

Radford University



SHRM Newsletter

March 2008

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Announcements:

- **GOOD LUCK!** A big good luck goes out to all of the 2nd year students for their orals this week. You can do it! ☺
- **Congratulations** to all of the students who presented at SEPA and IOOB over Spring Break

Upcoming Events:

- **Coal Mine SHRM Tour:** Saturday April 5th
- **Team Building Event—Ropes Course:** Friday, April 18th

Open House

- **Date:** Saturday, March 29th
- **Time:** 12:00pm – 2:00pm
- **Location:** RU 301 (or TBA)
- **Reminders:**
 - Try to arrive early!
 - There will be snacks
 - Please bring your IOOB poster for display
 - Dress style is business casual



Upcoming Issues

-  **IOOB 2008**
–Denver, Colorado
- **SHRM Tour:**
Coors Brewery Tour



Thanks to Everyone who Attended the SHRM RU Bowling Social!



Stress Management

Quick Stress Reduction Techniques

If you are stressed, do one or all of these things, in whatever order that takes your fancy. These ideas can also be adapted for team development exercises.

The key to de-stressing in the moment is getting away from or removing yourself from the stressor. **Developing new habits** which regularly **remove you and distract you from stressors** and stressful situations and pressures is essentially how to manage stress on a more permanent basis.

In this modern world it is difficult if not impossible to change stressful situations. What we can do however is change and reduce our exposure to those stressful situations.

These stress reduction ideas and techniques are based on that simple principle. These tips won't change the situation causing the stress, but they will, more importantly, enable you to change your reaction and relationship to the stressful situations.

And in keeping with the tone of this stress tips section, and since color is regarded by many as a factor in affecting mood, the calming shade of green is used for the headings.

Stress Reduction Idea 1 - Humor

Humor is one of the greatest and quickest devices for reducing stress.

Humor works because laughter produces helpful chemicals in the brain.

Humor also gets your brain thinking and working in a different way - it distracts you from having a stressed mindset. Distraction is a simple effective de-stressor - it takes your thoughts away from the stress, and thereby diffuses the stressful feelings.

Therefore most people will feel quite different and notice a change in mindset after laughing and being distracted by something humorous.

Go read the funny family fortunes answers (<http://www.businessballs.com/familyfortunesanswers.htm>). Or try the funny letters to the council (http://www.businessballs.com/letters_to_the_council.htm). Even if you've seen them a hundred times before. As you start to smile and chuckle the stress begins to dissipate.

If this material fails to make you laugh then find something which does.

Keep taking the laughter medicine until you feel suitably relaxed and re-charged.

Stress Reduction Idea 2 - Brisk Walk and Self-talk

Go for a short quick really brisk walk outside.

Yes, actually leave the building.

Change your environment.

Breathe in some fresh air and smell the atmosphere...

Trees, rain, flowers, traffic fumes - doesn't matter - stimulate your senses with new things.

On your way out keep saying to yourself **out loud** (and to anyone else you see, in that daft way people say "Elvis has left the building..."):

"(Your name) is leaving the building..."

And when you are outside and free say:

"(Your name) has left the building... "

You can extend the exercise by going to a park and jogging a little.

Or do a few star-jumps - something energetic to get your body moving and relaxing.

Or stroke a dog, or pick up some litter, or kick a kid's football.

You can of course use other mantras or chants, depending on what you want to do and how far you want to get away from the stress causes, for example:

"(your name) is doing star-jumps/picking up litter/looking for a small non-threatening dog..." or

"(Your name) is leaving/has left the industrial park/district/city/company/country..." etc, etc

Of course this is daft, but the daftness reduces the stress by removing you from the stress in mind and body.

Doing something daft and physical - and reinforcing it with some daft chanting - opens up the world again.

Stress Reduction Idea 3 - Rehydrate

Go get a big cup or a bottle of water.

Here's why...

Most of us fail to drink enough water - that's water - not tea, coffee, coke, 'sports' drinks, Red Bull or fruit juice...

All of your organs, including your brain, are strongly dependent on water to function properly. It's how we are built.

If you starve your body of water you will function below your best - and you will get stressed. Physically and mentally.

Offices and workplaces commonly have a very dry atmosphere due to air conditioning, etc., which increases people's susceptibility to de-hydration.

This is why you must keep your body properly hydrated by regularly drinking water (most people need 4-8 glasses of water a day).

You will drink more water if you keep some on your desk at all times - it's human nature to drink it if it's there - so go get some now.

When you drink water you need to pee. This gives you a bit of a break and a bit of exercise now and then, which also reduces stress.

When you pee you can see if your body is properly hydrated (your pee will be clear or near clear - if it's yellow you are not taking enough water).

This will also prompt some amusing discussion and chuckling with your colleagues ("Nature calls - I'm off to the bog again...") which is also good for reducing stress.

