



"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has."

MARGARET MEAD

Stress Management

July 2008 from

www.facesva.org/pdf/articles/stress_management_jul2008.pdf

Stress can be defined as excessive demands placed on the body that causes an interference with normal activity. Stress is not an actual event. Events, such as divorce, work related problems, family illness or buying a new home, are called stressors.

Your response to those situations is the actual stress.

Stress can be both positive and negative. Eustress, or positive stress, helps generate good feelings and energy. Distress, or negative stress, makes people suffer both emotionally and physically.

Signs of Stress

Our bodies respond to stress in a physical way. In prehistoric times, managing stress was a matter of survival. Fighting off the "saber tooth tiger" or hunting for food required bodies that responded quickly and could cope well with new challenges.

Today, stress has shifted from survival skills to pressures at work, home, career goals, etc. However, our bodies still prepare for action through a series of physical changes that stimulate hormones and prepare the body for the "fight or flight" reaction needed for survival by prehistoric man. Because our body is not able to use up these chemicals in a physical fight with the boss or in rush hour traffic they may build up over time and cause severe physical consequences.

Stress can affect the body in several ways:

The Body's Reaction

- Fatigue
- Migraines
- Upset stomach
- Heartburn
- Muscle aches
- Dry mouth
- Shortness of breath

- Grinding teeth
- Nervous tics
- Restlessness

The Mind's Reaction

- Mind full of worry
- Confusion-disoriented
- Lose sense of humor
- Lose interest in hobbies
- Jealous of others
- Daydreaming
- Nightmares
- Depression
- Boredom
- Easily Angered

Behavioral Reaction

- Eat more
- Increase alcohol
- Procrastinate
- Work more
- Perfectionist
- Increase work load
- Lose interest in sex
- Drink more coffee/tea

... and many more!

Stress is implicated in 50-80% of all illnesses!

Look at the things in life that are causing you stress. Determine if you can change what is happening or if you can find a different way of looking at things in order to feel less stress.

Sometimes more information about a situation will change the perspective. Accept that it is not possible to change others, but you can influence opinions with respectful persistence.

LEARN TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF, PRACTICE HEALTHLY LIVING, FIND WAYS TO RELAX AND ENJOY LIFE. TAKE ONE DAY AT A TIME.