

STRESS

Friend or Killer?

What makes us fight?

What can we do to stop it?

Stress Management

Stress is a very difficult thing to manage. First a person needs to recognise that they are stressed. This is not as easy as it sounds.

If you are stressed, your heart works harder and in turn reduces your ability to endure prolonged physical activity.

This documents aims to explain the following:

- What stress is
- Fight or Flight response
- Physiology of stress – The science
- Principles of SABRES
- Relaxation and breathing

What is stress?

1. Response to Stressors!
Anxiety, Panic, Fear, Worry, Tension, Anger and Frustration
2. Depression
3. Rushing against time restraints
4. Excitement – (May be a good stress)
5. Anything challenging

What do we do when we are stressed?

FIGHT OR FLIGHT RESPONSE (Fight or run for your life!)

- Your reactions are not in your control
- It is a primitive instinctive survival response – Battle Stations, ready to fight for survival!
- It is your body's natural defence, to pump extra blood and oxygen to muscles and tissues
- When your brain perceives a threat and activates this response, it takes a lot of will power to convince yourself that it is a false threat, and great effort to stand-down battle stations!

Fight or flight response – What happens to your body and why?

- Breathing rate increases – Body grabs more oxygen
- Heart rate increases – Body pumps oxygen to muscles ready for the fight
- Blood pressure increases – Natural reaction to increased heart rate
- Blood vessels get narrower – Increased breathing fails to remove poisons from the blood

The results

- Dizziness – Lack of oxygen to the brain, sugar is drained with the tension
- Muscles Tension / Aches – Muscles become over oxygenised
- Sweating – A result of high blood pressure
- Dry mouth – Saliva dries up as body shuts down non-essential systems to conserve oxygen
- Need the toilet (The expression P*****ed / S****t himself) – Bladder shrinks as body shuts down non-essential systems to conserve oxygen
- Stomach churns – Lack of saliva rapidly changes the balance of acid
- Shaking and Tremor – The body is now ready to lash out
- Failure to act at this stage, either to fight or stand down, can cause massive heart trauma and irreversible damage

Primitive response

- Automatic response
- Immediate reaction to perceived threat
- Clearly noticeable
- Fairly easily attributed to a cause
- Can be measured

Vs

- Automatic response
- Is a continuous reaction
- Not easily noticeable
- Not easily attributed to any particular cause
- Can be measured

Chronic Stress

Physiology of Stress – The Science

Adrenalin / Noradrenalin

Released in response to:

- Anxiety and Fear
- Anger and Frustration
- Rushing against time restraints
- Getting worked up

Starts Fight or Flight response reactions and increases blood pressure etc....

Cortisol

Released in response to:

- Depression
- Despair
- Worry
- Bottling up problems

Cortisol makes heart sensitive to adrenalin and encourages laying down of fatty plaque in arteries

Practical tips to decrease stress

1. Every situation has a positive side – find it!
2. Do not think of the negative side of a situation
3. Talk about your problems – Calmly
4. Walk away – relax – if too frustrated, exercise, followed by sleep

S.A.B.R.E.S.

This technique was founded by doctors at Charing Cross Hospital

- S**leep - Good undisturbed sleep, enough for you
- A**rousal - Increased awareness of when you are aroused (wound-up)
- B**reathing - Practice breathing so that good breathing comes naturally
- R**est - Listen to your body, rest before you tire. Conserve energy and simplify tasks
- E**xercise - 5 times a week, at least 20 minutes a day – Work out your frustrations
- S**elf Esteem - Believe that you can achieve anything. Positive behaviour promotes good health

How to breathe

Breathing should be done from the abdomen (Below the chest and above the stomach). You should breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth.

To test that you are breathing correctly, do the following:

1. Place your hands on your abdomen so that the fingertips are just touching
2. When you breathe in, your finger tips should part
3. When you breathe out, your finger tips should touch again

Breathing is a great stress relieve. You know that old saying “Count to 10” – It enables you to breathe and reassess your situation.

Summary

Uncontrolled stress is never good for you. You cannot allow the animal instinct inside you to take control.

Stress is a killer; it strains your heart and reduces your life. On the spur of the moment, uncontrolled stress leads to short tempers, fights and misery.

Get your stress under control now before it is too late.