

Stressful Times Call for Super Stress Management Skills



Nobody gets through this life without some stressful experiences. The old saying, “nothing is certain except death and taxes” tells us stressful experiences are universal. Death of loved ones and tax time are just two of the many experiences people find stressful.

Right now, a large percentage of Americans are feeling stressed about the economy, but to keep things in perspective, we should remember that even when the economy is good, there are people who experience the stress of losing their jobs and homes. Even in relatively good times unexpected bills, relationship problems, illnesses, accidents and natural disasters bring stress into our lives.

Since none of us are going to escape experiencing stressful events, *stress management is a vital life-skill that everyone needs to learn.* Just as exercise and hard work can build muscles, stressful experiences can help us build character, but only when we understand how to correctly manage our stress. When we don't know how to deal with the stress of life, stress takes a big toll on our mental, emotional and physical health.

We all know what stress feels like, but to understand how to manage stress properly, we need to understand what stress really is. So, here's a short primer on stress.

The Stress Response Is Designed to Save Your Life

The feelings we associate with stress are a natural, and healthy, reaction to danger. When we perceive our life is in danger, the body primes us for action by releasing chemical messengers from the adrenal glands and sympathetic nervous system. The feelings we experience from this release of stress-related hormones and neurotransmitters include fear, anxiety, stress and excitement. The label we attach to these feelings is dependent on how we perceive the situation.

These stress-related messengers cause our breathing to become rapid and shallow and to flood our system with oxygen. They also cause our blood pressure and heart rate to increase so more oxygen and nutrients can be delivered to our muscles. Systems not essential to immediate survival, such as digestion, elimination and sex drive, are inhibited. Higher brain function gives way to “gut instinct” as we react to the situation without thinking.

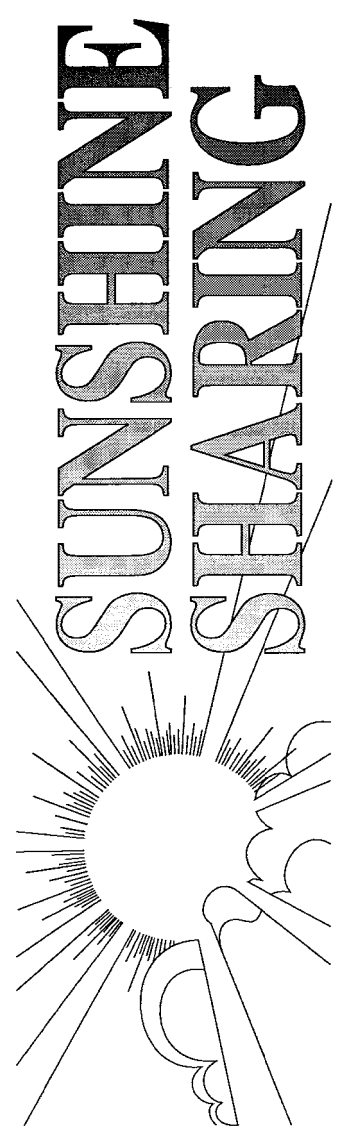
Most people in modern society have had the experience of nearly getting into an automobile accident. If you have, you will recognize that you swerved or hit the brakes automatically, without having to think about it. This quick reaction saved your life. That's what the stress response was designed to do—save your life when you are *physically* in danger by priming your body for quick and immediate action.

The Stress Response Doesn't Help Us With Modern Problems

Unfortunately, most of the “dangers” in modern life aren't really physical dangers. A stack of unpaid bills feels like a threat to our survival, but doesn't allow for an instinctive physical response. Instead, we need to be able to calmly, and rationally, make decisions about how we can solve the problem.

In addition, unlike swerving to avoid a car accident, these “dangers” of modern society often last for months and years. The continuous activation of the stress response, over and over again, has a cumulative effect. This chronic stress eventually leads to a feeling of “burn out,” a state of emotional and nervous exhaustion.

This “burned-out” feeling is common to soldiers who faced constant real stress on the battle field. It was called “shell shock” in World War I and “battle fatigue” in World War II. Today, it is called “post-traumatic stress disorder.”



