

STRESS 101

THE PROBLEM OF TOO MUCH STRESS



- We will all suffer from high states of stress at some point in our lives, and in today's busy society we are involved in regular stressful life situations, along with frequent and exhausting training schedules.
- This stress is a burden on the body, and if the stress becomes chronically elevated and prolonged, we can end up massively fatigued and run down.
- What we don't always realize is the potential damage this is doing on the inside of our bodies and how it affects our health.



HOW DOES STRESS WORK

- At the time of a stressful event, the hypothalamus sends a nerve impulse directly to your adrenals, which causes them to secrete adrenaline.
- Adrenaline is the reason for the heightened state you feel after the event, it results in high blood pressure, respiration and heart rate.
- The body also releases glucose during this stressful time.
- This causes the release of the corticotrophin releasing hormone (CRH) - which tells the pituitary to release -the adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH) - which tells the adrenals to produce cortisol.
- One-off releases of cortisol can be a good thing for the body, as they help regulate immune function, repair tendons/ligaments and may even accelerate fat loss.
- The problems occur when cortisol is elevated for prolonged periods of time. It is chronic, low level stress that never quite goes away that leads to physical problems.



BAD STRESS SYMPTOMS

Those with long-term high stress levels may experience negative symptoms such as:

- Difficulty falling asleep
- Feeling lethargic most of the day
- Suffering from mood swings or feeling emotional
- Increased blood sugar levels (store more body fat)
- Suppressed pituitary function (low testosterone)
- Suffering from allergies or falling ill frequently
- Increased inflammation
- Learning and memory issues



NUTRITION & LIFESTYLE TIPS

1 EAT LITTLE & OFTEN



It is important for those suffering from elevated stress levels to eat regularly with consistent meal timings throughout the day.



The meals should be nutritionally balanced with adequate protein, fats and carbs. Avoid sugary foods, caffeine and alcohol, which can all have a big effect on blood glucose levels.



2 DON'T FAST



Fasting should never be used by those under a lot of stress as it will call on the adrenals to produce glucocorticoids to maintain a level of blood glucose, thus resulting in further overuse of the adrenals.



Basically, don't skip breakfast or go extra long periods without food.



3 EAT YOUR CARBS



Carbohydrates are the body's preferred source of energy usage, and this becomes more apparent during times of stress.



To help provide the energy to support recovery from the stress, you should be following a high carbohydrate diet.



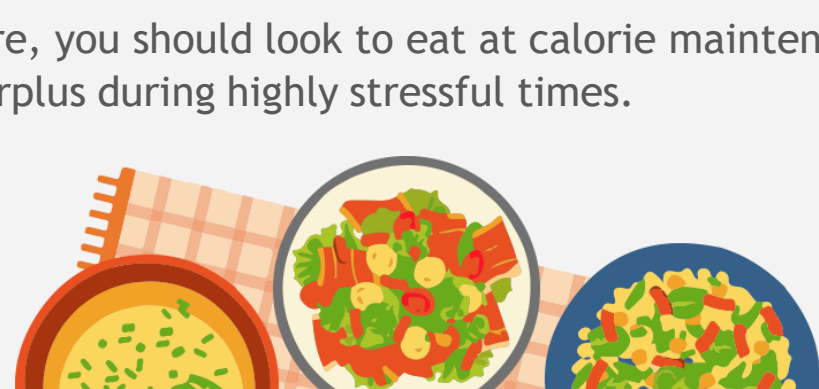
4 DON'T STARVE



A low calorie intake during stressful times will only heighten the depletion of glycogen, breakdown of muscle tissue and put more demand on the adrenals.



Therefore, you should look to eat at calorie maintenance level or a slight surplus during highly stressful times.



5 MANAGE YOUR LIFESTYLE

Diet, training, family, friends, career and money can all be stressful issues at times, and it's important to manage these as much as possible. Find the root cause(s) that may be adding extra stress and then put procedures into place to reduce or eliminate these.

SOME TIPS:

- Exercise regularly (low to moderate activity like yoga, stretching, walking)
- Get some sun daily
- Reduce caffeine, alcohol, sugar and nicotine
- Get enough sleep
- Introduce relaxing techniques (meditation, deep breathing)
- Do things you enjoy
- Listen to music you like
- Laugh a lot
- Have plenty of sex

