

# STRESS MANAGEMENT

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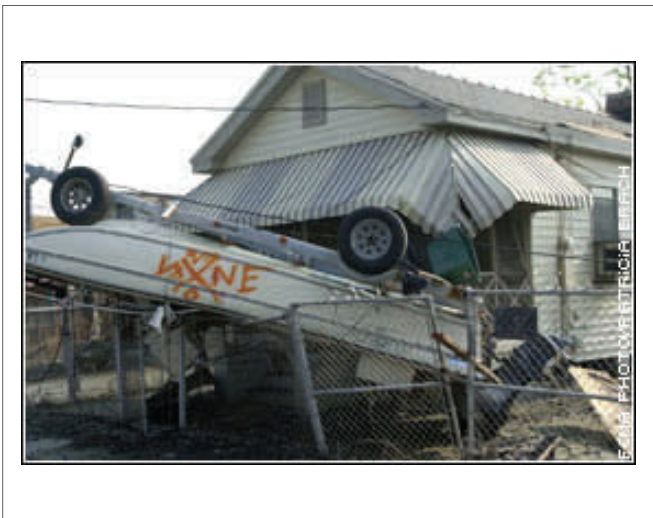
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In the incredible devastating wakes of Hurricane Katrina and Rita, there is no better time than now to talk about stress and how to manage it. Katrina and Rita have left our nation to deal with the stressful aftermath. How we manage stress as a nation is vital for the collective health of all of our citizens.

The first step in stress management is to recognize it. In this month's newsletter, we talk about stress in daily life, types and effects of stress, warning signs and symptoms, national stress due to Katrina, Rita and other natural disasters and some simple actions to manage stress.

We also invite new authors to submit articles for our future newsletters, and list this years newsletter themes.

Our hearts and prayers go to all Hurricane evacuees and the citizens of the United States, as we collectively begin the process of managing stress due to natural disasters.



## Our Nation Victimized by Katrina and Rita

*By Vanessa M Dazio, OTD, OTR/L*

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita have physically displaced more than two million of our citizens, but they both actually victimized an entire nation. Thanks to the amazing technology of television and radio, Katrina and Rita have emotionally displaced our nation, and even other citizens of the world.

While in the comfort of our homes, we personally witnessed the total devastation of a thriving, energetic, colorful and vitally important major trade city. To our horror, we watched brutal hurricane winds cut life changing paths through at least 5 states, razing many, many towns and homes to the ground.

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Safety, Health, Injury Prevention

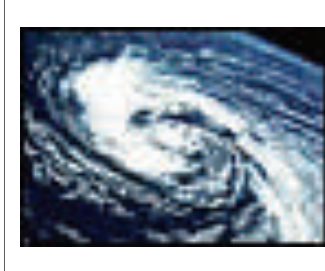


Stress can lead to  
poor health,  
injuries and other  
serious difficulties  
coping with life.

## Our Nation Victimized by Katrina and Rita, cont.

We have passively watched winds, rains, floods, and fires destroy lives, homes, businesses, livelihoods, historic buildings and generations of memories. We witnessed families coping with death of loved ones; parents and children separated; dazed adults and children, too shocked to handle personal events.

We have collectively shared in the pain, agony and suffering caused by both Hurricanes. It has been heart wrenching. We personally feel for every single person who has lost family, friends, homes, personal treasures, possessions, jobs, memories and even culture. And, now, as a nation, we must get back to the task of living; cope with our grief, and begin the rebuilding process to revitalize our nation.

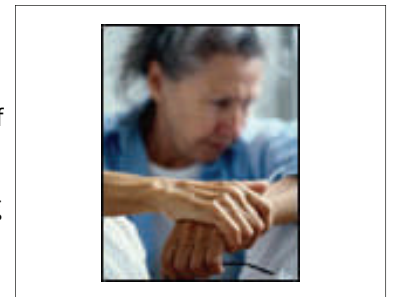


So, in one way or another, we are all victims of Hurricane Katrina and Rita! We must recognize it. We must find positive ways to handle our collective stress. It is vital for our health and safety.

