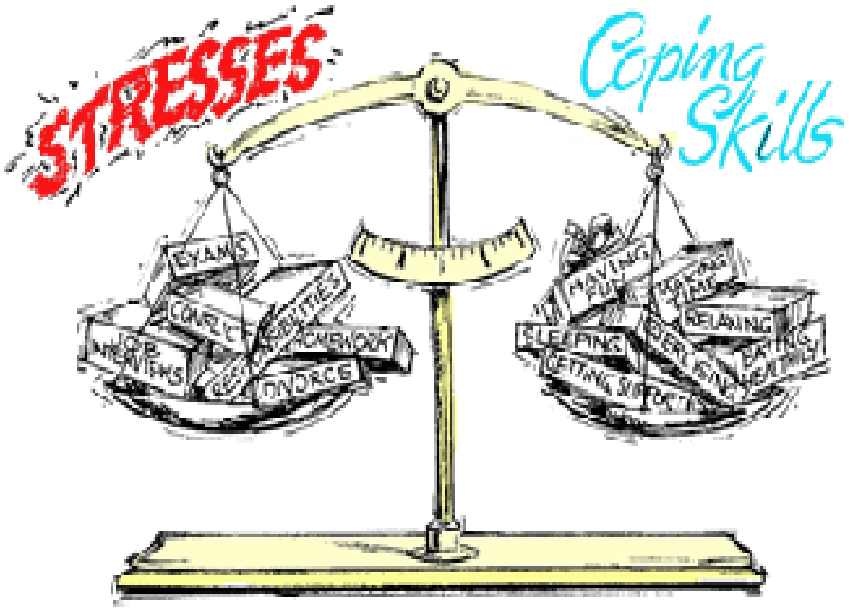
Seven Proven Steps to Treat Stress



7 PROVEN STEPS TO TREAT STRESS

1. Positive Thinking
2. Effective Communication
3. Healthy Relationships
4. Give Thanks
5. Embrace You
6. Daily Relaxation
7. Laugh Often

Workshop Goals and Objectives

Participant's Goal:

1. Focus on what you want to learn from this workshop
2. Discuss conflicts that trouble you
3. Recognize signs of individual stress

Trainer's Objectives:

1. Define stress
2. Identify individual stressors
3. Identify seven practical ways to treat stress

Important Facts about Stress

- Stress increases CRF-High levels of CRF damages hippocampus and damage to the hippocampus affects long-term memory and causes problems retaining new memory

- Stress decreases “brain-derived neurotrophic factor” or BDNF gene- produces proteins and serotonin, acts as a fertilizer for the brain, encourages brain cells to grow and protects them from stress and cell death, low levels of BDNF are associated with depression and suicide because nerve cells don’t produce certain chemicals

- Stress hormone - Cortisol can be good, but too much of it makes your brain more vulnerable to strokes, aging and stressful events

- Stress excites your brain to death by releasing too much calcium. Excess calcium causes them to fire too frequently

- Stress kills brain cells

- Prolonged exposure to stress increases your risk of heart disease, obesity, infection, anxiety, depression, and memory problems.

- Stress causes physiological, psychological, behavioral, biological and emotional problems

- Stress causes premature aging

- Stress weakens the immune system75% of all doctor visits are stress related

Important Q's & A's about Stress

Question 1:

If stress can kill us, why do we allow ourselves to be stressed?

Answer: We do not recognize the stress signals our bodies send to us.

Question 2:

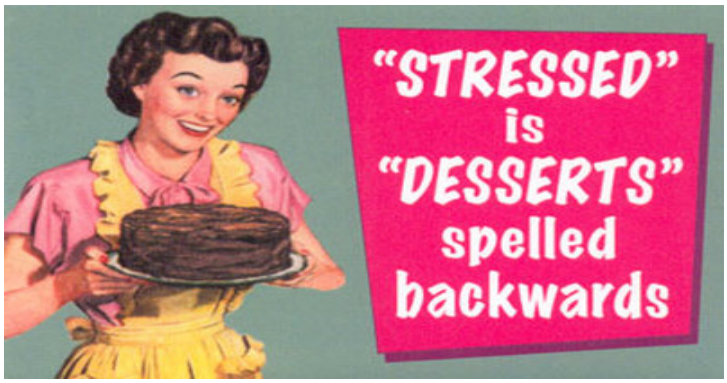
What are some stress signs our bodies send that says it is stressed?

Answer: Each body reacts differently to stress so you must observe your body in stressful situations to know when it is stressed

Question 3:

Can I learn to de-stress my body once it is already in the "fight or flight" stage?

Answer: It is never too late to prevent the body from continuing to escalate to *"fight or flight".*



Most Commonly asked Questions about Stress

What is stress?

Stress is the body and mind's response to any pressure that disrupts its normal balance. Stress expresses itself as resistance, tension, strain or frustration that throws off our physiological and psychological equilibrium, keeping us out of sync.

