

Stress Management
for a Successful

INFERTILITY

Treatment



Imprint

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By Victory A.R.T. Laboratory Phils, Inc.

These articles were compiled by <http://www.ivfvictoryphilippines.com/> in hopes of helping bring into light infertility questions and bring solutions for many couples and / individuals having a hard time conceiving.

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Victory A.R.T. Laboratory Phils, Inc. is part of the Hong Kong based Victory Group of A.R.T. Laboratories and is the pioneer IVF laboratory here in the Philippines. Established in and spearheaded by **Dr. Gregorio Pastorfide**, a re-knowned and internationally acclaimed OB-GYN, Victory continues to assist and provide infertility solutions using state-of-the-art equipment and an ever-growing and adapting medical team.

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Stress and How it Affects Getting Pregnant

Nowadays, men and women handle the same workload whether in the office or in the field. They put out the same amount of effort, and both may suffer from work-related stress. Even after marriage, most women continue to work to ensure that they are financially capable of supporting their future children. But with all the stress that they're suffering because of work, a childless future is a scary possibility.

How Stress Affects Pregnancy

Stress, in general, can interfere with conception because it disrupts the normal functioning of the human body. Stress interferes with your hypothalamus, the gland responsible for emotions, appetite, and most importantly, the hormones that signals the ovaries to release egg cells.

If your work stresses you out, you might notice changes in your cycle like late ovulation or none at all. Using the calendar method to plan would be ineffective since the timing could be completely off and no fertilization would occur. However, not all types of stress could hinder you from getting pregnant. When you are in constant stress, your body may adapt and acclimate. This allows you to ovulate consistently.



If you are used to the typical workload of your day job, or the stress caused by your



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daily commute, ovulation could normalize later on and increase your chances of getting pregnant. However, sudden stress like an accident or the loss of a loved one could throw your cycle off, and you may not ovulate for quite some time.

But keep in mind that it's not only the negative stress disrupts ovulation. Positive stress triggers like wedding jitters, or an impending promotion could easily delay your plans of getting pregnant.

Managing Your Stress

The next time someone advises you to relax and take things easy, it is best to follow. If you want to get pregnant, get rid of stress from your system. Take some time off to unwind and concentrate on getting pregnant.

If you are finding it hard to get pregnant, relaxing is probably the last thing on your mind. However, you need to remember that the more you stressed you are, the less likely you'll conceive. Perhaps relaxing for a bit is actually the best thing to do.

It is advisable to consult your physician as well to check if there's anything wrong with you or your partner. Stay positive to avoid further stress. There are other ways to get pregnant. Thanks to **assisted reproductive technology** like In-Vitro Fertilization, couples can now fulfill their dreams of having children.



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The 7 Myths Of Relaxation

Myth #1 If you slow down and relax nothing gets done.

Having a major health challenge allows you to appreciate the joys of slowing down.

Myth #2 I don't know how to relax.

The patients in the hospital learns relaxation helps them to heal faster. Their mind is not cluttered with all the stresses of the world.

Myth #3 Keeping yourself busy as a form of therapy for dealing with stress

A young stroke patient (40 years old) discovered that being busy stopped her from getting in touch with her true feelings. It took the experience of a stroke to convince her that there is no need or benefit for always being busy.

Myth#4 You need to accept that you are stressed.

A young man of 40 years was stressing out about having a stroke. In a relaxation process he was taken to a garden. This garden brought back memories that he had not experienced for the last 35 years. He now understood that with these memories there is no need to be stressed.

Myth #5 Relaxation is from the outside.

One older gentleman who had a stroke said his relaxation was to please his dad. This desire caused him to forsake his family because he was always attempting to change the world. Changing the world meant that he got his dad's approval.

When his dad acknowledged him he felt relaxed. Now after having a stroke at age 67 he has decided it is time to spend some time with his family.



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Myth #6 Relaxation should be a one time thing.

