

Instant Mood Boosters For Us

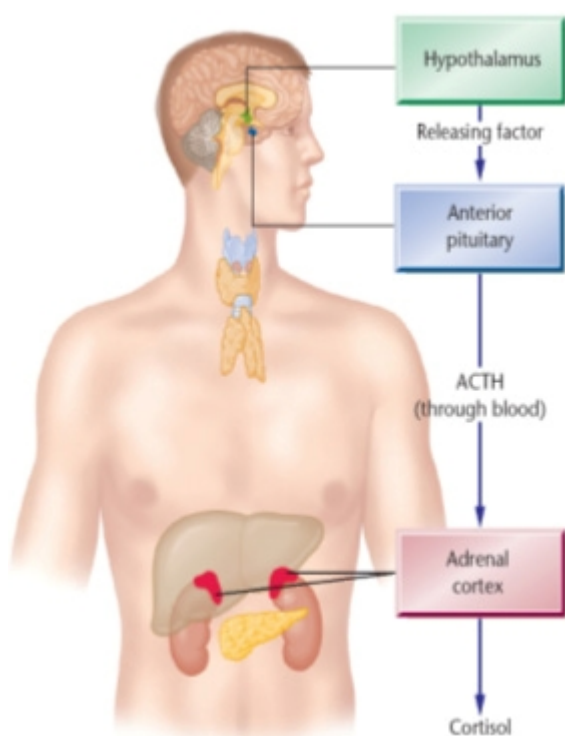
Written by Ash Ariffin

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Most of us are very busy these days, as a matter of fact we always have been. As humans, we know that our health is very important but unfortunately, most of the time we do not or forget to prioritise it.

Let us take a moment for thoughts and think for a little while what really causes stress in our lives? If my answers are emotions and non-healthy food choices, will anyone believe me? Well, I am not sure of it myself but it happened to be true. To attain the feel and looking good, we have no other choice but to find a balance in our lifestyle and in our body.

Cortisol is our body's main fighting hormone in which our body produces via



adrenal gland and it is especially high when we are in periods of stress and low when we are relaxing. It increases our appetite and promotes inflammation, reducing the body's sensitivity to metabolic hormones. To reduce cortisol levels and normalise our metabolism, we must relax!

When levels of serotonin and dopamine are low, our mood might be low, leaving us unprepared to cope with stress. It is particularly important to balance blood sugar levels because when these are low, serotonin and dopamine level will fall. Unusually high levels of cortisol will have possible result in blood sugar irregularities creating weakness, immune system deficiencies, anxiety, panic attacks, depression and increased risk of associated diseases. Even if the

original stressor subsides, our body may remain in continuous or "hyper" state of anxiety.

During the episodes of ongoing stress, overproduction of adrenaline and cortisol interferes with the near perfect balance of hormones in our body. Cortisol appears to interfere with how much serotonin and dopamine are produced. These are called neurotransmitters, which affect mood and our sense of well-being.

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Most of us always say that there is no time to de-stress. Well, think again. We can reduce our stress levels in various fast and effective ways and I call them “On the spot” or “Instant” mood boosters.

1) **Start laughing**

- Various researches have proven that forced laughter reduces cortisol and blood pressure instantly.

2) **Start singing**

- Recent research has shown that singing your favourite tunes or songs is more pleasurable than simply listening to them.

3) **Start repeating three-five words phrase**

- Continuously repeating three to five words phrases while you are in a traffic jam, waiting in the dentist's office or even before your important presentation, business meetings or interviews. This action clears our mind and this is exactly what we need when we are stressed out. Phrases like for example, “I am calm”, “I am beautiful”, “I am good looking” or “I do not give a damn” will help us and not only with stress but also in a lot of different scenarios in life because our brain will always believe our own words. It is similar to self-hypnosis.

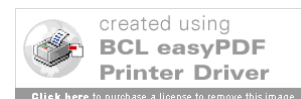
4) **Stop and enjoy the nature**

- When we start to day dream, watch a bird in flight, stare up at the clouds, enjoy the ocean or a beautiful flower, our mind is fixed on one thought and this action is a form of meditation or self-hypnosis, one of the most powerful relaxation techniques ever used. You can also use imagery meditation by sitting quietly and picturing some place, thing, or activity that makes you feel calm. You may also do mental projection of yourself in a scenario of your dream or goals in life. Research has shown that meditation also changes blood flow to the brain and reduces anxiety while it improves other mental functions. If you live in a big city, a store with a dress or anything in the window that you like will do the trick.

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5) **Call your friend or talk to your pet**

- Research has shown that making conversation with someone you care about causes the similar kind of positive physiological changes that a massage will give. To express your feelings and thoughts, you can either call a friend or talk to your pet (pets are even better listeners because not everyone has someone close that is a good listener)

6) **Take a walk**

- This is a common action that most of us will do. Some fresh air and moderate exercise can help clear our mind and frustration or anger.

7) **Squeeze a squishy ball or hug a pillow/soft toy**

- Start squeezing something like a squishy ball or hug a pillow/soft toy, to make away your tension or frustration.

8) **Have some de-stress snack**

- Chillies have been known as mood lifter, depression fighter, and one of the most powerful de-stress super foods, because they release mood-boosting endorphins. So, what ever your favourite chillies cocktail are, have them prepared in your fridge.

9) **Have some Dark Chocolate**

-This action is the most favourable by women. Research shows that **Dark Chocolate** (70-75% of cocoa or higher) not only reduces blood pressure and clear the arteries, but also improves mood by boosting serotonin and endorphin levels in the brain. Try it with a piece of dark chocolate, close your eyes, enjoy the flavour and relax.

If we do not take care of ourselves, nobody will and if something happens to us, who will take care of our children and our family? Studies show that more than 800.000 people a day take time off work because illness related to stress. Let us be stress smart and stress free!

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