

## Uncontrolled Stress Can Make You Sick

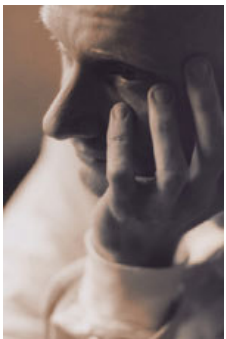
Did you know that stress doesn't just effect you emotionally, but it can also make you physically sick? Scientists now believe that most illness is related to unrelieved stress. A number of studies even suggest that job-related stress is as great a risk to health as smoking or not exercising. Just a few of the physical ailments that can be caused by, or made worse by, stress include:

- sleep disturbances
- back, neck and shoulder pain
- acid reflux
- high blood pressure
- chest pain



A recent study revealed that 89% of Americans reported they had serious stress in their lives. And 40% of American workers describe their jobs as very stressful. What can you do to reduce stress? Put into practice some of these proven stress relievers to improve your overall health!

1. **Face your problems.** Find out what's bothering you and work to resolve them.
2. **Take a breather.** Slow deep breathing can help to reduce heart rate and respiration. Take short periodic breaks from stressful situations to "re-fuel".
3. **Stay in shape.** Exercise three to four times a week and eat well balanced meals. When your body is in good condition, it's better able to cope with stress.
4. **Talk it out.** Individuals who have supportive relationships with family and friends are better able to handle stress.



## Lack of Sleep—An Eye Opening Problem

Have you noticed co-workers complaining about being tired or caught someone nodding off during a meeting – maybe even you?

With all the "to-do's" on our list, we are spending less and less time sleeping, and more time stressing. Americans are only averaging 6.9 hours of sleep each night, well below the 8 hours recommended by experts. You may think that your lack of sleep is not affecting your quality of life, but it is.

Sleep deprivation is making Americans anxious, depressed, irritable and forgetful and may be downright dangerous to our health. Lack of sleep is causing fatigue related accidents both on and off the job and costing U.S. employers \$18 billion each year in lost productivity.

## Did You Know?

- 43% of all adults suffer adverse health affects from stress
- 75% to 90% of all doctor's office visits are from stress related ailments and complaints
- Stress is linked to six of the leading causes of death: health disease, cancer, lung ailments, accidents, cirrhosis of the liver, and suicide
- The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) declared stress a hazard of the workplace
- American industry spends more than \$300 billion annually on stress related costs such as lost hours due to absenteeism, reduced productivity, and workers' compensation benefits
- Chronic untreated stress is attributed to more than 50% of all emotional disorders occurring in one's lifetime

*Information used in this publication was compiled from the following sources:  
WebMD  
University of Maryland Medical Center  
Helpguide.org  
About.com*