Six Keys to Victory Over Stress

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Presented by:
Mark Zollitsch, Wellness Consultant
What’s Your Happy Place?

Adam Sandler
Happy Gilmore
He doesn't play golf... He destroys it.
6 Steps to Victory Over Stress

1. Have a Plan;

2. Understand the Physiology of Stress;

3. Identify Sources of Your Stress;

4. Be Proactive with Circumstances;

5. Identify your best Relaxation activities; and

What is Stress?

- STRESS – *c. a physical, chemical, or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension and may be a factor in disease causation* - Merriam Webster;

- Is stress necessary?

- Eustress vs. Distress.
So Why Should We Be Concerned?

• Chronic stress may be the ultimate risk factor;
  – Some experts think stress is a major cause of 50% of all disease;
  – Dramatic effect on your immune system;
• 80% of all primary care visits stress related;
• Sympathetic/parasympathetic nervous system imbalance research; and
  – Primary cause of Heart attack? Possibly…
The Nature of Stress

There are two kinds of “Distress:”

• **Acute Stress:** Very intense, but short lived (usually around 20 minutes); and

• **Chronic Stress:** Not very intense, but it endures for days, weeks, months.
Major Life Event Stresses
(Holmes-Rahe Scale)

1. Death of a child, spouse, parent, other family member;
2. Divorce or separation;
3. Jail;
4. Death of friend;
5. Loss of job;
6. Hospitalization or illness;
7. Birth or adoption;
8. Pregnancy;
9. Miscarriage or abortion;
10. Change of health of family member;
11. Foreclosure;
12. Illness;
13. Major financial change;
14. Change in marital status of parents;
15. Marriage;
16. Moving;
17. Change in work; and
18. Accident.
The Physiology of Stress

• Fight or Flight response;
• Hormone Cocktail Release;
  – Epinephrine;
  – Norepinephrine;
  – Vasopressin;
  – Aldosterone;
  – Cortisol;
• Sympathetic nervous system activated; and
• Bodily Responses.
Equal and Opposite Nervous and Biochemical Systems

**Fight or Flight Response**
- Sympathetic nervous system activated;
- Activating hormone cocktail release;
- Heart rate, breathing, blood pressure, blood sugar and sweating increase;
- High alertness;
- High energy state; and
- Primed to run or engage.

**Physiological responses triggered for survival!**

**Ineffective for mental, emotional or spiritual stressors.**

**Relaxation Response**
- Parasympathetic nervous system activated;
- Calming hormone cocktail release;
- Heart rate, breathing, blood pressure, blood sugar and sweating decrease;
- Calm and collected;
- Lower energy state; and
- Primed to chill or sleep.

**Physiological responses triggered to reverse effects of fight or flight response!**
Short Term Symptoms of Chronic Stress

• Headaches;
• Upset stomach, ulcers;
• Back pain;
• Weakens immune system;
• Moody, tense, depressed;
• Decreased performance; and
• Insomnia.
HOW STRESS AFFECTS THE BODY

**BRAIN**
Difficulty concentrating, anxiety, depression, irritability, mood, mind fog

**CARDIOVASCULAR**
higher cholesterol, high blood pressure, increased risk of heart attack and stroke

**JOINTS AND MUSCLES**
increased inflammation, tension, aches and pains, muscle tightness

**IMMUNE SYSTEM**
decreased immune function, lowered immune defenses, increased risk of becoming ill, increase in recovery time

**SKIN**
hair loss, dull/brittle hair, brittle nails, dry skin, acne, delayed tissue repair

**GUT**
nutrient absorption, diarrhea, constipation, indigestion, bloating, pain and discomfort

**REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM**
decreased hormone production, decrease in libido, increase in PMS symptoms
Long Term Effects of Stress Physiology

