

# The Science and Effects of Stress and How to Deal with IT!

Stress seems to have become a constant factor in today's fast-paced society. How many times a day do we say to ourselves or hear others exclaim, "I am just stressed out !!!" If left unchecked, stress can wreak havoc upon our health. Learning how to effectively manage stress can mean the difference between being robust and full of life, or becoming susceptible to illness and disease. As business owners we are particularly susceptible to stress. We attempt to wear many hats, some of them fitting well and some of them uncomfortable, each of which raising our stress level.

Stress responses are an important component of our biological heritage, our instinctual nature, and can serve us well. When we encounter a perceived or actual threat, our hypothalamus, a tiny region at the base of our brain, sets off an alarm system in our body. Through a combination of nerve and hormonal signals, this system prompts our adrenal glands, located atop your kidneys, to release a surge of hormones, including adrenaline and cortisol. Unfortunately, stress hormones compromise our immune function, increases heart rate, blood pressure, glucose levels, adrenaline, cortisol, free radicals and oxidative damage and leads to inflammatory conditions such as in the development and progression of preventable chronic diseases, including obesity, type 2 diabetes mellitus, hypertension, cardiovascular disease and several types of cancer.

Reducing the production of stress hormones thereby protecting the immune system is a vital part of living longer, feeling younger and being healthy. Here are ten natural healthy ways to reduce stress, boost your immune system and slow down the hands of time.

- 1. Movement:** The best way to burn off the stress hormones without having to change your thinking is to move, sweat and vary your heart rate. Vary your movement and spend at least thirty to sixty minutes a day in a variety of movement. You will experience a sense of relaxation, creativity and increased energy and competency.
- 2. Nutritious, Non-Toxic Foods.** Eat whole foods rich in antioxidants (like vitamins A, C, E and lycopene), omega-3 fatty acids, and folate. Focus on eating whole, plant-strong, fresh foods and stay away from processed, chemical laden "Frankenfoods."
- 3. Breath:** Most of us hold our breath often or breathe shallow, anxious breaths. Deep, slow, full breaths have a profound effect on resetting and lowering our stress response.
- 4. Laughter and Humor:** There is truth to the saying that laughter is the best medicine. Laughing reduces stress hormones like adrenaline (epinephrine) and cortisol. Start off your day watching a funny YouTube video and raise your immune function while reducing adrenaline and cortisol.
- 5. Music.** Listening to your favorite music is a great method of reducing stress and relieving anxiety.
- 6. Positive Thinking.** Optimism can counteract the negative impact stress, tension and anxiety has on your immune system and well-being. Having a positive attitude, finding the good in what life throws your way and looking at the bright side of things enhances your ability to effectively manage stress.
- 7. Hot Bath:** Add 2 cups of Epsom salt, a half-cup of baking soda, and 10 drops of lavender oil to a very hot bath. Then, add one stressed human and soak for 20 minutes. Guaranteed to induce relaxation.
- 8. Meditate:** Learn how to quieten your mind through a meditation practice. Meditation dramatically lower stress levels and as a result an increased ability to deal with whatever comes at you from the world, calmly and clearly.
- 9. Sleep.** Getting enough sound sleep has a profound impact on your stress levels, immune function and disease resistance. Sleep time is when your body and immune system do most of its repairs and rejuvenation. Strive to get 7-8 hours of sleep each night. Remember rest and relaxation go hand in hand.

**10. Be Grateful.** Being grateful for your blessings can cancel out negative thoughts and worries. Keep a gratitude journal. Don't forget to celebrate accomplishments like mastering a new task at work or a new hobby.

Stress can keep us up at night when we should be sleeping, or drive us to get a little snippy with our coworkers, employees and the ones we love. It's natural to feel stressed out from time to time, but continual stress takes a toll on our bodies. That's why it's so important to learn healthy ways to cope with the stressors in your life. Let's recognize our experience of stress and utilize the tools identified above to dissipate stress and create a happy, giving, fulfilled life.



Namaste,

*Lorraine*

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Focusing on the whole of my client as I assist them in meeting their needs, desires and vision.

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