Featured in this issue:
Stress and Technology
CONTENTMENT

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Contentment is a quarterly newsletter published in March, June, September and December with news and advertising designed with the general public in mind. It appeals to all those interested in the myriad and complex interrelationships between stress and health because technical jargon is avoided and it is easy to understand. Contentment is archived online at stress.org. Information in this publication is carefully compiled to ensure accuracy.

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AIS Daily Life Stress Board

Chaired by Dr. Michel Woodbury-Farina, the role of this board is to develop initiatives and communications to serve the stress management needs of all people.

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The mission of AIS is to improve the health of the community and the world by setting the standard of excellence of stress management in education, research, clinical care and the workplace. Diverse and inclusive, The American Institute of Stress educates medical practitioners, scientists, health care professionals and the public; conducts research; and provides information, training and techniques to prevent human illness related to stress.

AIS provides a diverse and inclusive environment that fosters intellectual discovery, creates and transmits innovative knowledge, improves human health, and provides leadership to the world on stress related topics.
Advances in technology have changed, and continue to change, the way we live. Many people today are constantly connected to work because they are accessible by mobile phone, e-mail, pagers, etc. As a result, it’s possible to feel overwhelmed and never really finished because you’re always ‘plugged in’. For many, the boundary between work and personal life has become blurred.

Due to the fact that technology allows us to do more, we can end up taking on too much. Mobile phones enable us to start work before we arrive and to continue work on our drive home from the workplace. Laptops and home PCs can continually tempt us to check and respond to our work-related e-mail outside of traditional working hours.

“When I took office, only high-energy physicists had ever heard of what is called the Worldwide Web. Now, even my cat has its own page.”

President William Jefferson Clinton, 1996
TECHNOSTRESS

Being continually plugged-in can make us over-stimulated, anxious or stressed-out. The term technostress was coined in 1984 by psychologist Dr. Craig Brod, in his book ‘Technostress: The Human Cost of the Computer Revolution’.

Brod has defined technostress as: “a modern disease of adaptation caused by an inability to cope with new computer technology in a healthy manner. It manifests itself in two distinct and related ways: the struggle to accept computer technology, and in the more specialized form of over-identification with computer technology.”

In their book ‘Technostress: Coping with Technology @ Work, @ Home, and @ Play’ psychologists Dr. Larry Rosen and Dr. Michelle Weil did not define technostress as a disease but rather as “... any negative impact on attitudes, thoughts, behaviours, or body physiology that is caused either directly or indirectly by technology”.

According to Rosen and Weil:

- We need to understand not only what technology can do for us but also what it is doing to us.
- Technology can be time saving. It can make us work better and more efficiently but we have to establish clear limits. If we don’t set clear limits we will be continually multi-tasking and dealing with information overload.

SYMPTOMS OF TECHNOSTRESS

According to Brod, the main symptoms of technostress are anxiety, expressed in irritability, headaches, nightmares, resistance to learning about the computer or outright rejection of technology. Terrie Rizzo of Stanford University has identified the following symptoms:

- Feeling over-stimulated, panicky or stressed-out about being perpetually ‘plugged in’.
- Memory loss, impatience, diminished concentration, irritability, difficulty in relaxing or falling asleep.
- Headaches, stomach discomfort, backaches and more serious health problems, such as irritable bowel syndrome.

THE INTERNET, SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT AND WELL-BEING

A research study which examined the social and psychological impact of the Internet on 169 people in 73 households during their first one to two years on-line, was published in the September 1998 issue of ‘American Psychologist’.
The findings revealed that greater use of the Internet was associated with small, but statistically significant declines in social involvement as measured by communication within the family and the size of study participants’ local social networks, and with increases in loneliness. Greater use of the internet was also associated with increases in depression. The researchers noted, however, that they did not know how generalizable their findings were across people, time, or outcomes.

The following quotation from an unknown author is apposite:

“Give a person a fish and you feed them for a day; teach that person how to use the Internet and they won’t bother you for weeks.”
Rx FOR TECHNOSTRESS

Various authors have suggested a number of strategies to ‘remedy’ technostress. These include the following:

• **Stop or limit multitasking** – Computers are excellent at multitasking. People can multitask too. Continuous multitasking, however, can lead to hyper-arousal and increased stress levels.

