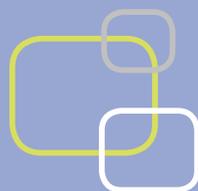


identifying & reducing
stress in the workplace

a clear guide for managers
& staff



RoodlaneMedical

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Introduction

Stress affects every individual differently. The ability to tolerate stress and ways in which people deal with it vary enormously. Stress is also addictive and whilst some situations may be seen as stressful by most people, their ability to cope may depend on whether they have friends and family to offer support and what other problems they have in their life.

Personality also makes a big difference, minor problems may cause stress for some people and not for others. But the good news is that it is possible to increase the tolerance that you have for stress and learn coping mechanisms to use when you need to relax. The first key is to recognise stress in yourself and in your colleagues.

 Acknowledging the problem
means that you can begin to
deal with it. 

What is Stress?

There are two main elements to stress, they are separate but closely linked, the physical and the psychological.

At the **psychological** level stress is most simply described as a feeling of being **overwhelmed** or **unable to cope**. This leads to frustration, despondency and a sense of poor self-esteem. This can result in poor work performance and problems with relationships both at work and at home. It is both unpleasant and unproductive.

At the **physical** level stress pushes your body to run on adrenaline in a state of continuous “fight or flight”. This is a normal physical response to danger, which prepares the body to use muscular strength to run or fight. It was not designed to be anything other than a short term response, kept going for days/weeks/months it causes considerable damage and results in many of the physical symptoms of stress.

Recognising the symptoms of stress in yourself and others

The following table is a guide to recognising the symptoms of stress in yourself and your colleagues. Some of these symptoms can be normal for some people, for example it is normal for some of us to lose our temper more easily than others. The important point to recognise is that when our own behaviour or a colleagues changes it can be a warning sign of a build-up of stress.

Physical

COMMON SYMPTOMS	RECOGNISABLE SIGNS IN YOURSELF	RECOGNISABLE SIGNS IN OTHERS	PRACTICAL WAYS TO REDUCE STRESS
POOR SLEEP	Broken sleep. Waking early. Difficulty going to sleep. Not be able to get back to sleep if you are woken up in the night. Drowsiness during the day.	Clumsiness/Accidents. Deteriorating Performance. Arriving Late.	Keep a notepad by the bed – jot down any worries and deal with them in the morning. Never work in the bedroom. Use “10 steps to better sleep”
STOMACH PROBLEMS	Digestion problems. Abdominal pain. Disturbed bowel.	Unexplained weight changes.	Eat breakfast. Don't skip meals. Increase your fluid intake. Review your diet - stop caffeine and “fast food”
EXCESSIVE TIREDNESS	Difficulty in getting up. Feeling tired all day.	Clumsiness / accidents. Loss of care in personal appearance. Deteriorating work performance. Poor concentration.	Review diet / sleep / lifestyle. Rationalise work and home commitments. Take some personal time to “recreate” yourself.
FREQUENT MINOR ILLNESSES	Colds; stomach upset; feeling “under the weather” Not getting over minor illness as quickly as usual.	Always run down. Increased time off work for minor ailments.	Have a two week “health drive” Get plenty of sleep. Stop alcohol and caffeine. Take vitamins. Start a regular exercise programme.

Psychological

COMMON SYMPTOMS	RECOGNISABLE SIGNS IN YOURSELF	RECOGNISABLE SIGNS IN OTHERS	PRACTICAL WAYS TO REDUCE STRESS
DIFFICULTIES WITH RELATIONSHIPS, WITH COLLEAGUES & FAMILY	Becoming more short-tempered. Losing patience easily. Change in how you interact with others. Arguments with family over irrelevant things.	Increase Eating / Drinking / Smoking. Argumentative. Hostile.	Include personal time in your list of priorities - give yourself some space. Make regular contact with friends / family. Learn a relaxation technique.
POOR CONCENTRATION / INABILITY TO FOCUS	Becoming easily side-tracked. Not completing tasks before moving on.	Deteriorating Performance. Clumsiness/Accidents. Loss of Care in Personal Appearance.	Apply time management techniques. Complete one task before moving to next. Learn to concentrate on what you are doing rather than allowing your mind to drift. Meditate
ANXIETY	Feeling helpless / not in control. Overwhelming emotions. Feelings of panic. Loss of confidence.	Increase in eating / drinking / smoking. Long hours but unproductive. Loss of confidence. Hostility or unpredictable behaviour.	Rationalise your fears. List your problems and tackle them one at a time. Learn a relaxation technique.

