



328en30A



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STRESS MANAGEMENT AND WELL-BEING

Uptil now you have studied all about what is stress and what are the health problems related with stress. Stress is by and large manageable. If a scientific approach is followed for managing stress, it can be relieved. This lesson deals with the strategies which one can adopt for effective management of stress. Stress management training refers to a package of techniques that are used for helping the individuals cope with stress rather effectively. Wellness refers to the good physical, psychological and social functioning of an individual.



OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson, you will be able to:

- enumerate the relaxation procedures;
- explain the cognitive strategies for stress management;
- explain the sources of support from environment and the methods of enhancing the support system;
- describe how effectively hobbies, recreation and leisure time activities can control stress ; and
- list the hobbies, recreation and leisure time activities which could reduce the stress.
- discuss various ways of managing time well;
- describe how physical exercise and nutrition can promote well-being, and
- explain the benefits one could obtain by practicing yoga and mediation.



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30.1 ALTERING BODILY REACTIONS AND RELAXATION

Relaxation is just opposite to the state of stress or tension. It is a state in which one is able to think clearly about or reflect on a problem. Just as stress can affect the individual at physiological, affective, cognitive and behavioural levels, relaxation also can influence the individual at all these levels. Among the various dimensions which an individual has in one's personality; bodily or physiological dimension is the one which responds first to stress. Therefore, to combat stress effectively, one will have to regulate the physiological changes that occur because of stress.

Generally when an individual is under stress, he or she experiences stress from head to toe. That is due to the several changes that take place in the body. All the muscles in the body reflect stress by being rather rigid or tight. Breathing gets altered. Heart starts beating faster. Similarly almost all organs and systems present in the body are affected by stress.

Techniques for Stress Reduction

Physical exercise, sports, and yoga, etc. are found to be of immense value in preparing a person for relaxation. Apart from these well known methods, there are some more techniques which are scientific and systematic in nature. One such procedure is deep muscle relaxation. This technique is based on the assumption that mental relaxation follows muscular relaxation.

Deep Muscle Relaxation

The individual is taught to experience both tension and relaxation alternately in each and every group of muscles in the body. Experience of relaxation and appreciation of difference between tension and relaxation immensely helps the individual in maximizing the feeling of calmness. It is also called progressive muscle relaxation, because as the individual practices this technique, experience of relaxation increases.

Biofeedback

Another procedure which is generally adopted for inducing relaxation through altering bodily reactions is biofeedback. In this procedure, based on skin response (GSR), feedback on brain waves (EEG) and feedback on any other physiological parameter, the individual is made to study the internal reactions to stress and relaxation. By giving the individual, feed back whether he/she is in a state of stress or relaxation, the individual can be made to alter the reaction in favour of relaxation which he/she will have to maintain as much as possible. Visual or auditory feedback is given. In the visual feedback, when the individual experiences stress, red light will be on. The individual, then, will have to relax and the state of relaxation will be



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indicated by green light. Hence the goal is always to keep the green light on when the individual undergoes treatment for management of stress through bio-feedback. Once, the individual masters the art of relaxation through bio feed back, he/she can easily generalize the same state of relaxation to any other situation. Thus one can gain perfect control over all the situations.

In the case of auditory feedback “beep” sound will come whenever the individual is tense. Focus is given by the individual to successfully put off the beep sound. As the very sound may at times prevent the individual from relaxation, visual feed back is preferred more than the auditory one.

Try it Yourself

1. Analyze the ways which you follow for experiencing relaxation. Then note the changes that take place in your body and behaviour.
2. Visit any well equipped psychological clinic and see for yourself the mechanism of bio feedback.
3. Try to learn the procedure of deep muscle relaxation from a qualified and practicing psychologist who advocates the procedure to his/her clients.

30.2 COGNITIVE STRATEGIES

The term cognition is closely associated with thinking. Behind every action there is a thought or cognition. So by altering the cognitive environment, behaviour can be modified. Healthy thoughts lead individuals to adaptive behaviour whereas unhealthy thoughts result in maladaptive behaviour. Experience of too much of stress and later on coming out with abnormal behaviour patterns are regarded as maladaptive. The experience and expression of stress are also guided or influenced by a set of thoughts which are generally unhealthy. So by making those negative or unhealthy thoughts, positive or healthy, both the experience and expression of stress can be minimized. Let us examine some of these strategies.

