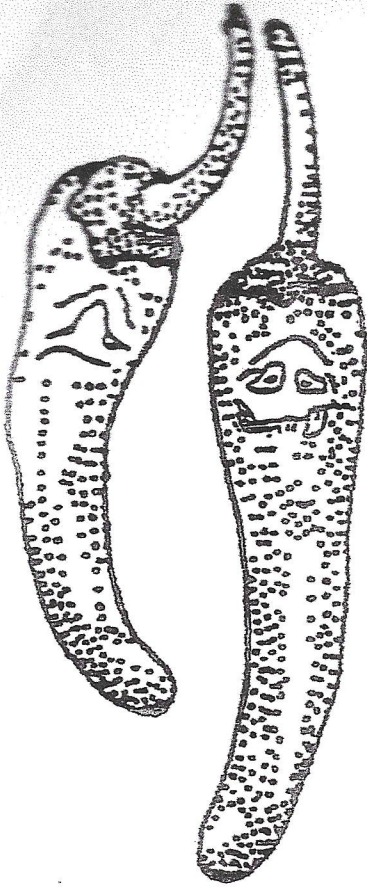


Hot as a Chile Pepper



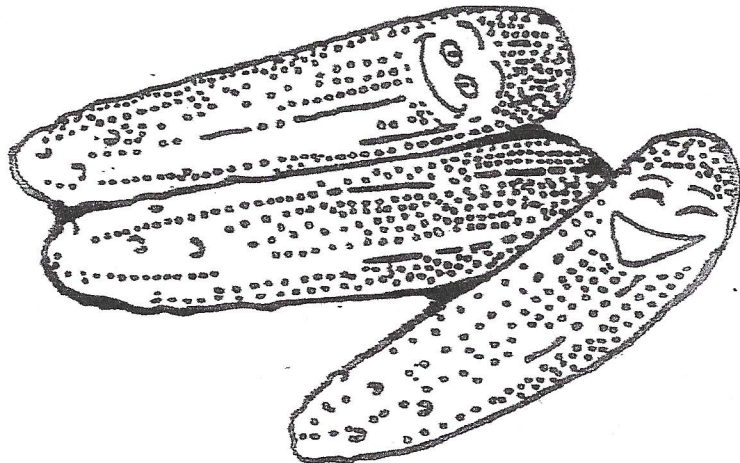
TEACHERS GUIDE

Developed by:

Ida Lee Knapp

2007

Cool as a Cucumber



HOT AS A CHILE PEPPER

TEACHER'S OUTLINE

Objective Of Lesson

The objective of this lesson is to help you understand what stress is and what it does. We all have stress but what do we do about it. By taking the Stress-Prone Personality Test you can see if you are adding more stress to your life and what to do about it.

Ideas To Teach The Lesson

This lesson has a lot of discussion areas, which are identified in the lesson. Hopefully this lesson will open up a dialogue about stress and what it does to us.

Enclosures

1. Teachers material (pages 1-4)
 - a. Two pictures and a saying per group
2. Members Handout (pages 1-11)
3. Evaluation Form

HOT AS A CHILE PEPPER

Before we start the lesson I would like you to sit quietly in a comfortable, erect position. Close your eyes and feel your breath as it goes in and out. As you inhale, say to yourself, "I." As you exhale, silently say, "Can." Make no effort at all to control your breathing. Just stay relaxed. When your mind wanders to other things, gently bring it back to feeling your breath go in and out. Do this five times. Now while you are relaxed slowly stretch your arms to the ceiling. Do this three times. If you would like to do the breathing exercise at home do it once or twice a day for five to fifteen minutes. If you don't like the words "I Can" you can use any two words that you want.

Introduction

There is a lot of discussion these days about our "highly-stressed society." Before now men and women lived through famine and disaster, plagues and poverty, joblessness, persecution, and war and there was not the talk about stress levels as there is today. Stress has become such an ingrained part of our vocabulary and daily existence that it is difficult to believe that our current use of the term originated only a little more than fifty years ago. It is probably because society has now recognized the far-reaching effects of stress.

What is stress?

Stress is defined as any change that you must adapt to in our ever changing world. In particular, stress is any demand (force, pressure, strain) placed on the body and the body's reaction to it. One thing to remember is that stress is not an outside event, but an automatic inner system by which your mind and body mobilize energy for coping with change and challenge. Stress is experienced by everyone who is living, working, and breathing at this very moment. It is a fact of life you cannot avoid. Stress, itself, ranges in intensity from the negative extreme of being in physical danger to the joy of completing a desired goal. All stress is not bad. When you hear the word "stress" what image do you think of? (Discussion time) (Here are some examples to help with the discussion, if needed: boiling pot about to pop its lid, tense excitement, and feeling of pressure.)

There are different types of stress. Here are three types.

ACUTE stress results from the strains of everyday life. Often, it involves unpleasant situations or conflicts that need to be resolved. Acute stress is temporary and can be managed.

CHRONIC stress is long term and you feel that there is no way out of the situation. Chronic stress situations are things like money problems, no job, despise your job, ongoing family problems, etc.

