



Fight or Flight?



Are you stressed out?

Is your job stressful?

What causes you to be stressed?

What is stress?

-Experts are divided over definition

1. 'external response that can be measured by changes in glandular secretions, skin reactions and other physical functions.
2. 'internal interpretation of, or reaction to, as stressor, which might be defines as something in one's environment that strains one's adaptive capacities and threatens one's well being.
3. BOTH of the above

What is stress?

Dr. William Roberts (University of Minnesota): “In engineering terms, stress is something that deforms the material. In the medical sense, it’s something that puts pressure on your biological or psychic system that makes you feel abnormal.”

Dr. David Coppel (University of Washington): “When the demands from the environment are greater than our emotional and psychological resources, what’s left over is stress.”

What is stress?

- Stress is multi-dimensional: physical, environmental, emotional and spiritual
- Stress can be an emotion about the future
- Stress can be depression, having a sense of loss (perceived or actual)

INTERESTING:

Our bodies do not care about the 'source' of stress (economic, overwork, etc.)

BUT:

It is very damaging on a wide scale

SHOCKING:

- 80 - 90% of illness is stress-related
- 100 million Americans suffer from them

Symptoms of Stress

Short-term:

- increased heart-rate
- sweaty palms
- muscle tension
- gastrointestinal distress
- dizziness
- fatigue
- panic attacks
- anxiousness
- depression

Science of Stress

Primary physiological agent = cortisol (‘stress hormone)

Small amounts:

- quick burst of energy
- heightened memory
- increased immunity
- lower sensitivity to pain

Continued secretion of cortisol:

- impaired cognitive function
- blood sugar imbalances
- loss of muscle and bone density
- more abdominal fat
- higher blood pressure
- lower immunity

Long-term:

Severe effect on heart and other organs

Research facts

-some vulnerability to stress can be genetic
(shorter version of serotonin transporter gene)

higher risks:

- sense of loss of control over physical environment and social support networks
- the socially disadvantaged (race, gender, educational level)

Activity #1

What are some symptoms of stress that you have identified for yourself?

(write them on the note card)

Activity #2

How do you usually respond to stress?
What do you do to alleviate it?

(write them on the note card)

**What is the cheapest medicine
to treat stress?**

Exercise

- helps the body to mobilize energy
- prepares the body to better cope with stress
- reduces anxiety
- reduces blood pressure

DIET

- eat foods high in magnesium and calcium (green leafy veggies)
- eat foods high in vitamin B, C and amino acids (fruits, veggies, whole grains)

Free your mind!

1. Set boundaries (power off phone, computer, etc.)
2. Quiet the mind (too much sensory overload)
3. Turn off the TV (we are addicted)
4. Take a virtual vacation
5. Pray/Meditate
6. Practice self-talk
7. Muscle relaxation method
8. Deep breathing

Do good to others!

