

# STOP THE STRESS

Secrets of a stress free life



By Mark Thompson

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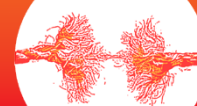
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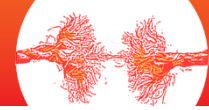
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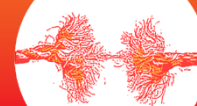
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## *Foreword*

Stress is defined as our body's way of responding to challenges. Also, it is generally perceived as a negative condition but in real context, it only becomes negative when we take things negatively.

It is only a state of mind that can be affected by outside forces, which in effect can influence both physical and mental well-being. There are many indications of stress overload.



## Chapter 1:

# Stress Overload Basics

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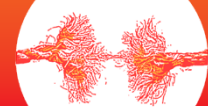
## *Synopsis*

Stress is reflected as part of our daily lives. It is common for us to feel stress when something bad happens or when we are given challenges that we can't handle. To name a few we have bad debts, work overload, personal and relational problems, wrong career, low income, few opportunities, sky rocketing bills, high tuition fees and more. When these things happen, we normally experience panic attacks, depression and hopelessness.

## *The Basics*

Here are the most common signs and symptom of stress that you should not ignore if you want to live a peaceful and happier life.

- 1. Excessive anxiousness.** Physical signs include irritability, poor sleeping habits, short breathing, trembling, dizziness, palpitation, muscle tension and slow mental functioning. It occurs when neurotransmitters, a chemical found in the brain is decreased. Anxiety can be reduced by taking antidepressants in order to supply the brain with a chemical deficit. To be able to control anxiety, combine exercise in your routine and you will notice the difference when your mind and body are relaxed and refreshed.
- 2. Prolonged depression.** Stress can possibly lead to depression which causes restlessness, tremendous weight loss, sadness, fatigue, irritability and poor sex drive. Some people have tendencies to commit suicide when depressed. In order to deal with it, meditation combined with medications can alleviate depression.
- 3. Too much alcoholism.** Stress overload can cause someone to become dependent on alcohol. A lot of people prefer to get drunk instead of solving their issues upfront. This is because it is easier to get drunk and forget your problem for a time than trying to keep things from falling apart. Physical signs of alcoholism include excessive drinking, nausea, vomiting, anger and confusion. A great medicine for alcoholism is acamprosate, naltrexone and disulfiram.



## Chapter 2:

# Understand How You Respond To Stress

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### *Synopsis*

For most of us, stress seems to be part of our daily life. However, our individual stresses differ according to how we take things altogether. In order for us to manage stress we need to first identify the things that cause us stress. Once we are aware of our stressors, we will be able to respond accordingly.

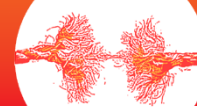
### *Know Yourself*

To substantiate, when we understand better how we normally react to stress, we will be able to successfully cope with it. Further, it is important for us to understand the way we act in response to stress as it would help us to know our limits and our strengths in surviving difficult challenges.

On the other hand, any change that will happen in our daily lives can possibly cause us stress in a certain level. Good and pleasurable thing can also become a cause of stress like sports, vacations, and other recreational activities. However we can expect that difficult situations like office meetings and long term planning can really cause us to feel stress.

All of us normally respond to stress and anxiety in a patterned way. The first stage is we recognize that we are stressed and we know how it affects us at a certain level. The next stage is we become more aware of the manifestations of stress and we respond to it the way we recognize it. Knowing how we respond to any stress will greatly help us in overcoming stress.

While our response to stress happens in pattern, our approach towards managing stress generally varies. We normally apply different physical, mental and even emotional activities to combat our stress.



## Chapter 3:

# Cognitive Signs And Symptoms Of Stress

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### *Synopsis*

For most of us because of the nature of our work, stress becomes part of our lifestyle. Moreover, we have to understand that stress is not always a bad thing. Its level of positivity or negativity depends largely on how we perceive things. Why did I say that? Man ageable stress can also be a good motivation to do things the right way as it challenges us to do our best one way or the other.

