


Take control of your stress



*A mini stress
workbook to
help you take
control of
stress*

brought to you by
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Stress

Stress may not be something you immediately associate with health or illness - but it's actually vital to wellbeing.

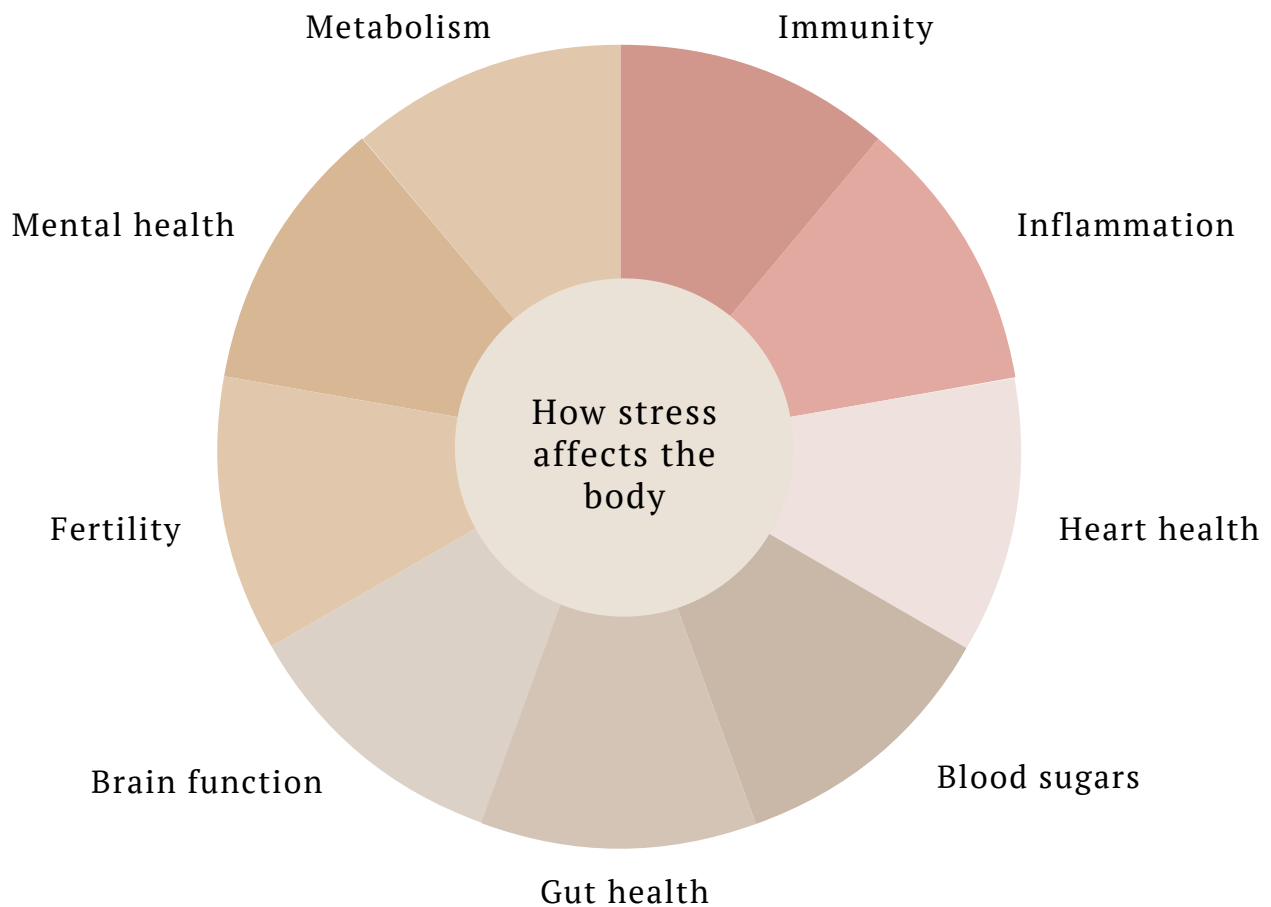
Stress has even been called the health epidemic of the 21st century - it affects most people at most stages of life. It's estimated that up to 80% of visits to family doctors (GPs) are for stress related reasons!

Stress can be so insidious and normalised that we often don't notice it, yet it can have a huge impact on health, happiness and even how long we live. On the flip side, research shows some simple stress reduction strategies can dramatically improve our lives and health.

One famous study by Harvard University found that teaching people ways to manage stress over just an 8 week period, led to 43% less doctors appointments, 60% less emergency department visits and even a 50% reduction in the need for x-rays and medical scans!

This illustrates just how much stress can affect us and how powerful recognising and managing stress can be. This ebook will take you through the basics of stress and ways to reduce it in your daily life.

Chronic stress



Chronic stress can affect almost every part of the body - metabolism, immune function, inflammatory levels, heart health, blood sugar control, gut health, brain function, fertility, mental health and pain. It even alters DNA and whether genes are turned on or off (epigenetics) and can actually shorten our life span!

