



Fit For Sisters

Andrew Loscutoff
Columnist

Stress and weight gain

The pandemic has been tough on people’s waistlines.

It’s reported that 36 percent of people have admitted to gaining a lot of weight during the pandemic. This should come as no surprise. In a stressful environment, the body is naturally receptive to weight gain. And the direction people turn to soothe some stress isn’t beneficial for the waistline either.

Forty percent of people report eating and watching TV as their main coping mechanisms.

Anyone reading this ought to know by now the body is a system, which is all wired together, rather than a machine of binary units, which only perform one function. Stress, whether psychological or physical, produces a similar reaction; this imposes on many unrelated functions of the body, whether or not it has to directly do with the stress.

What happens to the body in a stressful situation?

First, there is a hormonal response. Stress sends a cascade of chemistry, which changes the way the body digests and assimilates its resources. Cortisol and glucocorticoids increase blood pressure, free fatty acids, and send signals to the fat cells to take up energy. What this means is that the body

wants to store fat — and accumulates it in areas like the abdomen.

These hormones hijack a few other bodily systems — notably, the hunger and fullness hormones. The hormone leptin regulates the sensation of fullness and cravings to eat. Under stress, the hormones are positioned to make you feel hungrier, and less full. This can lead to eating more, despite intentions to lose weight.

Another way that stress is holding back weight loss is in the head. It’s known that stress down-regulates the prefrontal cortex of the brain, dulling deliberate thinking and higher-level cognition. This is a response to the fight-and-flight mechanisms that will save your life if you drop everything and run instead of thinking about it.

So, under stress, you’re more prone to store body fat; you’ll want to eat more, and you won’t be so thoughtful when making choices. What can be done?

Use a “treatment” approach to stress. People undergo treatment for high blood pressure, diabetes, and other ailments; why not stress?

Take a moment each day to sit, lie down, or move gently without distractions, noise, or work to do. Exercise in a way that feels good; a body that is used to rigors will be more adept at battling low-level stress. Remove things from life that create strife, and know there are a lot of things you can’t control — and worrying about those are endeavors of imagination.

These are a few rudimentary examples — and take them as such. Professionals are available to help. Seek out stress-relief as a way to promote health, not just mentally, but physically. Do small things each day, and take in the simple pleasures of life. Stress can be managed with a little insight and work.

Your body will thank you.

LETTERS

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farm workers from exploitation by Big Ag. He supported location of highly polluting factory farms in minority communities. He promoted approval of numerous genetically modified food products.

He allowed meatpacking employees to replace government food-safety inspectors. He serves as a highly paid lobbyist for the dairy industry, a significant factor in the climate crisis. He failed to lead our nation’s transition from a meat- and fat-laden diet to a healthy, eco-friendly diet of vegetables, fruits, and grains.

Even in crass political terms, he failed to deliver the Iowa caucuses to the Biden candidacy and the rural vote to the Biden presidency.

Our senators must oppose Tom Vilsack’s nomination as secretary of agriculture.

Siegfried Neufhaus

Youth Artist Spotlight



“Braided Ring”

2021 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards Gold Key Award



“Carved Ring”

2021 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards Silver Key Award

Bela Chladek

Tell us about yourself; what do you love?

I love to ski, be active, work with my hands, and hang out on the lake foil boarding in the summer. I also like to work with my dad as a boat mechanic.

What inspires you?

Skiing and a wintery, snowy day inspire me. Giving gifts to others inspires me. My uncle inspires me.

What art do you like to make?

I like to make three-dimensional art. I enjoy working with metal, making jewelry, and working with wood, crafting things like skis and chairs.

Tell us about your Scholastic entry and what makes it special.

I entered a braided wax-cast silver ring and a carved wax-cast ring in the Scholastic art contest. The braided ring received the gold key award, and I originally made it with my aunt in mind. I carved a wave and a pattern design on the wax cast ring. I felt happy with how both rings turned out.

Bela with skis he designed and built.



Scholastic Art & Writing Awards

Youth artist spotlight courtesy of The Nugget Newspaper. Read your Nugget weekly for more student highlights.