The wrong strategies

These are the things we tend to do under stress which don't help. They may look all too familiar.

INCREASED

Eating
Drinking
Smoking
Caffeine

REDUCED

Sleep
Exercise
Time with family/friends
Leisure

All of this reduces your energy and makes you less able to deal with the extra stress.

The right strategies

THE PHYSICAL APPROACH
THE PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH
THE LIFESTYLE APPROACH

THE PHYSICAL APPROACH

If your body is fit and healthy your mind will follow suit. If you can't do anything about the stress in your life you can still take control by getting fit.

Exercise is a great relaxer, it leaves you feeling energised and positive. Hard to believe? - try it regularly for 4 weeks and then see how you feel.

Most people in the city don't exercise because they believe they don't have the time -we can all make time and as you get fitter the extra energy makes you more efficient and you will find that you have more time because of the exercise not less.

Don't believe it? - then try it. You need regular vigorous exercise for 20 minutes or more, 5 days a week to feel better and even if time is a problem 20 minutes on an exercise bike in front of the TV is fine. Be realistic and choose something you can enjoy and a time and place you are likely to achieve.

Stress can lower your immunity and make you tired, run down and vulnerable to every cough and cold. A good quality multivitamin with additional selenium (a trace element which is lacking in many people's diets) can help..

Complimentary therapies can be useful and there is a herbal remedy - St John's Wort (hypericum perforatum) which actually works in a very similar way to modern antidepressants such as Prozac but can be bought without a prescription. This is sold as tablets or capsules and has become widely recognised by mainstream medicine.

New evidence shows that St John's Wort (hypericum perforatum) can interfere with several other drugs including the contraceptive pill. Before you start taking St John's Wort, check with your doctor before taking it, if you are on any medication.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH

Relaxation techniques can be learned and you can get good enough at them to do them quite quickly if you start to feel stressed.

They work by turning off the “fight or flight” response through mental relaxation. The pulse slows and blood pressure falls, the skin becomes warmer and digestion improves as blood flows to the gut and the bowel muscle relaxes.

There are a variety of ways of achieving this through meditation, visualisation or autogenic relaxation. Books and tapes describing methods are available in most bookshops and some health food shops.

Visualise a peaceful picture. Sit or lie comfortably in a quiet place where you won't be disturbed. Quieten your breathing down until it is slow and steady. Visualise a tranquil and peaceful scene, choose one that has significance for you. A place which holds happy memories is a good choice, take time to find an idyllic setting which gives you a sense of spiritual freedom and calm.

Imagine yourself into the scene taking time to notice all the details of sound, colour and smell. Do this slowly and think about the elements that are important to you, identify them and use them to bring you more strongly into the visualization. With practice you can learn to do this quite quickly and you will find that it can uplift your spirit even on the most difficult days.

THE LIFESTYLE APPROACH

Instead of doing all the wrong things which is so easy to do under pressure, try doing all the right things. Taking extra care of your body will leave your mind clearer, brighter and more relaxed.

Sleep is often the first thing to suffer under stress and putting it right can make all the difference.

10 Steps to better sleep

01 A REGULAR PATTERN

Waking at the same time each day sets your “body clock” and avoids that early morning tiredness which is often worse on Monday because you have slept in at the weekend. Getting up late on some mornings means that when you get up early for work your body still wants to be asleep, very much like jet lag. If you need extra sleep go to bed early but try never to change your waking time by more than an hour. Not convinced? Try it and see!

