



You might be wondering what playing with a beach ball has to do with stress. What you just experienced were symptoms of stress: altered physiological response and changes in attitude. You might ask stress? We were doing something fun and entertaining. You are absolutely correct, however your body does not know the difference between positive and negative stress. There are 2 major types of stress. This will have an impact on how you deal with it.

1. Eustress- good stress such as a marriage, job promotion,
2. Distress- is stress associated with negative activities. Distress has 4 subcategories
 - a. Acute: arrives and disappears quickly. Limited time, exam, public speaking
 - b. Chronic: weeks, months or years. providing long-term care for a loved one
 - c. Hyper-stress: pushed beyond ones limits, Wall Street trader
 - d. Hypo-stress: not challenged, repetitive factory work

Today my goal is to help you understand stress in the workplace and as legal administrators you experience stress coming at you from all directions. I am Peggy Green, President of Whole Body Fitness. I am a Colorado native and enjoy spring skiing when a t-shirt and vest is ample layering. I really prefer though warm weather activities such as bike riding, running, gardening, camping and golfing.

My passion is to help clients who want to feel better, look great and live longer disease and pain free. Anybody with me? It's all about having a healthy and active lifestyle at whatever stage of life, parent, child or spouse or whatever age. I do this by focusing on the body, nutrition and attitude.

You have the power within you to slow down aging, prevent disease and live a long and healthy life. You are in charge of your health. Remember that it is NOT the doctors, it is NOT the government, and it is NOT your spouse. Rather it is you who is responsible for your health. As a result, I am promoting you to manager of your health. I believe that it is time for each and every one of us to step up and take responsibility for our health and the outcomes from doing so. So in taking this job seriously, I ask that you believe it. What you say is what you believe. Write this down, I (your name) am manager of (your name) health enterprises.



What is stress? Stress is a psychological and physiological response to events that upset our personal balance in some way. When faced with a threat, whether to our physical safety or emotional equilibrium, the body's defenses kick into high gear in a rapid, automatic process known as the “fight-or-flight” response, all bodily systems are on red alert.

People experience stress when they perceive they have an imbalance between the demands made of them and the resources they have available to cope with those demands. Stress is caused by a poor match between us and our work, poor relationships and presence of physiological or physical violence at a workplace, and conflicts between our roles at work and outside it. Although the experience of stress is psychological, stress also affects physical health.

The Body’s stress response

The “fight-or-flight” stress response involves an enormous amount of biological changes that prepare us for emergency action. When danger is sensed, a small part of the brain called the hypothalamus sets off a chemical alarm. The following domino effect results with the sympathetic nervous system responding by releasing a flood of stress hormones, including adrenaline, nora-epinephrine, and cortisol. These stress hormones race through the bloodstream, readying us to either battle it out or flee the scene.

Our heart rate increase and blood flow to the large muscles increases so we can run faster and fight harder. Blood vessels under the skin constrict to prevent blood loss in case of injury, pupils dilate so we can see better, and our blood sugar ramps up, giving us an energy boost and speeding up reaction time. At the same time, body processes not essential to immediate survival are suppressed such as the digestive and reproductive systems. The stress response floods your body with chemicals that prepare you for “fight or flight.” But while the stress response is helpful in true emergency situations where you must be alert, it wears your body down when constantly activated causing to adrenal glands to go into renal failure. The problem with the stress response is that the more it’s activated, the harder it is to shut off.

It is now time to dive into the heart of the workshop. We will be discussing what causes stress, how it affects you and 3 stress reduction techniques that you can take anywhere



What causes stress?

- Family
- Work
- Finances
- Health
- Food
- Environment
- Death
- Divorce

This list is available for free at <http://www.wholebodyfitnesscolorado.com/resources.php>. Recently I must say that I have had my fair share of stress in the last 2 years. I have bought and sold a house, went through a long divorce, had several deaths in my family, and received my bachelors degree. Now if you want to talk about distress and eustress, I've had it all.

One of the reasons that work stress is so difficult to define is that it comes from many different sources. Some of the most common sources of job-related stress include environmental stress. This type of stress is associated with workplace safety, the configuration of one's work area, the type of furniture or equipment. Even though society is supposed to be going paperless, law firms still require a lot of hard documenting of files. I know that when I've been to my attorney's office, I have seen boxes and boxes of client's files pile on the floor on chairs and on desks. This is a good example of environmental stress.

People who are uncertain of their job often experience high degrees of stress. This can be fueled by fear of job loss, anticipation of promotion or lack of feedback on performance.

A great deal of stress in the workplace stems from relationships such as coping with difficult co-workers, dealing with a negative or uncommunicative supervisor, and peer pressure.

New areas of stress include social media. Are you watching what you post on Facebook and Twitter? It could come back to haunt you if not politically correct.



