

The Impact of Stress

Stress is inevitable in today's economy, and the cost to employers is immeasurable (link #1 below). The Center for Disease Control concluded that 90% of all illnesses are stress related. According to the American Institute of Stress, on the job stress carries a price tag of over \$300 Billion per year in costs relating to:

- increased absenteeism
- employee turnover
- diminished productivity
- increases in medical, legal, and insurance expenses
- increases in workers' compensation costs

The impact of stress on profitability goes even deeper than the obvious physical injuries, lost work and errors. Studies show that chronic over-secretion of stress hormones adversely affects brain function, **especially memory**. The relationship between stress and loss of learning function and memory has been well documented in a paper titled **Homeostasis and the Cascading Effects of Stress**.

"Under stress, you will regress..."

Your employees are bombarded by stress every day. And while some of this stress can be alleviated, many of the **causes of employee stress** are beyond your ability to control. As we all know, we are beset with more stressors now in our modern world than at any other time in history.

Even when we are not physically threatened our physiological response to stress causes symptoms such as headaches, stomachaches, skin rashes, hair loss, increased heart rate, back pain, muscle aches, and repetitive stress/cumulative trauma injuries.

This is because without proper reconditioning we cannot biologically differentiate between an actual/physical threat and an emotional/symbolic threat. The human nervous system is conditioned to respond to the stress we feel from the threat of making a mistake, losing our job, facing an angry customer or arriving late for a meeting in the same physiological way as we would respond to physical threats such as the fear of being attacked or the fear of falling. This physiological response creates a **cycle of dysfunction** that can be highly destructive physically, mentally and emotionally.

The good news is that awareness and movement training can offset and even reverse the effects of stress on your employees. An optimal human to environment interface can alleviate some of the stressors but it is unlikely that our lives, or our workplaces, will ever be stress free. However, stress management can be taught and the human nervous system can be reconditioned to respond to stress in a more functional, productive manner.