What causes stress?

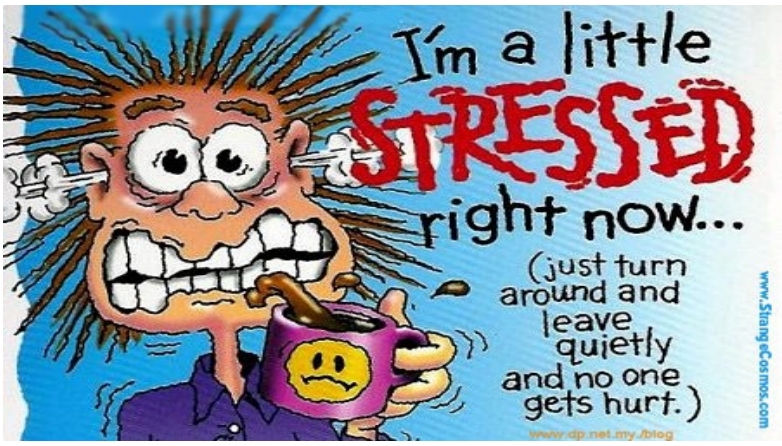
Stress is not caused by outside events. It is caused by how we react (emotionally) to everyday events.

Can you manage stress?

If we seek to manage stress, we only deal with the symptoms of what is causing the stress. It does not deal with the root cause of the problem.

How can we deal with the root cause or "underlying problem" of stress?

Learn how to deal with work related conflicts, work related pressures, personal demands, personal conflicts, inner conflicts, illnesses, and religious demands.



Top 10 Stressors in Life

1. Death of Spouse
2. Divorce
3. Childhood Trauma
4. Jail Sentence
5. Death of a Close Relative
6. Injury or Illness
7. Marriage
8. Termination from Employment
9. Marriage Reconciliation
10. Retirement

Physiological Effects of Stress

⇒ Cancer

⇒ Diabetes

⇒ Breakdown in immune system

⇒ Alcohol and substance abuse

⇒ Heart Disease

⇒ Headaches or migraines

⇒ Increased skin irritations such as eczema

⇒ Feeling tired all the time

Psychological Effects of Stress on Body

⇒ Anxiety

⇒ Depression

⇒ Panic attacks

⇒ Feeling overwhelmed

⇒ Mood swings

⇒ Irritability

⇒ Low self-esteem

⇒ Lack of interest in activities

⇒ Feelings of helplessness

Behavioral Effects of Stress

⇒ Excessive smoking

⇒ Nervous tics

⇒ Increased use of alcohol (drugs)

⇒ Increased eating

⇒ Absent mindedness

⇒ Overly aggressive

Biological Effects of Stress

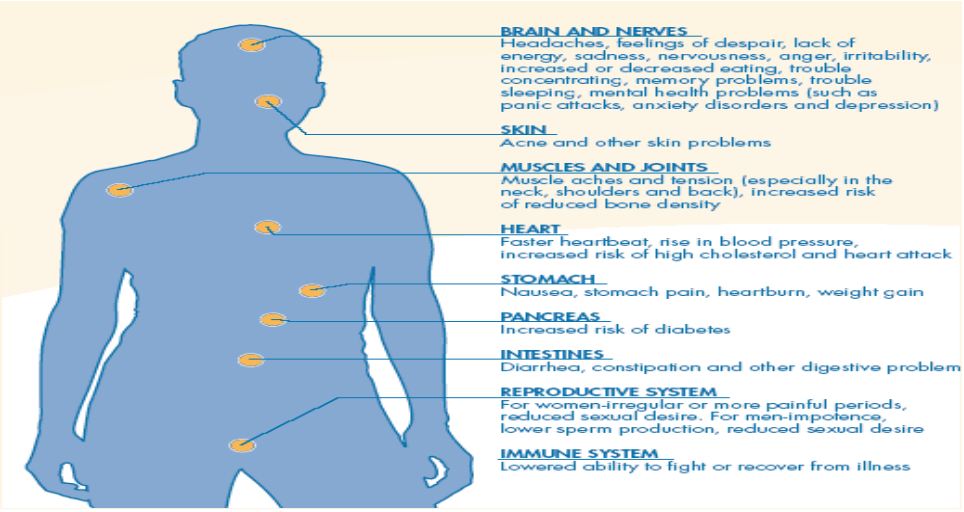
⇒ Pupils are dilated so that more light enters the eyes

⇒ Skin is constricted to limit blood loss in the event of injury

⇒ Blood sugar increased to provide body more energy

⇒ Formation of glucose from non carbohydrate substances

⇒ Body reacts in three major phases (Alarm reaction, stage of resistance and exhaustion)



Emotional Effects of Stress

⇒ Increased forgetfulness

⇒ Indecisiveness

⇒ Loss sense of humor

⇒ Increased irritability

⇒ Negative thinking

⇒ Less concentration

⇒ Constantly worried

1. Positive Thinking

You can close the windows and darken your room, and you can open the windows and let light in. It is a matter of choice. Your mind is your room. Do you darken it or do you fill it with light?