02 THE RIGHT SETTING

The bedroom should be quiet, warm and comfortable. Good curtains muffle noise and block unwanted light. The bed should be the best you can afford, think how much time you spend in it.

03 BEDTIME ROUTINE

Children need routine and so do adults. If you prepare for bed with a bath or shower, a little reading or a hot drink your mind will automatically recognise the routine and start to relax.

04 KEEP THE BEDROOM FOR BED

Bed is not the place to work, eat or watch television. It should be reserved for relaxation and sleep.

05 NO DAYTIME NAPS

Our bodies run on 24 hour clocks (circadian rhythms) which tell us when to be alert and when to be drowsy. Daytime sleeping disrupts these rhythms and confuses the clock. This simply increases the overall sense of fatigue and disturbs sleep at night.

06 AVOID CAFFEINE, NICOTINE AND ALCOHOL

All of these disrupt normal sleep. Alcohol may seem like a good idea to relax and sometimes a small amount is, but it damages your sleep pattern and can cause early waking (that 4am feeling) it also leaves you with poor concentration and fatigue the next day.) Caffeine may also seem to help you keep going but too much destroys sleep, it is also addictive, it dehydrates you, can cause anxiety and palpitations. Keep it to two or three cups a day and avoid it after about 2 p.m.

07 AVOID HEAVY LATE MEALS

Eat well before bedtime and keep your evening meal light and easy to digest. As well as aiding good sleep this will ease digestive problems and help with weight.

08 AVOID EXERCISING LATE AT NIGHT

Exercise is a physical and mental stimulant. The best time to work out is in the morning or midday, early evening is fine if it suits you better but late at night is the worst time.

09 SOLVE YOUR PROBLEMS OR SET THEM ASIDE

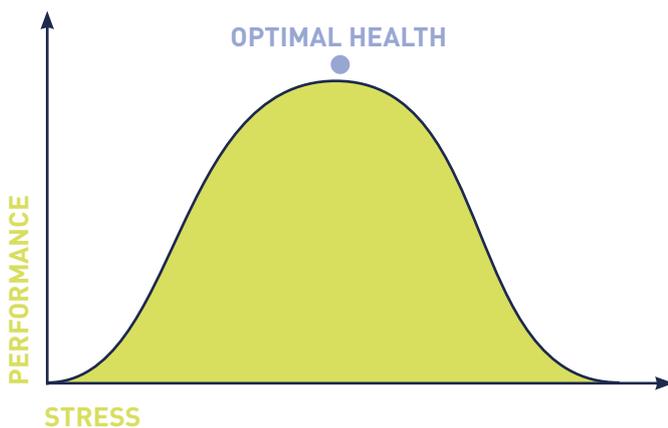
Taking problems to bed, whether they are related to work or home achieves nothing. If you are worried about something and can deal with it before bed then do so, if not, then leave it outside the bedroom door and tackle it the next day. This is easier said than done, but it definitely gets easier with practice.

10 RELISH YOUR SLEEP AND PRIORITISE IT

People often reduce their sleep time when they are busy and stressed, this is the worst thing you can do. Sleep refreshes and restores, it allows us to stay alert and creative. It is also a great pleasure, never cheat yourself of your sleep, it should be a priority.

Impact on work

A certain amount of stress is a positive force. Most people need some demands or goals in order to reach the best of their potential. This can be described graphically as below, this is called the “inverted U” curve and shows the way in which a certain amount of pressure can push us to perform but excessive pressure causes deteriorating performance, and health.



The problems start when you go beyond the level of stress that works for you and start to slide down the other side of the curve.

There is no scale on the graph because of the considerable variation in where peak performance lies for different people but it is true of everyone that beyond a certain point they will begin to decompensate and start to fall apart, or at least crack a little at the edges! People often don't realise what is happening to them and may just try to push themselves even harder.

It is not a static curve, you can actively work to increase your ability to cope.

Sometimes the stress is avoidable; If you know that a certain time of year is busy at work you need to avoid other stresses at the same time. This is all about recognising that there are limits to what you can manage effectively and staying within them. It doesn't mean achieving less, you will probably achieve more as you learn to pace yourself.

