



*Let's admit it...our current economic state is affecting everyone either directly or indirectly. For this month's newsletter, it only seems appropriate to talk about the science of stress and ways to minimize it in one's daily life. May our suggestions help you find balance during stressful times.*

*Stay healthy!*

## **Inside:**

*Page 2: More FYL News*

*Page 3: The Physiology of Stress... Simplified!*

*Page 4: Simple Strategies to Manage Stress*

## **FYL IN THE COMMUNITY**

### **2009 Markham-Stouffville MS WALK**

Sunday April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2009  
Markham District High School  
89 Church Street, Markham ON  
Walk starts at 10 am

**FabYourLife** is pleased to announce that we are again participating in this wonderful event for the second year in a row. The FYL team will be located inside the cafeteria where **Genevieve** will be donating her services by providing 5-10 minute massages to MS Walk Participants, while **Fabian** and **Louisa** will be on hand for any health related questions or concerns. Please come by to say hello!

Invite family and friends to enjoy a Sunday morning walk and make a difference in the life of someone living with Multiple Sclerosis.

Register today! [www.mswalks.ca](http://www.mswalks.ca)



## **NEW ADDITION TO FYL TEAM**

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome **Alan Sze** to the FYL Health & Wellness Team. Alan holds a Bachelor Degree in Physical Health & Education from the University of Toronto, as well as a Diploma in Sports Injury Management from Sheridan College. As a Certified Kinesiologist and Certified Athletic Therapist, Alan has had the opportunity to work with amateur and professional athletes in many sports including hockey, tennis, golf, rugby, running, basketball, lacrosse and dancing.

With over 7 years of experience, Alan's versatility has allowed him to work in many settings including private therapy clinics, hospitals, and high performance training centres. Being an avid runner and duathlete himself, he specializes in rehabilitation and elite training. Alan Sze enjoys working with anyone who wants to improve themselves. He thrives to identify your goals and works with you to not only meet them, but surpass them.

To book and appointment with Alan, or to learn more on how he can help you achieve your fitness goals, email [info@fabyourlife.com](mailto:info@fabyourlife.com)



## UPDATE

With summer around the corner, **Fabian** will not be teaching at Humber College between the months of May and August 2009, making him once again available to see clients on Fridays.

## RECOGNITION

Congratulations to both **Clare Mount** and **Janice Leonard**, two outstanding FYL clients, for completing and surviving the "Around the Bay 30K Race" in Hamilton on March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2009. The already challenging course was made even more difficult thanks to cold weather, strong winds and heavy rain. Their commitment and motivation allowed them to persevere and successfully complete the entire course.

We would like to add that **Clare Mount** has also qualified for the 2010 Boston Marathon by coming 2<sup>nd</sup> in her age category at the "Last Chance for Boston Marathon" in Dublin, Ohio on February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Way to go girls!



## ANNOUNCEMENT

Once again, **Fabian** is hard at work organizing the **3<sup>rd</sup> Annual OKA 5K Fun Run**. The run will be taking place again at the beautiful Balmy Beach Club on **Sunday August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2009**. We invite everyone to join us, beginners and pros, to enjoy a fun filled morning of activities, demonstrations, food, music and prizes.

Proceeds go towards the Canadian Diabetes Association. So mark your calendars and spread the word!



## The Physiology of Stress...*Simplified!*

With our current economic state, it is inevitable for many to feel more stress than usual. A little bit of stress can be good at times, but when stress becomes prolonged or consistent in one's life, the effects can have a negative impact on the body. So let's discuss the physiology of stress to better understand why it is essential to keep it under control, and ultimately keep the body in a state of optimum health.

### SHORT TERM STRESS

When someone is stressed, they are said to be in a "Fight or Flight" mode. Essentially, their sympathetic nervous system becomes over-stimulated, giving the person a momentary boost to do whatever needs to be done to survive. Examples of short-term stress include being stuck in traffic, watching a scary movie, feeling excited or nervous before a race, and witnessing a traumatic event. Thanks to hormones and the nervous system, the following processes will occur:



- The heart will beat harder and faster to supply blood to the muscles needed for the activity.
- The respiratory rate will increase in order to bring more oxygen into the body.
- The body will breakdown fats and form sugars at an increased rate to meet higher energy demands.
- Certain processes such as digestion and urine production will slow since blood shifts from non-vital organs to vital organs and muscle tissue.
- Inflammatory and immune responses will be inhibited since healing is not essential when the body is in a state of survival mode.

