

A STUDY ON STRESS MANAGEMENT AND MARATHON

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ABSTRACT

Stress is a normal psychological and physical reaction to the ever-increasing demands of life. Stress is man's adaptive reaction to an outward situation which would lead to physical, mental and behavioural changes. Even though stress kills brain cells, not all stresses are destructive in nature. Appropriate amount of stress can actually trigger passion for work, tap latent abilities and even ignite inspirations. Stress may be considered as any physical, chemical, or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental unrest and that may be a factor in causing disease. In looking at the causes of stress, remember that your brain comes hard-wired with an alarm system for your protection. When your brain perceives a threat, it signals your body to release a burst of hormones to fuel your capacity for a response. This has been labelled the "fight-or-flight" response. Physical activity plays a key role in reducing and preventing the effects of stress, but you don't have to be an athlete or spend hours in a gym to experience the benefits. Just about any form of physical activity can help relieve stress and burn away anger, tension, and frustration. Exercise releases endorphins that boost your mood and make you feel good, and it can also serve as a valuable distraction to your daily worries.

Key words : Stress, Stress Management, Marathon, Healthy life, Work life balance.

1. INTRODUCTION : MARATHON

The marathon is a long-distance running event with an official distance of 42.195 kilometres (26.21875 miles, or 26 miles 385 yards), usually run as a road race. The event was instituted in commemoration of the fabled run of the Greek soldier Pheidippides, a messenger from the Battle of Marathon to Athens.

The marathon was one of the original modern Olympic events in 1896, though the distance did not become standardized until 1921. More than 500 marathons are held throughout the world each year, with the vast majority of competitors being recreational athletes as larger marathons can have tens of thousands of participants.

Large companies arrange marathon for the benefits of the employees in various aspects just to show the personal care that they take over their employees.

2. PHYSICAL BENEFITS

There are various health benefits of running a marathon in a regular basis and these good things are implemented over the employees for their health, few physical health benefits of running a marathon are

- IMPROVED CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH
- FEELING ACCOMPLISHED
- LONG-TERM FITNESS LIFESTYLE
- REDUCED RISK OF CANCER

Running can help you shed as many as 100 calories per mile and aids in lowering your blood pressure by making sure the arteries stay nice and elastic. In fact, running can cause your arteries to expand and contract as much as three times the arteries of a guy who spends all his time sitting at his cubicle. Running also slows down the hands of time a little, as it relates to your aging process regular runners are less likely to have bone and muscle loss.

"Some people create with words, or with music, or with a brush and paints. I like to make something beautiful when I run. I like to make people stop and say, "I've never seen anyone run like that before." It's more than just a race, it's a style. It's doing something better than anyone else. It's being creative." – Usain Bolt.

3. PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS

Here are some psychological benefits for runners as well. Stress in both its forms, acute and long-term, have some pretty nasty effects on your body. Acute stress comes on fast and typically doesn't last very long. It can be triggered by anything, from an auto accident to bumping into an old flame you weren't prepared to see. Most of your body systems are negatively affected by acute stress. Your brain, lungs, heart, immune system and digestive system all ramp up to deal with whatever trigger got you so worked up, whether it's a real danger or just perceived. Long-term, or chronic, stress is even worse. Over time, your heart will have to work overtime, and your immune system will weaken and send your fat straight to your waistline.

Arthritis, heart disease, diabetes and aging all take a hit when you live with chronic stress.

“ Running has become a part and parcel of my life. It has thought me perseverance, patience and focus. Running is also a great soft skill developer” – N. Chandra, CEO & MD, TCS. (In reference to #Mumbai Marathon 2016)

4. STRESS RELIEF FOR EMPLOYEES

Employees who engage in long distance running usually report fewer instances of anxiety and depression as well as lower levels of anger and stress. This is because exercise (including long distance running) affects certain neurotransmitters in the brain that helps reduce fear and the physical symptoms of anxiety.

For most people who work out regularly, regardless of how they feel at any particular moment, exercise makes them feel better. And this is not limited to the “runner’s high” of race day — that blast of feel-good hormones called endocannabinoids. In a study published in *Medicine & Science in Sports and Exercise*, researchers found that even a single training session of as little as 30 minutes of walking could immediately improve the mood of patients suffering from major depressive disorders.

Moreover, the results were similar in a more recent study where rats and mice showed antidepressant-like results after running on a wheel. This latter study (on top of previous ones) led researchers to conclude that physical activities such as running are indeed actual alternatives to treating depression.

Research has also shown that even on days when runners force themselves to train, exercise still protects them against depression and anxiety. A 2012 study in the **Journal of Adolescent Health** also showed that simply running for 30 minutes for three weeks enhanced sleep quality, mood, and focus throughout the day.

5. CONCLUSION

Running a marathon is hard but the rewards are plentiful, from better state of mind to eating better and being fit. These are all substantial benefits that can be difficult to achieve all at once. In the recent past, many leading corporates have started sponsoring marathons for the betterment of every individual and consequently individuals travel across various countries to participate in these platforms and get benefited from this .