



STRESS & SLEEP

High stress levels and poor sleep often go hand in hand. When we are chronically stressed it can deplete our energy resources. Add to this some poor sleep and it can have the most positive, energised person feeling low on energy and zest for life.

Whilst there are a number of reasons for this, exercise has been proven to have a fantastic effect on both. The trick is to find the right balance of activity to have a positive impact on your stress levels and sleep pattern. It can take a little trial and error but once you get it right you can really feel the difference. You should feel an increase in general energy levels, a return to a more positive frame of mind as well as improving your sleep and allowing you to manage your stress levels better.

TIPS TO IMPROVE STRESS & SLEEP

- 1 Get active - Just 30 minutes of moderate exercise a day has been proven to improve your sleep pattern and decrease your stress levels.
- 2 Increase good fats- This is proven to help improve your brain function and mood.
- 3 Mindfulness - Try yoga, pilates, meditation or even just a few minutes focussing on your breathing. This can really help de-stress and give your mind a little rest.
- 4 Avoid caffeine- Caffeine can elevate cortisol levels. This can be a big deal if you are stressed as your cortisol levels will be too high most of the time. Aim to cut all caffeine out until you have dealt with your stress levels and then stop drinking it 5-6 hours before you want to sleep.
- 5 Give yourself 60-90 minutes to unwind- Stay away from electrical devices such as TV, smart phones or tablets. Find a routine that helps you switch off. It could be a relaxing bath, some calming music or candles.
- 6 Do something fun- Find something you enjoy and give yourself some time to do it. It could be painting, writing, playing a sport or learning a language. This is so important when you are busy with work or family. You still need to make some time for yourself.