

Lesson 1

Exercise Your Stress Away

Introduction

I wonder what it would be like to wake up in the morning without feeling stressed?

You'll probably know all the stress management techniques going under the sun, right? But why then, do you still struggle to manage stress? You might have tried strategies before, like exercise, deep breathing, or meditation and got close to it. But have these fizzled out?

Taking the pressure off yourself can help reduce stress. Trying to be Wonder Woman or Superman might get you brownie points at work in the short-term but you'll soon burn out and be less productive.

There are a number of ways you can let go of stress and by the end of the lesson, you'll have a few things to try, to put you back in the driver's seat. You'll learn how best to build exercise into your routine so you'll choose to integrate it into your life, long after you've completed this course.

Naturally, it's always a good idea to consult with your doctor before starting any new exercise routine.

Seeing stress as a blocker to your achievements and how it affects your body and mind is the first step.

The Science

Academics define stress as a state of feeling overwhelmed and an inability to cope with pressures. When stressed, you believe that you don't have the personal resources to manage situations and can feel like your world is crumbling around you.

Your physical and mental wellbeing can be affected by stress. Your work productivity can suffer and your career potential limited.

Is it any wonder why high-flying professionals have a short life, or short career? They burn themselves out and experience exhaustion.

Studies have found that regular exercise such as walking each day increases production of endorphins and releases dopamine in your body, giving you the feel-good factor.

Exercise also serves as a distractor to those worrying thoughts associated with stress by keeping you focused on the present, in the movements you're doing.

Value

Exercise is a proven way of reducing stress. It can help you achieve your work and life goals and keep your wellbeing in good shape.

Achieving small exercise goals gives you a dopamine boost which will motivate you and give you a sense of accomplishment.

Regular exercise keeps you fixed on the task in hand. Physical symptoms, emotional tension, and worrying thoughts melt away. You have more energy and enjoy the sense of calm and relaxation that follows it.

Your pent up energy can be put to good use through an exercise regime that can be as gentle or as tough as you want. As long as you exercise every day, you'll reap the rewards and be well on the way to being the more productive, calm and composed you!

Exercise video

In this exercise you'll need 10 minutes. Watch the video for inspiration and a range of ideas for the forms of exercise you might take.

In today's fast-paced world, our emotions can take a battering and our nerves can start to fray. Adrenaline floods our bodies, which in the short term can be good as it gives us the energy to be fast and effective. When our bodies are exposed to the stress response for longer periods, we feel unable to cope, and experience unpleasant physical and emotional symptoms.

Boot camps are a great way of exercising alongside others, who can give us the support we need to maintain the routine. Look out for ones in your area that you can attend in person, or even online.

Walking the dog is a great stress-buster. It's something we can do every day, and it gives us that special time with our furry friends.

Cycling can be exhilarating, but guess what, we won't be stressing about work, we'll be too busy avoiding cracks in the road, feeling the wind in our face as we take our feet off the pedals hurtling downhill, or gasping for breath as we're taking on a hill climb.

Bonus Tips

Start slowly... as you're more likely to keep going with it.

Choose an activity you enjoy... gardening is a form of exercise so if you prefer this to running, do it!

Make it accessible – having a hoop, skipping rope or yoga mat handy in your place of work can help you bust that stress in your breaktimes.

Protect the time... it's important for your physical and emotional wellbeing, so schedule it in your diary.

If your lunch break allows it, get out and walk. Look out for physical activities on offer at your work too!

Wrap

Accepting that exercise can help improve your physical and mental wellbeing is important if you are to recoup the rewards it brings. Not only will you find that you have a fitter physique, but your mind will be in better shape too.

Whilst some stress is good for you, constant stress is a health concern. By managing stress through exercise, it will only come into play when it's really needed.

To keep exercise going as a strategy, try building it into your routine – just as you eat and drink every day. Exercise is a powerful solution and can help you achieve and be productive.