

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT - 12 PAGE SUPPLEMENT • NCEF DIPLOMA IN EXERCISE & HEALTH FITNESS



National  
Certificate  
in Exercise  
& Fitness

# NATIONAL *fitness*

## news

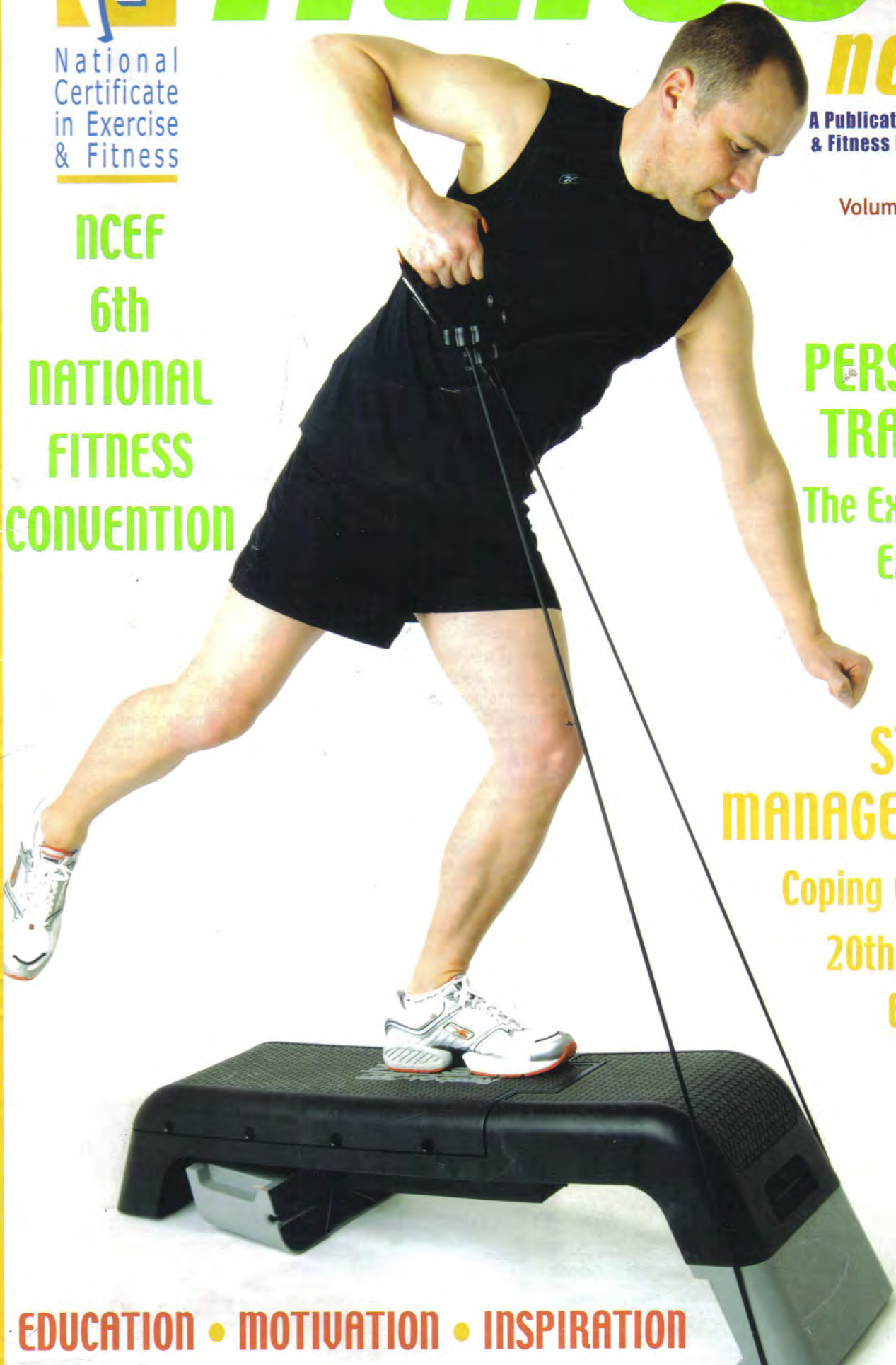
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**NCEF**  
**6th**  
**NATIONAL**  
**FITNESS**  
**CONVENTION**

