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Triumphant Stress Disorder: Its Maladies & Managerial Stratgies

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ABSTRACT

Stress is an organism's response to a stressor such as an environmental condition or a stimulus. Stress is a body's way to react to a challenge. According to the stressful event, the body's way to respond to stress is by sympathetic nervous system activation which results in the fight-or-flight response. Stress typically describes a negative condition or a positive condition that can have an impact on an organism's mental and physical well-being. The body's natural relaxation response is a powerful antidote to stress. Relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, visualization, progressive muscle relaxation, meditation and yoga can help an individual activate this relaxation response. When practiced regularly, these activities lead to a reduction in everyday stress levels and a boost in feelings of joy and serenity. They also serve a protective quality by teaching how to stay calm and collective in the life's curve balls. Exercise is an essential part of good body function. It helps deplete stress hormones and releases mood enhancing chemicals which will help us cope with stress better. Endorphins or happy hormones are released during any form of physical activity. The increase in endorphins in your body leads to feeling of euphoria, modulation of appetite, release of sex hormones and enhancement of immune response. This will help in combating the negative effects of stress. Exercise helps us to shed the day's irritation and create more energy and a feeling of optimism will surround us which will make us calm and ready for the next target. Thus conquering stress by physical fitness is the need of the hour. This manuscript delineates about the causes of stress syndrome, its prevention and management stratagem.

Keywords: Self-confidence, Environmental engineering, Bio-feedback, Relaxation exercises, Tai chi, Yoga, Massage techniques, Positive reframing, Depression, Frustration, Anxiety

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1. Introduction

Competition in any sphere of life often manifests anxiety, strain, fear, frustration and stress. Contemporary and competitive environment seemed to be one where the individual or the group wanted to outsmart the opponents in order to establish supremacy in competing endeavor. Stress tends to rob physical energy, enjoyment and success than any other factor. It can destroy self-confidence by leading individuals to believe they are incompetent and can deny individuals to demonstrate skills they have mastered through countless hours of practice. Stress is one's body's response or reaction to a real or imagined threat or an event or a change and is called stressors. They can be internal like thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, or external like loss of loved ones, tragedy etc. There are two types of stress; one is 'Eustress' or good/ positive stresses. This kind of stress is helpful in motivating one to move into action to get things accomplished. 'Distress' or bad/negative stress occurs when one's stress is too high or too low and his/her body and mind or any one of them begins to respond negatively to the stressors. Moderate levels of stress may actually improve performance and efficiency of an individual. Too little stress may result in boredom while too much stress may cause an unproductive anxiety level. Negative effects of stress affect one's body and the physical effects are weight gain/loss, palpitations, high blood pressure etc. The emotional effects are sudden mood swinging, anxiety, depression and indulging in unhealthy practices like alcoholism, smoking, use of drugs, etc. Stress causes inter-personal conflict, induces physical injury and drives towards early retirement thus:

- Psychological Stress robbed off Physical Energy, victory and enjoyment than any other factor.
- Can destroy Self-Confidence, deny the use of skills and destroy peak-performance flow.
- Causes inter-personal conflicts, induces injury and drives towards early retirement.
- Stress is an insidious disease and when sustained manifests in the form of Burn-out.
- Stress is defined as occurring when there is substantial imbalance between "What you perceive is being demanded of you by the Environment and what you perceive your capabilities are, especially when you perceive out-come to be important.

Stress is a kind of non-specific response superimposed upon various specific manifestations of an insulting agent impinging upon the organism and considered it as a state in which the natural homeostasis of the body is disturbed. Stress occurs when there is a substantial imbalance between the perceived demands and the perceived capabilities of the individual in the circumstance when the outcome is also considered important. It is not the environment per se but an individual's perception of the environment that cause stress. Physiologically, the left hemisphere of our brain works as Analyzer where worry takes place and the right hemisphere is the Integrator where components of a skill are integrated into complex whole. The analyzer and integrator usually work together smoothly when individuals are in flow. But when they are stressed, the analyzer tends

to dominate, hurting one's performance. Physical fitness is the human body's ability to function efficiently and effectively during work and while undergoing leisure activities. It is also the ability to resist hypokinetic diseases or diseases from sedentary lifestyles. The human body is made in such a way that it should be in momentum most of the time. The sedentary life of present generation is reason for many health problems. Scientific advancement has provided lot of goodness as well as comforts to us. But on the other side of this goodness and comforts lay problem galore. Our forefathers enjoyed abundant health due to their style of living in communion with nature.

