molecule, anandamide plays an important role in our emotional well-being. Some research suggests that AEA may act a gatekeeper to stress.

A **study in 2014** revealed central anandamide levels predict stress-induced anxiety. Anandamide deficiency is associated with higher stress levels.

CBD, a cannabinoid in cannabis, **helps preserve anandamide**. AEA is degraded by Fatty Acid Amide Hydrolase or FAAH.

CBD reduces the production of FAAH in the body, restoring anandamide levels and reducing stress.

The verdict is still up for debate when it comes to THC and stress relief. It seems though that moderation is key. **Low doses of THC** are associated with reduced stress while high doses of THC can be stress inducing.

## Long-Term Cannabis Use and Stress



*Current research shows moderation is key for using cannabis to manage chronic stress.*

A [recent study](#) from Washington State University revealed long-term cannabis is associated with a diminished stress response.

The researchers examined stress levels by monitoring the hormone cortisol in cannabis users and non-users. 84 people participated in the study, 42 were non-users while 40 were daily cannabis users.

The findings revealed that long-term cannabis use is linked to reduced stress levels. In fact, researchers noted:

"The findings are consistent with a growing body of literature that indicates chronic cannabis use is associated with dulled adrenal and emotional reactivity."

While the researchers also noted that their findings are inconclusive in whether a diluted stress response is beneficial, it is evident that cannabis plays a key role in modulating our stress response.

And for people who have overactive stress levels and too much 'emotional reactivity', cannabis may help them find the balance they need.

# Managing Stress with Mindful Cannabis Consumption

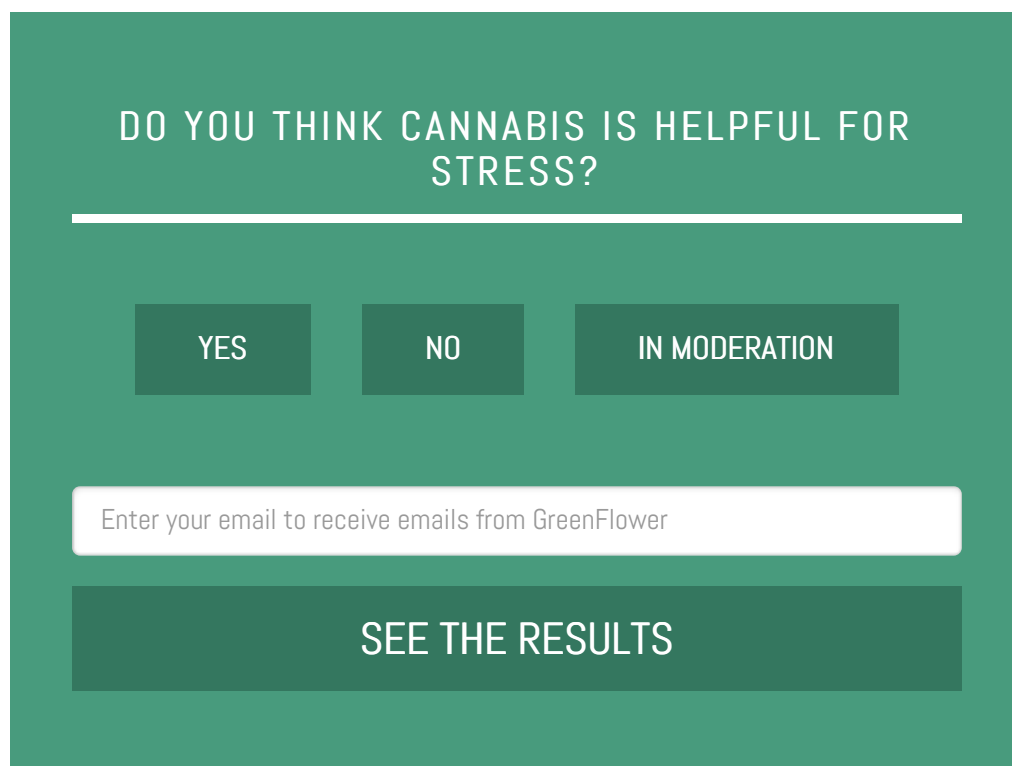
You can find different ways to use cannabis for stress management, with or without psychoactivity.

From dosage to administration, every individual's needs are unique. How your body will respond depends on a variety of factors. The most important thing is to listen to your body.

You know your self best. Start slowly and monitor your responses.

Incorporate [mindful cannabis](#) use alongside other healthy habits such as regular exercise, a nutrient rich diet, and stress reducing activities like yoga or meditation to maximize health benefits.

If you want to learn more about how to get the most out of cannabis, be sure to check out Green Flower's ongoing [series of free broadcasts](#) with top cannabis experts from around the globe.



DO YOU THINK CANNABIS IS HELPFUL FOR STRESS?

YES NO IN MODERATION

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