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## S.T.R.E.S.S.S.S. Formula For Wellness

**Sleep** – very few people are able to function effectively on the average 5-6 hours/night of sleep. Most experts agree that 7-9 hours of sound sleep per night is required for optimal performance. There is a cumulative effect of chronic sleep deprivation that increases production of stress hormones that affect the entire body. Getting into a regular schedule of going to sleep and waking at the same time every day will help you get the most out of your sleep time. Loud snoring and/or interrupted breathing during sleep may be indicative of a serious sleep disorder. Consult a sleep specialist, if necessary.

**Time Management** – if you do not manage your life, it will manage you. Learn to schedule your obligations, including time for self-care, and know when to say NO to keep yourself from becoming over-committed and “too busy.” Strive to eliminate habitual hurry from your life.

**Relaxation/Spiritual Renewal** – a critical component of self-care is taking time to slow yourself down and just BE. Learn a self-hypnosis, meditation or structured relaxation technique and use it daily. Practice deep, relaxed breathing throughout the day.

**Exercise** – In order for our bodies and minds to function optimally, the body must be worked regularly to enhance cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength and flexibility. According to some experts on aging, 80% of the infirmities of old age can be attributed to a loss of muscle strength. Recent recommendations for minimum amounts of exercise have been increased to 60 minutes per day, six days per week. Rigorous, daily activities count toward your overall activity level. Climb stairs when you have the option, park your car at the end of the parking lot and walk. Make scheduled exercise a part of your daily life.

**Sound Nutrition** – garbage in, garbage out. Avoid wide fluctuations in blood sugar by fueling your body with high quality foods at regular intervals throughout the day. Choose a diet high in fruits, vegetables, complex carbohydrates and high quality proteins. Limit your intake of fats and simple carbohydrates. Adequate hydration is an important part of sound nutrition. Drink water throughout the day.

**Self-Knowledge** – become an observer of yourself. Take steps to become aware of your emotional states and to monitor changes in how you are feeling. What are your predominant thoughts, attitudes and perceptions? What do you believe about yourself, other people and the world? Do those thoughts contribute to your personal growth or do they perpetuate conditions in your life with which you are not satisfied? Journal writing and engaging in meaningful dialogue with others are effective means of helping you to identify your predominant thoughts.

**Social Support** – life is difficult to take on alone. Enlist the assistance of family, friends, co-workers and professionals to support you as you navigate through life. Take steps to rectify states of isolation. Get involved in activities that interest you, be they political, social or recreational.

**Sobriety** – Staying conscious and present. Do you consume alcohol or other drugs in a manner that is detrimental to your health, relationships or career? Do you engage in habitual or compulsive behaviors that inhibit your full expression of yourself? Over-anything (eating, spending, cleaning, exercising, sex, TV watching, etc.) distracts you from knowing you. Strive to achieve healthy balance in your life.