

STRESS

HOW IT CAN IMPACT EATING HABITS AND WEIGHT

Stress is a part of life that **many of us can't avoid** and can impact our lives in a variety of ways. Our overall health as well as progress towards our weight loss and body composition goals can be affected by stress. Research has shown that individuals who are under stress long-term are more likely to **over-consume foods** in general, but particularly those that are higher in fat, sugar, and salt. This repeated behavior, over time, can lead to increased risk for overweight/obesity and other health-related concerns. Some of the physiological side effects of chronic stress include:

- Your body **releases hormones** that cause an effect on your body such as:
 - Cortisol which temporarily increases blood sugar and appetite.
 - Aldosterone which increases sodium reabsorption and fluid retention which can lead to weight gain and increased blood pressure.
- Other health impacts such as **decreased functioning of your immune system** and increased **degradation of your bones**.

Some of these common coping mechanisms for stress can lead to the development of unhealthy habits and behaviors that are hard to break. These habits tend to pull us further away from our weight loss/body composition goals. At Stronger U, we want to make sure you feel supported and prepared in learning new ways to cope with stress that don't hinder you from reaching your goals!

Behavioral impacts of chronic stress:



consumption of high fat, salt and sugary foods.



likelihood of drinking alcohol and smoking.



sedentary behavior leading to fewer calories burned



PAUSE

Put the food/drink down and tune into the cause behind the urgent and indulgent behavior.

Take 4 deep breaths and identify the exact emotions you feel.

Identify how the act of consuming the indulgent food/drink will take away or decrease the stressful situation at hand.



SUPPORT

Call a friend, family member, or other supportive individuals to help you process your stressful thoughts and emotions.



DISTRACT

Identify non-food related activities to distract yourself; exercise, gardening, cleaning, reading, journaling, and/or other hobbies.

Practice gratitude and focus on what you can control.



BALANCE

Engage in mindful eating practices where you eat in response to hunger and stop eating when you are full.

**THE GREATEST WEAPON AGAINST STRESS IS
OUR ABILITY TO CHOOSE ONE THOUGHT OVER
THE OTHER.**

-William James



Main Takeaway

It's important to know the negative impact that chronic stress can have on your health and weight loss/body composition goals while in this program. Although some stress is unavoidable, finding healthier ways to cope with stress will allow you to break free of those unhealthy habits that have been formed over the course of your life, forever! Understanding the mechanism of what happens in the body during chronic stress also provides a new appreciation of how important it is to try and reduce unnecessary stress as much as possible.

Our goal at Stronger U is to help you become the best version of yourself, and guide you towards developing new, healthier ways to deal with stress that you can adopt in your life long term!



Resources

Further information regarding the impact stress can have on your body and helpful ways to cope with stress are below!

- [Stronger U Blog: Stress and Weight Gain](#)
- [Stress Effects on the Body](#)
- [Staying Healthy During Times of Stress](#)
- [How Stress Can Lead to Overeating and How to Manage](#)