

HOW STRESS AFFECTS THE BODY

Zzzz
Chronic Fatigue

60% to 80% of primary care doctor visits are related to stress, yet only 3% of patients receive stress management help.

JAMA Intern Med. 2013;173(1):76-77

Headaches, Dizziness, ADD/ADHD, Anxiety, Irritability & Anger, Panic Disorders

Grinding Teeth & Tension in Jaw

Increased Heart Rate, Strokes, Heart Disease, Hypertension, Diabetes Type I & II, Arrhythmias

Digestive Disorders, Upset Stomach, Abdominal Pain, Irritable Bowel Syndrome

Weight Gain & Obesity

Decreased Sex Drive

Muscle Tension, Fibromyalgia, Complex Regional Pain Syndrome

STRESS AFFECTS THE ENTIRE BODY & CAN CAUSE MANY OTHER PROBLEMS

42% of Americans report lying awake at night due to stress

American Psychological Association Stress in America Report 2013

DECREASED ENERGY LEVEL, MOOD & APPETITE

Stress Stats

Understanding the science of the stress response gives you the advantage of being more aware of - and sensitive to - your physiological, emotional, and cognitive responses.

This increased awareness can help you harness your energy and cognitive capital to be more effective and efficient both personally and professionally.

Here are a few stress stats that can help you enhance how you think, work, and live.

Stat #1: The stress response does not discriminate between a BIG stress or a little one.

Your body responds to stress with increased heart rate and shallow breathing, which limits the oxygen and glucose available to your brain, the fuels it needs to operate optimally. A typical stress reaction, which most of us experience dozens of times each day, begins with a cascade of 1,400 biochemical events in your body. If these reactions are left unchecked, our cognitive function is directly impacted, our energy is drained, and we are robbed of our effectiveness and clarity, even leading to premature aging.

Stat #2: Stress can make smart people do "less smart" things.

Stress causes what brain researchers call "cortical inhibition" which is an "either/or" phenomenon that helps explain why smart people do dumb things. Simply said, stress and the emotional reactions associated inhibit the "thinking" part of your brain and heightens the energy directed towards the emotion centers. When we are in coherence – a state where we are cognitively sharp, emotionally calm, and we feel and think with enhanced clarity – the brain, heart and nervous system are working in harmony.

Stat #3: Stress stifles innovative thinking.

We can be physiologically experiencing stress yet mentally numb to it because we've become so accustomed to it. Some have become so adapted to the daily pressures, irritations and annoyances of life that it starts to seem normal. Yet the small stresses accumulate quickly and we may not realize how much they're impairing our mental and emotional clarity and our overall health until it shows up as a bad decision, an overreaction or an unwanted diagnosis at the doctor's office.

The good news is our brain are adaptable, agile, and trainable!

You can build your capacity to prepare for, recover from, and adapt in the face of stress, challenge, or adversity. Lifestyle factors along with practical strategies can help your body and brain harness energy to optimize performance.

Featured SMART Stress Strategies from Brain Performance Solutions:

REFRAME to reset mindset and emotion

- Shift from threat mindset to a challenge mindset "I'm excited to..."
- Focus on renewing feelings/emotions such as appreciation or gratitude

RECHARGE to energize and refresh brain & body

- 5x5 Brain breaks
- Heart focused breathing - plus renewing emotions

REGENERATE to sustain neurogenesis

- Mindfulness meditation
- Restorative REM Sleep



Resources

- **10% Happier:** Dan Harris
- **Meditation for Fidgety Skeptics:** Dan Harris and Jeff Warren
- **The Mindful Way Through Depression: Freeing Yourself From Chronic Unhappiness:** Mark Williams, et. al
- **The Here and Now Habit:** Hugh G. Byrne
- **Into the Magic Shop:** James Doty
- **Mental Resilience - The Power of Clarity:** Kamal Sarma

centerforbrainhealth.com/calendar