

Stress Management

Tips to Avoid Harmful Stress

Background

- Employee engagement survey in May/June 2008
- Eight corporate strategies were developed to address concerns
- One strategy related to increasing workload and expectations
- A working committee was established and has launched some initiatives:
 - Deputy Minister's Panel (for supervisors and managers)
 - Tips 'n Tools Workshops (time management, technology etiquette, Blackberry 101, stress management, Groupwise tips)
- Employee Engagement website has been launched by the PSC

Employee Engagement Website



<http://iis.peigov/ee/>

Managing Work

Chose 'Tips and Tools'

Groupwise Tips

Blackberry 101

Stress Management

Technology Etiquette

Time Management



Stress Management

Tips to Avoid Harmful Stress

What is Stress?

- “Stress is the emotional and physical strain caused by our response to pressure from the outside world.”

Stress is also:

- A necessary part of our daily lives.
- Defined as anything that stimulates us to act, think, or react.
- Simple or extreme.
- Necessary in order to force us to accomplish certain tasks.

- Without stress, our bodies wouldn't react at all, even in times of extreme danger.

Stress:

- Can either help us with challenges and problems or make them many times worse.
- The effect stress will have depends on how we handle or view the situation.
- Handling stress depends on us:
 - Recognizing the stress
 - Understanding where it is coming from
 - Understanding our stress management options

Stress:

- “What happens is not as important as how you react to what happens” – Thaddeus Golas
- How we react to what happens determines the impact on our health.
- It appears from the various statistics that we have been reacting very seriously to stress.

Quick Facts

- More than six in ten Canadians report that they are experiencing a 'great deal of stress' on the job.
(US – 1/3 considered quitting due to stress.)
- The annual cost in Canada of work time lost to stress is calculated at \$12-billion. (US - \$300 billion spent annually on stress related issues.)
- 40% of job turnover is due to stress
- Absenteeism due to stress has increased by over 300% since 1995



Sources of Stress may include...

- pace / variety / meaningfulness of work
- workload (overload and underload)
- role conflict (conflicting job demands, multiple supervisors/managers)
- career development opportunities
- role ambiguity (lack of clarity about responsibilities, expectations, etc.)

Sources of Stress may also include...

- Balancing home and work life.



What are signs of Stress?

- Tension
- Irritability
- Inability to concentrate
- Feeling excessively tired
- Trouble sleeping

Signs

- Increased blood pressure
- Difficulty breathing
- Stomach upset
- Sweating palms
- Tight muscles that may cause pain and trembling

