

**STRESSED  
OUT?!**



## **FACT:**

75% of the general population experiences at least "some stress" every two weeks

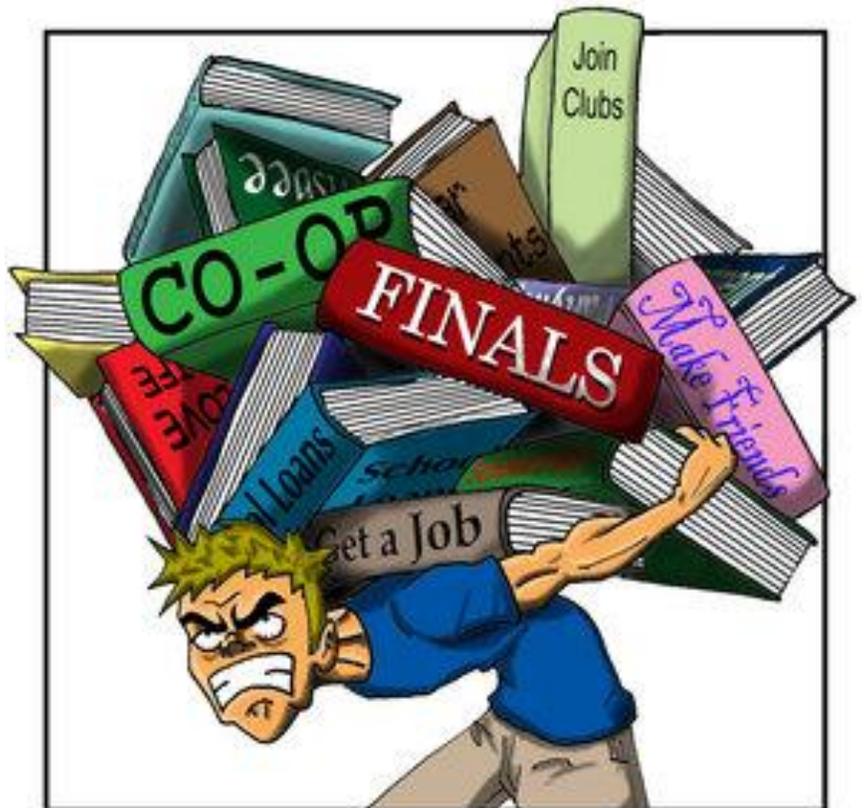
*(National Health Interview Survey).*

## **Recognizing Stress**

These are some indicators that you may be experiencing stress...

- General irritability
- Elevated heart rate
- Increased blood pressure
- Increased accident proneness
- Floating anxiety-anxious feeling for no specific reason
- Trembling
- Insomnia
- Headaches
- Indigestion
- Pain in neck and/or lower back