Much of stress stems from negative thinking. Oftentimes, we believe so strongly that something will happen only to find out a week later it didn't or would not happen. I made myself a promise when I am tempted to worry. I pick a day on the calendar that I will worry about that issue. On that day, I turn to my calendar, and of course there are many other things on my mind by that time. In order to treat stress, you must gain control of your thoughts because your thoughts possess power. The thoughts that you most often think tend to come true so our thoughts should be chosen carefully. If you pour your mental energy into the same thoughts or mental images day after day, they will become stronger and stronger, and would consequently affect your attitude, expectations, behavior and actions. Changing the thoughts in your mind is like inserting a cassette in the VCR of the mind.

Positive thinking is contagious. People around you pick up your mental moods and are affected accordingly. Think of someone when they walk into the room, you know whether they are in a good or bad mood. We all have problems. There are times when things happen that throw us all off balance, but we need to monitor those times to be certain it has not become a part of our character. People automatically gravitate toward positive people because their positive attitude gives off positive energy.

Below are ways to help you think more positively:

- Choose positive words while thinking and talking such as “I can, I will, I am able, it is possible, it can be done”
- Allow only feelings of strength and success into your awareness
- Refuse to dwell on negative thoughts and if you have them- redirect them to specific positive thoughts/actions
- Read inspiring quotes, books, stories daily
- Watch movies that make you feel happy or inspire you
- Minimize the time you listen to news or read newspaper
- Associate yourself with positive people
- Do some activities that make you feel good (dancing singing, writing, drawing)

Remember: A positive mind anticipates happiness, joy, health and a successful outcome of every situation and action. Whatever the mind expects, it finds.

2. Effective Communication

***"Communication is really all anyone ever gets paid for ultimately...and if you cannot effectively communicate...you will PAY...not get paid..." --* Doug Firebaugh**

Effective communication is important in every aspect of our lives because once we learn how to effectively communicate we will have less internal and external conflicts. Effective communication helps us to: avoid misunderstandings at work, express what needs to be expressed, and allows for mutual understanding. How many times have you said something to someone and they heard one thing, but that's not how you meant it? People misunderstand one another all the time and it is often these misunderstandings that lead to high levels of stress. Learning how to better convey and organize your thoughts will help build relationships and ties with your bosses, colleagues, parents, friends, and significant others.

There are several things you should do to ensure you have effective communication. First, feel what you want the other person to feel. If you want the other person to feel enthusiastic, you should feel the enthusiasm first. Second, people listen in different ways. Use different ways and examples to get your point across. Some people learn from stories, others learn from descriptions and others from visuals. Talk so everyone can understand. Then take a minute to ask the listener if he/she understood your point. Third, when someone else is talking, before responding-consider how your response will sound. This means to think before responding because once it is said, it can not be taken back. Fourth, let people disagree with you. If people don't feel like they can disagree with you, they won't talk to you. They may even avoid holding conversations with you. Let people honestly voice their opinions. Lastly, talk about things that matter to the other person. People want to talk about themselves and their lives. If you talk about things that matter to other people, they will want to listen.

Below are barriers to effective communication. You should try at best to eliminate these barriers when communicating with others.

- Language-choose your words carefully when conveying a message
- Defensiveness-if you are defensive when someone is explaining something, you will not be able to effectively communicate
- Body language-your body should be in a relaxed state. Be mindful of your folded arms or how you are standing
- Selective hearing-you should hear all of what the person is conveying and not just what you want to hear
- Power struggles-if you are trying to out talk or out do the person you are talking to, you will not communicate
- Assumptions-you cannot assume anything about the other person or how he/she is thinking
- Distrusted source-when you are talking to someone you don't trust, you should talk about subjects and ideas that are factual
- Avoid personal talk

By worrying less about your words and actions, you will have more peace of mind. More peace of mind means you will have less stress. When you communicate, you want to be sure you are saying what you think you said.

3. Healthy Relationships

"No man is worth your tears, but once you find one that is, he won't make you cry"

It is through relationships and interactions with others that our lives have meaning. We have a basic need for interacting with other people. The quality of our personal connections has a great impact on our emotional and physical health. Research has shown that having supportive relationships has a greater impact on health than diet, exercise, stress, smoking, drugs, and even genetics (Northwestern Health Science University). Some medical doctors say that our survival depends on the healing power of love, intimacy, and relationships. Healthy relationships do the following: help you to maintain a positive outlook about life, fight feelings of anxiety, anger, and depression, maintain a level of support, and provide you with another point-of –view, and help you to see yourself and others as an essential part of life.