In our day to day lives we are constantly being bombarded by stresses, both big and small. Some are obvious such as illness, financial worries or major life events. These are often easier to detect as they make us feel obviously stressed, so we can recognise and deal with them. In contrast, chronic stress is often more subtle and may only cause vague physical symptoms - making it far harder to identify.

Common symptoms of stress include tiredness, poor sleep, recurrent infections, upset digestion, racing heart, muscle pain, trouble concentrating, headaches, and feeling overwhelmed. It can also be a common cause of unintended weight gain or loss.



'GRANT ME THE SERENITY TO ACCEPT
THE THINGS I CANNOT CHANGE,
COURAGE TO CHANGE THE THINGS I
CAN, AND WISDOM TO KNOW THE
DIFFERENCE'

How to reduce stress

Key steps

1. identify and recognise the things in your life that are causing stress
2. look at which stresses you can control vs those you can't
3. find practical ways to reduce the stressors you can control
4. build stress resilience to make you stronger and more able to deal with stress

Building stress resilience

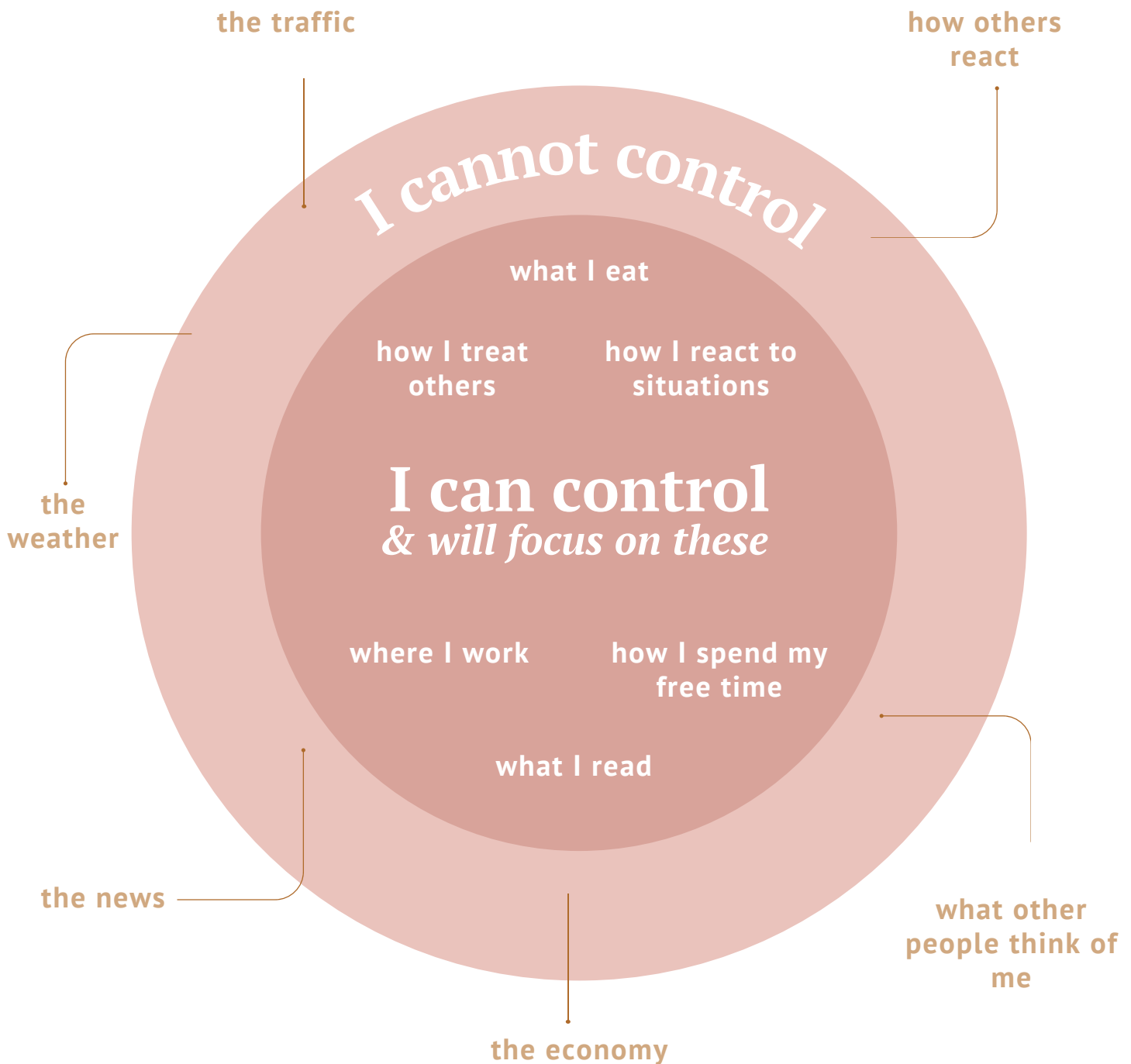
This means finding ways that help us deal with stress, both current and future. Our brain is incredibly adaptable and research shows us we can actually rewire it to change how we respond to stress, so we are less likely to get overwhelmed.