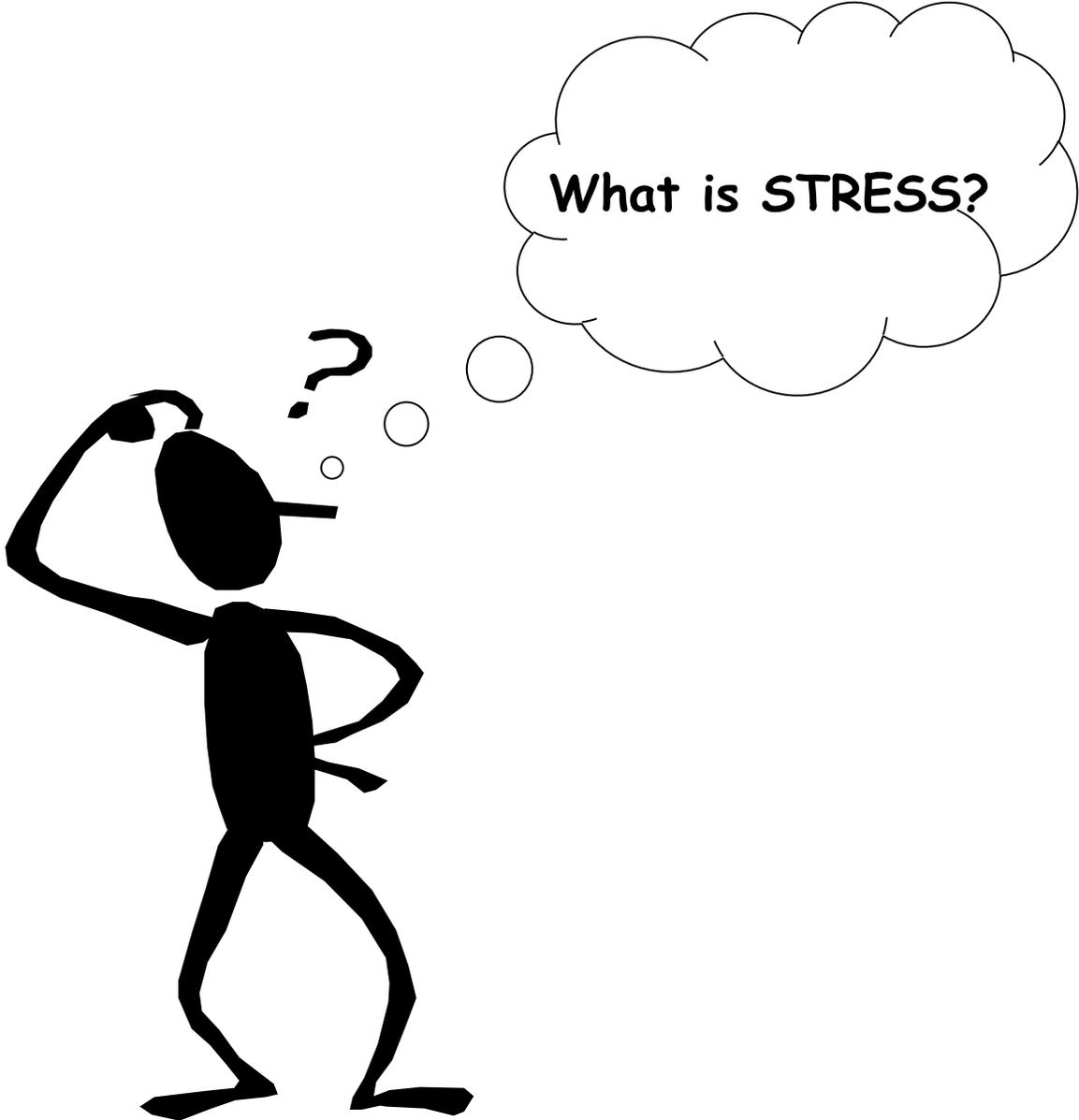
**Stress** is a process that builds. It's more effective to intervene early in the process rather than later. Try to become aware of the signs that suggest the process has begun.



# Stress Management Strategies

**The following are tips on how to maintain a healthier lifestyle and to prepare you to cope with the stress of everyday living...**

1. Structure each day to include a minimum of 20 minutes of aerobic exercise.
2. Eat well balanced meals, more whole grains, nuts, fruits and vegetables. Substitute fruits for desserts.
3. Avoid caffeine. The substance may aggravate anxiety, insomnia, nervousness and trembling.
4. Reduce refined sugars. Excess sugars cause frequent fluctuation in blood glucose levels, adding stress to the body's physiological functioning.
5. Reduce alcohol and drugs. These substances may add to headaches and swelling, decrease coping mechanisms and add to depression.
6. Get a least 7 hours of sleep nightly.
7. Spend time each day with at least one relaxation technique - imagery, daydreaming, prayer, yoga or meditation.
8. Take a warm bath or shower.
9. Go for a walk.
10. Get in touch! Hug someone, hold hands, or stroke a pet. Physical contact is a great way to relieve stress.



Stress is an adaptive response. It's the body's reaction to an event that is seen as emotionally disturbing, disquieting, or threatening. When we perceive such an event, we experience what one stress researcher called the "fight or flight" response. To prepare for fighting or fleeing, the body increases its heart rate and blood pressure; more blood is then sent to your heart and muscles, and your respiration rate increases.



## **How to Relieve Stress...**

- **Getting a massage** can relax muscles, ease muscle spasms and pain, increase blood flow in the skin and muscles, relieve mental and emotional stress, and induce relaxation.
- **Listening to tunes**. Music can indeed soothe the savage beast and help minimize the stress response.
- **Reaching out for help**. If you have trouble managing stress on your own, remember...help is available. Don't be afraid to consult with your primary care physician or a qualified mental health professional.
- **Writing about your troubles**. While writing is no substitute for professional consultation, it can help you ventilate your feelings. A daily session with pen and paper, or at the computer keyboard, can serve as a good release for stress-inducing problems or as an adjunct to psychotherapy. Some people have important insights, or discover solutions to their problems, while writing.
- **Laughing**. Feelings and attitudes appear to play an important role in health. If you can maintain perspective and laugh at life's events, rather than letting them rain on your parade, you stand to gain health-wise.