TRAUMATIC stress is the impact of an overwhelming tragedy, such as rape, accident, or natural disaster. Many war veterans and concentration camp survivors suffer from this type of stress.

Stress is a feeling that's created when we react to particular events. Our body responds to the challenge and prepares to meet the situation with focus, strength, stamina, and heightened alertness. The events that provoke stress are called **stressors**, and they cover a wide range of situations. Stressors can be immediate and come from outside and are objective. They can be cultural currents which underlie the more obvious layer and those that stem from our individual temperaments. What kinds of situations can cause stress? (Discussion time) (Here are some examples to help with the discussion, if needed: death of a loved one, birth of a child, moving to a new place, a loved one being involved with drugs, holidays, balancing priorities, getting up in front of a crowd to speak,

and avoiding an accident.)

What does stress do to our body?

When our body responds to stressors it goes into fast forward. Your heartbeat quickens, blood pressure soars, adrenal glands pump hormones, circulation is speeded up, lungs pump more air, sugar goes to muscles and the brain-mobilizes for full energy, muscle functions improve, blood clotting mechanisms accelerate, red cells flow into arteries to help body take in oxygen and cast off carbon dioxide, eyesight and hearing become keener, hands and feet turn cold and digestive processes turn off so that energy can be directed to the heart. This is where we get our fight or flight response from. If the stress response is for a short time our bodies go back to normal. If we have chronic stress, which is for longer periods, our body does not go back to normal and it can cause physical problems.

Now that we know how our bodies react to stress, what kind of physical problems can we have from long term stress? (Discussion time.) (Here are some examples to help with the discussion, if needed: headaches, upset stomach, rashes, insomnia, ulcers, high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, tightness of the chest, sweaty palms, tightness of neck or back muscles, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, fatigue, susceptibility to minor illness, and slumped posture.)

What kind of emotional changes can happen with stress? (Discussion time.) (Here are some examples to help with the discussion, if needed: irritability, lowered self-esteem, angry outburst, lack of interest, tendency to cry, depression, restlessness, anxiousness, withdrawal, reduction of personal involvement with others, appetite extremes, and distrust.)

Now that we have discussed the physical and emotional side of stress I am going to read a story about George and Ruby. I want you to pick out any stress problems and the effects it has on their health and emotions. After the story we will discuss what you think is happening here.

George kicks off his shoes and settles into his recliner chair. The television blares out the theme song of a popular comedy show. He unbuckles his belt and lights a cigarette. Whew, he thinks, that was a good supper of pork roast, and mashed potatoes and gravy, all topped off by a double chocolate dessert! As he sips on a beer, he lets his mind wander back to the work week with displeasure. He remembers the argument he had with his boss, and now he can't even concentrate on the TV show.

He would love to change jobs, but he and his wife, Ruby, live from paycheck to paycheck. He feels the pressure build up inside him, but he knows he should not mention their money problems to Ruby. Just as he thinks about their finances, George feels that shooting pain go up his arm and across his chest again. As he wishes the pain would just go away, he promises himself he will run an extra mile on Saturday, his regular workout day. George smiles as he plans to reward his extra effort with a breakfast of bacon, eggs, and doughnuts.

Lighting another cigarette, George glances over at Ruby. She is already in the living room with him, after having quickly cleaned up the kitchen from supper. She sits on the edge of the couch, reading a news magazine. Because of her constant dieting, Ruby is very thin, and lately she seems nervous and touchy. George notes that she doesn't laugh much anymore, but then neither does he, for that matter. She constantly worries about everything, from their children to their money. If Ruby just wouldn't spend so much on clothes and shoes, his paycheck would go much

further.

And those health food kicks of Ruby's are more than George can handle. She sips on a glass of cabbage juice, which she says is all the daily nutrition she needs. George remembers some of the awful things Ruby has tried to get him to eat and drink. He promises himself never to eat another vegetable! The TV show is still on, but George is not amused. He becomes bored, quiet, and lonely. Soon he has drifted off to sleep and is snoring.

Ruby looks up and frowns at her snoring husband. She remembers how fun and romantic he used to be. He actually used to take her dancing. That was a long time ago--before that nasty car accident. They had been out drinking with friends and her leg was broken in the crash. Even after Ruby was hurt so badly, George still won't wear a seat belt. Ruby rubs her leg. The place where the pin remains in her leg has begun to ache.

Come to think of it, Ruby is reminded that she has not been feeling good lately. She pushes the thoughts out of her mind; it costs too much to go to the doctor. Besides, she's not sure she really wants to know if something is wrong with her. A familiar song on the television reminds her of old times and old friends. She suddenly gets lonely and wonders if George might take a walk with her. She glances at him and shakes her head. He's fast asleep by now. Picking up a romance novel, Ruby settles in for another quiet evening at home.

(Discussion time.)

Are you stress prone?

Now that we have learned that everyone has some kind of stress in their lives, we will take a test to see if we are stress prone. The test is in your members handout. When you get through with the test add up your score. (You should spend no longer than 5 minutes on this test. Most of the people will be done before that.)

