



Stress

Relieving Mantra

SPECIAL REPORT



Say Goodbye to Stress
Anxiety, and Tension by Incorporating
Healthier Lifestyle Changes in Your Life!



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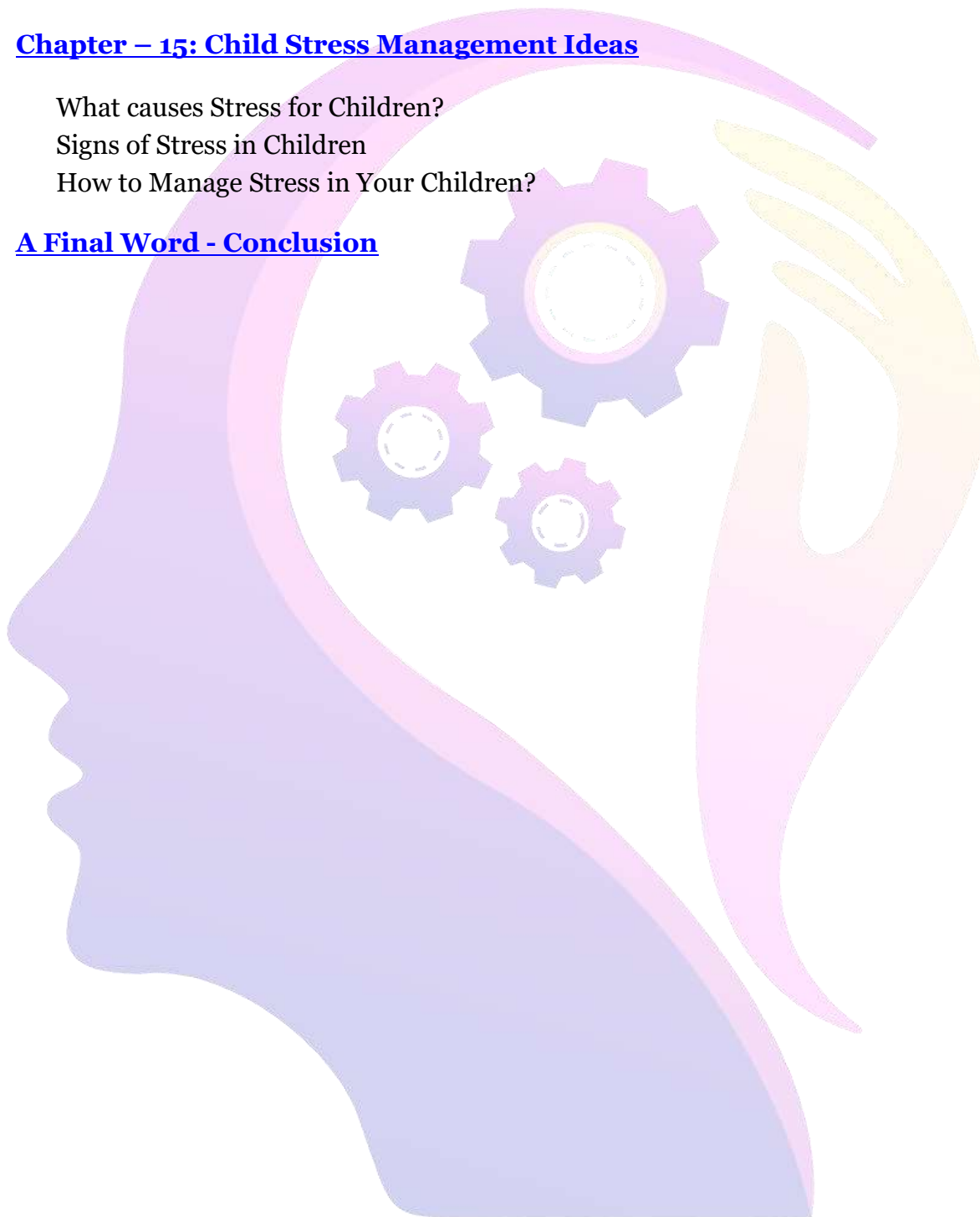


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Introduction

In today's fast-paced modern world, we are experiencing stress in our everyday lives. Stress is a fact of life, wherever you are or whatever you are doing. You cannot avoid stress, but you can learn to manage it so it doesn't manage you.

Stress is caused by changes. Any change in life including enrolling in college, getting married, changing jobs or illness are frequent causes of stress. Keep in mind that changes that cause stress can also benefit you. Moving away from home to attend college, for example, creates personal-development opportunities—new challenges, friends, and living arrangements. That is why it's important to know yourself and carefully consider the causes of stress.

Learning to do this takes time, and although you cannot avoid stress, the good news is that you can minimize the harmful effects of stress, such as depression or hypertension. The key is to develop an awareness of how you interpret, and react to, circumstances. This awareness will help you develop coping techniques for managing stress.

Inside this guide, we will provide you some basic information on stress and simple recommended techniques to effectively manage and deal with stress. You'll learn how to combat stress in your daily life and prevent it from becoming a serious medical problem for your health and well-being.

The book focuses on what stress is, what causes it, and most importantly what you can do to manage your stress. It will provide you a detailed idea about how to identify your sources of stress, understand the stress and its root cause along with the ability to generate alternative solutions, and select the best solutions for your physical, mental and social well-being.

Let's embark on your stress management journey and get ready to say goodbye to troubled days in your life.



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Chapter 1



Stress – An Overview



Stress — just the word may be enough to set your nerves on edge. Everyone feels stressed from time to time. Stress is a common part of life but sometimes we don't recognize its effects on us.

Have you ever found yourself in a situation where your to-do list seems endless, deadlines are fast approaching and you find yourself saying 'Eek! I feel stressed!'? But what is stress really, and how does it affect us? Well, let's find out...

1.1 What is 'Stress'?

Stress can be defined as the brain's response to any demand. Many things can trigger this response, including change. Changes can be positive or negative, as well as real or perceived. They may be recurring, short-term, or long-term and may include things like commuting to and from school or work every day, traveling for a yearly vacation, or moving to another home.



Changes can be mild and relatively harmless, such as winning a race, watching a scary movie, or riding a rollercoaster. Some changes are major, such as marriage or divorce,



serious illness, or a car accident. Other changes are extreme, such as exposure to violence, and can lead to traumatic stress reactions.

Stress impacts people in different ways and can have both physical and emotional effects. Everyone feels stressed from time to time. Not all stress is bad. All animals have a stress response, and it can be life-saving. Some people thrive on stress and even need it to get things done. When the term 'stress' is used in a clinical sense, it refers to a situation that causes discomfort and distress for a person and can lead to other mental health problems, such as anxiety and depression.

Therefore, stress can be a good thing but too much of a good thing can become unhealthy.

Stress can result from external factors (e.g., events, environment) or from internal factors (e.g., expectations, attitudes, feelings).



Stress often occurs in response to situations that are perceived as being difficult to handle or threatening. Common causes for stress (called stressors) include illness, injury, fear, and anxiety.



Each person reacts to stress differently. A healthy response to stress begins quickly; is appropriate in degree and in length; and can improve function, motivation, and productivity.

1.2 Stress—a good thing or a bad thing?

Feeling stressed can feel perfectly normal, especially during exam time. You might notice that sometimes being stressed-out motivates you to focus on your work, yet at other times, you feel incredibly overwhelmed and can't concentrate on anything. While stress affects everyone in different ways, there are two major types of stress: stress that's beneficial and motivating — good stress — and stress that causes anxiety and even health problems — bad stress.



In general, good stress is short-term and pushes you to accomplish greater things. In these situations, you tend to have a lot of control over the outcome and the stress can motivate you. Bad stress can be short-term or long-term. Bad stress is often accompanied by feelings of helplessness because you don't have a lot of control over what's happening and you may begin to feel compressed or trapped.



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Chapter 2



Types of Stress



Stress is a feeling that people have when they are struggling to cope with challenges related to finances, work, relationships, environment, and other situations. Moreover, stress is felt when an individual perceives a real or imagined challenge or threat to their well-being. People often use the word stress interchangeably with anxiety, feeling anxious, fearful, nervous, overwhelmed, panic, or stressed-out.



The body is an intelligent operating system, but the body cannot determine the difference between the life-threatening external threat from imagined or perceived non-life threatening stressors. The body reacts the same either way.

Stress management can be complicated because of the different types of stress. Therefore, they require different levels of treatment interventions, management, and psychological treatment modalities due to the nature of the person's environment, lifestyle, developmental history, coping resources, and personality.

2.1 Types of Stress

The types of stress related to how the stress comes on or what symptoms are associated with the stress, but psychologists typically differentiate between the different types based on how long the periods last. Learning more about the different types of stress can help individuals learn how to battle stress.



#1 Acute Stress: Acute stress is the most common form of stress. Acute stress is the type of stress that throws you off-balance momentarily. This is the type of stress that comes on quickly and often unexpectedly and doesn't last too long, but requires a response and shakes you up a bit, like an argument with someone in your life, or an exam for which you don't feel adequately prepared.



It comes from demands and pressures of the recent past and anticipated demands and pressures of the near future. Acute stress is thrilling and exciting in small doses, but too much is exhausting. A fast run down a challenging ski slope, for example, is exhilarating early in the day. That same ski runs late in the day is taxing and wearing. Skiing beyond your limits can lead to falls and broken bones. By the same token, overdoing on short-term stress can lead to psychological distress, tension headaches, upset stomach, and other symptoms.

Acute stress isn't always negative. It's also the experience you have when riding a roller coaster or having a person jump out at you in a haunted house. Isolated episodes of acute stress should not have any lingering health effects. In fact, they might actually be healthy for you, as these stressful situations give your body and brain practice in developing the best response to future stressful situations.



Severe acute stress such as stress suffered as the victim of a crime or life-threatening situation can lead to mental health problems, such as post-traumatic stress disorder or acute stress disorder.