You do not need to buy expensive mineral water. Tap water is fine.

If you do not like the taste of tap water it's probably because of the chlorine (aquarium fish don't like it either), however the chlorine dissipates quite naturally after a few hours - even through a plastic bottle - so keep some ordinary tap water in the fridge for 2-3 hours and try it then.

If you want to be really exotic add a slice of lemon or lime. Kiwi and Sharon fruit are nice too...

So now you are fully watered and guffawing and exercised up to the max, read on for ideas for how to prevent stress as well as reduce and manage it.

Stress Reduction Technique 4 - Catnap or Povernap

(Not so easy but still perfectly possible)

Take a quick nap. It is nature's way of recharging and re-energizing.

A quick 10-30 minutes' sleep is very helpful to reduce stress.

It's obviously essential if you are driving while tired, but a quick sleep is a powerful de-stressor too.

A lunchtime snooze is very practical for home-workers - it just requires the realization that doing so is acceptable and beneficial (when we are conditioned unfortunately to think that sleeping during the day is lazy, rather than healthy).

At some stage conventional Western industry will 'wake up' to the realization that many people derive enormous benefit from a midday nap. Sounds ridiculous? Tell that to the many millions in the Mediterranean countries who thrive on a mid-day siesta.

People in the Mediterranean and Central Americas take a siesta every working day, and this is almost certainly related to longer life expectancy and lower levels of heart disease.

If your work situation is not quite ready to tolerate the concept of a daytime nap then practise a short session of self-hypnosis, combined with deep breathing, which you can do at your desk, or even in the loo. It works wonders.

See the self-hypnosis and relaxation (<http://www.businessballs.com/selfbelief.htm>) page.

In the summer of course you can go to the nearest park and try it al fresco (that's from the Italian incidentally, al fresco, meaning in the fresh air - which is another good thing for stress reduction).

Stress Reduction Technique 5 - Make a Cup of Tea

Any tea will do, but a flavored cup of tea is even better.

Experiment with different natural flavorings using herbs and spices and fruit.

Fresh mint is wonderful, and excellent for the digestive system. Nettles are fantastic and contain natural relaxants. Orange zest is super (use one of those nifty little zester gadgets). Ginger root is brilliant. Many herbs, spices, fruits and edible plants make great flavored tea, and many herbs and spices have real therapeutic properties.

Use a 'base' of green tea leaves - about half a spoonful per serving - plus the natural flavoring(s) of your choice, and freshly boiled water. Be bold - use lots of leaves - experiment until you find a blend that you really enjoy. Sugar or honey brings out the taste. Best without milk, but milk is fine if you prefer it.

Making the tea and preparing the ingredients take your mind off your problems, and then smelling and drinking the tea also relaxes you. There is something wonderful about natural plants and fruits which you can't buy in a packet. Use a tea-pot or craftier, or if you are happy with a bit of foliage in your drink actually brew it in a big mug or heatproof tumbler.

Fresh mint and ginger tea recipe:

Put all this into a teapot or craftier and add boiling water for 2-3 cups. Allow to brew for a minute or two, stir and serve. (This is enough for 2-3 mug-sized servings):

1-1½ heaped teaspoons of green tea leaves

2-4 sprigs of fresh mint (a very generous handful of leaves with or without the stems - more than you might imagine)

3-6 zest scrapes of an orange

half a teaspoon of chopped ginger root

2-4 teaspoons of sugar or 1-2 teaspoons of honey - more or less to taste

Alter the amounts to your own taste. The recipe also works very well without the orange and ginger, which is effectively the mint tea drink that is hugely popular in Morocco and other parts of North Africa. Dried mint can be substituted for fresh mint. Experiment. The Moroccan tradition is to use small glass tumblers, and somehow seeing the fine color of the tea adds to the experience.

Stress Reduction Technique 6 - Crying

Not much is known about the physiology of crying and tears, although many find that crying - weeping proper tears - has a powerful helpful effect on stress levels. Whatever the science behind crying, a good bout of sobbing and weeping does seem to release tension and stress for many people.

Of course how and where you choose to submit to this most basic of emotional impulses is up to you. The middle of the boardroom during an important presentation to a top client (or during the middle of orals!) is probably not a great idea, but there are more private situations and you should feel free to try it from time to time if the urge takes you.

It is a shame that attitudes towards crying and tears prevent many people from crying, and it's a sad reflection on our unforgiving society that some people who might benefit from a good cry feel that they shouldn't do it ever - even in complete privacy.

Unfortunately most of us - especially boys - are told as children that crying is bad or shameful or childish, which of course is utter nonsense. Arguably only the bravest cry

unashamedly - the rest of us would rather suffer than appear weak, which is daft, but nevertheless real.

Shedding a few tears can be a very good thing now and then, and if you've yet to discover its benefits then give it a try. You might be surprised.

Happy Spring!