**PERSONAL**  
**TRAINING**  
The Exhausted  
Executive

**STRESS**  
**MANAGEMENT**  
Coping with our  
20th Century  
Epidemic



**EDUCATION • MOTIVATION • INSPIRATION**

# Stress Management



## Part 1 – Coping with our 20th Century Epidemic

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(Bsc.,M.I.L., R.G.N, Dip. Stress Mgt., NCEF, Life Coach, NLP Practitioner)

STRESS has been identified as the "20th Century Epidemic" by the World Health Organisation. The statistics show that four out of 5 people are suffering from stress disorder (world health organisation) and that 1:10 people fall victim to over stress, estimating that it is costing the Irish economy 10% of its gross national product due to loss of productivity and increased insurance claims.

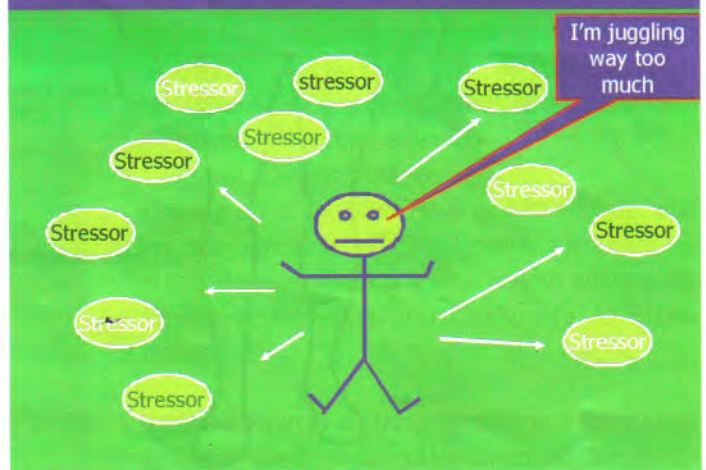
'Stress' is not a myth, and it is not a psychiatric illness. And is defined as "the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demands placed on them" (H. S.E (U.K) 2005). It is our bodies reaction to these pressures that trigger the bodies system to display the body stress signs and symptoms.

### What's difference between stress and pressure?

There is a difference between experiencing 'Stress' and experiencing 'Pressure'. Pressure can be a motivating factor, however when we experience Stress as an end result of having too much Pressure on us. Such pressures are called Stressors and these are things that we experience each day however if too many happen at any one moment then we are more open to experiencing a Stress Body Reaction.

As you read these you are thinking that well these are the things that happen to us day in and day out, however we can be so busy trying to keep everything going that we neglect ourselves, and are not taking the time to pace things, which can mean we feel that we are unable to cope, (refer to diagram below) and over time if we do not adequately offload some of these stressors/demands we begin to experience the symptoms of stress. Stress been defined in the earlier paragraph as "The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demands placed on them" (HSE , 2005)

## Juggling Too Much!



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## What are Stressors?



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### What are the Signs and Symptoms of Stress?

The signs and symptoms experienced by people suffering from stress, can vary from person to person, as our bodies do respond differently to different situation. However the symptoms experiences can vary from emotional, spiritual, physical, pshycological and relational. The following are a list of various symptoms:

