MANAGING STRESS MAY HELP PREVENT DEPRESSION

Stress can be caused by a number of factors including anxiety, poor lifestyle, sleep disorders, medication, medical conditions, home circumstances or working conditions. Chronic stress can lead to reduced productivity and an increased risk of injury and illness.

What are the symptoms of stress?

- A constant desire to sleep
- Irritability
- Poor memory and concentration
- Reduced ability to judge risky behaviour
- Reduced capacity for communicating with others
- Reduced hand-eye coordination and reduced visual perception
- Reduced vigilance
- Slower reaction times

There are measures you can put in place to manage fatigue. Some of these include:

- **Exercise.** Work out for 20-30 minutes a day for 5 days a week, as exercise can increase your energy levels. The hormones released during exercise can help combat the feelings of stress.

- **Eat a healthy, balanced diet.** Include lean protein, complex carbohydrates, and plenty of fruit and vegetables in your diet. Stay away from processed foods, unhealthy fats, and reduce your alcohol intake.

- **Take frequent breaks.** Every hour or so, try to give yourself a break. Go for a walk or have some water. Try to have your lunch away from your desk if you can. Meditation can also be a good way to incorporate periods of relaxation into your day to help relieve stress.

- **Maintain regular work hours.** While occasional overtime may be required, it shouldn't become the norm. Try to keep routine work hours if possible. Arriving very early and leaving very late can lead to a cycle of exhaustion and stress.

If your stress is not caused by poor lifestyle or overworking, it is crucial that you see a doctor and/or a psychologist who can help you to determine the cause.

Don't wait for stress to lead to depression or depression to result in higher stress levels before making the decision to prioritise your health and wellness.

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