• **Live on human-time** – Technology can run 24/7. Human beings can’t. Remember to live on human-time, not computer-time!

• **Recharge regularly** – For at least one working hour every day, don’t plug into anything that habitually demands your attention. During that time, for example, switch off your mobile phone.
• **Break your e-mail addiction** – E-mail can be a massive time waster. Turn off your e-mail ‘alarm’ so that you’re not responding to it like Pavlov’s dog. Schedule specific times to check your e-mail e.g. every 2 hours instead of every 15 minutes.

• **Slow down** – Technology does things faster. If you allow technology to set your pace, it will be faster and faster.

• **Take regular breaks** – Take a short break from your computer at least every 45 minutes. Get up, stretch, and walk around. If possible, have a brief chat with another human being!

• **Use technology to communicate your boundaries** – Use voice mail messages and e-mail messages to let people know that you will be “out of touch” during particular time periods.

• **Decide when you’re done** – Be clear about when you’ve finished work for the day and don’t go back into your home office after than time.

• **Don’t always be ‘on call’** - Leave your mobile phone at home when you go out for leisure activities. If you really need to bring it to make an important call, then leave it switched off the rest of the time.

• **Set a time limit on web surfing** – Schedule it into a fixed time slot like you would for any other work task.

• **Resist the e-mailing urge** – Once in a while, resist the urge to e-mail someone. Phone them instead. Even better, if they are only a short distance away, pay them a personal visit.

**IN CONCLUSION**

I will conclude with a quotation from C. P. Snow which appeared in the New York Times on the 15th of March 1971.

“Technology …. is a queer thing. It brings you great gifts with one hand, and it stabs you in the back with the other”.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Dr. Alan Ruth is a health & organizational psychologist and Principal Consultant with Compass Consulting. His specialist interests are stress reduction and the treatment of anxiety disorders.
Fast, Safe & Proven Effective Relief Without Drugs

The brain functions electrochemically and can be readily modified by electrical intervention. The Alpha-Stim AID utilizes cranial electrotherapy stimulation (CES) to deliver the only patented waveform which is clinically proven to significantly decrease anxiety and comorbid depression.

- 82% of patients reported at least a 50% reduction in anxiety and comorbid depression scores\(^1\)
- Safe, with no serious adverse events reported in over 35 years of clinical use
- Used as a first-line therapy, or as an adjunct to pharmacotherapy (without polypharmacy effects)

PROVEN: Alpha-Stim Significantly Reduces Anxiety, Insomnia, and Depression

**DECREASED ANXIETY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Mean Anxiety Score</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>29.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>13.4*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After 5 weeks of treatment, the active Alpha-Stim CES group reported an average decrease of 94% in their anxiety\(^1\)

**INCREASED SLEEP TIME**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>CES</th>
<th>Total Sleep Time, 5 Days, N=57, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Service Members receiving Alpha-Stim CES reported an average increase of 43 total minutes of sleep time after only 5 treatments\(^2\)

**DEPRESSION IMPROVEMENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Depression Mean Improvement</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>13.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
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<td>9.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>6.5*</td>
<td>6.5*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After 5 weeks of treatment, the active Alpha-Stim CES group reported an average decrease of 75% in their depression\(^1\)

**REFERENCES**


HELP FOR YOU IS HERE.

To get started and to see more clinical data, visit www.Alpha-Stim.com or call 1-800-FOR-PAIN (in USA) or +940-328-0788 (Outside USA).
Like other stress-related concerns and conditions, the point where technology becomes more foe than friend is different for each of us. Using energy resource theory, “stress is what occurs when demand exceeds capacity”. Our constant connection to information, stimulation, and validation can quickly shift us into overwhelm and trigger anxiety of not having or being enough.

While some people feel on-edge from the noise of tech and knowing demands on our time and resources constantly increase with each incoming email, others fail to notice any signs or symptoms of tech addiction until they’re asked to put it away, or when it’s taken away from them, such as in a loss of connectivity in an emergency situation or network dysfunction.

Not long ago, I recall an elevator exchange with a conference attendee who was disgruntled by the fact she couldn’t continue to text in route to her hotel room. “We can put a man on the moon but we can’t create a cell signal that doesn’t drop in the elevator? Sheesh…” she shrugged. Sometimes it seems the more we accomplish the more pathetic we see our inability to be perfect. Perhaps this has something to do with the rising rates of anxiety, depression and other stress-related conditions despite the extraordinary advancement and luxuries in life.

