

# De-stress & reenergize

## A WEALTH OF HEALTH



*Dr. Kathleen Hufnagle and staff at Agape Chiropractic & Massage Center in Lake Villa have been committed to helping clients manage stress and keep healthy for the last 26 years. If you would like more information, or to schedule your free consultation please call Agape Chiropractic & Massage Center at 847-356-9696.*

**W**eb MD defines “stress” as what you feel when you have to handle more than you are used to. When you are stressed your body responds as if it is in danger. It produces hormones that speed up your heart, makes you breathe faster and gives you a burst of energy. You go in “flight or fight” mode.

But flight or fight is meant as a temporary solution to a crises situation. For example, you are in the woods and meet a bear; that is when you want that flight or fight mechanism to work for you. Unfortunately, what has happened in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with our fast, high pressure, jam-packed lives, is that we are continually in that stressed, or flight or fight state.

We are asking our bodies to except stress as normal. It does not take a rocket scientist to see that keeping that heart revved up and depleting the body’s supply of adrenal hormones, is going to create some serious problems.

For example, high blood pressure, abnormal heartbeat, headaches, atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries) depression, sleep problems and worsening conditions; like diabetes, IBS, GERD, asthma and COPD are just some of those conditions associated with high stress. Remember that the effects of prolonged stress will lead to an impairment of your life and as research has shown, could

greatly shorten your life.

### ***Here are four recommendations for handling some of the stress in your life:***

**1.** This month’s edition of the Suburban Life Magazine is featuring recreation and leisure. What a concept! Put a little play and relaxation back into your busy life.

Take some time for yourself. Before job demands, children and other commitments, what did you enjoy doing? Whether it is painting, crafts, sewing, building things, gardening, hiking, camping, swimming, golf, relaxing in a hot tub, or reading a good book, bring at least one activity back into your life that you enjoy. And do it every day.

**2.** Pare down your “to-do” list. Prioritize things on your list into three categories.

A) Absolutely must get done today.

B) Could get done today, but not absolutely necessary.

C) If you get to it great, but if you don’t the world won’t come to an end.

Number threes usually are easy and there are usually a lot of them. If you’re a list person, they’re easy to finish, and it feels like you’re accomplishing a lot by scratching them off your list.

**3.** Adopt a healthy lifestyle. Diet and exercise are key factors in managing stress. Eat a healthy diet. Well-nourished bodies are better prepared to cope with stress. Regular exercise helps reduce and prevent the effects of stress. Try to carve 30 minutes a day of cardiovascular exercise into your schedule at least four days a week.

**4.** Look at yourself in the mirror. Are your ears level? Are your shoulders even? Are they elevated? Feel your neck, upper back, shoulders and the base of your skull. Do you feel tightness and knots? If you are not level, or have knots and tightness, stress is part of your life. You must get back into alignment and balance. Ask your doctor if he/she has a method of rebalancing without the use of medication.

If your doctor is not well-versed in natural methods of stress reduction and you’re still struggling with managing stress on your own, consider a chiropractic consultation to evaluate how massage therapy, chiropractic techniques and exercise protocols can help alleviate your structural imbalances and knots.

