Too Stressed Out to De-Stress?

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Objectives

- Gain knowledge about stress
- Learn tips on stress relief
- Understand the stress relieving benefits of physical activity
- Learn how to incorporate exercise into daily routine
What is Stress?

- **Stressors** – Event/agent in the environment that causes stress.

- **Stress** – General state of the body, mind, and emotions when a environmental stressor has triggered a response.
Types of Stress

**Distress**
- Causes anxiety or concern
- Can be short- or long-term
- Is perceived as outside of our coping abilities
-Feels unpleasant
- Decreases performance
- Can lead to mental and physical problems

**Eustress**
- Motivates, focuses energy
- Is short-term
- Is perceived as within our coping abilities
- Feels exciting
- Improves performance
90 percent of Americans experience high stress levels once or twice a week.
Body Systems

**Sympathetic**
- Fight or Flight

**Parasympathetic**
- Rest and Digest
The Stress Response

- All stressors elicit a stress response (also known as a fight-or-flight response)
- Release of cortisol
Cortisol is an important hormone in the body, secreted by the adrenal glands.

**Positive Effects**
- A quick burst of energy for survival reasons
- Heightened memory functions
- A burst of increased immunity
- Lower sensitivity to pain
- Helps maintain homeostasis in the body

**Negative Effects**
- Impaired cognitive performance
- Blood sugar imbalances
- Decreased bone density
- Decrease in muscle tissue
- Higher blood pressure
- Lowered immunity
- Increased abdominal fat
Causes of Stress

External
- Comes from outside (i.e. external factors)

Internal
- Comes from within (our ability to respond to and deal with external stress)
Stress Recovery

- How fast you can recover from stress is the ability of your body to restore parasympathetic control.
- Body returns to homeostasis (a state of stability and balance in which body functions are maintained within a normal range)
Homeostasis

- Stress response - fight or flight, cortisol release, increase in blood pressure, heart rate, respirations.
- Stress recovery - hormone release bringing the body back down to normal (decrease blood pressure, heart rate, respirations)
Physical exercise is a form of stress. It engages all of the physiological systems that the fight-or-flight response triggers for physical survival.

Physical exercise is a very effective way to reduce stress and the most natural means to elicit the stress response.
Physical exercise may be a stress to the body, but in moderate amounts, it tends to regulate (balance) the body’s physiological functions.

Homeostasis is regained through “parasympathetic rebound.”
Choose leisure activities that balance the unique stresses of your job.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If your job requires...</th>
<th>Consider a complementary leisure activity such as...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sitting or mental concentration</td>
<td>Aerobic exercise</td>
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<tr>
<td>A controlled environment</td>
<td>Hiking in nature; adventure</td>
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<td>Boring task or no recognition</td>
<td>Competitive or achievement- oriented activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Responding to people demands</td>
<td>Solitary activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dealing with conflicts</td>
<td>Peaceful activities</td>
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<td>Working alone</td>
<td>Social activities</td>
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## Chronic Effects of Stress Vs. Exercise

### Health Benefit

<table>
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<th>Exercise</th>
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  - sleep quality
  - self-esteem
  - mental alertness
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  - percent of body fat

- **Exercise**
  - resting blood pressure
  - overall well-being
  - sense of self-reliance
  - perception
  - serum levels of cholesterol and triglycerides
  - resistance to colds and illness
Motivation

- Daily activities become easier to perform because you are stronger and have more endurance.
- Exercise generates energy
Chronic stress can lead to lower libido and other body chemicals
   - Lowers our ability to handle intense emotions and conflict

Exercise is a shared activity that promotes closeness
   - Couples that exercise together are more likely to stick to an exercise program
People that exercise often have higher levels of self-esteem and body image than their less active counterparts, according to Athletic Insight, the Online Journal of Sport Psychology.

Appearance and body weight are important to your self-esteem and body image.

- Weight training can increased muscle tone
- Cardiovascular exercise can deceased fat and total body weight
Physical Exercise

At the office exercises

- Squats behind chair
- Push ups on table
- Back lunges
- Dips on chair
- Abs on chair
Physical Exercise

At the office exercises

- Squats behind chair
- Push ups on table
- Back lunges
- Dips on chair
- Abs on chair
- Each exercise performed at your own pace for 15 seconds
- Move to the next exercise immediately
- 2 complete rotations
Tips on Sticking to a Program

- Set goals
- Put it on paper
- Make it fun
- Make exercise part of your daily routine
- Get others involved
- Reward yourself
- Be flexible
Resources for relaxation

Relaxation handout and stress journal

www.uky.edu/HR/Wellness
   /healthsmart
   /bodyshop
   /lunchandlearn
   /intune

http://www.innerhealthstudio.com/relaxation-downloads.html


http://www.myyogaonline.com/
Body Shop Fitness membership includes access to two fitness facilities, Group Fitness Classes, one-on-one exercise consultations, and training information.

All UK employees, retirees, spouses and sponsored dependents are eligible for Body Shop Fitness.

The fee for Body Shop Fitness will be deducted from your UK employee paycheck at the rate of $7 per month or $3.50 per biweekly period.
Work + Life Connections

- Work+Life Connections is a free, voluntary, confidential benefit. Employees are eligible for up to five consultations per year.

- Following are some reasons you might want to schedule a consultation:
  - Depression, anxiety, grief and other mental health concerns
  - Parenting, divorce, separation or family and relationship concerns
  - Stress management/relaxation skills
  - Work performance difficulties
  - Alcohol or drug concerns and assessments for self or family.
  - Dealing with and learning about new emotional or physical health diagnosis
  - Communication issues
  - Crisis counseling

- http://www.uky.edu/HR/WLC/
References

- http://www.helpguide.org/mental/stress_signs.htm
- Managing stress, principles and strategies for health and well-being
- http://www.meditationworkshop.org/meditation-exercises/relaxation-exercise/
- http://body-mechanix.com/2012/02/surprising-ways-that-exercise-can-improve-your-romantic-relationships/
- http://www.webmd.com/depression/features/exercise-and-depression-expert-q-a
Questions?