

# Get a Life, Get a Balance

## Building Resilience

### The Mechanics of Stress

Stress is defined as a response by your body to any demand made upon it. Your body responds to stress in many ways. Hormones, like adrenalin, surge. Your heartbeat and blood pressure increase. Your blood sugar rises. These effects, unchanged for thousands of years, helped prehistoric humans survive by helping them run away faster or fight harder, which is why we often call our body's reaction to stress the 'flight or fight' response.

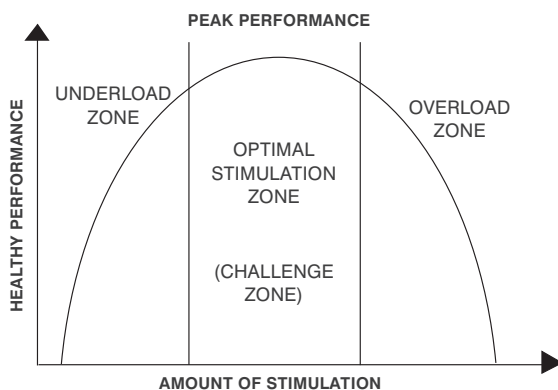
Many people think of stress as another way of saying tension or pressure. Actually, stress is just the way we respond to change. Understanding stress and its effects can help you use it to your own advantage, and turn potential 'stressors' into positive challenges.

### The Effects of Stress

Your body can't tell the difference between a positive or negative stressor. In either case, your body experiences the same stress effects. If you are not able to let off steam and relax, these effects can be harmful. You may feel tired, depressed, or anxious. You may experience physical symptoms such as a clenched jaw or back pain.

### Tip 1: Recognise and manage your stress

#### Maintaining Peak Performance



### Caution: "Flashing Lights"

1. **Psychological**  
(e.g. anxiety, depression, paranoia)
2. **Behavioural**  
(e.g. cranky, withdrawn, memory problems)
3. **Physical**  
(e.g. tiredness, aches and pains)
4. **Spiritual**  
(e.g. emptiness, lack of purpose)

### Signs of Underload

- Unmotivated
- Irritability
- Tiredness
- Unreliability
- Lack of decision making
- Moaning about situation but not changing it
- Reduced output

### Signs of Healthy Overload

- Effective problem solving
- Appropriate sense of humour
- High work standard
- Clear thinking
- Harmonious relationships
- Deadlines met
- Open to feedback
- Feelings of being valued and competent

### Signs of Overload

- Poor memory/ concentration/ decision-making
- Anxious
- Mood swings
- Poor attendance
- Tiredness
- Overly self-critical
- Sleep problems
- Frequent criticism
- Gossip
- Poor work quality



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1300 our eap  
1300 687 327

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### 3 Pronged Approach to Stress Management

**1. Diet:**

- Balanced
- Lunch breaks
- Decrease stimulants
- Increase vitamins and minerals
- Beware of comfort eating – know your patterns

**2. Exercise:**

- Min 20 minutes a day
- Must get heart rate up so have at least light – moderate sweat
- Increase endorphins
- Decrease adrenalin and cortisol

**3. Quick Stress Busters:**

- Gym workout
- Talking it out
- Laughter
- Aromatherapy
- Leisurely bath
- Favourite music
- Relaxation, massage
- Yoga / pilates / stretching
- Deep Breathing
- Schedule a worry stop
- Time with family or friends
- Doing something for others you find gratifying

**Tip 2: Balance your life**



- Think of the activities that make up your life and give you balance.
- Then place them in a “time pie”. Draw one up, you might be surprised.
- Remember this is not a one size fits all. Some people will spend more time in some areas and less elsewhere.
- Ask yourself “Is this the division that I want?”
- Rarely are our needs met by just one role. Invest time and energy in all aspects of your life.
- So, are your segments in the right proportion? Do you have the balance you want?
- If not – do something about it!

**Tip 4: Know what you can and can't control**

- You cannot control other people / You can only control yourself.
- But you can influence other people by changing your responses to them.

Practice the Personal Power Grid to help you invest your energy wisely in the areas that you can control.

**The Personal Power Grid**

ACTION	CAN CONTROL	CAN'T CONTROL
Take Action	Mastery Empowered 	Ceaseless Striving Frustrated / angry 
No Action	Giving Up Frustrated / angry	Letting Go Relieved

**Tip 3: Have a healthy approach to change**

Everyone reacts to change differently.

Some enjoy change ... it excites them. Others prefer to stick with the way things are. Whatever your response, be aware of your reactions and work positively towards managing what you can and can't control.

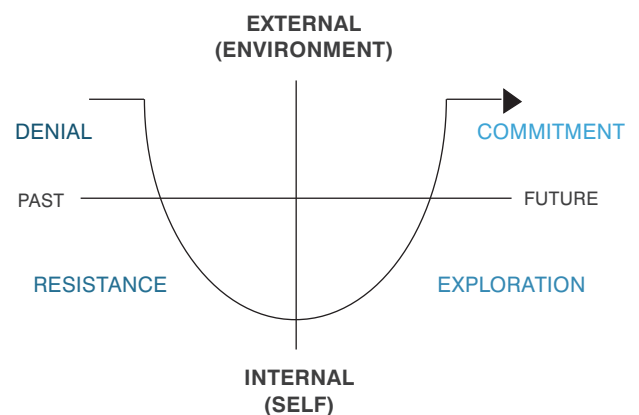
**It can take time to adjust to change.**

Let people know how you are going and ask them to respect your views as you move towards accepting the new situation.

**Your attitude to change really counts!**

Remember: “Whether you think you can or you think you can't ... you're probably right.”

**The Change Grid**



**Tip 5: The most important step is to have a positive attitude**

A helpful reminder for achieving balance:

- B:** Balance work, home, health and fun
- A:** Accept the differences of others
- L:** Laughter and love
- A:** Attitude of positiveness
- N:** No right or wrong, only differences
- C:** Control – know what you can and cannot control
- E:** Exercise for energy
- D:** Diet

Daily discipline and practice to maintain peak performance

**Useful Resources**

**Books:**

The Relaxation & Stress Reduction Workbook (5th Ed) by Mathew McKay

Mindfulness for Beginner (Audiobook) (Audio CD) by Jon Kabat-Zinn

**On-Line:**

The Little Online Book of Stress Management by Eddie Lester [www.hypnos.info/book2/book2.html](http://www.hypnos.info/book2/book2.html)