

Workbook Chapter Thirty-Six Create Good Physical Self-Care

Self-Assessment Tools:

Addiction to Adrenaline Inventory

(Diamond 1989)

Directions: Place a number before each question that best indicates the degree to which this is true in your life. (1 = Almost Never, 2 = Occasionally, 3 = Usually, 4 = Almost Always)

- ___ 1. I talk fast.
- ___ 2. I drive fast.
- ___ 3. I eat fast.
- ___ 4. I read while I eat.
- ___ 5. I read in the bathroom.
- ___ 6. I believe that doing one thing at a time is inefficient.
- ___ 7. I drink more than three cups of coffee a day.
- ___ 8. I talk on the phone while preparing meals.
- ___ 9. I love time efficiency devices such as cell phones, computers, instant messaging, microwaves, and food processors.
- ___ 10. I am better at starting relationships than making them work.
- ___ 11. I work more than 60 hours a week.
- ___ 12. I find it difficult to leave work at the office.
- ___ 13. I smoke cigarettes.
- ___ 14. I feel anxious when I am out of touch with my work setting.
- ___ 15. I feel that sleeping is time wasted.
- ___ 16. I find it difficult to relax when the workday is done.
- ___ 17. Lying on the beach doing nothing seems more like torture than relaxation.
- ___ 18. I find accomplishing many things at once (multi-tasking) immensely satisfying.
- ___ 19. I don't spend as much time as I'd like with my family.
- ___ 20. I don't spend as much time alone as I'd like.
- ___ 21. I feel driven to get more done.
- ___ 22. I schedule my time so tightly I am frustrated by the inevitable interruptions.
- ___ 23. I get upset when others are late.
- ___ 24. I have difficulty waiting in line.
- ___ 25. I get angry when the traffic light changes and the person in front of me takes too much time getting moving.
- ___ 26. I get frustrated with slow drivers.
- ___ 27. I skip meals because I get busy with more important things.
- ___ 28. I eat on the run.
- ___ 29. I hurry my children because they aren't moving fast enough.
- ___ 30. I love computers because they are fast, efficient, and accurate.
- ___ 31. I have trouble with people who are slow, inefficient, and talk too much.
- ___ 32. I believe that living faster means living better.
- ___ 33. I hate to make two trips carrying in the groceries.
- ___ 34. I do things in a hurry, even though doing it quickly may mean I may have to do it again.
- ___ 35. I seek out high intensity experiences.
- ___ 36. I resist reading directions, preferring to jump in and get started.
- ___ 37. I find that a level of danger is a necessary ingredient for feeling fully alive.
- ___ 38. I have trouble slowing down because I fear that something or someone might gain on me.
- ___ 39. I feel I must keep myself "revved up" to keep from becoming bored or depressed.

- ___ 40. I find people boring if they don't live high intensity lives.
- ___ 41. I find it difficult to take time to just think and dream.
- ___ 42. I find it difficult to "shut down" my mind, even away from work.
- ___ 43. I keep a notepad or recording machine with me to jot down important thoughts.
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- ___ 44. I panic just thinking about the possibility that my computer may crash.
- ___ 45. My fear of computer viruses rivals or surpass my fear of AIDS.
- ___ 46. I miss taking time to "enjoy the sunsets and smell the flowers."
- ___ 47. I like the multiplex theaters because I can check out another movie if I get bored with the first.
- ___ 48. I like reading *USA Today* because it is quick and easy to learn a little about a lot of things.
- ___ 49. I find it difficult to read a book from cover to cover, even when I am enjoying it.
- ___ 50. I have many partially read books lying around.
- ___ 51. I read mostly business-related material and feel slightly guilty if I read just for pleasure.
- ___ 52. I feel dependent on the constant stimulation, pressure, and excitement I get in life.
- ___ 53. I find myself accepting civic and business obligations even after I feel overloaded.
- ___ 54. I am missing important times with my children, partner, or family because I am too busy.
- ___ 55. My preferred forms of exercise or recreation are demanding and/or competitive.
- ___ 56. I become anxious or depressed when I can't work out.
- ___ 57. I feel my life is moving too fast.
- ___ 58. I have had stress-related illnesses such as back problems, high blood pressure, ulcers, or "nervous stomach."
- ___ 59. I dream of hitting the jackpot via lottery tickets, sports betting (horse or dog racing, weekly football pools, fantasy sports betting, etc.) or playing slots.
- ___ 60. I like to watch scary movies and TV shows.