In the legal profession, you also are under strict rules, regulations and processes. Finally, performance is a huge workplace stressor. It can be tied to quality or quantity, deadlines and quality standards.

Here are a few interesting statistics to ponder:

- Did you know that up to 75% of all lost time in the workplace is stress related? (Covey 1999).
- Did you know that 75-90% of all visits to primary care physicians are for stress related complaints or disorders?
- Did you know that a three-year study conducted by large corporations showed 60% of employee absences were to due psychological problems such as stress?

As a result organizations see the economic impact of stress with high absenteeism, high staff turnover, poor time keeping, disciplinary problems and harassment. It can also reduce productivity, increase accidents, and errors and skyrocket health care costs from compensation or health care.

That concludes the portion about causes of stress. That was pretty easy to figure out wasn't it? Let's move onto point number two: the affects of stress in our lives

Signs and symptoms of stress

There are many signs and symptoms of stress and how it affects our lives. However the specific ones vary widely from person to person. There are 4 basic areas in which stress has an impact on us.

1. Physically
2. Emotionally
3. Behaviorally
4. Cognitively

Let's start with the most common place we think of stress having an effect: Physically.



Top Ten Physical Signs of Stress

1. Headache
2. Back and chest pain
3. Pounding heart
4. High blood pressure
5. Shortness of breath
6. Muscle aches
7. Stomach upset (constipation, diarrhea)
8. Sleep problems
9. Sex problems
10. Weight gain or loss

So we've covered how stress affects us physically, we can now take a look at how it affects us emotionally.

Top Ten Emotional Signs of Stress

1. Anxiety/worry
2. Restlessness
3. Depression
4. Job dissatisfaction
5. Resentment/guilt
6. Feeling overwhelmed
7. Seeing only the negative
8. Forgetfulness
9. Feeling on edge all the time
10. Irritability/Impatience

We will now look at how stress affects us behaviorally.

This is an actual behavior that we engage in when we are stressful.

To give you an example, I personally demonstrate stress behaviorally by talking too fast.



Top Ten Behavioral Signs of Stress

1. Overdoing/Under doing activities (e.g., exercising, shopping sleeping, eating)
2. Using alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs to relax
3. Crying spells
4. Relationship conflicts / Picking fights with others
5. Decreased productivity
6. Isolating yourself from others / Social withdrawal
7. Procrastination, neglecting responsibilities
8. Nervous habits (e.g., nail biting, pacing)
9. Teeth grinding or jaw clenching
10. Overreacting to unexpected problems

We have chatted about how stress affects us physically, emotionally and behaviorally. Our final area is cognitively. When under stress our brain is affected in how it reacts and works. Here are some examples of how our brain is affected.

Top Ten Cognitive Signs of Stress

1. Indecisiveness is reluctance to make a decision, the result is not clear.
2. Inability to concentrate: our brain cannot focus on even the smallest of tasks and follow through.
3. Trouble thinking clearly
4. Poor judgment is another example of how stress affects us cognitively. Have you ever made a decision then regretted it later?
5. Seeing only the negative. Have you ever just seen the negative in a situation rather than looking for the positive?
6. Anxious or racing thoughts are being afraid that something is going to happen or might happen.
7. Constant worrying is pretty much like being anxious in which you are projecting about something unpleasant happening in the future.
8. Loss of objectivity is the inability to perceive something without being influenced by personal emotions or prejudices
9. Fearful anticipation is the feeling of not looking forward to an event.
10. Forgetfulness is not being able to remember little things or things from moment to moment or even what happened yesterday

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If you would like to evaluate how you are coping with stress, please go to <http://www.wholebodyfitnesscolorado.com/assessments.php> to take the stress assessment.

As a good manager, you have been doing due diligence and educating yourself. Congratulations, you have now been promoted to vice president of your health enterprises. Say it out loud: I am the vice president of (your name) health enterprises. We are now finished with how stress affects our bodies physically, emotionally, behaviorally and cognitively. I would now like to move onto the importance of managing stress and its symptoms.

Importance of managing stress

As I said earlier, recent research suggests that anywhere from 60 to 90 percent of illness is stress-related. Extended or repeated activation of the stress response takes a heavy toll on the body. Prolonged exposure to stress increases your risk of everything from heart disease, obesity, and infection to anxiety, depression, and memory problems. The physical wear and tear of stress includes damage to the cardiovascular system and immune system suppression.

Stress compromises your ability to fight off disease and infection, throws your digestive system off balance, makes it difficult to conceive a baby, and can even stunt growth in children. Because of the widespread damage it can cause, it's essential to learn how to deal with stress in a more positive way and reduce its impact on your daily life. Our body does not have the ability to distinguish between distress and eustress. As a result, chronic stress wears you down day after day and year after year, with no visible escape. Under sustained or severe stress, even the most well-adjusted person loses the ability to adapt. When stress overwhelms our coping resources, our bodies and minds suffer.

