

MANAGING STRESS WITH STRESS MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

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Abstract

Stress is a reaction to a stimulus that disturbs our physical or mental equilibrium. Stress hormones are cortisol and adrenaline. Adrenaline is also called as fight or flight hormone. When an individual comes across a stressful event. Situation is released and the individual either fights that is may face the situation/problem boldly or may escape from the situation. Types of stress include acute, chronic and episodic. Eustress is stress which is positive one. Causes of stress can be personal and work related (working conditions, working environment, role ambiguity, inter group and inter personal conflicts etc). Stress effects both physical and mental health of a person. Stress can be managed by effectively employing strategies like yoga, deep breathing exercises, relaxation exercises, aromatherapy, music therapy. Laughter therapy, aerobics, medication. (Stress as a result of chronic illness), psychological counseling.

Keywords: *Stress, Cortisol, Adrenaline, Yoga, Aerobics, Deep Breathing Exercises, and Relaxation Exercises.*

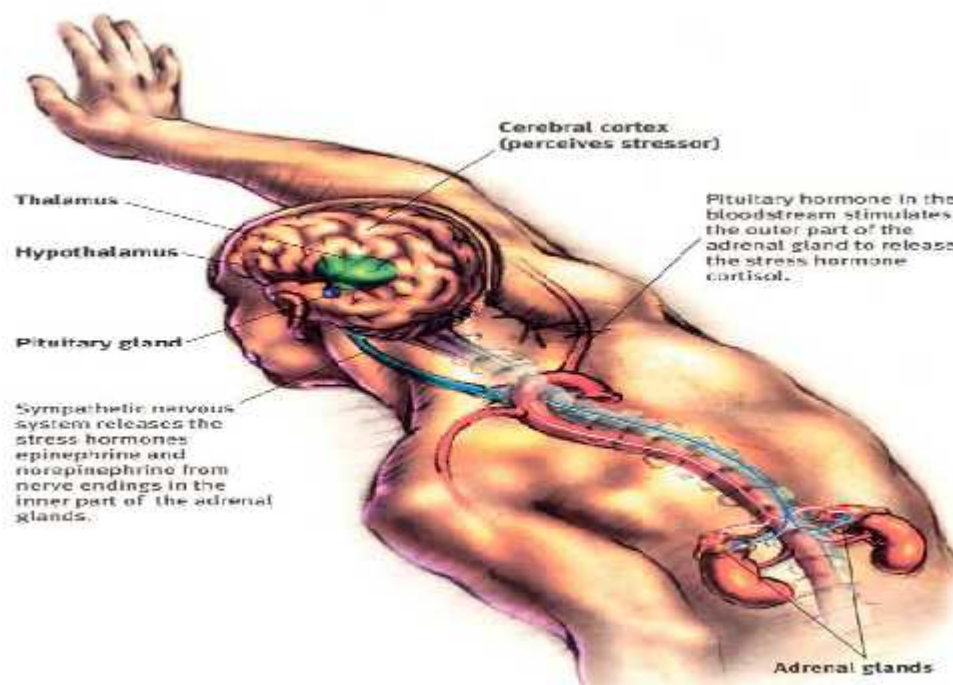
INTRODUCTION

Everybody in our life we come across stress at home or at work place. It is defined as a ‘‘state of physiological and psychological imbalance resulting from the disparity between situational demand and the individual’s ability and motivation to meet those needs. Stress will have its impact both physically and mentally. So stress need to be managed effectively. Stress management techniques help in reducing anxiety, tension, depression and aids in health.

WHAT IS STRESS?

- Stress is defined as an organism’s total response to environmental demands/pressures.
- It is defined as a ‘‘state of physiological and psychological imbalance resulting from the disparity between situational demand and the individual’s ability and motivation to meet those needs.
- Stress is your’s body’s response to certain situations
- It is defined as state of physiological or psychological pressures felt by people throughout their lives.

PHYSIOLOGY OF STRESS



The physiology of stress response starts from the moment the body realizes the presence of the stressor, followed by the sending of signals to the brain, and to specific sympathetic and hormonal responses to eliminate, reduce or cope with the stress.

What are stressors?

Factors responsible for causing stress are called as stressors.

What are Stress Hormones?

The hormones which cause stress are called as stress hormones. They are

- PITUITARY GLAND (ACTH-CORTISOL)
- ADRENAL GLAND (ADRENALINE)

PHYSIOLOGY OF CORTISOL

Cortisol is a stress hormone which influences, regulates or modulates many of the changes that occur in the body in response to stress. It is a steroid hormone of glucocorticoid class of hormones and is produced by Zona of fasciculata of the adrenal cortex within the adrenal gland.

FUNCTIONS OF CORTISOL

- Blood sugar (glucose) levels
- Fat, protein and carbohydrate metabolism to maintain blood glucose (gluconeogenesis).
- Immune responses
- Anti-inflammatory actions
- Blood pressure
- Heart and blood vessel tone and contraction
- Central nervous system activation.

