

THE EFFECTS OF STRESS ON BODY, MIND AND SPIRIT



An Overview of Stress

Stress is your body's natural response to a specific stimulus or event that you experience.

Two Major Types Of Stress

Eustress

This is what's known as "positive stress." Though eustress can still be a bit overwhelming and mentally taxing, it actually motivates you rather than hindering you. You might experience eustress on the morning of your wedding or before a big test that you really studied for.

Distress

This is what people are usually talking about when they mention stress. This stress is physically, mentally, and emotionally overwhelming in a negative fashion, meaning it tends to drain you. You might experience distress when you lose your job, or a family member gets ill.



Chronic Stress

- When you're experiencing stress, your body produces greater amounts of adrenaline and cortisol, the stress hormones. This is exactly what puts your body into fight-or-flight mode.
- When stress is regular and ongoing, it is called chronic stress.
- In chronic stress you're always in this fight-or-flight mode.
- Chronic stress is the worst stress condition that has long term repercussions on your health and wellbeing putting you at a higher risk of developing long-term health consequences.



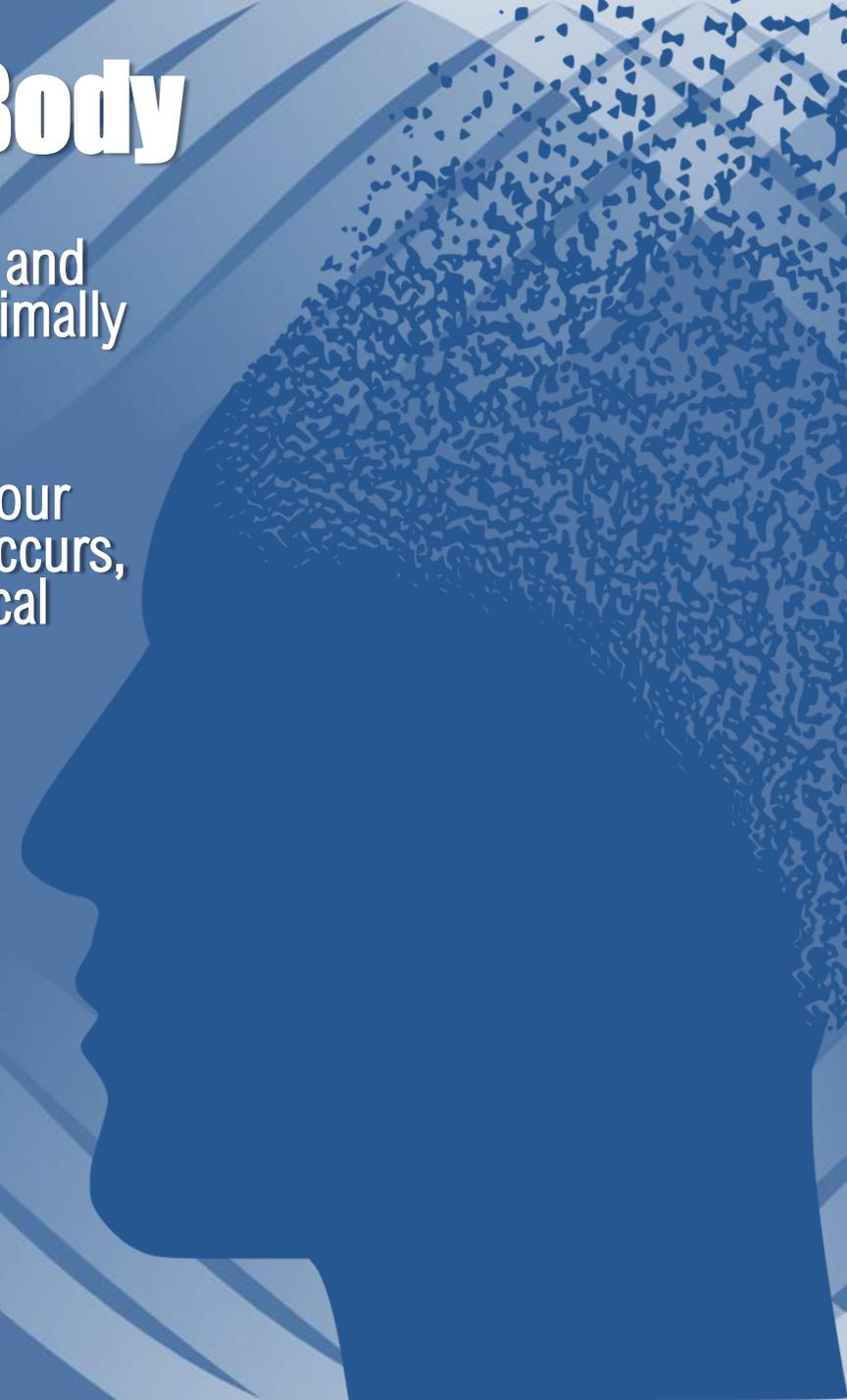
What Chronic Stress Does to the Body

Stress has the potential to impact the functioning of every single organ and organ system within your body. The more stress builds up, the less optimally your body will function.

When your body is flooded with cortisol and adrenaline, a majority of your organs and organ systems enter into a state of “overdrive.” When this occurs, they’re extremely overworked and pushed to their limits, causing physical manifestations.

How Stress Impacts The Physical Body

- Muscle and joint tension and/or pain
- Hyperventilation (breathing too quickly)
- Increased heart rate and blood pressure
- Reduced immunity to illnesses
- Gastrointestinal issues (diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, weight loss)
- Higher risk for heart disease, obesity, and type 2 diabetes.
- Evidence shows that chronic stress can cut years off your lifespan



The Impact of Stress on the Mind & Spirit

- Untreated stress leads to anxiety, depression or neurodegenerative disorders like dementia
- Reduced memory
- Less brain activation and fewer active brain cells
- Physical changes to the brain's structure
- High levels of cortisol and adrenaline impair normal brain functioning
- Loss of focus and concentration
- Loss of enjoyment in things you love
- Bad mood, lashing out, misery and unhappiness
- Levels of serotonin and dopamine drop leading mental health conditions



THE RELAXATION STATE

The normal state of your mind and body.

You are calm, relaxed and centered

Heart rate is normal at 60 - 100 beats per minute

Your blood pressure is normal

Your digestive system is working normally

Muscles and joints feel and function normally

You are calm and approachable to the outside world

Focus and concentration skills are normal and effective

You sleep fine without anxiety or worry

Versus

THE STRESS STATE

Abnormal state for your body and your mind.

You're in a state of "high alert" and hyperarousal, on edge , and waiting for the other shoe to drop.

Your heart rate is well above normal

Your blood pressure is off the charts

Stomach pain and digestive issues

Muscles and joints ache

You're angry, lashing out and everybody notices

You can't focus or concentrate on much of anything

Sleep is suffering, your mind is racing as you try to fall asleep, you are anxious and unable to relax

Final Thoughts

- In moderation, stress can actually encourage you to make progress toward your goals when it's in the form of eustress.
- Distress is what you're likely experiencing more on a daily basis and what's causing you so much trouble.
- With long-term exposure to a stressful environment and triggers, you're putting yourself at risk for damaging your body, mind, and even your spirit.
- Though not all stress is avoidable, the best thing you can do is identify your triggers, avoid them if possible, and develop healthy coping strategies that work best for you.

