HOW TO SURVIVE KILLER STRESS

By Dharma Singh Khalsa, M.D.
President/Medical Director Alzheimer’s Research and Prevention Foundation

Stress has become so much a part of our lives that many people are numb to its effects. Folks don’t realize how damaging it actually is, even leading to Alzheimer’s Disease.

How can men and, especially, women survive this age of anxiety? I emphasize women because women make up more than two-thirds of all Alzheimer’s patients. Beyond that, a woman’s risk for Alzheimer’s is twice that for breast cancer.

Could our steady diet of mostly bad news on an almost minute-by-minute basis have a serious negative effect on our mental and physical health?

I believe it does and here’s why: Continuous stress induces a constant state of “fight or flight.” In essence, we are hundreds of millions of lizards living in a constant state of alertness, walking around thinking we’re human. This reptilian activation shuts down a critically important region of your brain called the prefrontal cortex. The prefrontal’s job is to send comforting messages to the amygdala and insula. The former is an almond-shaped spot deep in the limbic system, found on both sides of your brain. The insula is right behind that.

The amygdala controls emotions and certain aspects of memory function, while the insula soothes traumatic experiences. When your prefrontal area shuts down from continual stress, your world becomes smaller, and you can only experience anxiety and tension. This blanks out healthier emotions such as compassion and empathy, so that we tend to react to life in negative ways, with anger and hatred.

All of this makes it difficult for you to be happy, joyful, loving, or fulfilled as a human being, which brings sadness and misery.

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This issue of The Sharper Edge addresses one of the foremost assaults on the human body and the human brain.

**STRESS** is something we all know and experience. It is so pervasive in our daily lives that we tend to discount it and simply ignore its effects. And yet, stress can be destructive to our bodies and lead to weight gain, anxiety, cardiovascular disease, and ultimately, to dementia.

Dr. Dharma Singh Khalsa, a medical doctor and founder of the Alzheimer’s Research and Prevention Foundation (ARPF), describes why stress is so harmful in his article “How to Survive Killer Stress.” He discusses how the brain reacts to stress, and why women are particularly at risk. Clinical research shows that a meditation called the Kirtan Kriya positively impacts the brain and our memory centers.

Once we are aware of the stress in our lives and its causes, we can take steps to manage it. Exercise is one antidote, helping us to sleep better, keep cortisol levels in check, and improve cardiovascular health. Meditation, yoga and Reiki also help to lower stress levels, and are explored in these pages.

Children are suffering the ill effects of stress at younger ages due to academic pressure, bullying, social media, abuse, and cultural violence. The effects of stress start early, and learning to name it and manage it is key to a healthy life. Sharp Again Naturally’s intern writes about her experience with stress at college and what she does to address it.

We encourage each of you to reflect on the stress in your own lives. Some stress can be positive and motivate us to move beyond our fears. But constant, unremitting stress takes an often unseen toll on the body and the brain. It becomes apparent when we can’t “think straight” or feel overwhelmed, exhausted and overly emotional. Our elders feel stress with the loss of friends and spouses, financial difficulties, and physical changes that limit their abilities. Caregiver stress is becoming a health crisis in its own right.

We’ll be continuing the conversation about managing stress, and invite you to share your experience with us at info@sharpagain.org. To learn more, go to our website at sharpagain.org.

Lisa Feiner  
Board Chair, Sharp Again Naturally
How can we stay in balance and create mental fitness in this age of anxiety?

The single best thing we can do is a simple, easy, and effective singing yoga/meditation exercise called Kirtan Kriya, or KK, which is also described elsewhere in this newsletter. It requires just 12 minutes a day, preferably in the morning.

Close to two decades of medical research on KK has revealed many compelling positive results. Significantly, in one of our studies where 75 percent of the subjects were women, and in those with memory loss, there was a tremendously significant finding: KK reversed this memory loss and helped create enhanced psychological and spiritual well-being.

Let’s work to enjoy greater peace of mind, a rare commodity in this crazy world in which we live today.

As Sir Paul McCartney once sang on the album Abbey Road by The Beatles,

“And in the end, the love you take is equal to the love you make.”

Meditate more, share your love, find peace of mind, and defeat stress.

Sources:

Innes, Kim E., Selfe, Terry Kita, Khalsa, Dharma Singh, Kandati, Sahitia. Meditation and Music Improve Memory and Cognitive Function in Adults with Subjective Cognitive Decline: A Pilot Randomized Controlled Trial. JAD Feb. 3, 2017;56(3):899-916

Eyre, Harris A., Prabha, Siddartha, Acevedo, Bianca et al. A Randomized Controlled Trial of Kundalini Yoga in Mild Cognitive Impairment International Psychogeriatrics. 29:1-11


Research has shown that the Kirtan Kriya, a 12 minute ancient meditation practice, reduces stress and contributes to brain health and longevity. Kirtan Kriya is a type of meditation from the Kundalini yoga tradition. It involves chanting the sounds “SA” “TA” “NA” “MA” which come from the mantra “Sat Nam,” meaning “my true essence.”

