

Stress Management for Individuals



Time to put the
puzzle back together!

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Stress Management for Individuals

Stress is defined as....

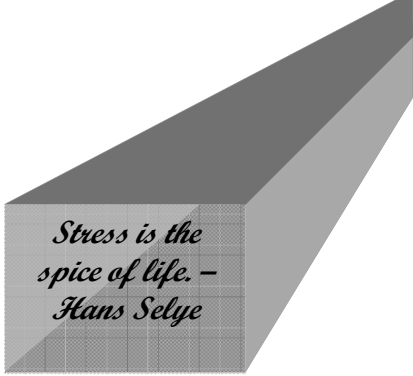
A physical or psychological stimulus that can produce mental tension or physiological reactions that may lead to illness.

Source: The American Heritage® Stedman's Medical Dictionary.

What is Stress?

Dr. Hans Selye, the father of stress theory, defined stress as “the nonspecific response of the body to any demand made upon it.” The “demand” can be a threat, a challenge or any kind of change that requires the body to adapt. The response is automatic and immediate.

The stress reaction results from an outpouring of adrenaline, a stimulant hormone, into the blood stream. This, with other stress hormones, produces a number of changes in the body, which are intended to be protective. The result often is called the “fight or flight response” because it provides the strength and energy to either fight or run away from danger. The changes include an increase in heart rate and blood pressure so that you get more blood to the muscles, brain and heart, faster breathing so you can take in more oxygen, tensing of muscles so that you can prepare for action and increased mental alertness and sensitivity to sense organs in order to assess the situation and act quickly. The increased blood flow to the brain, heart and muscles which are the organs that are most important in dealing with danger means there is less blood to the skin, digestive tract, kidneys and liver where it is least needed in times of crisis. In addition, there is an increase in blood sugar, fats and cholesterol for extra energy and a rise in platelets and



*Stress is the
spice of life. –
Hans Selye*

Every stress leaves an indelible scar, and the organism pays for its survival after a stressful situation by becoming a little older. Hans Selye

blood clotting factors in order to prevent hemorrhage in case of injury.

After the perceived threat is over other hormones will be secreted to offset the reaction to stress. However, when stress is constant the body does not have the opportunity to relax and to replenish its resources.

Stress can be considered the “wear and tear” our bodies experience as we adjust to our continually changing environment; it has physical and emotional effects on us and can create positive or negative feelings. As a positive influence, stress can help compel us to action; it can enable us to increase our abilities as we learn ways to deal with the stress. As a negative influence, it can result in feelings of fear, anxiety, anger, depression or fatigue that in turn can lead to health problems such as headaches, bowel problems, rashes, insomnia, ulcers, high blood pressure, heart disease, and stroke. With the death of a loved one, the birth of a child, a job promotion, or a new relationship, we experience stress as we re-adjust our lives. In adjusting to different circumstances, stress will help or hinder us depending on how we react to it.

When written in Chinese the word “crisis” is composed of two characters. One represents danger and the other represents opportunity. – John F. Kennedy

When something happens to us, we automatically evaluate the situation mentally. We decide if the situation is threatening to us, what coping skills we possess to meet the challenge and how we will deal with it. If we decide that the demands of the situation outweigh the skills we have, then the stress response will be much greater and will last much longer. If we decide our coping skills outweigh the demands of the situation, then we don’t perceive the

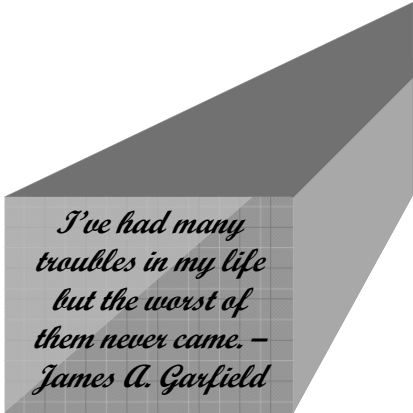
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challenge to be as stressful therefore the effects of the stress are much less.

Everyone will see the same situation differently and will have a different set of coping skills. For this reason, no two people will respond exactly the same way to a given situation. Also, not all situations that are labeled stressful are negative. The birth of a child, being promoted or moving to a new home may not be perceived as threatening, however, those situations may feel stressful because we don't feel fully prepared to deal with them.

