



## Stress -Sign, Symptoms, Pathology and its Managements

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### ABSTRACT

Stress may be considered as any physical, chemical, or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental unrest and that may be a factor in causing disease. Physical and chemical factors that can cause stress include trauma, infections, toxins, illnesses, and injuries of any sort. Emotional causes of stress and tension are numerous and varied. While many people associate the term stress with psychological stress, scientists and physicians use this term to denote any force that impairs the stability and balance of bodily functions. Relaxation techniques are an essential part of stress management. If you're an overachiever, you may put relaxation low on your priority list. Don't shortchange yourself. There are active ways of achieving relaxation. Relaxation is invaluable for maintaining your health and well-being, and repairing the toll that stress takes on your mind and body. Almost everyone can benefit from learning relaxation techniques. Relaxation techniques help to slow your breathing and to focus your attention on the here and now. The concept of enjoying the moment we are living in, rather than being worried about what could happen in the future. Common relaxation techniques include meditation, mindfulness, tai chi and yoga. For a more active approach, walking outdoors or participating in a sporting sports activity can be relaxing

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### Introduction

Stress is a biological term which refers to the consequences of the failure of a human or animal body to respond appropriately to emotional or physical threats to the organism, whether actual or imagined it includes a state of alarm and adrenaline production, short-term resistance as a coping mechanism, and exhaustion. It refers to the inability of a human or animal body to respond. Common stress symptoms include irritability, muscular tension, inability to concentrate and a variety of physical reactions, such as headaches and accelerated heart rate. Stress may define as "a state of affair involving demand on physical or mental energy". A condition or circumstance (not always adverse), which can disturb the normal physical and mental health of an individual. In medical parlance 'stress' is defined as a perturbation of the body's homeostasis. This demand on mind-body occurs when it tries to cope with incessant changes in life. A 'stress' condition seems 'relative' in nature. Extreme stress conditions, psychologists say, are detrimental to human health but in moderation stress is normal and, in many cases, proves useful. Stress, nonetheless, is synonymous with negative conditions. Today, with the rapid diversification of human activity, we come face to face with numerous causes of stress and the symptoms of stress and depression. In general, stress is related to both external and internal factors. External factors include your physical environment, your job, relationships with others, your home, and all the situations, challenges, difficulties, and expectations you're confronted with on a daily basis. Internal factors determine your body's ability to respond to, and deal with, the external stress-inducing factors. Internal factors which influence your ability to handle stress include your nutritional status, overall health and fitness levels, emotional well-being, your

ability to control stress through relaxation techniques or other strategies, and the amount of sleep and rest you get. Managing stress, therefore, can involve learning tips to change the external factors which confront you or the internal factors which strengthen your ability to deal with what comes your way.

### History

The term "stress" was first used by the endocrinologist Hans Selye in the 1930s to identify physiological responses in laboratory animals. He later broadened and popularized the concept to include the perceptions and responses of humans trying to adapt to the challenges of everyday life. In Selye's terminology, "stress" refers to the reaction of the organism, and "stressor" to the perceived threat. Stress in certain circumstances may be experienced positively. Eustress, for example, can be an adaptive response prompting the activation of internal resources to meet challenges and achieve goals. The term is commonly used by laypersons in a metaphorical rather than literal or biological sense, as a catch-all for any perceived difficulties in life. It also became a euphemism, a way of referring to problems and eliciting sympathy without being explicitly confessional, just "stressed out". It covers a huge range of phenomena from mild irritation to the kind of severe problems that might result in a real breakdown of health. In popular usage almost any event or situation between these extremes could be described as stressful.

Everyone feels stressed from time to time. Not all stress is bad. All animals have a stress response, and it can be life-saving. But chronic stress can cause both physical and mental harm.

### There are at least three different types of stress:

- Routine stress related to the pressures of work, family, and other daily responsibilities

- Stress brought about by a sudden negative change, such as losing a job, divorce, or illness
- Traumatic stress, which happens when you are in danger of being seriously hurt or killed. Examples include a major accident, war, assault, or a natural disaster. This type of stress can cause post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

### Sign And Symptoms Of Stress

Manifestations of excess or poorly managed stress can be extremely varied. While many people report that stress induces headaches, sleep disturbances, feelings of anxiety or tension, anger, or concentration problems, others may complain of depression, lack of interest in food, increased appetite, or any number of other symptoms. In severe situations, one can experience overwhelming stress to the point of so-called "burnout," with loss of interest in normal activities.