Most patients agree, as a result of their experience, that to be healthy you need to slow down and smell the roses. Slowing down is a process and not a quick fix.

Relaxation is not part of life; relaxation is a process of living in each moment.

Myth #7 It is OK to be all stressed out.

Sometimes you need a life altering experience (like a stroke or a heart attack) to realize the fact that you create stress. That is the bad news.

The good news is that now you know you have the ability to create stress, you can also find pleasant memories within you to help you create relaxation.

In summary

1. **Relaxation helps you slow down** so that you can notice the feeling of peace and tranquility and listen to your thoughts, which will make you become more relaxed, productive and healthy.
2. **Relaxation, if practiced regularly give you a feeling of more energy** as you notice you're becoming more focused.
3. Now you can **notice the feelings**, that it is not healthy to avoid a situation by being busy.
4. **Relaxation makes you more aware**, as you listen to that part of you that you now call 'relax' and notice the feeling.
5. **You do not need other people's approval to make you feel relaxed.** Also, you may begin to notice the feeling of the health benefits of being relaxed.
6. You **need to practice relaxation regularly** because you will begin to acknowledge and notice the experience of the sounds of the simple things in life.
7. When you **discover your experiences of the ways you create stress**, then within the next 30 days you can look forward with excitement as you tell yourself how many ways you are going to create relaxation.



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The Consequences of **Stress**



One of the pioneers of stress research, Dr. Hans Selye wrote that “ ... **stress is essentially reflected by the rate of all the wear and tear caused by life.**”

His research convinced him that the body has only a finite reserve of adaptation energy to apply to the stressors of life. Selye likened this reserve to a bank account upon which we can make withdrawals from time to time but into which we cannot make deposits. It is a non-renewable reserve of energy which we draw on throughout life until eventually it is consumed and death results. Some people squander their reserves and experience premature ageing as a result; others exercise more discretion and so they maintain a supply over a longer period of time.

Over a long period of time the stress response begins to take a toll on the body. One of the prime targets affected is the thymus gland (a mysterious pale grey gland that sits behind the breastbone, above the heart) which plays a key role in the body's immune system. The thymus gland pumps out millions of lymphocytes each day to patrol throughout the body and to kill off bacterial invaders. Killer cells called macrophages literally eat invading bacteria. They operate in all parts of the body and we depend on them for our survival. Macrophages are weakened by a steroid called cortisol which is released by the adrenal gland when we experience stress. A weakened immune system makes us vulnerable to infection and this is why people under stress often experience regular attacks of colds and flu.

Psychological stress does have physical ramifications. We can do ourselves a great deal of harm by stressful thinking. We can flood our body with stress hormones and this can create a vicious cycle making us more and more stressful.



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How To Choose A **Stress** Test

Many people in this world need

to take a stress test. These tests

can take many forms and are designed to search for different things, but they all have one key goal: they want to see how you are doing. Merely taking a stress test can be a kind of stress all its own, but it does not have to be. And by understanding stress tests, you can understand more fully what they are designed to do.



The first kind of stress test is simply a pen and paper test. These tests will often ask you about certain things you do, where you are in your life, what you are concerned about, and what is going on around you. These stress tests are very easy to take, though the results can often be more than a little surprising. These tests are designed to root out stress in its many forms and are the most common form of stress test.

There are many stress tests out on the Internet, though many of them will not be particularly useful. Some are designed to be scientific but are not backed up by research, or some may simply be jokes. However, there are a few out there that can be very useful. Unfortunately, many are also very subjective and the answers you give may not be all that useful.

If you would like to take a stress test, your doctor can point you in the right direction. There are many valid and very useful stress tests out in the world and they can give you and your doctor the answers that you need to help you determine how you are stressed and how to manage it. Thus, your doctor is the best place to start and the best place to find answers to all that is troubling you.



