



"Our greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another."

- William James

All of us are under the influence of stress - if you say you're not, you're either ignorant or lying! (Sorry, but that's the #truth!)

Stress is your body's reaction to a challenge or demand- physically, emotionally, mentally, and even spiritually.

Stress can be helpful- it can make us stronger in a crisis (think about lifting a car off someone in an emergency) or faster (imagine chasing a child on a runaway bicycle). Your adrenaline kicks in and makes seemingly super-human feats possible, but when our stress hormones are firing away during our daily lives it can affect us negatively, even reducing our decision-making capabilities.

We have three major stress hormones:

**Adrenaline:** This is responsible for our fight-or-flight response. It is the immediate surge of energy, strength, or speed that surges through our bodies during a stressful situation.

**Cortisol:** This is the Amygdala's favorite, BTW! (the fear center of the brain) It can be good - it gets us going in the morning and helps to balance our blood pressure, but it can also suppress our immune systems, impact our cardiovascular health, and even cause weight loss resistance.

**Norepinephrine:** This is the backup system for burnt-out adrenals. If you've ever experienced a second wave of energy during a crisis, this is likely norepinephrine kicking in.

Hands up if you've ever found yourself stress-eating. 🧑  
I have!

We look for coping mechanisms to deal with stress, and if we are using food as our drug of choice, this is what we do.

Drug abuse, gambling, drinking excessively, shopping, anxiety attacks, high blood pressure, diabetes, depression, heart disease, a weak immune system, and sleep disorders are all directly influenced by stress.

So what do we do about this stress mess?

- Get into a routine - work, school, family, and responsibilities. Once your routine is established, it becomes easier to manage stress because there are fewer unpleasant surprises. Let stress become a motivator of sorts, for example, taking a test and doing your best.
- Stress affects decision-making. We tend to let fear and emotion guide our decisions. Unplugging from emotion and being analytical will help us remain calm and process the decision fully.
- Remember, bad decisions are born out of stress and our bodies are greatly influenced by it. On the one hand, exercise temporarily raises our cortisol levels. This is why at night you need to be winding down, not up. Exercise at night can promote sleeplessness when you need your cortisol levels to go down.

On the other hand, as your fitness improves, your body's ability to handle all kinds of stress improves! There is a happy balance that you need to find.

We've established that stress is part of life, but how do we manage it?

- Follow the Hot Melt Sprint Principles of food, water, movement, and sleep.
- Self-care isn't optional- it is essential! It sends the message to your brain that you are loved and nurtured.
- Meditate, breathe deeply, light a candle, and find your center.
- Watch the caffeine! Too much caffeine can make stress worse!
- Exercise releases endorphins. Balance hard exercise with stretching or yoga.
- Laugh, yawn, be mindful, and practice gratitude.
- Take your supplements every day.