

What Is Stress?



Stress can be defined as a physical, chemical, or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension, and may be a factor in disease causation.

1. TYPES OF STRESS

Acute stress is caused by minor, temporary sources of stress – such as being stuck in a traffic jam, or getting into an argument.

Acute episodic stress is when these minor moments of stress keep recurring – such as having frequent work deadlines.

Chronic stress results from persistent, long-term causes of stress that can be difficult to change – such as:



Financial instability from unemployment



Mental or physical abuse



Family conflict

Traumatic stress is a type of chronic stress that permanently changes an individual's beliefs and assumptions, often after a traumatic event – such as:



Life-threatening accident



Near-death experience

2. THE STRESS RESPONSE

All types of stress result in the same stress response:



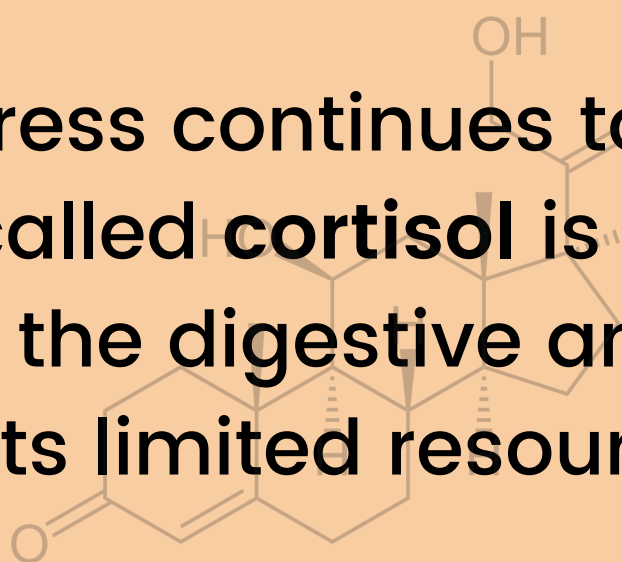
FIGHT

OR

FLIGHT

When a stressful event occurs, adrenaline levels in the blood rise. Adrenaline is a hormone that increase your heart rate. This makes us more alert and responsive during stressful times.

If the stress continues to build or does not reduce, another hormone called **cortisol** is released. Cortisol leads to decreased function of the digestive and reproductive system - as the body prioritizes its limited resources to deal with the source of stress.



3. THE PROBLEM WITH CHRONIC STRESS

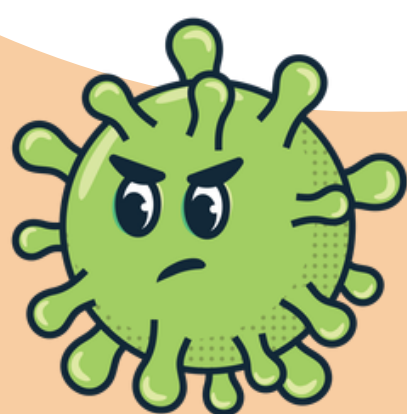
High levels of cortisol over a long period of time prevents the body's essential systems from functioning properly. As a result, chronic stress can result in serious health problems - such as:

- ⚠️ Rapid heartbeat
- ⚠️ Anxiety
- ⚠️ Type 2 diabetes
- ⚠️ Difficulty sleeping
- ⚠️ Higher blood pressure
- ⚠️ Cardiovascular disease

Why Is Stress A Serious Issue?



First came the emergence of COVID-19, then came circuit breaker, mandatory mask-wearing, extended lockdowns, and the list goes on and on. We are all aware of the physical effects of COVID-19, but what about the long-term 'side effects'?



1. LONG TERM EFFECTS COVID-19 HAS

In 2020, COVID-19 resulted in a decline in economic activity, local spending, and domestic activity. Lockdowns keeping us at home for extended periods of time have also led to arguments between family members and roommates:



Increase in family disputes



Domestic violence cases increased by 22% from the usual average of 398 cases monthly

*Conversely, some families did become more bonded as a result of spending more time with one another



Post-pandemic social anxiety may emerge due to the fear of changes and new measures

2. MAKING A DIFFERENCE



Helplines are not always a feasible option as victims may be afraid their abusers find out.