HIGHER LEVELS OF CORTISOL (CHRONIC STRESS) NEGATIVE EFFECTS

- Impaired cognitive performance
- Decreased bone density
- Sleep disruption
- Elevated blood pressure
- Slow wound healing
- Dampened thyroid function
- Increased abdominal fat (High levels of bad cholesterol, LDL)

LOWER LEVELS OF CORTISOL, NEGATIVE EFFECTS

- Low thyroid function
- Blood sugar imbalances like hypoglycemia
- Fatigue
- Lowered immune function
- Inflammation

PHYSIOLOGY OF ADRENALINE

- Adrenaline is a hormone and neurotransmitter also called as "epinephrine".
- It is produced by the adrenal cortex of adrenal gland. Adrenal glands also called as "supra renal glands" (supra means above and renal means kidneys).
- It is also called as "Fight or Flight"

WHAT IS FIGHT/FLIGHT RESPONSE

It was first described by Walter Bradford Cannon. It is the physiological reaction that occurs in response to a perceived harmful event, attack, threat. For example if a person sees a snake he will run away. It is because of this hormone. Likewise if an individual comes across a stressful event/situation he/she may face the situation (fight) or escapes from the situation (flight). It all depends on the personality, nature and attitude of the person to face or escape from the stressful situations.

TYPES OF STRESS: Stress can be classified as

- Acute
- Chronic
- Episodic

Acute Stress : Acute stress means stress for short period of time (months). It is common form of stress seen in day to day life activities. Acute stress is your body's immediate reaction to a new challenge, event, or demand—fight or flight response.

Chronic Stress: Chronic stress means stress lasting for long duration (years). For example death of a loved one's, chronic illness etc.

Episodic Stress: Episodic stress means stress lasts for episodes of time.

**IS STRESS ALWAYS NEGATIVE??? NO
WHAT IS EUSTRESS?**

“Good form of stress which increases the performance of the individual towards fulfillment of their goals.”

What are the Causes of Stress?

1) At Work Place

- **Work related**
If the employee is not satisfied with any of the reasons then they are prone to stress. Work related reasons can be working conditions, work overload, work shifts, working environment etc.
- **Role ambiguity**
It occurs when the person does not know what he/she is supposed to do on the job. His/her tasks and responsibilities are not clear. The employee is not sure what he/she is expected to do. It creates confusion in the minds of the worker and creates stress.
- **Role conflict**
It occurs when people have different expectations from the person performing a particular role. It can also occur if the job is not as per expectation, or when a job demands a certain type of behaviour that is against the person's moral values.
- **Occupational demands**
Some jobs are more demanding than others. Jobs that involve risk, and danger are more stressful.
- **Lack of participation in decision making**
Employees expect that management should consult them on matters relating to job.
- **Lack of Group Cohesiveness**
Individuals experience stress when there is no unity among the work group members
- **Interpersonal conflict**
Conflict between two persons may be because of perceptions. Attitudes etc.
- **Inter-group conflict:** Conflict between groups
- **Organizational changes:** When changes occur, people have to adapt to those changes and this may cause stress.
- **Career concerns**
If an employee feels that he/she is very much behind in the corporate ladder, then he/she may experience stress.
- **Technological change**
The employee needs to meet the advances and changes in technology otherwise they are prone to stress.

2) PERSONAL

- Problems in relationships (with the family members, with neighbours with friends etc)
- Problems of financial aspects
- Chronic illness(diseases of chronic nature like cancers, coronary heart disease, paralysis etc)
- Death of a loved one's etc.(when a person loses the one whom they love more and attached)

EFFECTS OF STRESS



Stress effects both mental and physical health. It effects your mind,your thoughts,feelings and your behavior.

ON YOUR BODY:

- Head ache
- Muscle tension/pain
- Fatigue
- Sleep disorders

ON YOUR MOOD:

- Anxiety
- Restlessness
- Lack of motivation
- Depression

ON YOUR BEHAVIOUR:

- Social withdrawal
- Angry outbursts
- Over eating/under eating

HOW TO COPE WITH STRESS??BY STRESS MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES:

STRATEGY1:

YOGA: Means to “unite”-”Uniting Body With Spirit”.

Patanjali gave the basic principles:

- Asanas ---Postures
- Pranayama-Breath control
- Prathyahara-Control of senses
- Dhyana-Meditation



STRATEGY 2: DEEP BREATHING EXERCISES



Good relaxation always starts with focusing on your breathing. The way to do it is to breathe in and out slowly and in a regular rhythm as this will help you to calm down

- Fill up the whole of your lungs with air, without forcing.
- Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth
- Breathe in slowly and regularly counting from one to five.
- Let the breathe escape slowly, counting from one to five.
- Keep doing this until you feel calm. Breathe without pausing or holding your breathe.

STRATEGY 3: AEROBICS



Aerobic (meaning 'with oxygen') exercises that use large muscles of body—usually arms and legs—in repetitive and rhythmic movements, increasing the need for oxygen in the muscles being exercised. This increased need for oxygen is met through increased heart rate and respiration. So your heart and lungs also get a good work out. Aerobics strengthens cardiovascular system, improves lung capacity, increases endurance

STRATEGY 4&5: AROMA & MUSIC THERAPIES:



Aroma therapy means usage of oils. Oils produce calming and stimulating effects. Commonly used oils are lavender, rose, bergamot, chamomile, orange, lemon, neroli. Music therapy reduces stress, aids health.

STRATEGY 5 & 6 :RELAXATION EXERCISES& LAUGHTER THERAPY:



Relaxation exercises reduce anxiety, stress or anger. Exercises decrease muscle tension, lower blood pressure and slow heart and breathe rates. Commonly used are progressive relaxation techniques.

Laughter therapy is commonly seen now a days where groups are formed and they assemble at a place and do.

OTHERS :WALKING,PSYCHOLOGICALCOUNSELLING(CHRONIC STRESS),DIET(ANT-OXIDANTS)

DO'S:

- Spend time with close one's
- Be optimistic
- Do activity which gives pleasure
- Memorizing happy moments

DONT'S:

- Don't be alone
- Avoid pessimistic, stressful thoughts

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