Important Notice

The information in *Sunshine Sharing* is for educational purposes only and should not be used to diagnose and treat diseases. If you have a health problem, we recommend you consult a competent health practitioner before embarking on any course of treatment.

Sunshine Sharing is an independent educational publication and receives no financial support from any herb or health product manufacturer. Your comments, questions and personal experiences are welcome. Send them to *Sunshine Sharing*, P.O. Box 911239, St. George, UT 84791-1239 or comments@treelite.com.

Copyright © 2009 by Tree of Light Publishing (a division of Kether-One, Inc.). Photocopying this publication for distribution is strictly forbidden. If you receive a photocopy of this publication, the distributor of said photocopies is in violation of copyright law.

Managing Editor/Writer: Steven Horne
Associate Editors: Carolyn & Hugh Hughes, Sharon Grimes, David Horne

Your guide to better health the natural way.

Vol. 20 No. 3

Continued on page 2

Stressful Times Call for Stress Management

Continued from Page One

Whatever you call it, you don't need to go to war to experience "battle fatigue" or "post-traumatic stress disorder." You just need to experience poorly managed stress over an extended period of time.

Chronic stress has many negative effects. It leads to elevated blood pressure and heart rate and the increased risk of cardiovascular disease. Since the stress response inhibits digestion, elimination and sex drive, we can start to suffer from chronic indigestion, upset stomach, constipation and low sex drive.

The stress response also inhibits the immune system, so chronic stress makes us more susceptible to colds, flu and other contagious diseases. It can also contribute to the development of serious immune diseases like cancer.

Emotionally, we can become depressed, discouraged, confused and emotionally sensitive. When "burn-out" or "battle fatigue" sets in, we feel tired, but can't relax or sleep soundly.

In short, chronic stress can cause us to lose our ability to cope with life's challenges and it can take down our health.

But, there is hope. There are skills that you can learn that will reduce the output of stress hormones, thereby limiting the effects of chronic stress. These skills can also help you solve problems intelligently and manage life's difficulties, turning stress into excitement and confidence.

However, none of these things will help unless you do them. Learning to manage stress requires action. By practicing the stress management skills and applying the stress management tools found in this newsletter, you will increase your capacity to meet the challenges of life. Start today!

Feeling Like You Can't Cope? Adaptagens May Be the Answer

If you're under a lot of stress, adaptagens could be your very best friend. The word 'adaptagen' was coined in Russia to describe the effects of Eleuthero root. Russian researchers found that Eleuthero helped people adapt to stressful situations. In other words, adaptagens help people cope better with stress.

The diagram on the right shows the HPA (hypothalamus-pituitary-adrenal) axis and how adaptagens work. Adaptagens reduce the output of ACTH from the pituitary and cortisol from the adrenals, using the same feedback loop the body normally uses to stop the production of stress hormones. Reducing the stress response results in clearer thinking, improved sleep, enhanced immune function, and better physical and mental performance. For example, Russian research showed that Eleuthero helped athletes to perform better, cosmonauts to avoid space sickness, and reduce incidences of sickness in factory workers. It even helped secretaries make fewer mistakes.

Many other herbs have been discovered to possess adaptagenic properties. Herbs classified as adaptagens include Korean and American ginseng, schizandra, suma, rhodiola, gotu kola and gymnostema. The following are some adaptagenic blends. If you're suffering from chronic stress, try one of these formulas.

Maximize Your Ability to Adapt with Adaptamax

If you're looking for a general adaptagenic tonic that will improve your health and overall ability to cope with stress, consider Adaptamax. This blend of adaptagens and tonic herbs helps reduce

stress, improve immunity and counteract fatigue. It supports maintaining a relaxed and positive mood during periods of stress.

Overcome Burn-Out and Fatigue with Nervous Fatigue Formula

Another important adaptagenic formula is Nervous Fatigue Formula. This blend helps people who feel "burned out" from nervous exhaustion and stress. It is particularly helpful for people who feel tired and stressed during the day, but then can't get a peaceful night's sleep. It counteracts moodiness and irritability, helps improve mental concentration, eases feelings of anxiety (especially feeling tension or pressure in the chest) and promotes restful sleep and improved energy.