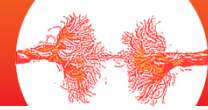
### *Watch For Signs*

However, when we get stressed too often, our mind and our body will be surely affected. To protect ourselves from the harmful effects of stress, we need to learn and recognize the signs of stress at its early stages so that we can easily manage it.

Let us understand first how our body responds to stress. When our body recognizes a threat, our nervous system instinctively releases stress hormones containing adrenaline and cortisol which are responsible for stimulating the body to prepare for an emergency action.

As a result, the normal response of our body is to fight from imminent danger. Normal manifestations are faster heartbeat, increase of blood pressure, shorter and faster breaths, muscle tension and the body's senses becomes even sharper. This body condition prepares us for fighting against any harmful threat.

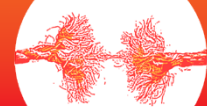
However, by hitting a certain level, stress stops being useful. Instead, it will start being the direct threat to our health, feelings and mindset which will eventually affect our productivity, relationships or worse our entire well-being.



Stress also has cognitive symptoms. When you are stressed you are likely to notice these cognitive symptoms:

1. Problems with sleeping
2. Disorganized and rushing thoughts
3. Memory problems
4. Excessive worrying
5. Difficulty in making decisions

Under stress, our brain functions differently. There are people that notice that when they are stressed or experiencing a bad situation, their brain functions more clearly. Thoughts come rushing and the brain becomes hyperactive. While it can be beneficial at times, the thing is when this happens every so often the brain cannot return to its normal state and function from being high and hyperactive. This will cause the brain to deteriorate. Which is why, too much stress is definitely damaging, not just to the body but to the mind as well.



## Chapter 4:

# Physical Signs And Symptoms Of Stress

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### *Synopsis*

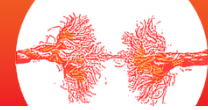
When we are under stress our mind and body sends out signs and symptoms. These warning signs are not an indication that you are sick because in the first place, stress is definitely not a type of ailment. It is the fight-flight response of our body that provides us more energy and speed when challenged by difficult situation.

### *Keep An Eye Out*

Furthermore, these symptoms should not be ignored as it could lead to a serious problem. We just need to understand however that these signs can be the same sign of having a disease, the only indication that would tell us it is stress related symptoms is when you know you are facing a difficult situation and you are having hard time dealing. So when you notice that your heart is pounding really fast don't fuss just yet as you are not having a heart attack, you might just be under stress.

Our mind and body is designed to cope with the fight-flight response of our nervous system which is characterized by speeding up of body functions. However, it is important that we recognize stress when it reaches a harmful level so that we can take the necessary actions to help our body functions go back to their normal state.

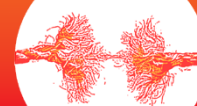
Unfortunately, there will be times that we can't recognize stress related symptoms because the manifestation is not physical and familiar, such as anger or wailing. Being familiar with the physical signs and symptoms of stress can help us save ourselves from the detrimental effect of stress.



Below are the common physical indicators of stress.

1. Short breaths
2. Increase heart rate
3. Dizziness
4. Fatigue
5. Diarrhea or Constipation
6. Indigestion
7. Hyperventilating
8. Upset stomach
9. Headaches
10. Excess sweating
11. Increased instances of colds or flu
12. Dry mouth

Address stress by applying recommended stress coping techniques such as cardio exercises, yoga, swimming and more. Whatever your preference is, make sure that you give proper attention to coping with stress overloads to stay healthy and happy.



## Chapter 5:

# How Much Is Too Much

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### *Synopsis*

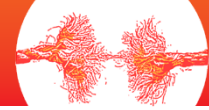
Be aware that when stress reaches a certain level it can be harmful. With different levels of stress at work, sometimes we cannot anymore identify harmful stress. The bad thing about not recognizing stress is that we might just wake up one day feeling sick, unmotivated and unhappy. Thus, it is very important that we recognize stress when it is already too high.