#2 Episodic acute stress: There are those, however, who suffer acute stress frequently, whose lives are so disordered that they are studies in chaos and crisis. They're always in a rush, but always late. If something can go wrong, it does. They take on too much, have too many irons in the fire, and can't organize the slew of self-inflicted demands and pressures clamoring for their attention. They seem perpetually in the clutches of acute stress.



It is common for people with acute stress reactions to be over aroused, short-tempered, irritable, anxious and tense. Often, they describe themselves as having "a lot of nervous energy." Always in a hurry, they tend to be abrupt, and sometimes their irritability



comes across as hostility. Interpersonal relationships deteriorate rapidly when others respond with real hostility. The workplace becomes a very stressful place for them.

There are 2 main personality types that frequently present with Episodic Acute Stress:

1) “Type A” personality

2) The “Worrier”

“Type A” personality: Type A personality have an excessive competitive drive, aggressiveness, impatience, abrupt, and a sense of time urgency. In addition, Type A personality presents as reactive with hostility, and almost always deep-seated insecurity about performance. These personality traits create frequent episodes of acute stress for the Type A individual. The cardiologists, Friedman and Rosenman found Type A’s to be significantly likely to develop coronary heart disease.

The “Worrier”: The Worrier presents with almost incessant negative thoughts causing episodic acute stress on physical and mental health. “Worrywarts” project probable disaster and negatively forecast catastrophe in almost every situation. They have core beliefs that the world is a dangerous, unrewarding, punitive place where something awful is always about to happen. These negative binge thinkers also tend to be over aroused and tense, but are more anxious and depressed than angry and hostile. Their thoughts are frequently filled with “What if...” statements that are with projected negative outcomes. They are often diagnosed DSM-5 with generalized anxiety disorder.

#3 Chronic stress: While acute stress can be thrilling and exciting, chronic stress is not.

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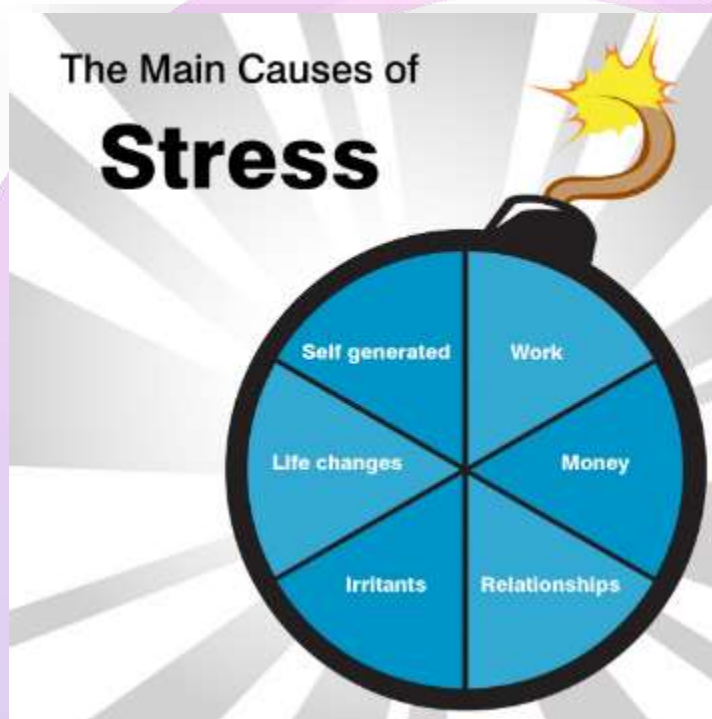
Chapter 3



What Causes Stress?



We all deal with stress at some point in our lives. Maybe it's your job, a family illness, or money troubles. These are common triggers. According to a recent study, about half of all Americans say they're dealing with moderate stress.



Exposure to stressful situations is one of the most common human experiences. These situations can range from daily annoyances and the consequences of overstretched, time-pressured lifestyles, to unexpected events such as illness, loss, natural disasters, and the dramatic effects caused by war-torn environments with ever-present uncertainty and armed conflict. All of these can cause life-shattering chronic stress.

3.1 Causes of Stress

Stress is different for everyone. What stresses you out may not even bother your best friend and vice versa.

Still, your bodies react the same to stressors. That's because the stress response is your body's way of dealing with tough or demanding situations. It causes hormonal, respiratory, cardiovascular, and nervous system changes.



Now, what are stressors? The situations and pressures that cause stress are known as stressors. We usually think of stressors as being negative, such as an exhausting work schedule or a rocky relationship. However, anything that puts high demands on you can be stressful. This includes positive events such as getting married, buying a house, going to college, or receiving a promotion.



Of course, not all stress is caused by external factors. Stress can also be internal or self-generated, when you worry excessively about something that may or may not happen, or have irrational, pessimistic thoughts about life.

What causes stress depends, at least in part, on your perception of it. Something that's stressful to you may not faze someone else; they may even enjoy it. While some of us are terrified of getting up in front of people to perform or speak, for example, others live for the spotlight. Where one person thrives under pressure and performs best in the face of a tight deadline, another will shut down when work demands escalate. And while you may enjoy helping to care for your elderly parents, your siblings may find the demands of caretaking overwhelming and stressful.



3.2 What are our "Stressors"?

We briefly mentioned "stressors" in the last lesson. To recap, a "stressor" is an incident, event or change where we feel like we cannot cope. Since this demand may deplete our tangible, physical and mental resources, it can create stress in our lives. We can divide stressors into two types – external and internal.

3.2.1 External Stressors:

There are a variety of external stressors including Environmental Stressors – Extreme noise, traffic gridlock, excessive crowds, smog and other types of pollution can contribute to stress.

- 1. Social Stressors:** Human interaction and communication can be a major stress in society. Things that people such as family members, bosses, co-workers, customer service representations or even neighbors say or do can ratchet up your stress levels. Even happy events like planning a wedding, getting married, getting a new job or having a baby can contribute to stress.



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Chapter 4



Signs, Symptoms and
Reaction of Stress



The most dangerous thing about stress is how easily it can creep up on you. You get used to it. It starts to feel familiar, even normal. You don't notice how much it's affecting you, even as it takes a heavy toll. That's why it's important to be aware of the common warning signs and symptoms of stress overload.

4.1 Emotional Signs and Symptoms of Stress

Stress, defined as emotional tension or mental strain, is all too common of a feeling for many of us. The emotional symptoms it causes are:

1. **Depression:** The Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA) defines depression as an illness in which an individual experiences a persistent and severe low mood.

Research suggests a link between high levels of stress and the onset of depression.



2. **Anxiety:** Anxiety differs from depression. It's characterized by feelings of overwhelming dread, rather than just feelings of sadness. However, like depression, studies have suggested that stress may be linked to anxiety and anxiety disorders.



- 3. Irritability:** Irritability and anger can become common traits in people who are stressed.

In one study, higher levels of anger were associated with both mental stress and the possibility of a stress-related heart attack.

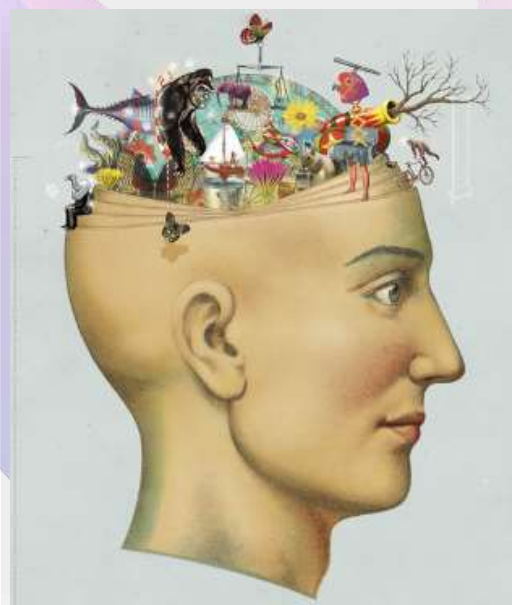
- 4. Low sex drive:** In some people, too much stress can have a negative impact on sex drive and the desire to be intimate.

A study published in 2014 found that chronic stress levels had a negative impact on sexual arousal. The research suggested that both high levels of cortisol and a higher chance of being distracted led to lower levels of arousal.

Much of the research surrounding stress and low libido involves women, but it can certainly affect men too. One animal study showed that social stress during adolescence affected the sexual appetite of male hamsters during adulthood.

- 5. Memory and concentration problems:** If you find yourself having trouble with concentration and memory, stress may be a part of the problem.

An animal study found that adolescent rats exposed to acute stress experienced more memory performance issues than their non-stressed counterparts.





Another review investigated the stress-response pathways in the brain and their effect on long-term memory. Researchers found that certain hormones following a stressful or traumatic event can have the ability to impair memory.

- 6. Compulsive behavior:** There has long been a link between stress and addictive behaviors.

One paper expanded on the idea that stress-related changes in the brain may play a role in the development of addiction. According to the researchers, chronic stress can change the physical nature of the brain to promote habit- and addiction-forming behaviors.

Another study even found that in certain people, genetic variations can play a further role in the stress response and vulnerability towards addiction.

- 7. Mood swings:** The many emotional effects of stress can leave you feeling like you're experiencing mood swings.

One study from 2014 examined the role of various types of stress tests on physiology, mood, and cognition. The research showed that both social and physical stressors can have a big impact on emotional well-being and mood. With the many other emotional signs of stress, it's easy to see just how big of influence stress can have on your overall mood.

4.2 Physical Signs and Symptoms of stress

Identifying physical symptoms can help you to identify your stress and you can actually do something about it.

