

The Stress Connection

Fighting Off Infection

Changing your perspective on work could be the key to a better life. Germs and genetics aren't all that determine your health. Psychology also plays a part in how your body functions. Believe it or not, the way you deal with stress actually has an effect on your body, according to a recent study in the New England Journal of Medicine.

The rubber band syndrome

Imagine a rubber band. Pull and it snaps back. You can stretch it over and over. Yet, it continues to maintain its shape. But what happens over time? Pull too much and the rubber weakens. Eventually, the rubber band breaks. Your body is like a rubber band. Stress tugs on you and you bounce back, but only so many times. Chronic stress weakens your immune system, making it harder for your body to fight off infection. In fact, recent reports in the New England Journal of Medicine show that chronic stress increases susceptibility to the common cold by 16%.

Mind over matter

For many people, stress is like a cloud. When it comes, it stays and hangs over your head. Even though you can't change the amount of stress you experience at work, you can control the amount you keep inside of you. Stress can be thought of as a refundable item that you don't have to keep.

Fighting back

There are ways to deal with stress. It doesn't have to linger in your body. By ridding your body of stress, you can decrease your chances of getting sick.

Keep the following ideas in mind next time you start to feel stress getting the best of you:

- **Exercise:** Working out is one of the best ways to get stress out of your body and off your mind. And the fringe benefits are great—a better looking physique.
- **Relax:** This is a simple and effective way to reduce stress in just a few minutes at the office. By consciously trying to relax, you can get your heart rate down and put your mind at ease.

Knowing that you are in control is the key. Stress is inevitable, but stress-related diseases are not.