So, just how much tech can we tolerate before it turns pressure into pain? According to one survey by Harris Interactive, the magic number for most people is about 50 emails a day. Once
our inbox exceeds that count, most feel like they can’t keep up. Ironically, if you asked people how they’d feel if they got less than the average number of emails a day (or the amount they perceive other important people get), they’d start to experience depression due to feeling less than. It seems we need enough connection to feel stimulated and validated but not so much that we feel stressed out. Or perhaps since stressed out is the norm these days, feeling calm and in control would feel wrong.

Research has clearly shown that multitasking has serious negative effects on productivity and performance, and can even compromise long-term health and happiness. When we wake up in the morning feeling like we don’t have enough time to get it all done, the brain shifts to a state of chronic stress that hijacks our energy and attention. Add a steady stream of incoming emails, texts, phone calls, and a 24/7 news cycle and you have a recipe for attentional disaster, or deficit disorder.

Understanding that tech isn’t going away or slowing down anytime soon, how can we maximize its benefit while minimizing the impact on our stress load?
1. **Prioritize downtime.** We need to recharge our brains and bodies with as much effort and attention as we give to our cellular devices. For every hour, plan 3 – 5 minutes to relax and focus on nourishing positivity with simple techniques like gratitude, calm breathing, and music.

2. **Minimize multitasking.** When we need to focus on the task at hand, turn tech off. Completely off. Remember that hands-free is not brain-free; studies show that the risk of a crash is 4x higher when on a phone call whether you’re holding a phone or not (National Safety Council, 2014). Set aside specific times during the day to check email or do other online tasks and avoid slipping into surfing in between. Fight the temptation to get more done in less time by doing multiple tasks at once, and instead focus on being fully engaged in what matters most in each moment.

3. **Engage in email etiquette.** Drop the need to cc more than necessary, and be considerate about sending communications after hours. When it’s important, make a call or when possible meet face to face.

4. **Reduce the rush.** Set realistic expectations for yourself and others regarding response time. Create more space in your calendar by committing to 50-minute or 25-minute meetings, with buffer time for breaks in between.

5. **Run mindful meetings.** Spend time up front getting clear on the agenda and desired outcome so that participants can stay focused on the task at hand. Only invite people to the meeting who need to contribute, and hold firm to the scheduled time frame. Whenever possible, end meetings early to allow people to recharge their energy, reflect on the conversation, and take action on key takeaways.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Dr. Heidi Hanna is a health and performance consultant, NY Times bestselling author, and global speaker on topics related to stress, brain health, and personal and organizational energy management.
The American Institute of Stress is an executive producer of Body Electric: Electroceuticals and the Future of Medicine, a documentary film aimed to revolutionize the way we think about health and the human body. This 68 minute movie, by British producer/director/writer Justin Smith, is now available online, and the DVD will soon be available for purchase through AIS.

Rent for $4.99 - 48-hour streaming or
Buy for $14.49- Streaming and digital download

The American Institute of Stress helps people learn to manage their stress every single day. We help veterans returning from war find a sense of normalcy again. We help students who are stressed about exams, busy schedules and bullies reach their fullest potential. And we help people like you deal with whatever life throws at you! With your ongoing support, we will continue to be there providing people with relief for today and hope for tomorrow.

Call (682) 239-6823 or email info@stress.org to discuss your gift.
It’s easy to find bad news about the toll tech takes on our stress levels. We sleep less when we’re looking at our screens at night. According to the recent Stress in America survey, 23% of those who constantly check their phones report that technology is a somewhat or significantly stressful part of life, compared to 14% of people who don’t check their phones as often.

Despite the consequences of technology overuse, there are many benefits of having access to information and connection in the palms of our hands. Here are some of the most helpful apps for creating less frazzled, more peaceful, and more fulfilling lives.

**APPs TO BOOST HAPPINESS**

Positive psychology has many specific strategies that can boost mood while improving health and performance. The main obstacle for most people is not discovering these techniques but remembering to do them. That’s where apps can really shine. The following are some of the most popular for good reason:

*Uplifter*

This app utilizes what is known from positive psychology and helps you to make it a habit in your life. There’s a gratitude journal feature, mood tracking and personalized progress reports, daily motivational quotes, and more. This one can help you to get centered...
in the morning and stay more focused on the positive all day.