One 5th of the deaths in India are from CHD. By the year 2020, it will account for all deaths. Sadly, many of these Indians will be dying young. The reason the heart disease get written about so much is because it kills in huge numbers. When it comes to heart, the early you start the better you get. Many times patients often tell that they don't have any RF such as increased blood sugar level (diabetes), increased blood pressure (hypertention) and obesity. The absence of RF doesn't imply that one will not suffer a heart attack because there are some non - MRFs such as age, gender (if someone is male), and strong family history, which also put on at risk. By keeping to understanding the under mentioned strategies, risk of heart ailments can be overcome.

- Pump it up – An evening walk for 30 minutes every day must be assured.
- The number of hours sitting every day that can up the risk of heart failure by 30 per cent, in accordance with the study published in the international journal *Circulation*. The risk > doubles in those who sit for at least 5 hours a day and don't exercise. Get up every half an hour must be practiced.
- Food that protects – meals cooked at home having incorporated lots of fibres help protects health.
- Keeping it young

Bust stress to avoid CVD

Stress is part and parcel of everybody's life. It is factor which can't be taken out from life but can be modified to control it. Stress is such a RF which can't be quantified. Stress can exert physical signs like fatigue, muscle weakness, headache, backache, etc. to emotional symptoms viz. felling helpless, depression and irritability, etc. adequate dealing with stress varies person to person. Some people eat down to relieve stress, some people do smoke or consume alcohol, Some people might do extra work or try to multiple things at one time but remain unproductive. Some people sleep too less to cope with stress. All of these reactions are counterproductive and leads to further stress and starts a vicious cycle. This takes a toll on our body a s such and especially our heart. Mental stress and depression is a known RF for atherosclerosis. It does create the conditions in our body which are conductive to cholesterol deposition in arteries of heart and other parts of the body. It does lead to altered lifestyle as well as has other physiologic reactions in the body like increased level of

stress hormones, increased blood sugar levels and higher serum cortisol levels. All of these are bad for cardiovascular system. Acute stress or depression is a major precipitating factor for acute coronary syndrome or heart attack as known commonly.

Depression after a heart attack is very common and often ignored part of treatment by the medical practitioner or rehabilitation program. It's normal to feel bad after a cardiac illness but how long will it last, has to be monitored. So prolonged anxiety, fear or depression after a cardiac event of diagnosis, has to be evaluated by doctor or health care team. The most important treatment for this type of stress requires a psychological counseling in most cases or medications or both in some cases. Treatment has lot of benefits in this group of patients as these people are more likely to skip rehabilitation schedule, poor compliance to medications as well as likely to take care of their mental health. It does improve quality of life after recovery.

Talking with family members and friends is a great stress reliever. Positive self- talk is important way of avoiding stress. Regular physical activity decreases the chances of influencing stress. Engage in walking, cycling, dancing, swimming or biking to improve your physical and mental strength. Daily relaxation, yoga and meditation are important ways to counter stress. Laughter is a good therapy. Don't forget to laugh out loud at a joke or funny movie or a comic strip. Giving up bad habits like smoking, alcohol and caffeinated drinks helps in stress management. Planned work in advancing way is helpful too. Having enough sleep& avoiding worry are amazing tools to be stress-helping others free. Finally, volunteering is helpful to relieve stress.

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Body composition:

This can be described as the relative amount of fat, muscle, bone and other vital parts of the body.

Strength: It is the ability of a muscle group to exert force.

Cardiovascular fitness:

This is the ability of the circulatory systems and respiratory systems to supply oxygen during exercise.

Flexibility: This can be defined as the range of motion at a joint.

Muscular endurance: It is the ability of muscles to continue to perform repeated contractions against submaximal resistance.

Agility: It is the ability to change the position of the entire body rapidly with speed and accuracy.

Balance: It is the ability of the body to statically and dynamically stabilize against resisting intrinsic and extrinsic forces.

Coordination: This is the capacity of body to move two or more body parts smoothly and efficiently under control.

