

# Stress Management Series Part One

*Fitness, Nutrition, and  
Spending Time Outdoors*

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## HOW DOES STRESS AFFECT THE BODY?

- Low energy
- Headaches
- Digestive issues
- Aches, pains, and tense muscles
- Chest pain and rapid heartbeat
- Insomnia
- Low immunity
- Dry mouth and difficulty swallowing
- Clenched jaw and grinding teeth

## HOW DOES STRESS AFFECT THE MIND?

- Constant worrying
- Nail biting or other behavioral symptoms
- Racing thoughts
- Forgetfulness and disorganization
- Inability to focus
- Poor judgment
- Being pessimistic or seeing only the negative
- Increases risk of alcohol or substance abuse

## KNOWING YOUR STRESS TRIGGERS & MANAGING THEM:

- Effective stress management starts with identifying your stress sources and developing strategies to manage them.
- What situations, concerns, or challenges activate your stress response? Examples: meeting new people, relationships, watching the news.
- Strategies to manage external stressors include lifestyle factors such as eating a healthy diet, being physically active and spending time outdoors— which help boost your resiliency.
- Other helpful steps include asking for help from others, practicing problem-solving skills and effective time management.

## WHY DOES EXERCISE REDUCE STRESS?

- Decreases overall levels of tension
- Elevates and stabilizes mood
- Improves sleep
- Improves body's ability to use oxygen and improves blood flow. Both of these changes have a direct, positive effect on your brain
- Increases your brain's production of endorphins - the "feel good" neurotransmitters that sustain a sense of well-being



### **INDOOR ACTIVITIES:**

- Get a quick at-home workout in first thing in the morning
- Take a walk during light hours
- Do a quick workout at the end of the work day
- Pick a space – garage, basement, living room
- Resistance bands, body weight exercises, dumb bells
- YouTube offers MANY at home workout videos
- Home workout apps –Peleton, etc.

### **OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES:**

- Hunting and fishing
- Hiking
- Biking
- Kayaking
- Walking
- Jogging



### **WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT TO BE OUTDOORS ON A REGULAR BASIS?**

- Cortisol levels are lowered when your enjoying nature
- Sensory stimulation from being outdoors is beneficial for mental and physical health
- Calms the mind and body
- Vitamin D helps fight anxiety and depression
- Exposing yourself to light during daytime hours helps with the sleep cycle



### **NUTRTION QUICK TIPS TO HELP MANAGE STRESS:**

- Eat regularly-scheduled, healthful, balanced meals that include plenty of fruits and vegetables.
- Take time to sit down and enjoy eating with family.
- If you are by yourself, take time to eat at a table without trying to multitask.
- Eat slowly and enjoy your meal! Be conscious of when you are feeling full.
- Time your meals appropriately to be conscious of blood sugar levels.
- Try adding green smoothies for more vegetable intake.
- Include clean, lean protein regularly to stay full longer.
- Be sure to get enough vitamins and minerals in your diet to keep your immune system up.
- Being conscious of your health and maintaining regularly scheduled mealtimes will help limit unhealthy snacking and stress eating.