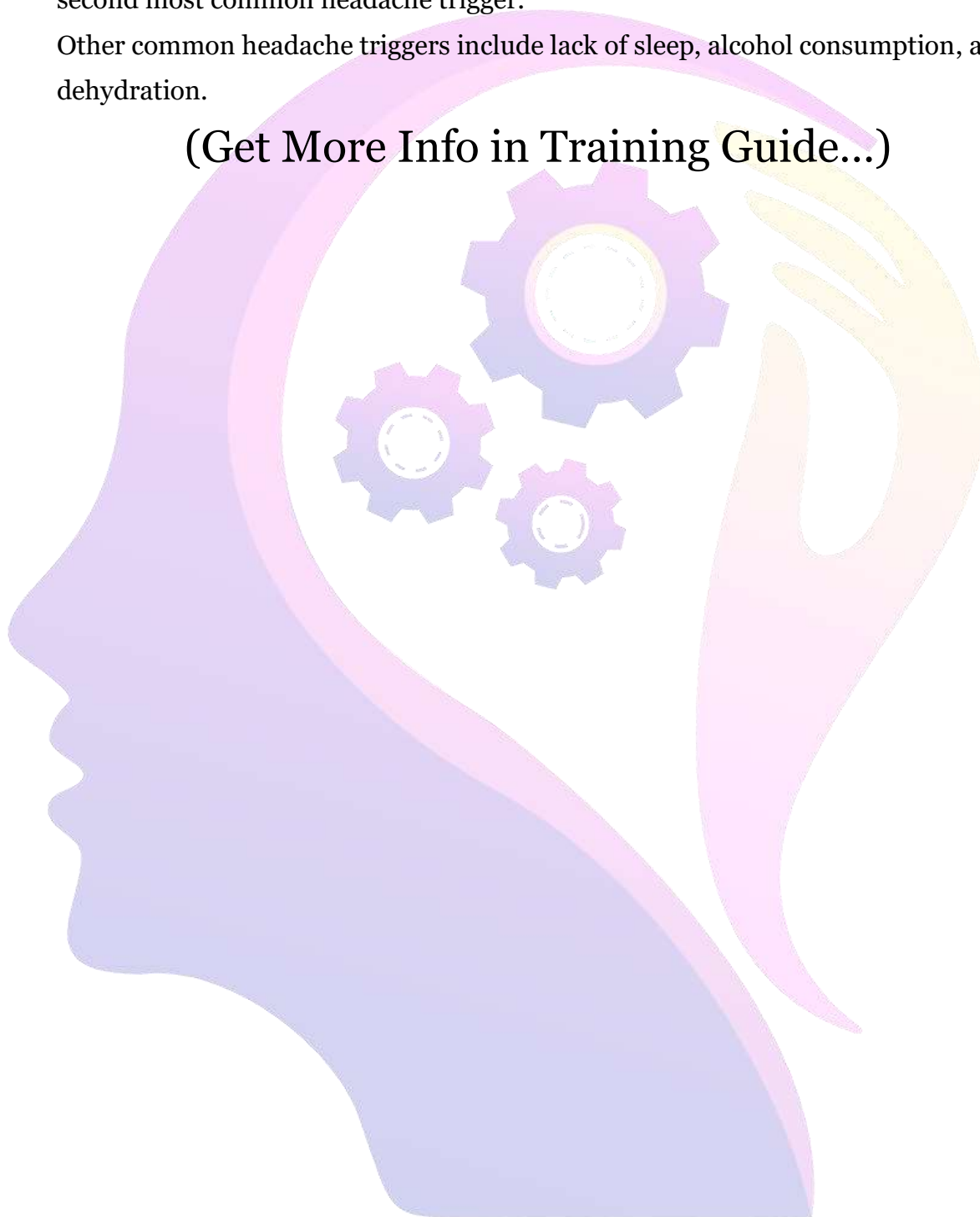
- 1. Neck pain:** Muscle tension is one of the first physical manifestations of stress, and it tends to be most pronounced at the base of the head. That's why your masseuse may ask if you've been stressed lately when your neck and shoulders feel insanely tense.
- 2. Headaches:** Many studies have found that stress can contribute to headaches, a condition characterized by pain in the head or neck region.
A study showed that increased stress intensity was associated with an increase in the number of headache days experienced per month.



Another study surveyed 150 military service members at a headache clinic, finding that 67% reported their headaches were triggered by stress, making it the second most common headache trigger.

Other common headache triggers include lack of sleep, alcohol consumption, and dehydration.

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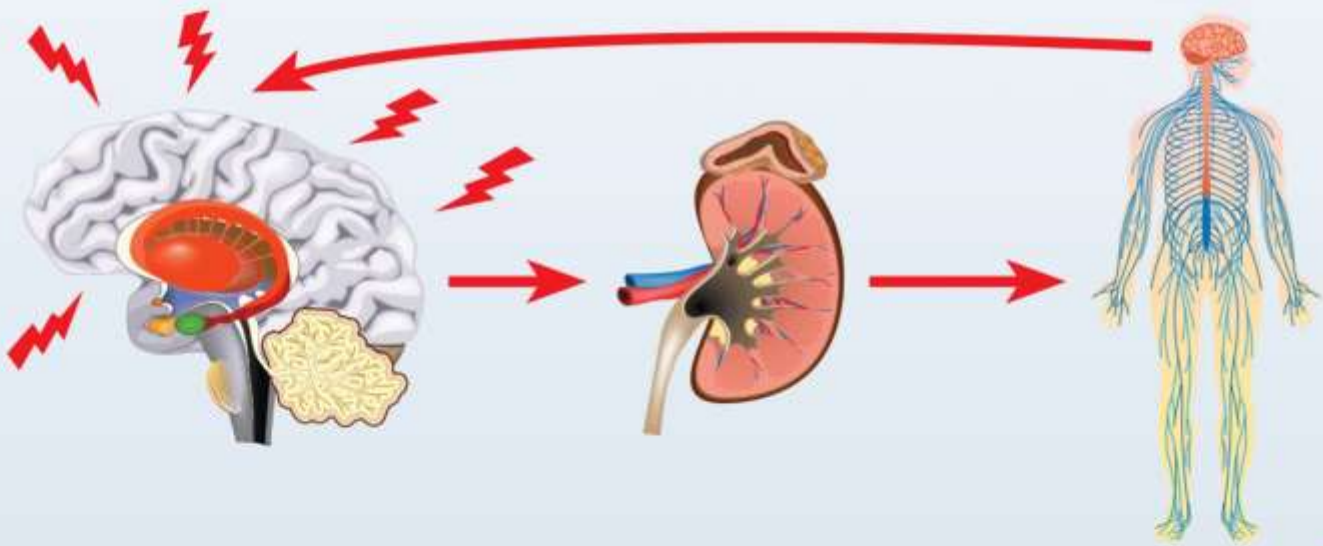




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Chapter 5



Stress Hormones –
An Introduction to Cortisol



Thanks to the work of our sympathetic nervous system, the "fight or flight" system that takes over when we're stressed, when you see your boss's name in your inbox late at night, your body reacts like there's a lion on the loose.



Behind the wide range of both physical and mental reactions to stress are a number of hormones that are in charge of adding fuel to the fire.

5.1 Stress Hormones

Stress hormones are produced by your body in situations that might be perceived as potentially dangerous. Daily activities, physical and emotional, that cause increased anxiety may cause your body to release some of these hormones and may cause you to feel more stressed about a routine situation.

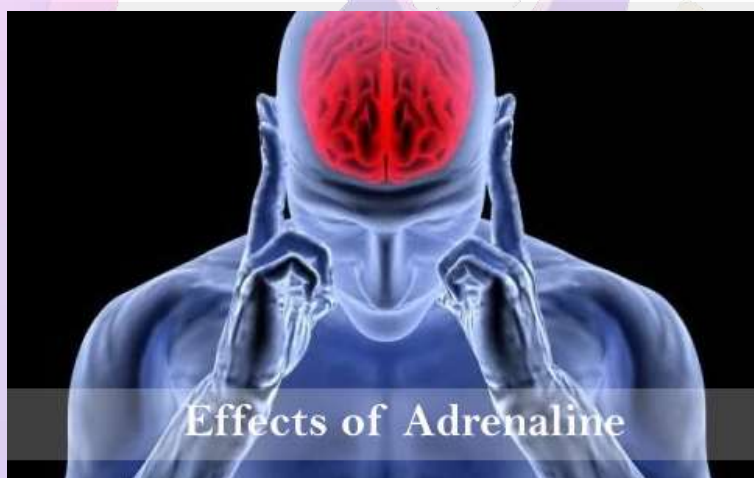
Stress hormones are a normal body response, but when constantly under stress through daily situations, this can lead to long-term health problems.

Major stress hormones are:



- 1. Adrenaline:** Commonly known as the fight or flight hormone, it is produced by the adrenal glands after receiving a message from the brain that a stressful situation has presented itself.

Adrenaline, along with norepinephrine (more on that below), is largely responsible for the immediate reactions we feel when stressed. Imagine you're trying to change lanes in your car. Suddenly, from your blind spot, comes a car racing at 100 miles per hour. You return to your original lane and your heart is pounding. Your muscles are tense, you're breathing faster, and you may start sweating. That's adrenaline.



Along with the increase in heart rate, adrenaline also gives you a surge of energy - which you might need to run away from a dangerous situation -- and also focuses your attention.

- 2. Cortisol:** A steroid hormone, commonly known as the stress hormone, produced by the adrenal glands.

It takes a little more time -- minutes, rather than seconds -- for you to feel the effects of cortisol in the face of stress because the release of this hormone takes a multi-step process involving two additional minor hormones.

First, the part of the brain called the amygdala has to recognize a threat. It then sends a message to the part of the brain called the hypothalamus, which releases corticotropin-releasing hormone (CRH). CRH then tells the pituitary gland to



release adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH), which tells the adrenal glands to produce cortisol.



