

S.T.O.P. in the Name of Stress: Mindful Stress Management

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Mindful Stress Management



Slow

Deep

Breaths

Stress and our Bodies

Fight or Flight Response

Sympathetic Nervous System

Sympathetic Nervous System – Body reacts to stress by activating the HPA Axis (hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal gland)

Physical Impact

Increases heart rate, blood pressure

Increases blood sugar, triglycerides, cholesterol

Causes rapid and shallow breathing

Increases sodium and water retention

Causes muscle tension

Blood clotting and belly fat can occur

Releases cortisol into our bodies

Psychological Impact

Alert

Fearful

Rapid and irrational thinking

Impaired memory

Negativity

Frozen state

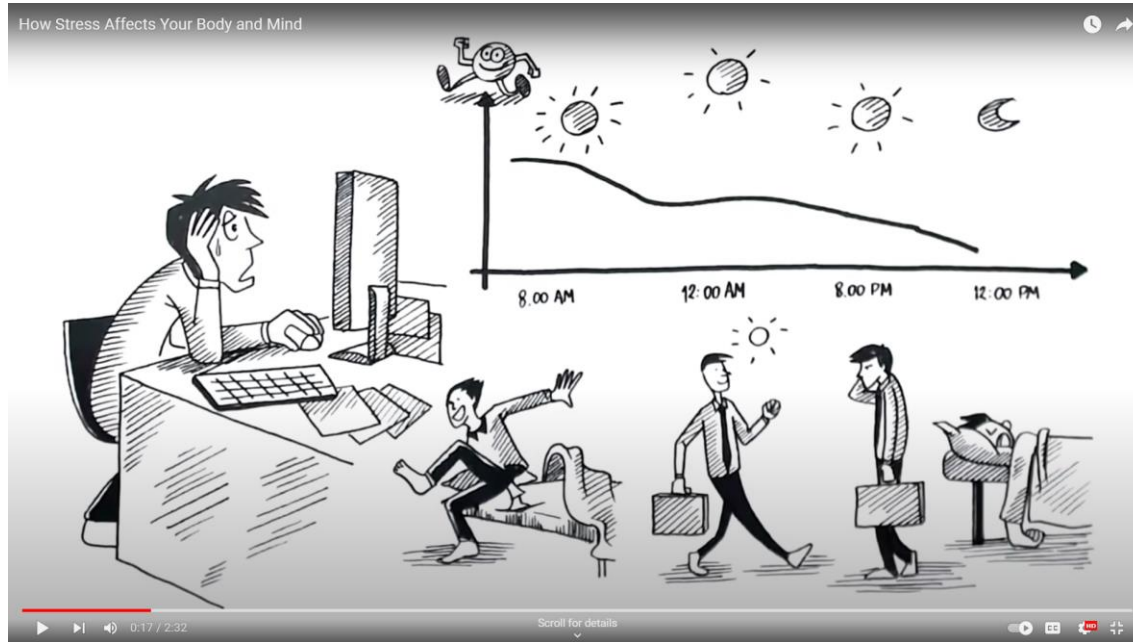
Cortisol

The Stress Hormone

Cortisol is a naturally-occurring steroid hormone that plays a key role in the body's stress response. It is often called the "Stress Hormone", because it is released at significantly higher levels when the body is reacting to stress.

Higher and more prolonged levels of cortisol in the bloodstream (such as those associated with chronic stress) have been shown to have negative effects, such as:

- * **Glucose metabolism**
- * **Insulin release**
- * **Blood sugar imbalances such as hyperglycemia**
- * Decreased bone density
- * Decreases in muscle tissue
- * Higher blood pressure
- * Impaired cognitive performance
- * Increased abdominal fat
- * Lowered immunity and inflammatory responses in the body, slowed wound healing
- * Suppressed thyroid function



How Stress Affects Your Body and Mind

What is Stress?

Stress is anything that makes a demand on you:

*** Caused by internal or external demands**

Internal thoughts/feelings: self generated pressure on oneself, perfectionism, unrealistic expectations, perceptions, helplessness, hopelessness, despair

External stresses: time pressure/deadlines for work, school or family obligations, traffic, crime, weather

*** Caused by positive or negative events**

Positive: weddings, births, graduations, pay raise, promotion, new home

Negative: finances, work, marital conflicts, health problems, death divorce

Sympathetic vs. Parasympathetic Nervous Systems in relation to our Blood Cortisol Levels

**Sympathetic – activates the Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal
response**

Parasympathetic – Produces relaxation/homeostasis

Sympathetic System is an automatic response, it reacts very quickly in producing high levels of cortisol in our systems. **(“Fight or Flight”)**

Parasympathetic System is also automatic, but in relation to controlling our cortisol levels is much slower in moving to a healthy level. **(“Rest and Digest”)**

Homeostasis: balance in level of arousal and relaxation, bringing cortisol levels back to normal.

