



Stress Management Society  
...from distress to de-stress

# More energy, less stress

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## More energy, less stress

This e-book introduces an approach to stress based on understanding of human energy. This brings a new dimension into the discussion of stress and how to deal with it.

## What is stress?

There are many different definitions of stress, the most common being that stress is a condition or feeling experienced when a person perceives that "demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilise."

The Health and Safety Executive defines it as "the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them".

Stress is a way we respond when we feel threatened or under pressure. We usually feel stressed when we cannot handle everything we need to do in our everyday life. We feel relaxed and balanced when we can handle all the demands that are placed on us. Stress often occurs when we experience change or feel unable to achieve our goals.

A simple definition of stress is "*not having enough energy to meet the demands of life*".

If the demands of our life match with our level of energy we handle life without experiencing stress. If the demands of our life increase while our energy level stays the same we begin to feel stressed. For example it is common to experience stress when organising a large event such as a wedding because there is much more to do than usual. Being promoted or starting a new job often causes stress because there are new and unfamiliar demands on us. We also experience stress when we are unsure about the future, for example if we are facing the possibility of redundancy, because we are trying to cope with the everyday demands of a job as well as think about what to do if we lose our job.

We also experience stress when our energy level drops but the demands of life stay the same. For example if we become sick we usually experience a dramatic decrease in energy. It quickly becomes impossible to handle everything we can manage when we are healthy. If we have to continue working or looking after other people when we are sick this can cause considerable stress, as we simply do not have enough energy to cope.

## What is energy?

Energy is our life force. It is the difference between being alive and dead. It is what makes us...

- ...feel inspired, ambitious and positive rather than bored, unmotivated and negative.
- ...jump out of bed in the morning and look forward to the day ahead
- ...keep healthy and active

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- ...able and confident to work
- ...able to attract relationships and friendships

When we are full of energy we are healthy and happy and we can handle any challenge. When we lack energy we feel tired, sluggish and find it difficult to solve problems. Even small events can cause stress when we lack energy, whereas nothing seems too much for us when we feel full of energy.

## Energy and health

Our energy level affects our health. A sick person is able to do very little and may need other people to care for them. Their energy is very limited. A healthy person is more active, makes more contribution to society and is able to support and care for other people. They have much more energy. The essential difference between these two is their energy capacity, or their life capacity. One has much more energy, or capacity for life, than the other.

The World Health Organization defines health as 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity'. Under this definition we can picture a healthy person as a person who is full of energy or has sufficient energy to meet all the demands of their life. Therefore a fully healthy person does not suffer from stress.

## Energy and money

Our energy also affects our financial capacity. One person may be able to earn a small salary to keep a family at a minimal standard of living. Another person may be able to earn a huge salary and provide a very high standard of living to their family. The owner of a small business can provide products or services for a limited number of clients. The CEO of a global corporation has overall responsibility for paying salaries for thousands of staff and their families, providing services or products for millions of customers and supplying profit to shareholders. The small business owner would find it impossibly stressful to run a global company because of a lack of energy capacity, or life capacity, to handle that level of demand.

## Stress and energy

The symptoms of stress act as an early warning system. They signal a developing imbalance between our energy and the demands of our life. They tell us that we are getting out of balance. If the imbalance continues or gets worse we run the risk of getting sick in the future.

## How can we reduce stress?

There are two ways to reduce stress.

1. Reduce the demands on your life.
2. Increase your energy.

Reducing the demand is usually the first and most common response to stress - "I'm doing too much, I need to cut down". However this is rarely the most effective strategy. Whilst it can be useful to cut out unnecessary or unwanted activities, reducing demand can eventually lead to disappointment and dissatisfaction. Each time you reduce a demand you eliminate a challenge from your life. If you do this too often your life gradually becomes less challenging and less productive. For example if you decide not to go for promotion because you want to avoid stress you lose an opportunity to develop yourself. If you cut down on your hobbies or social life because you have a demanding job you may feel you are missing out on something valuable to you.

## Why increase your energy?

The second option is much more positive - increase your energy so you can handle more demands. This gives you the chance to increase your capacity and to handle a richer and more interesting life.

There are many positive demands in life which we welcome, even though they often cause stress, for example being promoted, expanding business, getting married or having children. If we want to handle these demands without stress we need to increase our energy capacity to keep up.

Some demands are more negative, for example when we experience financial problems, business problems, relationship problems or health problems. They often cause high levels of stress. However if we have more energy we can avoid some of these problems and reduce others.

Some negative demands cannot be avoided, but may cause severe stress, for example bereavement or family sickness. At these difficult times it is important to take care of our energy to minimise the stress as much as possible.

If you increase your energy you increase your capacity for life and you are more positive and confident. You can handle more challenges and you feel satisfied because you are able to handle your life better. You experience more, achieve more and enjoy life more.

## How to increase your energy?

There are many ways to increase energy. All of them will help to reduce or prevent stress.

1. Eat healthy food and regulate your eating habits  
You can find advice about healthy eating habits on many websites and in books.
2. Get quality sleep and regulate your sleeping habits  
It is better for your energy to be asleep by 11pm and to get up early every day. If you have problems sleeping you should relax before sleep, rather than reading or watching television.
3. Maintain a regular and healthy lifestyle  
It is best to eat regularly, drink plenty of water every day. Ideally breakfast should be the most important meal of the day and you should eat lightly in the evening. Avoid excessive alcohol and caffeine and cut out smoking as they are all stimulants which will create more stress in your life.
4. Exercise regularly  
Regular aerobic exercise helps your energy circulate which is essential for avoiding stress. 40 minutes a day walking is very beneficial.
5. Take up relaxation or meditation  
This is a direct way to increase your energy levels and reduce stress. It is highly effective for reducing and preventing health problems.
6. Be positive  
Positive attitudes attract positive energy, negative attitudes attract negative energy. Learning how to change emotional behaviour to become peaceful, happy and positive is a powerful way to release stress and handle more challenges in life.
7. Develop an inspiring life goal  
This is the most powerful way of increasing energy, but it requires a disciplined lifestyle and a lot of hard work to achieve an inspiring goal. Although big goals may appear to create more stress, the inspiration of working on something you believe in provides a constant source of energy and motivation. When you are inspired pressure transforms into an opportunity for development.

*Note: It is recommended that you get professional guidance for each of these steps, so you can avoid problems and find the best solution to suit your lifestyle and budget.*

## Finally

Lack of energy is the primary factor that causes stress and your ability to manage multiple life demands, whether at work, home or a combination of both. Stress is a sign that you do not have enough energy to manage all the demands of your life. When you start to feel the symptoms of stress it is time to do something about your energy. The sooner you go into action the better. Preventing stress prevents later disease, unhappiness and dissatisfaction.

Having a good level of energy makes you feel:

- Positive
- Motivated
- Confident
- Focussed
- Relaxed

It gives you the belief to be able to achieve whatever you want.

Sarah McCrum, E Rejuvenation Consultant

For more information visit [www.erejuvenation.co.uk](http://www.erejuvenation.co.uk)

## What to do now?

1. Try a [free relaxation session online](http://www.erejuvenation.co.uk/individual/online-course-sample.html)  
(<http://www.erejuvenation.co.uk/individual/online-course-sample.html>)
2. Take a course to improve your quality of life and reduce stress.

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