WELLNESS

THE EFFECTS OF STRESS ON YOUR BODY

STRESS IS BAD FOR YOUR OVERALL HEALTH

WE WILL LOOK AT HOW STRESS CAN AFFECT YOU FROM THE PHYSICAL, BEHAVIOURAL, EMOTIONAL AND THOUGHTS/PERCEPTION.

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PRIMARY STRESS RESPONSE

IMMEDIATE & URGENT RESPONSE TO A SERIOUS THREAT

Skin: pales as blood, is diverted to vital organs.

Heart: begins to pound, sending blood around the body carrying sugar (energy) and hormones (eg. adrenalin)

Muscles: they tense in readiness for action.

Lungs: air passage dilates, breathing more intense to provide more oxygen to feed increase blood supply.

Liver: glycogen converted to blood sugar to give 'short distance' energy.

Digestion: processes shut down as blood diverted elsewhere. The mouth goes dry to avoid adding extra fluids to the stomach.

Blood: thickens to help it carry more oxygen, fight infection and stop bleeding.

Sweat glands: start-up to cool the underlying and overheated muscles.

Bladder and Rectum: muscles relax to release any excess load.

SECONDARY STRESS RESPONSE

ONGOING RESPONSE TO UNDEALT WITH STRESS

Skin: less blood supply can lead to developing diseases.

Heart: racing heartbeat and high blood pressure can lead to strokes or heart attacks.

Muscles: ongoing tension leads to aches and pains, even muscle strain.

Lungs: super-oxygenated blood can lead to blackouts and upset heart rhythms.

Liver: the body's fats and proteins are broken down and released to provide further energy.

Digestion: shutdown can lead to stomach problems, especially if you eat on the run. An increase in acidity can contribute to stomach ulcers.

Blood: heart works harder due to thickened blood.

Cholesterol: high cholesterol in the blood can cause the hardening of the arteries.

PHYSICAL WARNING SIGNS

BELOW ARE SOME OF THE MESSAGES OUR BODIES SEND TO TELL US WE'RE STRESSED.

Key: Early warning signs, Secondary stress signs in italics

Muscle tension
Sleep disturbance
Increased 'breakouts'
Rapid pulse
Nausea
Indigestion
Increased sweating
Flushing (face feeling hot).
Headaches/migraines
Tiredness
Backaches
Fatigue, lack of energy
High blood pressure
Diarrhea
Skin condition (rash, eczema)
Allergies

Prolonged/Frequent headaches
Susceptibility to mild illness
Dizziness/Faintness
Breathlessness/Chest Pain
Ongoing nausea/Stomach ache
Ongoing restless sleep

BEHAVIOURAL WARNING SIGNS

BELOW ARE SOME OF THE MESSAGES OUR BODIES SEND TO TELL US WE'RE STRESSED.

Key: Early warning signs, Secondary stress signs in italics

Impatience, Carelessness, Hyperactivity
Poor productivity/Low energy
Avoidance of situations or places
Change in sleeping patterns
Frequent boredom

Increased alcohol, cigarette and drug use
Increased absenteeism
Increased aggression, irritability
Sudden tears

EMOTIONAL WARNING SIGNS

BELOW ARE SOME OF THE MESSAGES OUR BODIES SEND TO TELL US WE'RE STRESSED.

Key: Early warning signs, Secondary stress signs in italics

Anxiety/Sadness
Moodiness/Grumpiness
Loss of sense of humour
Withdrawal/Feeling of isolation
Low self-esteem
Feelings of guilt and shame
Crying spells

Extreme anger (over-reaction)
Loss of libido
Overwhelming feelings of panic/anxiety

THOUGHTS/PERCEPTION WARNING SIGNS

BELOW ARE SOME OF THE MESSAGES OUR BODIES SEND TO TELL US WE'RE STRESSED.

Key: Early warning signs, Secondary stress signs in italics

Inability to make decisions or muddled thinking
Reduced co-ordination/Creativity
Becoming vague/Forgetful
Bleak 'globalization', everything seems to go wrong/Is bad
Fear of rejection/Defensiveness
Rushed decisions
Sensitive to criticism

Poor concentration
Negative self-talk/Fear of failure
Feelings of unfairness
The ability to not switch off the mind

STRESS TEST

MARK ANY SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN THE LAST TWO YEARS

10	Terminal illness
9	Death of someone close to you
7-9	Serious illness/hospitization
6-9	Experienced a natural disaster
6	Moved countries/state/province
5-8	Divorce
5-8	Family/relationship conflict or estrangement
5-8	Financial/business stress
5-7	Job loss
5	Moderate illness
5	conflict with friends
5	Moved houses
4-6	Sick/dependants or parents
4-6	A child born
4-6	Placing parents/dependents into care
4-6	Chronic health issues/mild depression
4	A new significant relationship
4	A pet dying
2-6	A new job/role
2-3	Last child to leave home
1	First child to leave home
1	A child starting school
1	A new pet
1	A new car/major possession
1	Bad diet

Total ____

The higher the number the more stress you will be experiencing.

WAYS TO MANAGE AND RELIEVE STRESS

Avoid alcohol, nicotine, caffeine
Indulge in physical activity
Get more sleep
Take control of your environment
Create a balanced schedule
Set healthy boundaries
Learn to say 'no'
Eat healthy foods
Talk to someone/support
Manage your time
Journal your emotions/feelings
Make time for hobbies/interests
Meditate/practice mindfulness
Slow down
Go easy on yourself
Eliminate your triggers
Identify the source of stress in your life
Get a massage/energy healing

The 4 A's of stress management
Avoid, alter, adapt and accept

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QUESTIONS/NOTES

How stressed are you, and what can you do today to change it?

Are you the cause of your stress? Is it someone or something else?

Do you have any symptoms of stress? And if so, how long have you experienced them?

How can you avoid or reduce your stress?

When was the last time you didn't feel stressed?

RESOURCES

The upside of stress by Kelly McGonigal

Don't sweat the small stuff by Richard Carlson

Declutter your mind: How to stop worrying by Barrie Davenport

The relaxation and stress reduction workbook by Martha Davis