Seeking Homeostasis

Exercise: Very effective – releases endorphins.

- Strength training exercise is one of the best exercises to reduce cortisol levels.
- People having high cortisol level should engage in conditioning or aerobic workouts to balance their stress hormone.

Stress Management: Very effective – reverses “fight or flight”

- Diaphragmatic Breathing
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Meditation
- Individual Therapy

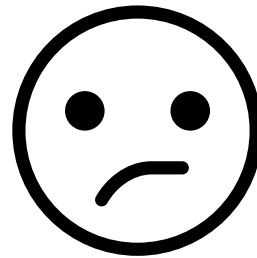
Antidepressants

Psychotherapy

Chronic Stress

- Heart disease
- Cancer
- Diabetes
- Disorders (lung, liver, digestive system)

“Good” Stress vs. “Bad” Stress



Patient Stress Identification

- Initial Evaluation
- PHQ-2 or PHQ-9
- Conversation
- Routine Check-in (ITP)

Common Stressors

- Financial problems
- Children
- Older parents
- Health
- Work
- Relationships
- Routine
- Being alone (QUARANTINE)
- Moving to a new area
- Conflict

Common Symptoms of Stress

- Physical
 - Headache
 - Fatigue
 - Stomach issues
 - Sexual issues
 - Frequent Illness
- Behavioral
 - Over and under eating
 - Alcohol or drug abuse
 - Urge to repeat actions
 - Social Withdrawal
 - Self-Criticism
- Emotional
 - Anxiety
 - Hopelessness
 - Concentration issues
 - Irritability or anger
 - Sadness or depression

Questions

- How stressful is your life right now?
(Scale of 1-10)
- How do you know when you are stressed?
- How do you handle your stress?
- How's that working for you? (Thanks Dr. Phil!)

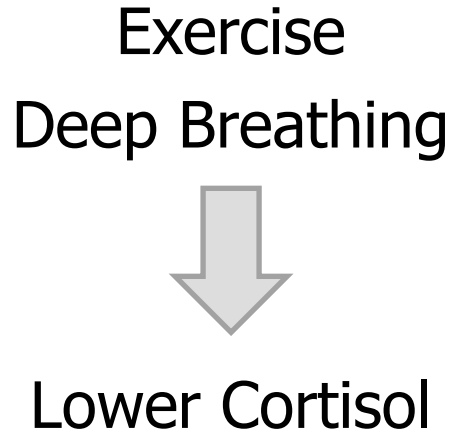
Self-care begins with "SELF"



Self-care begins with "SELF"



Count to 3...seriously?



- **S** – Stop what you're doing
- **T** – Take a deep breath (or 2 or 3)
- **O** – Observe what's happening and what you're feeling
- **P** – Proceed with an adjusted reaction

Stress Management Strategies

Relaxation Tools

Deep Breathing

- Note your stress level
- Position yourself comfortably
- Become aware of your breathing
- Breathe deeply for five minutes
- Note your stress level

Progressive Relaxation

- Note your stress level
- Position yourself comfortably
- Relax each muscle group from your toes to the top of your head
- Spend as much time as you need with each muscle group
- Note your stress level



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Stress Management Strategies Emotional Tools



Anger Management Skills – Count to 10, Breathe, Think before you act, Talk it out, Walk it off, No raised voices, etc....

Avoid – Ask yourself: Does this really affect me? Don't take on someone else's problems (if you do, don't carry them).

Adapt - Change *yourself* (can't change others). Communicate, Compromise, Negotiate

Accept – Accept things you can't change. Acceptance doesn't mean agreement. Let go of what's weighing you down.

Forgiveness – Are you struggling with forgiveness? Start practicing forgiveness (yourself or others) and letting go.

Stress Management Resources

- Phone Apps (Calm; Stop, Breathe & Think)
- [mindful.org](https://www.mindful.org)
- www.aarp.org
- www.heart.org
- Local Resources

Fight Stress With Healthy Habits

(American Heart Association)

- Talk with family and friends
- Daily physical activity
- Accept the things you cannot change
- Remember to laugh
- Give up bad habits
- Positive self-talk
- Slow down
- Get enough sleep
- Get organized
- Practice giving back
- Try not to worry

Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity to accept the
things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can,
And wisdom to know the difference.



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QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU!

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