Sometimes the stress is unavoidable and it is at these times that you need all the strategies you can find to push your tolerance of stress up. And you can! Some lucky souls are born with a high tolerance of stress but even they can benefit from polishing their skills. For the rest of us these coping skills can be a lifeline.

Autogenic Relaxation

Autogenic means self-generating. This means that you do the procedure to yourself. It also refers to the self-healing nature of autogenics. Autogenic training has been shown to have physiological as well as psychological benefits.

PHYSIOLOGICAL: The heart rate, respiratory rate, muscle tension and serum cholesterol level all decrease. Alpha brain waves increase. Blood flow to the arms and legs increase.

PSYCHOLOGICAL: Autogenic training has been found to reduce anxiety and depression, decrease tiredness, and help people increase their resistance to stress. Autogenics can aid those with chronic illnesses that result in pain (i.e. Arthritis) to tolerate that pain better.

Autogenic training is a relaxation technique that uses exercises to bring about the sensations of the body, warmth and heaviness in the limbs and torso and then uses relaxing images to expand physical relaxation to the mind.

BODY POSITION

1. Reclining - as for Progressive relaxation.
2. Sitting - the advantages of sitting are that you:
 - can relax almost anywhere
 - are less likely to sleep

Use a straight backed chair and keep head aligned with torso. The arms and hands can relax on the arms of the chair or in your lap. Make sure your body is relaxed and supported by as little muscular concentration as possible.

6 initial stages of Autogenic training

- 01 Focus on sensations of heaviness throughout the arms and legs (beginning with dominant arm or leg).
- 02 Focus on sensations of warmth throughout the arms and legs (beginning with the dominant arm or leg).
- 03 Focus on sensations of warmth and heaviness in the area of the heart.
- 04 Focus on breathing.
- 05 Focus on sensations of warmth in the abdomen.
- 06 Focus on sensations of coolness in the forehead.

Autogenic relaxation is a blend of relaxation and meditation. The use of your imagination and self-suggestion will have a definite effect on your mental well-being. Practise this exercise for 15-20 minutes daily.

- 01 Establish a quiet environment.
- 02 Make yourself comfortable in a reclining position.
- 03 Make no effort at all.
- 04 Use verbal messages to focus on a particular area of the body.
- 05 Start with the thought - "I am relaxed and at peace with myself".
- 06 Breathe deeply in and out.

STAGE 1

Focus the mind on the area of the body. Start by saying silently - "my right arm is heavy". Think of an image of the arm -visualise it completely relaxed and supported. Feel its weight. Repeat this phase a few times. Then proceed to the right leg... the left leg... left arm... neck... shoulders... back and all the other areas of your body. At each area, sense a feeling of heaviness and maintain a pensive feeling in the process.

STAGE 2

Begin with the right arm, concentrate on it as you say to yourself - "My right arm is warm". Repeat several times. Proceed through all the above areas of your body - pausing at each to feel warm sensations.

STAGE 3

This stage focuses on the breathing cycle with the phrase “my breathing is calm and regular”. No effort should be made to control the breathing. It should remain automatic. Repeat the phrase and observe the sensations that accompany it. Continue for several minutes.

STAGE 4

“My forehead is cool”-repeat this phrase for several minutes. This appears to produce a combination of alertness and relaxation. Sense coolness as a pleasant sensation. “My breathing is calm and regular”. “My forehead is cool”. “I am alert and refreshed”.

STAGE 5

Complete the exercise by using the phrase -“I am alert and refreshed”. Breathe deeply. Stretch. Return to the day’s activities.

WORD BY WORD AUTOGENIC PHRASES AND IMAGES

PREPARATION

First, get into a comfortable position. While you are finding a good position you will also want to loosen any tight clothing. Become as comfortable as possible.

Let your mouth drop for a moment and move your jaw gently from side to side. Now, close your mouth slowly, keeping your teeth slightly apart. Take a deep breath... breathe in so the air flows into your lungs and feels as though it 's filling up your stomach area. Now breathe out slowly... feel yourself floating down.