How we perceive a stress-provoking event and how we react to it determines its impact on our health. How we respond to a stress-provoking event may leave us feeling invigorated causing us to respond with excitement, determination and effectiveness or stressed causing us to respond in a manner which will have a negative effect on our physical, mental and social well being. If we always respond in a negative way our health and happiness will suffer. By understanding ourselves, and our reactions to stress provoking situations, we can increase our resources so that we can handle stress more effectively.

Even imagined change will cause stress. Your mind at the unconscious level does not make a distinction between a real and an imagined threat. Whether the event is good or bad, imagining changes in your life is stressful. Worry is driven by imagination, which is a component of the unconscious mind. Worry is done over situations that have not yet happened and many of them never do. In many cases the stress felt due to worry is stress that could have been avoided.



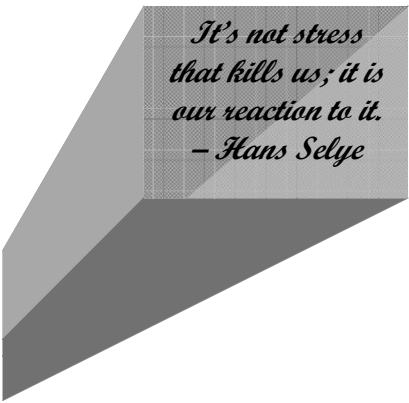
*I've had many
troubles in my life
but the worst of
them never came. –
James A. Garfield*

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Imagined changes are just as stressful as real changes.

Life without stimulus would be incredibly dull and boring. Life with too much stimulus would become unpleasant and tiring, either may ultimately damage your health. Too much or too little stress can seriously interfere with your ability to perform effectively. Each person will have a range of stress that is just right for him or her. There are ways to measure stress and to know when stress is affecting you negatively. Tools are available to learn how to perceive stressful situations differently, to learn new personal coping skills to deal with stress, and how to eliminate much of the clutter in our lives thus reducing overall stress.

For some it may be easier to think in terms of the idea of “pressure” versus “stress”. Pressure is something that can motivate you. You experience “pressure” when you have the resources you need to deal with the demands being made. You experience “stress” when the pressure becomes too much, lasts too long, comes on suddenly or leaves you feeling it cannot be controlled.



*It's not stress
that kills us; it is
our reaction to it.
– Hans Selye*

Since perception and personal resources are tied in to how stress affects a specific person a situation that might stress someone else may not affect you and vice versa

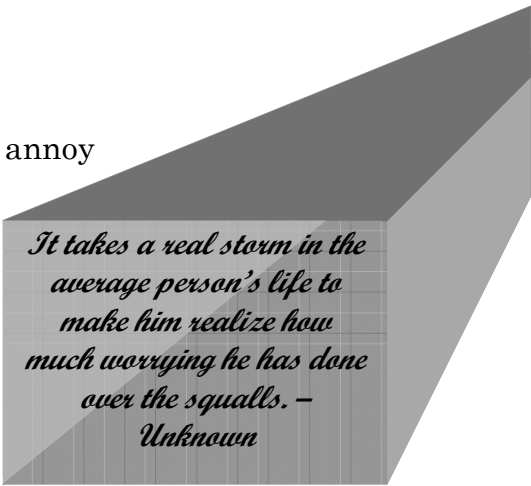
What causes stress?

David Posen MD has come up with the following list of stressors:

- Environmental
 - Noise, crowding, clutter

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- Cold, heat, humidity
- Bright lights, low light
- Heights or confined spaces such as airplanes, cubicles, elevators, no windows
- Social (interaction with people):
 - Relationship problems (family, lover, friends)
 - Work relationships (boss co-workers, customers)
 - Crowds, parties, strangers
 - Rude, aggressive critical or competitive people
 - Unreliable, moody, indecisive or boring people
- Institutional
 - Rules, regulations, restrictions, bureaucracy, red tape
 - Deadlines, schedules, meetings, formalities, office politics
- Major life events (change in life circumstances):
 - Both positive and negative life events can cause stress
 - Getting married
 - Moving to a new house or city
 - Having a child
 - Death of a spouse or close relative
 - Promotion or job loss
 - The impact of stress from major life events can last from 12 to 24 months but diminishes over time
- Daily hassles
 - Small, repeated daily situations that irritate, annoy and frustrate
 - Rush-hour traffic
 - Misplacing things
 - Waiting in lines
 - Being put on hold (telephone)