What Stress May Look Like

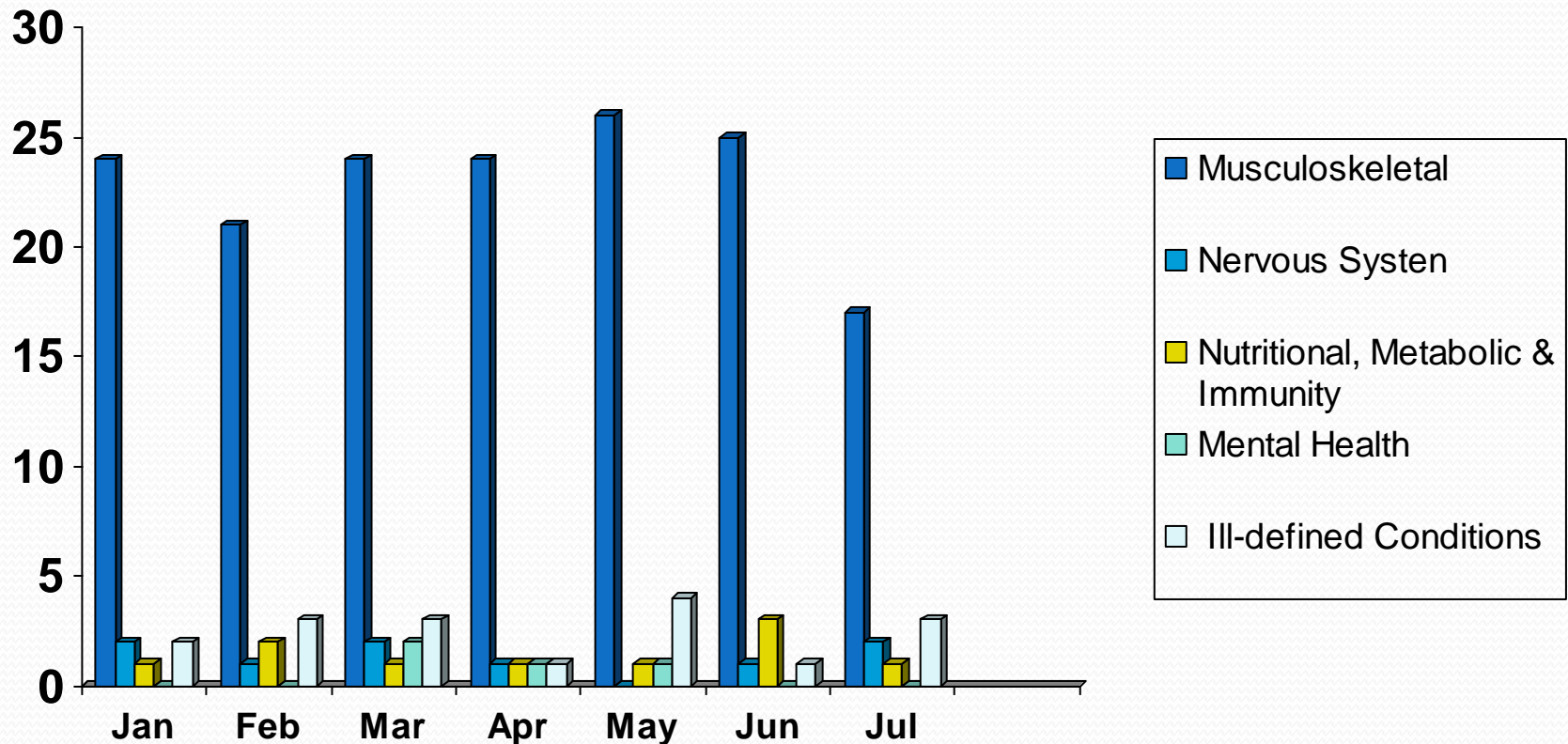
STRESS CAUSES US TO REVEAL,
TO THE WORLD, A SELF WE'D
RATHER KEEP HIDDEN.



High Stress Levels Can Lead To:

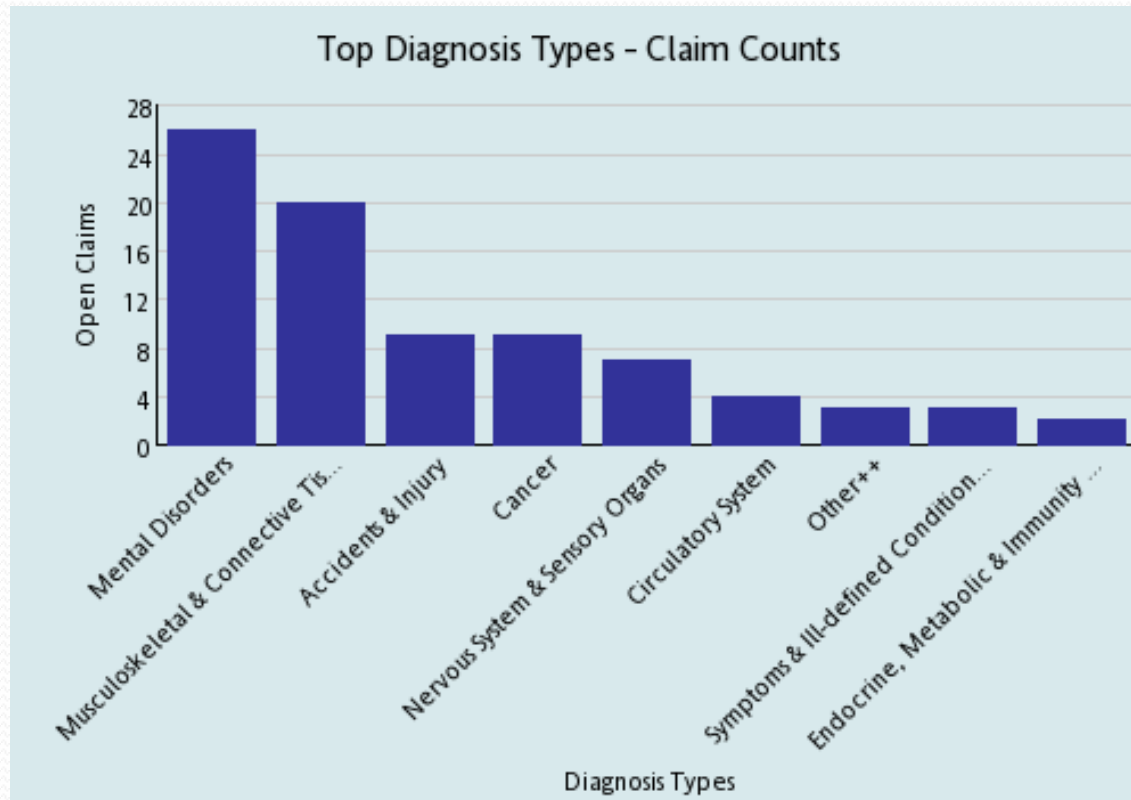
- Chronic health problems including:
 - cardiovascular disease
 - musculoskeletal disorders
 - psychological disorders

