

SOAR TO SUCCESS MINUS THE STRESS



REDUCE YOUR STRESS BY
50 PERCENT IN 30 MINUTES

SAM HESTER

Soar To Success - *Minus the Stress*

(Proven Strategies to Reduce Your Stress)

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Please check with your physician before undertaking any type of exercise program, or before utilizing any stress relief information or technique in this book if you have any concerns. The information here is of a general nature based upon the author's experience, and should not be substituted for medical advice.

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Introduction

Hello. My name is Sam Hester, and over the last 25 years working as a counselor, coach, speaker, author, researcher, consultant, and trainer I have learned a lot about stress.

During this period, I have worked with thousands of individuals and I've found that what holds many people back in life is not a lack of education, knowledge, or skills, but the effects of stress. Stress that blocks you from tapping into the abilities you already have.

If you were drawn to this book, you're probably a person with a number of responsibilities along with a good deal of talent and ambition. I believe that everything you need to soar to success is already inside you. If you clear away your stress,

you'll clear the path to accessing your own gifts.

As a researcher, I have studied volumes of material on stress. Doctors and scientists have produced much data describing why you become stressed and over the centuries, philosophers, religious leaders and spiritual masters have taught how to initiate relaxation, but few have put the information all together in a simple, comprehensive way, such as you'll read in this short book.

I can assure you, the stress reduction techniques I'm going to teach you are very effective. As a part of a research study that I conducted – the participants using these same techniques – reported reducing their stress levels by up to 33% over a three-month period of time.

I have distilled the most successful tools into a few key techniques that I'm passing on to you. I'm going to preface these techniques with some background on your physiology. This will give you a picture of how stress affects you physically, why you have it and what happens to your grateful body when you relieve it of stress.

Stay In the Arena

In 1910, President Teddy Roosevelt, a true Renaissance man and author of 35 books, gave a speech at the Sorbonne entitled "*The Man in The Arena.*" In this speech, he said:

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out where

the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs

to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by

dust and sweat and blood ..."

Right now, as you go about your work and tend to your responsibilities, you are in the arena, and I have good news: you don't have to leave the arena of your life to manage your stress. There is no need to attend seminars, travel to an Ashram or seek weekly therapy. You can read this work and immediately begin to utilize the tools I give you. They will also enhance your enjoyment of the place you are in right now in your life, as you work to increase your success.

Stress is a hot topic these days, but much of the information available to you is either too broad, or too complicated, and the subject as covered in the media often does a disservice by focusing on changing your external environment.

Many of the tips don't go far enough, or have been replaced with new

techniques by the time you hear them. Besides, most of you have already changed many of the external things that you can.

What has brought about the current emphasis on stress, anyway? Since the 1940s, America has seen an explosion in so-called “lifestyle” related health issues, including obesity, hypertension, heart disease and diabetes, but, why?

The answer is found in both ancient history and modern habits. What it comes down to is that our behavior has gotten way out of sync with what our bodies were designed to handle. We live sedentary lives while our bodies constantly kick into stress responses that were inherent in primitive man.

These responses were in keeping with the strenuous activity and the

life threatening conditions he had to deal with. With the physiology of a much more active human being, it's no wonder that you have difficulty relaxing. This, of course, has a cascading effect on the rest of your life.

Because of stress, many of you are living well below your potential, just going through the motions of life. You may have begun to wonder, *is this all there is?* An often-quoted observation by Henry Thoreau in the 19th century was, "*Most men live lives of quiet desperation.*" Taking this commentary on mankind's stress and depression forward 150 years to the present, his remark is, sadly, more on target now than ever.

Research

In fact, here are some facts to prove it. American businesses suffer an

estimated \$400 billion a year in stress-related loss to productivity, or, about \$10 thousand per employee. Almost 100 million people in this country take medication for a stress related illness, and the American Medical Association states that at least 80 percent of all illnesses have some stress-related component.