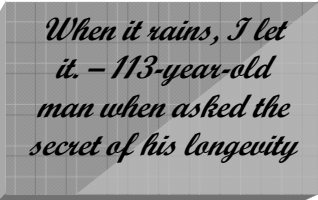


It takes a real storm in the average person's life to make him realize how much worrying he has done over the squalls. – Unknown

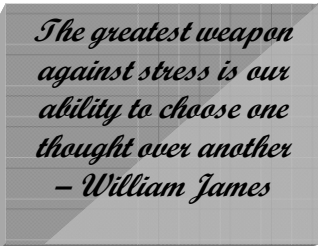
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- Mechanical breakdowns
- Home maintenance
- Searching for a parking spot (credit David Posen MD with above) Posen has concluded:

1. Most of the stress that most of us have is self-generated. We create most of our own distress.
2. We have more control than we think – but too often, we don't use it.
3. There is no silver bullet or quick fix for relieving stress (although exercise and relaxation techniques come pretty close). To master stress we have to change.
4. Stress mastery is as much a mind set as it is a collection of tools and strategies. It is the knowledge and confidence that, whatever happens, we will be able to handle it.



When it rains, I let it. – 113-year-old man when asked the secret of his longevity



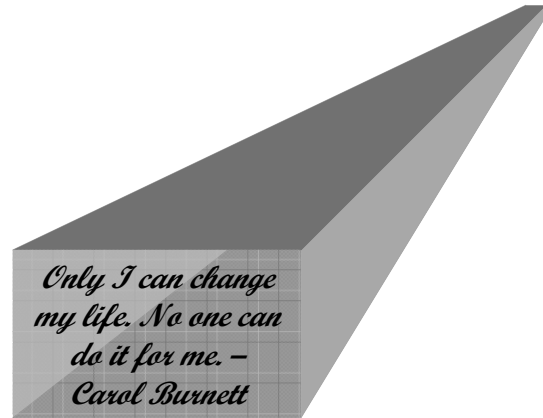
The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another – William James

In addition to the external stress triggers shown above, there are a number of internally triggered stressors:

- Lifestyle choices
 - Caffeine, alcohol, nicotine
 - Not enough sleep, not enough time to relax
 - Overloaded schedule
- Negative self-talk
 - Pessimistic thinking
 - Over-analyzing
 - Self-criticism
- Mind traps
 - Unrealistic expectations

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- Taking things personally
- All or nothing thinking
- Rigid thinking
- Exaggerating
- Stressful personality traits
 - Type A behavior
 - Perfectionist
 - Workaholic
 - Pleaser



In addition to the external and internal stressors, anything that will cause a change to your life or to your body health is stressful. The emotional stress of arguments, disagreements and conflicts causing change will also be accompanied by stress. Breaking a bone or an allergic reaction will cause stress and sap energy as the body responds to the threat. Times of significant hormonal change such as during puberty, pre-menstruation, post-partum and menopause are also times of significantly higher stress.

Once again imagined changes are as stressful as real changes.

Imagine it is 12:30 AM and your son is not yet home and the phone rings. Many people will hear the first ring and begin to imagine the worst has happened. Immediately their body becomes tense, they begin to sweat, breathe differently and become fearful. Now imagine picking up the phone to hear your son saying, I know it's late I just wanted to call to let you know I'm on my way. Instead of relief many will turn the stressful feelings into anger, "where are you", "why are you late", etc. The son may then feel stressed and upset. "Gee, I thought I was doing the right thing by calling". Now

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you're both stressed out as you anticipate the argument that will ensue upon his returning home.

There is an inherited component of how we respond to stressful situations. There are some that are able to handle anything life throws their way without a second thought and without any stress symptoms. Others on the other hand may begin to sweat and panic when they have to wait in line at the bank. While the way that the body responds to a stressor may have some basis in genetics a significant portion of your stress response is learned behavior.