If this is true, why then do our biggest stressors come from interacting with other people? People make us angry, upset, frustrated, hurt our feelings, and disappoint us. Since we need these people in our lives and they need us in their lives, we must find a way to eliminate the stressful conditions in relationships and develop healthy connections.

How do you know if you're in an unhealthy relationship**?** If you are asking yourself this question, you are probably in an unhealthy relationship. Unhealthy relationships rob you of your energy, time, and finances. Unhealthy relationships are the most challenging ones to end because we are often drawn to that person out of our personal need or out of their personal need. Whatever the reason, we find it difficult to let go of them. When we are in an unhealthy relationship, we can never do anything right for the person. They are never happy. And anytime there is a problem, you know it's your fault. If you were perfect, this would be the perfect relationship. Reality is you are not perfect, and will never be perfect. In an unhealthy relationship, you are always left feeling like you can do more. And usually you always do more and more and more. Eventually you become so stressed that it affects your physical appearance and/or body.

Qualities of an Unhealthy Relationship

- Mutual Respect: Do your friends listen when you say you are uncomfortable doing something or do they keep pushing you to do it? Respect is when each person values who the other is and understands-and would never challenge the other person's boundaries.
- Trust: Without trust there is *no* healthy relationship. Trust is you can tell a person something in secret without fear of them sharing it.
- Honesty: Believing the person will be truthful. Pull back the covers of a dishonest person and you find more critters.
- Support: Whatever the role in a healthy relationship your friend knows just which hat to wear.
- Fairness: Give and take must exist. Take turns doing what we both like. The relationship should not be a power struggle where one person gets his way all of the time.
- Be yourself: You should not feel like you are losing out on being yourself. You should still have your own life or identity. Don't pretend to like something you don't.
- Good communication: Speak openly and honestly about how you truly feel. Never keep a feeling bottled up inside.

Qualities of Healthy Relationships

- **Be responsible for you own happiness:** Take charge of your life. If you are unhappy in a relationship, "*change the person you're with or change the person you're with".*

- **Take the other person's point-of-view sometimes**: Don't be always interested in being "right" You may have to right at a red light, but if you see someone running it and you go on because you have the right. You may be right-**DEAD RIGHT**!

- **Approach every relationship as a learning experience**: Every one who we allow into our lives has something to teach us.

- **Be truthful to yourself and your friend/partner:** Lies create a disconnect in the relationship.

- **Forgive one another**: Forgiveness is a decision to let go of the past and focus on the present. When you forgive someone, you don't forgive them to constantly remind them that you forgave them.

- **Discuss your expectations**: Tell them who you are, your likes and dislikes, your attitude toward money, savings, love, intimacy, affection, affirmation, and support.

- **Be Responsible**: Own up to your actions. There is nothing worse than being with someone who never takes responsibility for his/her behavior. If you were rude to your friend, tell them so.

- **Show appreciation for your friend**: Say and do things that show your friend how much you appreciate him/her.

- **Spend quality time together**: Do something together where you turn off your cell phones, ignore everything and everybody except who you are with.

- **Laugh together:** Laughter begins great relationships. Laughing establishes a connection. Life is serious enough.

Give Thanks

"To the generous mind the heaviest debt is that of gratitude, when it is not in our power to repay it. " **Benjamin Franklin**

Thank you. It's simple, right? These two words are so commonplace that they should have lost their impact. The real truth is that these two words can have serious impact. From your boss to volunteers and all the way to your largest corporate donor, saying thank you is a great way to start, grow and keep relationships. But while we may acknowledge gratitude's many benefits, it still can be difficult to sustain. So many of us are trained to notice what is broken, undone or lacking in our lives. And for gratitude to meet its full healing potential in our lives, it needs to become more than just a Thanksgiving word. We have to learn a new way of looking at things, a new habit. And that can take some time.

One of the first things children are taught is to say please and thank you. So why is then these two words are said less among adults? Why is it we think it is so important for children say and do but not for adults? The truth is-it is just as important if not more for adults to say thank you. Everyone wants to be appreciated. Research says people who express gratitude for their lives and relationships are more likely to enjoy a satisfying and fulfilling life. An attitude of gratitude recognizes.

Remember that gratitude isn't a blindly optimistic approach in which the bad things in life are whitewashed or ignored. It's more a matter of where we put our focus and attention. Pain and injustice exist in this world, but when we focus on the gifts of life, we gain a feeling of well-being. Gratitude balances us and gives us hope.

10 Ways to Show you are Grateful!

1. Create a gratitude ritual-close your eyes and take a coupe of minutes to think of a couple of people you are grateful for.
2. Send a thank you note - (email) thanking the person for the specific thing he/she did.
3. Give a free hug-showing affection and gratitude brings us closer together.
4. Give thanks for life itself!
5. Do something for someone not expecting anything in return.
6. Give a little gift. It doesn’t have to be fancy or expensive.
7. Acknowledge them publicly.
8. Say thanks when things aren’t going well in your life.
9. Surprise someone with a kind word.
10. Remember an important date of someone and let you know you thought of them.