wellnessworks – New referrals by diagnostic category January to July 2009 – Civil and Health Sectors



Source – Monthly Metrics

LTD claims –Distribution by diagnosis Civil and Health Sectors



Open claims - July 2008 to July 2009 (Source – GroupNet)

Stress Relief Techniques

- Mental
- Physical

Mental Stress Relief Techniques

- Identify the sources of stress in your life:

Stress management starts with indentifying the sources of stress in our life. To do so we need to look closely at our habits, attitude and excuses. Until we accept responsibility for the role we play, our stress levels will remain out of our control.

Mental Stress Relief Techniques

- Avoid unnecessary stress

Learn to say “no”- know our limits and stick to them. Taking on more than we can handle is a recipe for stress.





- Alter the situation

If we can't avoid a stressful situation, try to alter it. Do what we can to change things so the problem will not occur in the future. Examples include being willing to compromise, being more assertive and better time management.

- Accept things you can't change

Some sources of stress are unavoidable, acceptance may be difficult but in the long run it's easier to accept than to rally against things we can't change.

- Expect ongoing change; understand the stages

If we can learn to embrace change and see it as a positive experience, stress will be reduced.

It isn't the changes that do us in
... it is the transition !

- TRANSITION
 - _ Internal
 - _ Psychological process people go thru to come to terms with a new situation

TRANSITION

ENDINGS
(letting go)

**NEUTRAL
ZONE**
(trying out
the change)

**NEW
BEGINNINGS**
(committing to
the change)

- Maintain a positive attitude

Try to maintain a positive attitude and minimize negativity



Avoid complaining, criticizing and gossiping
(take the challenge – [A Complaint Free World.org](http://AComplaintFreeWorld.org))





Don't sweat the small stuff:

- Quote from 113 year old man in response to a question about the secret of his longevity:
“When it rains, I let it”
- It takes a real storm in the average person's life to make him realize how much worrying he has done over the squalls.
– Author Unknown
- I've had many troubles in my life but the worst of them never came. – James Garfield.

•Whenever possible, laugh! It's great medicine.

Mental Health Benefits:

Adds joy and zest to life
Eases anxiety and fear
Relieves stress
Improves mood
Enhances resilience



Physical Health Benefits:

Boosts immunity
Lowers stress hormones
Decreases pain
Relaxes your muscles
Prevents heart disease



Social Benefits:

Strengthens relationships
Attracts others to us
Enhances teamwork
Helps defuse conflict
Promotes group bonding



Physical Stress Relief Techniques

Take a deep breath

- When stressed we tend to take quick, shallow breaths. Deep breathing brings fresh air in, forces old air out and brings about relaxation.

Where to start?

- Sit back comfortably with your chest and head held high
- Breathe in slowly through your nose while counting to three, filling in the belly area
- Count to three slowly as you exhale.
- Take as many slow breaths as you need until you start to feel relaxed

Cont'd

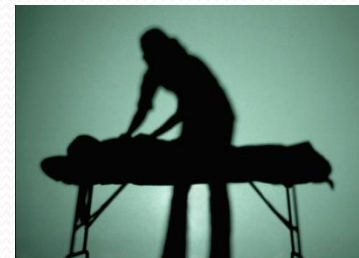


Reach for the Sky- Stretching and Stress

- Easy stretching helps to work out tension that builds up in our muscles during the run of a day.
- If working at a desk for prolonged periods of time it is important to get up and stretch every few hours. This helps us to relax and regroup before continuing on.

Consider therapeutic massages

- Helps to relieve stress



Progressive Muscular Relaxation

A useful tool for relaxing our body when our muscles are tense.

Tense up a group of muscles so that they are as tight as possible.

