

# Overcoming Stress



Dr. Brad Cole

# Modern Stress

Modern day life is full of pressures, hopeless situations, and frustrations. We struggle with our careers, work/life balance, and connecting (as opposed to conflicting) with others. Expectations are higher; margins are smaller; resources are thinner.



Stress - “A state of physiological or psychological strain caused by adverse stimuli, physical, mental, or emotional, internal or external, that tend to disturb the functioning of an organism...” *Dorland’s Medical Dictionary*

## Is Stress *Really* Harmful to My Body?

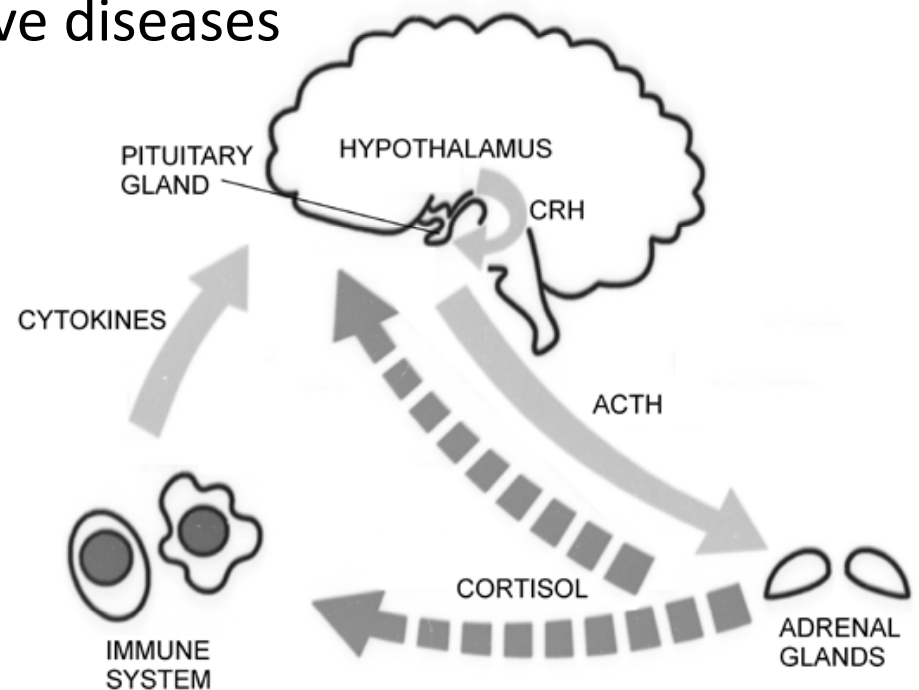
Your body's reaction to stress is like an alarm system going off deep inside your brain, immediately dumping stress hormones into your bloodstream. These stress hormones cause a whole series of sudden physiological changes in your body, such as increasing your heart rate and blood pressure, shutting down your digestive system, and preparing your body to fight off an attack or run for your life. Your body is prepped for action.

Threatening situations that require us to run and/or fight are very rare, unfortunately we have the same physical response to daily stressful situations.

*If stressful situations pile up one after another, your body has no chance to recover.*

So what happens when there is no action? What happens when what we really want from our body is calm focus, despite our bodies actually being prepared to fight or run? What happens when our bodies are stressed day in and out, often all day long?

- Ongoing stress blunts your immune system.
- In turn, your immune system responds by releasing substances that cause unresolved inflammation.
- Chronic, systemic inflammation contributes to the development of *all* degenerative diseases (cancer, diabetes, and heart disease are the big 3).
- The cycle continues and gains momentum.



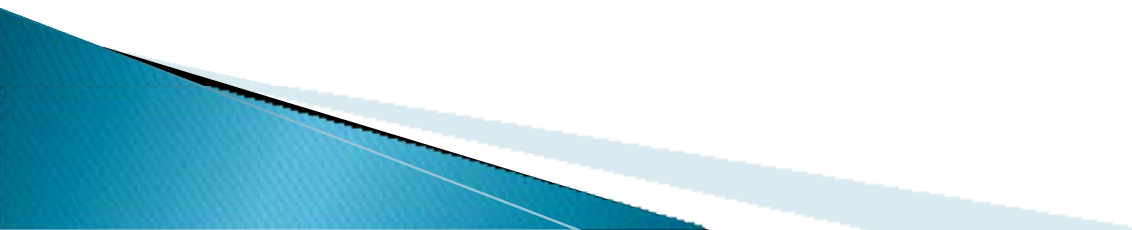
# Defense Strategy

Although we may not always be able to avoid stressful situations, there are a number of things we can do to reduce the effect that stress has on our bodies. By developing skills to manage stressful situations, avoiding poor coping strategies, and strengthening our physical capacity to handle stress, we can be more productive in the midst of the storm.



# Self Care

By making some strategic changes, you can form a buffer between yourself and life's stressors.

