

The **Stress Relief** Coach

Deal with Stress and Sleep like a Baby



Stress Relief Book

by Gary Paul Williams

My Story

Before we get started I have a personal message for you, what you may experience here may shock you and even worry you, but I do need to say that you must be gentle with yourself, life is not perfect and we are not perfect, a balance needs to be drawn when you set out to achieve something important.

Each day we can only do our best but forgive ourselves for falling back and not following what we know to be healthy or beneficial for our sleep. What we don't want is to create even more stress by trying to follow what I am going to share with you here.

All that said, sleep issues and stress did wreak havoc in my life and I still some days do not follow my own advice all the time, but that is an exception rather than the rule.



The reason that stress and a lack of sleep damaged my health was because I left behind my training as a stress consultant, and hypnotherapist and immersed myself in other industries that were financially fruitful as a book narrator, but over time the work that involves being cooped up in a booth for long periods of time and having tight deadlines ended up destroying my health.

Thankfully I had the sense to dig out my old courses and books and sit down to construct a program for myself and also I am grateful for Harley Street, Doctor Aseem Malhotra, who also was pivotal in helping me to get back to vibrant health and able to continue my work as a narrator. I can now say that I have more energy and have become more productive thus able to be more efficient and to earn more.

I hope you will experience this for yourself.

If you think about what I have said you will become aware that it was not the stress that was the problem but how I was dealing with it. We will talk more about that later.

I am giving back here to help prevent people like you from suffering the pitfalls that almost ended my journey here on this planet and we are talking about two heart attacks and diabetes, that thankfully I was able to move beyond.

But what really works so that you, like me, can finally feel well rested, healthier, and happier than you have ever done before?

Not just rhetoric but real solutions that come from my own personal experience of suffering illness and emotional issues all down to the ravages of sleep deprivation and stress-related problems.

There were many areas that I had to address to free myself from medication and debilitating illness and sleep played an important role, just as it does in many people's lives, except that they may not realize the role it plays and the importance of it.

One of the key factors in getting enough sleep is dealing with stress and stress hinders the sleeping process so you can see a vicious cycle there and that one feeds the other and stops us from regenerating and repairing our bodies and the internal processes that are so vital to our health and survival.

Many areas will be explored here, because without giving these parts the attention that they need, I would leave you open to possible struggle and failure if not addressed, just trying to separate and work on stress or sleep will not work.

Sleep, Stress and the Future of Our Race

You know, recently I was searching around the internet about sleep and dreams, keeping up to date with the latest popular thoughts and I came across the best Ted Talk ever. It was from Matt Walker who had the most original introduction I have ever seen on YouTube.

He said today we are going to be talking about testicles!

He shared that men who sleep five hours a night have significantly smaller testicles than those who sleep seven hours or more.

Also, men who routinely sleep just four to five hours a night will have a level of testosterone which is that of someone 10 years older and at 61 I am aware of what is being referred to here but let's move on swiftly.

So, losing sleep can age you by a decade in terms of health and wellness. Now what are the implications of that statement?

Over the past 30 years our lives have been swamped with electronic devices and our kids watch TV screens in their bedroom or more so these days use mobiles or play computer games, sometimes until late if not monitored by the parents.

But why is all this so important?

Have you noticed how so many things these days seem to be geared at leveling out the differences between men and women bringing equality in that sense, but how is that affecting men in general and should we be concerned? It does seem that masculinity is under attack these days.



Men are more stressed and losing sleep and we are now seeing a drop in the overall population with some countries such as Japan and China starting to worry and if some of the most populated countries are experiencing a drop that is concerning. We see similar issues in female productive health caused by a lack of sleep and high stress levels that can cause a lack of sleep.

What kinds of stress are there?

Before we start to look into the solutions to sleeping issues and how we should deal with stress, let me first give you an idea around the types of stress I am talking about.

Back in the 90's I thought it would be a great idea to strap a tank on my back and go explore the ocean and go deep down below the shores of Crete, something that is very vivid in my memory now for a number of reasons.



To be able to go deep into the ocean you must get the right instruction and you're taught a number of techniques for your own safety before you even get to wear a diving suit and as it turns out, this can save your life when you find yourself in trouble.

To cut a long story short I did my training and was ready to go. I had anticipation and fear about going deep down, doing something unknown and also a sense of excitement about doing so.

As you will discover later our bodies go through those same processes for both experiences, and that becomes important when you want to learn the mechanics of stress and how you can use it for your own benefit.

Back to the dive.

On the dive, we were meant to have a couple of experienced divers with us as there were two of us that needed guidance and attention. One of the divers was late as he was trying to get a camera to work and was having issues with it.

Anyway, we dived, going further down slowly and reaching the sea bed. It was then that the other person, who was new to this like me, suddenly had a serious issue with their diving gear and needed to be taken up immediately, it was an emergency!

This left me on my own at the bottom of the ocean as they disappeared out of view, I was told to stay below with hand signals and even if I went up I may find myself on my own in the middle of the ocean. So I couldn't believe it, I was all on my own and as fate would have it I started to have issues myself with no one to help me.

I started to feel the pressure building up in my head, feeling like it was about to explode, suffering with my own emergency, something that can happen to divers due to the pressure under the water.

So there I was under physical stress from the pressure of the water and also under emotional stress with the fear and pressure of being on my own, along with the mental stress of trying to work out what I was going to do, and being new to all this not knowing what to do. You can see all the different levels of stress that happened all at the same time and that in our lives we can all experience when under pressure.

So let's take a deep dive into all these areas and more to better equip ourselves and gain knowledge about not just how we can improve our sleep but what stress is and how you can use stress to your advantage, as there are some forms of stress that can be positive for us.

Also I will be offering techniques that get you out of trouble when the pressure is on and you are suffering some form of shock, fear or anxiety and you may well be uncertain about what is going to happen to you. These tools will help you take control and empower you mentally, emotionally, and even chemically as you will discover the deeper you go into the subject. If you work on your stress that will in turn help with your sleep as we have mentioned already.

Sleep Solutions

So stress is important but what are the solutions to a good night's sleep and why is sleep so important to our health and sanity?

In some ways solving the issue of not sleeping is a very simple one but for those who do not have the right insights it can seem like an impossible task.

But believe me when I say that I have seen many people being helped from around the globe, getting beyond the struggle that holds them back. So, let's narrow down what I believe to be the three main areas that need attention.

1 – Healthy Living

2 – Dealing with Daily stress

3 – Getting Enough Sleep

All these areas are of equal importance and are cyclical in nature and without dealing with each one you will not address the problem and get the results you are looking for.

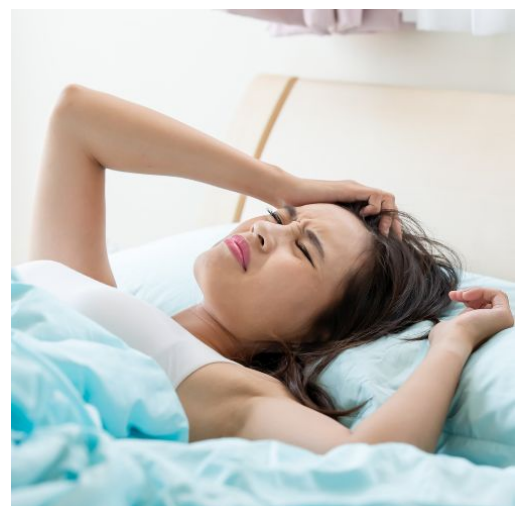
The only part that is not tackled in depth here is the health aspect, but a wealth of information is freely available around healthy eating and exercise that has changed from the original recommendations that were offered by Doctors and Nutritionists who continued with an outdated approach that lasted for over 50 years. So be selective when you choose advice and make sure they are up to date in all areas.