- Hold them in this state of extreme tension for a few seconds.
- Then, relax the muscles to their previous state.
- Finally, consciously relax the muscles even further so that you are as relaxed as possible.

- Experiment with PMR
- Form a fist, and clench your hand as tight as you can for a few seconds.
- Then relax your hand to its previous tension,
- and then consciously relax it again so that it is as loose as possible.
- You should feel deep relaxation in your hand muscles.



Stress reduction:

- Since there are so many other options , we don't recommend this physical stress reduction technique, although sometimes we may be tempted to use it

Stress Relief Technique not recommended

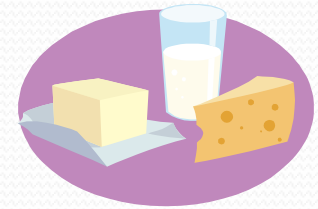
Stress Reduction Kit



Directions:

1. Place kit on FIRM surface.
2. Follow directions in circle of kit.
3. Repeat step 2 as necessary, or until unconscious.
4. If unconscious, cease stress reduction activity.

Also...



- Eat a healthy diet:

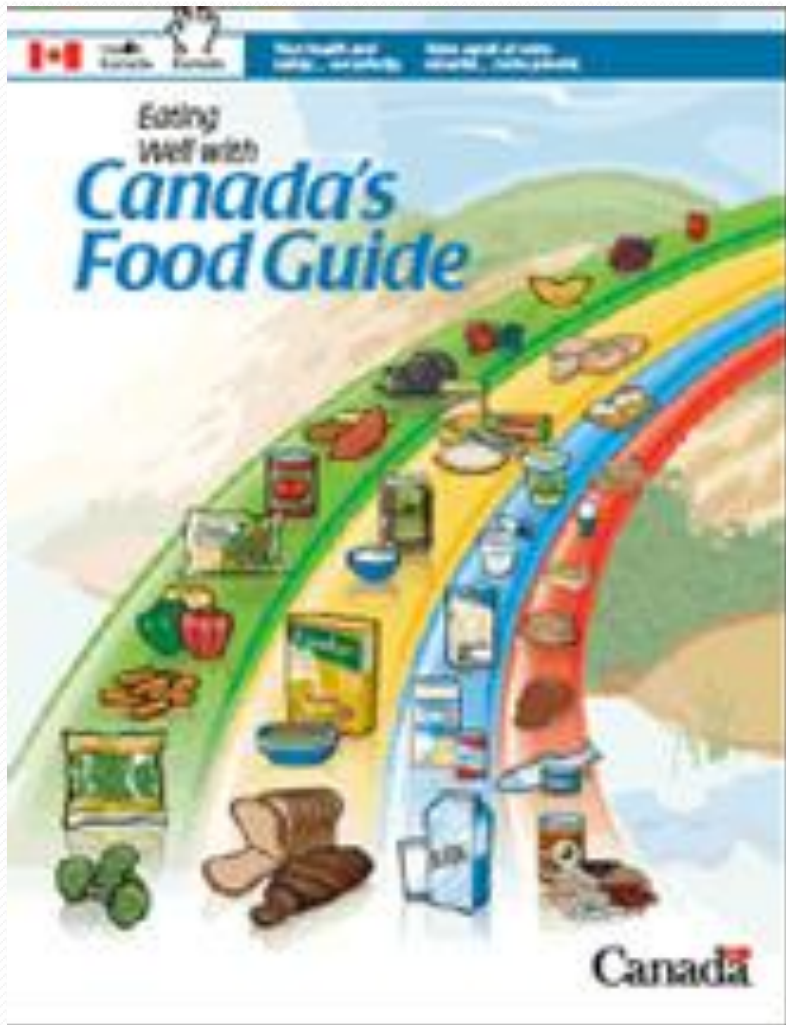
Well-nourished bodies are more equipped to cope with stress.

Start with a healthy breakfast and have healthy snacks throughout the day.

Focus on the basic food groups.

Watch portion sizes.