Scientific studies have shown that psychological stress may worsen the symptoms of almost every known medical condition. Examples of conditions in which stress may worsen the intensity also has effects on the immune system. While some studies of symptoms include cardiovascular diseases, asthma, multiple sclerosis, chronic pain, acne, fibromyalgia, and depression. While stress alone is not a cause of cardiovascular disease nor high blood pressure, it may actually worsen the progression of these diseases in many people.

Stress show that acute short-term stresses may actually be able to boost the body's immune response, chronic (long-term) stress has the effect of "wearing down" the immune system, leading to an increased susceptibility to colds and other infections. Scientific studies have also shown that stress can decrease the immune response to vaccinations and prolong wound healing.

### Stress Syndrom

All individuals have different capacities to perform and accommodate when faced with stress. But ultimately we all have a breaking point, add enough total stress and performance suffers. The work of Hans Selye provides the classic model for adaptation to stress (Table 1). He observed that given any source of external biological stress, an organism would respond with a predictable biological pattern in an attempt to restore its internal homeostasis. He termed this the general Adaptation syndrome or Biological stress syndrome, and divided the response in four categories-

- 1-The "Alarm Reaction" is characterized by an immediate activation of the nervous system and adrenal gland.
- 2-The Stage of resistance characterized by hypothalamic pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis activation.
- 3-A stage of adrenal hypertrophy, gastrointestinal ulceration, along with thymic and lymphoid atrophy.
- 4-An exhaustion phase which may cumulate with death.

**Table 1. Biological stress syndrome**

Phase	Neuroendocrine Effect
Alarm Reaction	Activation of the nervous system and adrenal gland.
Resistance Phase	Hypothalamic pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis activation.
Tissue change	Adrenal hypertrophy,
Exhaustion phase	gastrointestinal ulceration, along with thymic and lymphoid atrophy. May cumulate with death

### Positive Stress

The words 'positive' and 'stress' may not often go together. But, there are innumerable instances of athletes rising to the challenge of stress and achieving the unachievable, scientists stressing themselves out over a point to bring into light the most

unthinkable secrets of the phenomenal world, and likewise a painter, a composer or a writer producing the best paintings, the most liting of tunes or the most appealing piece of writing by pushing themselves to the limit. Psychologists second the opinion that some 'stress' situations can actually boost our inner potential and can be creatively helpful. Sudha Chandran, an Indian dancer, lost both of her legs in an accident. But, the physical and social inadequacies gave her more impetus to carry on with her dance performances with the help of prosthetic legs rather than deter her spirits.

Experts tell us that stress, in moderate doses, are necessary in our life. Stress responses are one of our body's best defense systems against outer and inner dangers. In a risky situation (in case of accidents or a sudden attack on life et al), body releases stress hormones that instantly make us more alert and our senses become more focused. The body is also prepared to act with increased strength and speed in a pressure situation. It is supposed to keep us sharp and ready for action.

Research suggests that stress can actually increase our performance. Instead of wilting under stress, one can use it as an impetus to achieve success. Stress can stimulate one's faculties to delve deep into and discover one's true potential. Under stress the brain is emotionally and biochemically stimulated to sharpen its performance. A working class mother in down town California, Erin Brokovich, accomplished an extraordinary feat in the 1990s when she took up a challenge against the giant industrial house Pacific Gas & Electric. The unit was polluting the drinking water of the area with chromium effluents. Once into it, Brockovich had to work under tremendous stress taking on the bigwigs of the society. By her own account, she had to study as many as 120 research articles to find if chromium 6 was carcinogenic. Going from door to door, Erin signed up over 600 plaintiffs, and with attorney Ed Masry went on to receive the largest court settlement, for the town people, ever paid in a direct action lawsuit in the U.S. history—\$333 million . It's an example of an ordinary individual triumphing over insurmountable odds under pressure. If handled positively stress can induce people to discover their inherent talents. Stress is, perhaps, necessary to occasionally clear cobwebs from our thinking. If approached positively, stress can help us evolve as a person by letting go of unwanted thoughts and principle in our life. Very often, at various crossroads of life, stress may remind you of the transitory nature of your experiences, and may prod you to look for the true happiness of life .

