



BALANCING STRESS FOR BETTER HEALTH

STRESS IS A PART OF EVERYDAY LIFE. TEYA SKAE EXPLORES HOW TO PERFORM IN THE STORM.

DID YOU KNOW THAT THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF STRESS?

1 NEGATIVE: We are all familiar with this one. This comes from the experiences we perceive as 'bad' in our life (e.g., losing a loved one, a job, a competition, a decrease or halt in income, or losing a limb in an accident).

2 POSITIVE: Truly! This is the type of stress that stems from good news and brings welcome change. Examples could be an unexpected promotion, relocating to another city, moving into a new house, planning a wedding (some people even have breakdowns around this time!). Change is synonymous with stress and many people avoid change as a result.

The interesting part though; even though our logical mind can distinguish two types of stress, the parts of our brain that deal with the stress response itself don't! Which is why in our increasing time-deprived, demand-driven modern life, stress is so prevalent.

Avoiding stress is like avoiding life, it is not usually possible nor practical. Instead, the trick is to teach your mind/body system to accommodate rising stress levels and then recover. This is done by teaching your

STRESS BUSTING SPECIAL

When having your chocolate fix, have it in the early part of the day like a treat with lunch.

system how and when to tone down or switch off the 'Fight-Flight-Collapse' response that we all hold within.

PRACTICAL WAYS TO DEAL WITH STRESS

GET SLEEP Just get it! Even if it is during the day (e.g., power-napping, dozing off on a weekend afternoon). Any rest and sleep is your body's way of repairing itself, so let it!

Make sure there is no light in your bedroom whatsoever as any light shining through the blinds disrupts the release of melatonin, which is the sleep-regulating hormone. You can even try sleeping with eye blinkers, yes the ones that you get on planes.

NUTRITIONAL KNOW-HOW Add good fats to your diet in the form of organic virgin coconut oil, milk or cream. Full of medium chain triglycerides (MCTs), these are the 'good guys' who will help you burn energy and fat. Coconut oil can also raise basal body temperatures while increasing metabolism, which is good news for people who suffer from low thyroid function due to stress (a very common scenario that causes weight gain).

Avoid all sugars, including fruit juices. Sugar, as well as white rice, white bread, white flour and all the products made with white flour will spike up insulin and make your adrenals work even harder. Instead, use organic stevia, a herbal sweetener that you will find at most health food stores.

Eat more vegetables, like sweet potatoes instead of normal potatoes, to avoid insulin spikes.

Load up on antioxidants for breakfast before and after training for helping with oxidative stress. Oxidation is a fact of life, and happens whether you are running on a real treadmill at the gym or on the treadmill of life. Go for power foods like organic raw cacao powder and replace coffee with organic green tea, or raw cacao with stevia. Don't fall for the hypes about expensive antioxidants; there are many out there.

Check out the ingredients listed on labels, and if you find added coffee, caffeine, guarana then

Stress prepares your body to run by redirecting more blood flow to the extremities and muscles. This primitive survival response that still runs our mind/body system goes back to the days of running away from imminent dangers, such as wild animals, and it was in our best interest to run as fast as we could at the expense of digesting food.

BALANCE YOUR BRAIN FOR STRESS RELEASE – A SIMPLE RELEASE TECHNIQUE

When people get stressed they naturally touch their forehead. This is because touching the forehead actually does relieve stress. So here is an exercise to restore the calmness and blood flow to the frontal cortex, which is the rational-thinking control centre. Technique: Put your right hand on the forehead and your left hand on the back part of the head at the base of neck, this changes the blood flow. When we are stressed blood flows to the back brain – the reptilian brain – which is why people feel a little brain dead during challenging times (because historically, at this point, all logical thinking ceases, for the sake of survival).

you are paying lots of money for something that will deplete your adrenals even further.

If you are going to eat chocolate (which many people do when stressed) then opt for natural organic dark chocolate. The 85 per cent varieties are much better than milk chocolate, and try and go for minimum sugar varieties. Avoid aspartame in any form and additives 950, 951 as they mess up your brain and make you crave even more sweets.

Probiotics help support your internal milieu (digestive tract and the small and large intestines) during times of heightened stress. Add good quality probiotics; ideally, the 'ten or more different strains' variety (which contains the good bacteria that we all need, all the time, for optimal health).

MOVE IT! For stress relief purposes, you should exercise at varying levels to ensure your body releases JUST enough of its natural endorphins (the feel-good chemicals). Always make sure you take sufficient rest between workouts if you are exercising for stress relief. Short bursts of intensity with lots of rest in between will stop the destructive side-effects of cortisol (the stress hormone).

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80% of your immune system resides in your gut and that is why probiotics are crucial. Steer clear of the probiotics that have sugar added because sugar and good bacteria do not get along well in your gut.