



The American Institute of Stress

TEN CRUCIAL POINTS ABOUT STRESS

1. Stress is difficult to define because it is different for each of us. A Steep roller coaster ride may be a terrifying trial for one individual but an exhilarating elation for another.
2. Stress is also an unavoidable consequence of life. Some sources of stress are inescapable but there are others you can do something about. Most of us never bother to distinguish between the two. Make a list of things that you find stressful in your life and divide them into these two categories so that you can concentrate your efforts in areas where they are most likely to achieve results. Don't waste your time and energy in a frustrating attempt to influence things you can't possibly change.
3. Stress affects us in different ways. Check the following list of some common stress related symptoms and see which might apply to you. There are a variety of techniques, which can reduce the annoying psychological and physical consequences of stress. Meditation, muscular relaxation and aerobic exercises, jogging, yoga, etc., can be very effective. However, just as stress is different for each of us, no technique works for everyone. Experiment and find out which is best for you, and then practice it on a regular basis.
4. The most important thing that you can learn about stress is to recognize that often it is not external events that are stressful, but rather how you perceive them.
5. Always remember that this is something, which is entirely under your control. Nobody can make you feel inferior - without your consent.
6. If you have been treated unfairly, or have a reasonable request, learn to act assertively but responsibly. If you are not satisfied with the results, persist in politely repeating your proposal on a periodic basis, even if you start to sound like a broken record.
7. Learn to say NO when confronted by a request you suspect will probably be stressful or time consuming. It's just not possible to always please everybody. No one will respect you unless you respect yourself and your personal time.
8. Learn to manage your time so that you specifically allow for adequate relaxation, recreation and sleep. Take time out to get in touch with your true feelings, needs and desires. Make an honest assessment of your strengths and weaknesses.
9. Establish some appropriate goals that allow you to more fully utilize your talents and which are within your reach but not your grasp. Unrealistic aspirations will only lead to chronic frustration. Insignificant achievements will rob you of the powerful stress-reducing benefits that come with pride of accomplishment.
10. A strong social support system is a powerful stress buffer. If family, friends or work fail to satisfy that need, get involved in group activities, volunteer work or hobbies with individuals that have similar interests. Try to do something you enjoy that benefits others.

STRESS IS DIFFICULT TO DEFINE, BUT THE FEELING OF BEING OUT OF CONTROL IS ALWAYS DISTRESSFUL. IF SOMETHING THAT BOTHERS YOU SEEMS BEYOND YOUR CONTROL, LEARN TO AVOID OR ACCEPT IT. IF THERE IS SOMETHING YOU CAN DO, DO IT - INSTEAD OF COMPLAINING, WORRYING AND SUFFERING NEEDLESSLY.