

Weight Loss & Wellness

STEP 9

STRESS & CORTISOL



The Road May Be Bumpy But Stay Committed To The Process

-Dr. Matthew Kulka

How Stress Leads to Weight Gain

Stress is responsible for releasing cortisol—the flight or fight hormone—which signals the body to slow down our metabolism and store more fat for survival. This once useful hormone now haunts us in our weight loss journeys because it subconsciously forces the body to slow down our fat-burning mechanism and store more fat.

In addition, increased cortisol can also cause higher levels of insulin, leading to increased fat storage, lower metabolism, and feeling more hungry. To stop this process, we must actively recognize it and work on ways to reduce stress.

- Don't use stress as an excuse for avoiding exercise or cheating on your diet.
- Work on ways to reduce stress naturally to help our bodies shed weight.

Ways to Reduce Stress Naturally

- Exercise: Exercise reduces insulin and cortisol levels and releases happy chemicals known as endorphins.
- Sleep: Adequate sleep (7-9 hours) reduces cortisol and insulin levels.
- Mindfulness: Mindfulness exercises, such as Tai Chi, meditation, and Yoga, reduce cortisol and anxiety and help cure burnout.

Next: Your Ninth Step ►



Your Ninth Steps

Stress is a part of life, but it is a part we can manage. The list below offers many different tips and tricks to help keep stress in check. Pick and choose the ones that work for you, and try to incorporate some others you might not have thought of. How many can you practice regularly?

- Exercise Daily.
- Take daily walks or go to the gym to help alleviate stress and boost your metabolism.
- Work towards getting 7-9 hours of sleep on a regular basis.
- Sleep on a regular schedule and research ways to improve sleep, such as reducing blue light and not eating before bed.
- Practice Mindfulness Daily. Even just taking one minute 2-3 times a day to stop and focus on your breathing and current mood can do wonders.
- Take 10 minutes per day to practice mindfulness using meditation, Yoga, or whatever feels right for you. Even taking 2 minutes throughout the day to practice meditation and breathing exercises will help.
- Laugh! Laughing reduces stress, makes you happier, boosts your immune system and relaxes your body.
- Get a massage. Not only are they relaxing, they can help relieve aches and pains from your new workouts.
- Get up from your chair every hour and stretch.
- Reduce your caffeine intake. Some people can be sensitive to caffeine, making them anxious.
- Hug something. Snuggling with friends, family, and pets can help release calming hormones into your system.
- Spend time outside. Especially in the winter months where sunlight can be scarce. Fresh air and natural sunlight have a positive effect on our mood.
- Focus on your breathing. Every so often take a moment and practice a few deep breaths - consciously letting go of any tension in your body and mind. It can do wonders for your spirit and decreases your heart rate.

Next: Review ►



Reviewing Your Steps

Step 8

- Mindful eating.
- Where, What, How, and Why around eating.
- Avoid mindless eating.

Step 7

- Exercise every day!
Drink an adequate amount of water before meals and throughout the day.
- Be mindful of your calories burned and eaten. Don't out eat your efforts.

Step 6

- Increase protein intake from natural foods.
- Vegetables, Whole grains, Nuts, Seeds, and Fish.

Step 5

- Choose healthy unsaturated fats - Polyunsaturated and Monounsaturated.
- Avoid unhealthy saturated and trans fats.
- Continue to read nutritional labels.

Step 4

- Eat more plant-based foods - Complex Carbs.
- Eat less processed carbs - Simple Carbs.
- Read all nutritional labels.
- Keep "added sugars" as close to zero as possible.

Step 3

- Calculate your personal Metabolic Rate.
- Consume 300 fewer calories to create a caloric deficit = Daily Caloric Goal.
- Strive to move your body for 30 minutes everyday.
- Adjust your daily caloric goal for physical activity.

Step 2

- Being prepared.
- Plan all meals and snacks at least one day ahead.
- Plan today what you will eat tomorrow.

Step 1

- Stay on track with Time-restricted eating.
- Leave at least 3-4 hours from dinner until lying down to sleep.
- No snacks after dinner. Not even fruit or veggies. Water is ok.
- Eat for 10-12 hours per day. Fast for 12-14 hours overnight.

Remember

- Keep wearing your green bracelet for motivation.
- This is a process. It takes time to adjust to new things. Be patient.
- Consistency is key. Do your best to stay on track each and every day.
- Keep going! You've got this!