Once the stressful stimulus is removed, the body will gradually return to a normal resting state.

### CHRONIC STRESS

When stress becomes consistent or frequent in one's life, it is termed chronic stress. Examples of chronic stress include work, deadlines, family matters, financial stresses, disputes, and schedules just to name a few. The same processes discussed above will take place, however the body will eventually fatigue or "burnout" from trying to keep up with the increased demands. Let's look more closely at the impact stress can have on the body if prolonged without periods of rest and relaxation to counterbalance the stress response.



- If the heart beats persistently harder and faster, other conditions such as high blood pressure, heart disease and heart failure can eventually develop.
- If the body continues to demand more energy, it will start to breakdown proteins once sugars have been utilized and fat stores have been depleted. This essentially means that it will start to breakdown much needed muscle tissue.
- With digestion and urine production being impeded, other conditions such as constipation, ulcers, kidney stones can subsequently develop.
- Last but not least, it is much easier to become ill when chronically stressed because the immune system is suppressed, making the body more susceptible to everything from cold and flu to cancer.

Ultimately, the body doesn't recognize what type of stress it is encountering. Whether it's acute or chronic stress, it will react the same way. It is necessary for the body to react this way, especially in emergency situation. However, we don't want our body to be stuck in survival mode for long periods of time since it can lead to disease and premature death.

## Simple Strategies to Manage Stress

Now that we've discussed the implications of stress, here are simple strategies to reduce stress in your life today.

- **Eat nutritiously.** Skipping meals when stressed only makes matters worse. Simply put... you are demanding more from your body. Make sure to eat breakfast, lunch and dinner, and fuel your body with healthy snacks in between meals. This will keep your body functioning optimally, both physically and mentally.
- **Exercise regularly.** Try starting or ending your busy day with exercise. It's as easy as putting on those dusty running shoes and running for 30 minutes. Not only is it beneficial for your cardiovascular health, but also for your mental health. As endorphins kick in, the stresses of your day will soon be forgotten.
- **Ensure you get sufficient hours of good quality sleep.** The body recovers and heals during sleep, so aim to get 8 hours of sleep and try going to bed and waking up at the same time every day. A lot of people have difficulty falling asleep since the day's events tend to play havoc in their mind. Try reading something unrelated to your daily life, such as a novel, or try falling asleep to low-volume calming music. For most, it's a matter of distracting the mind of what has happened or what is to come in order to fall asleep.
- **Don't forget to breathe!** You may find yourself holding your breath during stressful situations. This habit can make the body more toxic, the heart work harder to compensate for the lack of oxygen, muscles more tense, and essentially further intensify the stress response. If you catch yourself doing this, take a few deep diaphragmatic breaths by expanding your entire thorax, starting from the abdomen and ending at the upper chest.
- **Find time for you.** Choose an activity that you enjoy doing and make time to do it. It is essential to give the body time to rest, relax and recover from stressful events. If you don't have time...make time!
- **Take a break.** If you are struggling to complete a task and feel your anxiety levels slowly increasing, don't be afraid to take a break and do something else. Sometimes stepping away from a stressful task for an hour or two can help rejuvenate the mind and body, allowing you to tackle the task more efficiently upon your return.
- **Know when to say NO!** Remember that you are only one person. Be sure to set limitations so that you don't overextend yourself.
- **Understand what is within your control.** Recognizing what is within the realm of your control is key in managing stress. If something is out of your control, let it go. There's no sense stressing over something you cannot change.
- **Try meditation or yoga.** These are great activities for both the body and mind. Many feel a sense of being more grounded when practicing these ancient arts.
- **Talk to someone.** Share your feelings of stress and anxiety with someone you can confide in. Rather than bottling up your emotions, use your support system to "unload" the events of your day and feel the weight of stress slowly lift off your shoulders.



Print this page and place it somewhere that will visually remind you to make your health a priority every day... no matter what circumstances may arise.