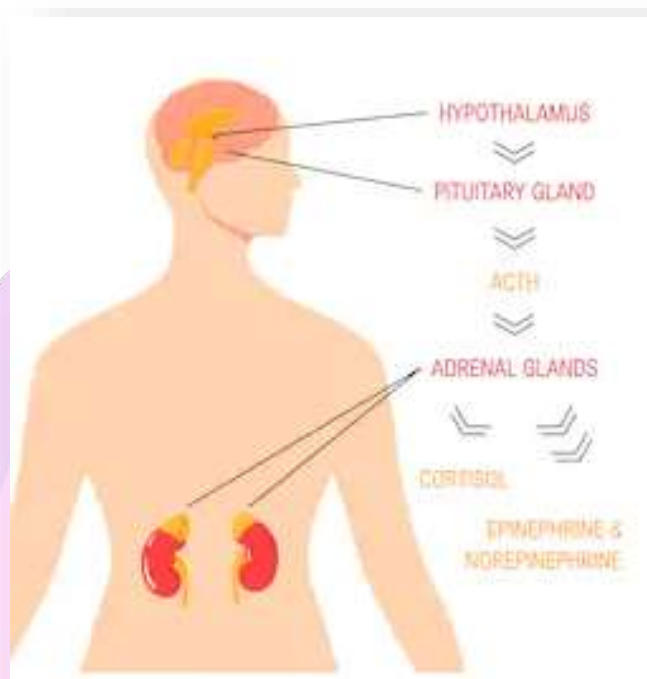
In survival mode, the optimal amounts of cortisol can be lifesaving. It helps to maintain fluid balance and blood pressure, while regulating some body functions that aren't crucial at the moment, like reproductive drive, immunity, digestion, and growth.

But when you stew on a problem, the body continuously releases cortisol, and chronically elevated levels can lead to serious issues. Too much cortisol can suppress the immune system, increase blood pressure and sugar, decrease libido, produce acne, contribute to obesity and more.

Of course, estrogen and testosterone are also hormones that affect how we react to stress, as are the neurotransmitters dopamine and serotonin.

3. Norepinephrine: A hormone similar to adrenaline, released from the adrenal glands and also from the brain.

The primary role of norepinephrine, like adrenaline, is arousal. When you are stressed, you become more aware, awake, focused. You are just generally more responsive. It also helps to shift blood flow away from areas where it might not be so crucial, like the skin, and toward more essential areas at the time, like the muscles, so you can flee the stressful scene.



Although norepinephrine might seem redundant given adrenaline (which is also sometimes called epinephrine), it was imagined that we have both hormones as a type of backup system. Say your adrenal glands are not working well you still want something to save you from acute catastrophe.

Depending on the long-term impact of whatever's stressing you out -- and how you personally handle stress -- it could take anywhere from half an hour to a couple of days to return to your normal resting state.

5.2 Why Is Cortisol Called The 'Stress Hormone'?

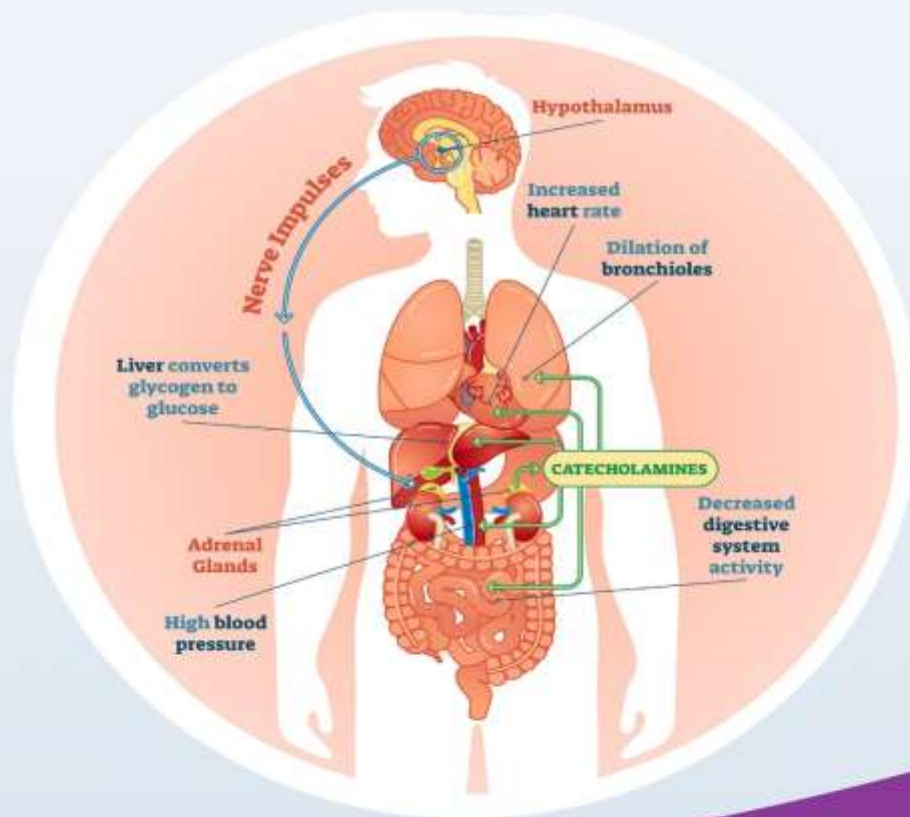
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Chapter 6



The Impact of Stress on Our Body



We all experience stress, to some degree, in our daily life. From work to busy schedules, from important relationships to our goals and dreams, we have competing priorities and it's a lot to keep on top of.

But while a limited amount of stress is normal, and even healthy, continuous or severe stress can be very harmful to your physical and mental health. Because all stress isn't the same and different types of stress affect us in ways that are somewhat unique, it helps to understand the different types of stress and how to best manage each, so you can tackle stress in the most effective ways.

6.1 The Impact of Stress on Your Health

Impact of Stress on Your Health



When faced with chronic stress and an over-activated autonomic nervous system, people begin to see a negative impact on their health. The first symptoms are relatively mild, like chronic headaches and increased susceptibility to colds. With more exposure to chronic stress, however, more serious health problems may develop.

6.1.1 Central Nervous and Endocrine Systems:



Your central nervous system (CNS) is in charge of your “fight or flight” response. In your brain, the hypothalamus gets the ball rolling, telling your adrenal glands to release the stress hormones adrenaline and cortisol. These hormones rev up your heartbeat and send blood rushing to the areas that need it most in an emergency, such as your muscles, heart, and other important organs.



When the perceived fear is gone, the hypothalamus should tell all systems to go back to normal. If the CNS fails to return to normal, or if the stressor doesn't go away, the response will continue.

Chronic stress is also a factor in behaviors such as overeating or not eating enough, alcohol or drug abuse, and social withdrawal.

6.1.2 Respiratory System:

Stress and strong emotions can present with respiratory symptoms, such as shortness of breath and rapid breathing, as the airway between the nose and the lungs constricts.

For people without respiratory disease, this is generally not a problem as the body can manage the additional work to breathe comfortably, but psychological stressors can



exacerbate breathing problems for people with pre-existing respiratory diseases such as asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD; includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis).



Some studies show that an acute stress — such as the death of a loved one — can actually trigger asthma attacks. In addition, the rapid breathing — or hyperventilation — caused by stress can bring on a panic attack in someone prone to panic attacks.

Working with a psychologist to develop relaxation, breathing, and other cognitive behavioral strategies can help.

6.1.3 Cardiovascular:

Chronic stress, or a constant stress experienced over a prolonged period of time, can contribute to long-term problems for heart and blood vessels. The consistent and ongoing increase in heart rate, and the elevated levels of stress hormones and of blood pressure, can take a toll on the body. This long-term ongoing stress can increase the risk for hypertension, heart attack or stroke.



Repeated acute stress and persistent chronic stress may also contribute to inflammation in the circulatory system, particularly in the coronary arteries, and this is one pathway that is thought to tie stress to heart attack. It also appears that how a person responds to stress can affect cholesterol levels.

The risk for heart disease associated with stress appears to differ for women, depending on whether the woman is pre or postmenopausal. Levels of estrogen in premenopausal women appears to help blood vessels respond better during stress, thereby helping their bodies to better handle stress and protecting them against heart disease.

Postmenopausal women lose this level of protection due to loss of estrogen, therefore putting them at greater risk for the effects of stress on heart disease.

6.1.4 Digestive System:

Under stress, your liver produces extra blood sugar (glucose) to give you a boost of energy. If you're under chronic stress, your body may not be able to keep up with this extra glucose surge. Chronic stress may increase your risk of developing type 2 diabetes.



The rush of hormones, rapid breathing, and increased heart rate can also upset your digestive system. You're more likely to have heartburn or acid reflux thanks to an increase in stomach acid. Stress doesn't cause ulcers (a bacterium called *H. pylori* often does), but it can increase your risk for them and cause existing ulcers to act up.