If you score between 20 and 30, chances are you are non-productive on your job or lack stimulation. Between 30 and 50 indicates you have a good balance between stress and controlling it. A 50-60 score is marginally too tense; you aren't handling it so well. Above 60, and you should be looking at changing your life. If you don't like your score then think about doing something about it. The point is to reduce the tension, keep the body in balance, not change the personality.

The secret to having less stress in your life and feeling better is to really know yourself. The more you know how you personally react to stress and what your stress alarms are, the easier it can be for you to head off stress. Now I would like you to do the Stress Management Worksheet in the members handout. On this worksheet put down what causes you stress and what you do to relieve the stress. (You should spend no longer than 5 minutes on this worksheet. Most people will be done before that. See if anyone is willing to discuss what they put down on this worksheet.)

Managing Stress

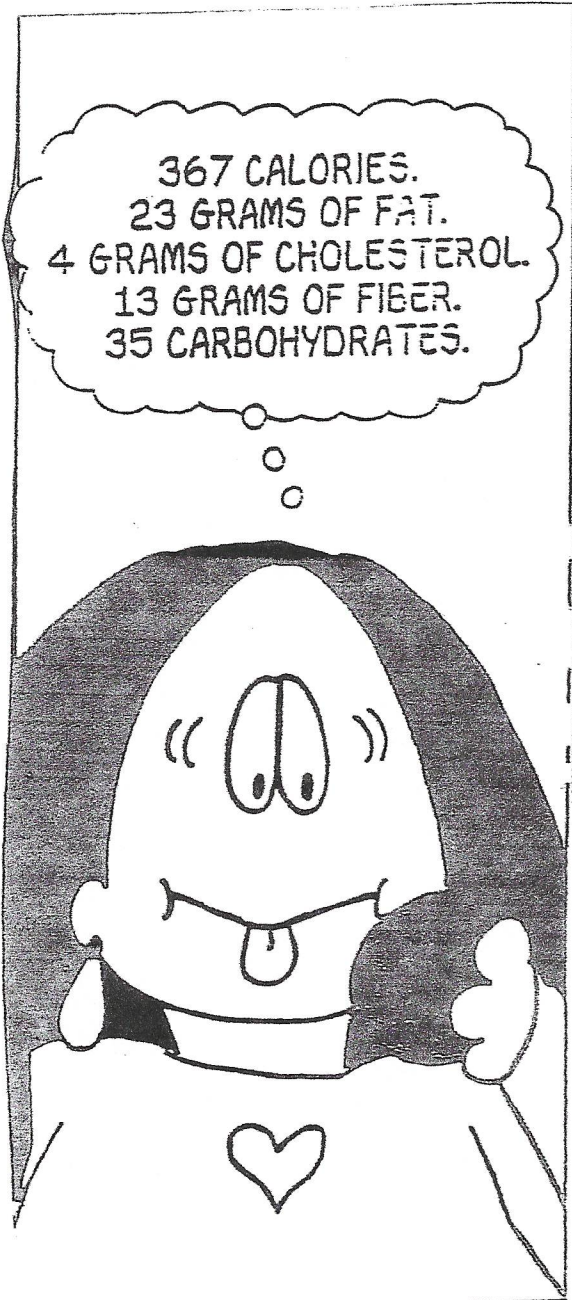
We live in a society that is constantly challenging us to stretch beyond our limits and reach for the stars. Demands are made on our time and energy and we are bombarded with pleas for help. Eventually, if we let it, stress will build and find a way of making our lives miserable. Listen to your body, it is an excellent barometer of stress.