BREATHING - SMOOTH AND RHYTHMIC

Focus your attention completely and fully on your breathing. Imagine your breathing is as automatic as the ocean waves, rolling in...and out...in ...and out. Silently say to yourself, “breathing, smooth and rhythmic...”, “...breathing, smooth and rhythmic”... “my breathing is effortless and calm...” “breathing, smooth and rhythmic ...”

As you breathe, imagine relaxation flowing over your body, one wave after another. Feel the waves of relaxation moving through your chest and shoulders. Down into your arms, through your back muscles. Down into your hips and legs. With each wave of relaxation, try to feel the heaviness and warmth in your arms and your legs. Now, I want you to think, still in a passive way, about wave after wave of relaxation. Concentrate on the relaxation moving upward from your lungs in waves, up and across your face and scalp.

TRANQUILITY AND HEART RATE CALMING

Your mind is becoming more passive and tranquil, and you have a placid, relaxed awareness of the feelings of relaxation throughout your body. All of the tensions and worries will slip away from you as you feel waves of relaxation flooding over you. There is a growing feeling of warmth and heaviness in your arms and legs and a passive awareness of your state of relaxation.

“I feel very quiet, and my heartbeat is calm and regular...”

Remember how you imagined the waves rolling in and out to help you breathe effortlessly. Try feeling that again as you now imagine your heart beating. Silently say to yourself “my heartbeat is calm and regular...”, “my heartbeat is calm and regular...” “I feel very quiet, and my heartbeat is calm and regular...” “my whole body is deeply relaxed and my heartbeat is calm and regular...” “my heartbeat is calm and regular...”

RIGHT ARM AND HAND - HEAVY AND WARM

These feelings of relaxation, passivity and peace will now become more and more profound as you concentrate on just your right hand and arm. Focus all your attention on your right hand and your right arm. In fact, just to make sure you have made mental contact with your right arm and hand, lightly touch these areas with your left hand.

While you gently stroke your right hand and arm, say to yourself “My right arm and hand are so heavy and warm, warmth is flowing into my arm and down to my hand...” Let your left hand return to a resting position, if you have not already done so.

Continue silently to repeat to yourself, “My right arm and hand are so heavy and warm, warmth is flowing into my arm and down to my hand, and it feels pleasantly warm...” Remember, you do not want to try to force any of these things to happen, just allow them to happen. They will occur naturally and gently as you passively continue to focus on your right arm and hand and the feelings of heaviness and warmth.” My right arm and hand are so heavy and warm, warmth is flowing into my arm and down to my hand...”

At this time, carefully study the feelings in your arm and hand to the feelings of heaviness and warmth. You may use any thoughts you care to in order to imagine your right arm and hand becoming warm. You can imagine that they are in warm water or that the warm sun is beating down on them. Continue repeating to yourself “My right arm and hand are so heavy and warm, warmth is flowing into my arm and down to my hand, and it feels pleasantly warm...”

LEFT ARM AND HAND - HEAVY AND WARM

Now, I would like you to turn your attention to your left hand, wrist and arm. Concentrate on this area of your body and focus all your attention there. If you need to, gently touch it as you silently repeat, "My left arm and hand are so heavy and warm, warmth is flowing into my arm and down to my hand..." "My left arm and hand are so heavy and warm, warmth is flowing into my arm and down to my hand..." "My left arm and hand feel pleasantly warm..."

The feelings of warmth may be deepening by imagining the sun shining on your left hand and arm. Continue saying words while focusing on your left arm and hand: "My left arm and hand are so heavy and warm, warmth is flowing into my arm and down to my wrist and hand..."

Become fully aware of the feelings in your left arm and hand, and be sure to keep out all other thoughts as you continue to focus on heaviness and warmth in your left arm and hand. If other thoughts come into your mind, you will find it impossible to let them go as quickly as they came. You are passively concentrating in heaviness and warmth. Simply let these things happen to you. Continue silently to repeat to yourself, "My left arm and hand are so heavy and warm, warmth is flowing into my arm and down to my hand..."