### *Regulate Your Stress Levels*

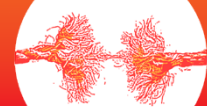
When can we say that our stress level is already too high? Here are ten warning signs that you should take proper consideration. Read through the list and see if you are experiencing such in your daily life.

You can say that it's already too much when:

1. You experience sudden anger. Have you noticed when you easily get angry and lash out the people near you like your partner, co-worker, friends or family members? If this is happening to you with no apparent reason, beware. You might be experiencing stress overload without you knowing it.
2. You are feeling beaten even with small things you do in your life. If you feel quite burdened by your normal routine and you are having that feeling of wanting to just go away and leave it all behind, you are overly stressed.
3. You worry too much without significant reason. If you find that you are worrying too much for almost the entire day, you have reached your limit of stress.
4. You are feeling depressed and unmotivated to work. If what interested you before doesn't interest you anymore. Or when you don't feel excited to do the things you used to do before for pleasure.



5. You easily get exhausted and despite being tired you find it hard to sleep because your mind is still thinking about so many concerns keeping you wide awake the whole night.
6. You are suffering from constant colds and when somebody else is having colds or fevers you easily catch the virus but your recovery is slower than usual.
7. You find it hard to concentrate as your mental capacity is deteriorating. Your memory is also fading making you forget even the thing you are doing just a while ago.
8. You are having mood swings. From happy to being sad to the point that you just want to burst out with tears for no reason at all.
9. You are starting to care less about yourself, your appearance, your relationship and your environment. It doesn't matter anymore if you don't brush your hair or say I love you to your partner like you always do.
10. You always lack time, like some evil took half of your day.



## Chapter 6:

# Effects Of Chronic Stress On The Brain

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### *Synopsis*

Stress as we all know is a constant part of our life. Whether we like it or not, it is present in our system and without it life wouldn't be as vigorous as it should be. Stress is an emotion we produce when we are being posed with difficult situations that cause our body to react as prevention to a rising challenge.

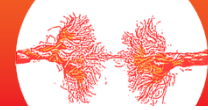
### *Damaging Effects*

Too much stress or a little of it will affect our effectiveness. As per stress indicators, it's not only shown physically but also emotionally and mentally. Below are the notable effects of chronic stress on our brain.

The hippocampus is one component of our brain that is responsible for consolidating long and short term memory, including the brain's spatial navigation. Chronic stress can significantly damage its function which can lead to destruction of neurons, short term memory reduction, contextual memory loss and weak endocrine response to chronic stress.

In order for us to beat stress to give way to a healthier brain we must be sure to allocate at least 20 minutes of meditation and relaxation per day. Yoga can be a good activity that can support that goal. Research shows that yoga can turn off the genetic factor activated by stress. Therefore regular yoga activity can dramatically reduce stress.

Other methods of relaxation and meditation are deep breathing, guided imagery, repetitive prayer, Tai chi, muscle relaxation, Qi gong and the like. Also, you can improve your lifestyle towards achieving a balanced and healthy brain by keeping your body active at least thirty minutes daily. Improve your diet by eating well balanced meals and drink a sufficient amount of water.



## Chapter 7:

# Effects Of Chronic Stress On The Body

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### *Synopsis*

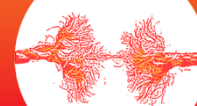
Long term stress can greatly affect our physical health regardless of age. It is not only detrimental physically but also mentally and emotionally. When we are facing difficult situations our body will send out chemicals commonly known as a fight-flight response. When this condition is sustained, the body and mind cannot rest from its abnormal state.

### *Damage To Your Body*

Our body and brain are intricately linked together which is why any change that happens between the two will create a physical change. For example, when our brain perceives a stressor it will insinuate physical reaction that will soon affect mental and emotional responses that can lead to physical damage. This is when you will experience headaches, muscle strain and many different disorders as a result of chronic stress.

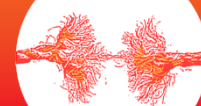
Our body is designed in such a way that can endure even excessive stress. Also, we have to understand that our body can easily cope with stress when appropriate action is taken. Above all, there are so many ways to get rid of stress overload that you can utilize to be able to gain back again good health and a clear mind.

