



Stress Management

Stress and Recovery

Stress is one of four major causes of relapse for those in recovery from addiction.

Addicts use alcohol and drugs as a way to self-medicate and deal with their stress.

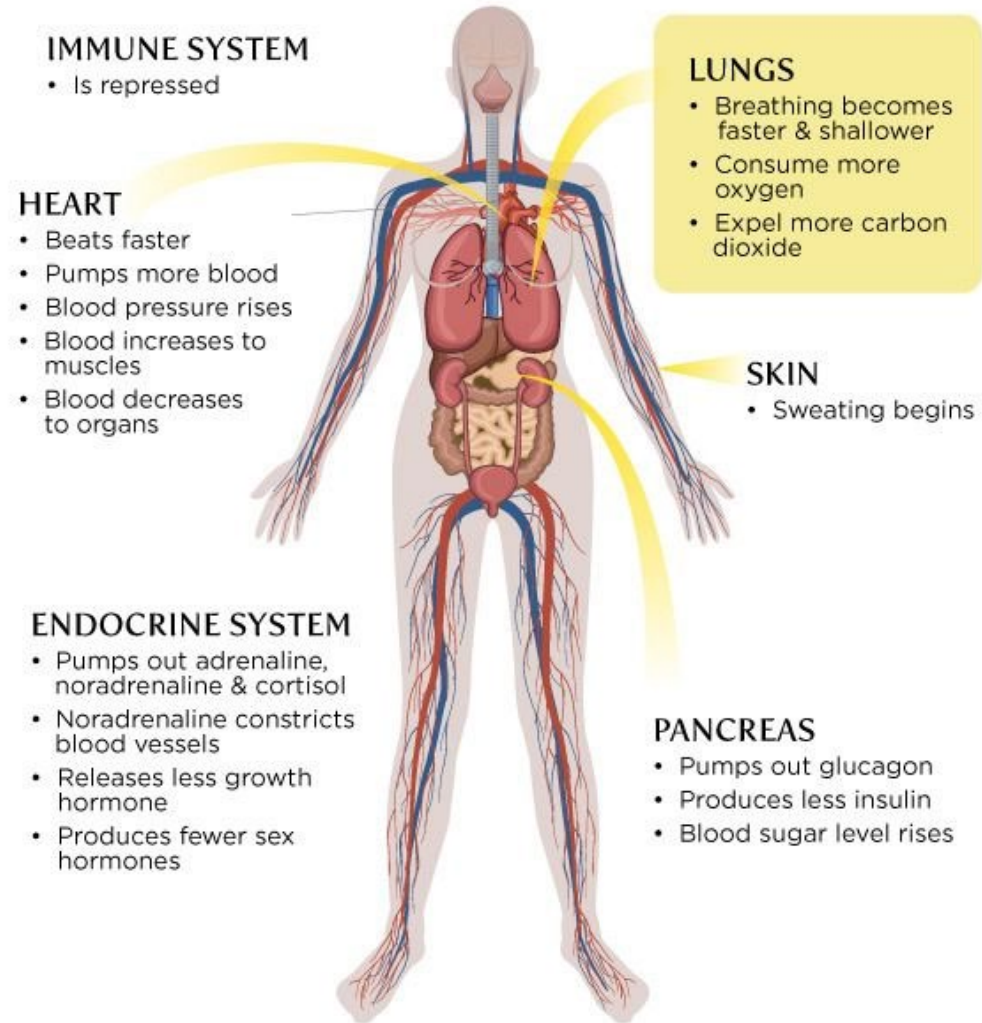
- ▶ Work
- ▶ Managing Relationships
- ▶ Loss of Job
- ▶ Catastrophic Event
- ▶ Paying Bills
- ▶ Home Life & Stress
- ▶ Loss of Family
- ▶ Major Illness



