

Facts On Stress

Stress is the human body's natural response to any change in the environment that requires an action, reaction, or adjustment to what's normal. How a person handles it very much defines stress for that person. It is a normal part of life that can either help us learn and grow or can cause us significant problems. See below for some interesting facts about stress.

10 Facts About Stress

The logo consists of the letters 'B' and 'H' in a white, serif font, set against a dark blue rectangular background.

1. **THE "SILENT KILLER"** - Stress has been called America's #1 health problem. It is known as the "silent killer" and can lead to heart disease, high blood pressure, chest pain, and an irregular heartbeat.
2. **LAUGH MORE OFTEN** - Laughing lowers stress hormones (like cortisol, epinephrine, and adrenaline) and strengthens the immune system by releasing health-enhancing hormones.
3. **PRIMARY CARE VISITS** - It is estimated that 75% - 90% of all visits to primary care physicians are due to stress related problems.
4. **REDUCING STRESS** - Stress can be managed by seeking support from loved ones, regular exercise, meditation or other relaxation techniques, structured timeouts, and learning new coping strategies to create predictability in our lives.
5. **EXTREME STRESS** - 1 in 5 Americans experience extreme stress. This includes shaking, heart palpitations and depression.
6. **STRESS AT WORK** - 80% of the workforce feels stress on the job, while 42% of the workforce say that their co-workers need help.
7. **PEOPLE CAN BECOME NUMB TO STRESS** - People can become so accustomed to stress, that they become numb. Some have become so adapted to the daily pressures, irritations and annoyances of life that it starts to seem normal.
8. **OVEREATING** - 38% of adults report overeating or eating unhealthy foods in the past month due to stress.
9. **SLEEPING** - Those who sleep less than 8 hours per night report higher stress levels than those who get 8 hours or more per night.
10. **STRESS DURING THE HOLIDAYS** - 8 out of 10 Americans anticipate stress during the holiday season. Two-thirds of Americans claim financing the holidays is a significant stress factor.

MANAGING STRESS

Life isn't something we can always control, and at times it can feel extremely stressful. You may not be able to remove all stress from your life, but you can learn to manage it.

MAKE "TO DO" LISTS



To-do lists can be a great option to reduce stress in the present, as well as in the future. Try working these three lists: 1) A master to-do list. This list will include everything that you want to accomplish. 2) A will-do-today list. This list includes what you want to spend your time on today. 3) A will-do-later list. This list enables you to schedule tasks at a later date.

ORGANIZE YOUR TIME



Do you ever feel like there just isn't enough time in the day? A few organizational skills can help maximize the time you do have. 1) Plan your next day the night before. Wake up with a purpose. 2) Schedule for interruptions. Set up time allowances in your plan. Give yourself time in between scheduled work for unexpected interruptions.

UNPLUG



Modern technology certainly has its advantages, productivity being one of them. It can also allow work stressors to intervene with family time, social activities and vacation. Set boundaries to help you spend your time and energy away from work. Try turning off cell phones at dinner and decide on a certain time to check email.

SLEEP



The stresses of life and work will leave anyone tossing and turning. Try one of these tips tonight for sweet dreams. 1) Quit caffeine by noon. Caffeine can remain in your body for 8-14 hours. 2) Practice relaxation 1-2 hours before bedtime. Decrease stimulation and do something you find relaxing, such as reading or taking a bath.

EAT A WELL BALANCED DIET



During stressful times, we often turn to traditional "comfort" foods. Ironically, these foods make us feel lethargic and reduce our ability to deal with stress. Try avoiding these foods and instead eating foods with low-fat, high-fiber, carbohydrate-rich meals with plenty of fruits and vegetables. Following these guidelines will help reduce stress.

LEAVE WORK AT WORK



You've had a long day at work, the last thing you need to do is take your work stress home with you. Try out one of these techniques to help your mind focus on the present, not on work. 1) Treating your commute home as a positive time to wind down and start the process of relaxation. 2) Once you get home, take a relaxing walk.