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## Stress management for athletes

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### Abstract

In this study researcher describes Stress which is purely a physical phenomenon. Some stress is necessary in order to reach peak performance. A fit athlete should be able to withstand stress better than the non - athlete because he is trained to perform well under pressure. Athletes are under pressure to perform well. Self-imposed expectations or those of coaches, teammates or family members can lead to anxiety, depression, insomnia and other forms of stress. In this study researcher mentions various techniques to manage stress. Stress can also be avoided by engaging oneself in regular exercise, by eating a balanced diet, getting proper sleep, by knowing your personal capabilities, by doing meditation etc.

**Keywords:** Stress, fitness, total stress load, athlete, tension, depression

### Introduction

#### About Stress

Stress is normal part of everyday life. Some stress is necessary in order to reach peak performance. Stress is purely physical phenomena and rest and relaxation will make it go away. A change of diet, a little jogging a good holiday will make your stress away. Other people, situation and events are responsible for your stress

#### What most People do?

1. Jogging, 2. Aerobics, 3. Change of diet, 4. Sports, 5. Vacation, 6. New hobby, 7. New relationship 8. Sleep 9. Alcohol.

#### What is Stress?

Stress is physical and emotional reaction to any kind of change- external or internal  
Stress is a form pain that comes to tell me that there is something I need to change.

#### The Total Stress Load

The concept we have to bear in mind is the Total Stress Load. For the athlete the formula is:  
Lifestyle Stress + Emotional Stress + Training Stress + Competition Stress = Total Stress Load.

The fit athlete should be able to withstand stress better than the ordinary person because he or she is trained to perform well under pressure. However, if the athlete is training too hard or competing too much, a slight increase in the total stress can push them over the top. It is a sad fact that fitness is not the same as health; the highly tuned athlete may be less healthy than the club athlete who maintains a high degree of fitness without going over his physical limits.

While an athlete can handle stress better than a non-athlete because he is trained to handle pressure, over-training or competing too much can ruin years of hard work. Athletes must be very careful to achieve a good balance by maintaining a high level of fitness without going over their physical and mental limits. Since the body perceives all stress as the same, athletes who want to perform their best should make sure that their lives outside of their sports are stress free and manageable as well.

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### **Stress is Impossible to avoid. But it can be managed.**

- Managing training stress. A big mistake that athletes make is to train too hard too fast. Instead, training should be gradually progressive. Make sure the body can handle its current load before you increase the load, and always give the body adequate rest between sessions.
- Managing competition stress. If the athlete finds competition stressful she shouldn't avoid it, she should just select it more carefully. You'll have more success if you plan your competitions so that the challenge increases each time out. The athlete's confidence and self-esteem will grow every time she is successful. There will be times she will be unsuccessful as well, and these should be recognized as great learning experiences.
- Managing everyday stress. An athlete who is moving, breaking up with a partner, or going through other life-changing events will experience stress which will have an effect on performance. Since there is no way to really get rid of the stress, the best way to combat it is to cut down on stress in other areas. If lifestyle stress is high, cut down on competition, and see training as therapy. Do only as much as makes you feel good. Never completely avoid physical exercise when you are stressed, as exercise, as long as there is no over-training, reduces overall stress. Especially during tough times, athletes should exercise at least 30 minutes a day five days a week. Always monitor your eating and sleeping patterns, which have a direct effect on stress. Eat healthfully and get the correct amount of sleep. Regular patterns will help keep the stress level in check.

### **Tips to Avoid Stress**

1. Aim to exercise regularly. Exercise dissipates the adrenaline that builds up in stressful situations and leaves us feeling with a sense of achievement and control.
2. Eat healthily. Ensure you are getting adequate vitamins and minerals in your diet. One recommendation that very few of us manage is to eat 5 servings of fruit and vegetables daily.
3. Make sure you are getting enough sleep. People need varying amounts ranging from 5 or 6 hours to 10 hours a night. By trial and error, you will know how much sleep YOU need to perform at your best.
4. Learn to think clearly and set yourself realistic goals and objectives. Work through one problem at a time in a logical way.
5. If you feel a panic or anxiety attack coming on, think through the problem by breaking it down. Imagine the worst that can happen. Nine times out of ten, it then appears less serious.
6. Say NO to tasks and projects you cannot take on. People will not think any less of you. After all, they have not got ESP.
7. Remember that you are human and mistakes are inevitable. Learn to view mistakes as learning opportunities and problems as challenges.
8. Practice physical relaxation techniques. Progressive relaxation contracting and relaxing all the body parts is a very effective way of reducing tension.
9. Sports Massage is an alternative method of helping to relieve tension and to relax you.

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