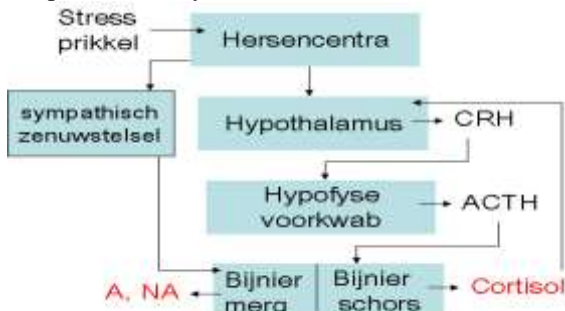
### The Physiology of Stress

In the body, the stress response is mediated by the hypothalamic-adrenal-pituitary axis, or the HPA-axis for short. When the body perceives stress, the HPA axis, along with the sympathetic nervous system, famous for its "fight of flight" response, are activated together.

Although the stress response is helpful and necessary when dealing with short lived stressors, issues result when the perceived stress remains sustained over a period of time. The sympathetic nervous system (SNS) tends to dominate over its counter balance, the parasympathetic nervous system (PNS). As a result, the individual has difficulty settling back down to their normal physical and emotional state, even if the perceived stress is subsequently removed. Chiropractic care can aid in normalizing sympathetic nerve function.

The HPA-axis is responsible for releasing a hormone known as cortisol, most commonly known as the stress hormone. Cortisol has many diverse physiological functions that occur throughout the body, such as suppressing immune function, increasing blood glucose levels, and breaking down

different body tissues. When the stressor is removed, cortisol levels drop and the body returns to its normal level of activity.



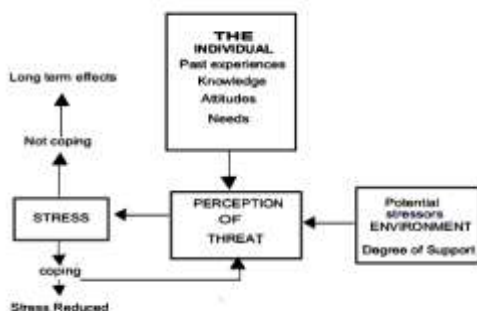
**Fig.2 Physiology of Stress**

Problems result, however, if the perceived stress is not removed. Unless the body has a chance to recover, the effects of stress hormones tend to accumulate and build up. Chronic stress can cause result in either an over activation or an under activation of the HPA axis, depending on the individual. Over activation of the HPA axis may result in increased and sustained levels of the stress hormone cortisol. This in turn can result in a variety of symptoms such as: Anxiety ,Agitation, Irritability, Depression, Lowered immune response, Altered reproductive function, Elevated cholesterol levels, Elevated triglyceride levels, Elevated blood pressure, Insulin resistance, Fatigue, Impaired memory, Central obesity, Loss of muscle tone and protein wasting , Bone mineral loss and impaired injury recovery.

In addition, people under stressed emotional states tend to have cravings for sweeter, higher fat foods and more energy dense meals. Without a corresponding increase in physical activity, these individuals tend to experience weight gain as a result. Alternatively, the other type of stress response that an individual may experience is an under activation of the HPA axis. Symptoms associated with this state may include:

An increased risk of autoimmune diseases , An increased risk of inflammatory conditions Apathy , Malaise/fatigue ,Weakness ,Reduced libido ,Weight loss ,Poor, restless sleep Chronic pain ,Asthma ,Allergies , An inability to carry out routine tasks. If the stress continues unabated, the body can actually experience adrenal fatigue, where the body can no longer deal adequately with the perceived stress. Commonly known as burnout, the body's ability to respond to any stress becomes compromised.

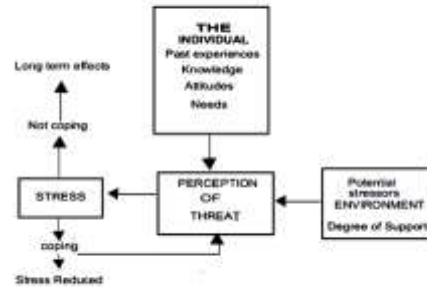
Although eliminating stress form one's life may be the most desired objective, it is not always practical. There are strategies that one may employ to deal with stress. In addition to getting adequate levels of physical activity, restful sleep and eating a well balanced diet, supplementation with adaptogens such as Prime One can be an effective strategy to help mitigate the deleterious effects of stress.



