

Stress Release and Your Health

By Kjartan D Armann, M.D.

We live in a great part of the world, Silicon Valley. It comes with some of the best weather, scenery, places to go and things to do. It also has its fair share of stress producing qualities. Each of us has forces in our lives that we feel are stress producing. Don't get me wrong some stress is good for us and we are designed to handle those good stresses. Like when we are getting ready to compete in an athletic competition, take a test or go for a job interview our bodies produce hormones and chemical mediators that make us ready for the task and help us be at the best of our game.

be able to come up with ways to avoid or change the outcome of the stressful situation. Writing a and remind you of your worth.



Get regular exercise: we all should be getting 60 to 90 minutes of exercise 6 to 7 times a week. This helps increase oxytocin production which is the feel good hormone, strengthens muscles and decreases fat. Take a hike or a bike ride we have many great trails and parks here in Santa Clara County. Eat

health: studies show the Mediterranean Diet will reduce heart attacks, strokes and deaths from heart disease.

Do something positive for yourself. Here in Silicon Valley we have so many stress reducing venues, many of which are free.



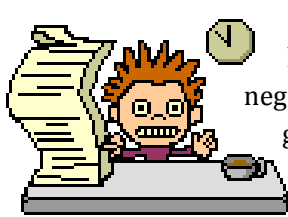
Our local libraries and community centers have many classes in a variety of subjects. The city of San Jose puts on gardening and composting classes for those who want more outdoor time. Starting in summer there are free outdoor concerts all over the valley. How about taking a cooking class with your kids or your partner? Yoga is a great stress reliever. This activity combines deep breathing and poses that work to reduce many types of stress.



There is meditation, reading, listening to music, getting a massage, take regular naps. Don't forget to hang out with your pet. Dog owners have been shown to be less stressed out. Get into art or play a musical instrument.

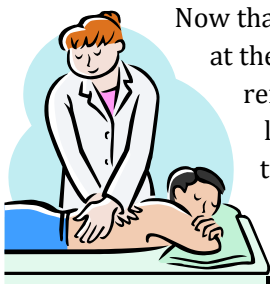


Remember hugging someone reduces stress as does kissing someone.



There are many things in our lives that cause us undue or negative stress. When these factors give us chronic stress that is when it starts to affect our health. We can start with

symptoms such as vomiting also known as dry-heaving, hair loss, nosebleeds, memory loss, weakened immunity and excessive sweating particularly of the palms and feet. Unchecked stress will lead to more serious health concerns such as depression, high blood pressure, heart disease including heart attacks, weight gain or loss, decreased sex drive, infertility, increased asthma & arthritis episodes, gastrointestinal diseases such as ulcers, diarrhea, irritable bowel syndrome, and more.



Now that I have your attention, let us look at the options we have to manage or remove the unwanted stress in our lives. Start a stress journal. Keep track of those things that bring stress into our lives. Track how we feel both physically and emotionally to stress and how

we react. Keeping a daily log will help us see patterns and common themes about the stress, and then we will