## Stress is Part of Daily Life

*By Vanessa M Dazio, OTD, OTR/L*

Stress is a sense of physical or emotional tension or strain. It is a way to communicate within ourselves, to have a heightened awareness that some sort of physical or emotional response may be needed shortly. Because of this heightened awareness, the body prepares itself. Lots of things happen in preparation for the potential event. For instance, the heart may pump a little faster. Breathing may speed up. Muscles tighten so we feel stress in the neck, back or stomach! The ability to sleep may decline. All of these actions are responses to the subtle internal message we received when thinking about a coming event.



There is no doubt, that daily life is stressful. Stress is normal, necessary and unavoidable. It can be very productive. Good stress can provide the push needed to accomplish meaningful and necessary activities in daily life.

Stress can also be destructive. It can appear as a stressful event is occurring or much later, even after the event is over. Stress can lead to poor health, injuries and other serious difficulties coping with life. The key to stress management is knowledge and personal involvement.

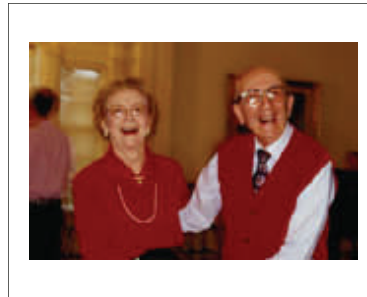
[Read more about stress.](#)

## A Laugh a Day Can Keep the Doctor Away

by Dr. Vanessa

There are many reasons why laughter should become a vital part of your day. Smiling will make you feel better. In fact, it is infectious. It makes everybody feel good. Here are some reasons to use laughter as a stress release:

- Can stimulate the immune system
- Changes your focus and can improve concentration
- Fosters healing
- Improves breathing
- Improves circulation
- Unleashes natural pain killers



[Read here for more information.](#)

## Relaxation: BREATHE!

By Vanessa M Dazio, OTD, OTR/L

That's right! Breathe! We all know breathing is necessary for life. Breathing transports oxygen from the air into our blood. Our blood distributes oxygen to all the vital organs. This provides essential nutrients to every tissue in the body, assists with digestion, our thinking processes, and even increases our feelings of vitality and energy.

Breathing also removes carbon dioxide (waste products) from our body. If these wastes are not removed, the body responds by slowing down, feeling fatigued, setting the stage for muscle spasms and pain to occur. A decline in concentration and other thought processes can happen.

For a little energy boost and a way to reduce stress, try some **deep** breathing.

**Position:** Get comfortable: Standing is better, but sitting is OK.  
**Precaution:** Do not do quickly. Fast breathing could cause hyperventilation.  
**Purpose:** Stress reduction, relaxation

### Instruction:

1. Take a very SLOW, but deep breath.
2. Completely fill your lungs with this breath.
3. Hold it for a second or two.
4. Then slowly release this air.
5. Repeat this 3 or 4 times, or whenever you feel stress getting the better of you.

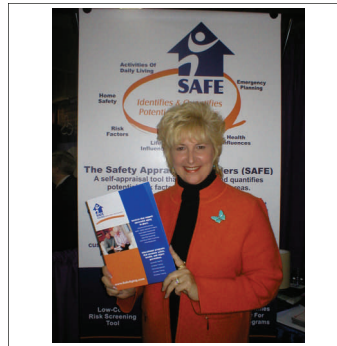


It takes 43 muscles to frown and 17 to smile, therefore, it is 2.5 times easier to smile than frown.



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## Want to Write an Article for the SAFE Aging Newsletter?



If you would like to write an article for the SAFE AGING Newsletter, please feel free to submit it to [vmd@safeaging.com](mailto:vmd@safeaging.com). Submission does not guarantee acceptance or publication.

Each month our newsletter has a theme related to safety, health or injury prevention. Articles should complement the monthly theme. Writing style should be easy to read and should not contain any professional jargon. We reserve editorial rights. All submissions become the sole property of SAFE Aging, Inc.

