KNOWLEDGE STOP

STRESS AS A SUPERPOWER

How many times have you heard that stress is bad for you? Shifting your perception can help you discover how stress directly affects your body's physiological response to stress. Did you know that it's not stress that's hurting you? It's actually how you think about stress that causes the most damage.

A POSITIVE LIGHT

Viewing stressors as a challenge instead of a threat elicits a different physiological response.

+ Stress can generate **oxytocin**, causing you to reach out in times of need. When you choose to connect with others under stress, you can create resilience.
+ Stress also provides **cardiovascular protection** cardiac efficiency improves and vasodilation occurs — this signals an approach orientation.

When you choose to view your stress as helpful, you create the biology of courage.

STRESS PERCEPTION

Reporting a lot of stress and perceiving that stress to have a high impact on your health can increase your risk of premature death by

43%

> **"The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another."**
>
> **William James**

KNOWLEDGE STOP

STRESS AS A SUPERPOWER

As you learn to engage with the positive aspects of stressful events and situations, you'll start to activate strategies to confront and productively use stress in your life. Learn how to make stress your hidden superpower.

YOUR BODY'S RESPONSE

NERVOUS SYSTEM	Release of adrenaline/epinephrine and cortisol
MUSCULOSKELETAL SYSTEM	Muscular tension develops
CARDIOVASCULAR SYSTEM	Increased heart rate and increased blood pressure
RESPIRATORY SYSTEM	Increased breathing rate

YOUR SYMPTOMS

Increased awareness and focus
Muscles primed for movement
Circulates oxygen to more efficiently working cells
Delivers oxygen to the body's cells

(Print, cut, and place the bottom portion of this page somewhere you'll see often to use as a reminder.)

SIMPLE STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING STRESS

+ Strike a power posture.
+ Practice 6–4–10 breathing.
+ Write down 3 things you are thankful for to begin or end your day.
+ Create a list of pros and cons. Emphasize a 2 to 1 ratio.
+ Solve the little problems first and save the big problems for later.
+ Take a break. Move for 10 minutes to clear your head.
+ Fuel for optimal performance by choosing well-balanced meals and snacks.
+ Take a micro-vacation. Escape to paradise in your mind for 10 minutes.