

ARE YOU STRESSED?

Studies show that stressful situations can develop into more serious health conditions. For example: a sudden or unexpected stressor can activate your adrenal glands, which sends adrenaline and other hormones into your bloodstream. This brings about an increase in your breathing, heart rate, blood pressure, and blood flow to the muscles.

This physical response was appropriate generations ago when it was needed for our very survival, but today much of our stress is emotional. With the high number of mental stress incidents that we can experience each day, these repetitive physical responses can begin to wear out all of the body's intricate systems.

When your stress is chronic, your body releases cortisol; a hormone designed to help the body handle a period of prolonged physical stress. This hormone is hard for the body to metabolise and consequently can lead to an immune system that becomes heavily suppressed, a damaged cardiovascular system, and a worn out endocrine system (the system responsible for handling stressful conditions).

Here are some common stress symptoms:

- Frequent headaches, jaw clenching or teeth grinding;
- Neck ache, back pain, or muscle spasms;
- Frequent colds and infections;
- Difficulty concentrating, forgetfulness and confusion;
- Excess anxiety, worry, guilt or nervousness;
- Depression or frequent mood swings;
- Insomnia or nightmares
- Lack of concentration and forgetfulness.
- Significant weight loss or gain without diet change;
- Nervous habits such as fidgeting;
- Constant tiredness, weakness or fatigue



Regular massage is the ideal remedy for a stressful life. With massage your blood and lymph circulation is increased, which helps all parts of your body to receive essential nutrients, dispose of waste products, and defend against disease.

Stress may take its greatest toll on the nervous system. Massage can address the imbalances that stress causes in your body by stimulating the sensory receptors that interconnect and harmonise all areas of your body, bringing it back into proper balance. This brings about that sense of wellbeing you experience that goes far beyond the release of tense muscles.

Studies have shown that stress hormones consistently fall after massage, and night-time sleep patterns also improved. By having a regular massage (even once a month will make a difference) - you are giving your body, mind & spirit the chance to de-stress before it will give you distress.

DID YOU KNOW?

Surveys have been conducted by a number of Australian organisations, with the following findings:

- Workplace stress costs Australian companies up to 1.2 billion dollars a year;
- 50% of workers reported an increase in workplace stress from the previous year;
- Workplace stress-related claims are increasing by 20% each year;
- 26% of employees admitted they have taken a day or more off due to stress, most using regular sick leave;
- 20% of teachers in one survey reported a medically diagnosed stress disorder;
- Major reasons for work stress cited by employees are:
 - Management issues, including lack of communication;
 - Increased workload and longer hours;
 - Job insecurity and lack of career opportunities;
 - Organisational change and restructuring, and
 - Inadequate staff and resources.

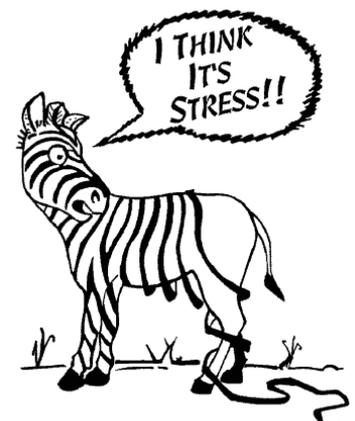
HOW DO YOUR MUSCLES RESPOND TO STRESS?

When the musculoskeletal system is “stressed” a biochemical stress response sequence is initiated. The sequence includes the following events:

- ❑ A stressor causes an increase in muscle tone.
- ❑ Increased tone for extended periods leads to retention of metabolic wastes.
- ❑ Increased tone simultaneously leads to a degree of localised oxygen deficit, resulting in *ischemia* (restriction in blood supply).
- ❑ Increased tone may also lead to oedema (swelling / fluid retention).
- ❑ These factors (retention of waste, ischemia and oedema) lead to discomfort and pain.
- ❑ Discomfort and pain results in increased or maintained *hyper-tonicity* (increased tension of the muscles).
- ❑ Inflammation or chronic irritation results.
- ❑ Poor functional patterns develop leading to chronic musculoskeletal problems and pain.

Tools that you can adopt to promote health and wellness, and manage stress levels include:

- ❑ Regular Massage;
- ❑ Regular exercise;
- ❑ Good nutrition;
- ❑ Adequate rest;
- ❑ Take time out to meditate;
- ❑ Effective time management;
- ❑ Being more in control of your life;
- ❑ Prioritise tasks and don't procrastinate;
- ❑ Interactions with positive support systems;
- ❑ Have a sense of humour – laugh more and more often.



Call Phoenix Therapies on 9303 9111 to arrange your next massage – we guarantee you will not be disappointed.