Also by committing to and applying what you will discover here to your life you will become aware in a step by step approach the connection between Healthy Living, Stress, Anxiety, and Sleep and what happens when you make the right changes by using tried and tested approaches and by using the vital skills and techniques that are available here to finally get a good night's sleep, waking up refreshed and motivated the next day.

Sleep Disorders

A very high proportion of people worldwide suffer from chronic sleep disorder, around one in every three men and 1 out of every 6 women are affected by this issue.

It is so bad that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said recently that sleep disorders are a public health epidemic and it amazes me that they don't seem to be reacting to the importance of it in a way that will help the general public.



If you have a serious sleep disorder you should seek professional help as the risk of cardiovascular death is increased by an astonishing 420% and one of the most common symptoms to look for is snoring. The older you get the worse your chances become, and by 66 years of age only 58% of sufferers survive and it is now known that sufferers are more prone to Alzheimer's as well. So it really should be declared a public emergency!

So, we spend a third of our lives asleep and as I have said here, and it needs repeating, it is most important to contact your doctor or health professional if you suspect you may have an issue in this area.

How much Sleep is enough?

So currently 70% of people are working or worse, still driving around sleep deprived and one third sleep six hours or less. This is double the rate than 50 years ago. This is not a good situation as we need to get at least 7 to 9 hours to remain healthy. As the world moves at a faster pace day by day and year by year, many of us are struggling to keep up. As we talked about earlier, stress becomes a big part in adding to our sleep issues.

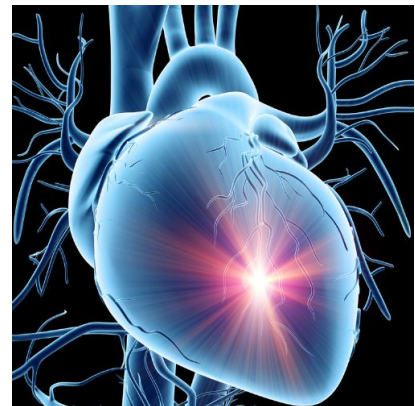
How do we benefit from a good night's sleep?

Many companies will sell you pillows, oils, water features that trickle in the bedroom and claims about mattresses and you can listen to soft music or the sounds of nature but none of these will deal with a chronic sleep issue but can assist a little in making your sleeping zone comfortable.

But what really makes the difference?

The Heart

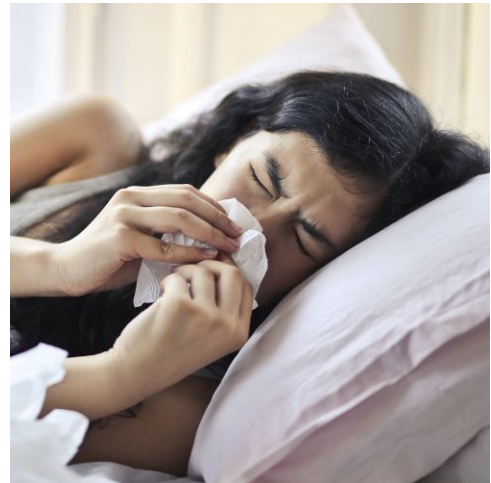
When you sleep your heart benefits as it slows down and reduces blood pressure, but sleep disorders do the opposite and increase it. So you can see the importance for those with this condition to get the right amount of sleep each day or it could have negative outcomes if not addressed.



The kind of outcomes that put me into intensive care not just once but three times and just to add to my problems ended up suffering anaphylactic shock from a heart exam, that left me with no vital functions and traveling to the next life, but with the intervention of the crash team still able to share this with you today. So you can see why I have such a passion to help others after being given a second go at life.

The Common Cold

Our immune system is greatly enhanced when we get the correct amount of sleep but if that is not so it will be impaired and so not addressing the problem, your resistance to viruses and even the common cold can be lowered and the chances of getting a common cold can increase by up to 200 to 300% if proper sleep is not achieved.



It is becoming more apparent that even more serious issues such as cancer can occur if proper sleep hygiene is not followed, and sleep issues can encourage cancer to grow because of the important role sleep plays in relation to the immune system.

The immune system has more recently been under attack from all different directions and let us now look at how sleep is a vital protection system that works naturally without the aid of any medical pharmaceuticals.

What we need to have is a good immune system and what are known as natural killer cells. They are like secret service agents like in the films of 007, and they spend their time looking out for dangerous unwanted elements like a cyber attack in action. If you have chosen a good secret agent and you look after them, they will be very efficient at eliminating any attacks that come your way.

Now would you employ immune assassins if they were not committed and up to the job, ones that get distracted and may drink themselves into a stupor? Well, if you want to have good agents you need to have sleep because without the right amount you will have issues.

There have been studies that have shown that even restricting your sleep down to four hours a night for a week causes your immune cells to have a 70% drop in protection of killer cell activity, now that is alarming. And this explains why we have discovered the connection between cancer and sleep deprivation in general. We know this because of numerous epidemiological studies across millions of individuals.

So the point I am making is that the shorter your sleep the shorter your life!

We are now discovering the truth of that statement but sadly if we do not change the habits of the modern generation there can be no hope for humanity and its survival. It doesn't end there, and it gets a little depressing when you start to go down the rabbit whole.

Your DNA genetic code can also be damaged, so again why is this not in the media or dealt with by our so-called leaders?

In a study they took a group of people and limited them to only 6 hours of sleep for one night for a week and then they measured the changes in their gene activity profile relative to when those same individuals were getting a full 8 hours of sleep every night for a week.

These findings are important as they have shown that 711 genes were distorted by this activity all caused by the lack of sleep. Also the genes associated were divided into two areas of thought or concern as some were increased in their activity and the other half decreased.

The ones that were switched off were associated with your immune system and the ones you need, and you guessed it, the other genes were the ones that promote tumors, chronic inflammation and also stress that could lead to heart attacks.

So sleep is more important to your health than may have been considered in the past and only a fool would ignore this and pay the price.

Sleep and the Brain

Sleep nourishes the body and there are several biological reasons why sleep is needed including the function of the brain.

The brain consumes the most energy overall even though it only weighs 2 to 3% of the weight of the body itself and uses 20 to 30% of the energy consumed overall.

One of the key functions of sleep is to maintain a healthy brain and the brain is designed to monitor the energy available and send messages out that we need to sleep when that store becomes low. This can be problematic if you're operating machinery or behind the steering wheel of a car or even creating the words on a page and you need to be creative.



To maintain brain health we need to replenish the energy that the brain needs just as we do for the body to function well. As we sleep we also integrate the events of the day and the things we have learned during our waking hours and that is important for many areas including emotional and mental aspects.

Using Stimulants such as Coffee

When I worked in security and later as an overnight radio host, I too fell back on what I like to what I thought was a great way to stay awake and with it, and that was by drinking coffee, something that many people do to stay awake.

This was not always successful as I can remember at least once whilst working on what was known as the graveyard shift or overnights as a radio presenter, and waking up hearing silence in front of the desk, not knowing at first how long I had drifted off and if I would get the sack the next day,



I was told later that this was a learning curve and just part of the journey for those trying to break into the radio industry, so I was not on my own as regards a sudden lapse in the middle of the night.