35 Ideas to Express Gratitude

1. Frame a picture of you with them.

2. Lotions or bath oils.

3. Journal. A nice journal can be beautiful. It's one of my favorite gifts.

4. Gourmet coffee with a personalized mug

5. A nice pen.

6. Photo album or scrapbook, with memories already included.

7. Homemade cookies or brownies you bake yourself.

8. Spice gift basket. Get some small jars and fill them with exotic spices.

9. Gift certificate for the person's favorite hobby store.

10. A burned CD with all the person's favorite songs.

11. A letter, hand-written on nice paper, from you. Make it heart-felt, with all the reasons you appreciate the person.

12. A small plant.

13. A movie pass and a small container of gourmet popcorn kernels.

14. Soup mixes or cookie mixes in nice clear jars.

15. Personalized T-shirt.

16. Stationery and stamps.

17. "IOU" booklets, with whatever services you are willing to perform. (Obviously only good for someone you know really well).

18. Knit or crochet something for someone (*I can't do this, but I know people who can).*

19. An "I appreciate you because" jar. Fill a nice jar with slips of different colored paper, each with a reason you appreciate (or love) someone.

20. Jams and jellies.

21. Good bread (home-made works great).

22. Books (my favorite).

23. Blank recipe books … write some of your favorite recipes on the first few pages.

24. A keepsake DVD with a video of special moments edited (and captioned) by you. A slideshow presentation with music burned on a DVD works too.

25. Create your own art (and put it on nice stationery or in a frame). By "art", I mean a sketch, painting, poem, short story, whatever.

26. Scented candles.

27. Make-up set.

28. Shaving kit.

29. Box of good tea and a teacup.

30. Box of Girl Scout cookies.

31. Favorite dessert.

32. A trinket from vacation spot.

34. A "Blue Mountain Art" Poem magnet.

35. A special thank you card from "card creations".

5. Embrace You

"We are so accustomed to disguise ourselves to others that in the end we become disguised to ourselves." **~ François Duc de La Rochefoucauld**

Most of us are guilty at some point of doing things that causes us discomfort because we want to fit in, don't want to be singled out as "different," don't want others to think bad about us, and we want to be seen as cool or normal. It is this type of thinking that has caused us to reject who we are (our authentic selves) and embrace who we are not (our fictitious selves). When we reject ourselves, we are doing much more than saying, "I don't like who I am." We are saying, "I like who you are better than I like who I am. Therefore, I trust your thoughts, feelings, and beliefs more than my own." Rejecting yourself does several things: It makes you more dependent on others, creates a "never enough" attitude in you, lowers your self-confidence, constantly reminds you of your past failures or imperfections, strips you of your ability to enjoy life, and adds stress to your life.

Whitney Houston says in her song, "The Greatest Love of All" that she found the greatest love of all-inside. The reasons so many are having difficulty accepting others as they are because they reject themselves. You can't accept someone else, as they are until you fully embrace who you are.

When you don't embrace yourself, everyone knows it. You are the first to point out a piece of hair that will never do right, how much weight you continue to gain/lose, imperfections on your body, or your incompetence on your job. When you do this, people see that you are unhappy with whom you are. If you don't embrace yourself, there is no one who will do it for you.

Embracing yourself allows you to trust and hear your inner voice and be at peace with yourself. When you do that, you encourage others to embrace themselves and trust their inner voice. One of our biggest issues with embracing ourselves is our past. We should look back at the past without regret. If we do, we will see the lessons that brought us to our current strength, courage and wisdom. We will also see that without those experiences, we would not be who or where we are today.

As I travel on life's journey, and separate the clutter from the truth I realize in order to live, love, and enjoy life, I have to embrace myself. I had to accept my individuality, my differences, and my own self-worth. I had to accept I am important to the universe. ***I matter-what I think matters-the decisions I make matter.***

I encourage you on your journey to a stress-free life to embrace yourself and allow yourself to shine. I'm still discovering and unwrapping pieces of myself, much like presents on Christmas morning, and what I'm finding is despite my faults and shortcomings, I'm nothing like the person that some people in my past tried to make me think I am. I consider myself a **"work-in-progress"**. I've made my share of mistakes and at times may not have lived up to my true potential as a human being. Regardless of the struggles you have had, you have made it to a place now where you are able to make different choices. Be thankful and say like Dr. Maya Angelo, **"I wouldn't take nothing for my journey now."**

10 Ways to Accept Yourself

1. Positive self talk. Concentrate daily on positive things about yourself and what you like most.

2. Remind yourself that everyone has positives and negatives.

3. Find at least one thing you like about yourself and focus on it. Accentuate it and play it up.

4. End the war between the “judging you” and the human being you are. Make peace with your shortcomings. You can learn to do better.

