

Stress Management

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In order to know how to go about effective stress management we first need to understand as much about the source of stress as possible. We then need to be able to recognize the symptoms of stress to be able to decide what techniques for stress management we could take.

Stress builds up as you crawl to work in all that traffic, stare at that unexpected bill, or worry that you just can't cope any longer at work or at home. To enjoy life you need challenges that you can cope with. Sadly we are all, at times faced with challenges that we cannot cope with or just grind us down. It's then that we need effective stress management techniques

What is Stress?

Stress is one's body response to demands made upon it – the “wear and tear” you experience as you adjust to your continually changing environment. Stress has physical and emotional effects on you and can create positive or negative feelings.

Stress management techniques may become necessary when we start to experience extremes of these feelings. Stress provides the means to express talents and energies and pursue happiness. These forms of stress are normal and essential and don't warrant the need for stress management.

As a negative influence, stress can result in feelings of distrust, rejection anger and depression, which in turn can lead to health problems such as headaches, upset stomach, rashes, insomnia, ulcers, high blood pressure heart disease, and stroke. This is where stress management techniques can make a crucial difference to your health and well being.

Sources of Stress

Survival Stress:

In a physically or emotionally threatening situation, your body adapts to help you react more effectively to meet the threat.

Internally Generated Stress: Anxiety

Stress that you cause for yourself. This can occur from anxious worrying about events beyond your control, from a tense and hurried approach to life, from relationship problems caused by your own behavior etc. This is where effective stress management techniques may have the greatest positive impact.

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Other aspects of personality can cause stress for yourself, for example, perfectionism where you set extremely ambitious goals for yourself and impatience with others who don't match your own high standards. Stress management can help alleviate the detrimental effects of such personality traits.

Environmental Stress:

It can come from crowding and invasion of personal space, noise, dirty conditions and pollution and so on. Most people who smoke feel relaxed after a cigarette. But the chemical stress from smoking feels much more relaxed generally, after the initial giving up period is finished.

Nutritional and Chemical Stress:

Your food may contribute to your stress levels. For example caffeine raises levels of "Stress hormones" making it more difficult to sleep, and can make you more irritable. Take the stress management step of reducing caffeine intake. Many people report a big reduction in feelings of stress cutting out coffee, although you may feel pretty rough when your body craves the missing caffeine. A gradual cutting down on coffee may be the most effective approach of stress management here.

Bursts of sugar from sweets make you feel more energetic in the short term. But your body will react to stabilize abnormally high sugar levels by releasing too much insulin, This causes a serious energy dip shortly after the sugar high. Too much salt raises your blood pressure and puts your body under chemical stress. The best stress management techniques here would be to simply reduce your intake of refined sugar and salt in your diet.

Life and work Related Stress:

These may include:

- Too much or too little work.
- Time pressure and deadlines.
- Responsibility for people, budgets or equipment.
- Frustration and boredom with current role
- Demands from clients.
- Financial or relationship problems

Recognizing Stress:

Stress is a process that builds. It's more effective to implement techniques to manage stress early in the process rather than later. Become watchful for the following signs and indicators that suggest the process has begun:

- Mood swings or general irritability
- Anxiety or feelings of panic
- Skin problems
- Tiredness
- Muscle tension – neck or lower back pain

- Poor concentration
- Changes in sleep patterns or insomnia
- Changes in eating patterns and appetite
- Low self – esteem
- Poor memory
- Indigestion
- Elevated heart rate
- Increased blood pressure
- More accident prone
- Trembling
- Headaches

Stress Management:

Positive stress adds anticipation and excitement to life and we all thrive under a certain amount of stress. Deadlines, competition, confrontation and even our frustrations and sorrows and depth and enrichment to our lives. Your goal should not be to eliminate stress but to learn effective stress management techniques and learn to benefit from stress.

Insufficient stress acts as a depressant and may leave you feeling bored or dejected. On the other hand excessive stress may leave you suffering number of the above symptoms. Both extremes may require some form of stress management. You need to find the optimal level of stress, which will motivate but not overwhelm you.

Recognizing stress and being aware of its effect on you life will not reduce its harmful effects. There are many options available for you for managing stress. However, they all require effort towards change: changing the source of stress and changing reaction to it. So how do you proceed with stress management techniques?

Recognize what you can change

Can you change your stressors by avoiding or eliminating them completely? Can you reduce their intensity? (manage them over a period of time instead of on a daily or weekly basis) can you shorten your exposure to stress at work? (take a break, leave the building, etc) can you devote the time and energy necessary to making a change? (Goal setting and time management techniques will be helpful here.)

Reduce your emotional reaction to stress:

Reduce the intensity of your emotional reactions to stress. The stress reaction is triggered by your perception of physical and emotional danger. Are you viewing your sources of stress in exaggerated terms and taking a difficult situation and making it a disaster? Are you expecting to please everyone? Are you over reacting and viewing things as absolutely critical and urgent? Do you feel you must always prevail in every stipulation? Are you screaming out for effective stress management?

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Working at adopting more moderate views is the ideal stress management approach here. Try to see the stress as something you can cope with rather than something that overpowers you, try to temper your excess emotions. Put the situation in perspective. Do not labor on the negative aspects and the “What it is”. This kind of stress management requires self – awareness and a good deal of mental effort.

An effective stress management technique is to visualize yourself standing back from or stepping out of an emotional situation to just be an impartial observe of your situation. You may often to able to find a sense of emotional balance this way.

Moderate your Physical Reactions to stress:

Slow, deep, regular breathing will bring your heart rate and respiration back to normal. Relaxation and breathing techniques can reduce mental stress and muscle tension, and a re preferable for stress management than using medication. Medication when prescribed by the physician can help in the short term in moderation your physical reaction. However, they alone are not the answer. Learning to moderate these reactions on your own is a preferable long term stress management solution.

Build your Physical Reserves:

Exercise three of four times a week (Moderate), prolonged rhythmic exercise is good for stress reduction, such as walking, swimming, cycling, or jogging). Eat weal – balances, nutritious meals. Maintain your ideal weight. Stop smoking; avoid excessive caffeine, and other stimulants. Mix leisure with work. Take breaks and get away when you can. Get enough sleep. Be a consistent with your sleep schedule as possible. All essential stress management techniques to weave into your life.

Yoga is highly recommended:

Yoga has become increasingly poplar in recent years. Yoga is widely recognized as a scientific method to stretch, tone, strengthen and relax your entire body. Yoga is safe and effective for people of all ages and will reward you with glowing good health.

Maintain your Emotional Reserves:

Develop dome mutually supportive friendships. Pursue realistic goals which are meaningful to you, rather than goals other impose on you that you do not share. Expect some frustrations, failures, and sorrows. Always be king and gentle with yourself and approve of yourself – be your own best friend. (The best stress management technique all)

“A wise man ought to realize that his health is the most valuable possession”

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