

Stress Less

The Essential Guide to
Reducing Stress With
Meditation and Mindfulness



CHAPTER 1: WHY YOU MUST STRESS LESS



We all know that stress is bad for us and this is something we get told very often. However, it's all too easy to write this off as being a minor nuisance or frustration rather than anything to really worry about. We all get stressed from time to time, right?

In reality though, this is the wrong way to think about stress. While it is fairly common place, that is not to say that it isn't serious. In fact, stress is *incredibly* serious and can cause severe problems both in the short term and long term.

Stress can shorten your lifespan. Ruin your enjoyment. Cause serious illness. Shrink your brain. Hurt your performance. Ruin your relationships. Cause impotence.

Do those sound like small matters?

To understand this better, it can help to look more closely at what precisely stress is. *How* it causes the problems it does and how and why you need to do everything you can to prevent and reduce it.

So What Exactly is Stress?

Stress is what we feel when we're overworked, when we're dreading something that's about to happen or when we're generally unable to relax and stay calm due to outside or inside factors influencing our thoughts.

But it actually goes beyond this. Stress is a basic physiological reaction that is designed to help us focus and survive. In itself it is not a bad thing and is actually rather adaptive. The problem is that it has been taken out of context, which means the positive effects become outweighed by the negative.

Essentially, stress is what causes the 'fight or flight response'. This is a physiological response to perceived danger, designed to improve our chances of survival. If you were to see a lion for example, this would trigger a cascade of effects collectively resulting in the stress response.

This begins when we observe danger or experience fear. Increased activity in our brain, causes the release of adrenaline, as well as