- (i) **Systematic Desensitization:** Maladaptive behaviour in the form of strong expression of stress is characterized by emotional hypersensitivity. So the individuals will have to be desensitized systematically against the situations that cause stress or anxiety. Before the situation could have any impact on individuals, the very thought of situation will cause stress in the individual. Therefore, he/she will have to get rid of the stress through imagination. So the individuals are, at first, given training at thought level to cope with stress by not being that emotionally sensitive as he or she had been. All the situations are graded on the intensity of stress that each situation produces. These situations, then, are presented to the individual one by one who imagines the situations



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and slowly or gradually, he/she counters those provoking situations with the pleasant scenes which bring relaxation. Thus, the individual learns to relax against all stress producing situations through systematic desensitization.

(ii) Thought Stopping: Another cognitive technique which is used for stress management is thought stopping. The individual is actively helped to stop entertaining those negative or useless unnecessary thoughts which prevent effective functioning. Strongly saying “Stop” results in getting the thought out of the individual’s brain for a minute. It has to be practiced repeatedly. Slowly and steadily the individual starts showing remarkable improvement in successfully keeping the thought away from him/her. Finally, this results in successful termination of stress that mainly occurs due to interference caused by unnecessary thoughts.

(iii) Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT): Rational emotive behaviour therapy (REBT) is yet another cognitive technique which helps the individual to think rationally and realistically so that positive emotion comes out of it. The individual is, thus, made to understand the fact that every successful action depends on rational or logical thinking which takes reality into account. Self talk is another method which is useful in preparing the individual cognitively for effective management of stress. For example a person who is poor in memory can have a self talk saying that “My memory has become better, now a days I am able to recall better” etc. Subsequently he/she has to use other strategies like using mnemonics for improving memory. These two together will be more effective.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 30.1

1. Explain biofeedback.

2. Name any two cognitive strategies.



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30.3 ENHANCING SUPPORTIVENESS OF THE ENVIRONMENT

For effective living all the human beings must grow in an environment which is supportive and highly encouraging. As stress causes a lot of feelings of insecurity in an individual, it becomes essential and rather imperative on the part of the environment to be highly supportive so as to make him/her feel secure. If the external environment is also as negative and as discouraging as the internal environment (mainly cognitive or thought environment), the individual will feel stress all the more.

How are we to enhance supportiveness of the external environment? First, a proper analysis of the environment will have to be made and place the individual in a relatively stress-free environment which will nurture him/her on healthy lines. “Stress free” environment will be characterized by certain features like having regard for an individual without any conditions, empathy, careful listening, providing useful tips to overcome stress which occurs mainly because of poor resolution of conflicts, appreciating adaptive behaviour etc. Such a positive environment will not only strengthen the personality make-up of the individuals, but also make the individuals learn certain new skills important for effective living. It is applicable for home and office environment too. A person having warm and positive environment is less likely to go in to stress.

Try it Yourself

1. Analyze your environment and find how people are supporting you. Find the positive and the negative points.

30.4 HOBBIES, RECREATION AND LEISURE

Hobbies, recreation and leisure provide a highly admirable support to individuals for overcoming stress. They help individuals (who are under stress due to several reasons) relax and gain much wanted relief from stress. Relaxation sets in rather fast when an individual who is experiencing high stress, engage himself/herself in an activity which becomes a hobby or forms a part of recreation, because the individual does this task in a leisurely manner which does not add much pressure to him/her.

Leisure activities may be active such as participation in sports or in artistic creation or they may be passive like engaging in spectator sports, attending musical



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programmes or visiting museums, art galleries. Leisure activities can include solitary pursuits such as reading or quiet contemplative activity. Some aspects of leisure activities are creative as they allow human beings to develop their potentialities and to employ their talents and skills in new ways. The leisure activities have a re-creative function enabling the individuals to renew their energies. Thus again they can prepare themselves for confronting the demands of their everyday responsibilities including those connected with their work.