### Article Guidelines

Articles will be approximately 300 words for feature article, 150 words or less for any other article. Please send articles either as a Microsoft Word Document or in rich text format. Authors may include contact information and a professional picture.

### 2005- 2006 SAFE Aging Newsletter Themes

Here are the themes for the next thirteen months:

October	Elder Abuse
November	Fun
December	Depression and Coping Strategies
January	Risk Assessment and Control
February	Planning for Changes in Life
March	User Friendly Homes
April	SAFE Driver Programs
May	Changing Cognition
June	Coordination changes
July	Travel
August	Accident Prevention
September	Safety in the Community
October	Nutrition and Health

### MANY SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR 2004-2005 GUEST AUTHORS

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If you like our newsletter, please tell your friends and family and sign up for this free service!

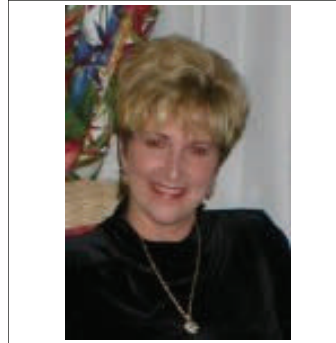
They may receive this newsletter by entering their email address in the mailing list sign up box located [here](#).

## Ask Dr. Vanessa

### How do you manage stress when life is stressful everyday?

While trying to compose an answer to this question, I stumbled on this unknown author email I received sometime ago. This piece was such a good way to describe stress management, I thought it might be a far better answer than I could compose.

So, here is the story as a round about answer to this question submitted by Lynda Thomas. Thanks, Lynda for your question. I hope this answer helps.



Dr. Vanessa M. Dazio, OTD

### How Heavy Is This Glass Of Water?

A lecturer, when explaining stress management to an audience, raised a glass of water and asked, "how heavy is this glass of water?"

Answers called out ranged from 20g to 500g. The lecturer replied, "The absolute weight doesn't matter. It depends on how long you try to hold it. If I hold it for a minute, that's not a problem. If I hold it for an hour, I'll have an ache in my right arm. If I hold it for a day, you'll have to call an ambulance. In each case, it's the same weight, but the longer I hold it, the heavier it becomes."

He continued, "and that's the way it is with stress management. If we carry our burdens all the time, sooner or later, as the burden becomes increasingly heavy, we won't be able to carry on. As with the glass of water, you have to put it down for a while and rest before holding it again.

When we're refreshed, we can carry on with the burden. So, before you return home tonight, put the burden of work down. Don't carry it home. You can pick it up tomorrow. Whatever burdens you are carrying now, let them down for a moment. Relax, pick them up later after you've rested. Life is short. Enjoy it!"

Refer to the article "[How to Reduce the Burdens of Life](#)" to read the rest of this story about this lecture.



*"If we carry our burdens all the time, sooner or later, as the burden becomes increasingly heavy, we won't be able to carry on."*

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### Quick Links

[SAFE Aging](#)

[Safety Appraisal  
for Elders](#)

[Education and Training](#)

[Learning Center](#)

[Newsletter Archives](#)

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[Take the SAFE Quiz!](#)

## Check Out Our Learning Center!

Check out the SAFE Aging [Learning Center](#), this is a great spot to read about safety, health and injury prevention. We provide tips, quizzes, general information, resources, other internet links to increase your awareness and knowledge of health and safety. The topics included in this center are:

- [Age Related Articles](#)
- [Caregiver Support](#)
- [Glossary](#)
- [Helpful Forms & Checklists](#)
- [Links](#)
- [Quizzes](#)
- [Assistive Devices](#)
- [Older Driver Safety](#)
- [Home Safety](#)
- [Elder Risk Appraisal](#)
- [Home Modification](#)
- [In-Home Monitoring](#)
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- [General Health](#)
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- [General Health & Personal Lifestyle Choices](#)
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*This center is constantly growing. If there is something you would like to see added, please email us with your suggestion at [info@safearging.com](mailto:info@safearging.com). Thank you for your interest.*