

STRESS BUSTING: SIMPLE SOLUTIONS FOR STRESS MANAGEMENT



arizona
B O D Y - M I N D
c o u n s e l i n g

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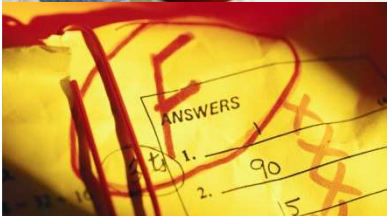
WHEN IS STRESS A PROBLEM?



¥ When it negatively affects how you function:

- ✓ **Emotional** – feeling pervasively sad, anxious, irritable, frustrated, apathetic, angry, etc.
- ✓ **Mental** – poor attention/concentration, difficulty or slowed recall, poor problem solving, feeling “blocked,” etc.
- ✓ **Physical** – change in eating/weight, having no energy, muscle tension/stiffness, pain, etc.
- ✓ **Social** – conflicts with others, isolating, feeling overly sensitive/defensive, frequent misunderstandings, etc.

FROM WHERE DOES STRESS COME?



- ¥ External & Internal
- ¥ Eustress & Distress
- ¥ Ultimately all stress is self-induced:
 - “Men are disturbed not by the events that happen to them, but by the opinions they hold about those events.” ~ Epictetus (Greek Philosopher 55-135 AD)
- ¥ Successful ongoing stress management requires a holistic approach

CHANGE WHAT YOU DO



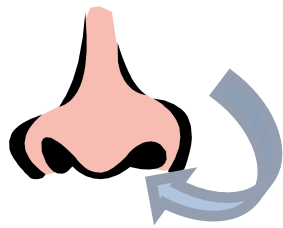
¥ Basic Self Care – “Stress Inoculation”

- ✓ Food & Nutrition
- ✓ Exercise
- ✓ Sleep/Rest
- ✓ Social Connection

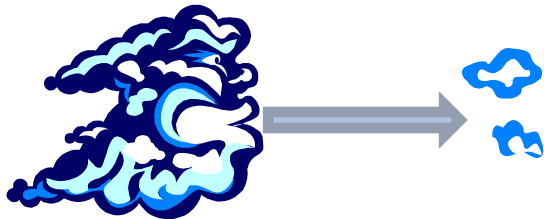
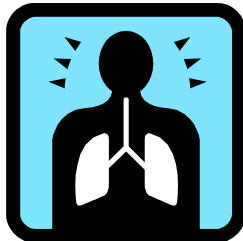
¥ Relaxation Techniques

- ✓ Behavioral
- ✓ Cognitive

BREATHING TECHNIQUE



HOLD



While touching your tongue to the ridge of tissue behind your front teeth:

1. Breathe in through your nose (count 4)
2. Hold breath in your belly (count 7)
3. Blow out through lips (count 8)

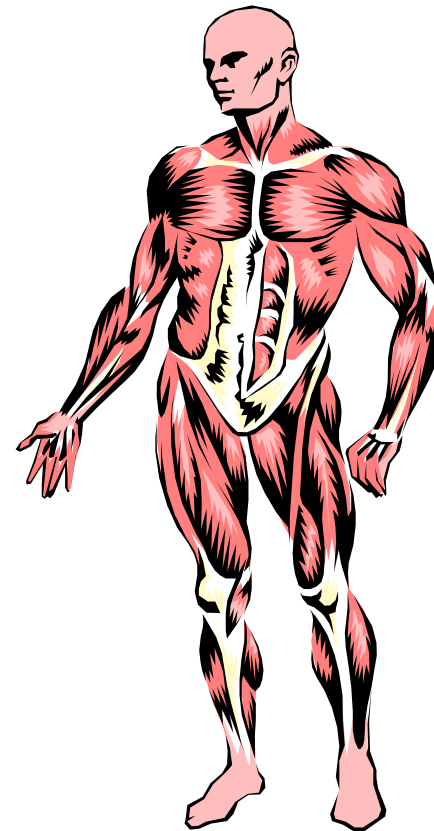
Repeat for 4 cycles and relax.

Practice 2-3X/day for 4 weeks and use PRN, then increase to 8 cycles.

From: "Breathing: the Master Key to Self-Healing" by Dr. Andrew Weil, University of Arizona Medical School.

PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

- ▶ Start with tensing the feet for 20 seconds and release
- ▶ Add calves and feet, then release
- ▶ Add thighs, calves and feet; then release
- ▶ Continue until entire body is tensed; then release and breathe deeply



END
Release
Tense
+
Release
Tense
+
Release
Tense
+
Release
Tense
+
Release
Tense
BEGIN

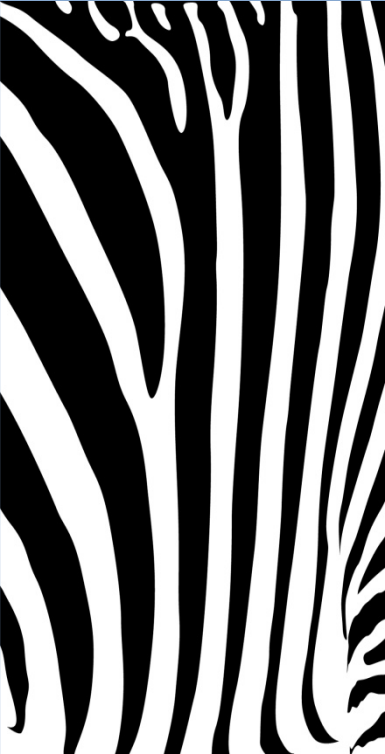
CHANGE THE THINGS THAT AFFECT YOUR FEELINGS



- ¥ Consider the mind being like a garden: you can't harvest fruit if you keep planting weeds.
- ¥ Negative, catastrophic, pessimistic thoughts lead to feelings of distress.
- ¥ Those negative thoughts will lead to fearful feelings that can develop into anxiety and even panic attacks
- ¥ Calm your mind through meditation & realistic thinking about your situation



COMMON COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS

- 
- ⌘ **All-or-nothing thinking:** If performance falls short of perfect, see self as a total failure.
 - ⌘ **Overgeneralization:** a single negative event is seen as a never-ending pattern of defeat.
 - ⌘ **Mental filter:** dwelling exclusively on negative details until all reality becomes darkened; like a drop of ink discolors an entire beaker of water.
 - ⌘ **Disqualifying the positive:** reject positive experiences, insisting they "don't count." Maintain negative belief that is contradicted by daily experience.
 - ⌘ **Magnification (catastrophizing) or minimization:** exaggeration of the importance of negative events or minimization of positive events.

From: Burns, David D., MD. 1989. The Feeling Good Handbook. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc.

COMMON COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS



- ¥ **Jumping to conclusions:** making a negative interpretation even though there are no definite facts that convincingly support your conclusion.
 - ☿ **Mind reading:** arbitrarily conclude that someone is reacting negatively to you and don't bother to check it out.
 - ☿ **The Fortune Teller Error:** anticipate that things will turn out badly and feel convinced that your prediction is an already-established fact.
- ¥ **Emotional reasoning:** You assume that your negative emotions necessarily reflect the way things really are: "I feel it, therefore it must be true."
- ¥ **Personalization:** You see yourself as the cause of some negative external event for which, in fact, you were not primarily responsible.

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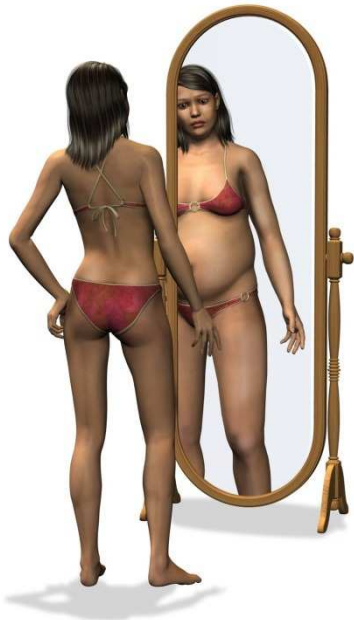
COMMON COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS



- ¥ **Should statements:** motivating through the use of shoulds and shouldn'ts, as if being whipped and punished was the only way to initiate and sustain action.
 - ↯ "Musts" and "oughts" are also offenders. The emotional consequence is guilt, shame and de-motivation. "Should" statements directed towards others results in feeling anger, frustration, and resentment.
- ¥ **Labeling and mislabeling (*an extreme form of overgeneralization*):** instead of describing a behavior or an error in realistic terms (*"I didn't study as hard as I could have, but that was the choice I made. That resulted in this exam score."*), attaching a negative label to yourself or someone: "I'm a loser." "He's a damn louse." "That exam wasn't fair!"
 - ↯ Mislabeling involves describing an event with language that is highly colored and emotionally loaded.

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CORRECTING DISTORTED THINKING



- ¥ **Monitor self talk for distorted thinking**
 - ✓ Feelings will be an indicator: strong negative feelings (panic, anger, depression) mean thinking isn't rational.
 - ✓ Strong distressing feelings may lead to negative behaviors (aggression, procrastinating, isolating, etc.)
- ¥ **Take corrective action: replace distorted thinking with realistic beliefs**
 - ✓ Distorted: "Failing this exam means I'll never become successful! I might as well drop out now! But I'll have all these loans and no income to pay it back! This is AWFUL!!!"
 - ✓ Realistic: "Failing this exam means my life is going to be complicated, but I can make it through. There's no need to quit at this point. I'll make an appointment with my faculty and Student Resources."



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LOOKING
FOR MORE?

Make an appointment for a face-to-face or online consultation:

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Don't forget to breathe!