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Another type of stress test is the exercise stress test, also known as a cardiac stress test. These tests involve putting a person on a treadmill at a slow walking pace, then slowly increasing the speed until the person is at a jogging or running pace. In these tests, people are usually hooked up to electroencephalographs and usually breathe through a tube in order to study heart rate and breathing. These tests are effective for studying how well a person's heart and lungs are working in order to see if there are any coronary problems.

Exercise stress tests are usually akin to exercising hard, but not strenuously. The person on the treadmill is closely monitored and a doctor is on hand in case there are any problems. As well, the person can stop the test anytime if they do not feel right. However, it is best to let the test run until it is finished, as it gives the best idea of how well the body is working.

A final kind of stress test is the thallium test. These tests are usually administered in people who seem to have blockages in their circulatory system and the blockages need to be located. Thallium tests are usually run in conjunction with an exercise stress test and, after the person is done on the treadmill, the person is injected with a slightly radioactive thallium solution. Once the thallium get into the bloodstream, a special camera examines the person's body in order to look for places where the thallium, and thus the blood, is not flowing properly. Thallium tests are not given very often, as they are mostly used when doctors know there is a blockage, but are not sure where to look for it. Obviously, some people cannot be asked to run on a treadmill and they are usually given a drug as a substitute in order to locate the blockage.

There are a variety of stress tests available and your doctor is the best person to talk to if you are interested in taking one. These tests are very valuable to check your overall health level and they provide a great deal of information that can be used to diagnose any problems or prevent them before they start. So if you are feeling the effects of stress and you wonder if it is causing health problems, there are ways to find out what you or your doctor want to know.



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Planning **Stress** Management

Deadlines at work, demanding bosses, bills to be paid at home, kids demanding for time and attention, changes in the environment, etc. These are the realities of everyday living that people in an industrialized world have to constantly contend with, if these factors are not handled properly this will lead to stress.

Stress is the wear and tear the body experiences as people adjust to the ever-changing environment. It is relative to every individual. What may be considered as stressful to one person may not be true to another. Since stress factors are part of daily life, the goal is not to eliminate stress but to find the optimal level where the stress factors motivate the individual in continuing his/her life and not be overwhelmed. This is called stress management.

Life without these stress factors may lead to boredom, dejection and depression. On the other hand, excess of which may make one feel tied up in knots. So, how do we know that we are attaining the optimal stress level?

A clear indication that stress management has not been practiced or the optimal stress level has not been attained is the presence of related illness. Most sickness is due to unrelieved stress such as hypertension, dizziness, hyperacidity, etc. This indicates that stress must be reduced in daily living.

So, how does one really manage stress? Two things may be done. It may be done by either changing the source of stress or changing one's reactions to it. As the cliché goes, it's either



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we shape out or we shape up. In doing the former, it's like totally quitting the status quo. It's like giving up totally so that the stress factor that is present in life is totally eliminated.

However, this is also relative for the individual because if the stress factor already affects every aspect of the life of the individual, getting out of the situation completely may be the best option. This may also be considered a brave move. The second option takes a lot of courage and maturity. Being able to identify and practice appropriate reactions to stressful situations takes a lot of courage and wisdom. However, with determination and persistence, this can be achieved.

The best way to manage stress is to first become aware of the stressors and to observe individual's emotion and physical reactions to them. Most often, people ignore the stress factors and just wish that they would go away. The stressor may be a person, a situation or an event. The individual must recognize that a stress factor is affecting his/her life and emotionally and physically he/she is reacting to it.

After which the next thing to do is to recognize what can be changed. The change may occur by avoiding or eliminating the stress factor completely as stated earlier or by reducing its intensity. This is done by managing the stress over a period of time instead of on a daily or weekly basis. If possible, it is best to try also to shorten exposure to stress. This may be done by taking a break, a sabbatical or a leave whatever possible so long as the individual avoids the physical premise where the stress is present. Another way is to devote time and energy to effect change by practicing goal setting and time management techniques.