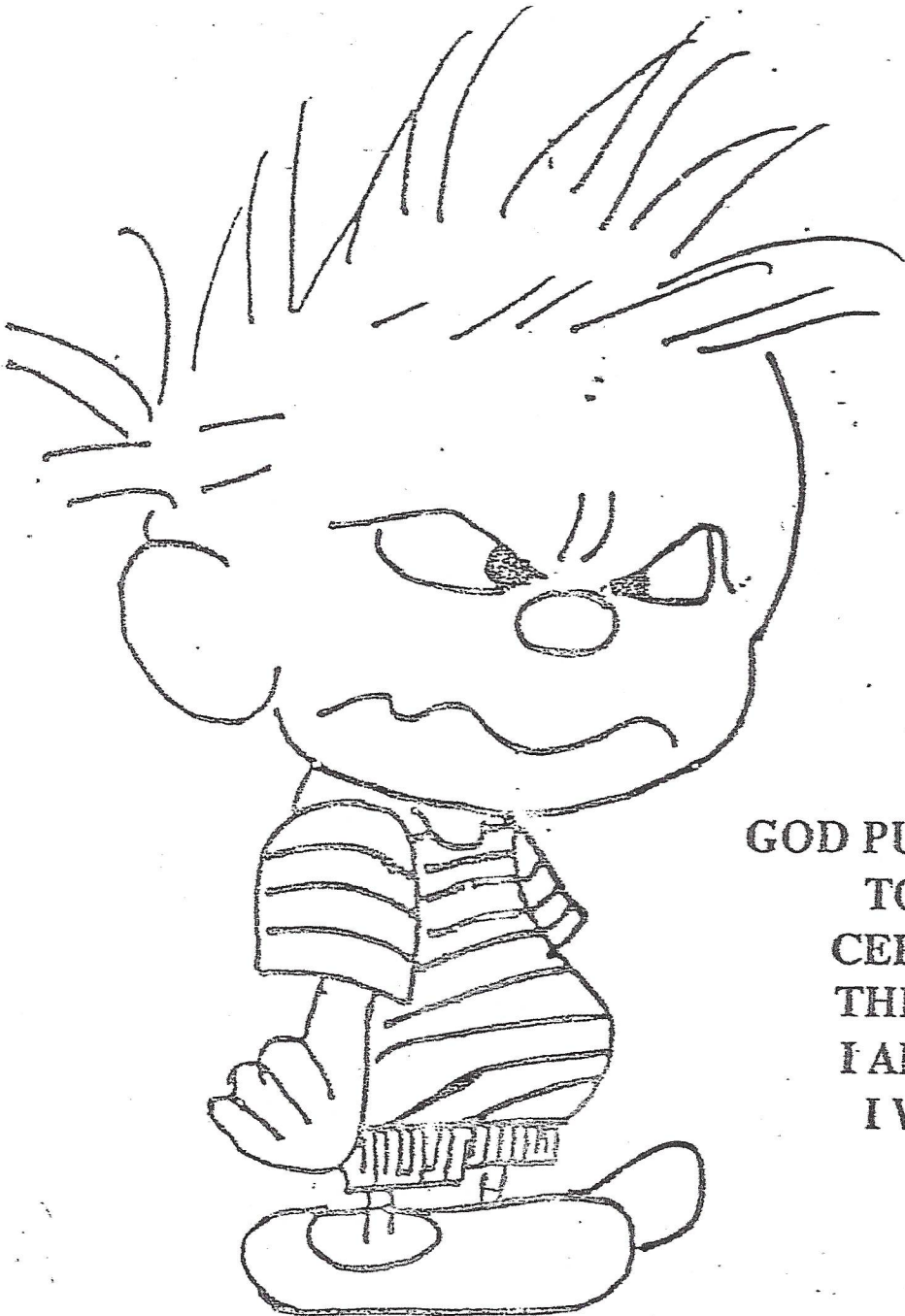
Since we can't eliminate stress from our lives, we should work toward changing what we can. Changes would include our reactions and attitudes toward stress we encounter in our daily lives. Managing stress seems like a simple process but you have to work at it. Peace is hard to accomplish and hard to keep. As soon as you notice the feelings of stress getting the best of you, you need to work at calming yourself. Focus on your breathing, praying, thinking positive thoughts, working in your garden, or doing something physical such as walking. In the members handout are ideas to de-stress and ways to relax, but rather than going over these papers I would like to hear the ways that you use to finding peace. (Discussion time.)

Closing

In closing I would like to show you two pictures and a saying. Has your attitude changed on the way you interpret these things? (Show picture #1, picture #2, and saying #1.) We are going to close this lesson like we began it with a relaxation technique. I want you to sit in a comfortable position. Close your eyes and take several slow and deep breaths. Now go in your mind to a special place that you love, a place where you know you will feel relaxed. We will only take a few minutes here doing this, but at home you can spend more time on doing this relaxation technique.

Fill out the Evaluation Form.





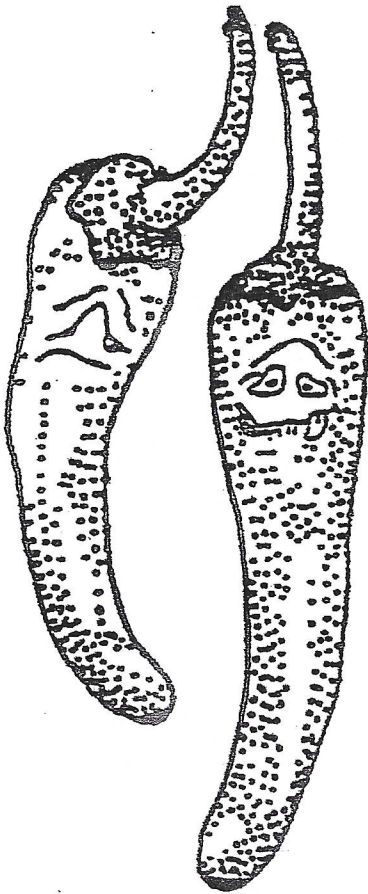
GOD PUT ME ON THIS EARTH
TO ACCOMPLISH A
CERTAIN NUMBER OF
THINGS. RIGHT NOW
I AM SO FAR BEHIND
I WILL NEVER DIE.

LIFE IS A TEST

It is only a test.

