



Category: fitness and life style management



## ROLE OF STRESS MANAGEMENT IN THE SUCCESS OF SPORT PERSONS

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### INTRODUCTION

Sports is a major force which unites people, catalyses cultural and social change, promotes skills, instills self-discipline, teaches people to win and lose, activates healthy lifestyle, creates a culture of sportsmanship and team spirit.

The body or mind has an adaptive capacity. A stressor or stress factor makes a demand on this capacity. The wear and tear caused by this demand in stress. The most common stressors are physical, chemical, change, emotional, social, work, family, commute, environment, time, financial, divorce, disease, death and academic.

1) PHYSICAL STRESS: This arises from severe hard work and the main victims of this type of stress are sports persons undergoing intense training, construction labourers, factory workers and so on. Sports persons in training should be given sufficient leisure time, balance diet so that they may not feel any physical strain.

2) CHEMICAL STRESS: Chemical stress is mainly due to exposure or intake of harmful substances like alcohol, smoking, narcotics, heavy eating of food etc. Sports persons should restrain from all these habits which eventually decrease the stamina and hence performance. It is unfortunate that some Olympic sportspersons use banned anabolic steroids which temporarily enhance the performance and these drugs are fatal to the body in the long run. Hence it is very much necessary for sportsperson to completely avoid chemical related stress.

3) CHANGE STRESS: This stress factor arises due to sudden and unwanted changes in the lives of persons. For example transfer of a government employee causes some stress on his mind through for a limited period of time. Similarly sportspersons must be prepared to face change stress as they have to participate in sports events in different countries. They must be in a position to accustom quickly to the weather conditions, food habits and sporting venues of the host country.

4) EMOTIONAL STRESS: For a sportsperson the emotional stress is the main enemy. A true sportsperson should not get mentally disturbed if he loses. He should analyze himself about his weaknesses or drawbacks. This definitely helps him to enjoy success in future events. At the same time, he should not be too much proud of his success and this may have negative impact on his future performance. Thus, the control over emotions is the key factor for the successful carrier of any sportsperson. Yoga also helps to keep emotional stress under control. Thus, the true sports man spirit is necessary for managing emotional stress.

5) SOCIAL STRESS: A team of sportspersons may consist of persons belonging to various religions or castes or languages or social statuses. So, sportspersons should be trained to give up such differences from their minds and a feeling of equality should be instilled in them. Similarly, sports persons of under developed countries should not feel inferior when they play with people of advanced countries. It is the individual merit that plays a vital role in success rather than the social status.

6) WORK STRESS: Work stress is mostly experienced by sports persons who are employed in both government and private sectors. The main causes of work stress are heavy workload, meeting the targets set by higher

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authorities, political interference and humiliation by coworkers. Sportspersons employed in both government and private sectors should be encouraged by employers in all aspects. There should be some percentage of reservation for sportspersons in private sector also. They should be sanctioned long leave for undergoing training, performance related incentives, special allowances for balanced diet and funds for sports equipment, sports apparel, traveling etc. These measures are must for nurturing world class sports persons.

7) **ACADEMIC STRESS:** Another important stress factor experienced by sportspersons is academic stress. Sportspersons are generally young boys and girls studying in schools, colleges and universities. As they have to dedicate a lot of time for their training they can not compete with other fellow students in academics. Such students should be encouraged by giving them special coaching in academics and cash incentives to meet their sporting expenses. Government must encourage them by giving reservations in higher studies and jobs. Fellow students and managements of institutions should encourage them as they bring glory to the same.

8) **FAMILY STRESS:** Role of family members is very much significant for people to take up sporting as their main profession. Parents must recognize and encourage the sporting talents of their children at an early age and give equal importance to formal education and sports. If parents suppress the sporting talents, a lot of mental stress develops in them which causes an adverse effect on their formal education. The encouragement of parents, siblings and spouse did miracles in the lives of many people and they grew as world class sports persons.

9) **FINANCIAL STRESS:** Financial status of the family has a huge impact on the growth of the people as world class sports persons. Children of financially weaker families miss so many opportunities in educational as well as sporting fields. Poor financial status of the family leads to malnutrition, child labour and illiteracy among children. Government and private sectors must jointly take measures to resolve these problems. Some big Corporate houses and Non-profit foundations should take up these problems as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). They should provide funds to encourage and train talented children from the underprivileged sections. They should support promising sports persons by providing them balanced diet, sports groups, training facilities and sporting infrastructure. Sportspersons involved in adventurous sports should have adequate medical, accidental and life insurance coverage so that they and their family members are free from financial crunch in case of any unfortunate situation.

10) **SOME OTHER STRESS FACTORS:** Disturbance in marital life, diseases, death of beloved family members are other stress factors which adversely affect the performance of sports persons.

**SIGNS OF STRESS :** Stress on a smaller scale in fact is necessary as it helps people to reach their goals. In other words it acts as a driving force in attaining recognition to people in all walks of life. However, uncontrollable stress has so many evil effects. The ability to bear stress varies from person to person. Common signs of stress are mood changes, anxiety, tiredness, lack of concentration, sleep disturbance, change in eating pattern, low self esteem, hostility, depression, jealousy, restlessness, lack of initiative, hyper alertness, blaming others, restricted focus and obsessions. As mentioned above the evil effects of stress are many and people in particular sports persons should not fall prey to them.

**MANAGEMENT OF STRESS :** The important stress relieving techniques are physical techniques, self hypnosis, emotional techniques, cognitive approach and spiritual exercises. Physical techniques include physical exercises like brisk walking, cycling, yoga, pranayam etc. It is scientifically proved that these techniques help to reduce or remove mental stress. Progressive muscle relaxation helps to get relief from physical stress. Self hypnosis is the process in which a person hypnotizes himself for positive thinking, elimination of phobias, elevation of self esteem, maintaining cordial relations with others and so on. Self hypnosis is a wonderful technique which reduces dependence on others for counseling and it boosts the self confidence. Spiritual thinking and practice make a person mature, honest, kind and peaceful. Cognitive approach is the zeal to learn from others which enhances communication skills, interactive ability, sharing of thoughts, skill to solve

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problems and so on. It is an established fact that introverts are more prone to mental stress. Modification of breathing, meditation, visualization, emotional intelligence, progressive muscle relaxation are solutions for reducing physical as well as mental stressors.

CONCLUSION : As discussed above, stressors act as hurdles in the career of a sports person. It is necessary to train them in stress management in addition to scientific sports training so that many world class sports persons are nurtured.