The next stress management technique is by reducing the intensity of emotional reaction to stress. Simply said, to avoid



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worrying too much. The worriers most likely chicken out. Sometimes perception of the stress factor is exaggerated. It's like making a mountain out of a mole. It is best to work at adopting moderate views. Positive thinkers achieve more than the negative thinkers.

By not worrying too much, the individual saves his body from possible physical illnesses. He is protecting his health to deteriorate due to lack of sleep and inappropriate food intake.

It is best to build physical reserves to be able to manage stress. The usual exercise is needed for cardiovascular fitness at least done three to four times a week. Live a healthy lifestyle because this will be the best armor in fighting the daily struggle of life.

Lastly, maintain your emotional reserves. The support from family and friends are still basic necessities in life.

Do not work out for a stress free life, work out to achieve and live a well stress managed life.



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Eating Healthy in a Time-Starved World

Everyone is literally running out of time. Achieving a work-life balance, which is still a luxury for tens of millions of working parents, has been overtaken by an even greater demand: a work-life-nutrition balance. Unfortunately, this increasing demand for nutrition has not been accompanied by a useful strategy that enables people to reclaim time from their harried lives.



The result of this dilemma has been an additional layer of stress applied on top of an already stressful life.

Once the link between time mismanagement and stress is made – and it is virtually axiomatic at this point that this link exists -- a range of adverse health and nutrition consequences often result. The vicious cycle that ensues is harrowing and known to most people through direct experience, or via painfully seeing it manifest in the life of a family member, friend, or colleague.

Stress can -- and often does -- lead to unhealthy eating, which in turn, leads to even more stress because the body is not receiving the essential micronutrients and vitamins that it requires. While this is happening, since poor eating is often associated with undesirable weight gain, another level of psychological stress – this one associated with body image problems – is unleashed.

Although if the cycle ended here this would be enough to solidify this as a major problem, it continues beyond this point and becomes worse.



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This psychological stress due to body image problems/weight gain often leads to “emotional eating”. It is estimated that 75% of all overeating is the result of emotional eating. This, in turn, leads to yet more nutritional deficiency, since the emotional eating is typically of unhealthy comfort foods that are rich in saturated fat. This – as can be inferred -- leads to yet more stress, and the cycle continues, unabated, often resulting in malnutrition, obesity, and in more cases than most average people realize, even suicide.



The almost clinical description of this negative cycle in the preceding paragraphs does not remotely capture the indescribable pain and suffering that tens of millions of people around the world experience each day due to the collision of stress, lack of time, and poor eating habits. While no description could accurately capture the devastation that this negative loop causes, it is enough in

the context of this article to firmly declare that it is a profoundly significant crisis.

No quick-fix solution to a problem of this magnitude is possible, and any attempt for an overnight solution should be met with the most aggressive skepticism. The key to addressing a situation of this immense complexity is to identify the root cause, and then provide remedies that mitigate or in some cases, avoid the negative loop from beginning in the first place.

One of the root causes of this problem has been noted already: a lack of time. If everyone had more time, or felt that they had more time, the stress associated with not having enough time would not be able to pull them under and into a negative nutrition spiral. Therefore, a solution that works on this level – the level of time – is going to be help solve this problem to some extent.

It is within this awareness that time is of the essence that a number of nutritional supplements have been created. Unfortunately, while many of these supplements



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take mere seconds to ingest, an array of them are not providing the body's requirement for micronutrients and vitamins.

Furthermore, and quite irresponsibly, many so-called "energy bars" are very high in calories and carbohydrates, and as such can lead to emotional eating and trigger weight gain. It is even more unfortunate than this to observe that the race to market many nutritional supplement products has been more about making money through clever advertising and slogans, than it has been about helping people save time, eat healthy, and avoid potentially life-altering negative stress cycles. This is evidenced by the number of so-called nutritional supplements that are little more than expensive and pretentious candy bars.

