All this helps us defend ourselves against danger. If the threat requires a physical response, stress hormones burn up quickly. Modern day stressors rarely require physical responses, so stress hormones linger unused in

The Positive Side of Stress

Not all stress is bad. Without stress we would have little motivation and energy. Inadequate stress levels produce symptoms similar to depression. Stress helps athletes break records. It also helps us meet deadlines, generate new ideas and if necessary, survive physical danger. Negative symptoms of stress develop only when we experience excess stress.

Stress Symptoms

In order to manage stress, it is important to recognize the symptoms of stress. When we are under stress, the body is constantly adjusting to external stimuli in order to keep the bodies condition stable. Some symptoms of stress are as follows:

- Anger
- Chest pain
- Headaches
- Joint pain
- Upset stomach
- Sweating
- Shortness of breath
- Irritability
- Muscle tension

Stress Management
Techniques

1) **Avoid Caffeine** - Caffeine is a strong stimulant that causes a stress reaction in the body. By avoiding caffeine many people feel more relaxed, sleep better and have more energy.

2) **Exercise Regularly** - When we are experiencing stress, our bodies enter a high-energy state. In order to use up the excess energy and drive down stress, jog, walk, swim or ride a bike for 30 minutes most days.

3) **Get Plenty of Sleep -**Sleep is a major stress reducer. Not only does sleep help repair the body, but it also helps people feel better prepared to handle stressful situations during waking hours.

4) **Take Time for Yourself** -Taking small time-outs throughout the day will keep you feeling refreshed and alert.

5) **Vent** - It is important to vent your feelings of frustrations in order to release stress.

Recognizing Stress Symptoms and Your Response to Stress

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1-800-611-6349

What is Stress?

What is stress? Stress is the emotional and physical strain caused by our response to pressure in the outside world. It's almost impossible to live without some stress. And most of us wouldn't want to because it gives life some spice and excitement. But if stress gets out of control, it may harm your health, relationships and your enjoyment of life.

Many addictions are linked to a stressful lifestyle, such as overeating, smoking, drinking and drug abuse. They are used as an escape or a temporary way of "switching off" - but they do not address the underlying problem.

Chronic Stress Symptoms

Chronic stress symptoms are caused by a number of conditions. Unhealthy relationships, illness, caring for a sick family member or poverty are just a few causes of chronic stress symptoms.
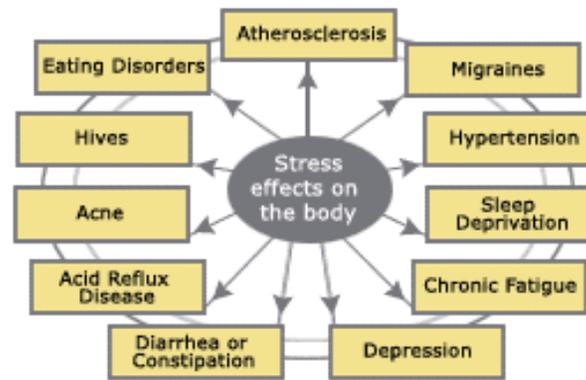
Symptoms of chronic stress include fatigue, muscle tension, anxiety, insomnia, depression, backaches, frequent infections and headaches. Continued symptoms can lead to a number of serious health complications including:

- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Eating disorders
- Immune system disorders

Acute Stress Symptoms

Acute stress is caused by a one-time stressor: an accident, a deadline or an argument. Isolated incidents of acute stress don't cause many symptoms beyond the immediate physical stress response.

When acute stressors occur continuously, more serious symptoms begin to develop. Symptoms of acute stress can include anger, chest pain, headaches, heart palpitations, irritability, joint pain, muscle tension, shortness of breath, upset stomach and sweating.

Symptoms of Fight or Flight

A stress response begins in the brain's hypothalamus, which signals the release of stress hormones (mainly adrenaline) from the adrenal glands. These hormones cause a variety of responses.

- Pupils widen
- Muscles tense
- Heart rate increases
- Blood pressure rises
- Red blood cell count increases
- Blood sugar rises