___ **Total Score**

Scoring: Add the numbers in the left-hand column and record your total score. See the interpretation below to determine what your score might mean.

Interpretation: Each person must decide the meaning of the scores when analyzing personal lifestyle. For one person, missing their child's first concert may be enough to make a change. For another, it may require a serious heart attack. The following interpretation guidelines will help you in your lifestyle analysis.

60-90	Low risk of adrenaline addiction
91-120	Some risk of adrenaline addiction
121-150	High risk of adrenaline addiction
151-180	Very high risk of adrenaline addiction
181-240	Danger; extremely high risk of adrenaline addiction

If your score was more than 120 on the scale above, it indicates not only a risk of addiction to adrenaline, but also a strong likelihood of experiences involving childhood developmental shock, trauma, or stress. Knowing that these behaviors are related to developmental trauma may motivate you to change some of your small daily habits that could be doing long-term damage to your mind/body.

How to Reduce Your Addiction To Adrenaline
Barry K. Weinhold, PhD

Obviously, the best way to reduce your addiction is by not distracting yourself with activities. The more you can stay focused on using the four steps to finish anything that is causing you stress, the better you will be able to manage your stress levels. I recommend a both/and approach. You can stay focused when a memory is triggered and you can do other things to reduce your level of addiction to your adrenaline.

There are a number of solid options for reducing the excess production of adrenaline, when something puts you under stress. Some are common sense, while others may seem counterintuitive. The goal is to cause your body to relax. If you can't relax and fall asleep normally at night, this can mean that you are still hyper-aroused after an experience of excess stress.

The goal is to reduce your level of arousal from being stuck in full throttle hyper-aroused mode to a more relaxed, normal state of functioning. This takes a lot of time though, so it can take a while to get back on track.

- 1. Exercise** – While your body is pumping with adrenaline after you freak out, the best thing you can do for yourself is to put the excess energy to use via exercise. Here's where it gets tricky – if you go overboard, you may damage your body and/or cause further production of adrenaline. Ideally, you should shoot for no more than 40 to 60 minutes in the weight room.

Work out hard, but when the time is up, leave. Do not ever do all cardio either, add in strength training because it will force your muscles to work hard and burn up energy stores. Strength training may be better than cardio for overcoming this addiction.

- 2. Yoga** – One practice you may consider taking up is that of some form of yoga. When done properly, it burns energy in the body, and relaxes the mind. When done consistently once or a couple times a week, it will help your body and mind start to relax. The relaxation may initially feel uncomfortable, but just keep pushing through it. It will help your body to relax after you had an experience of freaking out.
- 3. Self-hypnosis** – If you find yourself being "juiced" at bedtime after freaking out, the thing that helped me fall asleep at night was self-hypnosis and/or guided imagery recordings. You can simply download some self-hypnosis sessions, put them on an iPod to listen to, and was usually able to fall asleep. If you aren't able to fall asleep, at least you will feel very relaxed.
- 4. Deep breathing** – Practicing deep breathing can be beneficial for consciously training your body to relax after freaking out. Although deep breathing is helpful to get you to relax, most people don't know how to do it properly to help themselves relax. Should you choose to incorporate this in your attempt to relax, make sure you know what you're doing.
- 5. Meditation** – Perhaps one of the most effective ways to improve your mental state and increase happiness, self-control, and reduce your adrenaline is by learning how to properly meditate. There are many different types of meditation, so choose one that is aimed to help people relax. Most meditation types will help you relax and get you on the right track if you are consistent with your practice. I use the form of meditation that just asks you to focus on your breathing.