Power: Power is defined as the maximum exertion of strength within a short burst of movement.

Speed: Speed is the quick movement across the ground or the rapid movement of the limbs to grab or throw an object.

Physical fitness cannot be achieved through sedentary life style. In order to achieve a hail and hearty/fit body some form of physical activity, whether competitive or leisurely is indeed very essential in everybody's life. Involvement in physical activity or exercise can contribute a lot in reducing or minimizing stress. They are useful for wellness and can

be used as a component for stress management. Physical activities can lead to muscle tension relaxation. It provides an opportunity to being in the ‘present’ and overcoming the painful and sour experiences of the ‘past’ as well as expectations of the ‘future’. Though respiration and cardiovascular elevation take place through physical activity the reduction or quieting of these through relaxation will allow one to reduce stress. Physical activity or exercise provides a positive distraction from stressors when one involves in it. Activities of competitive nature like a game of Table Tennis, Carroms or Chess can help one to work off muscle tension. Care should be taken while performing the relaxation activity that it should be started slowly so that you will allow your body to get accustomed to the activity in a progressive way. Overdoing of any activity also may cause adverse effects hence should be avoided. Other benefits of exercise are abundant like it helps you to shed your extra weight by burning calories during workout. Present day sedentary life has contributed to the occurrence of diseases like high blood pressure, diabetes, depression, arthritis, etc. Exercise can be used for combating diseases. A regular workout will boost HDL or good cholesterol and reduces unhealthy triglycerides in human body. Exercise can boost your moods as well as energy too. Exercise can be fun and will provide you good sleep.

The body’s natural relaxation response is a powerful antidote to stress. Relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, visualization, progressive muscle relaxation, meditation and yoga can help an individual activate this relaxation response. When practiced regularly, these activities lead to a reduction in everyday stress levels and a boost in feelings of joy and serenity. They also serve a protective quality by teaching how to stay calm and collective in the life’s curve balls. Stress is a part and parcel of human life and to escape from it is impossible, but there are ways to counteract its negative effects. Here comes the importance of indulging in activities which provide relaxation and happiness. Some people find reading or listening to music enjoyable. Passive relaxation of this kind is always good but involving in some activity where our body systems are involved will provide better effects on the functioning of our body. The stress response floods our body with chemicals that prepare us for “fight or flight.” But while the stress response is helpful in true emergency situations where we must be alert, it wears our body down when constantly activated. The relaxation response brings our system back into balance: deepening our breathing, reducing stress hormones, slowing down heart rate and blood pressure, and relaxing the muscles.

Our brain fires electrical waves at 14 or more cycles a second. These are ‘beta’ waves and are great for getting tasks done, but not for learning new things. Taking few minutes to relax deeply slows our brain waves down. These slower waves are ‘alpha’ waves. They occur at a speed of 7-14 cycles a second. Studies show alpha waves improve one’s capacity to learn. Hence a relaxation session will help us improve our learning ability also. Learning the basics of these relaxation techniques isn’t difficult. But it takes practice to truly harness their stress-relieving power with