**If this were your Actual Life,
you would have received better
instructions.**

Hot as a Chile Pepper

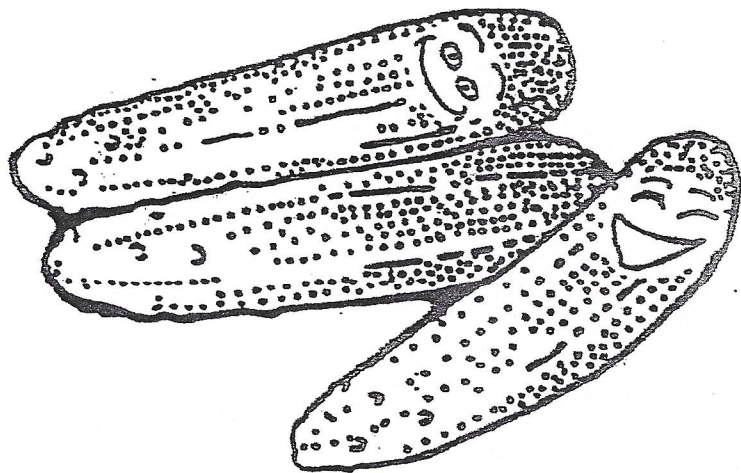


MEMBERS HANDOUT

Developed by:

Ida Lee Knapp

Cool as a Cucumber



STRESS-PRONE PERSONALITY TEST

Rate yourself as to how you typically react in each of the situations listed below. There are no right or wrong answers.

4 - Always

3 - Frequently

2 - Sometimes

1 - Never

- _____ 1. Do you try to do as much as possible in the least amount of time?
- _____ 2. Do you become impatient with delays or interruptions?
- _____ 3. Do you always have to win at games to enjoy yourself?
- _____ 4. Do you find yourself speeding up the car to get through amber lights?
- _____ 5. Are you unlikely to ask for or indicate you need help with a problem?
- _____ 6. Do you constantly seek the respect and admiration of others?
- _____ 7. Are you overly critical of the way others do their work?
- _____ 8. Do you have the habit of looking at your watch or clock often?
- _____ 9. Do you constantly strive to better your position and achievements?
- _____ 10. Do you spread yourself too thin in terms of your time?
- _____ 11. Do you have the habit of doing more than one thing at a time?
- _____ 12. Do you frequently get angry or irritable?
- _____ 13. Do you have little time for hobbies or time by yourself?
- _____ 14. Do you have a tendency to talk quickly or hasten conversations?
- _____ 15. Do you consider yourself hard-driven?
- _____ 16. Do your friends or relatives consider you hard-driven?
- _____ 17. Do you have a tendency to get involved in multiple projects?
- _____ 18. Do you have a lot of deadlines in your work?
- _____ 19. Do you feel vaguely guilty if you relax and do nothing during leisure?
- _____ 20. Do you take on too many responsibilities?
- _____ Total

Designed by Rosalind Forbes, Forbes Associates, Longmont, Colorado

STRESS MANAGEMENT WORKSHEET

Stressors

Relaxers

People: _____

Places: _____

Things: _____

People: _____

Places: _____

Things: _____

TWO WEEK PLAN TO DE-STRESS

1. Reduce tendency to think, speak, walk and eat rapidly.
2. Set work priorities. Do less important items as time allows. Delegate less important tasks.
3. When you feel agitated about finishing work, ask, "In 100 years, who will know or care?"
4. Do only one thing at a time. While waiting for a phone call look out the window or read.
5. Relax without guilt. Motivate yourself to find time with your family. Don't half listen to family members.
6. Seek satisfaction on a human and personal level by enriching others' lives.
7. Ask yourself, "Is my behavior appropriate, useful or necessary to accomplish a desirable, worthwhile goal?" Reward yourself when you reach a goal.
8. Recognize what you value in life. Be responsive to the world around you.
9. Allow more time when you need to finish a job or to drive to town.
10. Start your day 15 minutes earlier by doing something nice for yourself, such as walking, reading or relaxing in the tub.
11. Lean back in your chair and take slow, deep and controlled breaths. Relax tight muscles by deliberately tensing them and then relaxing. Repeat.
12. Find something that you are interested in and make it part of your life.
13. Establish life goals.
14. Take a weekend vacation.

This handout is from the National FCE lesson All Stressed Up---And A Million Places To Go