Certain leisure time activities like reading, T.V. viewing, card playing etc. contribute to the maintenance of personality.

Hobbies, recreation and leisure helps in managing stress adequately because the activities provide good exercise to both body and all the psychological systems. The individuals experience relaxation and they get immense happiness in knowing what their potentialities are. Moreover these activities enable them to develop or maximize the potentialities. As these activities are done in a less formal atmosphere, there is greater scope for sense of humour which acts as an antidote to stress. People acquire the ability to concentrate on the present more than the past or future by engaging themselves in the leisure time activities with a lot of interest. As many of the hobbies, recreational and leisure activities give an opportunity to the individuals to know more about others, the very socialization process becomes healthier and in the course of time the philosophy of each individual changes for the better because he or she gets a better view of the world. Thus, the value system becomes quite strong and well-knit. These informal activities very effectively contribute to the development of individuals. If each individual is fully developed, management of stress becomes pretty easy.

30.5 TIME MANAGEMENT

Time is an important factor which contributes to life in so many ways. That's why proverbs like "Time is gold", "Time is precious", "Time wasted cannot be taken back" are popular in society. We often think about time and keep doing things as per the time schedule. Time management is necessary for effective use of the available time for doing many activities within a short duration of time, thus, increasing the quality of the performance and life. Time acts as pressure when we simultaneously try to do many things without priorities. Time management techniques mainly involve (1) efficiency in doing things, (2) planning, and (3) prioritizing. Efficiency is increased by using simple notes, check lists etc. as one is shown in Figure 1.



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Today's Job	
1)	letter posting
2)	going to bank
3)	calling a friend
4)	purchasing a ticket
5)	_____
6)	_____

Fig. 1 : *Preparing schedule of a day with a check list.*

Planning would involve preparation, goal setting, scheduling future events and activities like fixing up appointments, setting dead lines, maintaining calendar etc. For example let us assume that you want to visit a hill station during summer vacation, you will have to plan the following steps.

Step 1 : Decide the hill station you want to visit. This can be based on the time and money available to you.

Step 2: Consult friends or tourist office for information like distance, accommodation, tourist spots, mode of transport, etc.

Step 3 : Book the ticket and the room (accommodation) in advance.

Step 4 : List out the things you would be taking for the trip such as eatables, clothes (casual and warm), camera, and other equipment for special purposes like trekking, entertainment etc.

Planning would make your trip more pleasant because you will be saved from the last minute hurry.

Prioritizing simply means sequencing as to what should be done first, second etc. From the example stated earlier, it could be noted that deciding the hill station, booking the accommodation and purchasing the ticket should be done first before making other arrangements. Even among the three, deciding a hill-station should be the first task.

Effective time management is a skill which one can acquire with conscious effort. The first step in this process is to identify the tasks which one wants to do. Then analyze the tasks in the following categories:

(1) “A” tasks, (2) “B” tasks, (3) “C” tasks.

“A” tasks should be done everyday during prime hours when one’s performance is at best. “B” type of tasks are those things which can be done, but with secondary importance. Perhaps 20 per cent of everyday’s time may be allotted for performing “B” tasks. “C” tasks are those which do not contribute to the priorities. These tasks can be ignored and they may be done at the leisure hour.



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For a student studying for an hour between 5 : 30 to 6 : 30 am can be called as “A” tasks. Polishing the shoes, ironing the uniform can be considered as “B” tasks and buying milk and vegetables may be considered as “C” tasks.

Distribution of work: A mother has a lot of work in the morning like cooking, preparing children for school, packing meal for husband. If she has to manage her time well, she has to train children to share the work such as polishing shoes, preparing a cup of tea, packing lunch for themselves. Children can do things better only when parents allow them to take care of themselves in eating, dressing, studying and so on. This type of distribution makes the mother free from time pressure and helps children learn skills for their well-being.

Some people have a tendency to do every work by themselves. A manager will be efficient only when he/she distributes the work amongst subordinates and gets it done. The allocation of the work must be done according to each one’s capacity, interest and skills.

