

THE DAILY STRESS & CORTISOL SUPPORT GUIDE

7 SIMPLE HABITS TO SUPPORT A HEALTHIER STRESS RESPONSE

By Dr. Bilkisu Gaye | Designed4Wellness



Introduction

Stress is a normal part of life.

Your body is designed to respond to short-term stress through the release of cortisol, often called the "stress hormone."

The problem occurs when stress becomes constant.

When cortisol remains elevated for long periods, it can affect sleep, energy, blood sugar regulation, cravings, mood, hormone balance, and weight management.

This doesn't mean stress is the enemy.

It means your body may need additional support.

This guide will help you recognize common signs of stress overload and introduce simple daily habits that support a healthier stress response.



Could Stress Be Affecting Your Health?

-Check any statements that apply to you-

- ☐ I feel tired but wired.
- ☐ My mind races at night.
- ☐ I wake up feeling exhausted.
- ☐ I crave sugar or carbohydrates when stressed.
- ☐ I gain weight during stressful periods.
- ☐ I experience frequent energy crashes.
- ☐ I feel overwhelmed by small tasks.
- ☐ I have trouble relaxing.
- ☐ I feel anxious more often than I used to.
- ☐ My sleep quality has declined.

If several of these apply to you, stress physiology may be playing a larger role in your health than you realize.

How Stress Impacts the Body

Chronic stress can influence:

- ✓ Cortisol production
- ✓ Blood sugar regulation
- ✓ Hunger and cravings
- ✓ Hormone balance
- ✓ Sleep quality
- ✓ Inflammation
- ✓ Energy production
- ✓ Weight management

Your body functions as an interconnected system. When one area is under stress, other systems often feel the effects.

7 Daily Habits to Support Cortisol Balance



01

Start Your Day Without Immediate Screens

Avoid checking emails, social media, or news the moment you wake up.
Giving your nervous system a calm start can set the tone for the day.



02

Get Morning Sunlight

Spend 10–20 minutes outside shortly after waking.

Natural light helps regulate cortisol rhythms and supports healthy sleep later in the day.



03

Eat a Protein-Rich Breakfast

Protein can help support blood sugar stability and reduce energy crashes and cravings throughout the day.

Examples include:

- ✓ Eggs
- ✓ Greek yogurt
- ✓ Cottage cheese
- ✓ Protein smoothie
- ✓ Leftover lean protein



04

Build Movement Into Your Day

Movement helps your body process stress hormones.

Try:

- ✓ Walking
- ✓ Stretching
- ✓ Strength training
- ✓ Yoga
- ✓ Outdoor activities



05

Schedule Daily Recovery Time

Even 10 minutes can make a difference.

Ideas include:

- ✓ Prayer
- ✓ Meditation
- ✓ Deep breathing
- ✓ Reading
- ✓ Journaling
- ✓ Quiet reflection



06

Support Blood Sugar Balance

Stress and blood sugar are closely connected.

Focus on:

- ✓ Protein
- ✓ Fiber
- ✓ Healthy fats
- ✓ Regular meals
- ✓ Hydration



07

Protect Your Sleep

Quality sleep is one of the most effective ways to support healthy cortisol rhythms.

Prioritize:

- ✓ Consistent bedtime
- ✓ Dark sleeping environment
- ✓ Reduced evening screen exposure
- ✓ Relaxing bedtime routine

Your Daily Stress-Support Checklist



Today I:

- ☒ Got morning sunlight
- ☒ Ate protein at breakfast
- ☒ Moved my body
- ☒ Drank enough water
- ☒ Took a stress-recovery break
- ☒ Balanced my meals
- ☒ Protected my sleep routine

Small habits practiced consistently often
create meaningful change over time.

Ready to Take a Whole-Body Approach?

At Designed 4 Wellness, we look beyond symptoms to explore how stress, hormones, metabolism, nutrition, sleep, and lifestyle work together.

Together, we'll discuss your symptoms, health goals, and practical next steps for supporting your overall wellness.



Dr. Bilkisu Gaye, MD

Functional & Integrative Health Physician



Schedule a Discovery Call
with Dr. Bilkisu Gaye



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