Welli
Here you’ll find a suite of mood-lifting tools that also use research from positive psychology. In addition to a gratitude journal, you’ll find a “flow tracker,” which helps you to identify activities that lead you to a sense of excitement, accomplishment, and peak performance. There’s also “The Adversity Disputer,” which uses cognitive-behavioral therapy approaches to combat negative self-talk and re-wire your brain to respond in a better way to the stressors you face in life.

Happify
This app contains games, quizzes, puzzles, and activities designed to help you with a variety of stressed states, such as feelings of anxiety and depression. Based on research and therapeutic techniques, there are many options for you to try that can help you to feel happier in the moment and more content in general. Their website claims that 86% of people who use Happify feel better about their lives in 2 months.

MINDFULNESS AND MEDITATION APPS
There’s plenty of research showing the vast benefits of regular meditation and mindfulness practice. It can be difficult to fit meditation into a hectic life, however, so these apps can help.

Headspace
This app has been referred to as “a gym membership for the mind” and contains a library of meditations of all types. This is great for beginners who need to find their style as well as veterans who may be looking for something new. There are even “bite-sized” meditations for the very busy and “SOS activities” for the extremely stressed.
Calm
This popular app provides you with meditations and breathing exercises that can help you to get into a calmer or meditative state of mind. There are also other features (like bedtime stories) that can help you to de-stress and relax when you need to.

Audible
This audiobook app has free content that can help with meditation and mindfulness. You can find guided meditations for anxiety, stress, and other negative states in the “channels” section, download them for no additional charge over the monthly price of the app, and listen to them over and over.

PRODUCTIVITY APPS
Much of our stress is due to the fast pace of life these days. It can be exhausting to keep track of everything we need to get done, let alone actually trying to do it all. These apps can help your frame of mind and your energy levels by helping you to stay organized and motivated.

Don’t Break the Chain
Jerry Seinfeld once said that he kept calendars on his walls and checked off each day with a red “X” when he got things done, and that this was motivating because he didn’t want to break the chain of Xes by being less than productive. This app uses that philosophy and allows you to maintain your own motivation by creating satisfying red Xes on a calendar each day you reach a goal of your choosing. (I admit that this is one of my favorites—for me, it creates a “pull” to complete tasks and work toward goals rather than feeling too pushed.)

My Fitness Pal
This app helps you to track your diet and exercise, which is an important aspect of self-care, and can help you to maintain energy throughout the day. It sends little reminders for you to record your meals, can sync up to a smart scale and many fitness trackers, and supplies you with a record of your fitness and weight loss, among other things.

Any.do
This app allows you to keep track of your daily tasks and chores with to-do lists, reminders, notes, and the ability to share these lists with others and delegate tasks. It syncs between your devices, has calendar integration, and even a voice-entry feature to cater to you when you’re on the go and help you to keep from getting lost in the daily tasks of life.

Of course, there are other common-sense solutions to minimizing the stress of tech such as limiting your time on social media, using caution with the frequency in which you check your phone or email, and scheduling digital detox from time to time where you reduce or even eliminate connection for a while.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Elizabeth Scott, M.S. is a wellness coach, author of 8 Keys to Stress Management, writer for About.com and Verywell.com, and maintains the daily newsletter and website, Daily Piece of Peace. She is currently finishing a Ph.D. in psychology and is a wife and mother of two fantastic boys.
GET INSIDE OUR HEAD

It’s Not Our Credentials That Make AIS So Impressible, It’s the Fellows That Go with Them.

The American Institute of Stress is a non-profit organization established in 1978 at the request of Dr. Hans Selye (the Founder of the Stress Concept) to serve as a clearinghouse for information on all stress related subjects. AIS Founding Fellows include:

Paul Rosch  Linus Pauling  Alvin Toffler  Bob Hope  Michael DeBakey  Herbert Benson  Charles Spielberger

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Over the last 35 years, we’ve expanded our services and broadened our reach, but our dedication to science hasn’t changed a bit.

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Join us in our mission to Engage, Educate and Empower the global community with science based stress management information, tools and techniques so people can live happier, healthier and longer lives!

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