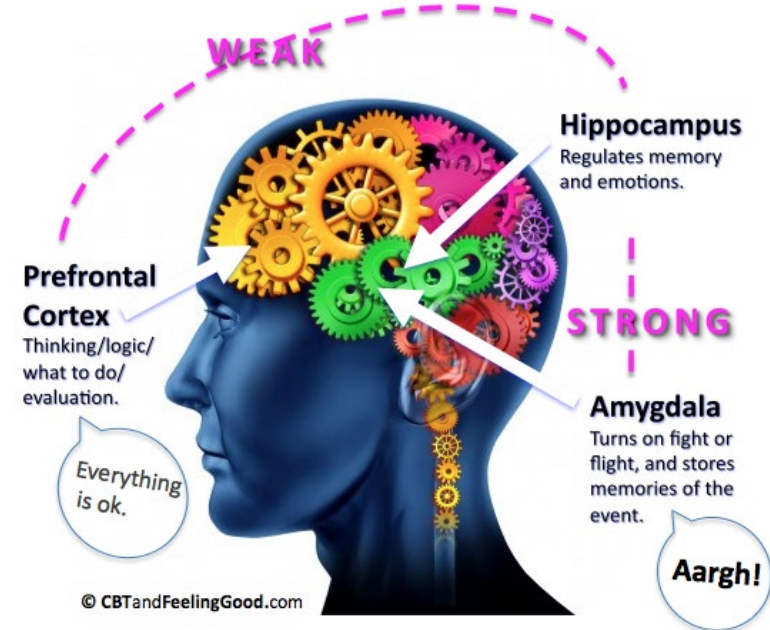
What is stress?

- ▶ Stress is your body's way of responding to any kind of demand or threat. When you sense danger—whether real or imagined—the body's defenses kick into high gear in a rapid automatic process known as the “fight-or-flight” reaction or the “stress response”.
- ▶ The stress response is the body's way of protecting you. When working properly, it helps you stay focused, energetic, and alert.

Fight-or-Flight Response



What happens in the body and brain?



What is stress?

- ▶ Stress can also help you rise to meet challenges. It's what keeps you on your toes during a presentation at work, sharpens your concentration when you're attempting the game-winning shot, or drives you to study for an exam when you would rather be doing something else.
- ▶ Beyond a certain point, stress stops being helpful and starts causing major damage to your health, your mood, your productivity, your relationships, and your quality of life.

Chronic Stress

If you tend to get stressed out frequently, your body may be in a heightened state of stress much of the time. This can lead to serious health issues such as:

- ▶ Suppress your immune system
- ▶ Upset digestive and reproductive system
- ▶ Increase risk of heart attack, heart disease and stroke
- ▶ Speed up the aging process

Chronic Stress

This can lead to serious health issues such as:

- ▶ Depression and anxiety
- ▶ Chronic pain
- ▶ Sleep problems
- ▶ Autoimmune disease
- ▶ Skin conditions
- ▶ Weight problems
- ▶ Thinking and memory problems

Signs and Symptoms of Stress Overload



Cognitive Symptoms

- ▶ Memory problems
- ▶ Inability to concentrate
- ▶ Poor judgment
- ▶ Seeing only the negative
- ▶ Anxious or racing thoughts
- ▶ Constant worrying

Signs and Symptoms of Stress Overload



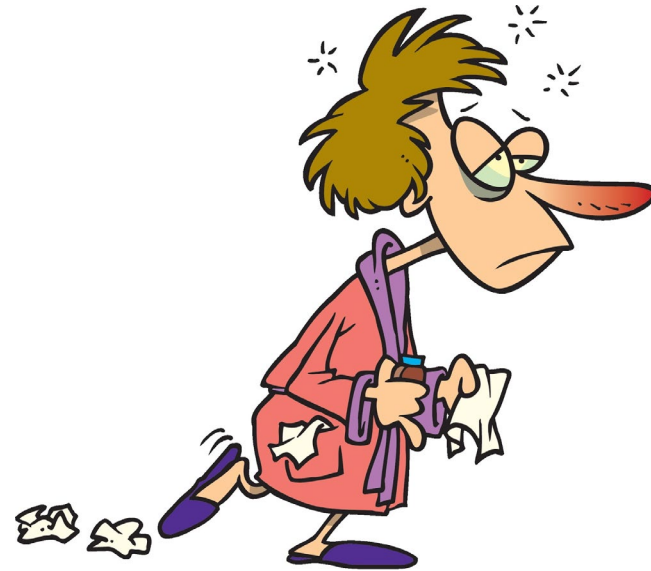
Emotional Symptoms

- ▶ Depression and general unhappiness
- ▶ Anxiety and agitation
- ▶ Moodiness, irritability, or anger
- ▶ Feeling overwhelmed
- ▶ Loneliness and isolation
- ▶ Other mental or emotional health problems

Signs and Symptoms of Stress Overload

Physical Symptoms

- ▶ Fatigue and exhaustion
- ▶ Aches and pains
- ▶ Diarrhea or constipation
- ▶ Nausea or dizziness
- ▶ Chest pain, rapid heart rate
- ▶ Frequent colds or flu



Signs and Symptoms of Stress Overload

Behavioral Symptoms

- ▶ Eating more or less
- ▶ Sleeping too much or too little
- ▶ Withdrawing from others
- ▶ Procrastinating or neglecting responsibilities
- ▶ Using alcohol, drugs, or cigarettes to relax
- ▶ Nervous habits (e.g. nail biting, pacing)





Two Types of Causes of Stress

- The situations and pressures that cause stress are known as stressors.
- We usually think of stressors as being negative, such as an exhausting week schedule or a rocky relationship, but anything that puts high demands on you can be stressful.
- This includes positive events, such as getting married, buying a house, going to college, or receiving a promotion.

Common External Causes of Stress

External stressors are events and situations that happen to you.

- ▶ Major life changes (moving, death of a loved one, birth of a child, job changes, etc.)
- ▶ School
- ▶ Relationship difficulties
- ▶ Financial problems
- ▶ Being too busy
- ▶ Family
- ▶ Health related issues

Common Internal Causes of Stress

Internal Stressors are sources of stress that are coming from within your body or your mind.

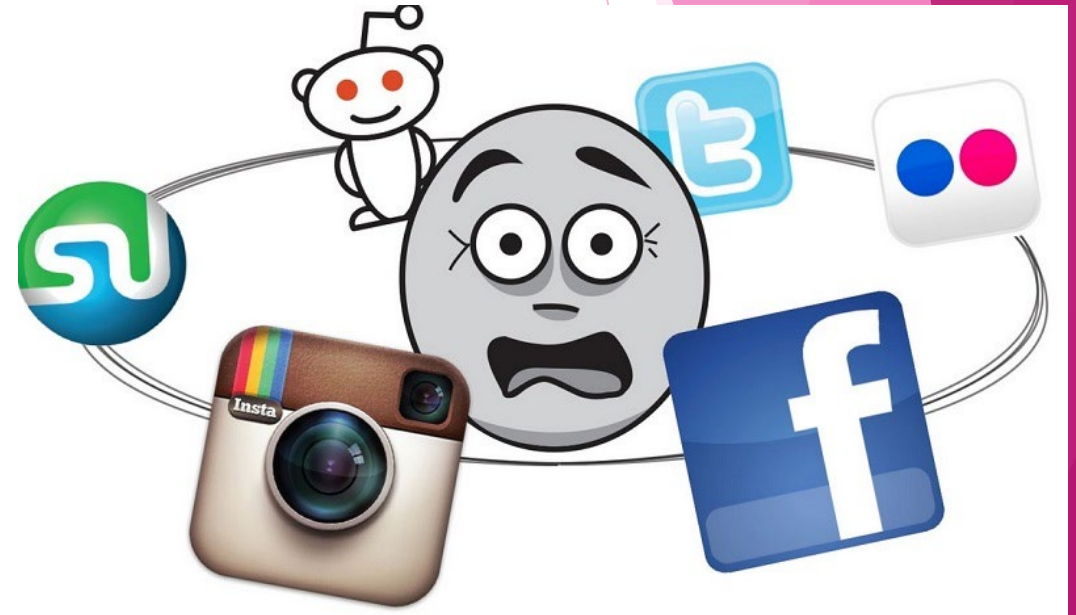
- ▶ Anxiety, worry, and pessimism
- ▶ Inability to accept uncertainty
- ▶ Rigid thinking, lack of flexibility
- ▶ Negative self-talk
- ▶ Unrealistic expectations
- ▶ Perfectionism and control issues
- ▶ All-or-nothing attitude
- ▶ Struggling with addiction and consequences

Newest Form of Stress: “Constant Checking” Stress

Those who check their email, texts and social media accounts on a constant basis.

Stress runs higher, on average, for constant checkers than for those who do not engage with technology as frequently.

Among employed Americans who check their work email constantly on their days off, their reported overall stress level is even higher, at 6.0.



Social Media Stress

- ▶ Social media also negatively affects a greater proportion of constant checkers compared with those who do not check as frequently.
- ▶ More than two in five constant checkers say that political and cultural discussions on social media cause them stress.
- ▶ Additionally, constant checkers say they worry about negative effects of social media on their physical and mental health, but it does not stop their behavior.

How much stress is too much?

Because of the widespread damage stress can cause, it's important to know your own limit. Just how much stress is "too much" differs from person to person.



Healthy Level of Stress

- ▶ A healthy level of stress can motivate you to rise to a challenge.
- ▶ Can make you hyper-aware of positive events in your life.
- ▶ Problem solving skills can be gained during stressful situations.
- ▶ Can help you stay focused on recovery in order to stay emotionally healthy.
- ▶ Can help you perform better in response to deadlines and time limits.

