Manage Your Stress and Be Your Best

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Overview

• Peak Performance: Facts and Myths
• How to Achieve Peak Performance
• Stress and How to Manage It
• Resources
Peak Performance - FACTS

• Peak performance is getting the most out of what you’ve got that day.
• We can never be better than our abilities, but we can definitely be worse.
• Hard work is not enough.
  – Need to work smarter, not harder.
Peak Performance - MYTHS

• The Zone is the Ideal
  – Most athletes are in the zone less than 5% of the time.
  – Most non-athletes are in the zone less than 1% of the time.

• Laser focus = guaranteed greatness
  – Focus increases the chances of great results, it does not guarantee it.

• Single-mindedness is to be admired
  – A lack of balance = A lack of personal success
"We have met the enemy...and he is us."

Russia's Mikhail Youzhny lost a tough point with a backhand into the net against Spain's Nicolas Almagro in the third round of the Sony Ericsson Open. He then hit himself in the head with his racket, 3 times.
What Can Get in the Way of Peak Performance?

• Black/White thinking is the antithesis of Peak Performance
  – No thing is all or nothing.

• Unrealistic or too realistic goals
  – No goals achieved = goals too hard
  – All goals achieved = goals too easy

• Your mind is your greatest asset and your greatest liability.
Get the Most Out of Life by Managing Your Stress

If you ask:
Does Stress make my ______ worse?

The answer is always:
YES
What is Stress?

• Wear and tear on body and mind related to adjusting and coping with challenging and changing environment

• Normal and essential for growth

• Physical, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, relational, spiritual components

• Stress response triggers psychological and physiological (cardiovascular, immune, endocrine) changes

• Beneficial in moderation
Some stress is good, but too much stress can be a bad thing...
How do I know if I am “stressed out?”

• None of these indicators alone is sufficient for predicting when someone might be personally or emotionally struggling.

• Each is a “clue” and when presented alone or in combination, they indicate the possible need for managing stress or getting support.

• It is better to act sooner rather than later.
Workplace Indicators

• Missed/Ignored assignments
• Deterioration in quality of work
• Repeated absences from work
• Disorganized or erratic performance
• Continual seeking of special accommodations (e.g., extensions)
Physical Indicators

- Deterioration in physical appearance
- Visible changes in weight
- Lack of attention to personal hygiene
- Excessive fatigue
- Feeling sick or ill
Personal/Interpersonal Indicators

- Unusual tearfulness
- Expressions of concerns by co-workers
- Unprovoked anger/hostility
- Feeling hopeless/worthless
Getting a Handle on Stress

• Attending to your emotional health supports your career achievement and performance.

• Goal is not to eliminate stress but to learn to manage it and use it to your advantage.
Getting a Handle on Stress

• Call someone you trust and share your feelings.

• Call a professional and arrange an appointment to talk about your concerns.
Asking For Help

• Most people want help
• Most people have trouble asking for help
• Most people respond well to being offered help
• Most people need help getting help
When you notice you are “stressed” ask yourself these three questions:

1. How long has this been going on for me?

2. What do I think is the best way to handle it?

3. What can others offer about ways to support me?
Barriers vs. Pathways

• When we are in distress we will focus on barriers.
Q: How long has this been going on for me?
Barrier: Forever!
Pathway: For X amount of time.

Q: What do I think is the best way to handle it?
Barrier: Nothing will work!
Pathway: I need to try my best to...

Q: What can others offer about ways to support me?
Barrier: Nothing!
Pathway: Hopefully something, I am not sure what yet.
Pathways and Problematic Thinking Patterns

- Global thinking - *everything*
- Stable thinking - *always*
- Personal thinking – *about me*
- Negative thinking – *is bad*
Pathways and Problematic Thinking Patterns

Everything Always About Me Is Bad
Getting a Handle on Stress

• Remember to have the strength to change what I can, patience to accept what I can’t, and wisdom to know the difference!

• Expect difficulties and mistakes; accept and try to view them as opportunities for learning and growth.

• Don’t believe everything you think and feel.
Getting a Handle on Stress

• Being optimistic and rational takes practice!

• Change happens in small steps: reward yourself for progress.

• Rest and take breaks.

• Use humor and laughter.
Getting a Handle on Stress

• Believe in yourself and your ability to solve problems and survive difficult situations

• Take care of yourself
Self-Care

• Self-care will improve *your* life.
  • Enormous amounts of evidence supporting the link between self-care and positive life-variables.

• Exercise
• Diet
• Sleep
• Balance
Life Balance Activity

• In the first circle, divide the circle into areas of time/energy commitment CURRENTLY
  • Include areas such as: family, friendships, school, spirituality, work, volunteer, community, health and fitness
  • Provide percentages for each area

• Now draw the circle as you would like it to look with those categories and time/energy commitments
  • What changes do you have to do to achieve balance?
Managing Worries

Mindfulness

• Push out past and future focused thoughts and just ...
  Be present in the moment

• Pay attention to the present moment, on purpose, and non-judgmentally
Extraneous, non-present thoughts are box-cars. Acknowledge them and send them down the track, out of sight.
Time Management

• Distinguish between *urgent* activities and *important activities*.

  • **Importance:** something that gives your life meaning and richness

  • **Urgent:** activities that are asking for our immediate attention
# What to do?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>URGENT &amp; IMPORTANT</th>
<th>IMPORTANT but NOT URGENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completing an assignment due tomorrow</td>
<td>Reading up on a career related topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going to the doctor for an appointment</td>
<td>Exploring new opportunities at work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calling your mother on her birthday</td>
<td>Spending time with friends/close ones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending a meeting</td>
<td>Volunteering</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eating lunch</td>
<td></td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>URGENT but NOT IMPORTANT</th>
<th>NOT URGENT &amp; NOT IMPORTANT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Many phone calls, texts</td>
<td>Reorganizing your closet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Booking a flight/hotel</td>
<td>Sorting out your receipts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trying a new recipe</td>
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Other Resources

• **Wellness (480) 965-4721**
  – ASU Wellness website provides a wide variety of health related information, a helpful resource center, and updates for ongoing programs.
  – [http://cfo.asu.edu/hr-wellness](http://cfo.asu.edu/hr-wellness)

• **Employee Assistance Office**
  – behavioral health services are provided free of charge, regardless of whether the problem arises in one’s personal life or in the workplace. All benefits-eligible faculty and staff, their immediate families and committed partners can access this free service.
  – [http://cfo.asu.edu/hr-eao](http://cfo.asu.edu/hr-eao)