

Getting out of *the fast lane*

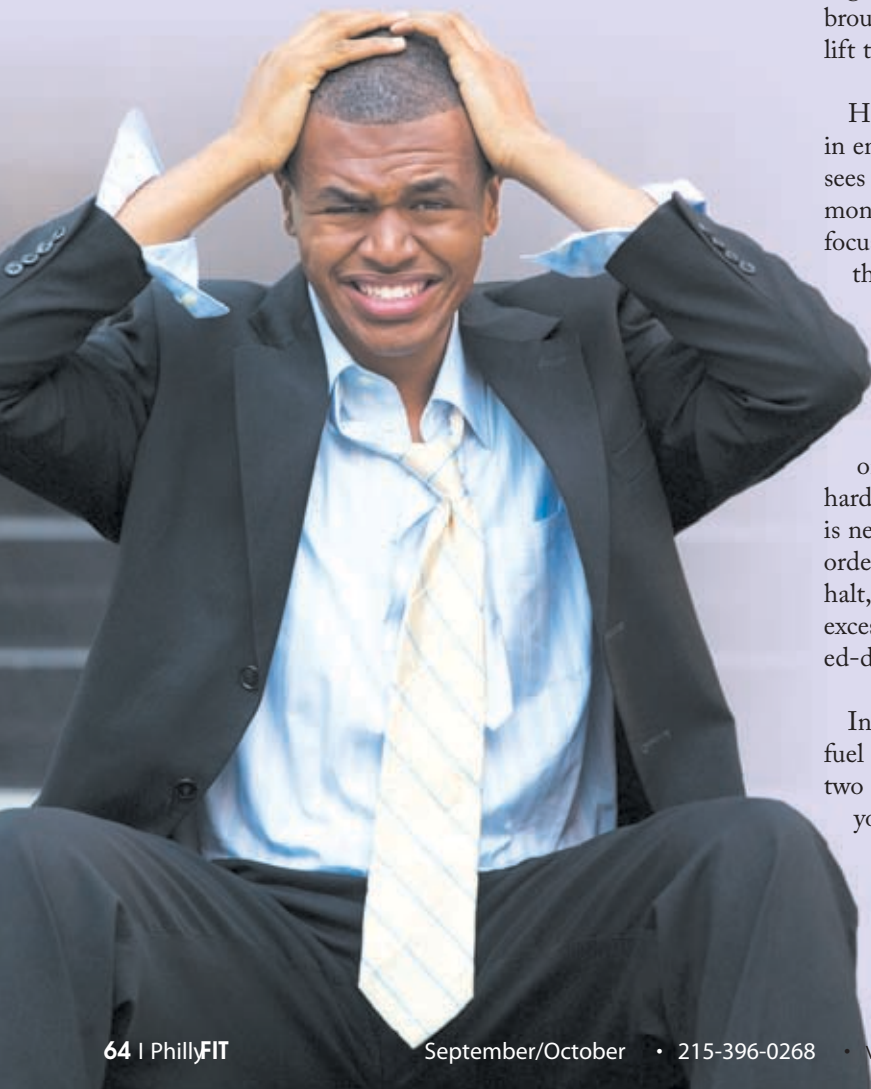
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Do you ever feel that your life is out of control? You're constantly facing pressures from your job, relationships, financial insecurities and schedule demands among so many other stress inducing factors.

STRESS - OFTEN A DISEASE OF CHOICE:

Are you feeling stressed out? Are you facing greater pressures from your job, relationships, your finances, and scheduling demands, to name a few? Many feel that we are living in a most stressful period in our society---in fact, the world! The daily news outlets chronicle an over-riding theme - - "ONE NATION UNDER PRESSURE!"



What is stress? Stress is simply our perception and response to events and pressures. Our bodies have been designed to physically equip us for emergency survival events--to fight our way out or to run away from them.

A number of years ago, the news reported about a young mother who witnessed, from her front door, her six-year-old daughter accidentally run over by a very large and heavy automobile. The mother ran out to the street, with one hand, lifted the front end of the car, and with the other, safely pulled her daughter from under the carriage of the vehicle. To dramatize how physically difficult this feat was for a slightly built woman, an elephant from a nearby circus was brought in, along with a few firemen. It took all of them to lift the car's front end as the mother had done!!

How did she accomplish the "impossible?" Nature's built-in emergency-survival mechanism kicked in. When the brain sees danger, it alerts the pituitary gland to release the hormone, adrenaline. At that instant, the body becomes very focused--vision becomes clearer, muscles are supplied the fuel they need for the strength to deal with the emergency.

The mother was actually able to become "super-woman" for this life or death moment.

When the hypothalamus of the brain sends its message to the adrenal glands (the pituitary), within seconds you can see more clearly, hear better, run faster, hit harder and think faster. Because every function of your body is needed for the emergency, all other systems shut down in order to "supercharge" your attack! Digestion comes to a halt, the immune system temporarily turns off, and even excess waste may be eliminated so that you won't be "weight-ed-down."

In order for your leg and arm muscles to receive the extra fuel they need from the blood, the heart begins pumping at two to three times the normal speed. This, of course, causes your blood pressure to soar, and sugars and fats are released for fuel into the blood stream, which elevates blood sugars and cholesterol levels.

Now all of this is a good thing for emergencies. But, what if, what was designed for occasional "battles" happened routinely? This alarm reaction occurs when we

are rushing through traffic, when we are late for deadlines, when we have problems with our boss, co-workers or family members, or any of the other regular pressures of life. There is a cost for this constant emergency preparedness. The adrenaline becomes toxic, creating ulcers and other digestive disorders. The blood pressure skyrockets, the high sugars and fat levels promote diabetes and heart disease. Unrelenting stress is too costly!

How to reduce the most stress in the least amount of time (adapted from stresstop.com):

1. MOVE IT AND LOSE IT. The best way to get rid of the toxic chemicals used to give you super human strength to "fight or flee," is to burn them up with physical activity. Try this simple walking program. But, if you haven't been active for a while, check with your doctor before you start.

A SIMPLE WALKING PROGRAM

(NOTE: Each column indicates the number of minutes to walk. Complete three exercise sessions each week. If you find a particular week's pattern tiring, repeat it before going on to the next pattern. You do not have to complete the walking program in twelve weeks).

WEEK:	Walk	Walk Briskly	Walk	Minutes
1	5	5	5	15
2	5	7	5	17
3	5	9	5	19
4	5	11	5	21
5	5	13	5	23
6	5	15	5	25
7	5	18	5	28
8	5	20	5	30
9	5	23	5	33
10	5	26	5	36
11	5	28	5	38
12	5	30	5	40

2. GET ORGANIZED. Disorganization is stressful. Clear your desk, tidy your car, organize your closets. You won't believe how much less stressed you'll be.

3. LEARN TO SAY NO. Too many volunteer activities will drive you crazy! Write down five different ways to kindly, yet firmly say NO and practice saying them until the words reel off your tongue. Start with: "Let me check with my calendar and I'll get back to you."

4. JOIN OR DEVELOP A SUPPORT GROUP. A network of friends can be invaluable support! Start a walking group or bowling team. Identify friends who need what you need-to reduce stress in your lives. In fact, joining others in ways that provide fun, laughter and increased physical activity can be the most powerful stress management tool you have at your disposal.

5. ALLOW EXTRA TIME. Time pressure is a major source of stress. Next time you feel stressed in a traffic jam or get chewed out by your boss, look below the surface. Time

pressure is often the culprit. To counteract this stressor, build in extra time for traffic that will become congested and assignments that will take longer than you think.

Why not call 215-686-2128 and get the support you need for "getting out of the fast lane," and realizing all of your health goals.

STAY WELL.



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