



# Stress Management for EMS

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# Stress in EMS

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Stress: The human reaction to events in the environment

Han Selye defined stress as the wear and tear on the body



# STRESS !!!!!

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Eustress: The stress that comes from good sources

New marriage

Birth of a baby

Winning the lottery

Distress: The stress that comes from bad sources

Difficult work environment

Overwhelming sights and sounds

Threat of personal injury



# Types of Stress

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- **General Stress:**  
Everyone has this stress at any time. It generally resolves within a day or two
- **Cumulative Stress:**  
Prolonged stress which builds up after time and can lead to adverse mental and/or physical consequences



# Types of Stress

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- Acute Traumatic Stress: Called Critical Incident Stress. Produces considerable psychological distress. Normal reaction to abnormal events
- Post Traumatic Stress: Severe stress produced by severe psychological trauma. Can produce lasting changes. Created by unresolved Critical Incident Stress



# General Adaptation Syndrome

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## **Alarm reaction**

The first stage of the general adaptation stage, the alarm reaction, is the immediate reaction to a stressor. In the initial phase of stress, humans exhibit a "fight or flight" response, which causes one to be ready for physical activity. However, this initial response can also decrease the effectiveness of the immune system, making persons more susceptible to illness during this phase.



# General Adaptation Syndrome

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Stage 2 might also be named the stage of adaptation, instead of the stage of resistance. During this phase, if the stress continues, the body adapts to the stressors it is exposed to. Changes at many levels take place in order to reduce the effect of the stressor. For example, if the stressor is starvation (possibly due to anorexia), the person might experience a reduced desire for physical activity to conserve energy, and the absorption of nutrients from food might be maximized.



# General Adaptation Syndrome

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## Stage of exhaustion

At this stage, the stress has continued for some time. The body's resistance to the stress may gradually be reduced, or may collapse quickly. Generally, this means the immune system, and the body's ability to resist disease, may be almost totally eliminated. Patients who experience long-term stress may succumb to heart attacks or severe infection due to their reduced immunity. For example, a person with a stressful job may experience long-term stress that might lead to high blood pressure and an eventual **heart attack**



# Short term Physical Stress Symptoms

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- Dry Mouth
  - Cool skin
  - Cold hands and feet
  - Increased sweating
  - Rapid Breathing
  - Faster heart beat
  - Tense Muscles
  - Feelings of nausea, or 'Butterflies in stomach'
  - Diarrhea
- A desire to urinate



# Long Term Physical Stress Symptoms

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- Insomnia
- change in appetite
- sexual disorders
- aches and pains
- frequent colds
- illnesses such as:
  - asthma
  - back pain
  - digestive problems
  - headaches
- feelings of intense and long-term tiredness



# Behavioral Stress Symptoms

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- Yawning
- Talking too fast or too loud
- Fiddling and twitching, nail biting, grinding teeth, drumming fingers, pacing, etc.
- Bad moods:
  - Defensiveness
  - Irrationality
  - Being irritable
  - Being critical
  - Aggression
- Overreaction and reacting emotionally



# Behavioral Stress Symptoms

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- Reduced personal effectiveness:
  - Being more forgetful
  - Being unreasonably negative
  - Making less realistic judgements
  - Making more mistakes
  - Being more accident prone
- Neglect of personal appearance
- Changing work habits
- Increased absenteeism



# Performance Stress Symptoms

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- It interferes with clear judgement and makes it difficult to take the time to make good decisions.
- Where you need good physical skills it gets in the way of fine motor control.
- It can seriously reduce your enjoyment of your work
- It damages the positive frame of mind you need for high quality work by:
  - narrowing attention,
  - damaging self-confidence,
  - promoting negative thinking,
  - disrupting focus and concentration and making it difficult to cope with distractions
- It consumes mental energy in distraction, anxiety, frustration and temper. This is energy that should be devoted to the work in hand.



# Healthy Living with Stress in EMS

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## THINGS YOU CAN DO FOR YOURSELF

DIET - LOWER SALT, REFINED CARBOHYDRATES, SUGAR, AND CAFFIENE. NEED MORE VEGETABLES, FRUITS, COMPLEX CARBOHYDRATES, AND VITAMINS.

REST - 4 HOURS CONTINUOS

EXERCISE - 20 MINUTES 5 X WEEK, BREAK A SWEAT. IT INCREASES ENDORPHIN PRODUCTION.

TALK - FAMILY, FRIENDS. PEERS

PLAN/ORGANIZE/DELEGATE - SPOUSE, KIDS, FRIENDS

YOGA, TAI CHI, PROGRESSIVE RELAXATION, MEDITATION



# Healthy Living with Stress in EMS

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## THINGS YOU CAN DO AT WORK

BE GOAL ORIENTED, BUT BE FLEXIBLE - YOUR WAY'S NOT THE ONLY WAY

APPROPRIATE WORKPLACE INTERACTIONS - FRIENDS REDUCE STRESS/ENEMIES ENHANCE IT, DON'T GOSSIP

ESTABLISH A ROUTINE

COMMUNICATE WITH EVERYONE SUPERVISOR, PEER, SUBORDINATE

MAINTAIN A SENSE OF HUMOR



# Healthy Living with Stress in EMS

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Balance in all that you do helps reduce stress. This is easier said than done when going through college and the transition to adult life.



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# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS