




RELAXATION BASICS

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What we will talk about?

Shortly about stress

Specific stressors of university students

General ways to reduce stress

Relaxation

Relaxační techniques

Autogenic training example





*How do you define a **stress**?*



Stres

Hans Selye (1966):

“the non-specific response of the body to any demand for change”.

Stress, as we will address it, is an inner state.

That means it´s level is very individual no matter the situation.



Physiological stress reaction

- The hypothalamus perceives the stressor and activates autonomic nervous system and releases some hormones.
- Autonomic nervous system consists of sympathetic (arousal) and parasympathetic (relaxed) nervous system. The ANS regulates visceral activities like circulation, digestion, respiration, temperature regulation and some vital organs.
- In response to a stressor catecholamines: epinephrine (adrenaline) and norepinephrine (noradrenaline) are released at various neural synapses. The release of these catecholamines causes several changes like increase in the heart rate and force of myocardial contraction vasodilatation of arteries throughout working muscles and vasoconstriction of arteries to nonworking muscles; dilation of pupil and bronchi and reduction of digestive activities in the body.



! specific stressors of the modern world !

In most cases, you are not able to use the fight or flight response - for example if you face a challenge, as an bad-tempered teacher, who examines you. You can't run away and you can't punch him, no matter how much you want to. Your body is not allowed to complete the stress response - to consume substances it made. They accumulate and become a threat for our physical and mental health in the long term.





University student specific stressors
- tell us about stress

Young adulthood specific stressors

The stage of development, which is called Early Adulthood, is a hard one to manage.

We have some very difficult developmental tasks, such as:

- to explore our identity,
- instability of finding and accepting new social roles,
- wide range of opportunities to choose,
- first experience of full autonomy,
- lots of new duties and responsibility,
- achieving emotional and financial independence of our parents,
- and many changes in our life (such as moving, new sleeping and eating habits, meeting new people,...).



Some stressors coming from university studies

Míček (1986):

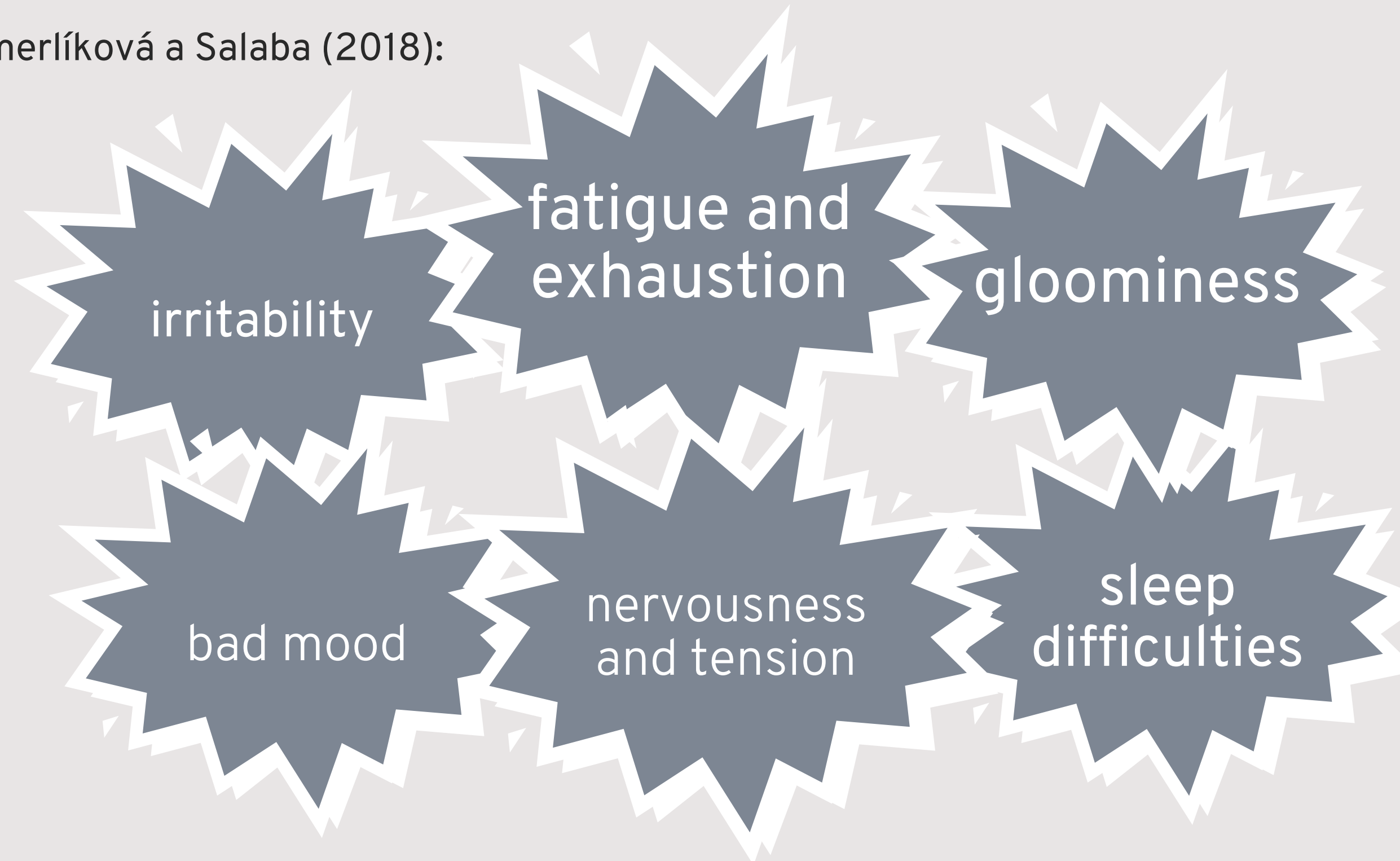
- (a) Objective: external (e.g. commuting), life style (e.g. lack of sleep), work environment (e.g. exams)
- (b) Subjective: e.g. anxiety, hopelessness, restlessness, inability to relax...