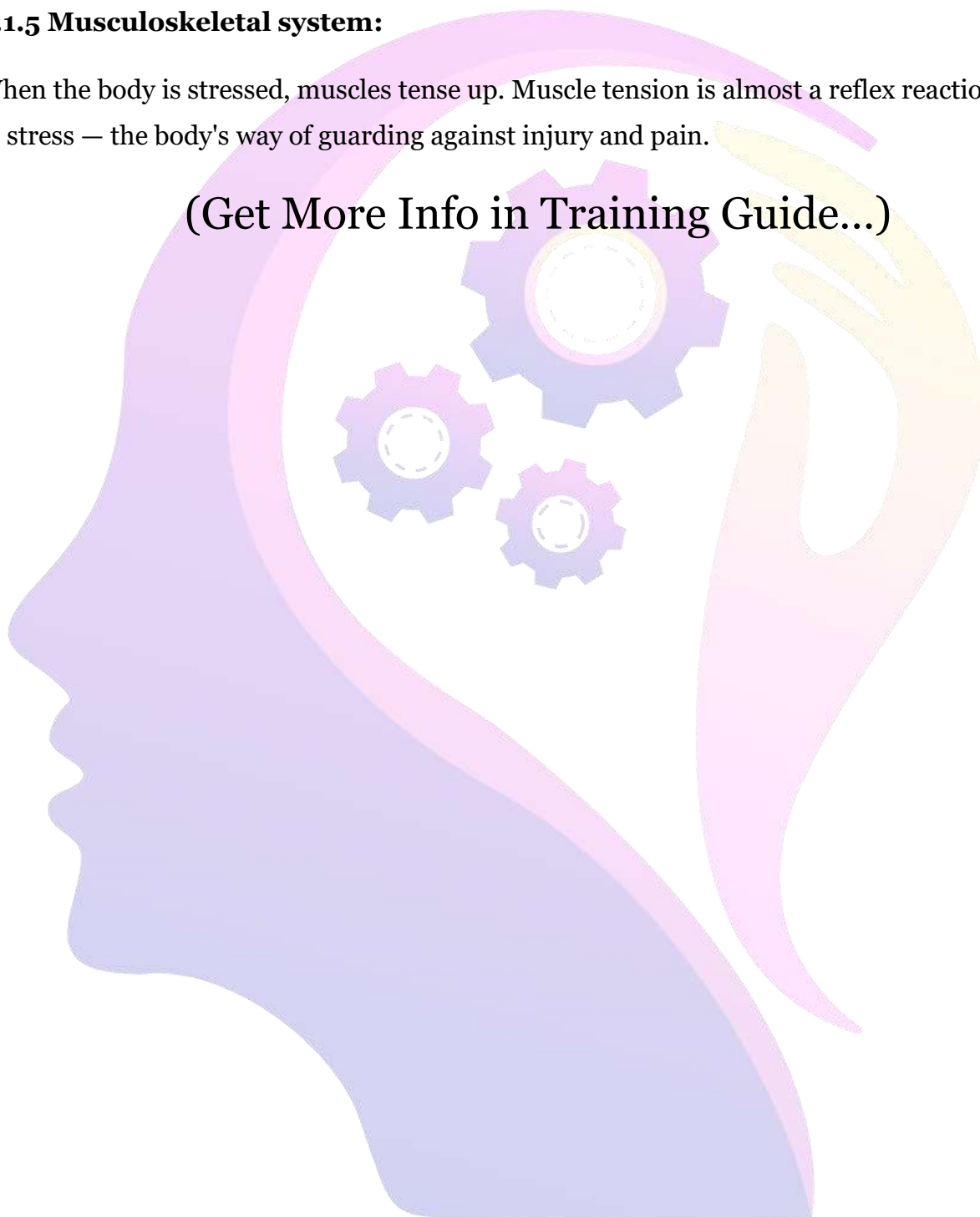


Stress can also affect the way food moves through your body, leading to diarrhea or constipation. You might also experience nausea, vomiting, or a stomachache.

6.1.5 Musculoskeletal system:

When the body is stressed, muscles tense up. Muscle tension is almost a reflex reaction to stress — the body's way of guarding against injury and pain.

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Chapter 7



Stress Management -
Tips to Reduce Everyday Stress



Everyday stress is the most harmful kind of stress, and it should be avoided at all costs.

Everyone has stress. It is a normal part of life. You can feel stress in your body when you have too much to do or when you haven't slept well. You can also feel stress when you worry about things like your job, money, relationships, or a friend or family member who is ill or in crisis.



In response to these strains, your body automatically increases blood pressure, heart rate, respiration, metabolism, and blood flow to your muscles. This response is intended to help your body react quickly and effectively to a high-pressure situation. However, when you are constantly reacting to stressful situations without making adjustments to counter the effects, you will feel stress which can threaten your health and well-being.

Sad to say, a lot of us are badly affected by unnecessary, but can easily be avoided, stress today.

7.1 Ways to Reduce and Overcome Everyday Stress



- **Get enough sleep:** Inconsistent sleep can have some serious consequences. Not only does it affect our physical health, but lack of sleep can also contribute to overall anxiety and stress. And sometimes it turns into a vicious cycle since anxiety often leads to disruptions in sleep. Especially when feeling anxious, try to schedule a full seven to nine hours of snooze time and see what a few nights of sweet slumber do for those anxiety levels throughout the day.



Adequate sleep fuels your mind, as well as your body. Feeling tired will increase your stress because it may cause you to think irrationally.

- **Eat well:** Foods rich in vitamin C, like oranges, lemons, and grapefruits, may help lower your stress hormones. Omega-3s, like those found in salmon and other fatty fish, as well as nuts and seeds also have a calming effect. In general, fuelling your body well with a balanced diet can help your body to better handle stress. Part of eating well means focusing on getting whole grains, vegetables, and fruits.



Fancy something sweet? Dark chocolate has a calming effect and eating chocolate, in general, makes you feel good.

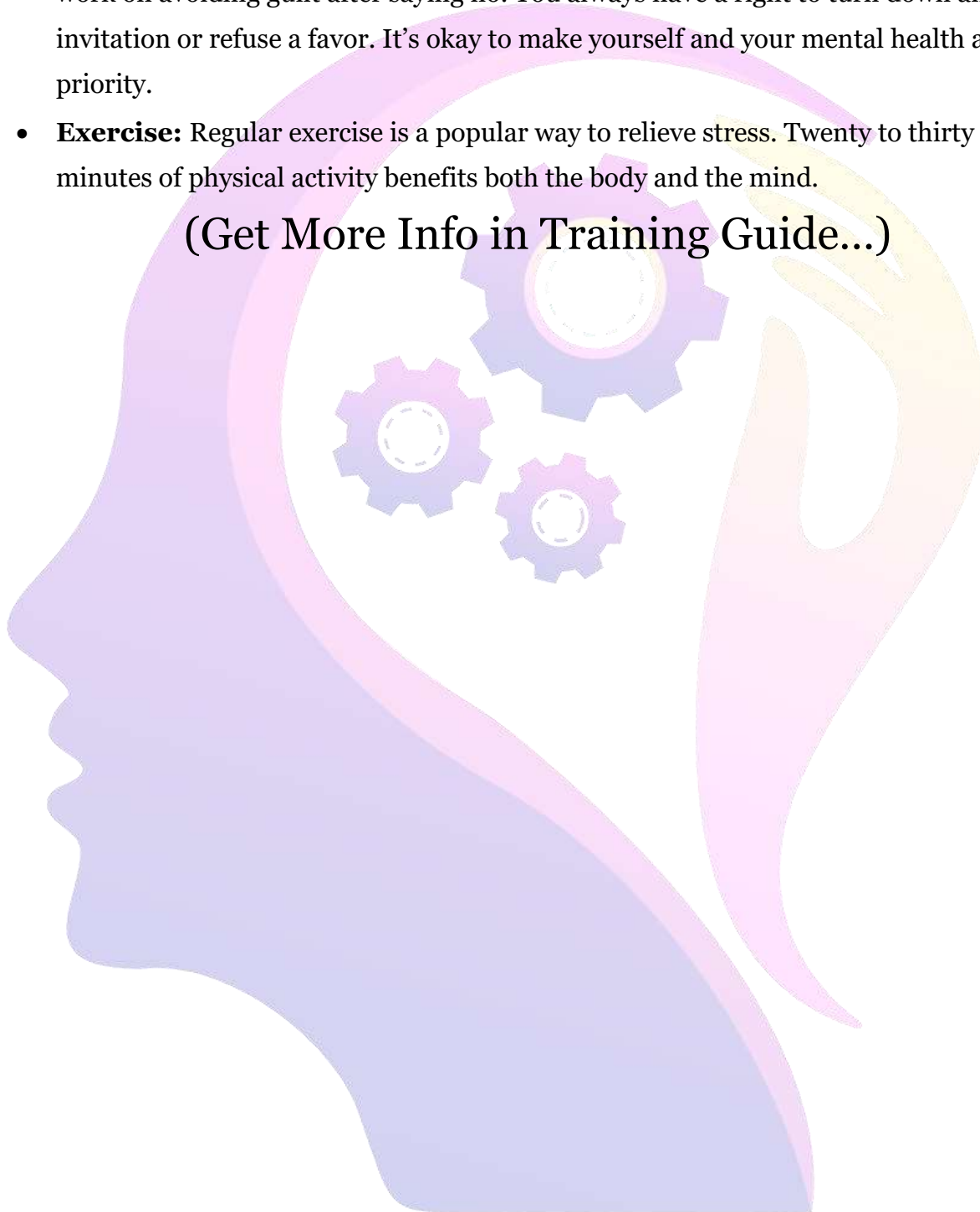
- **Breathe deeply:** Stopping and taking a few deep breaths can take the pressure off you right away. You'll be surprised how much better you feel once you get good at it. Just follow these 5 steps:
 - a. Sit in a comfortable position with your hands in your lap and your feet on the floor. Or you can lie down.
 - b. Close your eyes.
 - c. Imagine yourself in a relaxing place. It can be on the beach, in a beautiful field of grass, or anywhere that gives you a peaceful feeling.
 - d. Slowly take deep breaths in and out.
 - e. Do this for 5 to 10 minutes at a time.
- **Say no:** People pleasing is a one-way ticket to stress because guess what? You can't please all the people all the time! Give yourself permission to say no. If you're worried that people won't like you as much for saying no – think again. People will probably like and respect you more if you are honest with them instead of over-committing yourself and having to cancel things at the last minute. Work on considering the best ways to say no.



Think about your personal boundaries and the situation at hand. When saying no, do so in a polite way that makes your boundaries clear. Also very important, work on avoiding guilt after saying no. You always have a right to turn down an invitation or refuse a favor. It's okay to make yourself and your mental health a priority.

- **Exercise:** Regular exercise is a popular way to relieve stress. Twenty to thirty minutes of physical activity benefits both the body and the mind.