**Fig. 3Phase of General Adaptation Syndrome**

**Hormones of the stress response**

When our fight or flight response is activated, sequences of nerve cell firing occur and chemicals like adrenaline, noradrenaline and cortisol are released into our bloodstream. These patterns of nerve cell firing and chemical release cause our body to undergo a series of very dramatic changes. Our respiratory rate increases. Blood is shunted away from our digestive tract and directed into our muscles and limbs, which require extra energy and fuel for running and fighting.



**Fig. 3Phase of General Adaptation Syndrome**

**Fig.3 fight or flight response**

Our pupils dilate. Our awareness intensifies. Our sight sharpens. Our impulses quicken. Our perception of pain diminishes. Our immune system mobilizes with increased activation. We become prepared—physically and psychologically—for fight or flight. We scan and search our environment, "looking for the enemy."

When something stressful happens or you think a stressful thought, many hormones are released by the brain, nervous system, and other organs:

- The base of the brain, the hypothalamus, secretes an array of hormones into the blood, mainly corticotropin releasing factor, which triggers the pituitary to release the hormone corticotropin (ACTH). ACTH in the bloodstream triggers the release of glucocorticoids by the adrenal gland.
- The sympathetic nervous system releases epinephrine (adrenaline), and norepinephrine (noradrenaline) into the bloodstream.
- The pancreas releases a hormone called glucagon, which raises the circulating levels of glucose in the blood.
- The pituitary releases prolactin, suppressing reproductive systems and vasopressin, the anti-diuretic hormone.
- Both the brain and the pituitary release morphine-like substances called endorphins and enkephalins which limit pain perception.

Epinephrine and glucocorticoids appear to act in similar ways, however epinephrine acts within seconds, while glucocorticoids are slower-acting, backing up the epinephrine for minutes or hours. Together, epinephrine, norepinephrine, and the glucocorticoids account for a large portion of what happens in the body during stress.

At the same time, the secretions of the reproductive hormones (estrogen, progesterone, and testosterone) and the growth hormones are inhibited during stress to conserve energy for the imminent fight or flight. The secretion of insulin is also inhibited, which normally tells the body to store energy .

The pattern of the body's response to stress is not consistent. Massive physical stressors result in hormonal changes, with the glucocorticoid and epinephrine / norepinephrine response being the most reliable. More subtle stressors result in a variety of responses. For example, anxiety and vigilance types of stress may result in the release of epinephrine and

norepinephrine, while depression and giving-up types of stress may result in the release of glucocorticoids.

Depending on the anticipated type of stress, the psychological context of the stressors causes the release of these hormones and other chemicals, collectively called peptides. Peptides are strings of amino acids that are the means of communication within and between all parts of the body. They are detected by receptors in other parts of the body, which results in changes to those body parts. The peptides and their receptors are considered the biochemical correlates of emotions.

#### **Adaptogens And Stress**

When the body is working close to its maximum capacity as a result of stress, the whole organism is engaged. If the strain lasts for a longer duration, or is repeated, the cells must adapt to work at a higher level, and the capacity to manufacture cell fuel must be built up.

1) More specifically, adaptogenic substances increase the capacity of the cells to build "energy factories" by activating certain "workers," including mRNA (messengers) and tRNA (transporters). According to Michael Wahlstrom, they also act as anti-oxidants and thwart the free radicals which adversely effect cell membranes.

2) Wahlstrom notes that by normalizing our bodily functions, adaptogens help maintain the stable internal environment known as homeostasis. In order for our body parts to work efficiently, the concentrations of water, food substances, and oxygen (as well as the conditions of heat and pressure) must remain within certain very narrow limits. By helping body parts remain in balance, adaptogens can help us have more energy and greater health.

3) Combinations of this class of plant-based medicines have been perfected and prescribed to elite athletes by Russian and German sports physicians in order to continually assist them in replenishing the depleted structural and psychological reserves that result from the hard training necessary to reach elite levels.

