

## Stress-Related Illnesses

While you read over this list, ask yourself, ‘*how would a regular program of yoga, meditation and other stress-relieving activities improve my health?*’

<b>The Natural Stress Response</b>	<b>Chronic Stress Response</b>	<b>Addictions</b>	<b>Stress-Related Illnesses</b>
Mobilization of energy to meet a demand	Living up to the expectations we place on ourselves	Are compensations that are made due to inauthentic living	The result of separation from the real self
Increased circulation to brain and the musculature of the head – provides heightened awareness in an emergency situation	Migraine possible Tension headache	Over the counter medicines for headaches Sugar Stimulants	Migraines Possible links to: MS Alzheimer’s Stroke
Pupil dilation: for sharpened vision	Sore, tired, itchy eyes Watering eyes Eye strain	Eye drops Corrective lenses	Reduced vision
Jaw tightness: in preparation for battle	Bruxism Repressed rage	Oral fixations Eating disorders	TMJ
Pituitary gland: receives messages from emotional centers in the brain which triggers chemical stress reactions throughout the body	Cycle of anxiety and depression	All types	Many possible connections, including immune system dysfunction
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Thyroid gland: increased metabolism to face a threat or demand	Since metabolism is not designed to be elevated on an ongoing basis, energy levels become imbalanced. Interrupted sleep patterns	Caffeine Nicotine	Exhaustion Possible immune system dysfunction Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Sleep disorders
Thymus gland: parts of the immune system are activated while other parts are temporarily suppressed	Production of T-cells, which mature in the thymus gland, is suppressed	Possible addiction or dependency on immune system boosters, including herbal Antibiotic overuse	Reduced immunity Potentiating of certain viruses (AIDS, HIV, etc.)
Lungs and respiratory tract: Hyperventilation for rapid short-term energy Hyper-sensitivity of breathing passages as a defense mechanism	Poor breathing patterns Lack of energy Mild allergies, coughs and colds	Cough, cold and allergy medication overuse Alcohol Nicotine	Anxiety Depression Bronchitis Laringitis, tonsillitis Lung cancer Emphysema
Heart and arteries: increased blood pressure and heart rate for short-term energy supply	High Blood Pressure Cholesterol/Plaque build-up	Pain relievers CNS sedatives Drugs and alcohol	Heart disease Stroke Atherosclerosis
Diaphragm muscle: contracts as part of stress-response to assist hyperventilation	Hiccups Heartburn Acid reflux Nausea	Heartburn and antacid medications	Possible: abdominal problems Hiatal hernia

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Adrenals: produce adrenalin and noradrenalin for the fight or flight response. Cortisol assists in energy production	Energy imbalance, including exhaustion Urinary tract disorder Kidney stones Low back pain Edema	Caffeine Sugar Overeating Pain medications	Adrenal gland dysfunction/exhaustion Immune system dysfunction Obesity Toxemia
Muscles of the back: contract as part of the defense mechanism, especially in the lower back and shoulders	Common muscle pains Muscle spasm Strain/sprain syndromes	Pain medications Massage dependency	Chronic neck and low back pain Possible link to fibromyalgia
Skeletal System/Spine: Discs and vertebrae compress to brace for attack or impact	Joint pain Joint inflammation Joint degeneration Reduced range of motion	Pain medications Surgeries Chiropractic dependency Steriodal and nonsteroidal medications	Arthritis Disc problems Joint problems
Digestive Organs: Blood is shunted away from them to the large muscles of the body. Regenerative and restorative functions are shut down.	Lack of blood and energy to the system affects absorption of nutrients Stomach disorders Constipation Diarrhea	Digestive aids Antacids Laxatives Overeating Improper food choices Colonic dependency	IBS Crohn's Disease Colitis Diverticulitis Ulcers Colon Cancer
Lymphatic System: Functions are suppressed. Lymphatic system is meant to cleanse and regenerate	Lymphatic system is inhibited by constant musculature contraction resulting in greater susceptibility to infection and illness Sexual apathy	Cold and flu medications Immunizations Vaccines	Chronic infections Bronchitis Pneumonia Autoimmune disease

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Reproductive System and organs: blood is shunted away to large muscles used in “fight or flight.” Reproduction is suppressed under stress	Lack of closeness / relationships. When each day is an emergency, nature could view life as inhospitable	Pornography Promiscuity Repression Pregnancy programs Medications	Impotence Frigidity Atrophy, infertility Cancers Abnormal cell growth Endometriosis
Menopause: disregulation of endocrine system causes increased problems during menopause	Hot flashes Mental fog Mood swings are exacerbated by the chronic stress response	Plastic/cosmetic surgery	Anxiety Depression
Bones: stress response borrows nutrients from available structures and systems, including the bones	After a certain point, the loss is at a higher level than the gain		Osteoporosis
Aging Process is accelerated: Stress through the release of cortisol facilitates timely death of certain species (salmon)	This same stress response, when chronic, causes brain degeneration, especially in the hippocampus		

Source: *Integrative Yoga Therapy Manual*, Copyright 2000, Joseph Le Page