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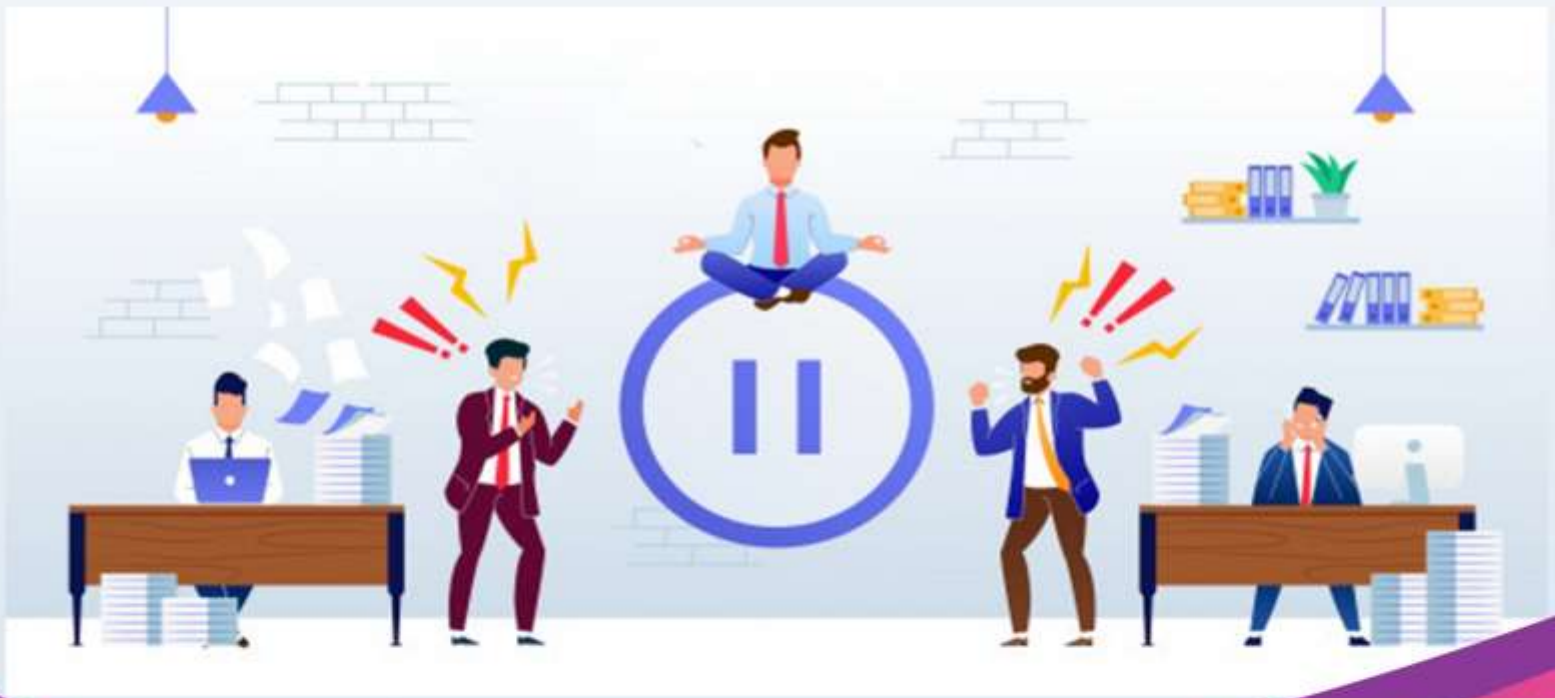




Stress

Relieving Mantra

Chapter 8



How to Eliminate Workplace
Stress Effectively?



Everyone who has ever held a job has, at some point, felt the pressure of work-related stress. Any job can have stressful elements, even if you love what you do. In the short-term, you may experience pressure to meet a deadline or to fulfill a challenging obligation. But when work stress becomes chronic, it can be overwhelming — and harmful to both physical and emotional health.



Unfortunately, such long-term stress is all too common. In fact, APA's annual Stress in America survey has consistently found that work is cited as a significant source of stress by a majority of Americans. You can't always avoid the tensions that occur on the job. Yet you can take steps to manage work-related stress.

8.1 What causes stress at work?

Are you stressed at work?

If so, you wouldn't be alone. According to the 2014 Work Stress Survey conducted by Nielsen, 80% of Americans indicated that they're stressed out on the job.



This statistic should be alarming to all decision-makers, especially considering that a recent study from Harvard and Stanford revealed that workplace stress can have as negative an impact on health as secondhand smoke.



Stress can lead to heart disease, insomnia, depression, and obesity, among other ailments, according to Today. Don't forget: employees can't be productive when they're sick.

The good news is that by identifying the major causes of work-related stress, managers can make a few changes here and there to help make sure employees are more relaxed in the office.

Let's take a look at six of the major causes of stress at work.

8.1.1 Demands: This includes the demands of the workload, the work pattern and the work environment. When employees feel that the demands of their workload and the associated time pressures are a source of stress, for example:

- Unrealistic deadlines and expectations
- Technology overload
- Unmanageable workloads
- Under-recruitment of staff for work already timetabled



- Long work hours



8.1.2 Lack of Control: This is about how much authority employees have about the way they do their work. Lack of influence and consultation in the way in which work is organized and performed can be a potential source of pressure, for example:

- Little control over aspects of the job
- Not enough involvement in decision making
- Account not taken of staff ideas/suggestions relating to the role
- No influence over performance targets
- Lack of time

8.1.3 Minimal Support: It's always important to know that we are supported in what we do. Knowing that your colleagues and management support you, will give you a boost, especially on difficult days. However, having no support or very little, can lead to feelings of frustration and being undervalued.

A company should have the following in place to ensure employees are supported in their role:



- Policies and procedures to support employees.
- Systems in place for managers, so they can support their staff, including managing workplace stress training.
- Systems in place for employees to encourage their colleagues, including workplace stress management training.
- Make employees aware of where they can find support and how to access it.
- A feedback system, so that employees get regular and constructive feedback.

8.1.4 Role Ambiguity: Work-related stress can be caused when an employee does not understand their role fully, if they have not been given adequate training to carry out their role or if their role has conflicting responsibilities.

Role ambiguity and conflict decreases workers' performance and are positively related to the probability of workers leaving the company.

8.1.5 Work-life Balance Issues:

(Get More Info in Training Guide...)



Stress

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Chapter 9



Managing Stress with
Exercise and Meditation



As our society becomes more health-conscious, there has been an increased focus on the importance of exercise. Many people exercise to control weight and get in better physical condition to become more healthy or physically attractive, but exercise and stress management are also closely linked.



Studies show that exercise is very effective at reducing fatigue, improving alertness and concentration, and at enhancing overall cognitive function. This can be especially helpful when stress has depleted your energy or ability to concentrate.

9.1 Exercise and Stress Relief

Exercise increases your overall health and your sense of well-being, which puts more pep in your step every day. But exercise also has some direct stress-busting benefits.

- **It pumps up your endorphins:** Physical activity helps to bump up the production of your brain's feel-good neurotransmitters, called endorphins. Although this function is often referred to as a runner's high, a rousing game of tennis or a nature hike also can contribute to this same feeling.
- **It's meditation in motion:** After a fast-paced game of racquetball or several laps in the pool, you'll often find that you've forgotten the day's irritations and concentrated only on your body's movements.



As you begin to regularly shed your daily tensions through movement and physical activity, you may find that this focus on a single task, and the resulting energy and optimism, can help you remain calm and clear in everything you do.

- **It improves your mood:** Regular exercise can increase self-confidence, it can relax you, and it can lower the symptoms associated with mild depression and anxiety. Exercise can also improve your sleep, which is often disrupted by stress, depression, and anxiety. All of these exercise benefits can ease your stress levels and give you a sense of command over your body and your life.

9.2 What Types of Exercise Help With Stress?

While any exercise will naturally reduce stress, there are several exercise activities that specifically act to connect mind and body – promoting an instant feeling of calmness and wellbeing. These physical activities provide a good workout for your body while also being relaxing and therapeutic.

Try out one of these stress-relieving exercises the next time you need an instant pick-me-up:

- **Yoga:** This popular mind-body practice brings together physical and mental disciplines to help you relax while increasing physical strength and flexibility. It combines poses with controlled breathing and mindfulness. Yoga can help reduce stress, lower blood pressure, and lower heart rate.

Anyone of any age or fitness level can practice and benefit from yoga. Contrary to popular belief, you don't have to be flexible or strong to hit the mat. Another perk of yoga? There are many different styles, forms, and intensities, so you'll never get bored of this powerful mind-body workout. Try out 15-minute stress relief yoga sequence for beginners.



- **Tai Chi:** Tai Chi is an ancient Chinese non-competitive martial art. It's popular due to its health benefits and known to be one of the most effective exercises for both mind and body. Like yoga, there are many different styles and forms of Tai Chi. This exercise links flowing physical movements with breathing. According to Tai Chi for Health Institute, studies have shown that Tai Chi improves muscular strength, flexibility, immunity, and can help relieve pain – all while achieving a sense of peace and serenity.
- **Qigong:** Similar to tai chi, qigong is considered one of the cornerstones of Chinese medicine, along with acupuncture and herbs. Practicing qigong regularly can promote feelings of serenity, improve sleep and digestion, and increase energy. Like tai chi, qigong helps you be more present in your body. Its slow gentle movements and focus on moving in harmony with the breath are extremely relaxing to the nervous system.



- **Pilates:** This fitness system is designed to strengthen muscles, improve posture and flexibility, and heighten mental awareness. Pilates is known to help relieve both stress and anxiety symptoms. It releases tension in the muscles while using breathing techniques to provide more oxygen to the brain – causing a feeling of calmness and wellbeing.



- **Gardening:** Get your hands dirty! Gardening isn't just a hobby – it's a workout. In fact, gardening for about 30-45 minutes a day can burn anywhere from 150 to 300 calories. A 2011 Netherlands study shows that gardening leads to a positive



mood and promotes relief from acute stress. It was also said to combat stress better than other relaxing leisure activities.

Since gardening doesn't seem like a "workout", you might forget to warm-up before you start. Start small. Even one or two herb plants are grown on a sunny windowsill can increase your connection to nature.

