



What is it?

Meeting deadlines may be inspirational for some people and a nightmare for others.

When you are under stress your body reacts as if you were facing a physical threat and initiates the 'fight-or-flight' response.

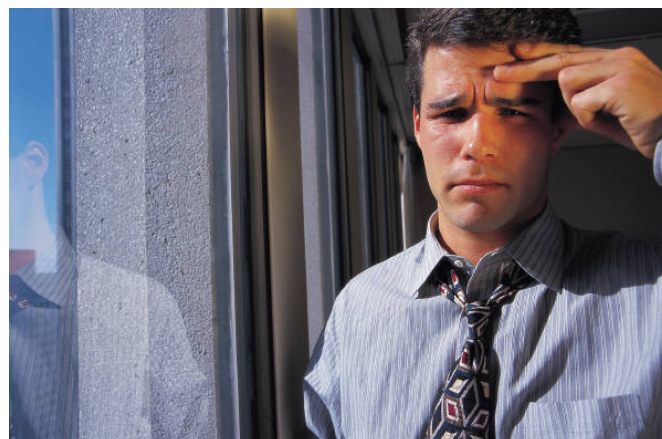
The fight or flight response – in slow motion:

- Your pituitary gland, responds to a perceived threat by increasing the release of adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH), which signals the adrenal glands to release cortisol and adrenaline into the bloodstream
- By this time your heart is racing to pump blood to vital areas of the body to cope with the stress
- The rate of breathing is increased to supply adequate oxygen to your heart, brain and exercising muscles
- Perspiration is increased to help maintain body temperature
- Digestive secretions are decreased because digestion is not critical when trying to counteract stress
- Blood sugar levels are increased to provide instant energy.
- Phew. You have finally escaped the threat.
- Cortisol and adrenaline in your bloodstream decline which, results in your heart rate, blood pressure, digestion and metabolism to return to normal.

Symptoms

Compared to early man we are constantly under stress and when the fight or flight response is constantly activated long-term health problems can occur, such as the following symptoms or conditions:

- Headache, fatigue, anxiety, depression, poor concentration, insomnia
- High blood pressure, cardiovascular disease
- Increased asthma attacks in asthma sufferers



- Digestive changes, diarrhoea or constipation, heartburn
- Muscular aches, twitches or spasms
- Loss of appetite or overeating
- Excessive use of tobacco or alcohol
- Decreased sex drive. Reproductive changes eg irregular menstrual cycle, premenstrual syndrome
- Immune changes.

Why does it happen?

A stressor can be anything that creates a disturbance that our body takes as harmful. These triggers may include any or all of the following:

- Illness
- Physical trauma such as a car accident
- Emotional upset
- Exposure to excessive heat or cold
- Environmental toxins
- Life events such as marriage, death of a loved one, divorce, financial difficulties, work problems and retirement.

What natural therapies can help?

When we are stressed our body utilises [zinc](#), **B group vitamins** and [vitamin C](#). Invest in a good supplement containing these nutrients.

Magnesium and **calcium** help relax muscles.

Valerian, **passion flower**, [chamomile](#) and **St John's wort** are calming herbs and may help if you are experiencing sleeping difficulties.

Liquorice tea – an adrenal tonic.

[Korean ginseng](#) – traditionally used short term for debilitated conditions. It increases the body's resistance to stress and builds up general vitality.

Bacopa – is a nerve tonic.

Read more

[Time for an energy boost](#)

February 2006 Good Health News
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[Discover how to get more energy](#)

November 2005 Good Health News
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[D-stress to enjoy life](#)

February 2006 Good Health News
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[How to stop stressing and start living](#)

May 2005 Good Health News
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Did you know?

Don't overburden your body with the extra stress of late nights, alcohol, excessive caffeine and junk food.

Get adequate rest and follow a healthy diet.

Chill out – exercise and stretching helps clear your mind and relaxes your muscles.

Try deep breathing exercises and meditation if you can't slow down.

Seek help or talk to a friend if it is taking over your life.

THIS INFORMATION IS NOT INTENDED TO TREAT OR DIAGNOSE. ALWAYS CONSULT YOUR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL BEFORE TAKING NUTRITIONAL OR HERBAL SUPPLEMENTS.