Enhance Energy and Clear Thinking with Suma Combination

This blend combines the adaptagens eleuthero and suma with the brain and memory enhancing herbs ginkgo and gotu kola. Suma Combination is a good choice for providing energy and helping you think clearly when you're under stress.

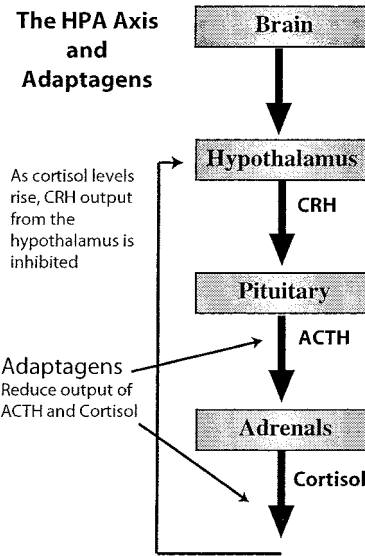
Improve Stamina and General Health with Mineral Chi Tonic

Combining colloidal trace minerals with Chinese adaptagenic and tonic herbs, Mineral Chi Tonic improves overall health, energy and stamina. It helps a person maintain good health and emotional balance while under stress and supports healthy adrenal function.

Rebuild from Burn-Out and Exhaustion with Adrenal Support

Designed to feed and rebuild depleted adrenal glands, Adrenal Support isn't an adaptagen, but it can help overcome the effects of chronic stress or "burn-out." It is helpful for fatigue, post-traumatic stress disorder, sleep disturbances and chronic inflammation. It helps move protein through the system and regulates insulin production.

The HPA Axis and Adaptagens





Seven Super Stress Management Tips to Help You Cope with Life's Little (and Big) Stresses

Stress has a negative impact on our body and it's also very hard to avoid stressful experiences. And stressful experiences happen to everyone. That's the bad news.

The good news is that we don't need to avoid stressful experiences. What we need are the tools and skills that can help us manage the effects of stress in our life so we can "bounce back" to feeling relaxed and happy.

So here are a Seven Super Stress Management Tips that you can start practicing right now. If you do these things, you will be pleasantly surprised at how fast they work.

Super Stress Tip #1 Stop and Take a Deep Breath

When our body releases stress hormones, it tends to shut down our higher reasoning and cause us to act on gut instinct. This is great for facing a real physical danger, but doesn't work well for most modern problems. Most of the problems we face in modern times require clear thinking, not instinctive reactions.

The fastest way to restore calm and clear thinking is to take a deep breath. A simple technique is to breathe in deeply thinking, "I am..." and exhale fully thinking, "...relaxed." Repeat this process until you start to feel more calm. By deliberately breathing slowly and deeply, you will begin to immediately counteract the effects of stress and will be able to face your problems with a clear head. In fact, if you practice deep breathing for at least five minutes, twice each day, it will make a huge difference in your stress level.



Super Stress Tip #2 Take a Shot of Flower Power

Edward Bach, an English homeopath developed flower essences as a way to help people heal emotionally. One of his blends, rescue remedy, contained five flowers and was used to treat shock. **Distress Remedy** contains the five flower essences in rescue remedy, plus other homeopathics that can help you learn how to stay calm during a crisis.

If you're undergoing a lot of stress, keep a bottle of Distress Remedy with you and take some (along with those deep breaths) anytime you feel stressed. You'll be amazed at the difference it will make.

Super Stress Tip #3 Drink Your Stress and Anxiety Away

Wait! It's not what you think! Or maybe it is, we're talking about water. Even slight dehydration affects your nervous system, increasing your level of anxiety and nervousness. Drinking more pure water will help you feel calmer and sleep better.

And while we're talking about drinking, skip the sodas, coffee, tea and energy drinks. All that sugar and caffeine will just add to your feelings of stress and anxiety. So will alcohol, as it rapidly turns into sugar in your body. If you really want to "drown" your troubles, stick with water.