Some ways to do this include :

- yoga
- gratitude practicing
- mindfulness meditation
- exercise
- time in nature
- connecting with others
- laughter
- deep breathing techniques
- physical touch
- creative outlets ie writing, journaling, art, music, dance

Stress will always be a part of life and isn't always under our control - yet how we respond to it can be!

Circle of control



1. list the main things in your life causing stress - this helps you move from feeling overwhelmed to being proactive and in control
2. be aware of the signs of stress (muscle tension, headaches, upset stomach, trouble sleeping), and learn to use these to detect when stress is building up
3. divide stresses into fixed stresses (things you can't control) vs flexible stresses (stressors you have some control over) - see diagram above
4. think of ways to reduce the stresses you can control. Saying 'no', setting boundaries at work and home, and minimising the time you spend in stressful environments are all great ways to do this. As well as delegating jobs, figuring out where you are wasting time, and bulk batching chores. You often have far more options than you realise, it just takes a change of perspective!

Identify your stress worksheet

1

Step one - identifying stress:

Obvious stressors (ie work, finances, family commitments, health issues)

Micro stressors (ie screen time, social media, lack of exercise, work and home boundaries)

2

Step two: organising your stresses

Fixed stresses (those you can't control)

Flexible stresses (those you have some control over)

Tips for managing stress



prioritising sleep if you are chronically tired



reviewing time management ie are there areas you can be more time efficient



reviewing values ie which things are really important to you vs things that you can let go



getting up slightly earlier to have more time in the morning so you are less rushed



changing your commute time/route to reduce time in traffic or add exercise



getting outside in your lunch break or actively commuting to fit in exercise



having regular screen free times and setting boundaries for when you go on social media



delegating tasks you are able to to others ie getting your partner or children to take over some household responsibilities, paying a cleaner if you can afford to, getting food boxes to reduce meal planning and prep, sharing school/after school transport with friends



creating clear home and work boundaries - this can be hard but is a big part of stress



'bulk batching' jobs ie doing jobs in batches less often to improve efficiency. This includes weekly supermarket shops, meal planning, doing meal prep on the weekend ; getting common foods on regular order (ie milk or vege box delivery); doing larger loads of laundry less often; setting aside a set time for cleaning once a week, or doing it in 15min bursts

Jobs are often far more time efficient when you do them this way - multitasking is a common cause of mental overload!!

You may be surprised at how many stresses you actually have a degree of control over! Identifying them means you can start to focus on which stresses you can actually change.

Often we lump stresses all together, creating a mental cycle of jumping from one stress to another - which leads to a ripple effect where our perception of stress gets bigger than the actual initial stress.

Yet if we can find ways to reduce the stresses we have some control over, it creates a sense of order from the chaos and empowers us to deal with them one by one. It also helps stop us wasting our energy on things we do not have any influence over.

"One of our greatest freedoms is how we react to things"

Charlie Mackesy



SMART GOALS

SMART goals is a structure to help you create a clear plan to achieve your goals

S

specific

What specific activity would you like to add/change? Make your goals specific and clear.

M

measurable

How much activity, how many sessions? Define how you will measure progress.

A

achievable

Break it down: What can you do to make this achievable?

R

relevant

Where will this fit into your life? recognise your limits: Start small and build up. What can you actually do?

T

time-bound

When? How frequent or for **how long** will you do the activity? Set a clear time frame to try your plan.

Example: I will try 10 minutes (how much?) of meditation (what?) every week day by (when?) next month. I will do this by (break it down?) taking my headphones to work and downloading an app to use in my office at the start of my lunch break (where does this fit in to your day?).

My *first* goal to take control of my stress

SMART GOAL

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT FOR ME?

ACTION STEPS

01

02

03

04

05

06

Potential challenges and how to navigate these

DEADLINE

DONE



Health made simple

We hope you've enjoyed this mini stress workbook, and found the information useful to help you reduce stress.

We're so happy to have been able to share with you some of the knowledge, tips and strategies that we use with our own patients. We know they work and we want to share them with the world!

This is just a snapshot of what we cover in our comprehensive 6 week 'reboot your health' course. If you are committed to investing in your health, and are ready to explore further, please click on the link below to find out more.

Thanks so much for reading our e-book, lets keep in touch.

In health and happiness ♥

Taisia and Marissa

www.yourlifestylemedics.com



Disclaimer

This information is for educational purposes only and is not intended to be personal medical advice.

Please consult with your doctor if you are unsure if it is right for you, especially if you have significant health concerns, or are pregnant, breastfeeding or taking prescription medicines. This information is intended for adults and should not be used for children under 18 without consulting your doctor.

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Thank you