daily practice. The best way to start and maintain a relaxation practice is by incorporating it into our daily routine. Schedule a set time either once or twice a day for your practice. You may find that it’s easier to stick to your practice if you do it first thing in the morning, before other tasks and responsibilities get in the way. Most stress experts recommend setting aside at least 10 to 20 minutes a day for relaxation practice. To get even more stress relief, one must aim for 30 minutes to an hour of regular practice. Yoga offers natural therapy for stress relief because it activates the parasympathetic nervous system, the part of our nervous system relaxation and rejuvenation. Yoga builds greater inner calm, enabling you to deal with pressures and tension in a more constructive way. It involves a series of both moving and stationary poses, combined with deep breathing. According to Beth Shaw, Founder/President of Yogafit Training Systems, worldwide, Inc., “The benefits of yoga include decreased stress and tension, increased strength and balance, increased flexibility, lowered blood pressure and reduced cortisol levels.” Meditation has a popular image that can lead to it being dismissed as a less-than-serious stress management tool. This is not true. A number of researches have been conducted on the topic and the results show that it is useful and practical technique for managing stress. The idea behind meditation is to consciously relax your body and focus your thoughts on one thing or an object for a sustained period. This occupies your mind, diverting it from the problems caused by stressors. It gives your body time to relax and recuperate and to clear away stress. To use meditation as a stress reliever, sit in a comfortable place, close your eyes, relax your body and focus your concentration on something for a period of time. By doing so you allow your stress hormones to subside and occupy your mind so that unpleasant, stressful thoughts do not intrude. Meditation takes effort to maintain your concentration and to bring it back to the present moment when your mind wanders or you start to drift off. But with regular practice, meditation actually changes the brain –strengthening the areas associated with joy and relaxation, and weakening those involved in negativity and stress. Coping with stress is a challenge for most people. You cannot control stress overload from the environment but you can control how you respond to it. Exercise is an essential part of good body function. It helps deplete stress hormones and releases mood enhancing chemicals which will help us cope with stress better. Endorphins or happy hormones are released during any form of physical activity. The increase in endorphins in your body leads to feeling of euphoria, modulation of appetite, release of sex hormones and enhancement of immune response. This will help in combating the negative effects of stress. Exercise helps us to shed the day’s irritation and create more energy and a feeling of optimism will surround us which will make us calm and ready for the next target. Thus conquering stress by physical fitness is the need of the hour. There is now evidence that points to abnormal stress responses as causing various diseases or conditions. These include anxiety disorders, depression, and substance abuse. Stress can affect virtually any organ system, being associated with conditions as diverse as skin

rashes high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, certain gastrointestinal diseases, some cancers, and even the process of aging itself. Stress also seems to increase the frequency and severity of migraine headaches, episodes of asthma, and fluctuations of blood sugar in people with diabetes.

There also is scientific evidence showing that people experiencing psychological stress are more prone to developing colds and other infections than their less-stressed peers. Overwhelming psychological stress (such as the events of 9-11) can cause both temporary (transient) and long-lasting (chronic) symptoms of a serious psychiatric illness called PTSD. Uncontrollable, unpredictable, and constant stress has far-reaching consequences on our physical and mental health. Stress can begin in the womb and recur throughout life. One of the pathological (abnormal) consequences of stress is a learned helplessness that leads to the hopelessness and helplessness of clinical depression, but in addition, many illnesses, such as chronic anxiety states, high blood pressure, heart disease, and addictive disorders, to name a few, also seem to be influenced by chronic or overwhelming stress. Nature, however, has provided us with wonderful processes (mechanisms) to cope with stressors through the HPA axis and the locus coeruleus / sympathetic nervous system. Furthermore, research has shown us the biological processes (mechanisms) that explain what we all intuitively know is true -- which is, that too much stress, particularly when we cannot predict it or control its recurrence, is harmful to our health.

The two Sided Brain Activity

Left hemisphere- Right hemisphere
(Works as Analyzer)- (works as integrator)
Analysis - Execution
Sequential Planning-Creativity
Rational thinking- Orientation in Space
Verbal Self Instructions- Emotion; Imagery

Elements of Stress

Stress contains three elements: Individual's

- (a) Environment,
- (b) Perceptions, and
- (c) Responses to these in the form of Arousal which activates the mind and body.

Usually people wrongly blame Environment to causing Stress, it is a wrong notion, In fact-it is the perception of an individual about the events (environment).

2. Stress Management Techniques

A host of techniques have been evolved to minimize the contraindications of stress which can be compartmentalized as environmental engineering, somatic stress management techniques and cognitive stress management.

I. Environmental Engineering Techniques:

Reduce Uncertainty
Reduce Importance

II. Somatic Stress Management Techniques:

- (a) Imagery Relaxation (Imagining a place where you always feel very relaxed)
- Change the Environment in the persons mind

Select a quite & comfortable setting
Individual should be alert & not excited
Create the right attitude about learning the skill
Have comfortable positions- Lying down on the floor
(b) Self-directed relaxation (Progressive Relaxation)
Tensing-Relaxing

III Cognitive Techniques

Autogenic Training
Thought Stopping
Rational thinking
Smart Talk (hierarchy of negative thoughts)

IV Bio-Feedback

Visual feedback
Auditory feedback
Self appraisal
Monitoring
Always be positive,
Set realistic and attainable goals,
Believe in your abilities,
Try hard to the best of your capabilities,
Always hope for a favorable outcome.