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Stress

Relieving Mantra

Chapter 10



Natural Herbal Remedies
to Reduce Stress



Steering clear from stress is almost impossible in today's high-pressure society. We live in a chronically stressed culture. Most of us exist in a state of near-constant overwork and overwhelm. And all this stress is taking a serious toll. An estimated 90% of all visits to primary care doctors are for stress-related complaints.

Some stress can help you, by driving you to heightened alertness or intensity of focus. But too much stress can cause serious damage to your health — from contributing to weight gain to damaging your heart and making you look older. Stress can also affect how you feel physically and mentally.

Plus, chronic, or lasting, stress is linked to every chronic disease because it lays the foundation for inflammation and other health ailments.

You can't avoid all the stress in your life. So, what's the solution? How can you cope and not let all the little things, or the big ones, get you down?

You have more power over your stress than you may realize. Life isn't only about what happens to you — it's also about how you respond. The right herbs can be a potent tool to help you calm the stresses and enjoy more resiliencies.

10.1 Herbal Remedies for Stress Relief

Getting a handle on your stress levels is essential to looking and feeling healthy, as well as aging gracefully. Luckily, there are a handful of herbal remedies for balancing cortisol and alleviating stress and anxiety naturally.

They are safe, non-toxic, and have a generalized, normalizing, balancing influence on the body—these herbs not only help the body to cope with stress, but they also enhance immunity, combat fatigue, promote strength, and encourage muscle development and repair.

Take a look at some of the most popular adaptogenic herbs and how you can benefit from their use:

- 1. Kava Root:** According to research, Kava may be one of the most effective herbal supplements for stress and anxiety. Unlike other herbal anxiety supplements,



kava is not only effective for anxiety symptoms - it's effective for anxious thoughts as well. Kava's calming effect may relieve anxiety, restlessness, sleeplessness, and stress-related symptoms such as muscle tension or spasm. Take kava as a concentrated extract in capsule or tablet form or hold back your taste buds and attempt the liquid form.



- 2. Brahmi:** Brahmi is well-known for reducing stress. It is known to decrease the levels of cortisol, the stress hormone. This herb counteracts the effects of stress by regulating hormones involved with the stress response. It further enhances your concentration power, revitalizing the brain cells leaving a soothing effect on the nervous system.



- 3. Ashwagandha:** Ashwagandha is a highly revered medicinal herb used in Ayurveda for millennia and praised as a longevity and vitality tonic. Its herbal actions benefit you by replacing your body's vital reserves, helping your body adapt to stress, and strengthening your body's systems, such as the nervous system and the adrenals. Many of the ashwagandha benefits are thought to come from the extract's ability to lower the stress hormone, cortisol. When you're under chronic stress and your cortisol levels creep up, your body's other hormones and neurotransmitters become unbalanced, leading to symptoms like anxiety, depression, and poor sleep.





- 4. Chamomile:** This amazing herb, related to ragweed, can be brewed in a tea or taken as a supplement, and it has been used for centuries to ease the mind and calm frazzled nerves. Chamomile has wonderful calming and anti-inflammatory properties and is often used in the treatment of insomnia and nervous complaints. Chamomile has a mild sedative action helping to promote a sense of calmness, which eases anxiety, along with inducing restful sleep. It is also useful for treating digestive problems associated with anxiety including nervous dyspepsia, IBS, diarrhea, constipation, and nausea.



- 5. Holy Basil:**

(Get More Info in Training Guide...)



Stress

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Chapter 11



The Importance of Positive
Self Talk to Deal with Stress



Is your glass-half-empty or half-full? How you answer this age-old question about positive thinking may reflect your outlook on life, your attitude toward yourself, and whether you're optimistic or pessimistic — and it may even affect your health.

Indeed, some studies show that personality traits such as optimism and pessimism can affect many areas of your health and well-being. The positive thinking that usually comes with optimism is a key part of effective stress management. And effective stress management is associated with many health benefits. If you tend to be pessimistic, don't despair — you can learn positive thinking skills.

11.1 Understanding self-talk

Many people are conscious of an inner voice that provides a running monologue throughout the day and even into the night. Cheerful and supportive or negative and self-defeating, this internal chatter is referred to as self-talk. This inner voice combines conscious thoughts with unconscious beliefs and biases. It's an effective way for the brain to interpret and process daily experiences. This voice is useful when it is positive, talking down fears and bolstering confidence.

Even though you might not know it, you're already practicing self-talk.

Take a minute and think about what you've said to yourself today. Was it critical? Or was it kind and helpful? How did you feel after you engaged in this inner discussion?

Your thoughts are the source of your emotions and mood. The conversations you have with yourself can be destructive or beneficial. They influence how you feel about yourself and how you respond to events in your life.



Human nature is prone to negative self-talk, however, and sweeping assertions like “I can’t do anything right” or “I’m a complete failure” are common diatribes. This negativity can be unrealistic and even harmful, paralyzing people into inaction and self-absorption to the point of being unaware of the world around them. The good news: That negative inner critic can and should be challenged; becoming more aware of it is just a first step.

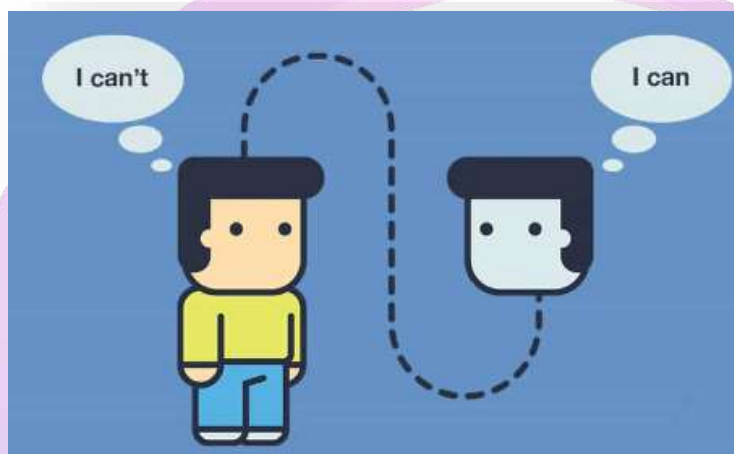
11.2 Positive Self-Talk – What is it?

You may have a negative message that replays in your head every time you make a mistake. As a child you have been told, “You’ll never amount to anything” or “You can’t do anything right.” When you make a mistake—and you will because we all do—you can choose to overwrite that message with a positive one, such as “I choose to accept and grow from my mistake” or “As I learn from my mistakes, I am becoming a better person.” During this exercise, mistakes become opportunities to replace negative views of who you are with positive options for personal enhancement.

Positive self-talk is not self-deception. It is not mentally looking at circumstances with eyes that see only what you want to see. Rather, positive self-talk is about recognizing the truth, in situations and in yourself. One of the fundamental truths is that you will



make mistakes. To expect perfection in yourself or anyone else is unrealistic. To expect no difficulties in life, whether through your own actions or sheer circumstances, is also unrealistic.



When negative events or mistakes happen, positive self-talk seeks to bring the positive out of the negative to help you do better, go further, or just keep moving forward. The practice of positive self-talk is often the process that allows you to discover the obscured optimism, hope, and joy in any given situation.

11.2.1 Some Examples of Positive and Negative Self-talk:

These scenarios are examples of negative self-talk and what are the positive alternatives for them.

- **Negative:** I'll disappoint everyone if I change my mind.
- **Positive:** I have the power to change my mind. Others will understand.
- **Negative:** I failed and embarrassed myself.
- **Positive:** I'm proud of myself for even trying. That took courage.
- **Negative:** I'm overweight and out of shape. I might as well not bother.
- **Positive:** I am capable and strong, and I want to get healthier for me.
- **Negative:** I let everyone on my team down when I didn't score.
- **Positive:** Sports are a team event. We win and lose together.



- **Negative:** I've never done this before and I'll be bad at it.
- **Positive:** This is a wonderful opportunity for me to learn from others and grow.
- **Negative:** There's just no way will this work.
- **Positive:** I can and will give it my all to make it work.



(Get More Info in Training Guide...)



Stress

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Chapter 12



Alleviating Stress with Nutrition



As we get busy and stressed, we tend to make poor nutritional choices that can actually increase our stress levels and cause other problems. We may do this because we're in a hurry and it's easier to grab pre-packaged food that may be less healthy, Or we may do this because we crave less healthy food when we're stressed. We may get so busy we forget to eat or skip meals, filling them in with unhealthy snack foods.



Whatever the reason, when we eat an unhealthy diet, we may experience short-term and long-term consequences. We may feel less energetic, and this lack of energy can affect our productivity and stress levels.

12.1 How Too Much Stress Affects Your Eating Habits?

Worry and overwork can lead to unhealthy lifestyle habits, which causes more stress, leading to a very harmful cycle. For example, if you are facing a very tight deadline at work, you might make poor choices about what to eat, relying on sugar and caffeine to



get you through the day. Unfortunately, these food choices can create more stress in the long run, as well as other problems. Below is a list of common bad habits people sometimes indulge in when overwhelmed and worried.

Stress-Induced Bad-Foods Habits:

- **Drinking Too Much Coffee:** When burning the candle at both ends, you may find yourself drinking several cups of coffee through the day to keep yourself going.



- **Eating the Wrong Foods:** Due partially to increased cortisol levels, the stress hormone, stressed people tend to crave foods high in fat, sugar, and salt. Many will turn to potato chips, ice cream or other junk foods after a rough day.
- **Skipping Meals:** When you are juggling a dozen things at once, eating a healthy meal often drops down in priorities. You might find yourself skipping breakfast because you're running late or not eating lunch because there's just too much on your to-do list.
- **Mindless Munching:** Conversely, stress also makes us prone to emotional eating, where we eat despite not being hungry but eat because it feels comforting.



