

MANAGING STRESS

When You Feel Like Running

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Photography Josh Gordon

The fight-or-flight response, also known as the acute stress response, refers to a physiological reaction that occurs in the presence of something that is terrifying, either mentally or physically: a harmful event, attack, or threat to survival. The response is triggered by the release of hormones that prepare your body to either stay and deal with a threat (fight) or to run away to safety (flight).

Unfortunately, the body can also overreact to stressors that are not life-threatening, such as traffic jams, work pressure, and family difficulties.

**Be resilient in
the face of
setbacks and
obstacles.**





HOW DOES STRESS SHOW UP PHYSICALLY?

- RAPID HEART RATE & BREATHING
- PALE OR FLUSHED SKIN
- DILATED PUPILS
- TREMBLING
- SWEATY PALMS
- TENSE MUSCLES
- DRY MOUTH
- SLOW DIGESTION

As emotional humans, our weaknesses will come out and shine bright in the time of stress. Emotional intelligence (Ei) is the ability to understand, use, and manage our own emotions in positive ways to relieve **stress**, communicate effectively, empathize with others, overcome challenges and defuse conflict.

HOW DOES STRESS SHOW UP EMOTIONALLY?

Stress management, a composite of Ei, is comprised of:

Flexibility - adapting emotions thoughts and behaviors in response to change.

Stress Tolerance - coping with and responding effectively to stressful situations and mounting pressure.

Optimism - positive attitude and outlook on life, despite setbacks.

What does a deficiency in stress management look like in the workplace?

- A hesitation to structural changes, new technology or evolving market needs.
- Rigidness & feeling anxious in change.
- Emotional attachment to “doing it your way.”
- At times of stress, performance is less.
- Attend primarily to negative emotions.
- Sees world in an extra negative lens.

Strategies For Action

- When finding yourself resistance to change, solicit the opinions of trusted colleagues or members of your "life team" on an issue to solve and how to approach it - embrace the perspective of others.
- Our brain can learn complex things. Take time out to try a new strategy or technique to broaden your skill base, enhancing your ability to cope with changes and stress.
- Build your coping strategies: deep breathing, yoga, meditation, tai chi, visualization exercises, massage therapy and journaling all are effective behavioral strategies.
- Incorporate physical exercise to bleed off the excess levels of the body's stress hormones, such as adrenaline and cortisol.
- Create a worry-free zone: move away from your workspace (or stressor), allow your mind to cool down and become clear again. The only rule is NO thinking about the thing that is causing you stress.
- Keep your optimism grounded in rational thought and logic. Ask for feedback and seek buy in from others on goals you set.
- Keep it real. Remain realistic about the challenges you are willing to undertake ensuring they are within your capacity. If not, seek help.

**It's not if
challenges occur
...it's when.
Successful people
are flexible when
things happen.
They have a
tolerance for
tension, are able to
create balance in
the midst of
change and
maintain a hope
for the future.**

Even if you are one to keep control of your emotions during times of stress, there is the possibility you do not leverage and use your emotions. Rather than subduing your emotions, remember to use them. For example, the emotion of happiness can help you come up with creative solutions to your stressful situations.

When managing pressure properly, your ability to tolerate and exert some influence over stressful situations will be calming and inspiring to those around you.

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