

STRESS!

by Rob Bush 09_01_06

Stress. We all deal with it in some form or fashion each and everyday. Stress is a common part of life. There is no escaping the fact that we all have to face it and hopefully deal with it in an appropriate, positive manner. From struggling to make ends meet financially, to relationships and kids, to the demands of the boss at work, stress is found in all aspects of life. Stress is generally defined as, "forces from the outside world impinging upon the individual."

Not all stress should be considered bad. A person needs to have a fair amount of stress to learn how to handle situations and circumstances properly. Stress can help teach a person to become stronger and more resilient. For example, exercise is a form of positive stress because of the benefits it provides physically, mentally and emotionally. Challenges and goals in life which will enable a person to grow and benefit are forms of good stress because they help a person to dig a little deeper and reach a little higher. This builds confidence in people. Stress is needed and should never be considered all bad.

It is the bad stress in life, which can have many adverse effects on a person. High stress levels due to the challenges of life can lead to a hoard of health problems such as high blood pressure, anxiety & depression, stomach ulcers, insomnia, not to mention weaken the immune system making a person more susceptible to colds & flus and many other ailments including diseases. Stress can actually affect the genetic make up of DNA in the body. Bad stress is the catalyst toward many, many health problems people face.

There are proven ways for people to reduce and help eliminate many of the effects that stress causes. Let's take a look at some of the things people can and should be doing to help deal with stress and its effects properly.

1) EXERCISE. When a person exercises, he or she is literally medicating the body naturally with endorphins. Endorphins bring a sense of euphoria that just make you feel good. Ever notice how good you feel after an intense work out versus how you felt before you got started? Exercise is not hard to do. Whether you want to go for a brisk, 20 minute walk, or hit the local health club for some weight training or aerobics, exercise is the vital for a healthy life. A hard day at the office will melt away with a good work out. Make exercise a regular part of your lifestyle.

2) Laugh. Laughing is such a powerful stress reliever in that it stimulates the entire immune system. Laughing can eliminate depression. Make it a point to laugh each day even if you don't have anything to laugh about. Laugh dammit!

3) Smile. The physical act of smiling strengthens the immune system causes the release of endorphins. Smiling just makes you feel good and goes hand in hand with laughing.

4) Sleep. Getting 8 hours of sleep a night is a must for the body to heal and rejuvenate itself. Lack of sleep is hard on the body and weakens the immune system. Don't be afraid to take a cat nap too whenever you can. Proper rest reduces stress.

5) Music. Music is a force to itself and influences people on a subconscious level. Ever notice how athletes will listen to up tempo, loud hard music to get psyched up for a game or when getting ready to perform? The same is true when learning to destress. Take time out and listen to relaxing music. Learn to enjoy the soothing sounds of classical music like Mozart or Beethoven or something that is slow and relaxing. Music can positively affect stress levels.

6) People. People are a product of their environment. You become what you surround yourself with. Stay in the company of positive people who are encouraging and successful in life. Avoid the company of negative people who can only bring you down. Nobody wants to hang around Debbie Downer or Negative Ned. Encourage positive relationships in your life.

7) Avoid news. We live in a world that is BOMBARDED by a negative media. This media is constantly reporting on tragedies and sad events 24/7. From war to murders to hurricanes to plagues, the media has nothing good to report and nothing good to say. Constantly ingesting this crap will adversely affect your mind. Watching the news will give you a fatalistic view on life and lead you to believe the world is coming to an end. This is a stress no one needs. Be realistic and take time to understand the world we live in, but do not rely on the media for anything good.

8) Pray. Whether you choose to believe in a higher power or not, research has proven prayer to be a strong force to reducing stress. Talking to God will bring one a sense of peace and comfort to be able to press on in an every changing, crazy world. Often times taking proper care of spiritual health is what is lacking in a persons life. Taking time daily to pray will reduce stress and enable you to perform better. No joke.

9) Pets. Having a pet is an enjoyable experience. Pets give unconditional love and do not judge you. Loving and caring for a pet reduces stress. Simply put, pets bring joy to life where people can't. Go buy a cat or dog today!

10) Find your purpose. Leading a rewarding life can be found in figuring out what your purpose and role in life is. This is different for everybody. Some people know their purpose early in life and go after and achieve all their goals. People who know their purpose are happier and have much less stress. Even people who appear to be surrounded by terrible stress may not be stressed out at all. Such as an emergency room doctor in an inner city. If that person knows in their heart they are doing what they were called to do, the stress around them may not be stressful to them. Understand my point? Some people take many years to find their purpose in life. That is okay for we all learn at different times in our lives and grow at different rates. The key is to do things that make you happy and stress will not be such a terrible problem. Do positive activities that bring joy and a sense of well-being. Reach out and help people. Try new things. Live life with passion and treat everyday like it could be your last. I believe in doing this, you can find your purpose, which in turn will make stress vanish.

Stress is a fact of life. It is how you react to stress that will determine success in reducing it as a negative force in your life. Practicing just one of the above mentioned methods will no doubt help in reducing stress and its effects. Try it for yourself and witness the wonderful benefits.

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Rob began training back in the early 80's being drawn to working out by some of the bodybuilding's great names. He is a fitness enthusiast who raced amateur motocross for 3 years in the late 80s. Rob dove into power lifting back the mid 90's and plans to begin recruiting clients to personal train R-Style in the Macon area. Rob is also a well-accomplished trumpet player who has performed in various ensembles through the years from grade school thru college and beyond. He studied privately for 6 years. Fitness-wise, Rob has worked in several training centers over the years.