

Learn to Navigate Your Stress This Winter

Signs of stress include depression, anxiety, low sex drive, memory and concentration challenges, mood swings and irritability, feelings of anguish and much more. Below, we break down a few of these symptoms, give you tips on how you can combat the onset of stress, and suggest Acupoints to focus on when you are feeling emotionally under the weather.

Depression & Anxiety

Signs of depression and anxiety include increased aches and pains, low mood or a feeling of dread, chronic fatigue, low sex drive, and disruptive sleep patterns (lack of deep sleep or oversleeping).

Given that depression and anxiety are known to affect sleep cycles and can cause a lack of deep sleep, depression and anxiety can also lead to a weakened immune system. Having your health compromised is discouraging enough, and can also add to the feeling of having an imbalanced mood.

The Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA) states that research suggests a link between high levels of stress and the onset of depression. Therefore, it is important to learn how to navigate and prevent obstacles that cause us stress.

Memory, concentration issues, and mood swings

When you become emotionally strained, your stress-response pathways in your brain do not function as they are meant to. Your neurons do not connect properly thus compromising your retention of long-term memories which means, you are more likely to be forgetful.

To prevent memory loss, keep your brain active with puzzles, board games, strategy games and so on. Building our memory is similar to how we build muscular strength, the more you use your brain, the stronger your receptors become. Keeping your body and mind active with a healthy diet, consistent exercise and healthy social relationships are great ways to prevent stress or keep it from blossoming.

Enhance the capacity of your brain's memory by learning unfamiliar or new skills. Push yourself out of your comfort zone and learn something that takes cognitive effort such as learning a dance, a language, an instrument, learning to draw something precise that requires concentration and so on.

Plan Ahead and Prevent Stress

There are many ways to prevent stress such as the suggestions listed above. Other ways to plan ahead and keep your stress under control is to utilize a mental health professional if needed. A counselor is a great way to get guidance on many issues that pertain to home-life, work-life, relationships or anything that you may not be able to navigate on your own in the moment.

Mental health professionals are there to bounce your thoughts and feelings off of in a private environment without risk or breach of confidentiality.

Arguably, seeing a counselor is just as important as going to the gym, Working on both your physical and mental health helps you stay balanced. You go to the gym to stay physically healthy, so why not go to see a counselor to keep your mental health in tip-top shape?

As mentioned above, it is important to have a consistent workout schedule. Working out combined with meditation or anything you may deem as a stress-relieving activity guarantees better overall health.

Keep in mind that some activities, such as drinking alcohol and smoking affect both your brain and your body. Avoid consuming these products if you find yourself hindered when you partake in them, sometimes these effects are delayed so before indulging take five mindful breaths and see if partaking still seems like a good idea.

Preventing or reducing stress isn't a one-size-fits-all approach and will look different for everyone. That's why it is important to try different avenues until you find a routine that works best for *you*.

IF you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out!