



## Arousal, Stress and Fight or Flight

Physiological arousal occurs as a response to conscious or unconscious perceptions of **THREAT**

This reflex reaction involves the triggering of the autonomic nervous system, which prepares the body for action.

The physiological response is part of our evolutionary heritage. It derives from the need of primitive man to react automatically to danger. The simple response to a threat to life was **FIGHT** or **RUN**.

Now the primitive need to prepare for a life and death struggle has largely disappeared: in most modern day threatening situations, we can't run away or fight.

### THE FIGHT OR FLIGHT RESPONSE

Adrenalin is released, and as a result:-

- muscle tension increases
- heart pumps faster, increasing blood supply to muscles
- blood is diverted from the skin and internal organs
- tension of the bladder/sphincter muscle changes
- blood pressure increases
- pupils dilate
- digestive activity slows down
- sweating increases to cool the body

### PHYSICAL SENSATIONS OF STRESS

- ↪ flushing
- ↪ shaking
- ↪ "butterflies" in the stomach
- ↪ tensing up
- ↪ heart palpitations
- ↪ sweating
- ↪ dry mouth