Time Budgeting: Time-budgeting is similar to money budgeting. At the beginning of a month individuals allocate money to be spent for various things such as milk, vegetables, provision, transport, school fees etc. Likewise, planning to spend time for a day and for a week is necessary.

Time budgeting is done by considering priorities, which are determined by personal, familial and professional goals etc. The priorities can be divided as short-term and long-term and accordingly they have to be executed. Time available should be calculated after deducting the time spent for personal necessities like, brushing, bathing, washing, eating, sleeping etc.

For example: If one can take out 12 hrs. (8 hrs. for sleeping + 4 hrs. for personal care and travelling) one is left with only 12 hrs. These 12 hours can be budgeted for spending in office, family and personal hobbies etc. Personal needs should be given priority during Saturdays and Sundays. Short term goal/priority may be studying for the coming examination. The long term goal may be getting a promotion after obtaining the degree.

Time availability partly depends on the way time is spent. Carefully spending and enjoying the activities can add satisfaction and quality to our lives. Time spent without any purpose can be a great source of frustration and can result in stress.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 30.2

State whether the given statements are true or false:

1. Wellness refers to the good physical, psychological and social functioning of an individual. True/False
2. Time wasted cannot be got back. True/False



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3. Time does not act as pressure when we simultaneously try to do many things without priorities. True/False
4. Time management technique mainly involves efficiency, planning and prioritizing. True/False
5. Time budgeting is different than money budgeting. True/False

30.6 YOGA

Yoga is a way of life that promotes physical as well as psychological well-being. Yoga has eight main steps. The most important steps which can be ordinarily practised by us are given below:

1. **Yama:** practicing self-regulation.
2. **Niyama:** observing behavioural norms.
3. **Pranayama:** Pranayama is an exercise meant to regulate breathing. It makes the respiratory system work to its optimum thus ensuring proper supply of oxygen to the blood and improving blood circulation.
4. **Asanas:** Asanas are the physical aspect of yoga in which postures are checked and modified as required for setting right the imbalance of inner functions which include both physical and physiological aspects of the human body system. Asanas have preventive, curative, and promotive values.
5. **Pratyahar:** Means withdrawing the senses from the external objects and turn them inward. Yoga helps us to train our sense organs to remain quiet without outer stimulation.
6. **Dharna:** is focusing of mind on a particular object.
7. **Dhyan:** study contemplation or meditation.
8. **Samadhi:** Extreme level of Dhyana when one loses sense of time and place.

Preventive and Curative Values of Asanas

Assimilation of food becomes better; waste products get eliminated more easily. Endocrine glands function more effectively. Certain disorders of liver, spleen, pancreas, kidneys, bladder and heart get corrected to a great extent. Conditions like asthma, diabetes, spondylosis, and constipation etc. can be managed by yoga. Those who suffer from conditions like hypertension (high B.P.), heart ailment, slip disc, lumbar, spondylosis are advised to do asanas under the constant supervision of trained experts in Yoga, that too with the consent of medical practitioners who have been treating them.

Promotive Values: The most important steps of practice of Yoga can also bring benefits for the psychological functioning. They are:



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(i) relief from tension, stress and strain, anxiety, frustration, anger etc. **Yoga steps** produce relaxation, positive thinking, self-confidence, self-awareness, development of personality, improvement of memory, reduction of sleep deficit, etc.

Patience, endurance, cheerfulness, straightforwardness, discipline and perseverance are also achieved by practising yoga systematically for a long time.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 30.3

Match the following statements:

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| 1. Yama | a. Physical aspects of yoga (postural practices) |
| 2. Niyama | b. Focusing one's attention |
| 3. Pranayama | c. Practicing self regulation. |
| 4. Asana | d. Observing behavioural norms. |
| 5. Dhyan | e. Regulation of breathing. |

30.7 DHYAN (MEDITATION)

In ancient times “Rishis” (sages) used to meditate in calm and quiet places. This helped them to maintain good health and be clear in thinking. This, enabled them to advise the kings for effective rule for the welfare of the people. You can also do meditation. Dhyan (meditation) is focussing one's attention to a particular state and not letting any thought disturb it. The aim of meditation is to relax the body and mind. Meditation can provide inner peace and reduce stress from the hustle and bustle of daily life. The basic common element found in all forms of meditation is pointedness which means all the attention is directed to one feature of experience and everything else is excluded.