For many and like me, coffee is not a solution although it does block the brain receptors that create the need to sleep within the brain and can delay the transition, but in time and about 3 am I found that nature takes its course and you can't prevent sleep altogether as I have already described.

Listen to Your Brain

We function better by getting to sleep when our brains need to and sleep more effectively if we have not been drinking coffee or taking other substances before sleep. If we don't sleep when we need to, our biological needs are not met and that leads to all the negative events we have talked about earlier and this is why it is so important to work on your sleep issues and also why you need an in-depth understanding into the mechanics of sleep.

I still may have a couple of cups of coffee in the daytime, but I make sure I do not drink it close to bedtime, and at least before lunch as it has a half-life of up to 6 hours and takes 12 hours to be fully eliminated and clear your system. Also, it may get you out of bed for a pee and that can disturb your sleep pattern.

Alcohol

Many people fall asleep after drinking alcohol and use it to self-medicate but it often disturbs your sleep pattern and can get you up at night in the same way as coffee, leaving you tired the next day, so best avoided close to bedtime.

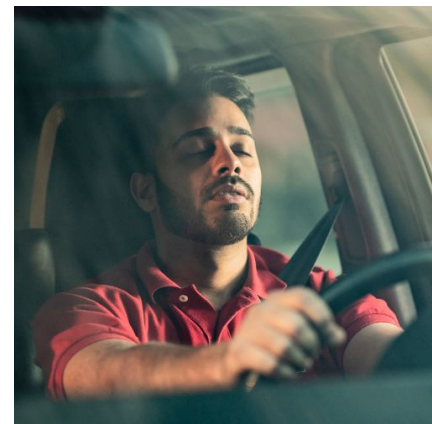
Sleeping and Driving

People who must work at night are in a great deal of trouble because of the body clock issues that we will be looking into in depth shortly, and generally, the effects also impacts us all to some degree if we do not have enough sleep by causing drowsy driving that leads to many car crashes especially by night workers falling asleep at the wheel,

1 out of every 5 car crashes are related to sleep deficiency.

I recall back in the 80's in one of my jobs as a security officer I had to travel 250 miles a night stopping at various points to check the security of buildings and machinery.

Having to drive all night I found that at around 3 a.m. in the morning seemed to be the point at which I fought to stay awake and I was shown methods that I am not recommending here, such as winding the window down, glancing in front through the main screen and looking at the mirror in quick succession. The truth is I was so tired that I should have pulled over.



This really hit me when I came across one victim in the middle of the road with little chance of survival having driven off a bridge with just a wheel next to him and the rest of the car bouncing way off into the distance. This was one of many that I stumbled across on my travels overnight on the motorways of England.

A car in the hands of a drowsy driver can turn into a weapon, when our driving ability that is mostly controlled by the unconscious mind and becomes routine, becomes greatly impaired, and our reaction time that is normally a quarter of a second ends up being 3 to six seconds and that is three times longer when not being fully awake and alert. This could be crucial when driving not just for your safety but also the safety of others.

In America alone a survey revealed that every month about 56 million Americans have admitted that they struggle to stay awake whilst driving and about 8 million of them end up falling asleep with the obvious consequences of a million crashes and 500

thousand injuries, 55 thousand of them debilitating injuries with 7000 deaths every year that result from that tragic turn of events.

Shift Work

The health problems reported among shift workers are numerous and it is because you are forcing yourself to sleep during the day and turning your body clock on its end and rejecting all of Mother Nature's cues about when it's time to be awake and asleep.

Scientists are actively working on ways to make this less of a detriment to our health, but I believe that we should go back to a world where this is not needed because if you're forced to live with this type of schedule you will have to maintain the same schedule even on your days off to stay healthy.



Daylight savings time

Just to add to our modern challenges the leaders of our world still maintain a crazy policy of daylight savings time, an experiment that has been performed on a global scale on 1.6 billion people across 70 countries twice yearly.

This simple change in the spring when we lose just one hour of sleep, has caused a surge of 24% in heart attacks the following day. And when the autumn returns, and we gain an hour of sleep we see the opposite effect as we have a 21% reduction.

This profile also applies to suicide rates, so it makes you wonder why this process is still conducted. The reason given as to why it continues is that people who are in favor of DST believe that it can help people save energy but as you can see not their lives.

Is it really worth the death rate that occurs from it?

Work Performance

Top managers and other decision makers should also be aware of the dangers of just missing one night's sleep and this can lead to poor judgment and lead to serious implications for the company or even a country if someone in power has not slept properly.

There are so many parts of our brain that take in visual and other aspects that are impaired by a lack of sleep and of course that involves judgment when driving or even as a traffic controller or pilot of an airplane and so on.

Just like a car our brains produce by products and a kind of sludge that needs to be dealt with and this is performed during the sleep period. Just like your lymphatic system this could become toxic overtime to neurons and that has been associated with Alzheimer's disease.



As we sleep our lymphatic system in the brain flushes out the toxins and is one of the critical functions of sleep and therefore scientists suspect a connection with Alzheimer's and other degenerative brain diseases and the importance of sleep. Hopefully you are now becoming aware of just how important sleep is to the brain and how it impacts our daily lives.

Jet Lag

Just as a side issue flying long distances through multiple time zones can wreak havoc on your body's internal clock and you will become a mess if you are doing it often enough. Even a difference of just a couple of hours is enough to throw your schedule completely off. Depending on which direction you're traveling, you may be extra tired or not tired at all when you arrive at your destination. When morning comes, you're either going to be up early or struggling to get up on time. Fortunately though ironically, you'll adjust within a few days to your new schedule, just in time to fly home. You then have to get used to your old routine all over again.

Weight and Appetite

We are not sure how this happened but somewhere in our evolution sleep and appetite have become linked. Studies have shown some interesting facts about animals that apparently sleep less when they are starving but humans do the opposite.

As we tend to stay up late at night with full bellies that get fuller whilst we go into the night watching Netflix.



This is wrong in so many ways.

As we do this we tend to be less satisfied with what we are eating and we end up eating more and more that will affect our sleep.

When we become sleep deprived this will dramatically affect your insulin levels and when this occurs, we try to push more insulin into the cells, but they say “no we can’t take any more” and this is when we become diabetic. I managed to get beyond this condition by addressing stress, eating healthy and getting enough sleep.

When cells have been compared in a study of someone who has been well rested and someone who is chronically deprived of sleep the cells and thus the glucose response of the non-sleeper was impaired.

Of course, all this dramatically affects the health of your body, and you will gain weight. This devastation around our metabolic system has increased over the past 30 to 40 years or so and has paralleled the increase of sleep deprivation. So even your fat cells need some sleep sometimes!

Note that before bedtime it is important not to eat close to when you are going to sleep as you may be uncomfortable and it will stimulate your gastric juices. Things to especially avoid are spicy and citrus type foods.

It is well known that food can affect our moods along with blood sugar. Sleeping issues are no different in that regard just like diabetics when they are not in the right state of

mind because of their condition, people become much more volatile when they don't get enough sleep, this may lead to depression or even suicidal thoughts.

When we have not had the right amount of sleep, we are less able to cope with everyday life and can snap at the slightest thing, thus affecting friendships and relationships or even our job. This is all connected to the amygdala, the part that deals with our emotional responses.

During one scientific study in which disturbing images were shown to one group who had missed just one night's sleep, they reacted and responded 10 times greater to the images, and the others were calmer overall.

Sleep for Children

Many parents will relate to those first early days in their children's life as they began to settle down into a natural sleep rhythm and I for one can remember many sleepless nights or driving around in the car to get my children to go to sleep.