In Kirtan Kriya we express Sa Ta Na Ma in three styles of vibrations — chanting aloud, in a whisper, and silently to oneself. The tongue touches specific parts of the mouth, stimulating targeted neurotransmitters. At the same time, our fingers move continuously in a repetitive pattern, invigorating acupressure points and creating neural pathways linking sound and movements simultaneously. This elegant combination enhances blood flow, and recharges and refreshes the brain, thus improving alertness and cognition.

Practicing the Kirtan Kriya allows us to go on a journey inward, creating a unique and challenging personal growth experience. Twelve minutes of Kirtan Kriya may seem short or long depending on the chatter level of the mind in that moment. The hope is that with daily practice, the mind will quiet more readily and the silence that follows the meditation will linger longer. It is this silence that transforms the Distressed Mind into the De-stressed mind.

ARE YOU READY TO COMMIT TO 12 MINUTES OF KIRTAN KRIYA A DAY FOR BRAIN LONGEVITY?

You can:

➢ Experience relaxation to build cognitive resilience, reserve and stamina
➢ Let go of mental confusion to release brain fuzz
➢ Shape a healthy brain to build a healthy body
➢ Live an alert, mindful, and happy life to be sharp again naturally

Here are links to two youtube videos that will help you get started:

https://cutt.ly/Ae6Wo70
https://cutt.ly/Ne6Waab
Can’t FIND your keys?  
Forgot WHY you went to the kitchen?

It’s a common belief that memory loss is a natural part of aging. Research shows that memory loss and other signs of dementia have many causes that may be prevented and treated.

SHARP AGAIN NATURALLY is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to educating the public and the medical community about reversible causes of memory loss and dementia.

A new multi-therapeutic approach is changing the conversation about brain health and bringing hope to millions of individuals and their families.

10 REVERSIBLE CAUSES of DEMENTIA*

1 Nutritional imbalances and deficiencies
2 Toxins in food, water, air, work/home environment
3 Effects of prescription medications
4 Mercury and other heavy metal toxicity
5 Hormonal imbalances (thyroid, cortisol, gender hormones, and others)
6 Inflammation from low-level infections (Lyme Disease, oral infections, food sensitivities, mold, etc.)
7 Inadequate physical activity, mental stimulation, and social interaction
8 Prolonged stress
9 Sleep and breathing problems
10 Physical and emotional trauma

* Scientific research has shown that addressing these causes can restore memory, sometimes completely. Before concluding dementia is incurable, seek evaluation for treatment of all these causes.
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Dr. Saltzman also uses a science-based, nutritional life style intervention program for obesity, diabetes, high cholesterol, and high blood pressure. This program is highly effective for decreasing cravings, accelerating fat loss, normalizing blood sugar and lowering cholesterol.

Susanne Saltzman, MD • Call 914-472-0666

Offices in Westchester and Rockland Counties:
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Dr. Saltzman’s knowledge, intuition, enthusiasm, compassion, and care for her patients are exceptional. She has thousands of patients who have improved their health under her care.

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THE PEACE AND CALM OF REIKI

Myra Oney, RMT
Myra is an active volunteer with Sharp Again Naturally and has been a Reiki Master for 18 years.

Reiki is one of the fastest growing and most researched of the energy healing modalities, and is now being recognized in traditional Western medical settings. Over 60 major US hospitals offer Reiki to their patients, and over 36,000 nurses have been trained as Reiki practitioners. It is most extensively used in maternity and cancer wards, and in hospice care. Recently, the Mayo Clinic announced a major new study on the effect of Reiki on hematology/oncology patients.

Perhaps you have heard of Reiki, but what is it?

Reiki originated in Japan as a spiritual art for self-healing. It is not a religion or affiliated with any religious practice. The word means “Universal Life Force Energy,” the energy that flows through all living things. Reiki practitioners believe that when the energy is free flowing, we are best able to maintain a state of health. When it is blocked, we can experience emotional and physical imbalance.

Possibly the biggest effect people have from a Reiki session is a feeling of peace and calm. This release from stress activates the parasympathetic (or “rest and digest”) nervous system. Like being in a deep sleep, it creates an optimal environment for healing on all levels. Just a one-hour session can have huge benefits. This can be especially important for caregivers who may be struggling with maintaining their health while dealing with the stress of caring for a loved one.

Receiving Reiki is simple. The client lies fully clothed on a massage table or seated in a chair. The practitioner activates the Reiki energy flow and, intuitively guided by the client, places their hands on the body (or in the energy field if he/she prefers not to be touched), allowing the energy to flow to that area. When the practitioner senses that an area has received all the energy it needs, they move to the next area. Depending on the practitioner’s training and background, they may utilize guided meditation, essential oils, crystals or other healing tools. This is discussed at each session.

As with all healing modalities, Reiki is most effective when used as preventative “medicine,” a tool in the self-care toolbox to maintain mental, physical and emotional balance.

For information on the Mayo study: https://cutt.ly/Se6Wt7p

International Association of Reiki Professionals: www.IARP.org

International Center for Reiki Training: www.Reiki.org
MANAGING STRESS AS A COLLEGE STUDENT

by Grace Hines
Grace Hines is a student at Sarah Lawrence College and a communications intern with Sharp Again Naturally.