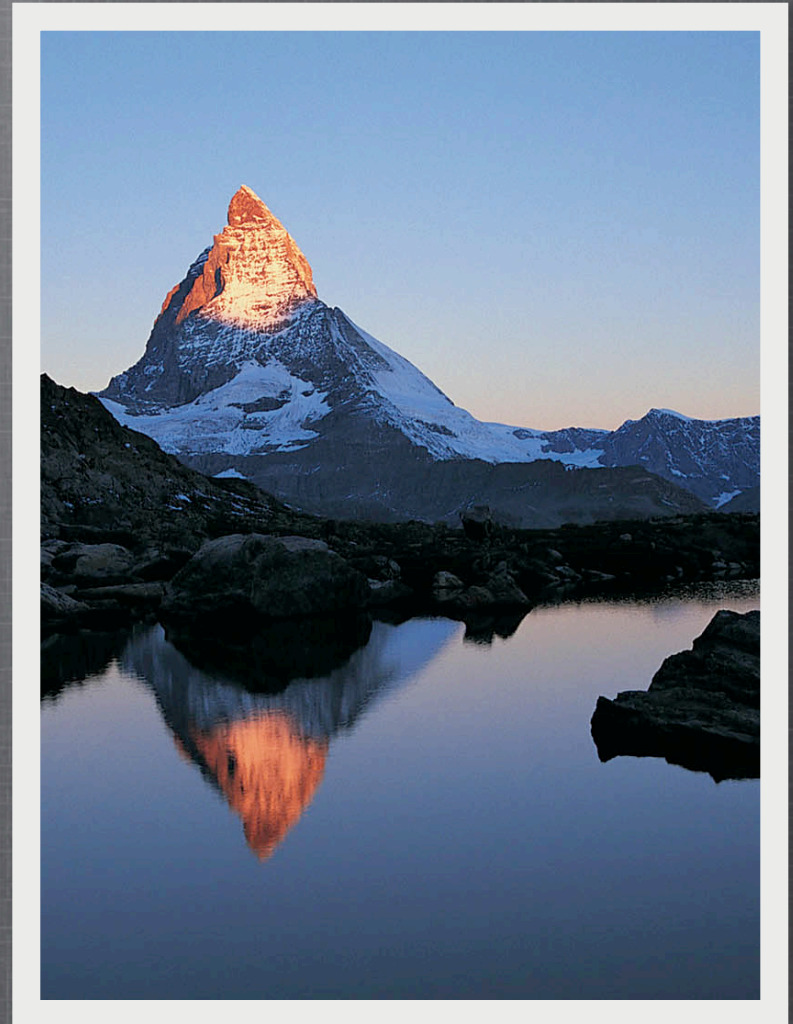
2 more things

-Avoid the 'Ostrich Approach'

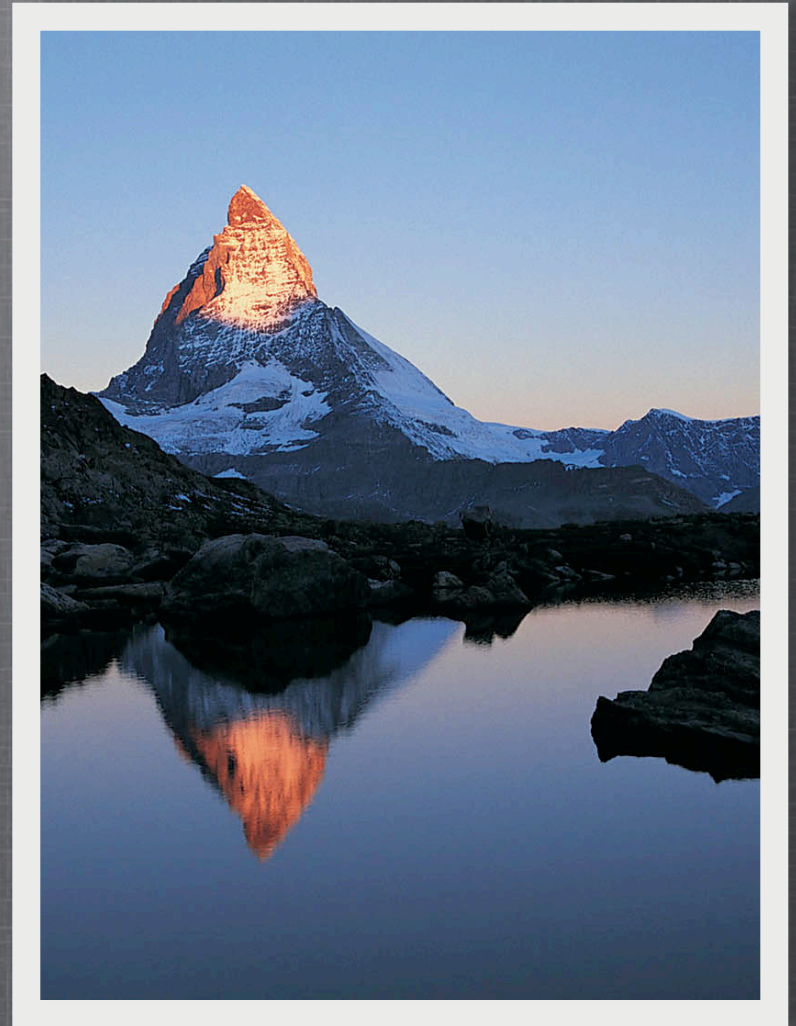
-Get regular rest

REST

Regular bodily rest is observed by humans and in the animal kingdom and it is **ESSENTIAL** for survival.



Matthew 11:28
Come to me you
who are tired and
worried and I will
give you rest.



Stress-reducing Resources

- American Institute of Stress (www.stress.org)
- CDC
- National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) - Stress at work. (www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/stress)

Presentation Resources

- American Council on Exercise/ Fitness Matters Magazine (March/April 2009)