If you look at the stats over the last century each year children are losing on average about 1 and a half minutes' worth of sleep each year, that equates to a loss of 2 hours less sleep per night currently and in time this is going to add up to a big issue when we realize how it impacts learning and other daytime activities.

Mostly sleep affects our ability to focus and pay attention and impacts our ability to stay alert as we have already pointed out and all this has dramatically changed in just a century, and it is unlikely that this is an evolutionary process that somehow helps us in some way. Can you imagine how that is impacting a child's learning ability and the future of society as a whole?

So, sleep deficiency is a challenge for all of us, young and old alike.

It is obvious that a child's future can be dramatically stunted by such a problem. Also, it is interesting to note that many misdiagnoses could be made of a child who is



suspected of having ADHD when in fact the symptoms displayed by sleep deficiency and ADHD are almost identical.

These sleep deprived kids cause endless havoc in classes and not only spoil their own chances in life but also the chances of other kids as the classroom is disturbed. So, sleep is vital for kids.

By being disciplined with our kids we could be securing their futures and as parents we need to take that responsibility seriously, they are the future after all so set a time for bed and stick to it, they will thank you later.

Competitive Sports and Sleep

Not so dramatic but important for some is that many athletes or those involved in sports will find their reaction times impaired when lacking the necessary sleep and this will dramatically affect their overall performance and potentially their career, we could go still further by talking about the military and national security and so on.

Also, it is important to note that if you are an athlete your performance can be affected if you only get 4 hours of sleep a night for a week as you deplete your testosterone levels by an amount that equals 11 years of aging. I wonder if that shows up in the face as well?

The Dark Truth About Sleep

Pitch black is best when it comes to the room you sleep in. So, if you can simply keep all devices, especially those with a screen and the dreaded blue light out of the bedroom and ban all gadgets and TV's, or anything that may stimulate you and keep it out of the sleep zone, that will help.



At night, the lights from your phone and television will disrupt melatonin production. Melatonin is the hormone that induces sleep, so if you don't have enough of it in your system, it's going to take you longer to fall asleep, ideally, you should turn them off an hour or so before bedtime.

The main issue is the cursed blue light given off by electronic screens that has been the subject of countless research papers. The blue light dramatically interferes with the circadian rhythm that is so important for sleep and that we will cover shortly. So, if you're trying to get your cycle to run normally again, just avoid screens like television, computers, smartphones, and e-readers within an hour before bed.

Circadian Rhythms and Naps

It's interesting to note that circadian cycles are not unique to humans, or even mammals. They're also present in other animals, fungi, and bacteria. Light is the most powerful external trigger to sync our body clock. The combination of [sunshine](#), fresh air, and exercise is a powerful combination to wake you up and energize you for the day ahead.

As I am creating this I am close to a window that is the best place to work at especially in the morning to get the reset you need.

But as we have mentioned earlier, light disrupts melatonin production. Even turning on the bathroom light in the middle of the night can throw off your circadian rhythm, and if you live in an area where there are bright street lights or lights from surrounding buildings, make sure you draw your shades closed and resist the urge to turn on any lights if you have to get up in the night.

Most of all though do not take a nap during the day!

Naps may seem refreshing and if you must, make sure it is no longer than 30 minutes. Naps may leave you struggling to sleep later at night.

Many of our biological functions, including sleep, are controlled by our internal body clock, also known as a circadian rhythm. They're also referred to as endogenous, which means built-in. So, our body clock then is a built-in mechanism that signals us when it's time to do an activity, like sleep. This clock can be influenced by external cues, referred to as zeitgebers,.

Our body's circadian rhythm cues us when it's time to go to sleep and time to wake up.

Depending on our age and lifestyle habits, our natural rhythm may change, but typically we see consistent energy peaks and valleys, with our lowest energy levels occurring between 2:00 AM and 4:00 AM. We also tend to feel a dip in the afternoon, usually between 1:00 PM and 3:00 PM, which is why some cultures take siestas (naps) after lunch.

The easiest way to keep your circadian cycle on track is to follow a consistent plan each day. It's going to require a commitment, and the best thing to do is plan a schedule you can stick to. For example:

1. Go to bed at the same time each night
2. Wake up at the same time every morning
3. Including weekends, but the occasional lazy Sunday won't hurt. Just don't make it a habit.

Going to bed each night at the same time can be a challenge as well as having to wake up at the same time each day as well. But unless you want to deal with your sleep issues there is no option but to set a time such as 10 PM if that is your desired bedtime, and if it is you should try to go to bed at that time each and every night.

Having a bedtime ritual will help signal to your body that it's time for bed when you're not feeling drowsy yet. Just like brushing your teeth or washing your face before bed, it becomes just a part of your routine overtime and will help to train your body and help it understand that the day is ending. Consistency is critical for success in almost any endeavor. You will be glad that you have made the effort to go to bed and wake up at the same time each day. Sleep in an hour later on the weekends if you must but do your best to maintain a constant schedule.

Relaxing Night-time Routine

So once you have made the changes to going to bed earlier to get your cycle back to its natural rhythm, you may find it nearly impossible to fall asleep as you want to, so having a relaxing night-time routine to prepare for sleep is very crucial to your success.

Suggestions include, taking a warm bath with soothing essential oils, enjoying a cup of hot, herbal tea, or doing some light stretching such as Yoga but not too energetic as this will stimulate you. You can also read a book but avoid e-readers.

The Body-Mind Connection

When we are feeling super happy or stressed it is not just in our heads it is also in our bodies.

The organs of your body and your eyes, gut, spleen, and other parts communicate with the brain in a feedback loop and control what I would call a seesaw effect that pushes you into one state or another.

Learning how all this works will help you to lean into life and reduce the burden that stress often brings and by doing so help you to deal with sleep issues, but there again please keep in mind that there are some positive aspects around stress that need to be studied and used to our advantage as I indicated at the start.

Emotions are important and are what makes us human, so by taking control of them and the stress response, we are not aiming to leave you numb and emotionless or robotic, but by discovering how your body and nervous system work, you will then be able to control your stress and emotions rather than them taking over and controlling you, and leading you into illness and even heart attacks and more.

We all have the power to do this but knowledge is what brings you this power so stick with me as we discover more.

Is Stress Really Bad for You?

Every stress video I have ever seen has talked about the bear in the woods or the hungry lion ready to jump out on you, and that when we are stressed it is a process that was created for us in prehistoric times, and that it no longer really serves us in a modern world and that this automatic reaction built into us is the problem.

Years ago they took our appendix out as routine at the slightest provocation, but these days science has moved on as they began to realize its importance.

This can be said of stress too and as the science around the subject has progressed we now understand more mentally, emotionally, and chemically about its true function and how it can help or hinder our progress.

We are making new discoveries every day and we know that all species experience stress and that even some birds experience emotions such as grief. So the old models are no longer relevant.

It is true throughout our human evolution that we were constantly vulnerable to different forms of attack, and we slowly started developing methods of defense such as fire and weapons to protect us from invaders and attacks from the animal kingdom.

Also, our intellect was developed to not just fight but to wait sometimes to feast on the bones of an animal corpse (particularly the marrow) that had been killed by another animal, thus saving us from expending so much energy and also keeping us away from the danger of the fight needed to kill the prey.

Even 10,000 years ago we would have been suffering many kinds of stress, like the loss of a loved one or not being able to find safe shelter, famine, or suffering the cold or intense heat, but we didn't need to use our mobile phones for directions as we were never lost because we were where we were meant to be.

