

**STRESS MANAGEMENT AND
TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR
REDUCING STRESS**



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Ten Commandments for Reducing Stress

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What is Stress?

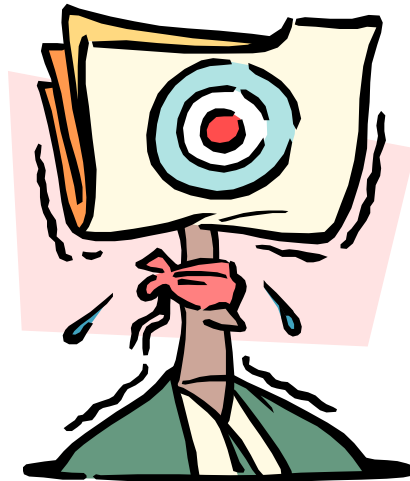
Stress is a pattern of emotional states and physiological reactions occurring in situations where individuals perceive threats to their important goals which they feel they may be unable to meet.

To fully understand stress, we must consider the emotional and physiological reactions it involves and the external factors that produce it.

The Stress Cycle

TENSION
ANXIETY
TIREDNESS

Relaxation breaks through this vicious circle and dramatically reduces the changes of the long term effects of stress occurring.



TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR REDUCING STRESS

- 1 Thou shalt **NOT** be perfect, nor even try to be
- 2 Thou shalt **NOT** try to be all things to all people
- 3 Thou shalt leave things undone that ought to be done
- 4 Thou shalt not spread thyself too thin
- 5 Thou shalt learn to say **NO**
- 6 Thou shalt schedule time for thyself and thy supportive network
- 7 Thou shalt switch off and do nothing, regularly
- 8 Thou shalt be boring, untidy, inelegant and unattractive at times
- 9 Thou shalt **NOT** even feel guilty
- 10 Especially, thou shalt **NOT** be thine own worst enemy, but be they best friend.

SHORT – TERM STRESS

PHYSIOLOGICAL EFFECTS

WHAT HAPPENS	WHY
Heart rate and blood pressure rises	To carry oxygen and nutrients faster around the body
Sugars and fats released into the blood stream	To provide energy and action
Salt retained in the body, and minerals released from the bones	To maintain the bodies fluid level, and blood pressure
Clotting factor in the blood	To minimise blood lost in case of trauma
Blood flows to selected muscles	To prepare them for action
Blood flows to the gut	To slow digestion and conserve body energy
Perspiration	To cool the body
Saliva and mucous rate of respiration increases	To allow more air to the lungs, and fluid for perspiration
Rate of respiration and width of wind pipes increases	To provide more oxygen and get rid of the extra carbon dioxide
Activity of the glands that fight infection	To conserve body energy
Size of pupils in the eye changes	To make the eyes more sensitive

LONG – TERM STRESS

PHYSIOLOGICAL EFFECTS

SHORT TERM RESPONSE	NO WONDER
Heart rate and blood pressure increases	The heart works overtime for years – and then starts complaining
Sugars and fats released into the blood stream	More fats are around to be laid down in blood vessel walls
Salt retained in the body	High blood pressure is sustained
Clotting factor in the blood	Clots can form more easily and block off blood vessels in the brain and heart
Blood flows to selected muscles, (the tense ones)	Blood doesn't flow freely through them so they tire faster and ache
Blood flows to the gut	The protection of the gut walls is reduced, so ulcers can occur
Saliva and mucous rate of respiration increases	The lungs are more vulnerable to infection and lung diseases eg bronchitis occur or are aggravated
Activity of the glands that fight infection changes	You are more vulnerable to disease

SHORT TERM STRESS

PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS

We respond in one of two ways:

- **We can become more alert**
- **Concentrate more easily**
- **Feel less tired**
- **Be motivated to action**

OR

- **Our reasoning diminishes and we panic ie we can think anxiety provoking thoughts**
- **I can't manage this**
- **What will my boss or spouse think**
- **Help I've got that terrible feeling again**
- **What shall I do, I feel so inadequate**
- **"Oh I'm going to faint"**