Can you feel the relaxation? Does your arm feel as if you would need help to lift it? Maybe the warmth reminds you of the summer sun. However you describe it is fine, as long as it is pleasant for you. Just continue to feel the heaviness and warmth and feel the relaxation.

BOTH ARMS AND HANDS - HEAVY AND WARM

Now, I want you to focus on both of your arms and hands at the same time, as you say to yourself, "My arms and hands are so heavy and warm, warmth is flowing into my arms and down to my hands..." "My arms and hands are so heavy and warm, warmth is flowing into my arms and gently down into my wrists, hands and fingertips and they feel very pleasant..."

Very good. You are relaxing all over as your arms become very heavy and warm. As the warmth flows into your hands, you will feel your whole body relaxing. You are letting everything go, all cares and worries are far away. This is your time to think only of pleasant relaxation and the feelings it brings. It is better for you if you think of nothing but the way your body feels. Let all other thoughts leave your mind.

This is your time to think only of pleasant relaxation and the feelings it brings.

Once again, focusing on both arms, think to yourself: "My arms and hands are so heavy and warm, warmth is flowing into my arms and down to my hands..." Continue passively to concentrate on your arms being heavy and warm. Be sure you gently push out any other thoughts.

In our modern society, the mind is often not used to being quiet and relaxed and it tends to wander. If you find this happening, do not become upset or disappointed. Just bring your mind back to the thought "My arms and hands are heavy and warm, warmth is flowing into my arms and down to my hands..."

Take some time now while you keep your arms very heavy and warm and check around your body to see if there is tension in any muscle. Check all around. Is your jaw loose and slack and are your eyelids gently closed? Be sure the muscles in your face are relaxed. You are being very relaxed and you feel loose and limp - just like an old rag doll. You really are relaxed, as you continue to practise Autogenic relaxation.

LEGS AND FEET - HEAVY AND WARM

Now, I want you to focus on your legs. If you need to, make contact with your legs by touching them and becoming more aware of them. Notice whether they are touching the surface on which is spreading down from your arms to your legs. Let it happen.

Passively allow the warmth to spread as you silently say to yourself: "My legs are so heavy and warm, warmth is flowing into my feet." "My legs are so heavy and warm, warmth is flowing into my feet..." "My legs are so heavy and warm, and the warmth is pleasantly flowing into my legs and down into my feet all the way to the very tips of my toes..." "My legs are so heavy and warm, warmth is flowing into my feet..."

Very good. Now I want you to focus on all your limbs, arms and legs together. Become very aware of your arms and your legs. Repeat silently to yourself "My arms and legs are so heavy and warm..." "My feet and hands are heavy and warm, warm and heavy..."

"Warm and pleasant feelings are sinking into every part of my arms, hands, legs and feet..." "My arms and legs are very limp, the muscles in my arms and legs are letting go, and I am becoming more and more relaxed..."

ALL THE LIMBS - HEAVY AND WARM

Take a deep breath...breathe in so that the air flows into your lungs and feels as though it is flowing way down into your stomach area. Breathe very deeply down into your stomach area and, as you breathe out, say to yourself "I am calm".

These are very important words that I want you to use only when you are relaxed, very deeply relaxed. These will be summing-up words, which you will say when you feel deeply relaxed "I am calm..." Take a deep breath and say, "I am calm".

Eventually you will be able to relax yourself by simply thinking the words "I am calm". When the day is going badly or you are caught in a traffic jam, you will be able to control your stress by saying "I am calm". You will remember the feelings of deep relaxation that you are feeling now.

Whenever things make you nervous, whether it is meeting new people, asking your boss for a pay increase, or talking to large groups, you will find you can relax yourself by simply thinking the words, "I am calm". At first, be sure to say it only when you are deeply relaxed. After practising, you can begin to use it in everyday life.

