Positive and negative stress

Although the term “Stress” is generally claimed as something negative, it is in reality also a positive driver. In order to perform well, a certain degree of positive stress (called EUSTRESS) is needed. Positive stress can be experienced when someone is well focused on a specific task, motivated, feeling confident and also excited about the result he/she is hoping to achieve. It is a typical short term feeling.

Negative stress (called DISTRESS) occurs when a person feels unable to perform or to cope with a situation. This feeling can be short or long term. It causes anxiety or concern and can lead to mental and physical problems. The causes (called STRESSORS) for the negative feelings of stress do not always lie with external situations. Internal feelings (i.e. fear of doing something), thoughts (i.e. continuous worrying) and certain behaviours (i.e. procrastination) can also lead to negative stress.

The underneath chart shows the relation between stress (positive and negative) and performance efficiency:

The physiological stress can be measured by combining physiological variables whilst the perceived stress can be indicated using questionnaires. Whether the stress in negative or positive, the physiological process in your body is the same. In order to deal with the stressor, the body goes in the ‘fight’ mode and biochemical reactions are taking place. These reactions can ask a lot of metabolic energy from the body. BioRICS continuously measures key variables in the individual energy equation. By using real-time algorithms, the metabolic energy that the body consumes for mental tasks is calculated.