It is called mindful meditation. It is relatively easy to do, but the trick is to return to focusing on your breathing every time a thought or something in

your environment gets your focus. Even 15 minutes a day before going to bed or when you wake up in the morning may help a lot more than you might expect.

- 6. Stop stimulants** – All stimulants will increase the flow of adrenaline and cause further problems. If you are serious about getting back to homeostasis and overcoming this addiction, you need to stop ingesting chemicals and foods that are stimulating. In other words, if you are drinking coffee, consuming 5-hour energy drinks, taking No Doz, cocaine, Red Bull, Adderall, etc. you will definitely increase your adrenaline flow.

All things that stimulate this adrenaline production should be stopped. Cut them from your diet completely, if you are serious about reducing your addiction to adrenaline.

- 7. Sleep** – Aim to get plenty of sleep, go to bed at a reasonable time and wake up when you feel well rested. Don't make yourself get very little amounts of sleep. If you are consistently getting less than 6 hours of sleep, your cortisol levels will be greatly amplified. Melatonin helps put you to sleep, so you might try this over-the-counter supplement.
- 8. Less electronics** – Whether it's video games, television, cell phones, or computer – when you have an addiction to adrenaline, electronics can make you even more amped up. If you cannot cut electronics completely for a while, at least minimize your time spent using them. Also, a tip: NEVER use electronics (including cell phone) at least an hour before bed. Something as simple as getting one text could get you so worked up that you won't be able to sleep.
- 9. Diet** – There are certain foods that lead to further production of adrenaline too. Try to eat a healthy balanced diet and limit excess carbohydrates. Highly spicy foods can also cause an adrenaline rush. Too many carbs can cause a major insulin spike, which will release more cortisol and adrenaline.
- 10. Neurofeedback** – Although this method isn't effective for everyone, it is basically a way to help train your brain to consciously relax. Typically, a professional will hook up an EEG, get a brain wave reading, and help you determine what frequencies you need to get your brain waves to slow down.
- 11. Brainwave entrainment** – This is a relatively newer and less researched science, but some people swear by this technology for helping them recover from freaking out. It works relatively well to help you with relaxation. There are studies out that prove that this technology can help promote relaxation. You can learn how to recover very quickly from an experience of freaking out.
- 12. Calming Supplements**-There is a supplement called Adrena-Calm that is a cream you rub inside your wrists and helps to calm down your sympathetic nervous system. It effectively shuts down the sympathetic nervous system that functions on increased adrenaline.
- 13. Centering** - This psychophysical exercise helps you calm down your nervous system. When you feel stressed, place your hand on your center (2 inches below your naval) and take a deep breath into that space and feel your body centering and relaxing.

Signs That You Are Recovering From An Adrenaline Addiction:

Barry K. Weinhold, PhD

1. **Automatically drift off to sleep** – Perhaps the easiest way to know that you've overcome this addiction is by your sleep pattern at night. When you are truly done with this addiction, you will lie down and not really be able to control when you fall asleep. Your brain will automatically switch gears and the subconscious will take over as you drift to sleep. In other words, your brainwaves will shift on their own and you will NOT be able to stay awake at will.
2. **More relaxed** – You will feel less anxious and more relaxed in all situations that used to cause you to freak out. This relaxation may initially feel uncomfortable because you have been so sensitized to the adrenaline.
3. **Carefree** – Fewer things will bother you and you may not be afraid of anything.
4. **Natural feeling** – You will feel more natural in your thinking and physical abilities. You will feel less hyped up and more like a normal human being should feel.
5. **Emotions** – The increased production of adrenaline that occurs when you freak out will numb you out to the point where you forgot what it was like to experience natural human emotions. These emotions will slowly start to come back as your body slowly returns to homeostasis.
6. **Desensitization** – You will become desensitized to things like sounds, smells, sights, etc. You will no longer freak out at hearing normal volume music – it will sound normal. You will be able to handle loud music without thinking you're going to lose your hearing. You will be much less fearful and won't freak out at things that before would've induced the fight or flight response.
7. **Relaxed body** – Before your brain slows down, a month or two in advance, your body will feel more relaxed. Your brain will still be stimulated, but you will feel very comfortable. Enjoy this state of awareness because the body feels great.
8. **Relaxed mind** – Lastly, your mind will start to slow back into normal mode. If you have had an adrenaline addiction for years, it may be very tough to transition. You may feel weird and not really like how slow your thinking becomes. Just go with the flow and try not to get triggered – things will get better.

