

## DEALING WITH STRESS



*If we could give every individual the right amount of nourishment and exercise, not too little and not too much, we would have found the safest way to health.*  
Hippocrates

Wise words, indeed, since a body that is well nourished is better able to handle all stresses, including the stress of disease.

We all experience some stress in our lives and stress is not necessarily bad for you. Laughter, pure joy, eating, and vacations are all positive ways to activate our body's stress mechanisms to some extent. Stress produces adrenaline which can make us feel excited and gives us extra energy when we need it. Stress can even motivate us to make changes in our lives.

However, our system must be prepared to handle the stresses. This means giving the body adequate rest, exercise and nutrition. What happens, then, when we short change ourselves on these necessities? Symptoms of stress can develop such as insomnia, indigestion, diarrhea, constipation, emotional outbursts, fatigue, headaches, irrational fears or anxiety. Stress can manifest in many different forms and places a tremendous burden on organs. It can lead to conditions such as angina, asthma, cancer, autoimmune diseases, high blood pressure, ulcers, diabetes, or ulcerative colitis.

In order to prepare our bodies to handle stress or to help deal effectively with stress, we need to:

1. Exercise – find a type of exercise that you like doing and make a commitment. For many people, walking is one of the easiest exercises to incorporate into daily living. Aim for 3 hours weekly.
2. Eat a healthy diet – Eat regular meals, eat in a relaxed environment, ensure you are getting the basic nutrients. Avoid alcohol, caffeine and refined carbohydrates. (The Nutri-Body™ analysis can evaluate nutritional imbalances or inadequacies.)
3. Get adequate rest – This will vary for each individual, but often we do not get enough sleep. It is important to sleep in a dark room, without a night light, or even a light from your alarm clock. The light disrupts the body's production of melatonin which helps regulate sleep. Reduced melatonin is also a risk factor in breast cancer. If you must get up to use the bathroom during the night, it is best to use a nightlight, rather than an overhead light which is too bright.
4. Get homeopathic treatment – If stress is extreme or prolonged, sometimes even in spite of our best efforts at diet and exercise, symptoms of stress become evident. Homeopathic medicine is effective in treating the physical, mental, and emotional symptoms of stress.
5. Breathe from the diaphragm – Many people are unaware that they breathe very shallowly from the upper chest. One successful way to decrease stress is by breathing with the diaphragm. Have you ever told yourself in moments of stress to take a deep breath? That breath is abdominal breathing, or diaphragmatic breathing. An easy way to learn to do this is with Laughter Yoga™. It is also a form of aerobic exercise. Remember that exercise is an effective stress management tool, so why not try a fun exercise like Laughter Yoga™. To learn more about Laughter Yoga, check out my website: [www.joyoflaughteryoga.ca](http://www.joyoflaughteryoga.ca)