What can we do?

Create a safe environment for the people around us to speak up. If you know anyone who is in an abusive relationship, here is a guide.



3. LONG TERM EFFECTS OF THE COMPETITIVE SINGAPOREAN CLIMATE



Did you know that 92% of Singaporeans in the workforce are stressed, 8% above the global average? Singapore is known to have the unhappiest workforce in the world despite having a high quality of life. Living in a fast-paced society, everyone has the pressure to succeed academically, socially, and financially:



Overworking

*Creates a toxic culture



Constantly making comparisons with others in our social circle

*Although comparing may serve as a motivator to perform better, it is far from a long-term solution and can create mental health issues when taken to an extreme.

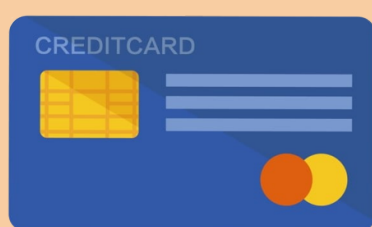
2. THE 5 Cs of Singapore



Cash



Car



Credit



Condominium



Club

Infamously coined as the “Five Cs of Singapore”, this “cash, car, credit card, condominium, and country club” seemingly projects an ideal image to others that is grounded in materialism.

The previously mentioned 5Cs model has now shifted and is being redefined; cash remains as the top contender, with changes to the other aspects such as attaining a good career, being cultured, holding credibility, and enjoying convenience in products and services.

Why Is Reducing Stress Good For The Community?



Mastering the ability to reduce stress has been a widely debated topic in Singapore. We are all probably familiar with the mindset that stress boosts our productivity and motivation to accomplish tasks. While this may hold true at times, prolonged stress can have detrimental effects.

1. INDIVIDUAL BENEFITS



Better psychological and physiological health such as:

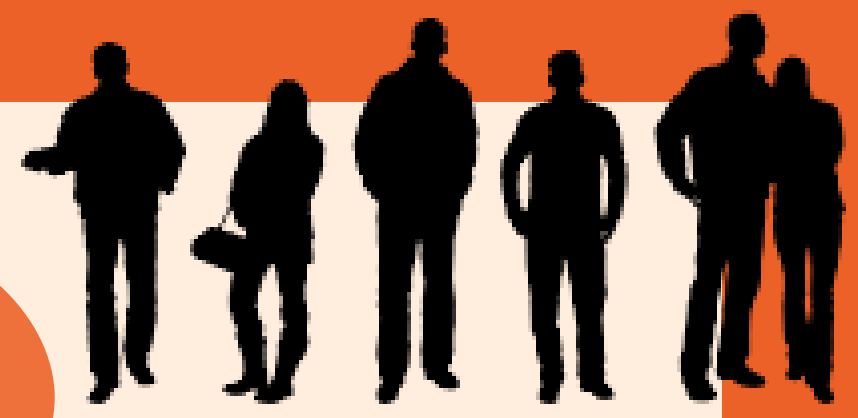
- Better nutrition
- Higher immunity
- Lowered risk of heart disease
- Decreased risk of digestive issues
- Lesser moodiness and irritability
- Reduced risk of obesity and diabetes
- Higher positivity and boost in confidence
- Increased energy and consistent sleep cycles
- Lowered risk of having psychological breakdowns and depression



Increased workplace productivity

- Better nutrition
- Feeling energised
- Mental positivity towards one's profession
- Increased efficacy in task completion
- Prevent burnout syndrome and chronic work stress





2. COMMUNITY BENEFITS



Increase in social harmony



Transforming toxic workplaces into supportive ones



Higher happiness index

Since reducing stress levels has proven to be beneficial to the individual, it can also be said to be beneficial to the community as a whole. For instance, increased positivity and energy levels would result in lesser conflicts within our social interactions.

This can be applied to:

Public & Private

spheres

Workplace & Friend groups

Family & Relatives

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that stress affects everyone and that not all stress is detrimental. However, learning how to manage and reduce stress when we have been exposed to prolonged chronic levels of stress is still essential to maintaining a healthy lifestyle.