
How to get off the **STRESS** express

Gaining control over stress

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What is Stress - Signs and Symptoms

Stress is simply energy. Therefore, stress management is merely energy conservation. Good stress is the excitement you feel when your favorite team is winning. Good stress helps you concentrate and keeps you motivated. Distress is whenever you feel frustrated, threatened or angry. Excess stress of either kind can be harmful.

Too much excitement can lead to burn-out, just like excessively eating your favorite sweets can lead to health problems. Excess stress can lead to burn-out, but more often results in "rust-out." Rust-out is general fatigue, boredom, irritability, and living merely "by the numbers" (going through the motions of life/job while feeling lifeless). Another sign of "rust-out" is the inability to re-energize after a good night's sleep or a weekend.

Causes of Stress

The major cause of stress in most people's life is a sense of not being in control of changes or events in one's life. Again, even too many good changes (a new job, combin-



ed with a recent marriage and relocation) would be very stressful. Job stress is very common. The good news is the most "rust-out" symptoms are reversible. Reversing Type A behaviors (reducing anger, time urgency) has even successfully improved cardiac rehabilitation.

Cures for Stress Excess

- Maintain a positive attitude.
- Substitute "I have to" with "I want to."
- Cut back on caffeine (over two or three weeks, cut back to two or less servings of caffeine drinks daily).
- Start walking three times weekly after consulting your physician.
- Enjoy your loved ones and pets.
- Clean up clutter and manage time where important.
- Learn to deal with difficult people assertively, without becoming angry or feeling guilty.
- Learn to relax yourself physically, concentrating on unclenching jaw muscles and fists, and breathing deeply and slowly.
- Consult a professional for overwhelming stress or panic attacks.

Dr. Ron Rubenzer, a licensed psychological associate, has written for *Duke's Talent Identification Program*. He coaches in performance enhancement on group tests from grade school to medical school and in career achievement. "**Your success is my goal**" is his mission statement. His internationally sold book, *How the Best Handle Stress*, (Barnes and Noble) is based on his presentation at Switzerland's World Congress on Stress, college teaching and U.S. TV appearances. He is in private practice in Greensboro, North Carolina (Triad Counseling 336-272-8090) where he also does individual testing. For more information about Dr. Rubenzer, please visit www.drrubenzer.com. His 2004 audio-CD "Your Relaxation Vacation" has been used in hospitals, businesses, schools and homes nationwide.

