ACTIVIDADES DE APOYO

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Docente: GONZALO ESTRADA OLAYA grado: UNDÉCIMO Fecha:







It's how you spend your days - not your down time - that matters

Cathy Carr, a 43 year old doctor, starts her day with putting on her make up, nukking oatmeal for her three kids and dashing out the door. By 7:30 am she's rushing around the Indianapolis hospital where she works, dealing with heart attacks and miscarriages.

Evenings are no better:" My purse isn't off my shoulder when I hear, "What's for dinner?" she says.

Carr's remedy for the building stress? Every few months, she and a friend check in to a hotel and treat themselves to a quiet day of room service and sesame-oil massages.

But, this is the wrong way to deal with stress. So says a growing body of research which says that millions of us manage stress incorrectly-stressing out all day, then deferring relaxation to isolated blocks of time like evening yoga classes and weekend getaways.

There is a problem with this approach to stress management: The constant exposure to daily, chronic anxiety is the most toxic form of stress. The body releases chemicals under high stress that can damage the immune system, increase the risk of illness, damage your memory and can lead to heart attacks. And if you eat to cope, it can make you fat. Your exposure to stress isn't managed by having an evening bubble bath or vegging in front of the TV. It is how you spend your days that matters. The latest research examines how some people glide through stressful situations while others wind themselves tighter.

Researchers have found a number of coping strategies that can be described by one word - resilience. Resilient people recover quickly, physically and mentally when faced with stress. It is how they breathe and how often they laugh, a set of subtle behaviors helps them ease in and out of `stress mode`.

We need to change how we react to stress, as it happens with these four strategies:

1. PLUG IN

Notice when you are stressed by signals like fast breathing and tight muscles, especially in your jaw or shoulder muscles. Then alter your breathing (deeper is better), drop your shoulders and relax your muscles and change what you are thinking. Imagine you are on a beach or somewhere relaxing. Do whatever you need to do to return your body to a state of calm. This is what stress resistant people do naturally.



While skeptics dismiss a lot of this, Wicken claims she can lower her anxiety in less than a minute.

2. TAKE A DEEP BREATH

Sitting at a desk increases stress. How? Most people raise their shoulders when they sit at a computer and they begin to breathe more shallowly says Erik Peper, a professor of San Francisco University. He recommends State breathing slowly and regularly. Researchers find that this is one of the fastest ways to trigger the body's relaxation response.

3. GET SNACKING

Its late afternoon and you are staring at the office vending machine. Go ahead - give in to temptation!

MIT researcher Judith Wurtman says your body is looking for stress relief. Eating carbohydrates triggers production of serotonin, a neurotransmitter with a calming effect.

That isn't an excuse to binge on chocolate bars. Eat your way to a calmer state with low fat carbohydrates like pretzels or popcorn. The effect can be felt after about 20 minutes.

4, STEP BACK

Many stress coaches try to teach their clients one key skill: perspective. What Pam Pecke of the University of Maryland calls the "ability to see things from ten paces back."

Experts advise us to rate stressful situations on a one-to-ten scale (with 10 being something catastrophic, like death). This helps put minor problems, like being late, into perspective. And gaining perspective helps you cope with more stress without becoming more stressed out.

Article adapted from The Wall Street Journal By Jane Spencer

- 1. What is the main idea of this reading?
 - a. You should go on a holiday or get more down time if you feel stressed
 - b. People who are stressed should eat more carbohydrates to calm them
 - c. Everyone should develop their resilience to stress with coping strategiesd. Stress causes toxic chemicals to be released into the body
- 2. Write summaries of the coping strategies suggested:

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