

**RELAXATION
BETTER SLEEP
FEWER HEADACHES
MORE ENERGY**

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RELAXATION AND MEDITATION

Deep relaxation is one way of getting in control of our bodies and your minds. It is a particularly good way to stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system. When that happens, muscles relax and blood vessels dilate to the very core of your body. You feel more relaxed generally and your blood pressure comes down.

The brain operates on a range of brain-wave patterns, measured in cycles per second.

Cycles per second	Brain wave type	Mind state
14 - 20	Beta	Awake
7 - 14	Alpha	Daydreaming
4 - 7	Theta	Sleep
Below 4	Delta	Deep sleep

Meditation and stress management

At the Alpha level we experience the state of deep relaxation which is very useful in managing stress; calming the body and re-establishing equilibrium within the nervous and endocrine systems.

To get into the Alpha state when you are awake, sit or lie comfortably, close your eyes, take a deep breath and as you breathe out count from 3 down to 1 and relax.

Ainslie Meares worked for 30 years as a psychiatrist and used meditation extensively in the treatment of psychosomatic and psychoneurotic illnesses. He died in 1986, but his books are widely read and still readily available. (Ainslie Meares *Life without Stress*. Viking O'Neill 1991 Ainslie Meares *Relief without drugs*. Angus and Robertson 1995)

Here is some of what he had to say about meditation.

You may well ask: 'What is the purpose of experiencing this meditative state for a few minutes each day?' The answer is that it reduces the level of our anxiety.

The effects of meditation include inner peace, better interpersonal relationships, clearer thinking, increased work capacity, better sexual relationships due to less tension, absence of disturbing dreams, and smoother physical reactions often shown in better performances in sport.

The key to management of our stress lies in those moments when our brain runs quietly in a way that restores harmony and function.

It does not require long periods of meditation to obtain relief from stress. Ten minutes twice a day has produced dramatic relief in some hundreds of people who have consulted me professionally.

To get the full effect of meditation, it is important not to do it when too tired.

DISTRACT YOURSELF

The people I see who are most stressed are the people who can't distract themselves from being busy and miserable.

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The average Australian goes to work, goes home, has a drink, has tea, sits down and watches television, goes to sleep, wakes up and goes to bed, can't sleep, gets up the next morning tired and does it all again. No wonder they're stressed out of their brain.

If you can't find time to

- get away from the desk at lunch time and go for a walk
- exercise
- go for a decent holiday each year
- meditate
- mix with friends
- go to the pictures in the middle of the week
- read a book
- conduct a good romantic life,

it's time you woke up to yourself. Get a life!

SLEEP

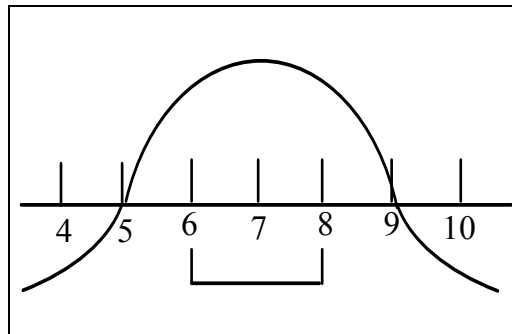
Sleep is one of the first casualties of stress. You can't get to sleep, you wake up in the middle of the night and you wake up tired in the morning.

The number of hours sleep we need is a highly individual matter. Whilst Percy Cerutti, famous and eccentric athletics coach said, '*6 hours for a man, 7 hours for a woman and 8 hours for a fool*', I would think that somewhere between six and eight is about right for most people.

There is a **normal** spread of hours from 5 through to 9. Some people even get along very well with just 4 hours sleep a night. It is all they need. For most healthy, stimulated people 9 hours is too much.

Nathan Pritiken said that if you don't have time for exercise take an hour off your sleep. You'll need less sleep and you'll sleep better.