However, there are some products that have risen to this ethical challenge – products that have been truly inspired by actual nutritional scientists who see a dire need in society, and have engineered a useful product to help meet that need.

The easiest way to identify such products is to find those that deliver a complete, balanced source of nutrition for time-starved individuals, including: adults, kids, athletes, sedentary individuals, and all those in between. At the same time, these elite products should provide a range of essential nutrients so that, in effect, the nutrition source can be relied upon as a complete meal when time is severely limited.

Solving time-starved dilemma is bigger than any one product, or series of products, to solve. However, though the perfect solution to this complex problem remains elusive, it is clear that part of that eventual solution will depend on resolving causes, and not chasing symptoms. Nutritional products that offer scientifically developed meal and supplement solutions will be a major ally in this resolution.



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Effective **Stress** Management for those with Busy lives!

What would you do with increased stamina, decreased anxiety, and solid peace of mind? You would probably get more done in less time--at the very least, each day would be more enjoyable. In the long term, you would certainly experience better physical health and a longer life span.

The only thing standing between you and a higher level of general well-being is the unpreventable occurrence of stress. Daily stress can rob us of our potential, weakening every aspect of our lives. Consider the following:



- * Stress breaks down the efficiency of the immune system leaving our bodies vulnerable to illness and disease.

- * Stress causes heart problems and high blood pressure.

- * Stress contributes to addictive behavior, causing alcoholism, eating disorders, nicotine addiction, and workaholic tendencies.

- * Stress causes social withdrawal, perpetuating symptoms and leading to destructive isolation.

To avoid stress and related symptoms you must be proactive, nurturing your body



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and mind through a balanced diet, exercise, and reserved time for relaxation.

A Balanced Diet - We know that a balanced diet can improve your health, but can it really do anything for your stress level? Experts say it can. Research has found that good nutrition has a tremendous impact on our ability to ward off the damage stress can do to our systems. Sure, you'll still feel tense, but with your body nutritionally armed for battle, you'll handle things better. There are many things you can do to maximize your body's fighting power.

One of the most significant things you can do is to reduce the amounts sugar and white flour in your diet. Sugar and white flour cause a host of problems you could do without. By reducing these items in your diet, you will be able to maintain better weight control, reduce the risk of heart disease, and increase your energy level. Why? Because items made with these products metabolize too fast in your blood system. The result is unhealthy spikes in your blood sugar, rapid depletion of energy, and damaging stress symptoms.

Exercise - In addition to eating right, exercise can be a tremendous help in fighting stress. As you get moving, your circulation delivers oxygen and nutritional elements throughout your body. The result is muscle relaxation, the release of mood elevating chemicals, and a strengthened immune system. Studies show that those who exercise regularly are less likely to suffer from stress related illness.

Relaxation. When your body relaxes, it reverses stress symptoms. You experience a sense of control as you eliminate the feelings of helplessness that often accompany stress. Find that one thing that really helps you to kick back and forget about things for a while. Here are some suggestions:



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- **Catering to our senses**, such as sight, smell, and sound can reduce anxiety. So put on some favorite music, keep fresh cut flowers in view, and sink into a warm bubble bath.

- **Reduce the clutter in your life**. Passing a stack of papers as you leave for work, tripping over boxes, or stuffing a breakfast plate into a sink of dirty dishes, creates underlying tension that acts as a fuse when something gets you fired up.

- **Deal head-on with anything** that has been bothering you. Ignoring problems won't make them go away--resolving them will.

- **Get a good night's sleep**. Your body needs this time to heal and "reboot" in preparation for the next day's challenges. Deny this basic need and you drain all of your systems of their strength.

Good nutrition, exercise, and learning to enjoy life will help you ward off dangerous stress symptoms. It's important that you take steps now to ensure a healthy future.

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*When you feel like giving up,
remember why you held on
for so long in the first place.*

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