The biggest university stressor - exam situation (Konečný & Urbanovská, 2002)



Some symptoms of stress in students


- Somerlíková a Salaba (2018):





Basic methods to reduce the stress level

(Drotárová & Drotárová, 2003)

- eating habits,
 - sleep and rest,
 - exercise,
 - social support,
 - cognitive approach,
 - spirituality and
 - relaxation.
- 



How do you relax?
— tell us about relaxation

Relaxation

Relaxation: relaxation is when the body and mind are free from tension and anxiety.

conscious (relaxation methods)

or unconscious (sleep).

Relaxed state (physiological relaxation response)

Simply put, the relaxation response is the opposite of your body's stress response. Your "off switch" to your body's tendency toward fight-or-flight. Your body activates a parasympathetic nervous system, breath slows down and deepens, consumption of oxygen decreases, as well your blood pressure, heartbeat and the whole metabolism. Some neurotransmitters are released, such as serotonin, which positively affects your mood.



Basic relaxation methods

- **Body** focused techniques (e.g. massage or acupressure)
- **Breath** focused techniques
- **Concentration** focused techniques (e.g. progressive muscle relaxation, autogenic training, meditation, mindfulness)
- Guided **imagery**
- **Technological** relaxations (float tanks, sensory deprivation)
- **Others** (e.g. aromatherapy, dance relaxation...)



ZÁKLADY RELAXACE



Progresivní relaxace

Opakovaně zatínej a povoluj svaly.



Hluboké dýchání

Dýchej zhluboka a svůj dech pozoruj.



Pozorování přírody

Pozoruj rostliny nebo zvířata.



Imaginace

Představ si klidné místo, kde se cítíš bezpečně. Využij svých představ k uvolnění.



Body scan

Projdi si postupně všechny části svého těla. Všimni si pocitů, které v nich cítíš.

Some tips for ultrafast relaxation:

- smile
- warm palms + heart move
- massage :)



Boxovací pytel

Vybij svoje napětí a stres do polštáře či boxovacího pytle.



Zvuky

Pust' si zvuky - déšť, šumění lesa nebo moře a další.



#NEVYPUSTDUSI

Useful apps



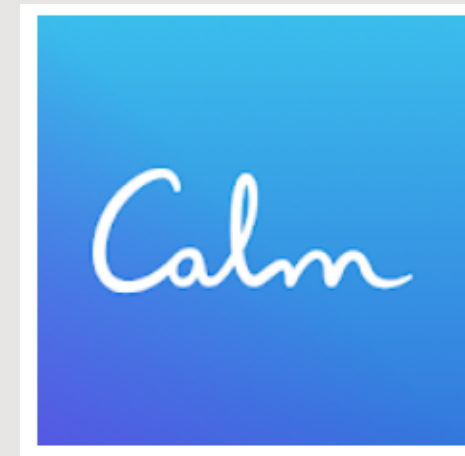
Nepanikař

breath exercise
relaxation
much more



Žiji

breath exercise,
disappearing writing or drawing
meditations
much more



Calm




Headspace



Calmio - Czech



Relaxation preparation

- calm environment without disturbing elements
 - adequate temperature
 - appropriate mat
 - appropriate relaxation position
- 

Basic relaxation positions

- lying on your back
- lying on your belly
- the "mexican layabout"
- the coachman position



Personalizing relaxation tips (Schwartz, 1995):



Time:

Try to find a time during the day, that will suit you for your relaxation - it may be the morning or the lunch break or maybe before sleep - experiment and explore when you are able to relax the most.



Length:

If you are a beginner, it may last about 15-30 minutes till you achieve the relaxed state. With training it can be much faster. Also with every technique the time needed will be slightly different - you and only you can tell how much time you want to spend practising.



Music:

Lots of people like relaxation with music in the background, but some of them do not. Find what is best for you. It is crucial that the music should support relaxation, not disturb.



Falling asleep:

If you fall asleep during the relaxation, it is OK and quite common. If you want to be sure that you won't oversleep - set an alarm to be sure.



As with any new skill, your first few relaxation attempts may not measure up to your hopes, though with practice you can learn to relax when you need to. Remember, just as there is no one way to decorate a room, there is no one right way to relax. Experiment. Try several different paths to relaxation, trusting that you know what works best for you. Feel free to adapt and modify the techniques, adding the personal touches that make relaxation easier and more likely to be part of a regular routine.

Like moving into a new room or a new house, the practice of relaxation may take a little getting used to. However, in time, you make the necessary changes, and the room becomes your own and your house becomes your home.

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