- **Forgetting Water:** With busy lives, it's easy to forget to drink your water, In fact, a good portion of Americans drink no water, and get water only from soda or coffee.
- **Fast Food:** People these days eat at home less than in generations past, as it's easier to just drive through a fast food place or go to a restaurant than to go home and cook something. Unfortunately, this gets expensive and is often unhealthy.
- **Crash Diets:** Because of weight gain from stress, some people intentionally eat less food than they need, or try dangerous fad diets in order to lose the excess weight. Diets that aren't balanced with fruits and vegetables, protein and healthy carbohydrates can often be bad for your health in the long run, even if they look attractive short term.

12.2 Superfoods for Stress Relief

(Get More Info in Training Guide...)



Stress

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Chapter 13



Combating Stress with Essential Oils



Stress is so common these days that it has become a normal part of daily life. Stress is one of the mechanisms the body used to deal with perceived threats and can have positive as well as negative effects. The problem is that often stress remains long after a stressful event, causing feelings of anxiety with negative impacts on the nervous system and the physical body.

If you had a rough day or if you suffer from stress day in and day out, having a natural go-to solution, as an essential oil on hand, can help to relieve stress symptoms (without the side-effect of drugs) and do wonders for calming your anxiety and relaxing the mind.

13.1 The Role of Essential Oils in Dealing with Stress

Essential oils are one of the safest ways to deal with acute or chronic stress. The powerful components in essential oils are the essence of natural organic plants that provide immediate relief from stressful feelings with no side effects.

They are convenient and easy to use anywhere and can help reduce even deep-rooted stress. They can be used at home, in massage therapies, to enhance the effectiveness of meditation or whenever you need help to calm down or relax your nerves.

Pure essential oils penetrate the cellular membranes of the body, crossing the blood-brain barrier to reach the emotional center of the brain. The effects can be felt in the mind and body in a matter of minutes with the long-term results of a calm mind and relaxed, healthy body.

A blend of essential oils specifically for the treatment of stress can do much more than just relax the mind and the body, it can reduce inflammation, balance hormones, enhance digestion, improve energy levels, boost immunity, and induce healthy sleep patterns.

Put simply, essential oils have aromatic, fragrant molecules that can actually pass right through the blood/brain barrier, having a direct effect on the areas of our brain in charge of controlling feelings of stress and anxiety and even panic and depression.

13.2 Essential Oils that are Best for Stress



Stress-related symptoms can be relieved by using essential oils. Below are some of the best essential oils recommended for the quick relief of tension and stress:

#1 Lavender: One of the best-known essential oils in aromatherapy, lavender oil is prized for its calming effects on the body and mind and ability to lessen anxiety. The reason people like lavender as an essential oil for anxiety is because not only does it contain linalool, which has a sedative effect, it also relaxes the muscles, lowers blood pressure, increases circulation, and lowers the cortisol in our bloodstream—all things that we are looking for to help us deal with stress.



In a study published in International Journal of Nursing Practice, aromatherapy using a 3 percent lavender oil spray on clothing was found to be effective in reducing work-related stress for three to four days.

Lavender oil can be found in a variety of aromatherapy products, including bath salts and massage oil. Another way to take advantage of the soothing scent of lavender: sipping lavender-infused herbal tea, which is sold in many natural-foods stores. Lavender is the best remedy for dealing with sleep problems naturally with no side effects like those experienced with sleeping pills.

#2 Ylang Ylang: Ylang-Ylang essential oils contain calming as well as uplifting properties that are highly effective in dealing with stress, anxiety, and depression. The



heavenly sweet aroma immediately calms the nervous system and relaxes the senses, helping to overcome feelings of fear, negativity, and anxiety replacing them with feelings of optimism and courage.



Ylang ylang essential oil can be both stimulating or calming depending on what the person using it is feeling. It is especially effective when dealing with anger-induced stress and can bring a feeling of immediate calm and peace.

The scent of Ylang-Ylang is said to be sedating, making it excellent for anxiety relief and a stress relief aid. It is relatively young in the world of essential oils but offers many strong properties for medical and psychological benefits.

#3 Clary Sage: The wonderfully fragrant Clary Sage is also a fantastic essential oil for calming anxiety and stress. Like Lavender, it is rich in linalool and linalyl acetate, two compounds which have been demonstrated in multiple scientific studies to calm and relax the central nervous system.



(Get More Info in Training Guide...)



Stress

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Chapter 14



Effective Stress Management
Techniques during Pregnancy



In some ways, pregnancy is really a mixed blessing. The excitement and expectation of having a new baby are combined with radical and sometimes difficult changes to a woman's body, financial concerns, emotional ups and downs, reorganizing rooms for baby, and much more. Reducing stress during pregnancy can help you enjoy this special time.



14.1 What are the Causes of Stress during Pregnancy?

For some women, finding out that they are pregnant can be a stressful experience in itself. You could feel like you have lost control or don't have enough resources to manage what you'll be experiencing. Other things that could cause stress in pregnancy include:

- Waiting for the results of your antenatal tests
- Previous negative experiences with pregnancy, birth or motherhood such as a miscarriage or death of a baby
- Having a pregnancy that is unplanned
- Dealing with the physical changes of pregnancy
- Having a complicated pregnancy
- Being a single parent or teenager and wondering how you will cope
- Experiencing difficulties in your relationship, which could include family violence
- Being overloaded with advice from other people



- Experiencing financial difficulties
- Moving house
- Changes in your job
- Grief, such as a death in the family
- Drug and alcohol problems
- Past anxiety, depression or other mental illness



14.2 How Can Stress Affect Your Baby and You?

Stress can do much more than simply make you anxious. Over time, unmanaged stress can:

- Decrease your ability to sleep restfully
- Decrease your ability to eat enough nutritious food throughout your pregnancy
- Lead to high blood pressure, which is particularly dangerous during pregnancy
- Lead to headaches and other physical issues which can make pregnancy more difficult
- Lead to premature birth, which is associated with a number of health and developmental issues



The better you are able to avoid stress, and manage it effectively when it does arise, the better you'll be able to avoid the physical problems that could injure your baby.

14.3 How to Reduce Stress during Pregnancy?

(Get More Info in Training Guide...)





Stress

Relieving Mantra

Chapter 15



Child Stress Management Ideas



Kids may not have to worry about work, bills or what to cook for dinner, but that doesn't mean they don't face stress every day. Maybe your son gets butterflies before a class presentation, or maybe your daughter feels a little sick before every soccer game.



Every child is different, and so are their triggers and reactions to stress. It could make them sweat or fidget, or cause their hearts to pound. They may become distracted or even feel nauseous or dizzy. It's helpful for kids—and their parents, too—to know some active ways to deal with everyday stress.

15.1 What causes Stress for Children?

Many parents easily recognize the sources of stress in their own lives. But we often don't realize that children have very different—and sometimes unexpected—sources of their own.

- Outside sources such as expectations of families and friends can leave a child feeling overwhelmed and filled with anxiety. Peer pressure, bullying or



harassment is common in school but not something children often talk about with parents.

- Over-packed schedules at school, in sports or via other extracurricular activities can fill children with feelings of exhaustion and helpless and does not allow them enough time to relax and unwind. Many children are also not getting enough sleep, which can cause both physical and emotional stress.
- Sometimes the biggest stressor for children is self-imposed pressure. It is easy for children to feel like they are not good enough, especially in school, sports or other extracurricular activities.



- World news can also be a source of stress for children. Violent or disturbing images seen on television or discussions of terrorism, wars, and natural disasters may result in children feeling scared and fearful.
- Any major change in a child's life can be extremely stressful, such as relocating, divorce or death of a loved one.

15.2 Signs of Stress in Children



Often, children -- particularly younger kids -- are not able to fully articulate their feelings of stress and anxiety. In fact, the signs of stress in children may be quite subtle, such as stomach pains, headaches, or changes in behavior. You may also notice mood swings and sleep problems as well as difficulty concentrating at school.

If there have been any major changes in a child's life such as a move or a new sibling, parents should pay particular attention and look for possible signs of child stress. Even if you can't pinpoint a particular stress factor, your child may experience stress from something at school or other sources you are not aware of.



Keep track of her behavior and moods, and watch for any signs of problems. Ask her teacher about how she is doing at school and observe how she is interacting with friends and family members.

It's also worth talking to your child about what she may be feeling, even though she may not be able to articulate it in "grown-up" terms. Stick to questions about what she might



be worried about or things that might not be making her feel good. Generally, younger children do not fully understand the concept of words such as stress and anxiety.

15.3 How to Manage Stress in Your Children?

The key to helping kids manage stress is teaching them to problem-solve, plan and know when to say yes and no to activities and commitments. It isn't to make everything smooth and comfortable.

If you don't teach your kids how to manage stress, they will self-medicate with food, drugs, and alcohol. In other words, kids will reach for something to make them feel better right away, and usually, it won't be something healthy.

Here's how you can help your kids manage stress successfully:

(Get More Info in Training Guide...)



A Final Word - Conclusion

Stress can seem overwhelming. Stress can be isolating. Stress can be, well, stressful. But you are not alone; you shouldn't be ashamed; and you can overcome it.

Hopefully at this point, you have all the tools and knowledge you need to begin reducing and combating the stress in your own life.

This isn't going to be an easy ride. Stress for many of us has become a normal part of life and habits are hard to change.

But by using the techniques mentioned in this guide, you'll find that you can reduce your base level of stress and rebuild some of the damage to your brain caused by anxiety. What's more, implementing them will teach you to be more aware of your thoughts and better ability to control your anxiety levels and thereby steer your emotions.

Managing stress is all about taking charge: taking charge of your thoughts, your emotions, your schedule, your environment, and the way you deal with problems. The ultimate goal is a balanced life, with time for work, relationships, relaxation, and fun – plus the resilience to hold up under pressure and meet challenges head on.

It's time to wrestle back control of your mind. You tell your body when it needs to wake up and when it needs to focus. You decide what's worth worrying about. And when you're home and work is over, you use this power to allow yourself to rest, recover and forget all about the stresses of the day.

Once you can do all this, you'll find your mood improves, your productivity skyrockets and your health is greatly enhanced in both the long and short term.

Stress less, live more!



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