Do You Suffer From Adrenal Fatigue?

Barry K. Weinhold, PhD

Directions: Place a number before each question that best indicates the degree to which this is true in your life. (1 = Almost Never, 2 = Occasionally, 3 = Usually, 4 = Almost Always. Find your total and check the Interpretation for more information about what it could mean.

1. I have trouble falling asleep despite feeling tired.
2. I wake up in the middle of the night for no reason.
3. I experience heart palpitations at night or when stressed.
4. I have low blood pressure.
5. I suffer from depression, even after taking anti-depressants.
6. My hair is falling out for no reason.
7. I get Irritable under stress.
8. I feel tired when I wake up, even though I just had a good night's sleep.
9. I suffer from anxiety/panic attacks.
10. I feel adrenaline rushes in my body.
11. I have foggy thinking.
12. I am unable to relax and do nothing.

- 13. I feel tired in the afternoon between 3:00 and 5 p.m.
- 14. I need coffee, tea or energy drinks to get going in the morning.
- 15. I feel tired between 9 and 10 p.m. but still find it hard to go to bed.
- 16. I crave salty foods, like potato chips.
- 17. My skin is dry.
- 18. I have food sensitivities to dairy or gluten.
- 19. I am very sensitive to temperature changes, especially to heat and sunshine.
- 20. When I exercise, I feel fatigued after doing it.
- 21. I have chemical sensitivities to paint, nail polish and certain plastics.
- 22. I am sensitive to electrical frequencies from cellphones and computer monitors.
- 23. I get constipated for no apparent reason.
- 24. I have accumulated abdominal fat for no apparent reason.
- 25. I suffer from joint pain from unknown reason.
- 26. I have cold hands and feet.
- 27. I have an inability to concentrate or focus.
- 28. I have low back pain, with no history of back injuries.
- 29. I get dizzy for no known reason.
- 30. I get ringing in my ears.
- 31. I feel numb in my hands or feet
- 32. I suffer from mouth and lip sores.
- 33. I experience a shortness of breath even though my normal breathing is fine.
- 34. I have dark circles under my eyes.
- 35. My body feels tense all over and I am unable to relax.
- 36. I suffer from "mood swings."
- 37. I have low tolerance for others.
- 38. I drink sodas and energy drinks that contain a lot of sugar.
- 39. I have stomach or intestinal gas.
- 40. I have a low libido and the lack of sex drive.
- 41. I drive myself to exhaustion.
- 42. I overwork with little time to play or relax.
- 43. I get extended, severe, or recurring respiratory infections.
- 44. I drink too much and/or overuse drugs
- 45. I am less productive at work.
- 46. I avoid emotional situations.
- 47. I suffer from mouth sores
- 48. I crave fatty foods.
- 49. I have a weak immune system
- 50. I get dizzy for no reason.
- 51. My legs feel heavy
- 52. I feel cold even when it is warm in the room
- 53. I f have a lack of patience
- 54. I feel worse after I skip a meal
- 55. I have pain in my upper back and neck for no reason.
- 56. I feel lightheaded, when I stand up
- 57. I have indigestion.
- 58. My ankles are swollen.
- 59. I get headaches, for no known reason.
- 60. I feel hopeless and despairing.
- 61. I am easily fatigued.
- 62. I like to sleep late in the morning.

