April Showers bring April Stress

April is National Stress Awareness Month and most of us are experiencing increasing stress levels. We know we should reduce our level of stress, but it can seem too hard to do when we’re just trying to keep up with everything we have to do. This is a great opportunity to assess the sources of stress in your life, learn about effective coping skills and work on ways to reduce the stress you experience on a daily basis.

**Did you know:**

Chronic stress exacerbates health, communication and performance problems.

Employees with high stress have 46% higher health costs.

61% of the workforce is impacted by chronic stress, resulting in $300 billion of lost productivity.

**Stress**, in medical terms, is the physiological response to a perceived threat. When the central nervous system senses a threat, signals are sent that release stress hormones such as epinephrine and cortisol. The release of these hormones into the bloodstream, in turn, triggers specific physiological responses such as accelerated heart and respiratory rates, muscle tension, perspiration and more.

5 tips to help give you stress relief moments.

1. **Laughter**. Laughing releases endorphins that make you feel good and counter stress. Take 2 minutes and catch a funny YouTube video.

2. **Deep Breaths/Meditation**. It’s not a cliché, deep breaths actually do slow your heart rate and increases oxygen intake. Give yourself a few moments out of your day for reflection and time to yourself.

3. **Don't dwell**. Forget thinking about what is causing you stress and think about positive moments and upcoming events.

4. **Listen to Music**. This releases dopamine which results in a positive relaxed feeling.

5. **Exercise**. Releases endorphins triggering a positive feeling in the body.

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**Local Race Dates**

- **Roger Snyder Memorial Race**
  April 6th, Richfield, PA
- **Capital 10-Miler**
  April 7th, Harrisburg, PA
- **Yuengling Light Lager Jogger 5K**
  April 13th, Pottsville, PA
- **3rd Annual Summer SEALS 5K Walk/Run**
  April 21st, Selinsgrove, PA
- **8th Annual State Police Memorial Benefit Ride**
  April 27th, Hershey, PA

Register at [www.active.com](http://www.active.com)

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**Exercise of the Month**

**SUITCASE SWING**

Start in a basic squat position and holding a dumbbell or kettlebell in each hand at your sides. Squat down and quickly stand up as you swing the dumbbells or kettlebells up to shoulder height. Perform 3 sets of 15 to 20 reps.

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**Recreation Services Contacts**

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Recipe Websites

www.everydaypaleo.com
www.eatingwell.com
www.whfoods.com
justeatrealfood.blogspot.com

Smartphone Apps

MyFitnessPal
WeightWatchersMobile
LiveStrong-MyPlateCalorieTracker
MapMyRun
Nike Training Club

Financial Freakout

Our financial situation can cause us stress, which seems to constantly on our minds. What are the factors that cause the burning hole in our wallets?

Credit Card Debt. Excessive credit card debt can cause financial stress. People may fall victim to the lure of easy credit and eventually find themselves so far in debt that they will have difficulty becoming completely debt free. Some people can only afford to pay the minimum due each month, which makes them feel they are treading water with their debt instead of reducing it.

No Savings. The average savings rate is only around 5% of income. Such low savings levels can cause people to worry about having the means to cover financial emergencies or to be able to afford retirement. Parents may also worry that they won’t be able to have the money to send their children to college.

Failure to Budget. People who don't prepare a household budget may lose track of how they are spending their money. As a result, they may not have the funds on hand when it comes time to pay the monthly bills, which leads to stress. Lack of a budget may also contribute to a lack of money set aside for savings.

Spring Fitness Programs

Lean in '13
Cardio Junkie
Max 30
Fitness 101

Upcoming Events

Wednesday April 17th @9:00pm- Bison Idol (Lip-syncing competition)

Tuesday April 23rd @9:00pm- Glow-in-the Dark Dodge ball Tournament

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