



**Dr. A. Kumar**  
**Consultant Herbalist @ Dietician**  
**D.Sc. (HS), U.S.A.**

## **Learn to manage your stress**

The word 'stress' has become so common that it does not seem like any disorder but stress may be the beginning of some serious disorder. Generally the state of stress occurs when a person feels that everything has become too much and that it seems difficult to cope with that. Anything that poses a challenge or a threat to our well-being is a stress. In other words, the stress is a normal physical response to events that makes a person feel threatened or upset his balance in some way. When for example, there is a situation of danger – whether it is real or imagined, the body's defenses act rapidly, which is an automatic process - known as the “fight-or-flight” reaction, or the stress response.

Response to stress: Everybody responds differently to a given situation of stress because of many reasons such as: everybody interprets the stressful situation in his or her own way; this results into the use of different resources; and of course, everybody do not have the same resources and skills. The most common causes of stress are: bereavement, sickness and disease, family problems, financial matters, problems at job, less time at disposal, relocation, divorce, abortion, becoming a mother or a father, driving in bad traffic, miscarriage, noisy neighbors, overcrowding, pregnancy, retirement, too much noise, uncertainty e.g. awaiting laboratory test results, academic exam results, job interview results, etc. besides a number of others.

Physical symptoms of stress: When stressed, a number of physical symptoms may occur such as: headache, high blood pressure, a tendency to sweat, back pain, chest pain, cramps or muscle spasms, loss of libido, lower immunity against diseases, muscular aches, nail biting, nervous twitches, pins and needles, sleeping difficulties, stomach upset etc.

Mental symptoms of stress: anger, anxiety, feeling unable to cope, a feeling of being failure, burnout, depression, feeling of insecurity, difficulty in making decisions, forgetfulness, irritability, difficulty in forgiving and forgetting, feeling neglect, problem concentrating, restlessness, sadness, atigue etc.

Possible effects on behaviour: eating too much or eating too little, sudden angry outbursts, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, higher tobacco consumption, social withdrawal, frequent crying and relationship problems among others.

Reducing the stress: Dealing with stress is not difficult but it needs a lot of awareness, training and discipline. Stress can be managed by way of self-help, self-management and medication e.g.:

Self-help: regular exercise, if work load is the cause – delegate duties, spend enough time eating foods, listen to relaxing music, smile and try to remain cheerful, enjoy a real holiday every six months if possible otherwise annually at least, assertiveness, cultivate a hobby you enjoy e.g. photography, gardening, walking etc., stop abusing alcohol - smoking or drugs and cut down on caffeine, enjoy nutritious food with lots of fruits and vegetables, spare time for self-recreation, have a regular body and head massage, always try to live in the present and forget about the past and the future, learn breathing techniques, talk to family and friends, learn relaxation techniques, take professional help if required.

Self-management: Learn about the cause of stress and then try to remove it. To learn more, attend some stress-management classes. Many therapies like yoga, reflexology and aromatherapy may help a lot.

Medicines: Though doctors don't prescribe any medicines for stress yet if there are any underlying causes like depression, severe anxiety etc., then they may advise for medicines which along with other methods as explained above, can be of immense benefit.

Finally, consider the following four positions which helps reduce stress and aid relaxation are:

- Supine – a yogic pose called Savasna, i.e. just laying on the back like a dead body, in normal breathing position, with closed eyes, limbs loose by the side and relaxed; feet slightly apart; while the heels directed towards each other, the toes going away from each other. Try to lay calm, leave the thoughts behind, if thoughts are not leaving your mind – then think of something beautiful like a calm lake, clouds, snow clad mountains, flowers or anything you love.
- Prone – lying on one cheek face down; straight loose legs and arms on the sides, palms up; the direction of the feet will be just opposite of the Supine position i.e. the toes directed towards each other while the heels going away from each other; normal breathing with lightly closed eyes. The thought process should be used as in the supine position.
- Standing – on the feet conveniently, loose body; shoulders rounded forward so that arms hang loosely in front; erect back but flexible with relaxed neck muscles; head hanging loosely in the front while chin pointing towards or touching the chest; normal breathing and closed eyes. Stand for 2 – 3 minutes, relax and do again.
- Kneeling – sitting on the floor on the knees with toes pointing towards the rear; while trying to touch the floor with the forehead, the buttocks should not raise; hands resting by the leg side with palms upwards; round the shoulders – close the eyes – breathing normal; Not a good position for the obese people.

While relaxing, understand one thing, a person relaxes much more when exhaling than at the time of inhaling. When we breath-in, the diaphragm contracts and contraction means tension in the body; but when we breath-out i.e. exhale, the diaphragm muscles totally relax. Hence, with every exhalation, try to send the maximum stress out of the body. It is simply a practice and not at all difficult. Also when relaxing, try to make the room semi-dark, better use scented candles, light music of your choice in the background, try to leave behind everything, every task, every relation, every chore, every problem, every happiness but simply try to relax and slowly you will learn this technique and stress will never both you.

For all chronic or other diseases like migraine, headaches, skin diseases, Eczema, leucorrhoea, arthritis, stress, general weakness, diabetes, anaemia, male and female sexual problems and others, contact Dr. A. Kumar through Asian World

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**D.Sc., (HS) USA**

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