RETURN TO ACTIVITY

Now as we complete this Autogenic practice, take a deep breath and slowly let it out. Now, I want you to see yourself lying in the room where you started these exercises. Imagine yourself back where you were when you started these exercises, safe, secure and pleasantly relaxed. You will enjoy a good feeling every time you do these exercises and you will feel more and more relaxed.

Back in the place where you started your relaxation, the environment will seem slower and calmer, and you will be more relaxed and peaceful.

One, relaxed, but more alert...Two, mentally wide awake...Three, eyes open, alert and refreshed.

If you plan to return immediately to a physical activity, follow these suggestions. Yawn and stretch as you do in the morning. Also, if you are going to do manual activities, shake your hands briskly.

Relaxation

There are several very simple ways in which we can encourage relaxation in our mind and body.

MUSIC

Music changes our mood. Soothing romantic music sets the scene, dance music makes people livelier, certain types of music can even help sell goods in shopping malls. Melodic harmonious music, whether modern or classical, can modify your mood and be a wonderful route to easy relaxation. Think about the way that music makes you feel and use it to change your mood, perhaps at the beginning and end of a busy day to enliven and encourage and then to relax.

SMELL

Smell is transmitted through the olfactory nerve in the nose. It is linked into much of the emotional and memory cortex and smell is one of the most evocative ways of triggering memory. Learning to associate a particular smell with the sense of relaxation and calm means that you can use the same smell to trigger those feelings in yourself very quickly. Lavender oil is a current favourite, if you have a few relaxing massages or float in a warm lavender scented bath you will begin to recognise an association of that smell with a reflex shut down of stress response in your body.

COLOUR AND LIGHTING

Some colours are more calm and harmonious than others. Bright yellows and reds tend to make people more agitated whereas soft greens and muted blues are calming and encourage tranquillity. Use this in your home environment together with gentle lighting to make it a place of relaxation and peace.

SUNSHINE

Bright sunlight lifts your mood, use it whenever you can.

LAUGHTER

Social contact and particularly laughter actually have effectively the opposite effects of stress on your body and on your mind. All the more reason not to neglect your social life or your sense of humour. All of these are ways to enhance relaxation without having to think too hard about it. They take almost no time once you have started to make them part of your life and your body and mind will learn to respond to them by shutting down the stress response and making you feel calmer and more relaxed.

Complementary Therapy

ALL HERBS SHOULD BE TREATED WITH RESPECT BECAUSE THEY CAN HAVE INTERACTIONS WITH OTHER DRUGS AND SIDE EFFECTS. YOU SHOULD ALWAYS READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED WITH THEM CAREFULLY.

NUTRIENTS

Vitamin B complex – 50mg, regulates nerves.

Magnesium – 200 to 300 mg, a muscle relaxant.

Vitamin C – 500 to 1000 mg in divided doses, urinary excretion of the vitamin increases during stress.

HERBAL THERAPY

St John's Wort – this is a herbal remedy which is comparatively safe and with few side effects. It takes up to eight weeks to have full effect but can improve mood as effectively as some of the anti-depressant drugs.

Rhodiola Rosea – Also known as arctic root or golden root. This is a polar plant which is said to have anti-ageing effects and anti-stress activity. It is also said to be an immune system stimulant. The dose is between 125 mgs and 250 mgs a day.

Passion Flower – 1 dropperful tincture three or four times daily or freeze-dried caps, reduces stress.

Camomile, Spearmint – have mild relaxant properties, reduce stress.

Valerian – a sedative, helps promote sleep.

Ginseng – 1 to 2g root or 100mg extract, tones and strengthens organs of body.

HOMEOPATHY

Take remedy according to symptoms:

Aconitum napellus

Argentum nitricum

Arsenicum album

Calcarea carbonica

Gelsemium

Ignatia amara

Kali phosphoricum

Lycopodium

Natrum muriaticum

Phosphorus

Pulsatilla

Silicea

PHYSICAL

Massage and reflexology can both be very helpful. Medication also helps to reverse the physical and psychological effects of stress.

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