



Stress Management

Stress Management Key Points

1. Your nervous system regulates your stress response
 - a. Sympathetic - your “fight or flight” response, increases alertness. It is the “gas pedal.”
 - b. Parasympathetic - “rest and digest,” should be in prominence most of the time, especially when you are sleeping, eating, and creating social connections. It is the “brake pedal.”

2. Types of stress
 - a. Acute - your body’s immediate reaction to new challenges, traumatic events, roller coasters.
 - b. Episodic Acute - frequent acute stress episodes, difficult to change lifestyle, may appear as a short temper or “worry-wart.”
 - c. Chronic - occurs when acute stress is not resolved and begins to increase. Stems from constant, unrelenting stressful issues. In chronic stress, your sympathetic nervous system is in overdrive.

3. Stress addiction
 - a. Multiple demands on our time and energy and have caused a neurochemical dependence on stress.
 - b. Addiction to chronic stress does not always present as stress because it is often at a constant, low level. We don’t always associate the side effects with stress because we become so accustomed to them.
 - c. Although stress can temporarily boost performance, the side effects will ultimately decrease your performance.

4. Chronic stress side effects and risks can include
 - a. Anxiety
 - b. Sleep disruption
 - c. Raised blood sugar
 - d. Impairment of memory and focus
 - e. Linked to heart disease, cancer, accidents, and autoimmune diseases





Exercises To Reduce Stress

1. Make a list of signs that you may be addicted to stress, your stressors, and where you feel it in your body. These will help you to identify what type of stress you are experiencing and what causes you stress in your life.
 - a. Examples of stress addiction signs include: thriving on tight deadlines, being a perfectionist, procrastination, being called “Type A”, complaining a lot, always being busy and never having “free” time, believing there’s a payoff in the future that will be better if you can withstand being unhappy now, suffering relationships, don’t have anyone close to you that you adore and trust, can’t remember what makes you happy or how to have fun.
 - b. Examples of stressors include: Boss, Co-workers, Traffic, An illness you have, an illness a loved one has, what you eat, what you drink, what you think, miscommunication with husband/wife/partner, kids, animals, too much on your plate
 - c. Examples of where you may feel stress include: muscle tension, neck ache, stomach and chest tightness, headache, jaw clenching, interrupted sleep..

2. Thoughts Exercise - finish the sentence.
 - a. Eating healthy _____
 - b. Exercising _____
 - c. Three words I use to describe my body are _____
 - d. My living situation is _____
 - e. I need to but am not taking action in the area of _____
 - f. The thing that stresses me out the most is _____
 - g. Managing my stress is _____
 - h. The most damaging thought I think in the day is _____

Pick one that is the most important to you. Share with a loved one or talk aloud to yourself about how you can change the perspective. For example: “Eating healthy is a burden and expensive.” Think, “It is true that I am grateful that I have enough money and support to make healthy choices. It is easy in today’s world to find healthy options.”

3. Relaxation Techniques
 - a. Mindfulness - the practice of becoming present to and mindful of what you are doing