While unchecked stress is undeniably damaging, there are many things you can do to control it and reduce its effects. I had a hard time deciding which ones to offer because there are many ways to reduce stress but I chose these three with this group in mind. It is now time to share with you three stress reduction techniques that you can take anywhere.



Stress reduction technique #1

Each one of these tips are about feeling better, looking great and living disease free and pain free.

1. How many of you skip lunch or eat at your desk? At the last ALA monthly meeting, I had the opportunity to meet several of you and was told that you thrive on the fast pace of the type of work that you do. I also heard that many of you don't take time for lunch, working through lunch, having it on the run or missing it entirely. My number one tip to reduce stress in the job is taking a break. I fully understand that you have deadlines, but if you continue to not take time away, you will wind up like my friend Carol. Years ago she was literally working 20 hour days and surviving on a bag of potato chips, and sodas. When she received her 5 year pin, the CEO told her that she should actually be receiving a 10 year pin because the number of hours that she worked. While this has some humor to it, it is probably a lot like many of you. When you don't take time to rest your mind and body, you lose productivity, and health. I am not suggesting start taking two hour lunches unless the boss will let you but I do want to urge you to be taking at least 15 minutes away from the job, even if it is closing your door and eating a PBJ from home. You need to take a break to create balance in your life. When you as the legal admin take time for yourself, you are also setting a positive example for those who work for you and with you. Think of lunch as a mini vacation that you take every day. Isn't vacation supposed to be about rest and relaxation which you need and have earned? I give you permission to take a break during the day. We can move onto the second stress reduction technique you can take anywhere.

Stress reduction technique #2

2. Our second tip is breathing like a baby. We all remember watching an infant as their big round bellies rose and fell with each breath. That's what we are going to do but first you ask why do I need to learn how to breathe? Good question. Do you recall that with stress our body goes into the fight or flight mode? Breathing through your chest only is fight or flight response. Think about when you are startled and your breath is taken away, such as a near miss of a traffic accident, or a scene in a movie that catches you off guard. This is a temporary and short term

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response but for many of us, we stay in the chest breathing mode. In order to take our body out of fight or flight, we need to breathe all the way down into the lungs, which means belly breathing. Now, take one hand and put it on your chest and the other on your stomach. Take a natural breath. I can venture to say that most of you are breathing through your chest only. Now, consciously take a breath all the way into your belly. See your hand on your abs rise. This is the way that you should be breathing all the time.

Just the other day, I had a woman who attended one of my previous talks on stress tell me this story:

I was flying on vacation and our plane ran into a lot of turbulence. I started to feel my muscles tighten, and have some very anxious thoughts when I remembered what you said about breathing like a baby. I put my hands on my chest and belly and slowly took in full breaths. Within a matter of a few breaths, I was feeling more relaxed and less anxious.

See, this is truly a technique you can take anywhere. Go buy some round stickers and put them all around your office, car and home. Every time you see one, remind yourself to breathe like a baby at least 5 times. The goal is to be breathing like baby all the time.

Stress reduction technique #3

3. Tip number three may not be popular but it is powerful. This last tip is reducing the amount of caffeine you drink. Alright, alright, no mutiny to the speaker. I'm not asking you to entirely give up caffeine but to reduce it by 50%. Now if you want to make it 100 % reduction, I won't complain. Why reduce caffeine intake? Caffeine is a drug that can disrupt sleep, interfere with hormones in the body, and cause people to feel moody and exacerbate stress response. Too much caffeine can cause dependence where you feel you need caffeine to have enough energy to function and when the caffeine wears off; you're even more tired and need more. Four or more cups of coffee can put you at risk of developing a physical dependence that leads to withdrawal symptoms like headache and intense cravings of caffeine use is discontinued. Caffeine is responsible for increasing the heart rate and keeping your body in the stress response. Remember our lists from earlier. Aren't these symptoms of stress? Instead, drink water. Pure simple water

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that's good for you. You should be drinking one-half of your body weight in ounces of water. For example if you weigh 130 pounds then you should be drinking 65 ounces of water. It will help you to stay hydrated, reduce the aging process and facilitate metabolism. So tip number 3, focus on reducing caffeine and replace with water.

In summary, tip number one to reduce stress is taking a break every day. Breathing like a baby is tip number two and reducing the amount of caffeine you consume and replacing it with water is our final tip. Remember, it is progress not perfection that we are after. Your health is what you make of it. That old saying of you don't know what you had until its lost hold so very true. Take charge, be in control and manage your life. Do something now. Be true to yourself!

Congratulations, you have received one final promotion today. You are now CEO of your health enterprises. Please stand up! This time with certainty and confidence, declare to the world that you are the brand new CEO of your health enterprises. I am Peggy Green of Peggy Green Health Enterprises. Now give yourself a round of applause.