We now know that stress is actually life threatening. You've heard about the mind-body connection, but there was very little scientific evidence to support the concept until 2004.

That year, a report came out on the work of Dr. Elisa Epel, a psychiatrist and researcher from the University of California at San Francisco. Dr. Epel's research revealed the first direct link between psychological stress and the aging process at the molecular level.

Her study involved women between the ages of 20 and 50 who were healthy, but who had kids with horrific illnesses such as autism and cerebral palsy. These mothers were involved in non-stop care giving.

The women were given a series of tests that focused on telomeres, the caps on the end of each human chromosome. Telomeres are like a cellular clock of aging. When your cells divide, your telomeres get shorter, and when your cells cannot divide anymore death occurs.

Interestingly, the women who self reported the most stress over the longest period of time correlated with the ones who did the worst on the tests.

In the study, women who reported the most stress had telomeres equivalent to women 10 years older

than themselves. This landmark study gave evidence that, when you are stressed, your body is literally in a state of deterioration.

What is Stress?

Now let's look at stress in your own life: your boss, your job, your kids, and your spouse. Each one is a stimulus, and it's your response to the stimulus that actually causes you stress, but, if you think for a minute, I'll bet you'll agree that most of the things that stress you, also bring you joy. It just depends on how you perceive your boss, your job, your family, at that moment.

My definition of stress is this: it's your body's internal, physiological reaction to *perceived* outside threats. Notice the word "perceived." A particular form of stimulation that

bothers you, might not bother me, and vice versa.

You can actually pinpoint where stress comes from on a physiological level. If you put your hand on the back of your head, just above your neck, this is where your body's central nervous system is housed.

In the sympathetic branch of your involuntary central nervous system, your stress reaction is produced. Imagine: you can put your hand right on the area in your body where all that turmoil starts!

Your stress reaction is nature's way of saying beware and pay attention. But nature and your body don't tell you *what* to beware of. It is like the alarm going off in your house, but you are not sure if it's because of a fire, a break-in, or false alarm. It just

gets your attention and makes you alert.

Let me describe what happens when your stress reaction goes off. Let's say you're driving along and a kid runs out in front of your car. In a fraction of a second, you move your foot off the gas and hit the brake. You didn't have to **think** about this, you just naturally react to a stimulus so that you won't hit the child.

In that fraction of a second, your adrenal glands start kicking out adrenalin, your heart can jump 30 beats, your blood pressure rises, and your breathing turns rapid and shallow. In addition, the blood travels away from your limbs and the outer part of your body into your core, to keep glucose and oxygen going to your brain. Non-essential organ systems, like digestion, actually start

shutting down in descending order of survival.

*This is called an **acute** stress reaction.* It keeps your body functioning while you're in distress, but it is hard on your body. Shallow breathing alone deprives you of 30 per cent of your available oxygen. It is no wonder every time you experience this kind of reaction, it contributes to the aging process.

The insidious thing about an acute stress reaction is that it will happen automatically, with or without your willing participation. So when it comes to reducing stress, awareness and information on how your body operates under pressure can be very helpful.

When you have an acute stress reaction, nature assumes that within a very short period of time, you are

going to engage your large muscle groups and move like hell. That behavior has been ingrained in humans for hundreds of thousands of years, and today it is called the *fight- or-flight response*.

But when was the last time that you actually ran away from your boss when he or she stressed you out? When was the last time you got into a fight over criticism of a report you wrote at work? You don't react like that! Instead, you sit still, just like the chameleon when threatened – you freeze. So, the actual sequence for humans is *fight, flight or freeze*, just as it is in the animal kingdom. You sit in your office, car and home, having hundreds or thousands of these acute stress responses every day, and you wonder why you feel like crap.

The problem is not the acute stress reaction itself. The harm comes from the buildup of numerous acute stress reactions over time. The effect of this build-up is called **chronic** stress. It results from the accumulation of powerful stress hormones, specifically adrenaline and cortisol. *Chronic stress is the bottom line stress problem for us humans.*