

MIND BODY FITNESS

As fitness professionals we often work with clients under undue mental or emotional stress. The goal of a fitness professional is to help people reach overall wellbeing as well as to help the individual better manage their stress.

To achieve this we need to understand the impact of stress on an individual's body both physiologically & psychologically.

About stress:

Stress can be viewed as the response of a person who is under *strain* or a stressor (thing, situation, and person)

For example:

***physiological stress may be a pain in body or a feeling of fatigue, heartburn, irritability**

whereas

***psychological stress may be a feelings of fear or anxiety**

The Mind-Body Connection is about balancing the mind with the physical body in a way that we build or blend to a healthy existence. Balance comes through managing diet or healthy nutrition, regular exercise and the appropriate rest of the body. Ideally, the body should balance relaxation with concentration for a positive outlook and attitudes of the mind. This is very well established in eastern cultures, but is relatively new to western societies. More people are learning to embrace yoga, tai chi, Pilates, and other and relaxation techniques; however, the biggest barrier to balance in mind and body is stress.

Stress and the Mind-Body Fitness are connected through the brain and the endocrine system. The brain and hormone producing glands in the body (i.e. the adrenal gland) work together to protect us from harm (fight or flight reaction). Our bodies are involuntary programmed to this response. Stress is the common modern day occurrence that elicits a fear driven response that we recognize as "anxieties".

Naturally, we may learn to manage the fight or flight response with better choices or decisions; however, today's society likes the "quick fix" of managing stress their stress with pharmaceuticals rather than behaviour modification like therapy, counselling or simply balanced mind-body movement. Everyone may learn to change their life for the better. Behaviour change takes concentration and discipline.

How to Manage Stress

- ◆ Look at your way of life and think of how you may improve it – DO IT!
- ◆ Eat Proper Nutrition. Know what you are putting into your body and how it helps or hurts it.



- ◆ Utilize **REGULAR** Physical Exercise to stretch, strengthen and balance the body. (There is more to life than cardio!!)
- ◆ Add 2 gears of training to your programs. Firstly, a more full body or high energy program that gets rid of stress, anger and focuses energy. Secondly, add more slower mindful and relaxation exercises to learn how to slow yourself down.
- ◆ Add instrumental music to your day. Choose music that calms yet engages your soul in a positive way
- ◆ Add visualization, affirmations or meditation techniques daily routine
- ◆ Work on centering or anchoring your posture as you walk, sit, stand, move or eat. Feel your energy from your posture and work on centering the body from the core.

There are so many “Positive” benefits associated with regular Physical activity – it really is amazing that 60% of our Western Culture is sedentary.

Here are a “few” benefits

- ◆ Reduced feelings and negative effects associated with stress: frustration, anger fatigue and depression
- ◆ Enhanced anabolic hormone production and controlled catabolic production
- ◆ Enhanced immune function, decreased susceptibility to allergies, infection and disease
- ◆ Regulated sleep patterns and quality of sleep
- ◆ Increased mood elevating hormones (endorphins) which increase feelings of relaxation energy and Physical performance
- ◆ Increased metabolism
- ◆ Feeling of confidence and improved self esteem