Relaxation Exercises

The body's natural relaxation response is a powerful antidote to stress. Relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, visualization, progressive muscle relaxation, meditation, and yoga can help you activate this relaxation response. When practiced regularly, these activities lead to a reduction in everyday stress levels and a boost in feelings of joy and serenity. What's more, they also serve a protective quality by teaching how to stay calm and collected in the face of life's curveballs. We can't avoid all stress, but can counteract its negative effects by learning how to evoke the *relaxation response*, a state of deep rest that is the polar opposite of the stress response. The stress response floods our body with chemicals that prepare us for "fight or flight." But while the stress response is helpful in true emergency situations where we must be alert, it wears our body down when constantly activated. The relaxation response brings our system back into balance: deepening our breathing, reducing stress hormones, slowing down heart rate and blood pressure, and relaxing the muscles. In addition to its calming physical effects, research shows that the relaxation response also increases energy and focus, combats illness, relieves aches and pains, improves problem-solving abilities, and boosts motivation and productivity. Best of all – with a little practice – anyone can reap these benefits. A variety of relaxation techniques help achieve the relaxation response. Those whose stress-busting benefits have been widely studied include deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, meditation, visualization, yoga, and tai chi. Learning the basics of these relaxation techniques isn't difficult. But it takes practice to truly harness their stress-relieving power with daily practice. Most stress experts recommend setting aside at least 10 to 20 minutes a day for relaxation practice. To get even more stress relief, must aim for 30 minutes to an hour.

Getting the Most Out of Your Relaxation Practice
Set aside time in your daily schedule

The best way to start and maintain a relaxation practice is by incorporating it into your daily routine. Schedule a set time either once or twice a day for your practice. You may find that it's easier to stick with your practice if you do it first thing in the morning, before other tasks and responsibilities get in the way. Don't practice when you're sleepy. These techniques can relax you so much that they can make you very sleepy, especially if it's close to bedtime. You will get the most out of these techniques if you practice when you're fully awake and alert.

Doing alone or in social stimulation

If you crave solitude, solo relaxation techniques such as meditation or progressive muscle relaxation will quiet your mind and recharge your batteries. If craving for social interaction, a class setting will give you the stimulation and support you're looking for. Practicing with others may also help stay motivated.

Deep Breathing for Stress Relief

With its focus on full, cleansing breaths, deep breathing is a simple, yet powerful, relaxation technique. It's easy to learn, can be practiced almost anywhere, and provides a quick way to get your stress levels in check. Deep breathing is the cornerstone of many other relaxation practices, too, and can be combined with other relaxing elements such as music. All you really need is a few minutes and a place to stretch out.

Methods to Practice

The key to deep breathing is to breathe deeply from the abdomen, getting as much fresh air as possible in your lungs. When you take deep breaths from the abdomen, rather than shallow breaths from your upper chest, you inhale more oxygen. The more oxygen you get, the less tense, short of breath, and anxious you feel. So the next time you feel stressed, take a minute to slow down and breathe deeply:

- a. Sit comfortably with your back straight. Put one hand on your chest and the other on your stomach.
- b. Breathe in through your nose. The hand on your stomach should rise. The hand on your chest should move very little. Exhale through your mouth, pushing out as much air as you can while contracting your abdominal muscles. The hand on your stomach should move in as you exhale, but your other hand should move very little.
- c. Continue to breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Try to inhale enough so that your lower abdomen rises and falls. Count slowly as you exhale. If you have hard time breathing from your abdomen while sitting up, try lying on the floor. Put a small book on your stomach, and try to breathe so that the book rises as you inhale and falls as you exhale.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation for Stress Relief

Progressive muscle relaxation is another effective and widely used strategy for stress relief. It involves a two-step process in which you systematically tense and relax different muscle groups in the body.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation Sequence

Right foot, Left foot, Right calf, Left calf, Right thigh, Left thigh, Hips and buttocks, Stomach, Chest, Back, Right arm

and hand, Left arm and hand, Neck and shoulders, Face, Most progressive muscle relaxation practitioners start at the feet and work their way up to the face. Here are few steps to follow, Loosen your clothing, take off your shoes, and get comfortable. Take a few minutes to relax, breathing in and out in slow, deep breaths. When you're relaxed and ready to start, shift your attention to your right foot. Take a moment to focus on the way it feels.