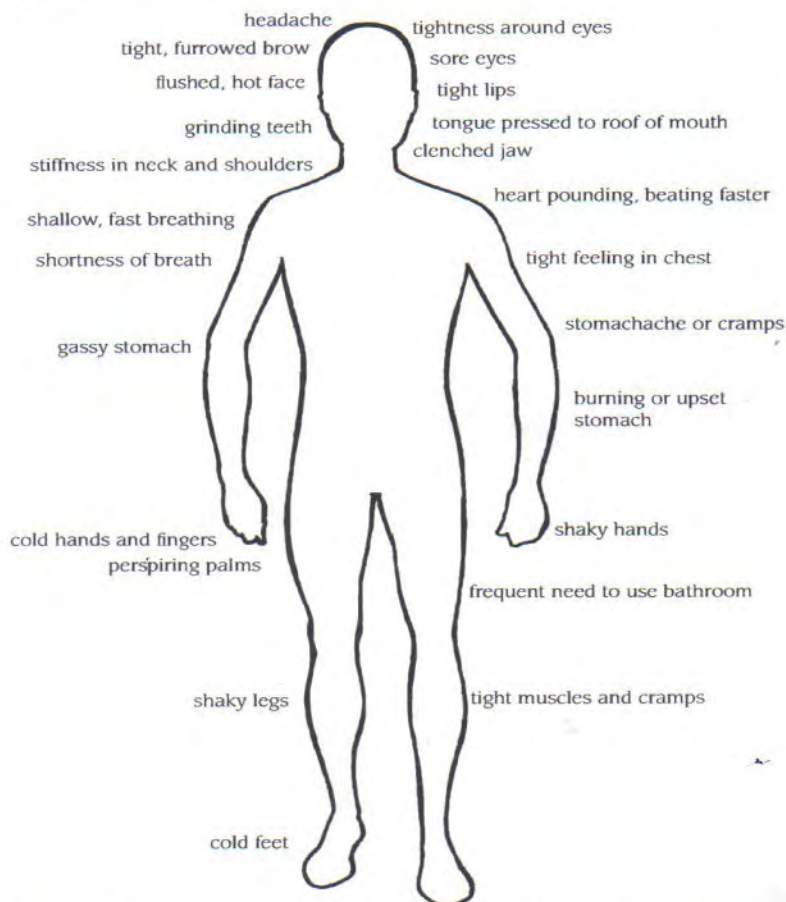
- Tearfulness
- Unable to cope
- Irritable
- Appetite Change
- Unable to make decisions
- Insomnia
- Social isolation
- Increased blood pressure

# Stress Management

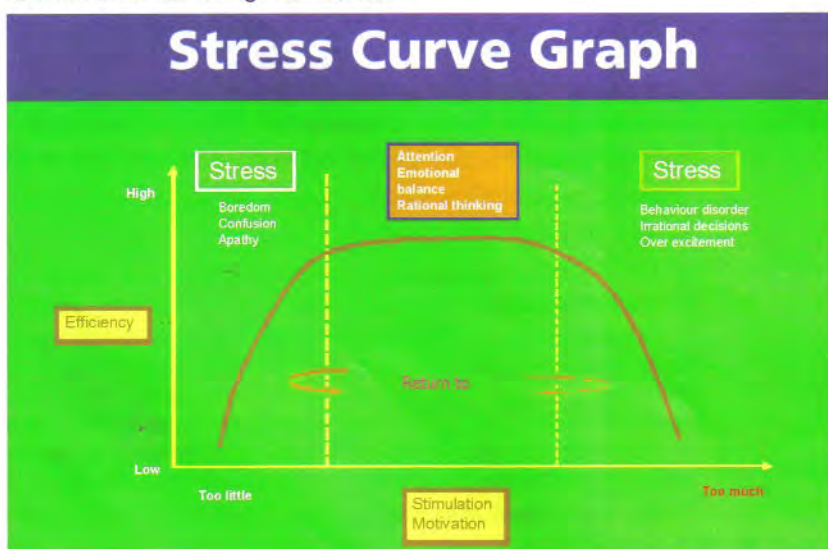
- Skin allergies/reactions
- Poor digestion
- Fatigue
- Lack of Motivation
- Panic Attacks
- Development of Phobia

## Physiological (Body) Signs of Stress

**PHYSIOLOGICAL SIGNS OF STRESS** are how we feel in our bodies when we have stress.



The diagram below titled the Stress curve graph illustrates that if you are experiencing either little life stimulation or constant pressure that you are at risk of suffering from stress.



