

Riverwalk Natural Health Clinic
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Coping with Stress in Today's Environment

What happens to our body when we're under stress? When you encounter something stressful, your brain signals the adrenal glands, which release hormones such as cortisol, adrenaline and noradrenaline. These stress hormones race through your bloodstream to different parts of your body, preparing you to fight or flee. Your breath quickens as your lungs take in extra oxygen. Glucose and fats are released from storage sites into your bloodstream. This supplies energy your body needs to fend off the threat and your sight and hearing become sharper, to make you more alert. Your heart beats faster, sometimes up to five times as quickly as normal. As your heart starts pounding, blood pressure rises. Certain blood vessels constrict, which helps direct blood flow to your brain and muscles and away from other organs. Your muscles tighten. This prepares you to spring into action. If you continue to experience stress without any coping mechanism it can affect your overall health.

Do you often feel tired and stressed? One of the most common problems I hear from patients is that they feel fatigued, anxious and depressed. And they often have trouble sleeping even though they are exhausted.

Most of them share a common underlying condition –adrenal burnout. It's the result of racing through life with a constantly aroused sympathetic ("fight or flight") nervous system. In the heightened nervous state of adrenal burnout, the body overproduces adrenaline, cortisol and other stress hormones. Eventually, this causes the adrenal glands, the front line in the stress reaction, to show wear and tear and become depleted. This frequently leads to an impairment in the thyroid gland, which can cause a further decline in energy level and mood and is one of the reasons why so many people have thyroid glands that don't work well.

Stress over long periods can increase your risk for heart disease, increase blood pressure, gastrointestinal problems, affect sleep, cause anxiety, lower your immune system, causes weight gain and diabetes, causes fatigue, and thyroid problems etc.

Sometimes the simple things are the best ways for coping with stress. Some suggestions include:

- Spend time with people who are optimistic and who make you laugh.
- Turn off the news.
- Quite looking at the stock market numbers they will continue to go up and down throughout history.
- Spring is in the air smell the roses purchase some flowers.
- Exercise at least one hour five times a week.

- Eat healthy. We burn more protein under stress. Make sure your eating protein with each meal and 5-12 veggies a day. Eliminate the caffeine, sugar and alcohol.

- Breath. A simple breathing exercise is to sit in a chair with your feet on the ground close your eyes and breathe in to the count of 7, hold the breath to the count of 4 and breathe out to the count of 8. Repeat this four times in a roll. Do these exercises twice a day.

- Get at least 8 hours of sleep a day. Naps may be necessary.

Remember this to will pass so try to relax.

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