5. Be patient and tolerant with yourself. You’re not done learning.

6. If you believe in a higher power, imagine that loving higher power seeing you with your flaws and still loving you unconditionally.

7. Pamper yourself without overspending. Show yourself that you love you.

8. Accept that you like the things you like, and that’s what makes you unique.

9. Think of the worst thing about yourself, in your eyes. Forgive yourself for that thing.

10. Think of someone you love unconditionally. Do you love them, even with their flaws? Do you even love their flaws? Why can’t you offer yourself that same love?

6. Daily Relaxation

"Show me a worrying person and I will show you a person who does not know how to relax." Albert E. Cliffe

Daily Relaxation is important because it contributes to the overall health of your mind, body and soul. Some benefits of relaxation include: ameliorates the levels of epinephrine and nor-epinephrine in the body, reduces the number of panic attacks, increases self-healing, brain is able to recharge, and inner connection. Dealing with the hustle and bustle of everyday life adds to our stress level. Whether it is trying to make the staff meeting and there is an accident that is causing a thirty minute wait, once you get to the staff meeting you discover you are being transferred to a new location, working 12-14 hour days, or meeting a deadline. It all adds to our stress level. Stress is now considered a part of our daily lives so why isn't daily relaxation?

Many think when they hear the word relaxation; there should be a bed, a couch, a yoga pose etc. The truth is relaxation can occur at any time or anyplace. Taking a break from the computer, going for a walk outside, inhaling and exhaling for a couple of minutes, reading a humorous story, a brief phone call to a friend, or hearing/sharing an uplifting story, listen to your favorite song, read your favorite poem, quote, blow bubbles, smell some flowers, watch the clouds, do five minutes of exercise. These all are ways to relax. You can do any of these at a red light, in your office, or at home to help you relax. It doesn't matter what type of relaxation you use so long as it is successful and leads to a sense of peacefulness.

7. Laugh Often

"From the moment I picked up your book until I laid it down, I was convulsed with laughter. Some day I intend reading it" - **Groucho Marx**

Every person laughs several times a day for different reasons - after hearing a joke, watching a comedy movie or reading a comic book. Humor is one of the important senses that a human being is blessed with. Laughing expresses a feeling of happiness. Humor and laughter are contagious and they cause a cumulative effect of amusement and joy. In addition, they offer a number of positive health benefits. Children tend to laugh an average of 400 times a day. For adults however, it is a totally different story. A recent laughter study shows that: 64 % of people smile less than 20 times a day at home. 72 % smile less than 20 times a day at work. The International Congress of humor found that laughter is down 66 - 82% worldwide of what it was in the 1950's. In the 1950's people laughed on the average 18 minutes a day. Today, we are lucky if we average between 4-6 minutes a day. As a matter of fact, a recent study found that people laugh 6 more times in the presence of one person and 30 more times in a group of people. We are more comfortable when we see others laughing.

When was the last time you had a belly laugh, the kind that hurts your stomach when you are done laughing? Laughing releases tension and anxiety and lifts the spirit.

Effects of Laughter on your Health

⇒ Exercise-laughter is a form of mild exercise. It fills the lungs with oxygen similar to aerobic exercise, and it exercises the abdominal muscles

⇒ Reduces Stress-When stress and anxiety are reduced, you relax and take life less seriously

⇒ Lowers High Blood Pressure

⇒ Helps overcome depression

⇒ Relaxes your body-Laughter eases muscle tension and reduces psychological stress

⇒ Boost Immune System-Laughter boosts immune systems' function. It increases health and well-being.

⇒ Laughter is contagious-you spread joy to all who see you laughing

⇒ Laughter motivates a person as it releases positive energy

Just For Laughs

Memo to all Staff:

In order to assure the highest levels of quality work and productivity from our Staff, it will be the policy of management to keep all Staff well trained through our programs of on-going Professional Development. This training will be Special High Intensity Training (S.H.I.T.). We are trying to give our Staff more S.H.I.T. than anyone else.

If you feel that you do not receive your share of S.H.I.T. during training, please see your specific manager. You will be immediately placed at the top of the S.H.I.T. list. Our managers are especially skilled at seeing that you get all the S.H.I.T. you can handle. Staff who do not take the Manager's S.H.I.T. will be placed on the Departmental Educational Evaluation Program better known as the (D.E.E.P. S.H.I.T.) list. Those who fail to take D.E.E.P. S.H.I.T. training seriously will have to go to Educational Attitude Training (E.A.T. S.H.I.T.).

Since many of you took S.H.I.T. from your previous employment, you don't have to take S.H.I.T. anymore. This is due to the fact that you are full of S.H.I.T. If you are full of S.H.I.T. you may be interested mentoring your colleagues who have little or no S.H.I.T. If you are interested, your name will be added to our official **B**asic **U**nderstanding **L**ecture **L**ist of **S**pecial **H**igh **I**ntensity **T**raining (B.U.L.L. S.H.I.T.)

