

FEEL STRESSED ? - Exercise Beats Stress

Work, traffic, taking the kids to activities, doctor and dentist appointments, paying the bills, supervising homework. Life today can be very stressful. How do we combat this and get some balance back into our lives? The answers are simple, try to organize your day, take time to rest (even if it is only 20 minutes), exercise daily, and eat properly so your body can function properly.

Stress can trigger an increase in our Cortisol (stress hormone) levels causing:

- Suppressed thyroid function
- Blood sugar imbalances such as hyperglycemia
- Impaired cognitive performance
- Decreased bone density
- Decrease in muscle tissue
- Higher blood pressure
- Lowered immunity and inflammatory responses in the body, slowed wound healing, and other health consequences
- Increased abdominal fat, which is associated with a greater amount of health problems than fat deposited in other areas of the body. Some of the health problems associated with increased abdominal fat are: heart attacks strokes, the development of, higher levels of "bad" cholesterol (LDL) and lower levels of "good" cholesterol (HDL), which can lead to other health problems!

To keep cortisol levels healthy and under control, the body needs to relax. You can learn to relax your body with different stress management skills, and you can make lifestyle changes in order to keep your body from reacting to stress in the first place.

Exercise is an integral part of dealing with stress. It can take your anger and frustration and channel it into a release of negative emotions. It takes your mind off your problems as you focus on strengthening your body. Another benefit of regular exercise is that you LOOK GOOD and that helps you feel good. You look in the mirror and like what you see. Your self esteem increases and you feel proud of your accomplishments. The social support is also a bonus. You meet new people who you can workout with, have fun and get stress relief at the same time. If you include a regular exercise regime in your lifestyle, a healthy body will be able to deal with illness and physical pain better and improve your chances to live a longer, healthier life.

Proper nutrition helps our body function more efficiently, providing the required amount of vitamins, minerals and nutrients that our organs and our muscles need to perform their daily functions. Combined with exercise it will help you feel energized ,stronger and elevate the bodys' metabolism which is paramount in burning fat.

So grab a friend, try yoga, swimming, walking, and join a gym. When joining a gym, be sure to find an experienced Personal Trainer to design a program to suit your goals and ensure that you are executing exercises properly. You do not want to risk injury. Even the experienced person would benefit from working with a trainer to keep their workouts up to date and avoid plateaus. Remember to rest, the hard work you put into your body comes to fruition with adequate rest between workouts.

Meditation is an excellent way to re-balance your body, mind and spirit. There are many relaxation tapes available at pharmacies and bookstores, listen to a few and find one you like. Find a quiet place where you will not be disturbed for at least 20 minutes. Sit comfortably, close your eyes and breathe deeply, exhaling slowly. Focus on each breathe, clearing your mind and soon you will feel your stress levels decrease. And last but not least, laugh! Laughter has be proven to reduce stress, so have fun, life is not so serious.

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