

STRESS AND THE BODY

Stress is what happens in your brain and your body when something you care about is at stake. Understanding that stress is a natural response and does not automatically mean harm – much like pain sometimes – can help you manage stressful events with a more positive approach.

If you learn to notice your stress triggers and what happens for you during a stress response, you can find strategies to address the way it changes your breathing, muscle tension and even mood.

Rethinking stress using a positive mindset can:

- Enhance focus, motivation and self-care
- Reduce inflammation
- Lead to a healthy heart response, as blood vessels are not constricted during a positive stress response

HOW TO REWIRE YOUR STRESS RESPONSE: SEVEN TIPS TO MAKE STRESS GOOD FOR YOU!

1. Name the stressor:

- Understanding and identifying what's causing the stress can allow you to come up with potential solutions, examine alternate outcomes and take control of the situation.

2. Learn to use stress for good:

- If you view stress in a negative light, you'll be more likely to react in negative ways.
- Next time you feel stressed or anxious, try recognizing and welcoming that feeling instead of pushing it away.

3. It's all about what you do, not the situation itself:

- You may not be able to control life, but you can control how you respond.
- If you approach stressful situations with an open mind and channel your heightened feelings into problem-solving, the initial stress can turn into a strong motivator.

4. Use exercise to fight negative stress responses:

- Exercise can increase levels of feel-good chemicals that promote a sense of contentment and well-being and reduce the stress hormone cortisol.

5. Get good sleep

6. Eat well:

- Ditch the junk food, sugary, and overly salty foods.

7. Keep a stress journal:

- Writing down your problems naturally encourages the brain to reflect, consider potential solutions and gives you a new perspective.
- If want to get ahead of your stress, you can even start the day with a list of things you think need to be addressed.

RESOURCES

- <https://www.liveplanbc.ca/pain-education/emotional-well-being/stress-awareness-pain>
- <https://theconversation.com/what-happens-to-your-body-when-youre-stressed-and-how-breathing-can-help-97046>
- <https://news.stanford.edu/2015/05/07/stress-embrace-mcgonigal-050715/>
- <https://community.thriveglobal.com/how-rethinking-stress-could-make-you-more-resilient/>
- <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/23437923/>
- <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/22201278/>