

## 3 Stages of Stress Reflected in the Eyes

We FEEL with our eyes. People who know us well can tell by looking at us how much emotional stress we are enduring. Stress causes muscles to contract. The most delicate muscles in the body are first to be affected. Therefore, as stress mounts in the body the eye muscles contract, creating a glassy, tired look, leading to a scary, haunting look.

We have all heard the expression, "she can't see beyond the nose on her face." That is precisely what happens when we begin to experience the first of three stages of stress.



**First Stage Stress** is more of an immediate response to shock or overwhelm or going beyond your limits of endurance. Blood travels to the muscles to allow for the "fight or flight" response. Eyes become glassy and droopy, the skin takes on a shine as the pores close and our mind becomes dull. It's hard to think straight.

It's time to stop and take a break. Drink some cold water to rehydrate and get yourself electrical again. Relax. Get some sleep. Do what you need to do to rebalance.

When the unresolved first stage stressor has been going on for days, weeks and/or months, **Second Stage Stress** becomes apparent. Stress chemicals cause muscles to contract. In the case of second stage stress, only one eye is involved. This is called vertical strabismus. The muscles contract the eye upward so that you see more white under one iris (the colored part of the eye). Depth perception is off, balance and ability to focus is off. Robert Whiteside, one of the pioneers of Structure/Function describes second stage stress as "accidents waiting to happen."



The stress has gone on for too long. Choose to take care of yourself. Get grounded. Breathe. Drink lots of water to flush out the stress chemicals.

Unresolved second stage stress becomes **Third Stage Stress**. It is hard to stay present because the focus is on the past and the future. You feel disconnected from yourself. Physically, you will see the eerie look in the eyes as the muscles contract both eyes upward revealing more white under each eye. Find some help immediately. Don't let chronic stress create physical symptoms.



In a perfect world you would give yourself time to meditate, take a yoga class, visit with friends often, take a long bubble bath, get a massage

and have all of your needs met. While I highly recommend practicing preventative care with holistic practitioners, I know that many of you only have limited time for yourselves. So, I offer some energy exercises that can support your body and can be done in 3 minutes or less.

### **THE OVERLOAD EXERCISE**

1. Place one hand on your navel;
2. With the other hand, massage under your collarbone (Kidney 27 point);
3. Massage above and below your lips;
4. Massage the tailbone;
3. Reverse hands and repeat.

### **CROSS-PATTERNING**

1. Bring your opposite hand to your opposite knee 3 or 4 times;
2. Bring the same hand to the same knee 3 or 4 times;
3. Repeat steps 1 and 2 several time;
4. Always end with opposite hand to opposite knee.



### **COOK HOOK UPS FOR EMOTIONAL CENTERING**

1. In a sitting position, place your left foot over your right knee;
2. Place your right hand over your left ankle bone;
3. Wrap your left hand around the ball of your foot so your fingers reach around the little toe to cover the top of your foot;
4. Put your tongue on the roof of your mouth;
5. Breathe in through your nose - as you breathe out let your tongue fall down;
6. Repeat 7 times.
7. Release your leg and sit comfortably;
8. Put your fingertips together and breathe as in step 5.