

General Adaptation Syndrome

Within moments after you perceive the stressor situation, the secondary phase of this process, called the General Adaptation Syndrome, is in full swing.

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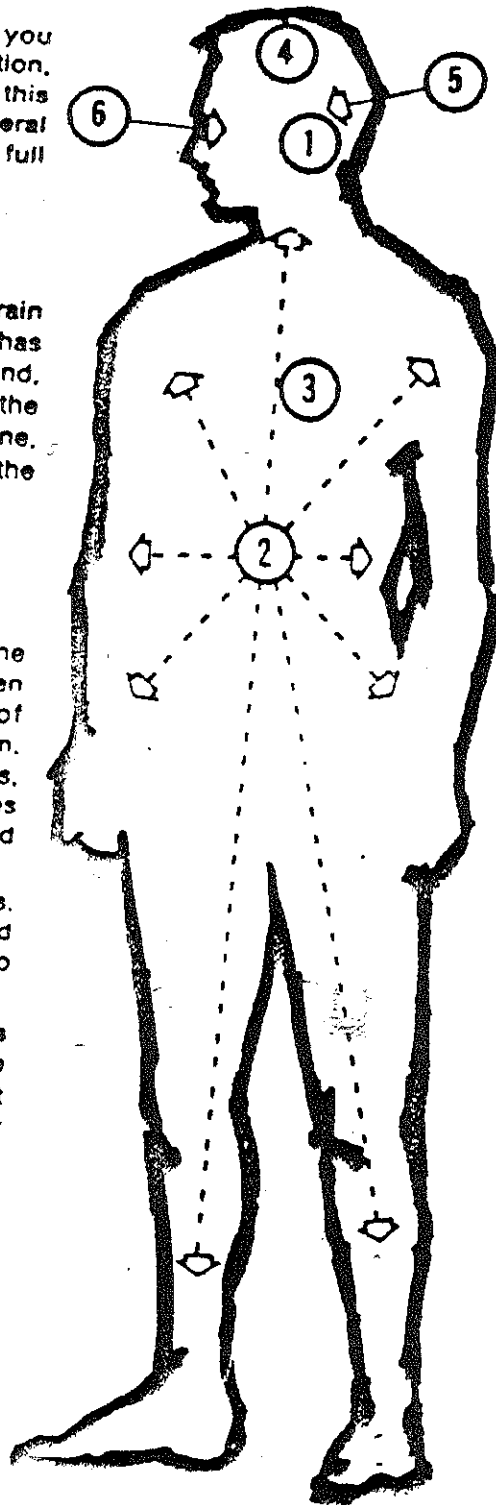
A small portion of the brain called the hypothalamus has triggered the pituitary gland, located near the base of the brain, and now its hormone, ACTH, is released into the bloodstream.

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ACTH goes directly to the adrenal glands, which then step up their output of adrenalin into the bloodstream, along with related hormones, corticoids. These hormones bring the body up to its aroused state.

Within the first eight seconds, the bloodstream has carried these stress organizers into every cell in the body.

At the same time, commands are traveling through the nerve communication system to alert heart, lungs, and muscles for action. The muscles have been more richly supplied with blood, as the tiny vessels constrict and your blood pressure increases. However, blood has been diverted away from your extremities. Your liver, too, is working harder to convert its stored glycogen into glucose which the brain and muscles will need in greater supply.



Meanwhile, your breathing is more rapid, increasing the amount of oxygen in the blood, which enables the muscles and the brain to burn that glucose more efficiently.

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The heart is pumping away, sending an abundant supply of blood to the priority portions of the body. Your skeletal muscles brace, and, with the blood you need in your stomach reduced in favor of those high priority areas elsewhere, you're going to have indigestion. Over long periods of time, you guessed it—ulcers.

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Now the brain is busy with preparations for violent physical action—one reason why you can't think very effectively on abstract levels during this panic state.

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On the other hand, your hearing may become more acute.

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The pupils of your eyes dilate, making your vision sensitive.