Adaptogens have been observed to significantly accelerate the recovery processes after intense training and to increase the body's resistance to stressful conditions. Eleutherococcus senticosus (ES) (Siberian Ginseng), Schizandra Chinensis, Rhodiola Rosea, Ashwagandha, Panax ginseng, Suma, Astersagalus, Reishi.

#### **Stress-Management**

Stress management starts with identifying the sources of stress in your life. This isn't as easy as it sounds. Your true sources of stress aren't always obvious, and it's all too easy to overlook your own stress-inducing thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Sure, you may know that you're constantly worried about work deadlines. But maybe it's your procrastination, rather than the actual job demands, that leads to deadline stress.

1. Stress is any physical, chemical, or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental unrest.

2. While elimination of stress is unrealistic, management of stress is an attainable and realistic goal that can be achieved by a number of strategies.

3. People with strong social support networks report less stress and fewer negative symptoms of stress than those who lack social support.

4. Stress-management techniques include relaxation techniques, time-management skills, counseling or group therapy, exercise, and maintaining an overall healthy lifestyle.

5. There are hundreds of different relaxation techniques to help manage stress, including yoga, guided imagery, biofeedback, tai chi, qigong, and progressive muscle relaxation.

6. Stress is a normal psychological and physical reaction to the ever increasing demands of life. When your brain perceives a

threat, it signals your body to release a burst of hormones to fuel your capacity for a response. This has been labeled the "fight-or-flight" response. Once the threat is gone, your body is meant to return to a normal relaxed state. Unfortunately, the nonstop stress of modern life means that your alarm system rarely shuts off.

7. That's why stress management is so important. Stress management gives you a range of tools to reset your alarm system. Without stress management, all too often your body is always on high alert. Over time, high levels of stress lead to serious health problems. Don't wait until stress has a negative impact on your health, relationships or quality of life. Start practicing a range of stress management techniques today.

8. Do you know anyone who isn't at times stressed out these days? The pace of modern life makes stress management a necessary skill for everyone. Many people juggle multiple responsibilities, work, home life, caregiving and relationships. Learning to identify problems and implement solutions is the key to successful stress reduction.

9. The first step in successful stress relief is deciding to make a change in how you manage stress. The next step is identifying your stress triggers. Some causes of stress are obvious — job pressures, relationship problems or financial difficulties. But daily hassles and demands, such as commuting, arranging day care or being overcommitted at work, can also contribute to your stress level. Positive events also can be stressful. If you got married, started a new job and bought a new house in the same year, you could have a high stress level. While negative events in general are more stressful, be sure to also assess positive changes in your life.

10. Once you've identified your stress triggers, you can start thinking about strategies for dealing with them. Sometimes the solution may be as easy as turning off the TV when the evening news is too distressing. Or, when you can't avoid a stressful situation, try brainstorming ways to reduce the irritation factor. And don't feel like you have to figure it out all on your own. Seek help and support from family and friends. You may want to ask them what stress-relief techniques have worked well for them. And many people benefit from daily practice of stress reduction techniques, such as mindfulness, tai chi, yoga, meditation or being in nature.

11. Stress won't disappear from your life. And stress management isn't an overnight cure. But with practice, you can learn to manage your stress level and increase your ability to cope with life's challenges.

#### **Relaxation Techniques and Meditation**

There are many ways to use structured relaxation techniques to help control stress and improve your physical and mental well-being. While some types of meditation and relaxation therapies are best learned in a class, it's also possible to learn meditation techniques on your own. There are literally hundreds of different types of relaxation methods ranging from audio CDs to group martial arts and fitness classes. The following are only examples of the types of structured programs available that can increase our capacity for relaxation:

##### **Autogenic training:**

Developed in the early 20th century, this technique is based upon passive concentration and awareness of body sensations. Through repetition of so-called autogenic "formulas" one focuses upon different sensations, such as warmth or heaviness, in different regions of the body. Autogenic training has been used by physicians as a part of therapy for many conditions. Popular in Europe (where it is even covered by some insurance plans), this method is currently gaining acceptance in the United States. No particular physical skills or exercises are involved;

however, people desiring to learn this technique must be prepared to invest time and patience. Since this technique is slightly more complex than some relaxation methods, a course is generally the best way to learn the method.

