

# Good Stress, Bad Stress

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Over the course of one's life, hormonal changes alter behavior, mood, and cognition. [Bruce McEwen](#) has spent more than 40 years studying how hormones regulate the brain and nervous system, and his lab helped draw distinctions between the vital and toxic forms of stress. McEwen coined the term *allostatic load*, a concept that explains how stress systems that help the body survive can cause problems when overworked. This work has led to a realization that stress hormone effects are protective in the short term and potentially damaging in the long term.