- Slowly tense the muscles in your right foot, squeezing as tightly as you can. Hold for a count of 10.
- Relax your right foot. Focus on the tension flowing away and the way your foot feels as it becomes limp and loose.
- Stay in this relaxed state for a moment, breathing deeply and slowly. When you're ready, shift your attention to your left foot. Follow the same sequence of muscle tension and release.
- Move slowly up through your body - legs, abdomen, back, neck, face - contracting and relaxing the muscle groups as you go.

Mindfulness Meditation for Stress Relief

Meditation that cultivates mindfulness is particularly effective at reducing stress, anxiety, depression, and other negative emotions. Mindfulness is the quality of being fully engaged in the present moment, without analyzing or otherwise "over-thinking" the past experience. Instead of worrying about the future or dwelling on the past, mindfulness meditation switches the focus to what's happening right now. For stress relief, try the following mindfulness meditation techniques:

Body scan: Body scanning cultivates mindfulness by focusing your attention on various parts of your body. Like progressive muscle relaxation, you start with your feet and work your way up. However, instead of tensing and relaxing your muscles, you simply focus on the way each part of your body feels without labeling the sensations as either "good" or "bad".

Walking meditation:

You don't have to be seated or still to meditate. In walking meditation, mindfulness involves being focused on the physicality of each step -the sensation of your feet touching the ground, the rhythm of your breath while moving, and feeling the wind against your face.

Mindful eating:

If you reach for food when you're under stress or gulp your meals down in a rush, try eating mindfully. Sit down at the table and focus your full attention on the meal (no TV, newspapers, or eating on the run). Eat slowly, taking the time to fully enjoy and concentrate on each bite.

Starting a meditation practice

All you need to start meditating are:

- a. A quiet environment. Choose a secluded place in your home, office, garden, place of worship, or in the great outdoors where you can relax without distractions or interruptions.
- b. A comfortable position. Get comfortable, but avoid lying down as this may lead to you falling asleep. Sit up with your spine straight, either in a

chair or on the floor. You can also try a cross-legged or lotus position.

- c. A point of focus: Pick a meaningful word or phrase and repeat it throughout your session. You may also choose to focus on an object in your surroundings to enhance your concentration, or alternately, you can close your eyes.
- d. An observant, non critical attitude: Don't worry about distracting thoughts that go through your mind or about how well you're doing. If thoughts intrude during your relaxation session, don't fight them. Instead, gently turn your attention back to your point of focus.

You can do this visualization exercise on your own, with a therapist's help, or using an audio recording. Close your eyes and let your worries drift away. Imagine your restful place. Picture it as vividly as you can everything you can see, hear, smell, and feel. Guided imagery works best if you incorporate as many sensory details as possible. For example, if you are thinking about a dock on a quiet lake:

- a. See the sun setting over the water
- b. Hear the birds singing
- c. Smell the pine trees
- d. Feel the cool water on your bare feet
- e. Taste the fresh, clean air

Yoga for Stress Relief

Yoga is an excellent stress relief technique. It involves a series of both moving and stationary poses, combined with deep breathing. The physical and mental benefits of yoga provide a natural counterbalance to stress, and strengthen the relaxation response in your daily life.

What type of yoga is best for stress

Although almost all yoga sessions end in a relaxation pose, however, those sessions wherein emphasis is laid on slow and steady movement combined with gentle stretching are best for stress relief. Power yoga, with its intense poses and focus on fitness, is not the best choice for stress relief. If you're unsure whether a specific yoga class is appropriate for stress relief, consult the yoga teacher or expert who could guide you best for the stress relieving postures. Since, injuries can happen when yoga is practiced, incorrectly, it's best to learn by attending group classes or hiring a private teacher. Once you've learned the basics, you can practice alone or with others, tailoring your practice as you deem fit.

