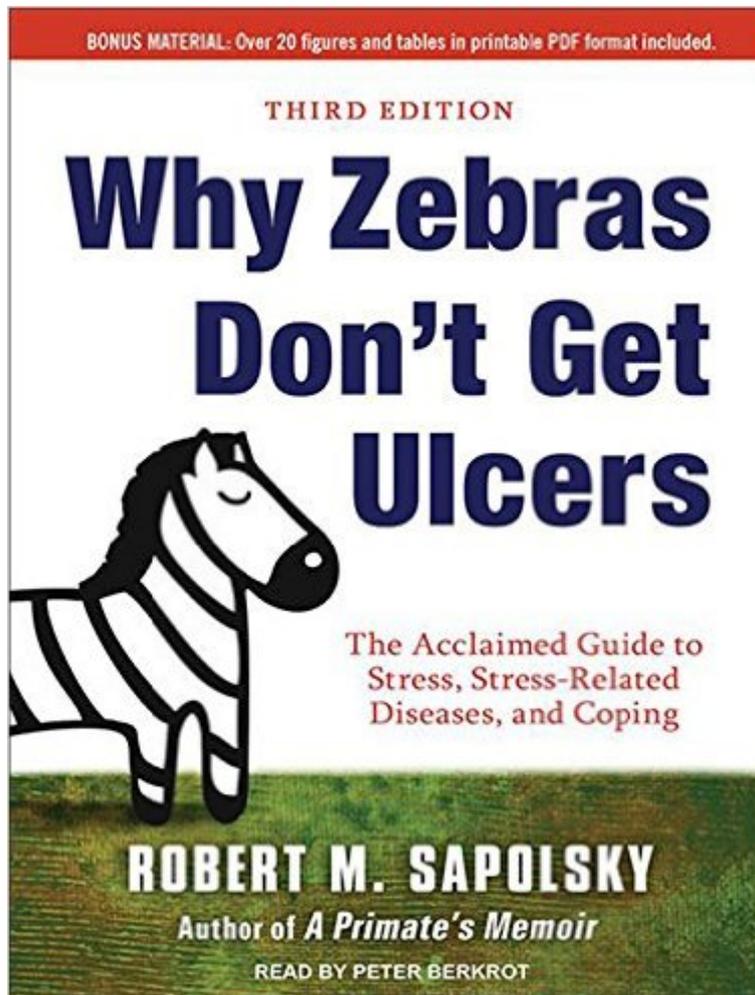


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Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers



Synopsis

Now in a third edition, Robert M. Sapolsky's acclaimed and successful *Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers* features new chapters on how stress affects sleep and addiction, as well as new insights into anxiety and personality disorder and the impact of spirituality on managing stress. As Sapolsky explains, most of us do not lie awake at night worrying about whether we have leprosy or malaria. Instead, the diseases we fear-and the ones that plague us now-are illnesses brought on by the slow accumulation of damage, such as heart disease and cancer. When we worry or experience stress, our body turns on the same physiological responses that an animal's does, but we do not resolve conflict in the same way-through fighting or fleeing. Over time, this activation of a stress response makes us literally sick. Combining cutting-edge research with a healthy dose of good humor and practical advice, *Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers* explains how prolonged stress causes or intensifies a range of physical and mental afflictions, including depression, ulcers, colitis, heart disease, and more. It also provides essential guidance to controlling our stress responses. This new edition promises to be the most comprehensive and engaging one yet.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This new edition of *Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers* is extensively revised and exceeds earlier editions in terms of explaining the effects of stress on the body. This is a very detailed exploration, but well worth the sometimes difficult reading. If you don't have some sort of background in biology, you may find that you have to read it a bit more slowly. Sapolsky as always explains his topics very clearly and uses humor and good examples to illustrate important points. I particularly liked his

analogy of two elephants on a teeter totter for the ways in which the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system can become imbalanced under chronic stress from being activated to frequently and where each is trying to compensate for the massive activation of the other in a vicious cycle. Sapolsky also develops the implications of long term stress and explains the mechanisms involved in a lot of detail. He also explores how mechanisms that evolved to save our lives in actual life and death struggles can hurt us by being activated over things like traffic jams or missed deadlines. An example that he uses in the book is that if you are a zebra with your guts dragging on the ground while you are being stocked by a predator, then maybe it's useful not to experience pain under stress. If you may not be alive in an hour, then shutting down long term building processes and depressing short term immunity makes sense as does a narrowing of the attention. The author goes on to further explain in the example above that the real problem comes when the flight or fight response is triggered chronically and long term repair and important building projects like bolstering immunity are depressed for long periods of time.

Imagine yourself at your favorite watering hole in an African savannah. You spot a lion. Your body hops up. Your stress response shifts into high gear. And all just as it was designed to do. Now imagine yourself sitting in front of a new mortgage, worrying about if your boss likes you, or if you look too fat, or your hair is just not falling the way it did after its fresh new cut. Your body hops up, and your stress response shifts into high gear. Only difference, no lion. And this lionless stress, day after day after day will take its toll. Depression, ulcers, heart disease, colitis, irritable bowl syndrome, and more. Sapolsky's hard-hitting and entertaining book will inform you exactly why too much stress will make you sick. He lives half of his life in a neuroendocrine lab in Stanford, the other half camped out with stressed out baboons in Africa. He draws both on personal experience and solid research to lead you through a detailed understanding of how stress affects our bodies as well as our psyches. You'll get no mantras, no workbook exercises, and no easy step-by-step guides to follow. Nor does he fool around with feel good proclamations. What you will get is a lot of scientifically based facts based on solid research. Sapolsky is a scientist, and comes to the subject with a scientist's critical eyes. He is also a brilliant and entertaining writer, who knows how to give his message a personal touch. You'll sit through page after page feeling as though he's talking just to you. (Did you know that Type A personality was first discovered by an upholsterer? Or that graves used to be robbed by medical schools to provide it with fresh bodies, and how this is connected to why SIDS was erroneously thought to be caused by abnormally large thyroids?)

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