- 63. I suffer from allergies to various environmental substances.
- 64. I have to force myself to keep going. Everything seems like a chore.
- 65. I do not eat three meals a day.
- 66. My life contains insufficient fun.
- 67. I do not exercise enough.
- 68. I have little control over how I spend my time.
- 69. My relationships at home and/or at work are unhappy.
- 70. I tend to shake when I am under pressure.
- Total Score**

INTERPRETATION: You must decide the meaning of the scores when analyzing your personal lifestyle. For one person, missing their child's first concert may be enough to make a change. For another, it may require a serious illness. The following interpretations of your score may help you identify the possible symptoms of adrenal fatigue.

70-140 – Low risk of adrenal fatigue.

141-200 - Moderate risk of adrenal fatigue.

201-280 – High risk of adrenal fatigue

If your score was above 200 on the scale above, it indicates that there is a strong likelihood that you are depleting your adrenal hormones more rapidly than you should. The depletion of your adrenal hormones is often caused by unfinished experiences involving past shock, trauma, or stress. Knowing that adrenal fatigue may be related to possible past experiences, may motivate you to address some of your small daily habits/symptoms that could be doing long-term damage to your mind/body, seek medical treatment and/or psychotherapy.

Case Example:

Jim, age 31, came to me with self-diagnosed symptoms of anxiety. He said he had trouble relaxing and had to be doing something all the time. He said he also had trouble shutting down his thoughts at night so he could go to sleep. Since he said his symptoms were acute, I started doing some crisis intervention work with him. I taught him some simple relaxation techniques that he could use to calm down his anxiety, when he needed immediate help.

I also had him fill out the Addiction to Adrenaline Inventory shown above. He took the top off the test and it was clear that he had become addicted to his own adrenaline. Because his score was so high in this instrument, I gave him the Adrenal Fatigue Self-Inventory, also shown above, to see how many symptoms of adrenal fatigue he was experiencing. This is important to assess because it can be a progressive disease that can reduce life expectancy and lead to death. He did indicate a significant number of symptoms of adrenal fatigue.

This can significantly reduce his quality of life. If not treated, adrenal fatigue can eventually turn into adrenal exhaustion. The lack of sufficient adrenal hormones in the body causes the body to attack its organs looking for more adrenaline and after a period of time, this leads to organ failure and death. I referred Jim to a physician for further testing and treatment for his adrenal fatigue brought on by an addiction to his own adrenaline.

Our own adrenaline is the most addictive substance to the human body. Chemically, it is in the same family as cocaine. Often the addiction comes from using activities to avoid feeling any feelings that are triggered by memories of past unfinished leaning experiences. The typical response to feeling these feelings is to

try to do something to either calm down or distract yourself from them. By increasing your activities, such as sex, exercise, gambling, shopping, work, etc. as an attempt to quiet these feelings, it can lead to an addiction to our own adrenaline. It takes more adrenaline to do these additional things to ward off the feelings we are having.

So, I began to work with Jim in several ways. First, I reviewed the items on the Addiction To Adrenaline Inventory where he scored high to see what he was willing to bring under his conscious control and change. There were quite a few items such as driving too fast, eating too fast and talking too fast that he agreed he could bring under conscious control. I also sent him the handout above on How To Reduce Your addiction to adrenaline, He cut down on his caffeine intake and started to learn to meditate.

I also gave him several other self-inventories and found that he had many instances of past unfinished learning experiences, that were causing the triggering events. I used my 4-step model with him to help him create ways to finish what was left unfinished from his past. Gradually, he reported being able to calm himself down when he began to feel anxious He also was able to take various actions to finish the unfinished elements of past learning experiences.