

Stress and Modern Life

by Patt Stock

There is nothing wrong with short-term stress. It is after all what gets you motivated. Stress in the short-term may be considered healthy giving you the get up and go to achieve your goals bring you the results you desire.

However the flip side of the coin is chronic or long-term stress. This really has not got a lot to commend it and if left unchecked may jeopardise your health. With today's reduced work force designed for greater efficiency within companies it is not difficult to realise that this can lead to fewer people sharing ever-increasing workloads. Deadlines and too many demands on the time of the individual can be difficult to manage and can feel like juggling several balls in the air at any one time.

Push yourself and/or your team too hard and what do you get? Ulcers? No they come later! Workers may be feeling under valued, that there just is not enough time to get everything done as well as under pressure to deliver quickly and for all we know they may be building up resentment about being at work instead of spending time with their family and friends. Today the work force is often reactive rather than proactive often as a result of fear of confrontation.

Earliest signs of chronic stress include sleepless nights, those nights when you are dead tired and just unable to switch off running the events of the day through your mind. In the morning what happens you are crotchety and grumpy, the shoulders and neck may feel tight and generally you are pretty fed up with life. Could be the right time for a pity party but hey you need to get back to the grindstone. Repeat this scenario a few times and you are heading for the slippery slope. Lack of sleep often affects the immune system reducing your resources to fight off bugs etc. Other signs may include depression, low back pain, irritability, jitteriness, panic and anxiety attacks to name but a few. There are a whole raft of signs out there that may be obvious to those around you. As well as all that to contend with it is more likely that you find yourself drinking too much coffee. The caffeine within coffee tends to further stimulate the immune system and is indeed a nerve irritant. In addition there may be some comfort eating or you may hit the alcohol or hit the drug scene.

So what can we do about it? Well, you can get yourself signed off with "stress". You take a month off? What real good does that achieve? It gives your colleagues more work because they have got yours to do as well giving them more stress and maybe a little resentment plus a bit of a guilt trip for you. Deep down you are trying to justify your action and does it really give you much job security?

What is the answer?

More than anything find out to manage conflict and potentially stressful situations especially before they get out of hand. Learn to evaluate the current set of circumstances and even how to say no if appropriate. Remember we all have our rights and you need to consider if this is right for you as well as your colleagues. It may be necessary to step outside the comfort zone sometimes to put things right.

Remember if your health is feeling a bit below par, that your energy levels are low, if you have any muscular-skeletal pain at all (that includes neck and back pain) you are likely to need to see a health care professional to check you out and to begin to get you back on to an even keel. Bowen therapy works really well in this situation. Not only does it rebalance

and realign the whole body, it is also deeply relaxing helping the brain waves to change from more highly charged beta state to a calmer alpha one. This can help you to reflect on your current state and help you start to make some informed changes. This is a fantastic way of ridding yourself of your physical pain restoring your sense of equilibrium and helping you find ways of getting some control back in your life.

Consider this minor signs of chronic stress are a nuisance and can be sorted out with the right help and understanding. Put off the opportunity to begin to correct these matters may lead to much more damaging and long-term health issues. These can include serious illness such as heart attacks, strokes, cancer, diabetes, alcoholism, drug dependency to mention but a few.

We have one life and this one is for real. It is not a dress rehearsal and it is up to each of us to optimise our health and well being and then the world can well and truly become our oyster. It is your choice.

If you want to learn more about how you can overcome your own problems then the next step is to get advice from a professional therapist who specialises in this area.