So although some say ancient people didn't worry, you can see how this is indeed a myth. So the system that we call stress was not just designed to get us out of the way of the saber-toothed tiger, it is much more generic and I will explain what I mean by that as we move forward here.

The fact that our stress system was not designed to do just one thing is actually a good thing and gives us a road to be able to take control of the process and make it work for us, rather than against us.

Let's start to explore how some of those hard-wired biological mechanisms, your cells, your chemicals, pathways, tissues, and more exist and allow you to put a brake on stress.

As we talk about stress you will discover that commonly we accept that there are three kinds of stress that you were born with and still have today, that are innate in you or genetically encoded.

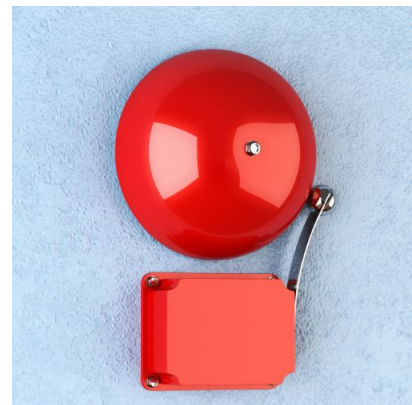
How the Stress Process Works

Don't Get Alarmed!

Understanding how the stress process works will help you to use the tools I am going to share with you, and help you to discover how you can control and use the stress mechanism to your own advantage.

What is the difference between stressors, the things that stress us out and stress, and the psychological and physiological response to stressors?

The first thing is that stressors can be psychological or physical, as we talked about, ancient tribes' shelter was important, and if you were out in the cold that would be a stressor, especially if that persisted over a long period of time. In modern times you could just be facing weeks of exams and worrying about getting the grades you are hoping for and having to stay up long hours to study, neglecting to eat or sleep properly.



Many of us don't understand or want to understand what happens under the hood or bonnet of a car, but that ignorance can lead to stress when stuck in the middle of nowhere without cell phone coverage and not able to even change a tire without help.

So please excuse the technicalities around what I am about to share with you, but you will see the purpose of understanding what I am saying and why the tools I am going to share with you work as we go through this.

So that you too will not find yourself having to seek help but will understand what to do when faced with stress or feeling unmotivated. More about that later.

Many years ago I bought a car that was the best-looking vehicle I had ever purchased and a little sporty. It was great as it had many features like being able to drive with the roof down in the summer. Sadly my joy was short-lived when I discovered that the alarm kept going off for no reason whatsoever, frustrating and irritating me and my neighbors.

I had to turn the alarm off by disconnecting it from the battery. This meant it could be stolen easily!

When we look at stress it is not far removed from a faulty alarm system that can also make you frustrated, angry, moody, and even lead to depression or serious illness as we have said before.

After a time the build-up of stress from all kinds of stressors can overload you and set off your alarm system. It is not that stress is bad but that you are just overloaded and your alarm has kicked in and could make your life and the life of others around you miserable.

So over time, your personal level of stress has become too much.

Once you discover how to fix this, like a car electrician can fix an alarm you can then use the alarm process in the correct way and still stay alert for any dangers but still be in control of your reactions to it.

How to Reset Your Alarm Quickly

One of the quickest and most efficient ways of doing this is by reconnecting to your body. No, I am not going to go all woo-woo on you here because what I am about to

share works by setting what is known as an anchor in the unconscious, the part that has the alarm system wired in so to speak.

You don't need to know all the technicalities; you just need to try it to make it work.

Exercise One -The Quick Stress Reset!

Use this at any time the moment you feel stressed and the more you do it the quicker you unconsciously will be taught a process that in the end becomes natural and more effective and allows room to gain insights.

1 – As soon as you are aware that you are stressed and experiencing the feelings that go with that, track those feelings as they happen in your body.

2 – Place your hand on your heart as you become conscious of that area, take three or more gentle breaths into your heart keeping your hand placed there and focusing on that area.

3 – Now start to recall a time from your past when you felt really, really good, your first time falling in love, or a time of true happiness and achievement like passing your driving test.

Feel all the feelings, see what you saw, the smells and sounds, and anything that takes you back there.

4 – As those feelings start to build, imagine that your heart had a voice and could speak to you and ask how you could take better care of yourself in this moment of stress you are experiencing.

5 – Take in what you first hear, don't overthink it, and act on it as soon as you can.

The exercise will help you get out of your head and help to bring back to your life a little common sense and may even create a way of developing wisdom but most of it will reconnect your alarm and help it to work only when it is really needed.

I hope the exercise brings you some relief from your stressful day and there are many things you can use to combat stress including meditation and breathing, all of which we will cover shortly, but real-time solutions to stress that can be used at the moment is what most people are seeking, but that is hard to find.

For best results please practice the above exercise before moving on, you may even want to do this for more than one day just to make sure you have it mastered.

Three-Step Daily Stress Solution

It is a sad fact but research has shown that 75% of doctor visits in relation to chronic illness can be traced back to excessive stress such as heart problems, tension headaches, muscle tension, hypertension, gut problems, sleep issues, high levels of anxiety, and low sex drive, that can also lead to serious life-threatening diseases, such as heart attacks, diabetes, depression, and even cancer.

So is there any good news?

Yes, this all can be prevented by getting better sleep and by using the techniques that you will experience here.

When it comes to the mind/body connection you will discover stress is involved with that connection and how you can take control of this mechanism by first exploring how stress impacts our lives.

Discover now how we can use our own minds to protect ourselves from the ravages of stress and avoid the negative results that many people suffer daily including having your sleep impacted.

An Interesting Encounter!

My wife and I were very lucky to have been able to travel to Africa and explore the beauty, diverse culture, and wealth of natural resources, including the wildlife.

Whilst there we wanted to see the big five animals of Africa: the lion, leopard, black rhinoceros, African bush elephant, and the African buffalo.

We did well with only one missing just before leaving to come home, the elephant.

This was an interesting experience as we entered a game reserve and my wife was driving and complained that she had not seen an elephant so much so that she was not really paying attention.

I noticed that up ahead in the distance there was an elephant in musk, charging down the dirt track straight at us so I kept shouting out, “elephant” but she was not taking in what I was saying or why I was shouting.

Shirley suddenly realized, and as the elephant was bearing down upon us, she threw the car into reverse as fast as she could.

It was a very stressful moment with all the stressful chemicals streaming through our bodies to get us out of there and thankfully we lived to tell the tale.

So without such reactions, we could be in great danger but the problem with modern-day stress is that it builds up to the size of an elephant and it's like you are being charged each and every day in a constant onslaught.

Our minds are full of roaming lions and other dangerous animals including charging elephants.

All can be the direct result of past experiences and events that are stored away in our unconscious, accumulating over time that creates and adds to constant feelings of fear around the future or ruminating about the past.

On top of this, we could be dealing with emotions and feelings around rejection, loneliness, fear of failure, and a whole host of toxic thoughts.

So what used to be a great mechanism to protect us and to keep us alert and aware of the danger, helping us to produce chemicals such as adrenaline and cortisol that fire up our muscles to react as part of the fight or flight mechanism, can be triggered constantly in our day to day life, affecting our ability to deal with efficiently everyday stressors and negative events.

But we do have an ally built into our bodies,

Yes, even more, good news here!

It's called the Vagus nerve that runs throughout our body and can be stimulated to help calm down our natural flight or fight response, improving our ability to cope by slowing everything down, and most importantly improving the mind/body connection and becoming in alignment to your emotional state and physical health.

Most of which has now been proven scientifically but the best proof you can have is by experiencing a technique developed from these theories that will help prove to yourself that it works.

