

LET'S AVOID STRESS

Too many people look upon life as the Norsemen did upon heaven: the time was to be passed in daily battles, with magical healing of wounds.

Everyone is working under conditions that strain the physical, mental, and emotional structure built during ages of evolution.

We are exposed to tension, expecting some new crisis. Keeping fit is not simply a matter of taking physical exercise, though that is important. It concerns both mind and body. It requires that we ease the stress of living.

The body becomes alarmed by stress and tries to defend itself. The endocrine glands pour out hormones, the heart beats faster, the liver increases its supply of glycogen, the blood pressure rises, and the activity of many internal organs is suspended so that their energy may be diverted to the external muscles. We, like our primitive ancestors become tensed for fight or flight.

The medical profession cannot look upon stress as a simple concept. Out of a thousand diseases described in a textbook of medicine, it is said that emotionally induced illness is as common as all the other 999 put together.

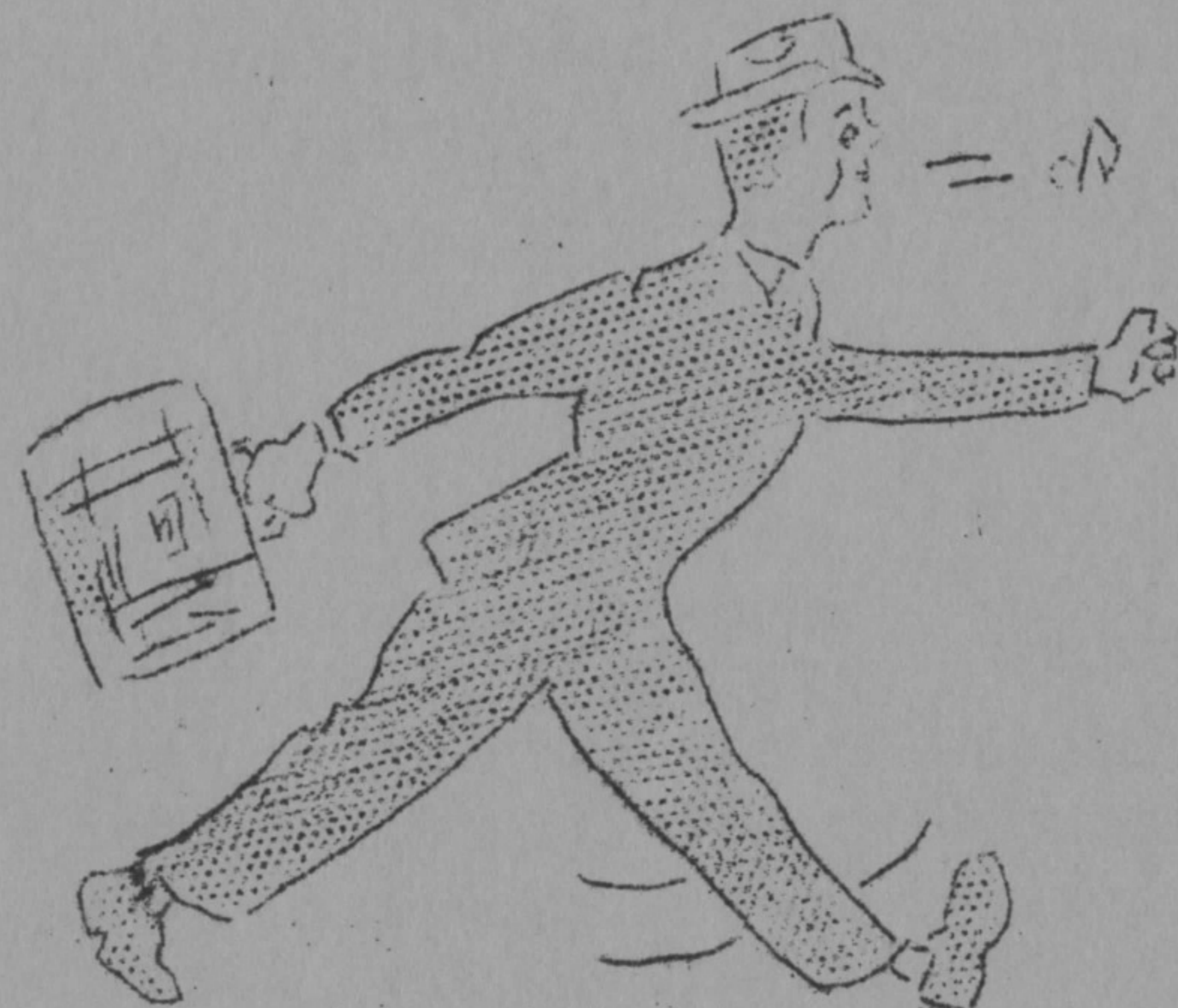
Whatever we allow to affect our minds in the way of pain or pleasure, hope or fear, extends its influence to our hearts. Financial worries, a monotonous job, strain at the office, emotional upsets in the home — these, and many more may show themselves physically as high blood pressure, digestive ailments such as peptic ulcer and colitis, headache, skin disorders, and some allergies.

All emotions are not bad. Some are guides to protective action. Pleasurable emotion is conducive to health. An invigorating emotion unlocks new stores of energy and drives away fatigue. It provides the zest of pursuit, the joy of striving, intense interest in work and renewed enthusiasm. The tension accompanies us home and keeps us awake, unless we have worked out for ourselves an effective way of releasing it.

Much of the time we are tangled up in the woolly words with which we clothe our thoughts rather than with facts themselves. The result is a state of anxiety.

The best executives have moments of doubt and weariness, but rise from their depression to principles they have learned. One of life's most health-giving virtues is to be able to meet disappointment and frustration well.

An angry man is not one who is doing something, but one who is suffering something to be done to him. He is allowing his dignity to be lowered and that is bad enough but he is also interfering with his digestion, disrupting his circulation and putting undue strain on his body's defensive organism. Chronic worry can bring on dyspepsia, ulcers, common colds, arthritis, asthma, and a host of other diseases.



Most common, perhaps is fatigue of one sort or another. There is nothing dramatic about fatigue. It creeps up on us, seeping through our bodies like poison. We get our wires crossed; the wrong messages come through to the brain. Boredom sets up stresses that give us feelings of fatigue. Long hours at a desk, repeated day after day result in muscular tension that can be more physically fatiguing than heavy manual labor.

Fatigue can be brought on by too much conversation — most of us would gain something both physically and mentally by retreating into silence at periods during every day.

Our ability to relax is one of the surest symptoms of our mental health. If we relax away the little tensions as they occur we stand

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