PHYSICAL DANGER SIGNS

- ? Sore throats, colds or feeling of being run down
- ? “Lump in the throat”
- ? Impaired speech or voice loss
- ? Aching or tired neck and shoulder muscles
- ? Low back pain
- ? Tension headaches, or pressure feelings
- ? Eye tension
- ? Migraines, dizziness, nausea
- ? Tooth grinding
- ? Fist clenching
- ? Trembling (eg hands or fingers)
- ? Twitching
- ? Chest pains, palpitations
- ? Raised blood pressure
- ? Difficulty breathing
- ? Asthma
- ? Bronchitis
- ? Heartburn
- ? Indigestion
- ? Abdominal discomfort
- ? Constipation or diarrhoea
- ? Menstrual disorders
- ? Loss of libido
- ? Skin rashes eg eczema, dermatitis and allergies

EMOTIONAL DANGER SIGNS

- ✘ Anxiety**
- ✘ Frustration**
- ✘ Irritability**
- ✘ Emotional outbursts or aggression**
- ✘ Unexplained depression**
- ✘ Moodiness**
- ✘ Guilt**
- ✘ Over-excitement**
- ✘ Nervousness**
- ✘ Panicky feelings**
- ✘ Apathy**
- ✘ Nervous laughter**
- ✘ Self esteem**
- ✘ Feelings of inadequacy**
- ✘ Hypersensitivity to criticism**
- ✘ Self-delusion**

SPIRITUAL DANGER SIGNS

- ❖ **Losing God's peace and joy**
- ❖ **Feeling spiritually dry and barren**
- ❖ **Struggling to hear God's voice**
- ❖ **No time for God**
- ❖ **Finding it hard to concentrate in our quiet times**
- ❖ **Feeling we are carrying a heavy load**
- ❖ **Worship**
- ❖ **Doubts**
- ❖ **Sense of direction**
- ❖ **Feeling driven by circumstances and demands**
- ❖ **Our "ministry" becomes a chore**
- ❖ **Our Christian life switches on to autopilot**
- ❖ **Feeling we would like to get out of our "ministry"**
- ❖ **Feeling angry and frustrated with God**

PERSONAL SUPPORT SYSTEM

Here are some of the types of support we all need from time to time. Indicate what support you want from them:

Colleagues:

.....

Close Friends:

.....

Family:

.....

Groups you are part of that are important to your sense of identity (such as race, sex, occupation, union, church):

.....

.....

Challengers:

.....

People who respect you:

.....

Approvers: (who praise what you do)

.....

Energisers: (who give you energy or inspiration)

.....

Evaluators: (who lets me know how I am doing)

.....

Supervisor:

.....

YOUR STRENGTHS: (write as many words as you can think of to describe your strengths)

.....

You have decided what types of support you want, are there any personal changes you need to make? (eg. time management, goals, stress management etc.)

.....

SHOULDER	Pull them towards your feet. STOP. Register That the tops of your shoulders are lower down than before.
ELBOWS	Push your elbows slightly away from your side and if possible straighten them a bit. STOP. Feel that your upper arms are away from your sides, and there is a wide angle at your elbows. Be aware of the weight of both arms resting on the support.
HANDS	Keeping the heel of your hand resting where it is, and only moving your fingers and thumbs – stretch them out to be as long as possible, with your thumbs stretching away from the fingers. STOP. Register the pads of your fingers and thumb resting on their support, and separated from each other.
LEGS	Turn your kneecaps to point outward. STOP. Feel your thighs rolled out, and knee caps facing away from each other.
KNEES	Move them slightly until they feel comfortable – slightly bent if possible.
BODY	Push your heels and shoulders into the support as though you were going to lift your bottom. STOP. Let the support take all your weight.
FEET	Push your feet away from your face and curl your toes. STOP. Be aware they are dangling on the ends of your legs.
HEAD	Push your head into the support. STOP. Feel the support holding your head for you.
JAW	With your lips together, drop your jaw by separating your back teeth. STOP
TONGUE	Press your tongue downward in your mouth. STOP. Feel your tongue resting in your mouth and your gullet slack
EYES	Close your eyes slightly tighter than normal. STOP. Feel your upper lids resting gently on your eyes with no tension around them.

FOREHEAD

Raise your eyebrows as far as you can. STOP.
Register that your forehead is smooth.

BREATHING

Be aware of it. As you breath in, feel the air going
to the bottom of your lungs. Relax as you breathe out
Enjoy the sensation of total calm.