



# STRESS-LESS

## PROGRAM WORKBOOK

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CORPORATE WELLNESS

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# WEEK 2

# The Effects of Stress on the Body & Mind

“It is not STRESS that kills us, but our REACTION to it.”- Hans Seyle



**This week we will talk about all of the ways stress can impact your body's ability to keep you feeling your very best physically, mentally and emotionally.**

When stress overwhelms your nervous system, your body is flooded with chemicals that prepare you for "fight or flight." This stress response can be life-saving in emergency situations where you need to act quickly. But when your body is constantly activated by the stresses of everyday life, it can wear your body down and take a toll on your health.

**The physiological stress response can lead to chronic stress if it is not managed.**

Your "fight or flight" response is controlled by your central nervous system (CNS). Within your brain, the hypothalamus initiates the process and signals your adrenal glands to release adrenaline and cortisol, the stress hormones. These hormones increase your heart rate and direct blood flow to the vital parts of your body during an emergency, such as your muscles, heart, and other important organs. After the perceived fear has passed, the hypothalamus should signal all systems to return to their normal state. When the central nervous system fails to reset to its regular state, or if the source of stress persists, the body's response can become chronic. This type of stress may also contribute to behaviors like excessive eating or diminished appetite, substance abuse, mental health issues, irritability, and social withdrawal.

**Stress has many symptoms such as:**

Insomnia, Disorganization, Feeling Overwhelmed, Loss of Interest, Crying/Depression, Exhaustion, Reduced Productivity, Communication Problems, Panic Attacks, Anger, Frustration, Excessive Worry, Guilt, Diminished Sexual Desire, Mood Swings, Procrastination, Chest Pain/Palpitations, Increased/Decreased Appetite, Overreaction, Increased Forgetfulness, Increased Mistakes/Accidents, Frequent Headaches, Grinding Teeth, Tremors, Neck and Back Pain, Headaches/Migraines, Rashes, Frequent Colds, Heartburn, Stomach Pain, Constipation/Diarrhea, etc.

# How is Stress Effecting YOUR Body & Mind?

## What Symptoms Do You Experience?

Make a list of the symptoms you have and see if you can find a way to connect them to stress. Disclaimer: Not all symptoms ARE related to stress, but it might be helpful to get a better understanding of the connections.

### Brain/Mind

### Cardiovascular/Heart

### Joint/Muscle

### Immune System

### Gut/Digestive

#### BRAIN

Difficulty concentrating, anxiety, depression, irritability, mood, mind fog

#### CARDIOVASCULAR

higher cholesterol, high blood pressure, increased risk of heart attack and stroke

#### JOINTS AND MUSCLES

increased inflammation, tension, aches and pains, muscle tightness

#### IMMUNE SYSTEM

decreased immune function, lowered immune defenses, increased risk of becoming ill, increase in recovery time

#### SKIN

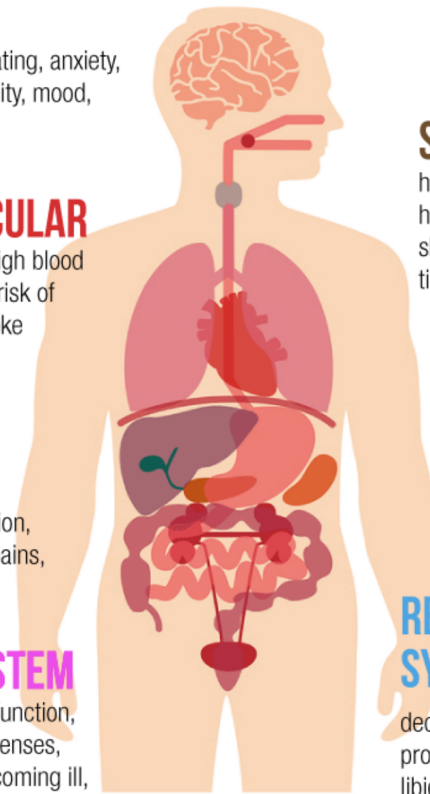
hair loss, dull/brittle hair, brittle nails, dry skin, acne, delayed tissue repair

#### GUT

nutrient absorption, diarrhea, constipation, indigestion, bloating, pain and discomfort

#### REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM

decreased hormone production, decrease in libido, increase in PMS symptoms



SOURCE: BRIDGINGHARTS.COM

### Skin/Hair

### Reproductive System

# Use the ABC Strategy

Stress is rooted in the feeling of not having enough of something. Such as: time, resources, words, money, knowledge, etc. Use the ABC Strategy to recognize your stress and gain more control.

## AWARENESS

*The knack to discern what causes one's stress.*

Identify your stressors. What is currently causing your stress SPECIFICALLY? What tends to stress you out?

## BALANCE

*Know how much you can handle. Set boundaries.*

How often can you say 'yes' before getting overwhelmed? When can you start saying 'NO'? How can you make YOU and your health a priority?

## CONTROL

*Take action to combat the causes of stress.*

Be Proactive! What actions can you take to avoid stressors from people, situations, etc. What self-care activities can you enjoy to combat stress?