• Impaired cognitive performance;
• Blood sugar imbalance – diabetes risk;
• Suppressed thyroid;
• Premature aging, decreased bone density & muscle tissue;
• Lowers immunity & inappropriate inflammatory responses;
• Higher BP & Increased abdominal fat - Coronary Heart disease;
• Chronic pain; and
• Epigenetic Expression.
Long Term Effects Contribute to:

• Cancer;
• Heart Disease;
• Lung ailments;
• Accidents;
• Cirrhosis of the liver;
• Suicide;
• Migraine headaches;
• Digestive problems;
• Mental illness;
• Sleeping problems;
• High blood pressure;
• Asthma;
• Allergies;
• Ulcers;
• Tooth decay; and
• The common cold.
Are You Self-Medicating Your Stress?

• Self destructive behaviors that increase stress down the road?

• Unhealthy foods, sugar, nicotine, alcohol and caffeine chemically lower coping skills;

• Addictions give you a brief reprieve, but counterfeit relief.
Confounding Effects

- HALT;
- Tobacco, caffeine, stimulants;
- Poor sleep;
- Poor social support; and
- Poor nourishment that exacerbates the stress response.
Solutions!
Identify Your Sources of Stress

• Within your control;
  – Learned Skills;
  – Perspective;
  – Reactions;
• Beyond your control;
  – Accident scenes;
  – Other people; and
  – Life events.
Skills To Learn for Stressors Within Your Control

- Time Management;
  - Prioritizing urgent vs. important;
- Money Management;
- Saying no – Boundaries;
- Conflict Resolution;
- Relationship & Marriage skills; and
- Parenting Skills.
Change of Perspective

“Any area of your life where hope does not glisten, indicates you are believing a lie in that area.” – Francis Frangipane

• Choose to see the situation differently; and

• Reframe your thoughts.
Identify What Relaxes You Most….

Pay Attention…
• Introvert or Extrovert?
• Which senses affect you most?
• Are you comfortable sharing your stress? With whom?
Induce Relaxation When Stress beyond Your Control

- Serenity Prayer/“Not my circus, not my monkeys”;

- LAUGHTER;

- Exercise – Aerobic and Strength;

- Diaphragmatic Breathing;

- Vista bigger than self – perspective “Grand Canyon”;

- Anti-inflammatory foods.
Induce Relaxation When Stress Is Beyond Your Control

• Sharing with safe person;
• Prayer or meditation;
• Puppies or pets;
• Yoga/Tai-chi;
• Journaling;
• Art;
• Aromatherapy/Music therapy; and
• Massage.
### Take a Bite out of Stress – “Could you have eaten it 500 years ago?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foods That Fight Stress</th>
<th>Foods That Biochemically Make Stress Worse</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fresh Vegetables &amp; Fruit – rich in antioxidants</td>
<td>Sweet &amp; sugary foods &amp; beverages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water, herbal teas</td>
<td>Caffeine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken, fish &amp; organ meats</td>
<td>Alcohol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legumes</td>
<td>Fast Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish, fish oil, nuts and seeds, olive oil, avocados, flax</td>
<td>Processed Foods, inflammatory vegetable oils</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Be Proactive with Combatting Stress

1. What works best for you?

2. For stressors within your control, find a resource and commit to improving your skill in that area;

3. For stressors beyond your control, pick 1-2 relaxation activities that work best for you; and

4. Make time, but short amounts sufficient: 2 minutes here, 5 minutes there…. 
Grimm, J. "Turning on, turning off, turning over." Editor & Publisher. 04/24/2000 (.5 to 2 times salary).
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4. PricewaterhouseCoopers Assumption, 2001: 50% of presenteeism is some function of stress.
Marcus, C. "Presenteeism: A clear view of a growing problem." Compensation & Benefits Management. 01/01/2001
Wojcik, J. "Stress a major risk in comp." Business Insurance. 04/19/1999
6. Stress Directions Assumption, 2002: 50% of Disability is some function of
Thank You

TAC Healthy County
(512)478-8753 ▪ (800)456-5974
healthycounty@county.org
www.county.org/healthycounty

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