

Stress Management

Why is it important to overcome stress?

When the body is under stress there is an actual **stress reaction** that takes place:

1. The brain perceives a threat: real or imagined. It could be demands at work or a near-miss situation on the highway. A message is then sent from the brain to the adrenal glands.
2. The message then triggers the adrenal glands to secrete hormones, including adrenaline and cortisol, which flood the circulatory system.
3. These hormones (chemicals) released into the blood cause an increase in bodily reactions, increase heart rate, and raise blood pressure. In other words prepare the body for rapid action.

Internal Stressors:

Some stress can be self-induced. Negative feelings and thoughts that pop into your head and cause you unrest can be a major source of stress.

- **Fears:** This is often from imagining a certain event or situation that you have coming up going as bad as possible. Often, it is not nearly as bad as we imagine it to be.
- **Uncertainty:** This could be from a looming restructuring at the office or waiting for medical test results
- **Attitude:** Having a negative view of the world can be stressful, because you are creating an unpleasant environment in which to live
- **Unrealistic expectations:** A perfectionist or controlling personality may lead to high stress levels.

External Sources:

These are events or situations that happen to you. Sometimes you cannot control what happens to you, but you can decide how you will react to the situation. Here are some examples of areas that may cause you stress.

- **Major life changes:** These changes can be positive (a new marriage, job promotion or new home) or they can be negative (a divorce or the death of a loved one).
- **Environment:** Examples include noise disturbances and lighting.
- **Unpredictable events:** These could include an increase in monthly bills or a pay cut.
- **Family:** Examples include heated situations with family members or relationship problems.
- **Workplace:** Examples include overwhelming workloads or disputes with co-workers.
- **Social:** Examples include having to do a presentation at work or forming new relationships.