For employees who are considering positions in management, we will refer you to the Department of **M**anagerial **O**perational **R**esearch **E**ducation **S**pecial **H**igh **I**ntensity **T**raining (M.O.R.E. S.H.I.T.). This course emphasizes how to manage M.O.R.E. S.H.I.T.

If you have further questions, please direct them to our **H**ead **O**f **T**raining, **S**pecial **H**igh **I**ntensity **T**raining (H.O.T. S.H.I.T.).

Thank you,

Boss **I**n **G**eneral,
Special **H**igh **I**ntensity **T**eaching
(B.I.G. S.H.I.T.)

100 Ways to Treat Stress

1. Prepare for the morning the night before
3. Avoid tight fitting clothes
4. Avoid relying on chemical aids
5. Set appointments ahead
6. Don't rely on your memory ... write it down
7. Practice preventive maintenance
8. Make duplicate keys
9. Say "no" more often
10. Set priorities in your life
11. Avoid negative people
12. Use time wisely
13. Simplify meal times
14. Always make copies of important papers
15. Anticipate your needs
16. Repair anything that doesn't work properly
17. Ask for help with the jobs you dislike
18. Break large tasks into bite size portions
19. Look at problems as challenges
20. Look at challenges differently
21. Unclutter your life
22. Smile
23. Be prepared for rain
24. Tickle a baby
25. Pet a friendly dog/cat
26. Don't know all the answers
27. Look for a silver lining
28. Say something nice to someone
30. Walk in the rain
31. Schedule play time into every day
32. Take a bubble bath
33. Be aware of the decisions you make
34. Believe in yourself
35. Stop saying negative things to yourself
36. Visualize yourself winning
37. Develop your sense of humor
38. Stop thinking tomorrow will be a better today
39. Have goals for yourself
40. Dance a jig
41. Say "hello" to a stranger
42. Ask a friend for a hug

43. Look up at the stars
44. Practice breathing slowly
45. Learn to whistle a tune
46. Read a poem
47. Listen to a symphony
48. Watch a ballet
49. Read a story curled up in bed
50. Do a brand new thing
51. Stop a bad habit
52. Buy yourself a flower
53. Take time to small the flowers
54. Find support from others
55. Ask someone to be your "vent-partner"
56. Do it today
57. Work at being cheerful and optimistic
58. Put safety first
59. Do everything in moderation
60. Pay attention to your appearance
61. Strive for excellence NOT perfection
62. Stretch your limits a little each day
63. Look at a work of art
64. Hum a jingle
65. Maintain your weight
66. Plant a tree
67. Feed the birds
68. Practice grace under pressure
69. Stand up and stretch
70. Always have a plan "B"
71. Learn a new doodle
72. Memorize a joke
73. Be responsible for your feelings
74. Learn to meet your own needs
75. Become a better listener
76. Know your limitations and let others know them too
77. Tell someone to have a good day in pig Latin
78. Throw a paper airplane
79. Exercise every day
80. Learn the words to a new song
81. Get to work early
82. Clean out one closet
83. Play patty cake with a toddler
84. Go on a picnic
85. Take a different route to work

86. Leave work early (with permission)
87. Put air freshener in your car
88. Watch a movie and eat popcorn
89. Write a note to a far away friend
90. Go to a ball game and scream
91. Cook a meal and eat it by candlelight
92. Recognize the importance of unconditional love
93. Remember that stress is an attitude
94. Keep a journal
96. Remember you always have options
97. Have a support network of people, places and things
98. Quit trying to fix other people
99. Get enough sleep
100. Talk less and listen more

78
EAST
Stressed Out
EXPRESS
78
WEST
Sleep Deprived
LIVING FOR
WEEKENDS
AND HOLIDAYS

10 Commandments for a Stress-Free Life

1. **Thou shall not try to be all things to all people:**
   Trying to be all things to all people may seem like a great way to cast a wide-net. But really, it's a way to turn people off. Being everything is equivalent in most people's minds as being nothing.

2. **Thou shall not be perfect or try to be:**
   Lose the need to get everything done ***"perfect."***
   Know that it's far better to accomplish a task at 85% perfection than procrastinate and wait for 100% perfection

3. **Thou shall sometimes leave things undone:**
   Overcoming that tyranny of the urgent and focusing instead on those things that are truly important is one sure way to propel us on our way toward a stress-free life. The way to overcome this problem is to leave some things undone. And that is especially hard for those of us who may have perfectionist tendencies and are driven to excel. We want to get it all done.

4. **Thou shall not spread thyself too thin:**
   You really cannot be the best at everything that you want. It is better to be known for a little of something than a lot of nothing. Don't try to do it all. Find a couple of things and stick to those.