My Food Guide

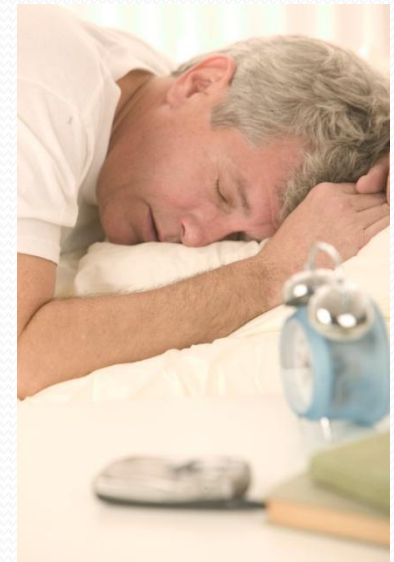
By Health Canada

Build your own Food Guide
with foods that you like.
Plan your meals and snacks.

www.myfoodguide.ca

Also, get enough sleep – target 8 hours.
Your stress management reserves will increase.

- Figure out why we are not getting enough sleep and commit to changing our routine
- Create a bedtime ritual
- Try not to get into the habit of falling asleep in front of the TV
- If we feel we are wasting precious time by sleeping when we should be getting things done, remember that sleeping is getting things done
(body heals, recharges, grows new cells – productive)
- Don't get all stressed out about not being able getting to sleep (occasionally okay as long as usually get enough)



Also:



Exercise



- Physical activity plays a key role in the prevention and reduction of stress.
- Try to make time for 30 minutes of exercise, 3 times a week to release pent up stress and tension.
- Exercise with a buddy.....they're great motivators.



Exercise - Motivators



....no matter what the season....



Summary – Tips to Reduce Stress

Identify sources in our life and accept responsibility

Avoid unnecessary stress

Alter the situation

Accept the things we can't change and expect change

Laughter

Positive thinking

Deep breathing

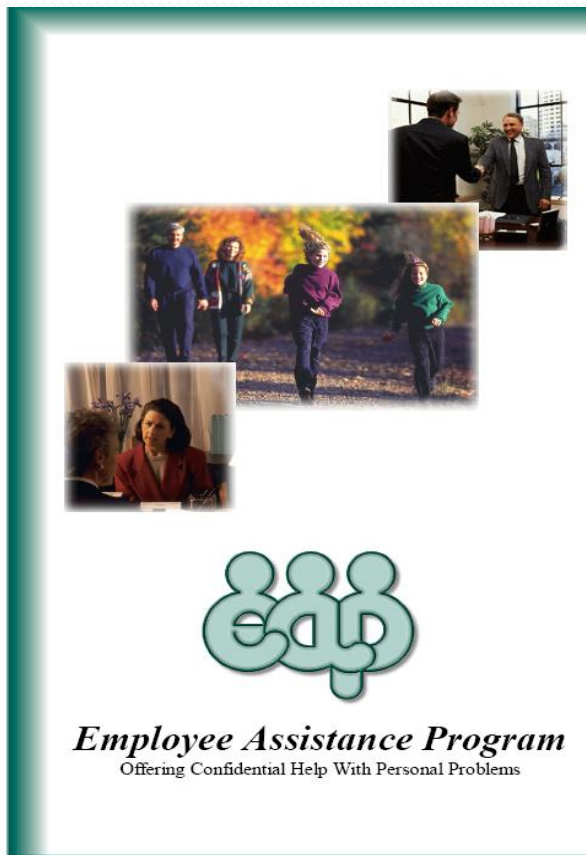
Stretching

Progressive Muscular Relaxation

Exercise

Healthy diet

Employee Assistance Program



A joint program of your employer and your union offering help with a variety of problems including job stress.

Goal is early recognition of a problem to help employees receive help before a crisis develops.

1-800-239-3826

Confidential Voluntary Competent

What works for you?

- Time with family and friends
- Music, singing
- Reading
- Prayer
- Being organized, planning
- Yoga
- Meditation
- Hobbies
- Etc.

Resources

- "Stress Management." *helpguide*. 12/16/2008. Web. 14 Oct 2009. <http://helpguide.org/mental/stress_management_relief_coping.htm#>.
- "Stress and how to manage it." *ehealthmd*. 2009. Web. 14 Oct 2009. <http://www.ehealthmd.com/library/stress/STR_what.html>.
- "Workplace Stress-General." 01/09/2008. CCOHS, Web. 14 Oct 2009. <<http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/stress.html>>.
- "Physical Techniques." <http://www.mindtools.com/stress/RelaxationTechniques/PhysicalTechniques.htm>



THANK
YOU

The image features the words "THANK YOU" in a bold, 3D, light blue font. The letters are arranged in two lines: "THANK" on top and "YOU" below it. The text is set against a solid black rectangular background. The 3D effect is achieved through shading and perspective, with the letters appearing to rise from the black surface. The overall design is clean and modern.