

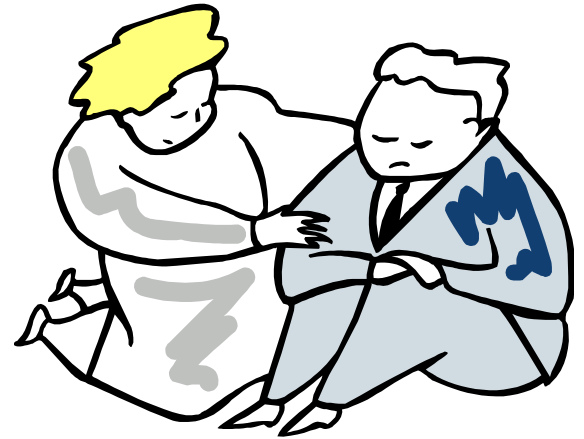
Are You Stressed?

Stress has become an epidemic in life. Everyone has it; everyone needs it. Does that surprise you? Without stress, life would be dull and unexciting. Stress adds flavor, challenge, and opportunity to life. Stress is with us all the time.

Stress is the body's response to any demand that causes a mental strain, urgency, or pressure. When we recognize such an event, we experience what some call the "fight or flight" response. To prepare for fighting or fleeing, the body increases its heart rate and blood pressure; more blood is sent to the heart and muscles, and your respiration rate increases.

You may be experiencing some symptoms of stress. Check out this list and see.

- Feeling overwhelmed
- Tightened muscles
- Rise in blood pressure
- Sleeplessness
- Fatigue
- Headaches
- Jaw-Clenching
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Stomachache or heartburn
- Inability to concentrate
- Not enjoying what you usually like
- Irritability
- Getting sick often



Having some stress in our lives keeps us on our toes, but when it becomes unmanageable, it can greatly affect how we think, feel, and act. The activities that we once enjoyed become tasks we *must* complete in order to get to the next thing. We often feel tense, sad, or angry, and we may snap at our friends, family, or coworkers. We may get distracted from our work, or, not work as efficiently as usual.

Our bodies have ways to deal with stress, but they also have limited resources and energy. If stress continues for too long, our bodies become exhausted. Stress can weaken the cardiovascular system by increasing the heart rate and blood pressure. The immune system is also weakened, making it difficult to fight off illnesses. Stress is also associated with anxiety and depression.

Here are some tips on how to control the stress in your life.

- ♦ Physical activity will relieve that "up tight" feeling.
 - ♦ Share your stress. Discuss your concerns with a friend, family member or your EA Professional
 - ♦ Know your limits. Learn to accept what is until you can change it.
 - ♦ Take care of yourself. Get enough rest and eat well.
-