

# ENERGY MANAGEMENT AND STRESS REDUCTION



## WHAT IS STRESS?

*Stress is the mental or physical response to an external factor and generally goes away when the stressor is removed or the stressful situations are resolved.*

*There is such a thing as “good” stress (the type of stress that helps us with our performance, often referred to as “eustress”). The “bad” stress (or “distress”) is what often causes us to have negative effects on our minds and bodies.*

*If we can learn to recognize when stress levels are high, and to better manage one’s energy, we can see positive effects on performance, mental well-being, interpersonal relationships, and on overall quality of life.*

## HOW CAN STRESS PRESENT ITSELF?

Stress can manifest mentally, physically and even emotionally, and you might recognize you are stressed if you experience:

- Feelings of uneasiness
- Muscle tension
- Loss of sleep
- Extreme frustration, angry outbursts, or high levels of irritability
- Lack of energy or decreased focus
- Digestive or eating issues
- ... And more.

If you, or someone you coach, are experiencing any of these symptoms, especially over a longer period of time and at a high degree, there ARE ways to help effectively manage stress, especially from the mental aspect.

## HOW TO REDUCE THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF STRESS



### INCREASE OPTIMISM

Optimism, and evoking gratitude, has been shown to decrease the negative physical sensations associated with stress and negative emotion, and replace them with more desirable physical sensations.



### BE ACTIVE

Being more active and exercising can help increase the “feel good” functions in your brain, your body, and help improve your mood state.



### PRACTICE DEEP BREATHING

Taking deep, big belly breaths to engage your diaphragm can actually kick start the relaxation response and help manage feelings of fight/flight.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP SUPPORT YOUR ATHLETES?

- Continue to encourage athletes to outwardly talk about and express their concerns about stress to a responsible adult, including discussing counterproductive thinking patterns and undesirable emotional states
- Promote the importance of proactively managing stress in a healthy manner and seeking additional support for stress reduction
- Incorporate deliberate rest/recovery time in rigorous training regimens, and dedicate “mental performance” time to your practice schedule
- Practice empathy and perspective taking to try seeing stressful situations from the athlete’s point of view
- Get to know your athletes personally so you can pick up on when they might be experiencing unhealthy stress

## MANAGE YOUR ENERGY OUTPUT

*Elite level performers tend to “go, go, go” and rarely take a step back to check in on themselves. If we don’t ensure we are recharging our “batteries” when needed, our personal energy levels will deplete, causing significant mental, emotional, social and physical issues. Strategically planning your day to day tasks, and building in intentional rest and recovery time can help you prioritize your daily demands and maximize your energy efficiency.*