However, if stress stays within us and left unattended it will possibly lead to many illnesses and emotional instability.



Below are the most common effects of chronic stress on our body that are non-life threatening and can be greatly improved when given proper attention and action.

1. Skin problems can be triggered by stress. There will be instances when you are stressed that you will develop acne, eczema and psoriasis. Having itchy skin can also be expected.
2. High blood pressures also known as hypertension can be acquired if we don't take proper care of our body, especially when we are highly stressed. It becomes dangerous soon as it will progress to kidney problems, heart failure and high stroke volume.
3. If you are stressed for a long period of time there is a huge possibility that you will develop heart problems. This is likely to happen to people who react to stress excessively.
4. Vulnerability to infection is high when you are stressed. This is because your immune system stays low and suppressed. When this happens, autoimmune diseases and allergic reactions will likely emerge.
5. Chronic stress can cause muscle pain as long term stimulation can cause muscles to tense which will eventually lead to severe back, neck and shoulder pain.



## Chapter 8:

# Effects Of Chronic Stress On Relationships

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### *Synopsis*

Couples frequently go through periods of change, every day bothers and emotional troubles cause tension in their relationships. We all have tension in our lives, whether it's job-related, financial, marital, or parental. It may cause uncomfortable mental and physical responses to life's events. This challenges your relationship.

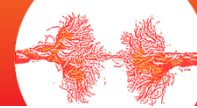
### *Don't Ruin Your Relationships*

It's crucial to comprehend how trying events affect your relationship. As you can't avoid it, you have to be able to understand and manage it. Discovering a way to have a conversation about what is causing you tension, where you both end the discussion feeling relieved and gratified, may make your relationship stronger. Here are a few tips on how to cope with tension in your relationship.

Tension is tricky. We frequently state "I'm so stressed out!" However, we may have trouble working out what is causing it. Take the time to discover what the issue is and then share it with your mate. Your mate might be able to help you deal with your tension. With increased awareness of what you're concerned about, he/she may think of ways to keep from adding to your tension.

Keep in mind that your mate might not think you have any reason to be stressed. Help him/her comprehend why you are. Respect each other's values and discover ways to work together on the roadblocks and challenges. Your mate may give you a different viewpoint and together you may brainstorm ways to solve the issue that's causing your tension.

Realize that not every issue (or stressor) has an answer, but talking about it and sharing your feelings may help you handle it.



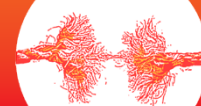
Comprehend that if you do not work out how to successfully handle tension with your mate, issues in your relationship might emerge.

You may become overwhelmed with activities that you truly do not have time for. This may cause issues in your relationship and with the entire family. The more time spent on additional things, the less time there is for the family.

Research has demonstrated that work tension is linked to unhappiness in marriage. Do not be a workaholic by choosing to stay connected through phones, emails and additional technology. This may cause your mate to feel lonely and will hurt your relationship.

Parents may feel like keeping up with every family member's schedule is a full time job. Scheduling the children's things and taking them to practices, games and events may get to be too much. To avoid family burn-out keep an eye out for signs of tension and cut down on activities as necessary.

When you're feeling overwhelmed and do not know how to get back on track to a healthy relationship, it's a great idea to take a relationship education course. Marriage education may give you the skills, data and resources you need to help manage your tension and make your relationship better. Make time to enjoy one another and work on your relationship.



## Chapter 9:

# Learn How To Relax

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### *Synopsis*

There's no magical formula for escaping the elevated levels of tension you face each day. That's why you need to learn how to unstrain your brain and cope with ongoing tension by taking care of yourself so that you may be your best.

Not sure where to start? Try one of these time-tested relaxation techniques. And remember, it won't feel natural immediately. As a matter of fact, it may not feel natural to you for quite some time. But learning to de-stress is a gift you deserve to give to yourself, and it's one you will never regret.