50 WAYS TO MANAGE YOUR STRESS

1. Set realistic goals for yourself at work and home.
2. Build a strong support system of friends. Don't hesitate to talk with a trusted friend or a family member about problems.
3. Gain internal control. Believe that the outcome of your behavior is within your control.
4. Set priorities and keep these decisions consistent with your values.
5. Use positive self-talk. Replace the negative thoughts with a kinder, more realistic one.
6. Separate the past from the present. Remember you cannot change the past. We operate in the present.
7. Identify your stressors and notice your reaction to them. This is the first step in taking control of stress.
8. Do something that feels good every day.
9. Keep a private journal. Expressing your feelings and your worries is harmless and can be therapeutic. Through writing, you can clarify your problems in your mind.
10. Admit your mistakes. Apologize and get over it; don't waste time and energy in cover-ups.
11. Exercise regularly. You will feel better when tense muscles have loosened.
12. Create a quiet place where you can gain a sense of peace--a retreat--then use it.
13. Ask for "help" when overwhelmed.
14. Communicate with others. Share feelings as well as ideas for solving problems. Good communication skills help you express what is causing stress.
15. Learn to pace yourself. Don't over schedule every minute.
16. Take one step at a time. When faced with an overwhelming task, before you panic, think about eating an elephant--one bite at a time.
17. Play, but don't compete. Enjoy the interaction but don't make winning a consuming and stress producing obsession.
18. Develop a sense of humor. A touch of humor will take the edge off in a tense situation.
19. Forgive yourself. Before going to bed at night, forgive yourself for things you did wrong that day, then let it go.
20. Always be prepared with a plan B and C. When plan A won't work then you have back-up plans.
21. If you are tempted to take on other people's stresses, ask yourself "Is that my problem?"
22. Be efficient in your decision making. Don't postpone decisions after you've considered alternatives adequately. Don't procrastinate.
23. Try new things, new games, new food, and new friends.
24. Use worry control techniques. Do what you can, forget the rest. Bypass what you cannot change, and put effort where it counts.
25. Remember, perfection is impossible. When time limits the quality of your activity, some things may be worth doing poorly. Sometimes it's okay to be sloppy. Use good judgment on this one!
26. Set realistic deadlines. Always allow yourself some extra time for interruptions and emergencies.
27. Avoid self medication. It can prolong and intensify serious health problems.
28. Play regularly. Put some fun in your life every day. All work and no play will eventually cause stress.
29. Do something for someone else. Their appreciation will make you feel good.

30. Resolve conflicts as soon as possible. Delaying will only cause more stress.
31. Use biofeedback to help you understand and change the way stress affects your body.
32. Get professional help. When you feel that talking with family and friends is not helping, you may need to go a step further and speak with a therapist, counselor, minister, or doctor.
33. Learn how to deep breathe properly. Never deep breathe rapidly, there is some risk of hyperventilation.
34. Loaf a little. Set your overscheduled lifestyle aside occasionally.
35. Put some things off until tomorrow, especially the ones you won't worry over. Some things are best done later.
36. Get enough sleep and rest. Find a sleep/rest pattern that fits your individual needs.
37. Listen to your body; know and react to health warning signals.
38. Pamper yourself now and then. Take a bubble bath or sit in a whirlpool.
39. Stroll. We need to recover the art of strolling. A brisk walk is stimulating, but sometimes we need to take a relaxing stroll.
40. Listen to relaxing music. A melodic, steady beat that moves slowly and smoothly will be soothing for most adults.
41. Enjoy a hobby. Choose carefully, however. Don't set completion deadlines. Don't set perfection standards. Take a leisurely approach.
42. Bake something. If you've never tried this before, you're missing something. Try a simple recipe that will smell good. Even the aroma can be relaxing.
43. Interact with children. Talk with them. Play with them. Read together. Bring some childlike responses into your own lifestyle. It's refreshing.
44. Enjoy a sunset or the stars on a clear night. There is something quite soothing and reassuring about the regularity of the natural environment.
45. Smile at someone. Smiles feel better than frowns.
46. Pray. For believers, the sense of peace and reassurance that comes from prayer is powerful.
47. Get a pet. Some studies show that interaction with easy care, non-judgmental pets can actually lower your blood pressure.
48. Learn a muscle relaxation routine and practice it regularly.
49. Use visual imagery to mentally project yourself to a relaxing environment.
50. Eat and drink sensibly. Some foods and beverages heighten anxiety and speed up some body functions.

30 SECOND STRESS CONTROL

Follow this 30 second routine to relieve stress before it builds up.

Spell **STRESS** out in your mind. Give each letter an action.

S=Stop (take a second to realize that you have been developing tension.)

T=Take a big deep breath, fill your lungs.

R=Release that breath, blow it all the way out.

E=Enjoy--take a second to think of something enjoyable--a cool green meadow, ocean waves, etc.

S=Stretch, if you can't reach up and get a good stretch, then pull your shoulders back and correct your posture. The feeling is the same.

S=Smile, the best stress buster of all--creates alpha waves--feeling of well being and it's contagious!!

