How Stress Hurts the Body

THIS EDITION FEATURES:

Enjoy Your Workout, Your Own Way!
Use Your Noodle
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How Stress Hurts the Body

RECIPES OF THE MONTH:
SESAME SOBA NOODLES

Brought to you by Independence
Use Your Noodle

Do you spend the week waiting for pasta night? You may want to try switching out regular white-flour noodles for these unrefined pastas that aren’t stripped of their essential vitamins and minerals:

**Soba noodles.** These heart-healthy Japanese noodles are made from buckwheat flour, which is rich in nutrients like fiber, iron, and thiamine. Soba noodles can be enjoyed in soup or as part of a stir-fry.

**Whole-wheat noodles.** Opt for ones that list the whole grain as the first ingredient. This hearty, fiber-packed pasta can be swapped for regular noodles in any pasta dish.

**Brown rice or quinoa pasta.** Whole-grain brown rice and/or quinoa pasta is a great option for pasta-lovers who want to lower carbs and up their intake of fiber, iron, zinc, and thiamine.

**Black bean noodles.** This protein-packed pasta has just two ingredients: black beans and water! These work best in pasta salads and stir-fries.

Give these healthy alternatives a chance, and you may be pleasantly surprised! Just be sure to always follow the cooking instructions on the package.

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**Enjoy Your Workout, Your Own Way!**

Why is it that ten minutes pass so quickly after pressing the snooze button on your alarm clock, but the same ten minutes can feel like an hour when you’re on a treadmill? Exercise shouldn’t be a drudge; it should be time that we enjoy. And when it becomes a regular habit, you might find that you feel better overall. Here are some ways to get there:

- Gradually add small amounts of physical activity to your daily routine. Start with a ten-minute stroll in the morning or after dinner.
- Tie physical activity to things that you already enjoy. Love the outdoors? Start a garden. Love taking pictures? Take them during a hike. Love nature? Volunteer to clean up a local park or beach. Love animals? Volunteer to take shelter dogs for walks.
- Use exercise as stress relief. Release frustrations or negative feelings with a burst of activity.
- Social butterfly? Set up a walking date with someone you want to spend more time with.

If you pair things that you enjoy with physical activity, you’ll end up not just making time for exercise, but also finding the joy in it.
When to Move On

Relationships can bring a lot to our lives. They can also leave us feeling drained — at which point it’s probably best to move on. The trick is knowing when. Here are some warning signs to consider when assessing the value of your relationships:

**Your needs aren’t being met.** No matter what the relationship, give and take is important. If you find that your friend, partner, or family member is always on the taking end, tell them how you feel. If things don’t change, perhaps it’s time to take a step back.

**You feel like the worst version of yourself.** If a loved one intentionally makes you feel bad about yourself or encourages unhealthy or dangerous behaviors, it may be time to walk away.

**You feel disrespected.** This may come in the form of crossed boundaries, unkind words, or untrustworthiness. If you feel that your loved one does not respect you, have a conversation with them. If talking doesn’t help, it may be time to move on.

Relationships come in all shapes and sizes, but it is important that they bring us joy more often than heartache. Having fulfilling, happy relationships is important for emotional and physical health.

Recipe of the Month:

**Sesame Soba Noodles**

**Ingredients:**

| ½ pound soba noodles (found in the Asian section of your grocery store) or long noodle of choice | 1 clove of garlic, chopped or crushed |
| ¼ cup honey | 1 bunch sliced scallions |
| ¼ cup low-sodium soy sauce | 1 cup shelled edamame (soybeans) |
| 2 tablespoons rice vinegar | 2 large carrots, grated |
| 2 teaspoons sesame oil | 1 tablespoon black sesame seeds |
| ½ cup olive oil | 1 tablespoon white sesame seeds |
| 1 tablespoon fresh, grated ginger |

**Instructions:**

Cook the soba noodles as directed on package and drain. In a separate large bowl, combine honey, soy sauce, vinegar, sesame oil, ginger, and garlic. Whisk in the olive oil. Add the cooled soba noodles, edamame, carrots, and scallions and toss to combine. Top with sesame seeds.
How Stress Hurts the Body

They don’t call it heartache for nothing! Stress has been linked to numerous physical disorders, including skin rashes and insomnia — as well as more serious conditions, such as ulcers, hypertension, and stroke. Stress can also aggravate existing conditions, such as viruses, cancers, and Parkinson’s disease. Here are some common physical signs of stress:

1. Frequent headaches
2. Jaw clenching or pain
3. Neck or back pain
4. Rashes, itching, or hives
5. Digestive discomfort
6. Increased or decreased appetite
7. Weakness or fatigue
8. Fidgeting or nervous movement

If you experience any of these symptoms, examine your life for sources of stress. The mind-body connection is powerful and not yet fully understood, but we can start by recognizing how our emotions affect our day-to-day health.

Source: The American Institute of Stress

Thanks a Lot!

Saying “thank you” is something that we (hopefully) learn as children. But as adults, we sometimes forget to be thankful, to the detriment of our mental health. Gratitude — being thankful for what we already have, both the big and little things — has been shown to impact our well-being in surprising ways:

Better relationships. Thanking a stranger can lead to a new friendship, and showing appreciation for someone you already know can deepen the bond.

Better physical health. Grateful people report better health, as well as a greater likelihood to exercise.

Better mental health. Being thankful makes you less likely to be envious, resentful, regretful, or depressed.

Better sleep. A recent study showed that taking a few minutes before bed to write down what you’re thankful for resulted in better, longer sleep.

Tip: Start a Gratitude Journal

Every night, before you go to sleep, write down five things that happened during the day that made you thankful. Keep it up for a month, and see what changes.

Source: Psychology Today
The 80/20 Rule

An old Finnish proverb says, “Happiness is a place between too little and too much.” Balance is good — especially when it comes to what we eat, where perfection is often hard to achieve. For instance, have you ever tried to keep to a strict diet... and crashed right into a pint of ice cream?

Instead of attempting to commit to a perfect diet, why not plan for the occasional indulgence? With the 80/20 Rule, you’ll still eat healthy food most of the time (80 percent of the time, to be exact) but you’ll budget 20 percent of your diet for treats.

With the 80/20 Rule...

- You’re building a lifestyle, rather than just following a diet.
- No food is off limits.
- You don’t have to be perfect 100 percent of the time!

Monthly Quiz:

1. What is a refined carbohydrate?
   a. An elegant and cultured food
   b. A processed food that has been stripped of essential nutrients and vitamins
   c. Food served in its whole form

2. Which of the following is NOT true about the 80/20 Rule to eating?
   a. It is an invitation to eat whatever and how much you want.
   b. You aim for balance instead of perfection.
   c. It can lead to a healthier mindset about food.

3. What is a potential health benefit of gratitude?
   a. Getting more things
   b. Better sleep
   c. Hearing “You’re welcome.”