You need to find out just how much sleep you really need. The fact that you lie in bed tossing and turning may be your body's way of telling you that you need less sleep. In which case, go to bed later or get up earlier and go for a run.



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SECRETS OF GETTING A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

1. Clean up anxiety

Complete the past, live the present and create a powerful future.

2. Physical activity

Twenty minutes vigorous physical activity is the springboard to better sleep. People who take part in regular physical activity can expect to need only 6 - 7 hours sleep a night.

3. Muscular relaxation

Get into the Alpha state and consciously relax the muscles in your body from the head down to the toes and drift off to a deep and relaxing sleep. As you breathe out say the word 'sleep' to yourself.

I recommend you use a **relaxation tape** to help get you off to a relaxed and gentle sleep. You can get my relaxation MP3 from www.fitandhealthyonline.com

When you are ready to go to sleep, put on the tape and let yourself drift away. You will wake up refreshed, relaxed, revitalized and re-invigorated next morning.

4. Lay off the grog

Being a depressant alcohol will help put you to sleep. However, the half-life of alcohol (four hours) means that your sleep will be disturbed mid-way through the night.

5. Focus your thinking

Most people are told to go to bed, they are not taught to go to sleep. When the 'monkeys are chattering', distract the left brain from its busy-ness by focusing on one thought.

6. Lay off the caffeine

Some people could drink 20 cups of coffee a day and they'd sleep like kittens. Others may only have one cup and it's enough to keep them awake.

7. Reduce your fluid intake

Having to get up to go to the loo breaks the sleep pattern. Then you may not be able to get back to sleep.

8. Steer clear of sleeping tablets - treat the cause of your sleep dysfunction

Sleeping tablets fail to produce the rapid eye movement (REM) deep sleep required for the body to recover naturally and then prepare for the next day.

9. Teach yourself to go to sleep using inner mental training

Train yourself over a 21 day period to go to sleep using the Silva white board and marker technique.

10. Take a holiday

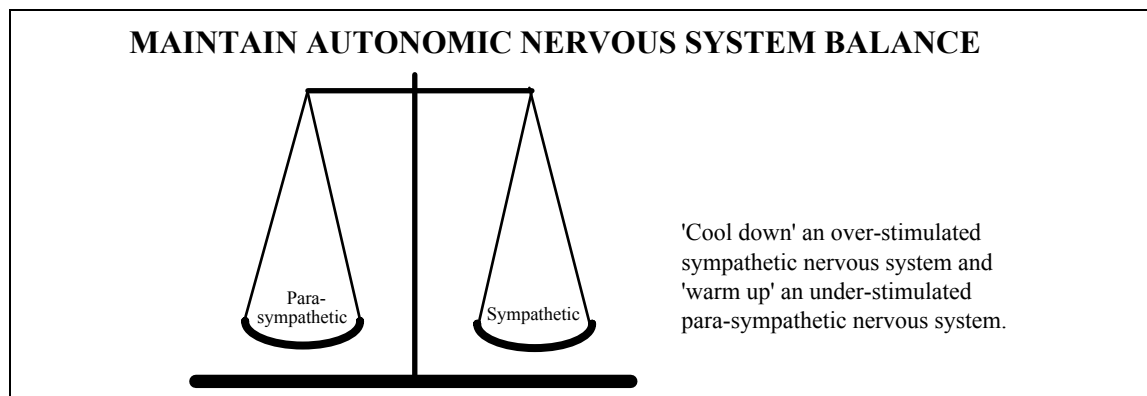
Being stressed, anxious and unable to go to sleep may be a reminder that you need a long holiday.

