

Stress & Sleep Management

Lifestyle, Setting Limits, Exercise, and Meditation

Weight Loss - **Week 10**



Stress and Sleep Management

As you have learned by now, the Metabolic Code™ Program works to help you manage stress, because it can affect so many areas of your physiology, that when unmanaged, can make it difficult, if not nearly impossible to lose weight and keep it off.



Areas Affected by Chronic Cortisol Elevation:



- Poor insulin function that leads to diabetes and weight gain.
- Reduced quality of sleep that correlates strongly with weight gain.
- Increased signals for visceral fat cells to store excess calories.
- Disrupted neuro-chemicals in the brain leading to craving patterns for sugary foods, memory problems, and reduced ability to sleep.
- Elevated blood pressure and vascular disease that leads to prescription drug needs.
- Increased fatigue that can result in a lack of motivation to exercise.
- Reduced thyroid function leading to weight gain.
- Intestinal health – increased gut permeability, leading to more risk for allergies and autoimmune disease.
- Reduced sex hormone production and decreased sex drive.

It becomes easy to see how stress directly leads to weight gain and a continued downward spiral, reducing the quality of your life and increasing your risk for chronic diseases.



So how do you **fight back**?

As you know our program provides dietary supplements with ingredients that have been studied and shown to down regulate cortisol production and therefore which can lessen the effects of stress on your sleep and your metabolism. These supplements are extremely helpful for when your life has sources of stress that simply can't be changed, like caring for an elderly parent, financial stress, going through a divorce, etc.



Dietary supplements work very well and are great when going through a stress that can't be changed, like a divorce or caring for a loved one who is sick. But there are other approaches that you can use to help manage stress. Regular exercise, yoga, meditation, and deep breathing exercises have all been shown to be effective at lowering stress levels.

Define your personal sources of stress and work to limit or redefine them. Recognize that we control what we do in the 24 hours we have each day and are in charge of how we interpret events in our life.

Take Charge of Your Response to People and Situations:

For example, you may be going through a divorce, but you can choose to not let it define you. You can work at not allowing an ex to "push your buttons," not retaliating to verbal barbs, etc. That is taking charge of our thinking – our response to things in life.

Taking charge of what you do. Overcommitted schedules can be a huge source of stress. Give yourself permission to reassess your daily activities and prioritize what is truly important to you. For example, assess how much of your time is being eroded by "busy work." You don't have to say "yes" to every request. Take control of your life and insert the things you want and eliminate things you no longer want to do. Other seemingly small things can make a difference, like making sure any appointment you set with someone, you allow ten minutes plus or minus, so not finding a parking space right away, doesn't amount to dramatically increased stress.

Also, go easy on yourself. For example, you have been learning new diet and health habits, which on one hand can help alleviate stress but on the other hand it can be somewhat stressful learning new habits. Give yourself a chance with your new lifestyle and don't expect it go perfectly right away. If you fall down on anything, just get back on it and





Action Steps for Stress Management:



Exercise Options- If you haven't started exercising yet, now may be the time to discuss the exercise program options with your program director. Besides actually helping to reduce stress hormones, the focus on physical activity is a way of forcing yourself to focus on something else for 10 to 30 minutes or more each day.



Deep Breathing - If meditation is difficult to do, deep breathing may work better for you. The correct way to do deep breathing is make sure to breath from the abdomen first, expanding it as much as possible, while not allowing the chest to expand very much if at all. Breath in slowly to a count of 4 and work your way to higher counts as you get better at it. Exhale slowly to the same count or higher. Do at least 4 repetitions. This method is easiest to do while lying down on the floor and propping your knees up on a stool or a few pillows. However, it can be done while seated in a chair.

Getting Good Sleep



Your body needs a bare minimum of 6, but preferably 7 hours per night or more uninterrupted sleep. Studies show getting at least 6 hours of sleep or more is crucial to controlling appetite and insulin resistance and therefore is one of the most important things we can do to help weight loss.






Allow yourself time to get adequate sleep. This might mean watching less TV at night, but the pay off in longer sleep is worth it. If you would like to sleep more, but either can't fall asleep or stay asleep, the number one reason for this is something called hyperarousal, or elevated nighttime cortisol, caused by chronic stress. So good stress management is crucial, and goes hand in hand with good sleep.



Try Stretching for Stress Relief

Stress restricts blood flow and causes tension in your muscles. Stretching can decrease the production of stress hormones while increasing endorphins.

Simple Daily Stretches

-  **Head rolls and turns to relax your neck.**
Relax and roll head forward and back and side to side. Then turn your head to the right and left. Roll head in circles both ways.
-  **Stand up and stretch arms in front of you, lace fingers together.**
Push your arms forward curving your back and shoulders forward at the same time. Hold for a few seconds, and then release. Put hands behind your back and lace your fingers. Raise your arms to pull shoulders back and stretch the front of your chest.
-  **Back Stretch** – stand with feet shoulder width apart, bend knees slightly and bend forward. Put hands on knees. Looking down, round your back closing chest and curving back. Then straighten and arch your back. Repeat several times.
-  **Leg Circulation.** Hold on to a desk or chair. Extend one leg in front of you flexing your foot. Then rotate your foot in circles to the right, then to the left. Repeat with other leg and foot. When done,
-  **Calf stretches.** Holding onto a counter or desk, place right foot and leg behind you bending left leg in front of you. Press right heel down to floor to stretch calf muscle. Repeat on other side. (This is best done flat footed, so if wearing shoes with heels, take them off!)



Sleep Pointers:

- 1 Manage Stress** – Use stress reduction measures, supplements and other techniques discussed above.
- 2 Exercise Daily** – Physical activity helps reduce stress and promotes better sleep.
- 3 Avoid Stimulants** – No caffeine after 1pm.
- 4 Sleep Hygiene** – Have a routine each night. Go to bed at the same time each night. Start winding down activity a good hour before bed. Drink a cup of chamomile tea, etc.
- 5 Darken your Room and Reduce Light Exposure** - Get off the computer 2 hours before bedtime and don't sit too close to a TV in the evening. Make sure no light comes in your windows at night.
- 6 Supplements** - Melatonin and other ingredients such as GABA and magnesium can greatly facilitate a good sleep cycle. They are safe and effective way to facilitate your body's natural sleep cycle.

Taking measures to reduce stress and to get more and better sleep can result in reduced cortisol, reduced daily strife, and a reduced waistline!