#### **Biofeedback:**

Biofeedback is one method of learning to achieve relaxation, control stress responses, or modify the body's reactions through the use of monitoring equipment that provides information from the body which would normally not be available. This method is based upon the principle first advanced in the early 1960s that the autonomic nervous system (the part we don't consciously use) is trainable. For example, instruments can be used to measure heart rate, blood pressure, brain activity, stomach acidity, muscle tension, or other parameters while people experiment with postural changes, breathing techniques, or thinking patterns. By receiving this feedback, one can learn to identify the processes that achieve the desired result, such as reduction in heart rate and blood pressure. Biofeedback is used by many practitioners for a variety of psychological and physical conditions. Because the technique involves the use of measuring devices, it can only be performed by a professional.

#### **Imagery:**

Imagery, sometimes referred to as *guided imagery*, is the use of pleasant or relaxing images to calm the mind and body. By controlling breathing and visualizing a soothing image, a state of deep relaxation can occur. This method can be learned by anyone and is relatively easy to try out.

#### **Meditation techniques:**

Ranging from practices associated with specific religions or beliefs to methods focusing purely on physical relaxation, meditation is one of the most popular techniques to achieve physical and mental relaxation. There are thousands of different types of meditation, and many can be learned on your own. The meditative state is one in which there is a deep centering and focusing upon the core of one's being; there is a quieting of the mind, emotions, and body. The meditative state can be achieved through structured (as in a daily practice of a routine) or unstructured (for example, while being alone outdoors) activities. While teachers of meditative arts are readily available, some techniques can be learned through books or online tutorials. A form of meditation popularized for several decades is transcendental meditation (TM). TM has the goal of achieving transcendental consciousness (the simplest form of awareness). It is practiced for 15-20 minutes in the mornings and evenings and is relatively easy to learn. Numerous classes and teaching materials are available for beginners. Another variant of a meditation technique has gained popularity in the U.S. since its description in the 1970s by Harvard physician Herbert Benson. This technique involves generation of the so-called relaxation response through the repetition of a word or phrase while quietly seated, 10-20 minutes per day. Designed to evoke the opposite bodily reaction to the stress response (or "fight or flight" reaction), this method carries no religious or spiritual overtones. Its value has been documented in the reduction of blood pressure and other bodily stress responses. Like other forms of meditation, it can be learned on one's own, but time and practice are required to elicit the desired relaxation state.

#### **Progressive muscle relaxation:**

Progressive muscle relaxation is a method developed in the 1930s in which muscle groups are tightened and then relaxed in succession. This method is based upon the idea that mental relaxation will be a natural outcome of physical relaxation. Although muscle activity is involved, this technique requires no special skills or conditioning, and it can be learned by almost

anyone. Progressive muscle relaxation is generally practiced for 10-20 minutes a day. As with the relaxation response, practice and patience are required for maximum benefits.

#### **Qigong:**

The martial art qigong is an ancient Chinese health-care system that combines physical training (such as isometrics, isotonic, and aerobic conditioning) with Eastern philosophy and relaxation techniques. There are many different kinds of qigong, including medical qigong. Some forms are practiced while standing, sitting, or lying down; others involve structured movements or massage. Over 70 million Chinese practice some form of qigong daily. Qigong has been used for centuries in China for the treatment of a variety of medical conditions. Learning qigong involves time, commitment, patience, and determination, and learning from a master or group is advisable. Since this technique involves physical exertion, check with your doctor before beginning, particularly if you have a chronic medical condition or are over 40 years old.

#### **Tai chi:**

Like qigong, tai chi is a Chinese martial art. It has been termed a kind of "meditation in motion" and is characterized by soft, flowing movements that stress precision and force. Also known as tai chi chuan, this method is thousands of years old. As with qigong, training from a master is necessary to learn the art of tai chi. Again, since motion and force are required, check with your doctor before beginning training.