## Can people become addicted to stress?

If one experiences long term levels of pressure without taking a break or making some life changes one will suffer from Chronic stress. This is when our body has become accustomed to a life of constant pressure. The result of this is that one can become addicted to the Stress Buzz of being constantly under pressure, which some interpret as a sign of success and achievement.

We all know people who living on their nerves, needing constant deadlines, who are unable to relax. It is possible that these individuals are suffering from Chronic Stress but are totally unaware of how their living behaviour is affecting their quality of life. For them this is a natural way of being. And in an article published by People Management, (23rd March, 2006) research conducted by Ciaran O'Boyle professor of psychology at the Royal College of Surgeons in Dublin identified that Senior Managers in Ireland are so stressed that they have a lower quality of life than the terminally ill.

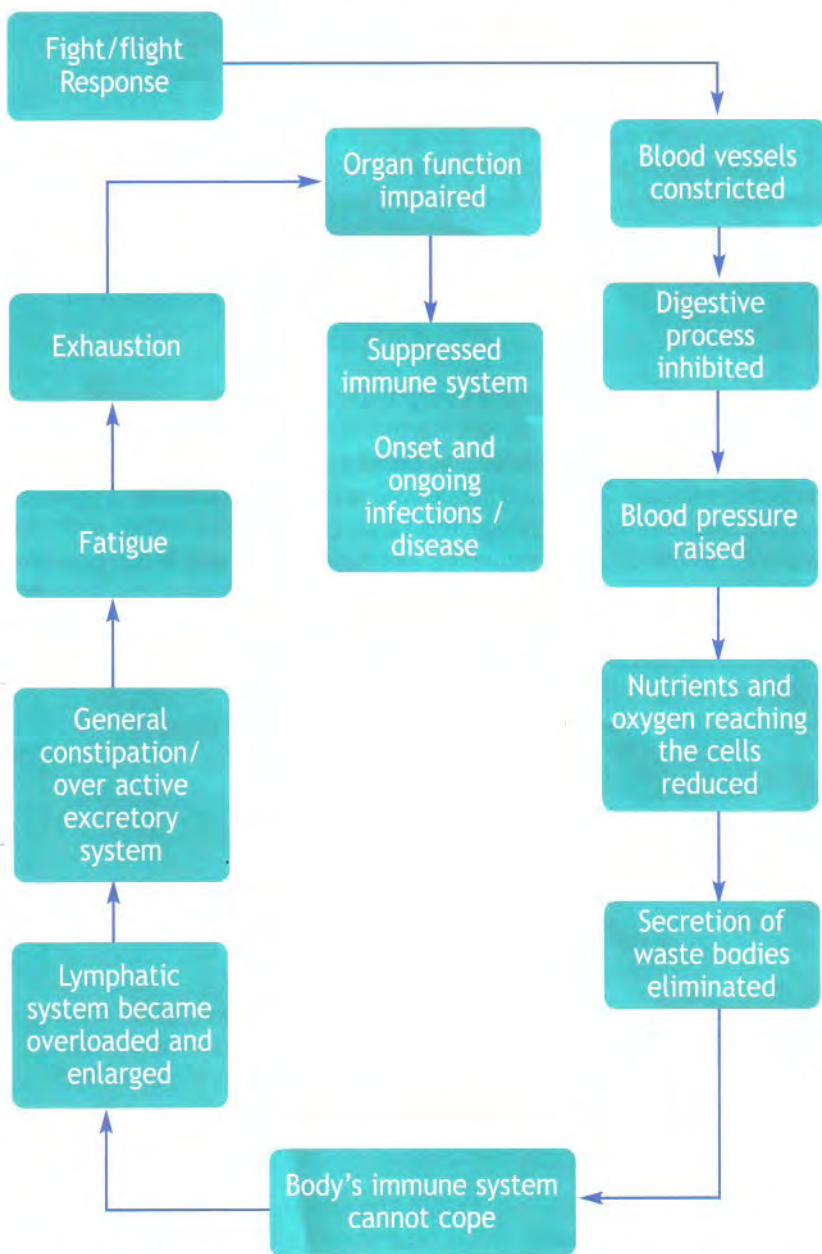
## What happens if you live a life that is constantly pressure orientated?