### *Relaxation, The Best Gift*

Learn how to unwind, whether you are taking a quick break during a busy working day, or you are teaching yourself to unwind after the youngsters are in bed.

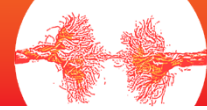
Use yoga. What's amazing about Yoga is that it relaxes both your brain and your body. If you've never tried it, you could be surprised to find out that it's really an astonishing workout, and it's a amazing way to heal the effects that tension has on your whole body.

The advantages of regular meditation include physical, mental, emotional and spiritual welfare. Give yourself twenty minutes a day to practice breathing techniques from meditation practices.

Is there somewhere else you'd rather be right now? Transport yourself to a different place and time with this simple relaxation strategy from guided imagery techniques.

One good way to reduce tension is to reduce the clutter around you so that you are surrounded by clarity rather than bedlam. Learn how get organized.

Do you feel like you are always missing appointments and forgetting crucial events? Learn to reduce tension by keeping track of everything, utilizing an easy and efficient calendar system.

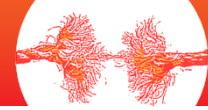


A different way to reduce tension is to surround yourself with sounds that soothe your body and soul. Use great relaxing music.

Do away with the damaging thoughts that course through your brain, and replace them with favorable, encouraging words to lift your spirits and help you continue to press on.

A guided meditation may erase your tension that presses upon you and leaves you feeling fresh and capable. Consider guided meditation MP3 files so you may listen to it with your eyes closed.

Do you need a little pampering? Learn to relax by giving yourself a facial or soak in a hot tub with beautiful essential oils.



## Chapter 10:

# The Benefits Of Not Getting Into The Stress Cycle For Your Health

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### *Synopsis*

Tension is useful. Healthy tension is the body's way of preparing to protect itself. Regrettably, most individuals experience too much tension. They're stressed for lengthened periods, and the physical mechanisms meant for protection begin to cause more damage than good. The term "tension management" is a useful one: It means the power to control the natural tension in our lives and the skill to keep it from drowning and harming us.

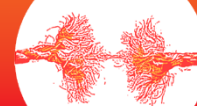
### *Less Stress Better Health*

Unchecked tension may weaken the immune system. A recent study found short-term tension enhances the immune system. That's if the body prepares itself to fight infection or injury. Chronic tension, the study demonstrated, creates too much "wear and tear"; the system of rules falters. The study likewise noted that older people and those with chronic illness are even more likely to be adversely affected by tension. The strategies of tension management decrease, and possibly eliminate, chronic tension and help the body bounce back fast after nerve-racking periods.

A medical center which has special preventive and healing platforms for individuals with heart conditions, says that the link between heart conditions and tension is "undeniable." They assert that tension management provides strategies for handling daily tension with grace, humor and control. That helps prevent unhealthy changes in pulse rate and blood pressure.

A recent paper discloses that evidence links the onset of major depression to tension. With tension management, you learn strategies to catch early signs of depression and choose steps to stop the downwards spiral. You could be able to turn your mind in a different, mood-lightening direction. Even if your own efforts can't change or stop the blues, your knowledge of tension

management may give you the incentive to acquire professional help and support before the depression gets tougher.



As you learn to handle tension, you will find that you have skills to deal with difficult situations. Life throws a lot of these our way, however we may become adept at coping with---and occasionally even enjoying--the challenges. When we are over-stressed, even the littlest inconvenience takes on gigantic proportions. Through tension management, we learn how to put things in perspective. With that, we may separate the crucial from the trivial and make time for recreation, relaxation and joy in our lives.

## Wrapping Up

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Isn't it your desire to live a life that is full of joy? Wouldn't it be nice to be able to manage your stress effectively? Getting over loaded on stress is a serious issue that can have serious consequences, not only on your mood but on your health as well. Thankfully, it is possible to manage stress and to keep from becoming over loaded. The key is to pay attention to your body's signs and symptoms and to intervene early on in the stress stages. You could have a much calmer life with much less stress all you need to do is apply the information you have learned while reading this book. I hope you enjoyed and good luck!