**Beat tension**

Tension is a feeling of extreme tightness which is both physical and emotional. In the right quantities it is a very necessary ingredient of our lives. It is a natural part of our daily existence when we are confronted with opportunities and threats.

Tension and the consequences thereof do not necessarily have to be bad or unpleasant. It is positive if it inspires you to greater heights.

Ongoing tension over long periods without relief leads to physical and spiritual exhaustion which in turn leads to frustration, anxiety and unhappiness.

Since tension is a necessary part of our existence, the answer lies not in the avoidance thereof but in the reaction to it and the way it is managed.

**Reaction, Signs, Prevention**

**Reaction to tension**

Reaction to tension differs from one person to the next as well as from one age group to another.

Phases in the reaction to excessive tension:

1. **Shock**

The individual becomes distraught – what can I do?

You cry, tremble, feel faint, your palms become sweaty and the pulse rate increases.

1. **Resistance / adjustment**

You try to escape the situation / problem OR you adapt to the new situation.

1. **Exhaustion**

If you cannot resolve the situation or adjust to it, exhaustion follows which can lead to various physical and emotional problems.

**Signs of tension**

* Inability to relax or switch off
* Sleep disturbances (too little or too much sleep)
* Headaches
* Changes in eating habits (loss of appetite or overeating)
* Mood swings
* Inability to concentrate
* Seeking regular refuge in alcohol or drugs
* Regularly feeling that everything is going wrong
* Abnormal behaviour - excessive reactions to trivial matters, etc.
* Ongoing depression
* Rebelliousness
* Self-pity
* Development of phobias (examination fear, etc.)
* Attempts to avoid certain situations (absence from tests or exams)

**Prevention / Managing tension**

* Follow a healthy diet.
* Get enough exercise.
* Develop self-acceptance.
* Accept things which you cannot change.
* Do something creative.
* Get enough sleep.
* Do things for others.
* Don’t procrastinate.
* Do one thing at a time.
* Do not expect perfection.
* Avoid unnecessary criticism.
* Avoid senseless competition.
* Stop trying to please others.
* Forgive others and also yourself.
* Laugh often and learn to laugh at yourself.
* Remember: there is always someone who loves you just the way you are.
* Talk to someone.
* Don’t make a mountain out of a molehill.
* Don’t always expect the worst.
* Do not be too hard on yourself.
* Make a list of things that really matter.
* Prioritise.
* Avoid/manage things that cause negative tension.
* Plan and become organised.