



**Rolling Strong**


**WELLNESS IN TRANSPORTATION**

As part of our "Maintaining A Strong Immune System" series

**Tip 3: STRESS & IMMUNITY**


As a valued member of Rolling Strong, your safety and well-being are important to us. With continued news around coronavirus (COVID-19), Rolling Strong will be sending tips on maintaining a strong immune system so you can be armed with the best chance of staying healthy!

Stress is a physiological process in your body that is programmed to keep you safe from danger and respond to emergencies. Stress causes a cascade of hormones that ramp up blood sugar, blood fats like cholesterol and triglycerides, increase blood pressure and shuts down digestion in order to ready your body to provide emergency energy to get you out of danger **but if stress becomes long term and chronic it can suppress your immune system, infections and viruses.**

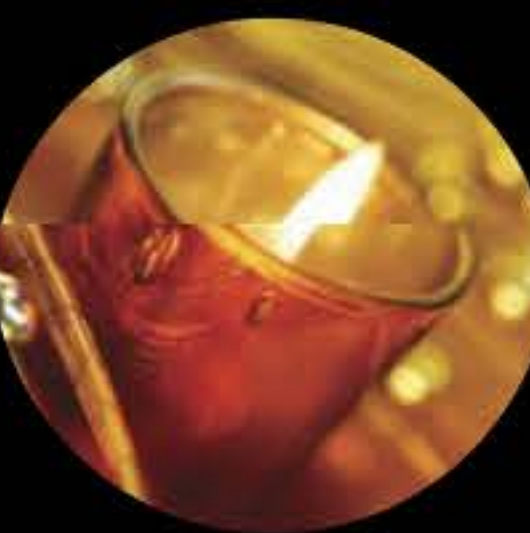
**Chronic Stress increases Inflammation**

Inflammation in the short term is your body's natural immune defense to combat viruses and infection. Long-term chronic stress desensitizes the inflammatory response; immune fighter cells don't respond as they should and allow pathogens to rapidly invade cells and systems. Have you ever noticed that you are more prone to catching a cold when you are under a lot of stress?



**Chronic inflammation becomes the root cause of chronic diseases**

Instead of combating foreign pathogens as it is supposed to do, chronic inflammation begins to attack the body and is an underlying cause of heart disease, stroke, diabetes and even certain types of cancers.



**Turning off the Stress Response**

The Stress Response (Fight or called the Relaxation Response. You have complete control and the ability to turn this system on with simple deep breathing exercises (see below). When you do this, the Stress Response completely shuts off - lowering blood pressure, blood sugar and fats and increases the ability of your immune system to combat pathogens.

**Tips to manage stress and increase resilience**

- Take a deep breath through your nose for a count of 4, filling your belly up like a balloon, hold for a second and then release the breath slowly for a count of 4 through your mouth. Repeat for 2 minutes.
- Yoga and meditation videos are widely available and free online. Stress tightens muscles so stretching helps to lower the tension held in muscle groups; meditation can help to stop the mind from rumination and worry, both of which turn on the stress response.
- Exercise helps to burn off the effects of stress in the blood, utilizing excess blood sugars and fats to lower negative effects of stress hormones.
- Practice predictability and purpose. Follow and establish a structure in your daily life. That means no binge watching Netflix or cookie eating just because you are stuck at home. Wake up at your normal time, exercise, do normal grooming routines and stick to regular mealtimes.
- Balance your emotional well-being. Eat nutritious foods, exercise and connect with friends and family through Facetime or other video chats or just a phone call.
- Nature soothes! Go outside for a walk in nature- nature had an overwhelmingly positive impact on emotional and psychological well being. Find the new Trails section in the Fitness section of the Rolling Strong app and find a trail near you to hike.
- Remember, the stress response is turned on inside your body by just thinking about worrisome thoughts, so find the time during the day to practice any of these relaxation strategies.

Connect with us!



**Stay tuned for the next tip on maintaining a healthy immune system and Roll Strong!**

