



From Stress to Strength

Part 1 – Why do we get stressed?

Stress is the reason I became a nutritional therapist... it took over my life and changed me as a person. I was exhausted, anxious, getting fatter by the day and frustrated because I just didn't understand why. I decided I needed help and started working with a nutritional therapist I had been following online. She helped me take back control of my health and my life which became the start of my journey to become a nutritional therapist myself.

This first blog post is about what causes us stress because it is something we overlook, I know I did. I think it's something we just accept as part of our busy lives and it's become the norm for a lot of people. So, what is stress? It is simply how people feel when the demands put upon them are more than they can cope with. This is a normal reaction that we experience when faced with situations that we feel under pressure in.

What causes us stress can be a combination of factors which can be physical, emotional, physiological or environmental. Whatever the stress, our bodies respond in the same way whether it's a traumatic life event or worrying about something at work. The causes of stress don't have to be obvious and will depend on the individual. In many cases people don't recognise that they are stressed. For me, it was simply being too busy, nothing bad happened to me, I just never stopped and this eventually drained my batteries. Have a read of some of the 'stressors' below, how many are relevant to you?

- daily hecticness
- fear, negative attitude, worries e.g. financial, meeting deadlines at work, a new job,
- smoking
- poor diet e.g. high sugar, processed/junk food
- a long term, low calorie diet
- high exposure to toxins or pollution
- allergies
- ill health or injury
- lack of sleep
- bereavement
- relationship troubles

- moving house
- lack of relaxation
- over exercising and not enough recovery time

Is stress something that affects you? Have a go at this simple quiz. If you answer yes to five or more of the questions below it can be an indication that you are stressed. The higher the score the higher chance that stress will be negatively affecting your health.

Is your energy less than what you want it to be?

Do you become irritated or angry easily?

Do challenging situations trigger anxiety or panic?

Do you often try to do two or three tasks simultaneously?

Do you find it hard to relax or switch off?

Do you avoid exercise because you feel too tired?

Do you get impatient if people or situations hold you up?

Do you have difficulty getting to sleep, or staying asleep?

Do you wake up feeling tired?

Do you rely on stimulants like coffee, energy drinks or sugar to keep going?

I hope this has provided some food for thought about what stressors might affect you. The next part focused on strategies to help reduce stress and its effects.

Joanne

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