5. **Thou shall learn to say no:**
   The bottom line here is that there are times when you simply have too much going on to stay productive. In order to keep moving towards your goals you need to know when to say no and when to push things off your plate.

6. Thou shall schedule time for thyself:

If you have trouble finding time to relax, put it in your schedule. Give yourself one hour on certain days to do an activity you truly enjoy. Work on a hobby, do some exercise, go for a walk, or read a book. This will help you renew your energy and concentration.

7. Thou shall switch thyself off and do nothing on a regular basis:

Feeling stressed and unfocused? Try doing nothing. Or rather, try sitting in a quiet room thinking about nothing for at least 20 minutes, twice a day.

8. Thou shall not even feel guilty when doing nothing or when saying no:

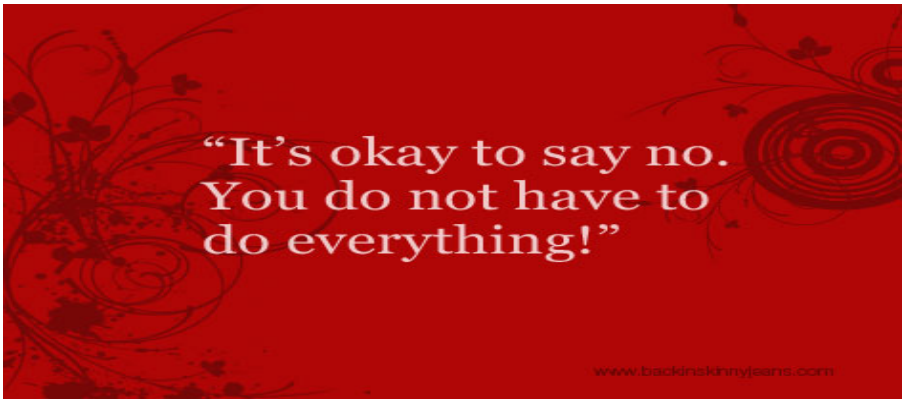
All or nothing is the reasons so many are stressed. Give what you can and know that in that percent you will give your best. Giving your all sometimes requires you to be unrealistic and creates stress.

9. Thou shall be boring, untidy, inelegant, and unattractive at times:

You don't have to look and feel your best every single day. Be bold and love the skin you're in right now-crooked nose, warts, corns, receding hairline, wrinkles, sags, bulges and all. Appreciate your natural beauty.

10. You shall not be your own enemy. But, be your own best friend:

Far too often, we are quick as a whip to complain when we feel we did something wrong, yet we are not as quick to lavish praise. Learn to praise yourself when you do a good job, and when you make a mistake-tell yourself its ok.


"It's okay to say no.
You do not have to
do everything!"
www.backinskinnyjeans.com

Namaste

"The life of inner peace, being harmonious and without stress is the easiest type of existence." **Norman Vincent Peale**

"Life is a journey and an experience." We have all heard that before haven't we? Well, that is true, it is a journey and we have the opportunity to make it great or mediocre. It is an experience because through our experiences, we learn how to better care for ourselves and those we love. As we journey through life, problems continue to arise in our personal and professional lives and demands are continually placed on us. Everyday we're expected to do more and more with less and less – less resources, less energy and less time.

Let's face it. There will be some things that happen in which we have little or no control that may cause stress. Yet, there is much that happens that we can control. It is this control that allows us to recognize stress, its triggers, and quickly implement a plan to treat it. Ultimately, it is not what is expected of us that creates the stress. It is how we react to what is expected of us that creates the stress. It is the demands that we place on ourselves that causes imbalance. It is the inability to say no to another project, the inability to control our negative thoughts, the inability to acknowledge the signs our bodies send to us when it needs to rest, the inability to end relationships that strip us of our identities, the inability to avoid conversations, comments, and actions that create stress in our lives, and the inability to make a commitment to ourselves that we are responsible for this body and will take care of it.

If we do not take care of our bodies, it is only a matter of time where our bodies will not take care of us. This is the beginning of stress. Our body and our mind talk to us through stress. It says "I need more time to rest/relax, I need more exercise, I need less fried foods, I need a vacation, I need a day off, I need to think more positive, and I need to start a health plan." We have said or thought all of this. Yet, many of us fail to make the connection of stress and illness.
I have heard near death stories where people are forced to change their way of life. From that point, they seemed to be able to listen to their bodies.

For years, our bodies have been talking to us, but we turn a deaf ear because we don't see an outward manifestation that there is a real danger. I ask you what will it take for you to change your lifestyle today? "What will it take for stress to do to you to get you to understand that stress can and if left untreated will kill you.

Starting today, choose to take control of your life. Recognize your stress triggers and be willing to treat them immediately. You only have one life, one mind, one body, and one chance to keep them all.

Best Wishes to you as you embark upon a stress free life!

Dora J Wallace