The more severe the pain or illness, the more severe will be the necessary changes. These may involve breaking bad habits, or acquiring some new and better ones. – Peter McWilliams, Life 101

The good news is that with the recognition that much of our stress is based on how we think and respond to stressors as opposed to the stressor itself we can begin to make the changes needed to reduce our overall stress.

Two American psychologists (Holmes and Rahe, 1967) have devised a scale of 43 life events considered to be stressful. The top nine events are listed below. We will revisit the entire scale in the section on measuring your own stress.

Grief teaches the steadiest minds to waver. - Sophocles

Stress	Event Value
Death of a spouse	100
Divorce	60
Menopause	60
Separation from a living partner	60
Jail term or probation	60
Death of a close family member (other than spouse)	60
Serious personal injury or illness	45
Marriage or establishing a life partnership	45

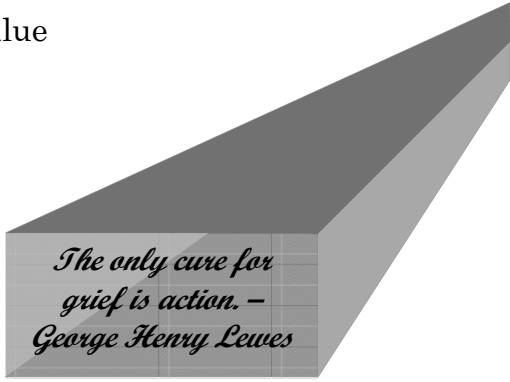
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Fired at work

45

There are stressors that are not mentioned in the scale. In that case simply draw a relationship to something that is on the list and assign the same number of points. Below is listed the top nine stressors on the Holmes-Rahe Scale for youth. In the youth scale there are 49 stressors listed. You can see how equivalent stressors have been assigned similar points on the scale.

Stress	Event Value
Death of a spouse, parent, boyfriend or girlfriend	100
Divorce, of yourself or parents	60
Puberty	60
Pregnancy, or causing pregnancy	60
Marital separation or break-up with boyfriend/girlfriend	60
Jail term or probation	60
Death of a close family member other than those above	60
Broken engagement	55
Engagement	50

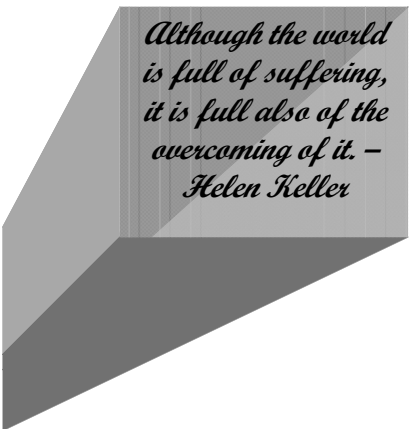


*The only cure for
grief is action. –
George Henry Lewes*

In addition to the Holmes-Rahe Scale we will be using the Hanson scale of weak and strong choices in order to determine an overall level of stress. This scale (on the weak side) looks at such factors as genetics, sleep patterns, diet, body type, life goals, toxins, smoking, career fit, financial fit and home life and support structure. On the strong side, the Hanson Scale looks at genetics, sense of humor, diet, alternative (positive) stress, life goals, understanding of stress, relaxation skills and sleep, career fit, financial fit and home life and support structure.

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A scoring system will be applied so that you can see where your stress is at this time. Keep in mind that levels of stress vary and also that some folks can deal with high levels of stress more effectively than others. The benefit of this type of measure is that you can use it periodically to see how well you are doing with your stress reduction work.



*Although the world
is full of suffering,
it is full also of the
overcoming of it. –
Helen Keller*

There is one other aspect of stress that has not yet been covered. This is the stress we all feel when there is a critical incident. This includes catastrophes such as 9-11, the Tsunami in Indonesia and Hurricane Katrina. Constant bombardment of news reports for weeks on end leave us all feeling a part of the disaster. Of course the stress felt by those more directly involved is significantly greater.

Symptoms of Stress

A common question is “How do I know when I am having stress?”