#### **Yoga:**

There are many forms of yoga, an ancient Indian form of exercise based upon the premise that the body and breathing are connected with the mind. The practice of yoga is thought to be over 5,000 years old. One goal of yoga is to restore balance and harmony to the body and emotions through numerous postural and breathing exercises. Yoga, which means "joining" or "union" in Sanskrit, has been called the "search for the soul" and the "union between the individual and the divine." Among the benefits of yoga are increased flexibility and capability for relaxation. No special level of conditioning is required; yoga can be learned by nearly anyone. Classes, books, and videos are widely available. Those with special or chronic physical conditions will want to get clearance from their doctor before beginning.

1. Build your physical reserves.

1. Exercise for cardiovascular fitness three to four times a week (moderate, prolonged rhythmic exercise is best, such as walking, swimming, cycling, or jogging).

2. Eat well-balanced, nutritious meals.

3. Maintain your ideal weight.

4. Avoid nicotine, excessive caffeine, and other stimulants.

5. Mix leisure with work. Take breaks and get away when you can.

6. Get enough sleep. Be as consistent with your sleep schedule as possible.

2. Maintain your emotional reserves.

1. Develop some mutually supportive friendships/relationships.

2. Pursue realistic goals which are meaningful to you, rather than goals others have for you that you do not share.

3. Expect some frustrations, failures, and sorrows.

4. Always be kind and gentle with yourself—be a friend to yourself.

#### **Stress Management Strategy**

##### **Strategy-1**

Not all stress can be avoided, and it's not healthy to avoid a situation that needs to be addressed. You may be surprised, however, by the number of stressors in your life that you can eliminate.



Learn how to say “no” – Know your limits and stick to them. Whether in your personal or professional life, refuse to accept added responsibilities when you’re close to reaching them. Taking on more than you can handle is a surefire recipe for stress.

Avoid people who stress you out – If someone consistently causes stress in your life and you can’t turn the relationship around, limit the amount of time you spend with that person or end the relationship entirely.

Take control of your environment – If the evening news makes you anxious, turn the TV off. If traffic’s got you tense, take a longer but less-traveled route. If going to the market is an unpleasant chore, do your grocery shopping online.

Avoid hot-button topics – If you get upset over religion or politics, cross them off your conversation list. If you repeatedly argue about the same subject with the same people, stop bringing it up or excuse yourself when it’s the topic of discussion.

Pare down your to-do list – Analyze your schedule, responsibilities, and daily tasks. If you’ve got too much on your plate, distinguish between the “shoulds” and the “musts.” Drop tasks that aren’t truly necessary to the bottom of the list or eliminate them entirely.

#### Strategy-2

If you can’t avoid a stressful situation, try to alter it. Figure out what you can do to change things so the problem doesn’t present itself in the future. Often, this involves changing the way you communicate and operate in your daily life.

Express your feelings instead of bottling them up. If something or someone is bothering you, communicate your concerns in an open and respectful way. If you don’t voice your feelings, resentment will build and the situation will likely remain the same.

Be willing to compromise. When you ask someone to change their behavior, be willing to do the same. If you both are willing to bend at least a little, you’ll have a good chance of finding a happy middle ground.

Be more assertive. Don’t take a backseat in your own life. Deal with problems head on, doing your best to anticipate and prevent them. If you’ve got an exam to study for and your chatty roommate just got home, say up front that you only have five minutes to talk.

Manage your time better. Poor time management can cause a lot of stress. When you’re stretched too thin and running behind, it’s hard to stay calm and focused. But if you plan ahead and make sure you don’t overextend yourself, you can alter the amount of stress you’re under.

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#### Strategy-4

If you can’t change the stressor, change yourself. You can adapt to stressful situations and regain your sense of control by changing your expectations and attitude.

Reframe problems. Try to view stressful situations from a more positive perspective. Rather than fuming about a traffic jam, look at it as an opportunity to pause and regroup, listen to your favorite radio station, or enjoy some alone time.

Look at the big picture. Take perspective of the stressful situation. Ask yourself how important it will be in the long run. Will it matter in a month? A year? Is it really worth getting upset over? If the answer is no, focus your time and energy elsewhere.

Adjust your standards. Perfectionism is a major source of avoidable stress. Stop setting yourself up for failure by demanding perfection. Set reasonable standards for yourself and others, and learn to be okay with “good enough.”

