

# ELMHURST COUNSELING

## **Effects of Stress**

When the body perceives fear, danger, threat, loss or failure, it begins making physiological adjustments that prepare us for crisis. This is called the "fight-flight" response. In these situations, our bodies prepare themselves to either confront (fight) or run (flight) from the stressful event. Our bodies do not distinguish between sources of stress. Our bodies just change to be optimally prepared for the perceived threat. This happens automatically. These changes are described below.

## **When we are under stress...**

### Body Functions That Speed Up

Heart Rate  
Blood Pressure  
Muscle Tension  
Brain Waves  
Respiration  
Pupil Dilation  
Sweat Glands

### Body Functions That Slow Down

Immune System  
Salivation  
Digestive System  
Blood Flow to Hands/Feet

## **Physical Symptoms...**

headaches(tension/migraine)  
diarrhea/constipation/ulcers  
dry mouth  
sleeplessness/insomnia  
anxiety/nervousness  
difficulty with concentration/focus  
muscle cramping  
cold hands and feet  
shortness of breath  
lowered resistance to colds/flu