Exercise Two

So here are 3 steps you can take today to get the results you are looking for.

1. First the breath
2. The mind
3. The use of words

How is it done?

1-Every morning when you first wake up place your hands on your diaphragm, taking deep slow breaths as you do so and concentrating on the rise and fall of your breath and your diaphragm, whilst tensing muscles such as clenching your fists, mimicking the fight or flight response and releasing them slowly.

2 - Start to slow your mind and thoughts down by focusing on the moment. This will send signals to your nervous system that operates out of your awareness and as you do so you find yourself becoming still, quiet, and focussed in the moment.

Increase this focus and awareness by becoming even more aware of the contact with the surface beneath you.

Don't try to get rid of any thoughts you may be having, this can be a misconception as we can never stop thinking but just accept any thoughts that come to you to be recognized and given permission to be released, giving you a sense of them drifting away, making room for other thoughts to come and go and eventually over time and with the practice being able to grow the gaps between your thoughts that in time will bring you peace, calm, and tranquility.

This will take time to nurture but the more you practice it, the more benefits you will experience. It's just a question of being patient.

3 - Choose a word that resonates with you, and that feels good to you.

It could be a word that reflects something positive in your life or a time or memory.

One single word only.

It could be peace, love, or even OM if you are familiar with Yoga, whatever resonates with you.

Once you have made the choice simply repeat that word, verbally or in your mind, saying it slowly and deliberately. Just practice this 3 step combination for ten minutes daily or even twice a day when you wake or just before going to sleep at night.

Over time as you take time out each day you will train your body and mind to produce the positive chemicals that help you thrive, such as endorphins, the body's natural pain killers, along with melatonin, a natural sleeping pill, and serotonin, a natural antidepressant, all because of taking out a few minutes to nurture yourself and by so doing help build a new mindset, a more positive outlook, connecting the mind and body naturally without the aid of medical intervention.

So before you tap on your phone in the morning, tap into your mind/body connection, resting and digesting with the help of your vagus nerve, becoming more cool, calm, and rational and also as you build the mind-body connection, it will help you to connect better with others, building your immune system

The Importance of Breathing

Breathing is something the body does automatically, and the way we breathe changes depending on our state of mind and how we feel.

Have you noticed how your breathing pattern changes with your emotions or in certain situations?

You may have noticed that when you are stressed or fearful you tend to take fast and shallow breaths, whereas when you are relaxed and at ease, you breathe gently and more steadily.

When we hold our breath or change the rate at which we breathe in and out, we can change how we feel, and this has a direct effect on the stress we experience.

It is important to note that it is not always the stress outside of us that makes us tired, irritable, or ill in some way, but how we react and respond to it, and that part can be brought under our control.

Breathing can play an important role in that regard.

The way we breathe can be actively controlled by simply focussing on the breath and how we are breathing.

For example, when we breathe gently, we send a signal to the body that says I am relaxed and that all is safe and well. In response, the body produces fewer stress hormones and increases feel-good hormones (endorphins).

Take a few slow, rhythmic breaths with long exhales and see how it feels.

Slow, rhythmic breathing also activates the vagus nerve—a large nerve that travels throughout the body and links your brain with your heart, lungs, gut, and other major organs.

What is the Vagus Nerve and why is that important?

The Vagus Nerve is part of the parasympathetic nervous system, which slows down the fight-or-flight response and takes the body back into a relaxed state known as “rest and digest.”

Blood flows from your hands and feet back to your inner organs, since your brain assumes you no longer must run or fight the crazy lion.

To practice slow, rhythmic breathing, try our breath mediation featured in the audio below. This is not recommended for people suffering from high blood pressure.

Exercise Three – Daily Meditation for Stress

Watch this video daily for the next week whenever you have a five-minute available gap in your day. This would be best in the morning or just before you go to sleep at night.

[\[click here\]](#)

Controlled Thinking

We are going to be easy on you today and offer something that can give powerful results and something you can practice at any time.

It is a way that over time can help you to control your thinking instead of the monkey mind taking over and leading you into negative thinking, depression, and so on.

Exercise Four

1. Being Aware Now

Describe three things you see right now, three things you see around you in terms of size, shape, texture, and color, the colors on your screen right now, a desk, or the color of your shoes if you are wearing them.

You can try this exercise indoors or outdoors and the benefit is that it brings your attention back to the present moment and living in the moment.

Why is that important?

Doing this helps you to take control over your thinking and be free from fear of the future and going back to the past, this will enhance your mood and you will enjoy the neutral aspects of the experience.

This is an instant fix and very powerful if practiced daily, constantly helping you to deal with worries and fears about what might happen in the future.

But the truth is we can only really do something about what is in front of us at the moment in this moment of time, that also applies to problems and issues that when thought of as a mass of things can overwhelm us.

We sometimes think in this way as a form of self-sabotage because the unconscious mind then gets overwhelmed and ends up not doing anything about any part of the presenting issues.

It is of course sensible to make the right plans and address important issues but all we need to deal with in life is what is in this moment in the space we inhabit at this moment of time, the present really is a gift.

Scientifically by doing this you will disengage the default mode network in your brain that gets activated when you're worrying, daydreaming, or thinking about yourself and will activate your brain's "on-task" network that is inconsistent with rumination.

2. Focus on your breath

We have talked about the breath before but it is so important that we need to come back to it today.

You will find that this is the simplest and most powerful way to stay in the present moment because breathing happens right now at the moment and is always present! We can't breathe into the future or the past.

By focusing your attention on your breath daily, you will slow down your mind naturally, so that in turn you will help deal with racing thoughts and help you focus on the present, as you become aware of your surroundings and as time seems to slow down, giving you the full capacity to take action and create the life you want.

3. Let go of the past

I wonder how much of our life is wasted on analyzing, re-living, or reminiscing about the past? When the past is over and done with, we step away from the present moment and attempt to resolve the past but that is a delusional process every time.

What you are doing in the present moment may need your attention, in the middle of a meeting or important activity that could be life-threatening if you are not paying attention, not only can it cause harm but this robs you of enjoying your life in the only moment that matters, this one.

It would be great to go back and re-record things that you wished had never happened or you wished you had never done but logically that will never happen unless you have your own personal time machine, if you have, let me know I would love to use it!

So the only thing you can change is how you react and behave at this moment in time, how you're living right now. So step fully into your power at this very moment. Live a life you want to live TODAY.

4. Set your goal and let it go

While we can't predict the future, it is beneficial to set an intention and achievable goals.

But the key here is to always let it go once you have created it, and give it time to mature because if you hold on to it too tightly you will only deplete your energy in the present moment.

So trust that the process is unfolding according to plan and let go. So set your goals, set your sights on your goals, and keep all your energy here in the present moment so that you can effectively live out every single step along the way.

5. Remember to enjoy the journey

This has been said by many and I am sure you must have become aware of it at some point that we often get lost in what we do, getting caught up with achieving and ambition in our work or just making pots of money. When we reach success on our journey it may not turn out as we had imagined it would be and we are still not happy. You come to discover that you now want something else because what you strived for doesn't fulfil you as you thought it would.

Now there has been researched data on this and it is a very common theme. The truth is you never really reach a final point in life where you've done when you feel complete, the older and wiser you are the more you begin to discover that there are just endless present moments to enjoy, all unfolding infinitely until the lights go out and you go who knows where. Some people have a theory about that though.

