

# Exercise a healthier option than voodoo dolls to control stress

By James S. Fell, Los Angeles Times

Do you ever feel like making a voodoo doll in the image of your boss, stabbing it full of pins, twisting its head off, then setting it on fire?

I remember those days.

Speaking of the old days, here's to the good old mammoth-slaying Stone Age, when we knew how to deal with stress. I'm talking about the fight-or-flight response, an inherited advantage coded into our genes via natural selection. Say you were chillin' about the cave one day and in sauntered a grizzly bear. The resulting stress elicited a massive surge of adrenal hormones and you'd jump to your feet and go all caveman on the intruder with valiant stabbing or cowardly fleeing.

Either way, the hormone surge was short-lived. Soon you'd be roasting up grizzly steaks or muttering that you didn't like that cave anyway and go off searching for a new abode to drag Daryl Hannah back to.

Fast forward a few millennia, and it's goodbye grizzly and hello to performance reviews conducted by supervisors with double-digit IQs. And as good as it might be for stress relief, you can't kidney-punch a domineering boss and declare yourself alpha drone o'er the cube farm. Hooray for progress.

Instead, you send a snotty email to some unsuspecting IT guy about how your stupid keyboard isn't Diet Coke-resistant or yell at a slow driver from the safety of your minivan during

the drive home. And when you get back home you pour yourself a stiff drink and crab at the kids to stop doing those things that kids do before collapsing in front of the TV to watch your favorite team lose or see "The Bachelor" give the boot to the one woman you thought deserved to win his heart.

But it doesn't have to be this way.

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