

Stress 1

Anxiety or stress, is a normal physical response to a potentially dangerous situation. However constant worry or perceived uncontrolled stress can be harmful to our health and will start to have negative effects on our well-being. Left untreated, stress can contribute to depression, elevated cholesterol, high blood pressure, heart attacks and stroke.

Many symptoms of stress can present with as a physical complaint. Some of the more common ones are ; churning stomach; loss of energy; Irritable bowel; low libido; asthma; recurrent coughs and cols; headaches; dermatitis; neck tightness and insomnia.

Some mental and emotional effects also occur and include: an inability to concentration; slurred speech; stuttering; loss of memory; anxiety; depression; mood changes; anger and irritability.

People may display stress through behaviours such as; over eating; over drinking; smoking; driving fast; using drugs/sedative/panadol :yelling or making irrational decisions.

If any of these relate to you AND you feel your stress levels are in excess of 6/10 on most days of the week, you really need to take stock and instigate some positive lifestyle and stress management changes.

It is important to learn to release our stress or learn to react in a different way.

Complete the Mood and Anxiety Questionnaire found on the www.byebyebriidget.com site. This will give you an idea of whether your stress levels are controlled or controlling you!

Here are some ideas for relieving stress:

1. Firstly identify and label your feelings. Are you suffering with stress?
2. Take 10 very deep breaths (trying to use your stomach muscles instead of your rib cage) every time you feel stressed
3. Talk to your partner, spouse or friends about how you are feeling. IF you don't wish to share your stress issues with them, talk with a professional. Either a doctor, psychologist or other health professional will point you in the right direction.
4. Exercise such as walking, tennis, golf (at least for 20 minutes per day)
5. Try a weekly or fortnightly massage
6. Go to the movies – try light, entertaining films, or a funny DVD at home
7. Aromatherapy – lavender on your pillow or in your bath helps with sleep and relaxing
8. Yoga, Tai Chi – you can go at your own pace
9. Bridge or cards – enquire to your local group or start a monthly meeting with some mates
10. Buy a dog – taking care of a dog greatly reduces stress and helps people to live longer and happier
11. Join a laughter group – these are non-profit groups set up around your community (call)
12. Go to the library and lose yourself in a magazine or book
13. Start a new hobby
14. Try gardening
15. Avoid working long hours
16. Have a hot bath with essential oils or floating candles in it