

PRESENTED BY



Los Alamos Fitness Center

FIT

Los Alamos

3/21/2010

Exercise to Reduce Stress
By Kent Pegg



No matter who you are, you have, no doubt, experienced stress at some point during your life. The majority of Americans say they face at least a moderate level of stress most every week. And, nearly nine out of ten people report having experienced high levels of stress at some time.

The American Institute of Stress estimates that 90% of all doctor visits are for stress related disorders. Additionally, 95 million people in this country take some form of medication for a stress related problem each week.

People who suffer from stress have higher rates of heart disease, hypertension, high cholesterol, immune system deficiency, and numerous other physical problems. In fact, stress, because of its direct and indirect effects, is often considered the number one killer in America today.

So what can you do to help reduce the amount of stress in your life? Probably the most important thing you can do is to exercise. Numerous studies show that regular exercise significantly reduces stress in most individuals.

Exercise decreases stress hormones like cortisol and increases the brains production of neurotransmitters. The increased release of endorphins, or feel-good chemicals, gives your mood an all-natural boost.

Exercise also acts as a distraction from the problems of everyday life and provides us with a way to release frustration. Often just knowing that you will be going to the gym after work helps prevent the buildup of stress throughout the day.

If you're not engaging in a regular exercise program to reduce stress, today is the day to start and here are some tips to help make that program as effective as possible. First, don't try to exercise at home or at the office. These environments have too many distractions that get in the way of allowing you to eliminate stress. Go to the gym or get outside where you will be free from interruptions and things that can get in the way of your exercise.

Next, try out new things to find exercises that

you will enjoy. I see dozens of people every day enjoying lifting weights who never thought it could be fun until they tried it. Many times we think of lifting weights and doing cardio as painful chores that we have to endure when, in reality, a well designed exercise program is not only good for you but fun as well.

Additionally, try working out with a buddy. When we exercise with a friend, the activity becomes a social interaction and prevents our minds from going back to the stressful situations that we face on a regular basis.

Taking a cardio or yoga class puts us in an environment where the other people around us are participating in the same event, making us feel part of a group where everyone is working to accomplish the same goal. In addition, alternating weight lifting sets with a friend encourages us to work harder without feeling like we're all alone.

We're fortunate to live in a town where every time you go to the gym you get to see people you know. That makes the experience more comfortable and, when done regularly, one that you will miss if you don't do.

So realize that, like everyone, you will experience stress. But by participating in a regular, enjoyable exercise program, you will be able to deal with those stressful situations more effectively and keep your body healthy and strong.

Kent Pegg is a certified personal trainer and the owner of the Los Alamos Fitness Center. If you have any questions about the information in this article you can call him at 662-5232.

