

STRESS Management

by Angela Poch, NC

PEACE
LONGEVITY
ENERGY



*Life is full of
surprises but that
doesn't mean it has
to be full of stress.
At least not negative
stress. Flip the page
to learn more...*

WHY?

WHAT IS IT?

HOW TO CONTROL IT?

SWEET SOOTHING SOLUTIONS

Stand up: And get some exercise. This will pump up the endorphins and reduce the built up stress hormones coursing through your veins.

Simplify: Clutter takes up space and time. Excess stuff can be physical, too many clothes, or mental, baggage from years gone by. Unload every unnecessary thing. Do a little each day, start in your fav room.

Schedule: Prioritize the important things and put those into the schedule first. Then add the necessities - food, sleep, exercise, and work. Notice work is last. If you have a heart attack or never see your children, what good is work?

Sea Breeze: Fresh air and deep breathing are great tools to reduce blood pressure and other effects of stress. Air blowing over moving water is rich in negative ions which are helpful too.

Solar Power: Like exercise, the sun has many benefits for mental health.¹ It will also add a little serotonin (the happy hormone) to your day!

Sound sleep: Sleep is needed in the production of melatonin, which is vital in the body's arsenal of stress coping mechanisms.

Song: Singing helps re-direct thoughts. Making music can improve mood, and can even reverse stress genes².

Service: Doing something for someone else.

Self-examination: Are you causing your own stress? Expectations, Erroneous thoughts, and Ego can all play a part in stress.

Spiritual: When POW's are asked what is the most important thing, "faith in God" is the answer.⁴

Sabbatical: Take a trip, a few days or a few hours, in nature. Nature has healing properties.⁵

Sabbath: A day of rest from the cares of the world is one of the factors in longevity and health according to National Geographic.⁶

Sacrifice: Remember what God has done for you. An Attitude of Gratitude can go a long way.

STRESS

Good or bad stress is here to stay. Good? Yes, stress can be good for you. But when is it not good for you? When it is continual, chronic, and/or negative.

So what is stress? Your car breaks down on the freeway? Your doctor says, you have cancer? Believe it or not, these are not stress, these are stressors. Stressors are things that produce a reaction in your mind and body. This reaction is stress. The first phase of stress is the alarm reaction with an increase in blood pressure, heart rate, and blood flow to active muscles, but with a decrease in blood flow to other areas like the kidneys. This is the flight or fight response, and when it is short term, it is not harmful.

It is when stress is prolonged that it creates problems such as fatigue, poor concentration, depression, anxiety, tension, irritability, anger, muscle pain, and even lowers the function of the brain.⁷

A stressor can be in any form. Physical - a dog bite,

mental - death of a friend, chemical - caffeine, poor diet, and so on.⁸

The first thing you can do is write out your most common stressors. Be specific. What is causing you the most distress? Are there any you can eliminate? Reduce? Change?

But what about the stressors that may be buried beneath our coping mechanisms. Interestingly enough we can help ourselves even if we can't identify all the stressors in our lives. Gillian Bethel, Ph.D. discovered clients at a lifestyle center were often relieved of their stress with exercise, rest, and a good diet before they even got to her for stress counselling.⁹

So the second step is a healthful diet and active lifestyle. Low fat, high fiber, lots of fruits, grains, legumes, and vegetables. For more information on a healthy lifestyle go to www.VeganNutrition4U.com (You don't have to be vegan, to use the information on this site).

The third step is to tune your thoughts. (See the box below.) What we think, is what we are. Our thoughts about events are more important than the events themselves. That is why two children can grow up under the same terrible circumstances and one is grossly affected while the other goes on fine with life.

The final step is to find your Sweet Soothing Solutions. You may need 1, 5, or 10 of the ideas listed in the box on the left. Each one is a study in itself. Try them all!

TUNE YOUR THOUGHTS WITH TRUTH

As you identify your stressors you need to learn how to live with the ones that you cannot change. This is not ignoring or avoiding, which can make the situation worse, but adapting. First of all, you need to analyze and control your own thoughts.

ABC thinking as psychologists put it. A- Activating Event (stressor) --- B- Beliefs and Self-talk (about that event) --- C- Consequences (the emotions and behaviors that arise from the belief and self-talk about the event). Example: A-Activating Event=You are in a car accident. B-Beliefs = You believe that it will cost \$1000's of dollars to fix, you'll miss work, perhaps get fired and lose your job. C-Consequence = You become worried, distressed, and angry. Ok so now you know what goes on in your brain, how do you do something about it? D-Dispute the belief. Will the car accident really cause you to lose your job? Is losing your job the end of the world? Can you find a cheaper way to fix the car, or perhaps purchase another used one? The questions and answers will be different for you, but the process is the same.

We tend to let our thoughts run a muck with distortions and exaggerations which create our beliefs. (Beliefs do NOT refer to your religious persuasion, although they can affect it.)

...continued on reverse page.

There are 10 major cognitive distortions¹⁰ (some are interrelated):

- All-or-nothing thinking - everything is black or white (i.e. Either I get straight A's or I'm failing.)
- Overgeneralization - once a failure, always a failure (i.e. Since I failed algebra in Grade 10, I will fail in 11 too.)
- Negative mental filter - remember only the bad experiences (i.e. On our vacation we got a flat tire, junior spilled his juice, we ran out of money, it was just awful.)
- Disqualifying the positive - discredit the good (i.e. I didn't do that much. Anybody can get B's in school.)
- Mind reading - predicting bad events (i.e. Dad's going to give it to me when I get home. She hates me.)
- Magnifying the negative - put too much importance on a bad event (Example of the car accident above.)
- Emotional reasoning - using feelings without logic (i.e. I feel depressed, therefore I am miserable.)
- Should and must - making demands (i.e. He must buy me flowers if he loves me.)
- Negative labeling - name calling (i.e. I'm stupid. What a screw-ball.)
- Blaming - total blame on yourself or someone else for an event. (i.e. If he wouldn't throw his socks on the floor, I wouldn't get angry.)

This just scratches the surface of CBT - Cognitive Behavior Therapy, which is a proven therapy to help stress, anxiety, and depression. It is consistent with the Bible and can be done by yourself.

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DISCLAIMER

This handout is intended to offer general information which is subject to change. We do not make any diagnosis or personal treatment suggestions. This information is not intended to diagnose, treat, or cure any disease. We urge you to learn about nutrition and health so that you can make informed decisions to preserve or regain the vibrant good health you deserve.



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Printed in Canada Revised 20150811