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THE AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

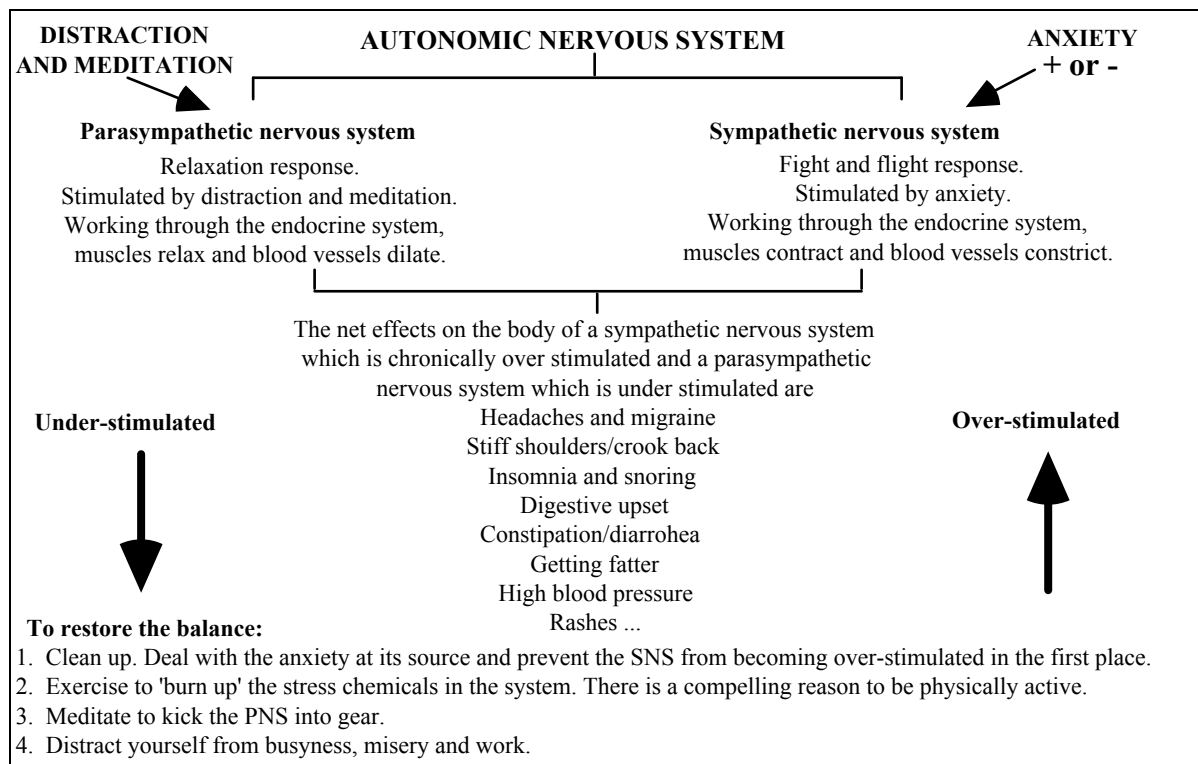
The autonomic nervous system runs sub-consciously the essential processes of your body like digestion and respiration, all of it under unconscious control. You don't have to worry about your heart rate, when to take the next breath, what's happening to your breakfast, it's all automatically controlled from the spot in your brain known as the limbic system.

It has two 'branches' the sympathetic nervous system, designed to help the body deal with stressful situations (whether they be good or bad), and the parasympathetic nervous system designed to bring the body back to a relaxed state of homeostasis.



The autonomic nervous system governs many of the major functions of the body, digestion, respiration and brain activity ...

The autonomic nervous system is a bit like the air conditioner in a large building. Just as the air conditioner ticks over quietly in the background, maintaining a steady temperature all day without the inhabitants being aware of what's happening, so the autonomic nervous system ticks over in the background managing body system functions and helping them to meet the demands of changing conditions.



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HEALTH, FITNESS AND WELLBEING PROFILE

The mind is just one of many body systems in a complex ecosystem. The mind and the rest of the body systems are intimately connected. For instance, when we get mentally stressed, the stress registered in the mind is relayed to the body via the autonomic nervous system. Conversely when one of the other body systems becomes stressed, the stress is relayed to the mind. You may not realize how stressed you are until you complete this questionnaire but your body does. The body is incapable of dishonesty!