This is important since we can’t deal with stress effectively if we don’t know when it is happening. Other people are often aware of our stress before we are. We might become abrupt or rude without even realizing it. Often others can read stress on our face that we ourselves haven’t noticed. Stress symptoms show up in four ways, physical, mental, emotional and behavioral.

Physical symptoms can be caused by other illnesses, so it is important to have a medical doctor treat conditions such as ulcers, compressed disks, or other physical disorders. Remember, however, that the body and mind are not separate entities. The physical problems outlined below may result from or be exacerbated by stress:

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Physical Symptoms

Tightness in chest
Chest pains or palpitations
Indigestion
Breathlessness
Nausea
Muscle twitches
Aches and pains
Headaches
Skin conditions
Recurrence of past illnesses
Constipation/diarrhea
Weight loss/gain
Change in menstrual cycle for women
Sleep problems/tiredness



Holding on to anger, resentment and hurt only gives you tense muscles, a headache and a sore jaw from clenching your teeth. Forgiveness gives you back laughter and the lightness in your life. – Joan Lunden, in Healthy Living Magazine

Like physical signs, emotional symptoms such as anxiety or depression can mask conditions other than stress. It is important to find out whether they are stress related or not. In either case, the following emotional symptoms are uncomfortable and can affect your performance at work or play, your physical health, or your relationship with others:

Emotional Symptoms

Mood swings
Feeling anxious
Feeling tense
Feelings of anger
Feeling guilty
Feelings of shame


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Lack of enthusiasm
More cynical
Feeling out of control
Feeling helpless
Poor concentration

Antisocial behavior displayed in stressful situations can cause a rapid deterioration in relationships with family, friends, co-workers and even strangers. A person under stress may manifest signs such as:

Relational Symptoms

Increased number of arguments
Isolation from social activities
Conflict with co-workers, employees, boss
Frequent job changes
Road rage
Domestic or workplace violence
Overreactions



*I've learned that you
can't have everything
and do everything at
the same time. – Oprah
Winfrey, O Magazine,
April 2003*

There are behavioral signs of stress as well. These signs show the internal thinking and preoccupation that often occurs.

Behavioral Symptoms

Drop in work performance
Becoming more accident prone
Drinking and/or smoking more
Overeating/loss of appetite
Change in sleeping patterns
Poor time management

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Too busy to relax

Withdrawing from family/friends

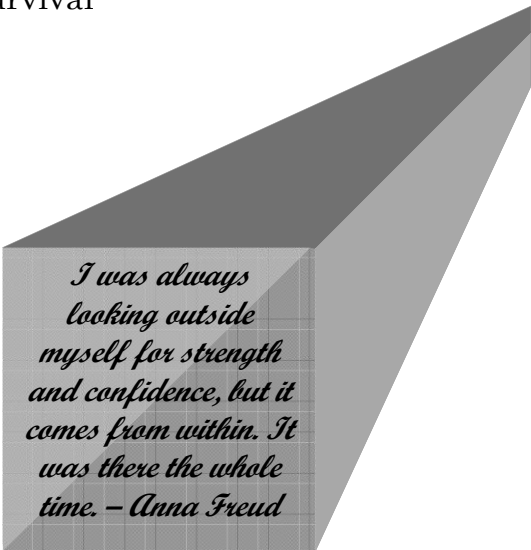
Loss of interest in sex

Poor judgment

The symptoms of stress may manifest in the ways described above physically, emotionally, relationally or behaviorally. In addition the symptoms may be short or long term in nature depending on the frequency and duration of the exposure to various stressors. Short-term physical symptoms of stress are the body's natural response to a stressor. Allowing the body to return to normal and replenish its resources will help to prevent the symptoms from becoming long term.

These short-term reactions are caused by the release of adrenaline, which allows your body to prepare for the threat. Although you may perceive these responses as unpleasant and negative, they are signs that your body is ready for the explosive action that assists survival or high performance.

- Faster heart beat
- Increased sweating
- Cool skin
- Cold hands and feet
- Feelings of nausea, 'butterflies'
- Rapid breathing
- Tense muscles
- Dry mouth
- A desire to urinate
- Diarrhea




*I was always
looking outside
myself for strength
and confidence, but it
comes from within. It
was there the whole
time. – Anna Freud*

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While adrenaline helps you survive in a 'fight or flight' situation, it does have negative effects in situations where this is not the case.