As a college student, it is important for me to bring my best every day. Being overwhelmed by stress can have undesirable consequences: arriving late to class or an important event, trying to finish a 12-page paper late at night, or skipping out on a meal to get work done.

Experiencing stress weakens how I perform in many aspects of life, which in turn brings more stress. I’ve learned through my college experience that the biggest risk factors for stress include procrastination, lack of preparation, and inadequate self-care.

Lowering stress levels and eliminating brain fog begins with taking care of myself. Making wise food choices and eating at reasonable times improves my overall mood, which increases the motivation I need in order not to procrastinate on work.

It’s important that I walk outside throughout the day, breathing in fresh air and experiencing nature to soothe my mind. Moreover, I’ve learned that an active body creates an active brain; this helps me to get a better night’s sleep, which also helps to recharge the brain.

I’ve discovered that what seem like small things can make a huge difference in managing my stress. For example, when I do my schoolwork I listen to classical music, which studies have shown can lessen anxiety and improve focus.

Furthermore, maintaining structure prevents stress from taking over my day. I like to prepare for the morning the night before by getting my books and supplies ready and thinking about what I’ll wear. It’s also helpful for me to write out a chronological list of what I want to accomplish the next day.

No matter what stage we are in our lives, managing stress is important and can create good habits. Maintaining these healthy habits can help ensure a less stressful future enhanced by optimal brain performance.
STEPS TO REDUCE STRESS

IDENTIFY the stressors in your life

PRACTICE mindfulness and non-judgment

INVESTIGATE and LEARN stress reduction techniques like those below

LEARN to say NO

TAKE TIME periodically to breathe deeply and clear your mind

GET 7-8 hours of SLEEP

ACKNOWLEDGE you cannot control everything

TRY THESE: STRESS BUSTERS

- Spend time in nature
- Read or listen to music
- Take a hot bath (w/Epsom salts) or a shower
- Meditate and/or do slow, deep breathing
- Have fun with family and friends
- Play with your pet
- Do yoga, tai chi or qigong
- Get a massage, Reiki, aromatherapy, reflexology or craniosacral therapy
- Start a gratitude practice where every day you write down three things you are grateful for
- Engage in exercise you enjoy!

PUT YOUR PASSION TO WORK

Are you excited about SAN’s mission and changing the conversation around dementia?
Join our dedicated and talented team of board members and volunteers to prevent and reverse memory loss.

Backgrounds most needed include financial services, marketing and social media, fundraising, and systems and data analysis; however, we are open to individuals with other skill sets.

Contact us at info@sharpagain.org.
Your mouth is the center of vital functions: including Eating, Breathing, Swallowing and Speaking.

Periodontal disease, sleep disordered breathing, chronic disease and exposure to toxic metals are among the SAN 10 Reversible Causes that have been linked to loss of cognitive function and dementia.

Have you been screened for the presence of these factors?

We collaborate with medical doctors who recognize the mouth’s relationship to overall health and frequently co-treat patients who have a wide variety of medical conditions.

Find out more:

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ph 845.357.1595 email info@hindincenter.com
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THE MISSION of SHARP AGAIN NATURALLY

To educate the public and medical community about preventing and reversing multiple causes of memory loss, dementia, and Alzheimer’s Disease.

SLEEP, OXYGEN, & COGNITIVE FUNCTION

Deep, restorative sleep is vital to a healthy brain, in large part because it is during deep sleep that toxins are cleared from the brain, human growth hormone is released, and memory is consolidated. Not surprisingly, interrupting deep sleep can severely impact a person’s thinking.

That’s why sleep apnea frequently precedes cognitive impairment. Sleep apnea occurs when a person suspends breathing for at least 10 seconds during sleep. This not only restricts how much oxygen reaches brain cells, but also fragments sleep and interrupts brain detoxification, especially in areas of the brain that govern executive function and memory (the prefrontal cortex and hippocampus).

Symptoms of snoring and sleep apnea include difficulty concentrating, depression, anxiety, reflux, fatigue, and neurocognitive deficits. Sleep apnea almost doubles the risk of cognitive impairment. Left untreated, these problems can progress to a diagnosis of dementia and Alzheimer’s.

Airflow blockages range from minor to severe: deviated septum, enlarged turbinates, mouth breathing, and sinus congestion all produce apneas that are usually partial, but still disturb sleep and restrict oxygen. More severe blockages include enlarged tonsils and adenoids, a narrow nose, an enlarged tongue, and misaligned jaws.

Fortunately, with proper diagnosis and treatment, brain function can improve. Michael Gelb, DDS, Director of the Gelb Center in NYC and White Plains, works with physicians to diagnose and treat these conditions. As its name suggests, Dr. Gelb’s trademark system, Airway Centric® Dentistry, optimizes the airway to promote proper breathing and restful sleep.

If you suspect you have a sleep disorder, call The Gelb Center to arrange a consultation.

www.gelbcenter.com
(212) 752 1662 – Manhattan
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