Focus on the positive. When stress is getting you down, take a moment to reflect on all the things you appreciate in your life, including your own positive qualities and gifts. This simple strategy can help you keep things in perspective. Some sources of stress are unavoidable. You can’t prevent or change stressors such as the death of a loved one, a serious illness, or a national recession. In such cases, the best way to cope with stress is to accept things as they are. Acceptance may be difficult, but in the long run, it’s easier than railing against a situation you can’t change.

Don’t try to control the uncontrollable. Many things in life are beyond our control— particularly the behavior of other people. Rather than stressing out over them, focus on the things you can control such as the way you choose to react to problems.

Look for the upside. As the saying goes, “What doesn’t kill us makes us stronger.” When facing major challenges, try to look at them as opportunities for personal growth. If your own poor choices contributed to a stressful situation, reflect on them and learn from your mistakes.

Share your feelings. Talk to a trusted friend or make an appointment with a therapist. Expressing what you’re going through can be very cathartic, even if there’s nothing you can do to alter the stressful situation.

Learn to forgive. Accept the fact that we live in an imperfect world and that people make mistakes. Let go of anger and resentments. Free yourself from negative energy by forgiving and moving on.

Beyond a take-charge approach and a positive attitude, you can reduce stress in your life by nurturing yourself. If you regularly make time for fun and relaxation, you’ll be in a better place to handle life’s stressors when they inevitably come.

#### Table-2 Healthy Ways To Relax And Recharge

- |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| ▪ Go for a walk.                         | ▪ Savor a warm cup of coffee or tea. |
| ▪ Spend time in nature.                  | ▪ Play with a pet.                   |
| ▪ Call a good friend.                    | ▪ Work in your garden.               |
| ▪ Sweat out tension with a good workout. | ▪ Get a massage.                     |
| ▪ Write in your journal.                 | ▪ Curl up with a good book.          |
| ▪ Take a long bath.                      | ▪ Listen to music.                   |
| ▪ Light scented candles.                 | ▪ Watch a comedy.                    |

Don't get so caught up in the hustle and bustle of life that you forget to take care of your own needs. Nurturing yourself is a necessity, not a luxury.

Set aside relaxation time. Include rest and relaxation in your daily schedule. Don't allow other obligations to encroach. This is your time to take a break from all responsibilities and recharge your batteries.

Connect with others. Spend time with positive people who enhance your life. A strong support system will buffer you from the negative effects of stress.

Do something you enjoy every day. Make time for leisure activities that bring you joy, whether it be stargazing, playing the piano, or working on your bike.

Keep your sense of humor. This includes the ability to laugh at yourself. The act of laughing helps your body fight stress in a number of ways.

#### Strategy-5

You can increase your resistance to stress by strengthening your physical health.

Exercise regularly. Physical activity plays a key role in reducing and preventing the effects of stress. Make time for at least 30 minutes of exercise, three times per week. Nothing beats aerobic exercise for releasing pent-up stress and tension.

Eat a healthy diet. Well-nourished bodies are better prepared to cope with stress, so be mindful of what you eat. Start your day right with breakfast, and keep your energy up and your mind clear with balanced, nutritious meals throughout the day.

Reduce caffeine and sugar. The temporary "highs" caffeine and sugar provide often end in with a crash in mood and energy. By reducing the amount of coffee, soft drinks, chocolate, and sugar snacks in your diet, you'll feel more relaxed and you'll sleep better.

Avoid alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs. Self-medicating with alcohol or drugs may provide an easy escape from stress, but the relief is only temporary. Don't avoid or mask the issue at hand; deal with problems head on and with a clear mind.

Get enough sleep. Adequate sleep fuels your mind, as well as your body. Feeling tired will increase your stress because it may cause you to think irrationally.

#### Conclusion

Stress is the "wear and tear" our bodies experience as we adjust to our continually changing environment; it has physical and emotional effects on us and can create positive or negative feelings. As a positive influence, stress can help compel us to action; it can result in a new awareness and an exciting new perspective. As a negative influence, it 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. Slow, deep breathing will bring your heart rate and respiration back to normal. Relaxation techniques can reduce muscle tension. Electronic biofeedback can help you gain voluntary control over such things as muscle tension, heart rate, and blood pressure. Medications, when prescribed by a physician, can help in the short term in moderating your physical reactions. However, they alone are not the answer. Learning to moderate these reactions on your own is a preferable long-term solution

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