- It interferes with clear judgment and makes it difficult to take the time to make good decisions
- It can seriously reduce your enjoyment of your work
- Where you need good physical skills it gets in the way of fine motor control
- It causes a difficult situation to be seen as a threat, not as a challenge
- It damages the positive frame of mind you need for high quality work by:
 - Promoting negative thinking
 - Damaging self-confidence
 - Narrowing attention
 - Disrupting focus and concentration
 - Making it difficult to cope with distractions



*Change your
thoughts and you
change your world.
- Norman Vincent
Peale*

Measuring Stress

Life crises such as the death of a spouse, divorce or bankruptcy can disrupt even the best stress management regimen. Different life crises have different impacts. In many cases however, it may be possible to anticipate crises and prepare for them. It may also be useful to recognize the impact of crises that have occurred so that you can take account of them appropriately.

Some very interesting work has been done in this area has been done by Doctor T H Holmes and Doctor R H Rahe, with their Social Readjustment Scale. This allocates a number of "Life Crisis Units"

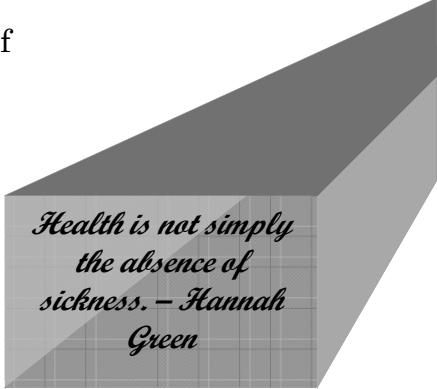
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(LCU's) to different events, so that you can evaluate them and take action accordingly. While this approach is obviously a simplification of complex situations, using LCU's can give you a useful start in adjusting to life crises.

The idea behind this approach is to run down the LCU table, totaling the LCU's for life crises that have occurred in the previous 2 years. As a rule of thumb, you may anticipate some form of serious or mental or physical effects of the crises according to the following table:

Life Crisis Units and the Probability of Illness

LCU's	Probability of Illness
300 +	80%+
200 – 299	50%
150-199	33%



*Health is not simply
the absence of
sickness. – Hannah
Green*

The LCU table is shown next in two versions. While listing major events that you may face there are other stressful situations that are not addressed. Do your best to draw a parallel to a life crisis that is listed and assign to it the same number of LCU's. By comparing the table for adults with the table for youth's shown after you can judge the relationship to LCU's for equivalent crises. For example, menopause on the adult scale is 60 LCU's as is puberty on the youth scale. This could be equivalent in LCU's to post-partum depression.

You may wish to set a baseline score and then measure yourself at specific intervals throughout the year. It will be a good way to understand the effectiveness of your stress management regimen.

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Holmes-Rahe Stress Rating Questionnaire

Stress	Event Value	Equivalent Event
Death of a Spouse	100	
Divorce	60	
Menopause	60	
Separation from a living partner	60	
Jail Term or Probation	60	
Death of a close family member other than spouse	60	
Serious personal injury or illness	45	
Marriage or establishing life partnership	45	
Fired at work	45	
Marital or relationship reconciliation	40	
Retirement	40	
Change in health of immediate family member	40	
Work more than 40 hours per week	35	
Pregnancy or causing pregnancy	35	
Sex difficulties	35	
Gain of a new family member	35	
Business or work role change	35	
Change in financial state	35	
Death of a close friend (Not a family member)	30	
Changes in the number of arguments with spouse or life partner	30	
Mortgage or loan for a major purpose	25	
Foreclosure of mortgage or loan	25	
Sleep less than 8 hours per night	25	
Change in responsibilities at work	25	