Dhyan brings down intense emotions. Pulse rate, skin conductivity, and muscle tension, become better due to meditation. Therefore almost all stress related disorders such as high Blood Pressure, migraine etc. can be managed rather effectively through meditation. Meditation gives healthy thinking characterized by clarity, good concentration and intellectual power. It reduces anger, anxiety, frustration, inferiority complex, tension. Ultimately it can be said that meditation enhances wellbeing.

30.8 PHYSICAL EXERCISE AND NUTRITION

“All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy” is an old saying. Yes, it is indeed so. If an individual goes without proper physical exercise, he/she loses control over the functioning. Physical exercises to a great extent trim the body and discipline

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the mind. If individuals cannot do rigorous physical exercises, they can at least go for walking, jogging, skipping etc., depending upon their health status. Exercises do produce a lot of positive change in the body. Warming up every part of the body systematically and cooling it down in systematic manner do good. Blood circulation becomes quite rhythmic and thinking becomes clear and positive, thereby, both body and mind are kept in the state of well being.

Adequate and balanced nutrition helps the individual to promote health. The best defence for the demands of stress is a healthy body. An old quote says that “a sound mind exists in a sound body”. Nutrition and physical exercises help individuals remain healthy. The body’s energy supply and the basic building blocks needed for the growth and maintenance, come from the three main macro nutrients namely carbohydrates, proteins and fat. Salads, vegetables and fresh fruits should form a substantial part of the day’s eating. Eating snacks between meals (that too, snacks like chips, chocolates, soft drinks, sweet, biscuits) is not good for both the waistline and the healthiness of diet.

Vegetarian diets are in many ways closer to the ideal healthy diet than non-vegetarian ones as they contain saturated fat and fiber. Drinking 8 to 10 glasses of water everyday provides the cells with ample fluid and aids the kidneys in flushing out waste products. Eating a healthy and regular diet will ensure healthy body and mind.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 30.4**

1. What is meditation? Mention any two of its effects.

2. What are the three macro-nutrients?

**WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT**

- Relaxation is a state which is just opposite to the state of stress or tension. Among the several methods by which one can attain relaxation, deep muscle relaxation and biofeedback are the most widely used and popular procedures.
- Thought stopping, systematic desensitization, Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy are some of the cognitive strategies by which stress can be effectively managed.



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- Hobbies, recreation and leisure time activities not only divert the attention of individuals from stress producing thoughts to relaxation, but also do those activities which enable the individuals to realize their potentialities and to grow healthy.
- Besides stress management, it is also important to know about time management for well being. Task analysis, proper time budgeting and distribution of work will enhance the state of well being achieved by effective time management.
- Yoga offers improved physical flexibility, freedom from stress and profound sense of wellbeing. People of all ages and conditions can do Yoga. Yama, Niyama, Pranayama, Asanas and meditation are important constituents of Yoga. Meditation is a state in which attention is directed to one feature of experience and everything else is excluded.
- The aim of meditation as well as Yoga is to induce relaxation.
- Physical exercises and nutrition provide the individuals with good physical health which in turn promotes psychological wellbeing.



TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. Explain any two cognitive strategies for the management of stress.
2. What role do hobbies, recreation and leisure play in the management of stress?
3. Briefly describe the procedure of time management.
4. How do physical exercises and nutrition promote wellbeing?



ANSWER TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

30.1

1. A procedure in which changes in internal bodily reactions are made available to the person and he or she may alter the reaction in favour of relaxation.
2. Altering the cognitive environment by systematic desensitization, thought stopping, rational emotive behaviour therapy.

30.2 (1) True, (2) True, (3) False, (4) True, (5) False

30.3 (1) c (2) d (3) e (4) a (5) b

30.4

1. Focussing of attention, inner peace, stress reduction.
2. Carbohydrates, protein, fat.