EXERCISES FOR RELAXATION

1. (SITTING) No matter where you are you can do this exercise. Wiggle your toes, giving special attention to your big toes for one minute. Then circle your feet by rotating them from your ankles. Next, tighten your buttocks, count to five, and then relax. Tighten your stomach muscles, count to five, and relax.
2. (SITTING) Take a deep breath, raise your arms to shoulder height and stretch your fingers until you can feel a pull in the fourth and fifth. Exhale as you lower your arms to your side. Then inhale as you lift your arms so they meet about your head. This gives you a feeling of soaring. Exhale as you lower your arms to your side. Do these two arm exercises five times.
3. (STANDING) Stand with your feet hip-width apart, arms at sides and palms out. Inhale and, to a count of 5 stretch arms above head, turning palms out. Exhale and, to a count of 5, lower arms to start of position. Repeat for five minutes.
4. (STANDING OR SITTING) Do this exercise whenever you can, wherever you are, whether sitting or standing. Look up at the ceiling or sky while raising both shoulders at the same time. This is also good for those prone to tension headaches, shoulder pains, and neck aches. Do this exercise five times whenever you feel yourself getting tense.
5. (STANDING OR SITTING) If during the day you find yourself sighing or yawning, you are simply releasing a bit of tension. Sigh deeply, letting out a sound of deep relief as the air rushes out of your lungs. Don't think about inhaling. Just let the air come in naturally. Each time you breathe out, shake your hands away from your body as if you were throwing your tension away. Repeat this 8 to 12 times, whenever needed.
6. Eye Relaxation (Palming) Put your palms over your closed eyes. Block out all light without putting too much pressure on your eyelids. Visualize the color black. You may see other colors or images, but focus on black. Continue with this for two to three minutes, thinking and focusing on black. Slowly open your eyes, gradually getting accustomed to the light. Feel the relaxation in the muscles around your eyes.

This handout is from the National FCE lesson All Stressed Up--And A Million Places To Go

WAYS TO RELAX USING SENSORY STRESS RELIEVING TECHNIQUES

When there are extreme demands made on our body and mind by stress we can call on ALL our stress skills to de-stress by using our sensory signals such as sight, taste, smell, sound, touch, pressure, stretch and movement. Here are some ideas to use.

SENSE OF SIGHT

Most of us become calmer and relax when we view: The rising or the setting of the sun, watch the waves as they gently come ashore, watch fish swimming, gaze at the stars, watch a baby, see a blue sky with white clouds over a meadow with beautiful flowers. Focus on colors and shapes of the trees. There are many sights that take away your stresses by capturing your attention and bring pleasant thoughts.

IMAGERY

Imagery is a technique to help generate vivid mental images that help reduce stress. Imagining a calm, serene lake with sailboats slowly moving along is a positive picture that is relaxing. Imagery has qualities that make it valuable in mind/body medicine and healing; it can bring about physiological changes, provide psychological insights and enhance emotional awareness. Guided imagery can be used alone or together with other relaxation techniques. Find a quiet place where you can sit in a comfortable position. Close your eyes and take several slow, deep breaths. Go in your mind to a special place that you love, a place where you know you would feel relaxed. Spend time in this peaceful place and when you come back to the present you will be calmer.

SENSE OF TASTE

It is a fact that some foods and drinks can help you relax. Treat yourself to an evening relaxation with a hot cup of freshly brewed passion flower or chamomile tea. They both have been used as a stress and anxiety reliever. There are some warning labels that come with the use of herbs- sometimes they have an adverse reaction with your prescription medicines so check on the affects of using the herb with your doctor or pharmacist.

SENSE OF SMELL

One of the fastest methods to help reduce stress and promote healing and wellness is aromatherapy. Inhaling fragrant parts of appropriate aromatic plants has many benefits and can reduce stress. Aromatherapy uses our keenest sense, which is smell. Humans are able to discern more than 10,000 odors while the tongue is capable of recognizing only that which is sweet, sour, bitter or salty. Aromatherapy offers pure enjoyment. Taking a whiff of a spice in your kitchen or a bouquet of flowers is fundamental aromatherapy.

Massaging aromatic oils into your skin is another way to benefit from aromatherapy. That's because essential oils, the compounds responsible for a plant's fragrance, offer a multitude of healing benefits in addition to their individual scents. Many familiar plants provide us with multifaceted essential oils. Rosemary, lavender, orange, and lemon for example, all produce essential oils that can be used therapeutically.

Lavender is the single best essential oil for relaxation. It not only helps you unwind, but it also calms nerves.

Rosemary or pine will revitalize your tired body after a long day on the go. Take a bath in either oil and put some candles in the room with you (scented) to complete the mood and your aches and pains will vanish.

Try a peppermint body scrub, it takes off the top layer of dead skin so the body can breathe.

A bottle of floral waters are a by-product of steam distillation, the process in which essential oils are extracted from herbs. A mist of rose or neroli water can refresh and uplift a weary traveler on the go.

For meditation, try a blended candle of ginger, spruce, cedar wood and myrrh.

A candle that blends lavender, cedar wood, lemon, patchouli and jasmine could perhaps produce a romantic evening to help you unwind.

To stay alert, it is recommended to use lemon, honeysuckle or melissa (lemon balm). Dab some on a cotton ball and carry it in your pocket.

Another scent is chamomile which has a distinctive scent and it may take a little time getting used to. It helps you to relax but also can help with the stressful symptoms of withdrawal, for example if you are trying to stop smoking.

SENSE OF HEARING

Since the beginning of time, we have used music as a therapeutic to restore and keep us healthy. Music is one of the few activities that is processed simultaneously in separate areas of the brain. Evidence of this is sometimes seen in people who have suffered strokes. Though their ability to speak may have been damaged, they can sing without a problem. Music is good for the body and the mind. One recent study found that surgery patients who listened to comforting music recovered more quickly and felt less pain than those who did not. It has been proven that infant babies in intensive care go home sooner, eat better and gain more weight if the staff talks and sings to them. When you have had a bad day, turn on the radio and sing as you drive home. Singing forces you to breathe fully, and the increased oxygen will do your body good. And if you sing songs with a spiritual or positive message, that will be a bonus. Use soft music as a relaxer, listen to a tape of soothing sounds in your car (it would be a good idea to park for a few minutes in case you get too relaxed). The sound of cascading water also creates a stress free ambiance and relaxes your mind and body.

SENSE OF TOUCH

Surprisingly we have been labeled the *touch-deprived society*. Most cultures allow for physical contact more often than we do. So much can be said without words, or to reinforce words, if only we would let ourselves. From greeting a stranger into the organization, or sympathizing with a bereaved person we meet in the street, to offering a useless bit of encouragement, there are many small ways in which we could use touch to get our meaning across if only we were a little more free. Words can often be badly chosen and risky, and then a hand contact may be easier, but even when the word is right, physical contact can make it even righter and a hug is warming to the soul. And to feel the warm smooth skin of a baby is like a miracle.

PRESSURE-STRETCHING-MOVEMENT

Massage therapy has gone from a luxury to something that almost anyone who needs TLC can get. It is wonderfully relaxing.

Massage therapy is a form of body therapy in which the practitioner applies manual techniques such as kneading, stroking, and manipulating of the soft tissues of the body, the skin, muscles, tendons, and ligaments with the intention of positively affecting the health and well-being of the client. Massage therapy helps many people relieve stress and body aches caused by tension and anxieties.

A professional massage increases blood flow and relaxes muscles. Massage therapy can provide anything from soothing relaxation to deep therapy for specific physical problems. It can aid in recovery from pulled muscles or sprained ligaments.

REFLEXOLOGY

Reflexology is a form of body therapy based on the theory that every part of the body has a direct line of communication to a reference point on the foot, hand, and ear. By massaging these reference points, professional reflexologist say they can help the corresponding body parts to heal and to rid you of nervous tension.

YOGA

For centuries yoga has been used to unify the mind, body and spirit. It's easy to do and takes only a few minutes a day. You can work at your own pace and comfort level. Yoga strengthens the muscles and the spine, creating flexibility and ease of motion and is a great stress reducer. It connects and balances the body, mind and spirit which gives you a feeling of ease and peace.

Yoga is practiced by engaging in a series of stretches, both gently and challenging. The stretches open the body and lengthens the spine. The stretches focus on the neck, back, hips, legs, and spine. Doing just a few minutes of yoga can make you feel more alive and open, peaceful and relaxed.

RELAX WITH COLOR

The colors you wear, the colors you see every day can cause some level of stress but they can also help de-stress. Examples are:

PINK, a study conducted has found that when men look at deep pink, their muscles strength is instantaneously reduced for about one-half hour producing a woozy effect.

PURPLE can boost your feelings of self worth and self respect and makes you feel more out-going. It supercharges your energy.

RED stimulates your adrenal glands which boosts your creativity and energy level. It also speeds up the pulse and respiration rate and increases blood pressure. How is that a good thing? It leaves you feeling energized and energy gets the job done.

YELLOW makes you feel warmth, happiness and optimism.

DENIM BLUE has shown to lower your body temperature, reduce your pulse rate and produce feelings of relaxation, making you feel a lot less stressed.

TAN or KHAKI is another proven stress-buster because it prevents you from making an over abundance of estrogen. Too much estrogen makes you over emotional. But keeping your estrogen levels normal will reduce irritability and fatigue and keep you calm.

These are just a few of the ways to relax. You may know other ways that work for you. If you have found ways to be less stressed then share it with your family and friends.

But most of all give yourself permission to laugh, love and be happy.

This handout came from the National FCE lesson All Stressed Up--And A Million Places To Go

RESOURCES

National FCE lesson "All Stressed Up----And A Million Places To Go"

Maureen Kartchner, Extension Agent, HE/Family Life, University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, Maricopa County

University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service - UK Extension's, Universe of Possibilities And A World of Possibilities

The University of Iowa, University Counseling Service at www.uiowa.edu

www.kidshealth.org

www.ivf.com

The American Institute of Stress at www.stress.org

Handouts

National FCE lesson "All Stress Up----And A Million Places To Go"

Two Week Plan To De-Stress

Part of 50 Ways To Manage Your Stress

30 Second Stress Control

Exercises For Relaxation

Ways To Relax Using Sensory Stress Relieving Techniques

Rosalind Forbes, Forbes Associates, Longmont, Colorado

Stress-Prone Personality Test

Dorothy H. Martin, Ed.D., Specialist, Human Development & Family Relations, C.S.U.

Cooperative Extension Service

Part of 50 Ways to Manage Your Stress

University of Arizona Cooperative Extension

Stress Management Worksheet