1. Enjoy a fresh, balanced, healthy diet. Don't over-eat.
  2. Enjoy restorative sleep.
  3. Enjoy daily exercise.
  4. Limit caffeine and alcohol. Don't use either to manage stress.
  5. Don't use nicotine or misuse a medication.
  6. Learn and practice relaxation techniques like progressive muscle relaxation, relaxing breathing, yoga, tai chi, or meditation.
  7. Enjoy breaks from work. Schedule fun/relaxing activities. Spend time connecting with people you enjoy.
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# Bang Head Here

- ▶ **Adults & Children 12 years and over:**  
Take 2 every 4 to 6 hours while symptoms last.
- ▶ Do not take more than 8 in 24 hours.
- ▶ Do not take for more than 10 days unless directed by a doctor.
- ▶ **When using this product:**  
Confusion may occur. Avoid alcoholic drinks. Do not drive a motor vehicle or operate machinery.
- ▶ **Stop use and ask a doctor if:**  
Stress persists for more than 2 weeks. Stress may be associated with other serious medical illness.

# A Better Way to Breathe

Practice this basic technique twice a day for the next week and whenever you feel tense. Follow these steps:

- 1. Inhale.** With your mouth closed and your shoulders relaxed, inhale as slowly and deeply as you can to the count of six. As you do that, push your stomach out. Allow the air to fill your diaphragm.
- 2. Hold.** Keep the air in your lungs as you slowly count to four.
- 3. Exhale.** Release the air through your mouth as you slowly count to six.
- 4. Repeat.** Complete the inhale-hold-exhale cycle three to five times.





# Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Tense each muscle group for at least five seconds and then relax for at least 30 seconds.

Repeat before moving to the next muscle group.

- 1. Upper part of your face:** Lift your eyebrows toward the ceiling, feeling the tension in your forehead and scalp. Relax and repeat.
- 2. Lower part of your face:** Clench your teeth and pull back the corners of your mouth toward your ears. Show your teeth like a snarling dog.  
Relax and repeat.
- 3. Neck:** Gently touch your chin to your chest. Feel the pull in the back of your neck as it spreads to your head. Relax and repeat.

*Progressive muscle relaxation is like  
“Ctrl- Alt- Del” for the neurologically  
controlled tension of the muscle systems.*

4. **Shoulders:** Pull your shoulders up toward your ears, feeling the tension in your shoulders, head, neck, and upper back. Relax and repeat.
5. **Chest, shoulders and upper back:** Pull your shoulders back as if you're trying to make your shoulder blades touch. Relax and repeat.
6. **Stomach:** Pull your stomach in toward your spine, tightening your abdominal muscles. Relax and repeat.
7. **Lower legs:** Raise your feet toward the ceiling while flexing them toward your body. Feel the tension in your calves. Relax and repeat.
8. **Feet:** Turn your feet inward and curl your toes up and out. Relax and repeat.





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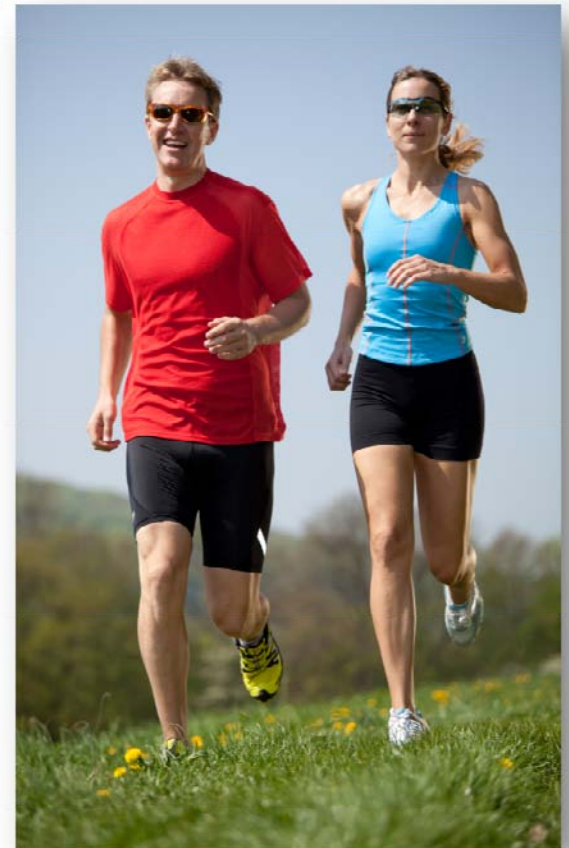
# Exercise

Daily exercise burns up the stress chemicals in your body. It's a healthy way to manage stress and relieve tension. The side effects are great. A fit body has a larger capacity to buffer stressful chemicals.

It is a challenge to make physical training a priority, but I have never met anyone who regretted having exercised. (If you have, please email me at [dr.bradfordcole@cptg.net](mailto:dr.bradfordcole@cptg.net). I'd be interested to read about it.)

*If you want to improve your  
life, **get active!***

*What better place than here,  
What better time than now?*



# Comprehensive Restoration of Health

It is clear that the negative effects associated with stress are real. Learning to cope, relax, and enjoy life is a much better way to reduce the harmful effects of stress and avoid the vicious cycle of stress and ill health.

For more information regarding nutrition, exercise, and quality sleep, e-mail me at [Dr.BradfordCole@cptg.net](mailto:Dr.BradfordCole@cptg.net).



# About The Author



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