So, take the time out during your day, use your deep breath, learn to let go of the past and stop ruminating about what happened and worrying about the future that is not here and now and set your sights on a possible goal, then slowly and with passion take every single step of the journey that lies ahead of you.

Welcome to Day Four and again we are using the tools that can be found around us and within, used to combat the effects that stress and anxiety can cause.

Exercise Five

Our environment can play a big part in how we feel emotionally, and we need to be kind to ourselves and try to get back to our origins as much as possible, even if it is taking a holiday with our thoughts.

What kind of imagery surrounds you in your home and at work?

There have been many studies that have looked at our personal emotional states in relation to what we have around us, such as pictures and even the colors of the rooms we live in.

Color is energy that is evident all around us, all the time. Our whole cosmos abounds in electromagnetic radiation, which includes microwaves, radio waves, ultraviolet light, gamma-rays, X-rays, and visible light. Visible light is only a minor part of the radiation spectrum that we as humans can see.

White light, in its purity, consists of all of the visible colors, and since light can perform or behave as a wave, each color has its very own wave frequency.

When I was a teenager I played around with radio transmitters for pirate radio in my rebellious phase and I found that when you tuned the transmitter up that consisted of a crystal and other parts, to transmit the music, etc, I found that it made the fridge vibrate with a faint indication of the music that was being played.

Needless to say, it shocked my mother greatly but shows that just because we can't see a thing does not mean it is not there.

All of these things can change our moods so be careful what kind of paintings and so on that you may wake up to in the morning as the wrong kind of influence can be detrimental, especially if it is something you see every day.

There have been many studies that have looked at our personal emotional states in relation to what we have around us, such as pictures and even the colors of the rooms we live in.

All of these things can change our moods so be careful what kind of paintings and so on that you may wake up to in the morning as the wrong kind of influence can be detrimental, especially if it is something you see every day.

Certain types of imagery such as nature and alike are proven to be beneficial.

Just looking at a picture of a nature scene can help lift your mood and set you up for the day ahead. Far better also to be out in nature walking and enjoying a pleasant scene. This has many benefits as doing so can speed your heart's recovery from any stress you may be suffering from.

A recent study involving students found that by having to take a math test and getting feedback (even if not accurate) that they were performing below average.

Afterward, researchers assigned participants to one of two groups that either saw pictures of empty pathways and trees or pictures of urban scenes with cars and people.

The difference was very interesting as the students who saw the pictures of trees had a quicker cardiovascular (heart rate, blood pressure) recovery following the stressor.

What can you change in your home to create a more positive approach and can you take time out and stroll into nature even if it is only with the power of your own imagination?

Overpower your anxiety

The chemical reaction which invokes panic and stomach-churning is in the fact is the same as when you ride a roller coaster or are chased by a saber-toothed tiger, whether that is real or imagined.

So, just worrying about an interview or facing a saber-tooth tiger will cause our bodies to

react similarly to both events with symptoms of anxiety and stress. Anxiety is usually perceived as more short-term, whereas stress can last for weeks,

months, or even years.

Stress is normally thought of as a negative word, but there are actually three different types of stress: positive, tolerable, and toxic. Positive stress typically occurs when we try new things or look forward

to an event, a simple reframing of the word stress to the excitement will not only change how you think about the upcoming event or interview, but it will actually change your body's physiological response. So if you learn how to change your mind you can change your body.

Have you ever thought that the signs of stress and anxiety also bear a striking resemblance?

Reinterpret your Stress as Excitement.

Anxiety and Excitement are often seen as opposites but instead of trying to calm down, think about harnessing the energy of your stress chemicals to help you work hard and stay motivated.

When we are anxious, we feel nervous, tense, and restless.

We may start sweating, breathing rapidly, and having trouble concentrating. Our heart rate also increases, this is similar to how we are when excited. There have been many studies that have shown that the feelings we have and the body's reactions to stressors are very similar to when we are involved with a task that excites us in some way.

Think about your passion for a task you are doing or the ideas you want to convey. It has been proven that those who reinterpreted their anxious feelings as excitement did better on a public speaking task and felt more positive feelings about the task than those who tried to calm down.

Also, change the words you use to describe the task in your head and replace the feeling of dread with one of excitement.

Exercise Six

3 Ways you can overpower your anxiety

So how can you tell what stress or anxiety is?

1 – Ask yourself if it is tolerable or toxic?

Tolerable stress is usually uncomfortable, but manageable. However, anxiety can be all-consuming and makes it difficult to eat properly, sleep well, or even stay focused on your daily tasks.

2 – Another way to reduce symptoms of stress and anxiety is to change the way that you explain a situation to yourself. That will then change the chemical message that your body receives. So next time you start to feel that nervous stomach and get all sweaty and muddled, try to explain the situation to yourself in a way that predicts things going well.

That will switch off the fight or flight response and your body will become calm. It usually takes your body 20 minutes to recover from a highly stressful or anxious episode which is why it is never a good idea to continue a stressful discussion with a child or partner once a toxic state has kicked in.

3 - Try to learn to relax to break the pattern to see if it eases the situation. Self-hypnosis and breathing techniques can be learned to send yourself chemical messages that calm down the anxiety reaction.

Stress is nature's way of making us more capable of physically defending ourselves; anxiety is a modern phenomenon where the way in which we think triggers the same process.

Stress and anxiety can feel the same, but the former is the right time, right place reaction; and the latter is often a series of negative predictions and ruminations that trigger the defense mechanism.

How Does Posture Help with Sleep and Stress?

Stress and poor posture have a reciprocal relationship. When we are under high levels of stress it causes poor posture, and poor posture causes stress, so you can be stuck in a never-ending cycle.

Have you noticed how standing upright as you go for a walk not only makes you feel more confident, but it helps you feel less stressed? Also when you sit or stand up straight, it helps you look taller, thinner, and more successful.

One of the benefits is that it decreases stress hormones and makes you feel more confident about yourself, helping anyone who lacks confidence if practiced daily.

Recently a study in the journal of Health Psychology found that people who had a slouchy posture while performing high-pressure tasks reported having more negative thoughts and feelings than those who sat upright.

Other studies have shown that an upright posture increases testosterone and decreases levels of the stress hormone cortisol.

Other studies done by the Ohio State University found that people with good posture demonstrated more confidence than those who slouched. All of this can help to project outward confidence translated to more confident thoughts as well.

But are there other hidden benefits?

Here are just a few that you will notice if you make a determined effort to keep an eye on your posture daily.

Back Pain

Back pain has to be one of the most popular complaints that Doctors see in their practice daily and having a correct posture will help to reduce both back and neck pain.

Slouching can strain the back and neck muscles while putting stress on the spine, this is a form of physical stress that can end up causing you to worry when you know that your health is not what it should be.

This can create spinal misalignments and even constrict blood vessels and nerves. so changing your posture can reduce both physical and mental stress.

Calories and Standing Upright

You actually burn up to 350 more calories a day just by practicing perfect posture as it helps you to take tension off the entire body and the entire body works and flows much better, also when you sit up straight and have correct posture, you allow your spine to be in a neutral state, and a neutral spine allows the pelvis to position itself in such a way that the core muscles work much better.

Breath Better

We have talked about breathing before but just to remind you that how we breathe can be life-changing and having an upright and proper posture will help to open up the airways in the lungs and also helps ensure proper breathing, encouraging more oxygen to flow throughout the body.

Doing this will help the entire nervous system, organs, and other tissues throughout the body function more effectively. It will also help with memory function.

An Indiana University conducted a study focused on the link between words, memories, and posture. and the study concluded that babies' learning abilities are affected by their posture. An upright and correct posture found that they were able to map new experiences and recall things better.

