

How Stress Can Pile on the Weight



Stress invites a number of health ailments, and weight gain is just one of them. However, there are tactics women can use to bust stress.

Perth, WA, 5 June, 2014 – Most people experience stress of some form or another – often repeatedly – throughout their lives, but for women especially, the pitfalls can be devastating on the body.

“Body and mind are constantly linked with each other,” says Michelle Monks, Gym Manager of Warwick Women’s Workout at the Warwick Leisure Centre in Perth. “When you’re thinking about something that isn’t particularly pleasant – or you’re going through a time in your life that is challenging – it can have repercussions on your body if you don’t check it.”

Monks agrees with experts that women in particular – having taken on the roles of wife, mother, housekeeper and caregiver – are more prone than men to suffering what is called ‘occupational stress.’

Having to care for an elderly or infirm parent, for example, can burden the mind of the caregiver. Monks believes that it is vitally important for women in that situation to take a moment each day to step away and recharge.

“What often happens is women in stressful situations tend to make poor nutrition choices, as well as neglect their fitness, and that leads to weight gain as well as setting up for more severe issues like diabetes and cholesterol problems,” Monks says.

“I can’t emphasise enough how important it is to employ a change of pace. Get out for a run, go for a swim or do something completely opposite to what you do that is causing the stress.”

Even knitting or crocheting – activities which keep the hands moving repetitively – can serve as a sort of meditative exercise. Gardening or chopping up vegetables has the same effect, with added plus of lowering heart rate as well as blood pressure.

Experts in the field of stress management also believe that going out into the great outdoors is a mood booster. Whether it’s climbing a hill, walking through the woods or sun bathing on a beach, getting in touch with one’s natural side can help the brain to extricate itself from the troubles or the workday or personal situation.

Even the weekend away from the office can be stressful if not managed correctly. It’s natural for many people to want to spill several activities into their weekend, yet experts say too much to do can make one even more exhausted and stressed. It’s recommended that of a weekend, 30 minutes daily should be put aside to recoup by reading, listening to music or even taking a soak in a calming bath.

“It’s completely possible to reset your mind by escaping to another place – be it a sporting event or a movie,” Monks says. “It’s the best way to take your mind off work, off the things that are distressing you. Do this for a few hours as often as you can, because emotionally, you really need it.”

Monks says, “You should ideally engage with what is going on around you – just take a deep breath and enjoy being in the moment. That’s a time-honoured prescription for kicking stress to the door and your health will thank you for it.”

Warwick Women’s Workout, at the Warwick Leisure Centre in Perth, offers women the chance to connect with each other to help them on their journey to optimal fitness. Contact a staff member by phone on (08) 9342 9028 or visit their website: <http://www.warwickwomensworkout.com.au>.

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