

# Wellness

## REVIEW

### Managing Stress



#### Is Stress Deterring You From Health?

Stress is now a common fixture in our hectic, busy lives. Small amounts of stress that are easily resolved can be beneficial in motivating and helping us achieve our goals. Although chronic or long-term stress affects each of us differently, it ultimately affects the whole body in a negative way and may contribute to many health complaints.

Is your health being affected by stress? Do you often feel anxious, worried, depressed, irritable, exhausted, overloaded or forgetful? Do you suffer from stiff or sore muscles or joints, tension headaches, high blood pressure, frequent colds or the flu? Or do you have irritable bowel syndrome, ulcers, an increase or loss of appetite, or worsening of an existing illness or condition? If you answered “yes” to one or more of these questions, your body may be overburdened by stress.

*Stress less!!! Ask us today how we can help manage your stress naturally.*

#### Fight or Flight: Your Response to Stress

Thousands of years ago, we may have been faced with the threat of a sabre tooth tiger and our immediate response to this was one of two reactions: to attack or run away. This is now known as the fight or flight response. Once this stress response is triggered, chemical messengers called adrenaline, cortisol and noradrenaline are produced by the adrenal glands and brain. These messengers increase blood flow to the essential organs such as the heart, lungs, brain and muscles to help us fight or run away. Digestive function slows down as this is less important in survival mode. Cortisol also increases the amount of sugar released into the blood to provide energy for our muscles to attack or run. In the past, stress was short-lived and once the stress was over, these chemical messengers shortly returned to normal.

#### Where's the Off Switch?

Over time our bodies have not changed this biological response to stress. Although the sabre tooth tigers are long gone, the physical threat to our lives and limbs has been replaced with the modern day stress of long work hours, financial worries, traffic jams and family issues. So what happens if this stress response does not turn off because of our non-stop busy lifestyles?

Ongoing stress that does not resolve may result in chronic stress, which can be the underlying cause of many health conditions. Chronic stress can impact body systems such as the cardiovascular system by contributing to high blood pressure. It can also take its toll on your nervous system leading to exhaustion, headaches and insomnia. Your digestive and immune systems can also be weakened by stress, making you more susceptible to irritable bowel syndrome, frequent colds and the flu.

#### Herbs and Nutrients for De-stressing

Go from ‘dis-stressed’ to ‘de-stressed’ with the help of herbs and nutrients:

- Rhodiola and withania are herbs which enhance the body’s response to stress. Rhodiola has been shown to reduce both physical and mental fatigue during times of stress.
- The herbs, passionflower, zizyphus and magnolia have been traditionally used for reducing stress, anxiety and nervous tension.
- St John’s wort is well-known for supporting healthy mood and protecting against the effects of stress.
- Magnesium, glutamine and B vitamins are used in abundance during times of stress, when the body’s requirement for these key nutrients is increased. Magnesium assists in muscle relaxation and calms the nervous system.

#### 5 Top Stress Busting Tips:

Lessen your stress load by practising the following stress busting strategies:

1. **Rest and Relaxation:** Relaxation techniques such as tai chi, yoga, and meditation can help you to control stress and improve physical and mental wellbeing.
2. **Think Positive:** A good attitude and positive outlook is fundamental for de-stressing. Thinking positively will help you get through a stressful period with greater enthusiasm and drive.
3. **Exercise:** Exercise is a brilliant form of stress relief, as it conditions the body and mind, and encourages the release of endorphins, which help you feel good.
4. **Indulge Yourself:** Enjoy a well-deserved massage or some other blissful treatment - perhaps soak in a bath with relaxing aromatherapy oils such as lavender, ylang ylang, chamomile or geranium.
5. **Eat Healthy Foods:** For a healthy mind and body, eat a diet abundant in fresh, brightly coloured fruits and vegetables. Consume protein with meals and snacks, and enjoy foods high in essential fatty acids such as oily fish, nuts and seeds. Minimise your intake of caffeine, energy drinks, sugar, alcohol and processed foods as these will contribute to fatigue in the long-term.

#### Stress Less for Good Health and Wellness

Although the stress of modern life is inescapable, it is important to remember that we can easily manage our response to stress with the help of dietary and lifestyle changes and some key natural medicines. Supporting a healthy stress response will allow you to feel more energised, resilient and ready to tackle life, so you can maintain the state of health and wellness that you deserve.

*Ask us today about our Stress Less program, tailored to your individual needs.*