

MAKING STRESS WORK FOR YOU

What Is Stress?

Few human conditions receive so much credit...and blame.

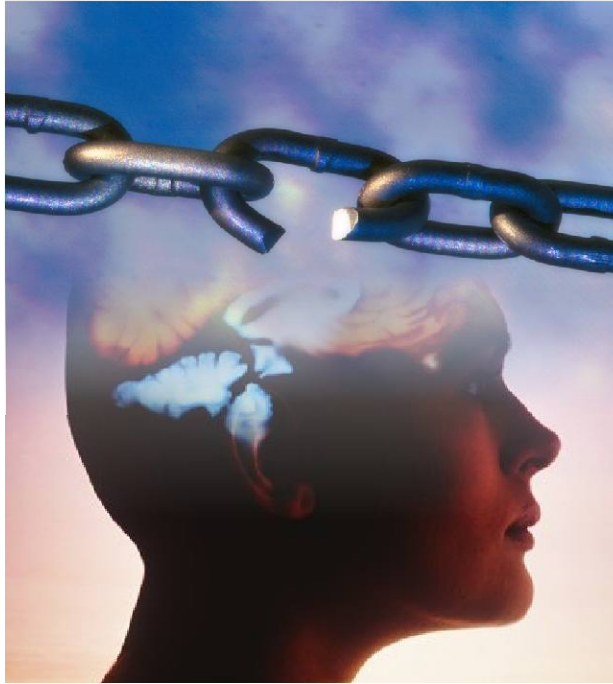
Stress is a fact of life. We need a certain amount of stress in our daily lives to function well, keep us sharp and on task. Stress is your body's response to changes around you. Your body responds to stressors by getting ready to act. This is called the "fight-or-flight" response because your body prepares to fight the stressor or flee from it.

Finding and maintaining balance is key to managing the tremendous pressure of modern life.

An event that is stressful to you may not even faze your best friend. People experience and handle pressure in different ways. It is important to know what 'stresses you out' and how you can cope with these issues.

Positive vs Negative

Negative stress, or *distress* is stress that may prevent you from doing what you need to do or that causes you discomfort. Positive stress, *eustress* is stress that can help you to accomplish goals. When you are excited, challenged and motivated - this is eustress.



HOW DO YOU REACT TO STRESS?

In our modern society we are constantly bombarded with stressors. Our stress is often mental: over-stimulation, deadlines, cell phones, traffic, homework. Mental stress can cause physical harm.

People have various ways of reacting to pressure:

- Fight back and take action
- Talk to someone about their feelings
- Ask for help
- Listen to music
- Play a sport
- Slam a door or yell
- Withdrawing from friends and family
- Internalize their feelings
- Act happy or deny that anything is wrong
- Drink or get high

We all have a choice on how we manage stress. The key is to be aware of how we individually react to stress (positive or negative) and *develop strategies to gain self control.*

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO FIND SUCCESS OVER STRESS?

Put Your Body In Motion

Get physically active. It clears your head and is good for your body.



Fuel Up

Eat regular meals. Give your body healthy food and the fuel that it needs to get through the day. Avoid energy jolts from sugar and caffeine.



LOL!

Laughter and fun are truly the best medicine! Crying can also make you feel better.

Hang With Friends

Social interaction can be a great diversion.



Spill To Someone You Trust

Talk to someone you feel comfortable with and respect. Don't keep your feelings bottled up inside. Talk out your problems. Seeing them from a different point of view may help you figure out other ways to deal with them.



Take Time To Chill

Do something relaxing that you enjoy:

- Reading
- TV
- Video games
- Music
- A hobby
- Writing
- Drawing
- Putting a puzzle together
- Playing cards or games



Catch Some ZZZZZZ

Fatigue exaggerates stress. You might feel tired, cranky, or you may have trouble thinking clearly.



Keep A Journal

Write down your thoughts and possible solutions. Self reflection can be a positive tool to help understand your feelings.

Get It Together

If you are feeling overwhelmed and distressed you may need to take time to *get organized*. Get help with time-management skills. Think of the analogy of the game "Jenga" where you need to take one layer off at a time to prevent the entire tower of blocks from tumbling down. Attack your work instead of procrastinating.

Lend A Hand

Get involved in an activity that helps others. The feeling that you get from volunteering may be greater than you can imagine. It may also put your stress in perspective.

Learn Relaxation Techniques

Stop, drop & breathe. Relaxation exercises, meditation, breathing and yoga can be a huge help.

Ask For Help!!!!

If you have tried coping strategies and you are still feeling *distressed*, please talk to someone. The strength of friendship and an understanding ear can be a powerful tool in your success over stress.



Links is a not-for-profit social service agency that supports adolescents by providing them with resources to make informed decisions about their health and sexuality.

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STRESS MANAGEMENT

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