Stress:

- Describes the body’s non-specific response to demands placed on it (internal / external)
- Induces change to physiological / psychological patterns and forces the pilot to adapt
- Stress is insidious
  - Subtle signs that the pilot is beyond his / her ability to respond appropriately
- Stress is cumulative
  - If the number or intensity of stressors is too high, the stress tolerance level is exceeded and performance and judgment deteriorate

Stress can range from wind shear to a lost wallet:

- Loss of income
- Death in the family
- Change in residence
- Divorce
- Pay raise
- Birth of a baby
- **Self induced crisis management** (due to loss of situational awareness, getting angry at yourself due to number and types of errors (bad day syndrome), etc.)
  - Illness
  - Heat
  - Dehydration
  - Excess alcohol
  - Lack of sleep
  - Turbulence
  - Aircraft malfunction
  - Flying long hours for multiple days

Stress is good and bad

- Performance of tasks generally improves with stress onset, but peaks and degrades rapidly as levels exceed pilot capability to adapt. The difference between pilot capabilities and task requirements is the margin of safety. **Accidents occur when flying task requirements exceed the pilot’s capabilities.**
The goal is to recognize when stress is or can have a negative effect on your current and future performance and take “the most conservative response” to back off as required (yes - maybe even not fly).

Superior Pilots Use Superior Judgment to Avoid Stressful Situations Which Might Call for Superior Skills