Super Stress Tip #4: 'B's Help You Be Calm

When we feel stressed, we are often tempted to eat more sugar and refined carbohydrates. This is because carbohydrates increase the levels of serotonin, a mood-elevating chemical, in our brain. Unfortunately, these refined carbohydrates also spike our blood sugar (resulting in a big "let down" a few hours later) and they deplete our reserves of B-vitamins and other nutrients.

B-vitamins are particularly important for the nervous system and for energy production. By depleting this vitamin, refined carbohydrates increase our anxiety and nervousness. To satisfy those carbohydrate cravings, look for products made with whole grains and unrefined sugars and consider taking a good anti-stress vitamin and mineral supplement such as Nutri-Calm.

Nutri-Calm contains the B-complex vitamins our nerves need to help us stay calm and relaxed while facing the problems of the day. It also contains vitamin C, which is important for adrenal function, and other herbs and nutrients that can help us cope better with stress. Many people find that Nutri-Calm actually gives them energy, while allowing them to stay relaxed.

Super Stress Tip #5: Relax and Get a Good Night's Sleep



Sleep is vital to our health and our ability to deal with life's problems. Think of how much better you feel after a good night's sleep. Unfortunately, stress can rob us of sleep, causing many of us to wake up during the night and worry about our problems.

Herbal Sleep is a combination of hops, valerian and passion flower that can help us relax and get to sleep. **Kava Kava** can also help by relaxing muscles and reducing feelings of anxiety. Take either (or both) about one hour before bedtime to help you relax.

Melatonin Extra can also help with sleep. Melatonin is the chemical messenger that promotes sleep. This formula also contains the adaptogenic herb ashwaganda.

If you wake up in the middle of the night, try using some adaptagens, particularly Nervous Fatigue Formula. Adrenal Support may also be helpful. (See page 2.)

Continued on Page Four

Additional Help and Information

Managing stress is an important skill for everyone. The techniques listed in this newsletter can help, but, some forms of stress and trauma require professional assistance, such as counseling, to overcome. If you need additional help with stress management, talk to the person who gave you this newsletter. Their contact information should be found at the top of page four. They have additional handouts and resource materials to help you. You can also consult some of the following sources:

Adaptagens: Herbs for Strength, Stamina and Stress Relief by David Winston and Steven Maimes

The Pleasure Prescription by Paul Pearsall

You Can Handle It DVD with Steven Horne (www.treelite.com)



*Bills Got You in a Bind?
Taxes Got You Tense?
To-Do List Too Long?
Computer Crashing?*

Feeling STRESSED?

We can help you handle it!

Continued from Page Three

Stress-J can also be taken during the day to relax muscle tension. It helps slow down sympathetic nervous system activity while increasing parasympathetic activity, which helps you unwind a little. This can improve digestion and elimination, enhance mental concentration, and lower blood pressure and heart rate.

Super Stress Tip #6: Let's Get Into Physical

A quick review of what we learned about stress hormones from page one will show that they are designed to prime the body for action. Then, it should be apparent, that doing some kind of physical action will help burn them off. Ever noticed how just taking a walk when you feel stressed helps you clear your head? Any enjoyable physical activity such as walking, swimming, golf, tai chi, yoga, etc. will help you burn off stress hormones and relax.

Tip #7: Pamper Yourself a Little

Here's some really good news. According to Dr. Paul Pearsall, author of *The Pleasure Prescription*, a pleasurable experience does more good for the body than a stressful experience does harm. Pleasure enhances health, energy and emotional well-being. It causes our muscles to relax and even triggers healing.

Dr. Pearsall believes that many people are sick because they lack pleasure in their lives. So rather than waste your time trying to avoid stress, plan time for pleasure, instead. Get a massage, engage in a pleasurable hobby or activity, take a relaxing bath, soak in a hot tub, listen to beautiful music, and surround yourself with pleasant fragrances, colors and sounds. Doing these things will counteract the harmful effects of stress on your body and mind.

For additional help and suggestions, talk to the person who gave you this newsletter.