3. Tips for Starting Yoga Practice

Consider your fitness level and any medical issues before joining a yoga class. There are many yoga classes for different needs, such as prenatal yoga, yoga for seniors, and adaptive yoga (modified yoga for disabilities). "Hot" or Bikram yoga, which is practiced in a heated environment, might be too much if you are just starting out. Look for a low-pressure environment where you can learn at your own pace. Don't extend yourself beyond what feels comfortable, and always back-off of a pose at the first sign of pain. A good teacher can show you alternate poses for ones that are too challenging for your health or fitness level. If you've ever seen a group of people in the park slowly moving in synch, you've probably witnessed tai chi. Tai chi is a self-paced, non-competitive series of slow, flowing body

movements. These movements emphasize concentration, relaxation, and the conscious circulation of vital energy throughout the body. Though tai chi has its roots in martial arts, today it is primarily practiced as a way of calming the mind, conditioning the body, and reducing stress. As in meditation, tai chi practitioners focus on their breathing and keeping their attention in the present moment. Tai chi is a safe, low-impact option for people of all ages and levels of fitness, including older adults and those recovering from injuries. Once you've learned the moves, you can practice it anywhere, at any time, by yourself, or with others. To reap the greatest stress reduction and other health benefits from tai chi, consider practicing it regularly. While you may get some benefit from a 12-week tai chi class, you may enjoy longer and bigger benefits if you continue tai chi for the long term and become more skilled. You may find it helpful to practice tai chi in the same place and at the same time every day to develop a routine. But if your schedule is erratic, do tai chi whenever you have a few minutes. You can even draw on the soothing mind-body concepts of tai chi without performing the actual movements if you get stuck in stressful situations - a traffic jam or a contentious work meeting, for instance.

Making tai chi work for you

- As with yoga, tai chi is best learned in a class or from a private instructor.
- Although tai chi is normally very safe and gentle, be sure to discuss any health or mobility concerns with your instructor.
- Tai chi classes are often offered in community centers, senior centers, or local community colleges in the north-east region.
- Massage Technique for Relaxation

Scalp Soother

Place your thumbs behind your ears while spreading your fingers on top of your head. Move your scalp back and forth slightly by making circles with your fingertips for 15-20 seconds.

Eyes Techniques

Close your eyes and place your ring fingers directly under your eyebrows, near the bridge of your nose. Slowly increase the pressure for 5-10 seconds, then gently release. Repeat 2-3 times.

Eyes Massage

Here are some simple self-massage techniques that you can enjoy whenever you have time.

Close your eyes, relax your face, ease your mind. Slow and deep breathing (so smooth and ease that you cannot hear yourself)

Rubbing around your eyes (be gentle with the eye bag area) Circulate eye balls movements, up & down, right & left, then look far warming up your hands by rubbing and then cover your eyes to repeat the breathing exercise for 8 times (if you feel pressure on your eyes, then you can first gentle circulate massage with warmed hands, and then do the breathing exercise) Open your eyes slowly with the inhale breathing. Below are some eye relaxing techniques that you can practice easily at your desk.

- a. Place your elbows on your desk and cup hands over eyes.

- b. Let your weight fall forward and rest your head in hands.
- c. Close your eyes and inhale deeply through your nose; hold it for three seconds, then exhale.
- d. Continue this deep breathing for 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat this exercise several times a day.

Change Focus

- a. Hold up a finger/pen a few centimeters in front of you.
- b. Focus on the finger/pen as you slowly move it away, and then focus on something further away
- c. Next, shift focus back to the finger/pen, and slowly bring the finger/pen back towards you.
- d. Now, shift your focus to something farther than the previous object and hold your eyes there for 2 seconds.
- e. Alternate your focus between the near and far objects, looking at each for at least 2 seconds at a time.
- f. Repeat this exercise several times a day.

Eye Rolls

Close eyes and imagine a clock face. Start by moving eyes slowly from the centre to the 12 o'clock position and hold for 2 seconds, then slowly roll eyes clockwise, until the cycle is completed. Repeat the exercise anti-clockwise. Next, slowly and gently move eyes to the 12 o'clock position and hold for 2 seconds. Shift the eye position to 6 o'clock position and hold for 2 seconds, and follow by 9 o'clock and 3 o'clock positions, holding each end positions for 2 seconds. Remember to stretch as far out as possible all the time and do it slowly. Repeat the entire exercise at least 3 times. Move eyes to the left, then slowly to the right

Position: The patient sits, with the head leaning backward, the operator standing at his side. The index finger is placed on his eyebrow, the middle finger grasping the eyelid, which is pressed, with either a radial or circular motion, against the eye. Be very careful not to use too much strength, and perform the movement as quickly as possible. By placing the index on the eyebrow we take the weight of the heavy hand off the tender organ. The lid really performs the massage by pressure generated through the finger. Vibrations with the fingers. While it is understood that the operator's hands should at all times be scrupulously clean, it becomes necessary to always use a mild antiseptic before treating the eyes.