Sitting at a Computer

A lot of bad postures come from sitting at a computer most of the day and you can reduce the harm by taking a one-minute break for every 20 minutes of work that you are doing in front of a screen, also try to position the screen so that it is 15 degrees below eye level.

So we have looked at standing and walking with a good upright posture and the many benefits that there are but in the western culture, we tend to spend a lot of time sitting especially if our work demands it.

Clearly, it is good when you can have a break to get out into the fresh air and spend your time walking rather than constantly eating or consuming many cups of coffee.

Correct Way to Sit

Always select a chair with a firm lower back support and keep your desk elbow high by adjusting the chair. It also helps to have your knees slightly lower than your hips and like we said, get up, take a break and walk around at least once an hour and during lunch breaks. This will also act as a form of meditation in motion and help clear your mind of any stressful thoughts.

Once your work in the office is done you may head home in the car and here too is an opportunity to improve your mental and physical stress levels by adopting best practices.

When in the car, adjust the seat so that you sit with your knees slightly lower than your hips and place a small pillow in the small of your lower back to help you improve your sitting posture.

You can also practice meditation and calmness when you find yourself stuck in a jam. This is the opposite of what we tend to do, eating an apple but not whilst on the move

will help you to pass the time or simply focus on your breathing or the noises around you like we explained earlier.

Sleeping Posture

There are so many thoughts and opinions around what makes up a good sleeping posture but generally, when you sleep on your side with your head supported by a pillow and your neck in a neutral position, and with your knees bent and a pillow placed between them, this is normally a great way to reduce your spinal stress.

Also try to sleep on your back, making sure your pillow allows your neck to be in line with your spine.

Sleep and stress is a very large area of study and we are going to go into even more depth in part two of the book.

Clenching

Stress and sleep issues can often show up in surprising ways and end up causing issues that we may not have expected.

One example would be when we end up grinding our teeth, something that many people do in bed at night, and this can cause all kinds of issues.

You or your dentist may become aware of this when your teeth are worn down through the enamel or are flat, broken, chipped, or loose or you may have constant jaw pain, tooth sensitivity, and headaches.

This can be related to stress and a sign of sleep apnoea that needs to be urgently addressed by a qualified medical professional or it could be that you will need to reduce alcohol or coffee.

Here is a little bit more about why that is so...

So drinking coffee and alcohol may well have the opposite desired effect that you are looking for so you need to replace the activity with positive stress-reducing techniques that need to be done on a daily basis to keep ahead of the stress curve.

Exercise Seven

Let's get physical for a moment as we share something that can be an instant benefit and involves clenching your hands.

Research shows that the right hand activates the left side of the brain, which is more verbal and logical, and the right brain is more global and emotional.

So, if you feel flooded by fear and anxiety (a right-brain function), activating your left brain can prime you to think through the situation in a logical way instead.

That said any form of exercise changes mood and enhances the feel-good chemicals, but this comes with a warning to not become too obsessive with it as you could harm your body by putting it under stress.

Many people find that their health and mental well-being are improved greatly by adopting gentle exercises such as Yoga, Tai Chi and simply walking daily. Search out a recommended class of the above near you and see the benefits.

My wife Shirley, a professional Yoga teacher will be helping me to share more about how this ancient process can help you to reduce stress. The great news is you don't have to sit on the floor or chant unless that is something you would really like to get into.

My favorite process is Qigong, and it has helped me personally with what has been a very stressful life.

It helped to bring balance to my life plus many physical benefits including, making my joints and muscles more fluid and allowing my entire body to relax in circumstances where the tension could lead to injury and stress that in turn can lead to illness.

So, I highly recommend it as it has made me feel stronger and healthier.

You will also have many mental and emotional benefits along with less stress if you try it. It is up to you! If it is not for you then there have been many things that we have shared with you so far, including the power of just taking a walk and walking tall, that are guaranteed to help you but like most things, it is all about your level of commitment, a commitment to your own well-being.

When it comes down to it you will find that it is only you that can make the changes that will create the changes that you are looking for.

As we know there are still even more areas you will need to know to take control of your sleep issues and stress for good. Knowledge is power and we will do the work for you, so that you don't have to, well some level of commitment will be needed of course.

Before we end, let us take a quick test of your daily stress level, this is something you can look at again after implementing the exercises here to see how far you have come.

Free Stress Test and Self-assessment

The following pairs of statements represent extreme behavior patterns at opposite ends of the Type A – Type B spectrum. Score your answers by choosing the most appropriate number from 1 to 7.

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| When waiting for an appointment or to be served in a restaurant, you sit back and relax. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | Waiting makes you feel edgy and you are aggravated by any delay. |
| You play games and sports for the sheer fun of it. The result is less important than the play. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | You always play to win – even against the kids. |
| You are a good listener and always wait for others to finish what they are saying. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | You can't wait to have your say and often interrupt others or finish their words for them. |

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| <p>You are never hurried in your actions, even when the heat is on and you are under pressure</p> | <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p> | <p>You are always in a rush, anxious to be moving on to the next thing on your list.</p> |
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| <p>You have plenty of interests and hobbies outside of work.</p> | <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p> | <p>Work is of overriding importance, often dominating your free time.</p> |
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| <p>You have a balanced social life, and maintain regular contact with a wide circle of friends and family.</p> | <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p> | <p>Your social life revolves around work interests and colleagues.</p> |
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| <p>You are satisfied with your job and content with your position at work.</p> | <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p> | <p>You are highly ambitious, looking for rapid promotion and advancement of your career.</p> |
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| <p>You are a careful and courteous driver, always making way for other vehicles and pedestrians.</p> | <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p> | <p>You are an aggressive driver, impatient of others on the road and anxious to get ahead, even if it means taking risks.</p> |
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| Work brings its own reward through the fulfillment and satisfaction you derive from your job. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | You crave recognition and praise for a job well done. |
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| You eat slowly and enjoy each mouthful | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | You eat quickly, often finishing your meal before others are barely halfway through. |
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| You respect people for who they are rather than what they are, and you never judge people by position, possessions, or the size of their bank balance. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | You measure your own and other people's worth in terms of numbers: how many achievements, how much money, and so on. |
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| You are in touch with your feelings and able to express them appropriately. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | You suppress your feelings but betray them through angry outbursts, critical remarks, or irritability. |
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Score 66 – 84: extreme type A

Highly competitive and always striving to be in control, you drive yourself hard. Because you are unaware how tense you really are, you do little to alleviate stress, but

unless you moderate your behavior you risk heart disease and other stress-related problems.

Score 48 – 65: moderate type A

Watch yourself and take care not to push yourself too hard. Be sure to take regular time out for yourself to unwind and relax.

Score 36 – 47: healthy type AB

You enjoy a challenge but have a well-balanced life and do not let pressure get the better of you. Be careful to ensure that Type A behavior doesn't begin to dominate when opportunities open up or your ambitions expand.

Score 18 – 35: moderate type B

You have a relaxed and healthy approach to life and are unlikely to suffer from stress-related illnesses.

Score 12 -17: extreme type B

You are so laid back that you hardly know what stress is. You are not at risk of stress-related problems.

The book helps you to build your skills and knowledge easily around stress and sleeping to finally give you the ability to take control and keep your edge and motivation to achieve and create the success you are looking for in life.

This can only happen if you put in the work and apply what you have learned here. Feel free to do the stress test as often as you can to keep an eye on your progress.

Sleep well!

Gary Paul Williams

Hypnotherapist and Stress Consultant