

□ **RESOURCES:**

www.stressmanagementtips.com

www.rd.com/content/37-stress-management-tips

www.zeromillion.com/personaldev/stress-management-tips.html

www.mindtools.com/smpage.html

www.stress.about.com

www.ivf.com/stress.html

Shwartz, Mark, "Robert Sapolsky discusses physiological effects of stress", Stanford Report, March 7, 2007.

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QUICK GUIDE TO



Stress is the body's natural response to situations that bombard us each day. We are hard-wired with a "fight or flight" mechanism. We respond to stressful situations by releasing hormones, such as adrenalin and glucocorticoids, which instantly increases our heart rate and energy level. For short amounts of time, this stress is helpful in removing us from the harmful situation. As Professor Robert Sapolsky a neuroscientist from Sanford University states, "You mobilize energy in your thigh muscles, you increase your blood pressure and you turn off everything that's not essential to surviving, such as digestion, growth and reproduction," he said. "You think more clearly, and certain aspects of learning and memory are enhanced. All of that is spectacularly adapted if you're dealing with an acute physical stressor –a real one."

However, most modern day individuals do not have life-threatening stressors. We are prone to constant worry about money, jobs, family, etc. We may no longer be conquering the Saber-tooth tiger but we certainly have our modern day stressors. Unfortunately our bodies respond the same way to life-threatening or non-life-threatening stressors; we release adrenalin and other stress hormones. As Dr.Sapolsky states, "If you turn on the stress response chronically for purely psychological reasons, you increase your risk of adult onset diabetes and high blood pressure. If you're chronically shutting down the digestive system there's a bunch of gastrointestinal disorders you're more at risk for as well."

□ CHRONIC STRESS:

- Dizziness
- General aches and pains
- Grinding teeth, clenched jaw
- Headaches
- Indigestion
- Increase in/loss of appetite
- Muscle tension in neck, face or shoulders
- Problems sleeping
- Racing heart
- Cold and sweaty palms
- Tiredness, exhaustion
- Trembling/shaking
- Weight gain or loss
- Upset stomach
- Sexual difficulties

□ STRESS-REDUCING TIPS:

1. Remember to breath!!! Breathing deeply increases oxygen to the brain by 30%. It helps us keep focused and helps us to slow down.

Put your hand on your abdomen just below your navel. Inhale slowly through your nose and watch your hand move out as your belly expands. Hold breath for a few seconds then exhale slowly.

2. Get moving!!! Exercise regularly. Your body fights stress better when it is fit.

Stand up and stretch. Do some shoulder rolls. Raise your arms over your head, walk or jump in place. Take a walk; either go outside or move around inside your place of work or home. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Park your car a little bit farther away on the parking lot.

3. Get writing!!! Sometimes putting the ideas/items that are bothering you on paper, helps to release the ever on- going thoughts in one's mind. Write down what you can't change and also what you can change. For those things that can't be changed, write them down. Accept that there are events that you cannot control. If you can't change them, let it go.

For the things that can be changed, try writing a plan on how to go about the change. Set small goals for yourself.

4. Get drinking!!! Water that is!! Most people don't get enough water. Try a glass when you first get up and before going to bed. During the day, get up every 2 hours and drink a glass. Don't rely on alcohol or drugs to reduce stress. Try to eat regular, healthy well-balanced meals.

5. Get sleeping!!! Try and get enough rest and sleep. Your body needs time to recover from stressful events. Try time management to build into your schedule down times. Try some relaxation techniques.