Sinus Pressure Relief

Place your fingertips at the bridge of your nose. Slowly slide your fingers down your nose and across the top of your cheekbones to the outside of your eyes. Reach one arm across the front of your body to your opposite shoulder. Using a circular motion, press firmly on the muscle above your shoulder blade. Repeat on the other side.

Shoulder Tension Relief

The most common type of massage is Swedish massage, a soothing technique specifically designed to relax and energize. Another common type of massage is Shiatsu, also known as acupressure. In Shiatsu massage, therapists use their fingers to manipulate the body's pressure points. Although self-massage is good for stress relief, getting a massage from a professional massage therapist can be

tremendously relaxing and more thorough than what you can do yourself. When booking a massage, try types like Swedish or Shiatsu, which promote overall relaxation. Deep tissue and sports massages are more aggressive. They often target specific areas and may leave you sore for a couple of days, making them less effective for relaxation and stress relief.

Ear Release Exercise (For Headaches and Ear Tension)

Using a wide squat or sitting comfortably, perform the following

Canal: Open and shut lower jaw while your pinky finger is in the ear canal lifting and opening canal. Open and close jaw while humming to assist in releasing tension in joints.

Ear Lobe: Place thumb in ear canal. Grasp earlobe with air finger and gently pull, stretch and rotate earlobe. Use humming to create a greater release.

Attaining Relaxation Instantly

Breathing deeply; Dropping shoulders; Getting organized; Auto suggestion; Relaxation (Mental); Rational analysis; Gaining confidence; Avoiding frustration; Compatible understanding; Positive re-enforcement

Some Handi Common Coping Stratgies For Distress

Active Coping

- Sharing with spouse or friends
- Using relaxation techniques
- Listening music
- Exercising

Diversive Coping

- Smoking
- Taking drugs
- Taking interest in sex

Positive Reframing

- Attending Parties / Functions
- Involving in hobbies
- Performing religious rituals
- Prefer to watch movies

Maladaptive Coping

- Yelling
- Withdrawing
- Fighting
- Sleeping
- Feeling Guilty
- Absenting due to sickness

Unproductive Responses

- Over eating
- Driving around
- Skip

Abbreviations

CHD (Coronary Heart Disease); MRF (Modifiable Risk factor); SA (Sleep Apnea); PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder); HDL (High Density Lipoprotein)

4. Conclusion

Present day world is fast moving and in order to keep pace with the fast movement of the world every human being has to struggle a lot. This struggle can be of different nature and differs individually. The struggle a student has to undergo is related to his studies and an executive may have to undergo different kind of struggle. No one in the earth is without

struggle. As part and parcel of this struggle, it is natural to have tensions, students under tension to fair better in studies, workers to perform better for their future benefits etc. The modern world offers so much of comfort to us but at the same time it has taken away one thing from us, i.e. peace of mind. As a result of this everybody is in stress. Competitions in all walks of life create urgency for maximum performance in the field to which one belongs to. Competitions in any sphere of life manifest anxiety, strain, and fear to mention but a few. Contemporary and competitive environment is one reason where the individual or the group wanted to outsmart the opponents in order to establish supremacy in competing endeavor. Stress tends to rob physical energy, enjoyment and success than any other factor. It can destroy self-confidence by leading individuals to believe they are incompetent and can deny individuals to demonstrate skills they have mastered through countless hours of practice. Stress causes inter-personal conflict in the work place or among colleagues. Stress is a kind of non-specific response superimposed upon various specific manifestations of an insulting agent impinging upon the organism. It's a state in which the natural homeostasis of the body is disturbed. Stress occurs when there is a substantial imbalance between the perceived demands and the perceived capabilities of the individual in the circumstance when the outcome is also considered important. It is not the environment per se but an individual's perception of the environment that cause stress.

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