When we are under constant pressure our body secretes stress hormones, which give our bodies the ability to accelerate the bodies function, however our body cannot sustain this level of activity without a break or a rest. The unfortunate result is that one's body mechanics - organs, nervous system, secretory system, etc, cannot keep up and start to malfunction, which is when stress related illnesses develop as the bodies natural balance is disturbed. Examples of such Stress Illnesses are: Fibromyalgia, High Blood Pressure, debilitating migraines, Stomach Ulcers, Heart Conditions, Panic Attacks.

The symptoms are endless, however when we push ourselves or our bodies too hard for too long without a rest we are leaving ourselves open to experiencing Stress body Reaction which could lead to illness/hospitalisation. The below diagram illustrates how this occurs. (Reference: ITEC stress management manual: Mary Scariff (2000))

# Stress Management

Diagram of stress and illness: Spiral effects of Constant Stress



## What will happen if stress goes untreated?

If stress goes untreated it can develop into further debilitating illnesses such as 'Panic attacks', insomnia, Compulsive behaviors, or paranoia. And this in itself is enough for a person to start doubting their very sanity.

## Is there a particular type of person who suffers from Stress?

Just to give you an idea of the type of persons who suffer and experience stress; they range from your local supermarket owner, farmer, home maker, to the directors of multinationals. Every-one is predisposed to suffering from stress the answer is what do people do to manage it.

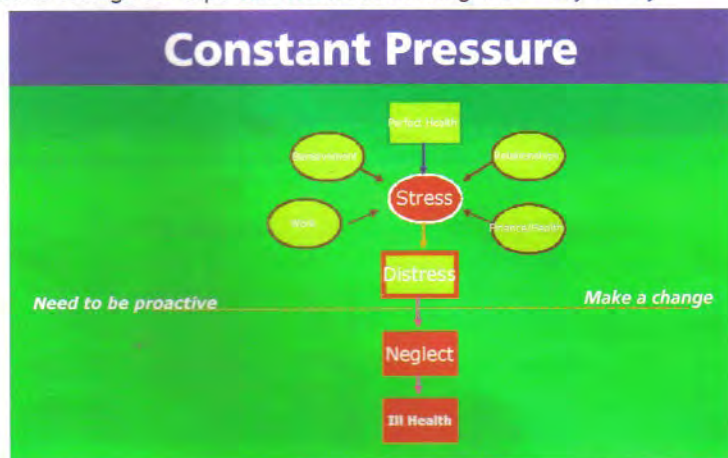
## What are the Irish Statistics on Stress? :

Unfortunately, there are no official published Irish Statistics by the C.S.O (Central Statistics office), H.S.A (health and Safety Authority of Ireland), I.O.S.H (The institute of occupational safety and health in Ireland) or the H.S.E (The Health Service Executive). It is possible the reason for this is because 'Stress' is not viewed as a disease and is treated as a symptom. I do believe that this is vital information that health professionals and state's authority would benefit from knowing. Statistics we have are provided by the World Health Organization (WHO), who have identified stress as 7 out of the top 10 killers in world. Along with the International Stress management association who estimate that Job Stress accounts for 6,500 new cases of work related mental Health problems in the U.K per annum (I.S.M.A 2003).

**Coming up in the Sept issue of NFN:** I will focus on the importance sports/health attributes to stress management along with how to address the Health & Fitness Professionals role in Stress Management.

**Therese Ryan** is a Stress Management Consultant & Coach. She is an Executive Board Member to the International Stress Management Association and director of Renewal Consultants. Her clients vary from Directors of Multinationals wanting to improve their work life balance to individuals wanting to get the motivation to manage the stress in their lives. Therese is consulted regularly by national radio and T.V for her advice and expertise relating to positive life and health changes. Her work is currently featuring on the T.V programme 'How long will you live? Airing on RTE1 at 8.30pm for the month of January.

For further information contact:  
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