Circle the number appropriate to the degree to which you experience the symptoms on the left hand side of the page. The greater the symptom, the higher the score. Total the score at the bottom of the page.

	None	Not much			A fair bit			A lot			
1. Headaches (including migraines)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2. Lack of energy and vitality	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3. Candida - jock itch, thrush, tinea, furry tongue	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4. Poor sleep. (Score 10 if on medication)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5. Snoring and/or sleep apnoea (Use gas mask, score 10)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6. Crook back, sore shoulders, stiff neck, RSI	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7. Frequent colds, flu and sinus	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8. Unsettled stomach, reflux. (If on medication score 10)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9. Overweight - 1 point for every 2Kg overweight	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10. Irritable bowel, constipation, diarrhoea, piles ...	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11. Shortness of breath from asthma	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
12. Low level of fitness*	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
13. Chest pain, palpitations	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
14. Rashes, zits, skin outbreaks, psoriasis, itchy skin	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
15. Mouth ulcers, cold sores ...	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
16. Elevated blood pressure (Score 10 if on medication)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
17. Elevated blood cholesterol (Score 10 if on medication)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
18. Elevated blood glucose (Score 10 if on medication)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
19. Shakes, nervous tics and mannerisms	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
20. Grinding teeth	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
21. Drinking too much alcohol (2 points per drink/day)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
22. Smoking too many cigarettes (1 point per cigarette per day)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
23. Drinking too much caffeine (1 point per cup per day)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
24. Anxious about life, insecure, apprehensive	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
25. Are you depressed? (Score 10 if on medication)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
26. Are you in the wrong job?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
27. Do you feel under-appreciated at work?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
28. Do you have a poor work/life balance?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
29. Are you unhappy with your family life?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
30. Are you unhappy with your financial status?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

The score of a normal, fit and healthy human being is less than

TOTAL

* Make an estimate of your level of fitness. You can confirm your estimate by measuring your fitness using the 5 minute 20 metre run. As a guide if you get less than 24 laps score 10. 32 laps scores 5. More than 40 laps scores 0.

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STRESS RISK PROFILE

1. Rate your ability to manage the stress of your life.
The more stressed you are the lower the score

Low			Medium				High			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

2. Do you get a good night's **sleep**. Do you get enough sleep, do you get to sleep quickly, do you sleep like a log and wake up refreshed in the morning?

No					Yes					
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

3. What was the longest number of **consecutive days holiday** you had away from home the last 12 months?

			7			14				21
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

4. Are you keeping yourself **fit and healthy** to the best of your ability?

No					Yes					
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

5. Is there **balance** in your life? Do you have good **distractors** that switch you off from being busy and miserable and which give you great pleasure?

No					Yes					
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

6. Do you **take time off** at lunch time to get away from your desk and get some fresh air? Score high if you exercise with vigor at lunch time.

No					Yes					
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

7. What is the average number of **hours you work** each week - include work-work and domestic work, particularly if you have young children?

	65		60		55		50		45	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

8. Are you good at giving back to your **Self**? Do you spend time thinking about your **Self**? Do you give your **Self** the time and attention it is craving?

No					Yes					
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

9. How many times a week do you **meditate**, for 10 minutes or more?

0		1		2		3		4		5
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

10. Are you happy with your **family** (and romantic) **life**?

Not at all					Very					
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

To better manage your stress, do the things that unstressed people do!

TOTAL

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NOTES

INSPIRED AND MOTIVATED TO BE FIT AND HEALTHY

If you would like more information on any of the topics discussed during one of my health management seminars visit the website, www.fitandhealthyonline.com and use the contact form to send me an email.

www.fitandhealthyonline.com

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*The softening process of our civilization
continues its persistent erosion.*

John Kennedy