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Trouble with in-laws or with children	25	
Outstanding personal achievement	25	
Spouse begins or stops work	20	
Begin or end school	20	
Change in living conditions (visitors, change in roommates, remodeling house)	20	
Change in personal habits (diet, exercise, smoking, etc.)	20	
Chronic allergies	20	
Trouble with boss	20	
Change in work hours or conditions	15	
Moving to new residence	15	
Presently in pre-menstrual period	15	
Change in schools	15	
Change in religious activities	15	
Change in social activities (more or less than before)	15	
Minor financial loan	10	
Change in frequency of family get-togethers	10	
Vacation	10	
Presently in Winter Holiday season	10	
Minor violation of the law	5	

Total Score: _____

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Holmes-Rahe Stress Rating Questionnaire
For Youth

Stress	Event Value	Equivalent Event
Death of a spouse, parent, boyfriend/girlfriend	100	
Divorce (of yourself or parents)	65	
Puberty	65	
Pregnancy (or causing pregnancy)	65	
Marital separation or breakup with boyfriend/girlfriend	60	
Jail Term or Probation	60	
Death of a close family member other than spouse, parent or boyfriend/girlfriend	60	
Broken engagement	55	
Engagement	50	
Serious personal injury or illness	45	
Marriage or establishing life partnership	45	
Entering college or beginning next level of school (starting junior high or high school)	45	
Change in independence or responsibility	45	
Any drug and/or alcohol use	45	
Fired at work or expelled from school	45	
Change in alcohol or drug use	40	
Reconciliation with mate, family or boyfriend/girlfriend	40	
Trouble at school	40	
Serious health problem of a family member	40	
Working while attending school	35	
Working more than 40 hours per week	35	
Changing course of study	35	
Change in frequency of dating	35	

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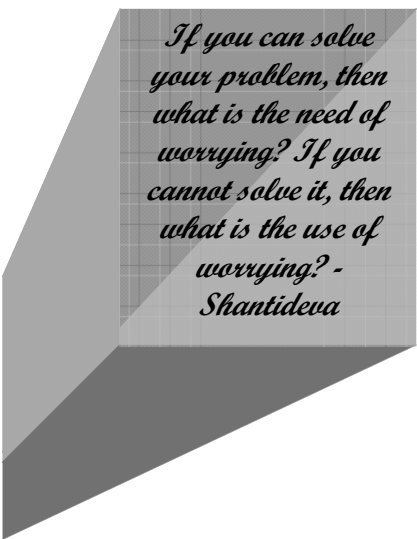
Sexual adjustment problems (confusion of sexual identity)	35	
Gain of a new family member (new baby born, parent remarries or adopts)	35	
Change in responsibilities at work	35	
Change in financial state	30	
Death of a close friend (Not a family member)	30	
Change to a different kind of work	30	
Change in number of arguments with mate, family or friends	30	
Sleep less than 8 hours per night	25	
Trouble with in-laws or boyfriend's or girlfriend's family	25	
Outstanding personal achievement	25	
Mate or parents start or stop working	20	
Begin or end school	20	
Change in living conditions (visitors, roommate change, remodeling house)	20	
Change in personal habits (start or stop a habit, like smoking or dieting)	20	
Chronic allergies	20	
Trouble with the boss	20	
Change in work hours	15	
Change in residence	15	
Change to a new school (other than graduation)	10	
Presently in pre-menstrual period	15	
Change in religious activity	15	
Going into debt (you or family)	10	
Change in frequency of family gatherings	10	
Vacation	10	
Presently in the winter holiday season	10	
Minor violations of the law	5	

Total score: _____

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The Hanson Scale

Another interesting scale in which to measure the relative stress is the Hanson Scale of life stress resistance. This scale measures weak choices and strong choices, for example, bad diet versus good diet. The more positive the results of this scale the better you are at making choices that allow you to manage your stress. Read through the full description before selecting any that may affect you. Some of them do not appear as choices, for example, bad genetics. While genetics is beyond your control your ability to see a doctor regularly if there is a genetic history for specific ailments is something that is up to you.



*If you can solve
your problem, then
what is the need of
worrying? If you
cannot solve it, then
what is the use of
worrying? -
Shantideva*

Select any that apply and then sum the associated points. Once again this can be used to baseline your stress in relation to those things you can control. Measuring them after taking appropriate action to make better choices will show that you are moving in the right direction with regards to your personal stress management.

Bad Genetics

Score -10

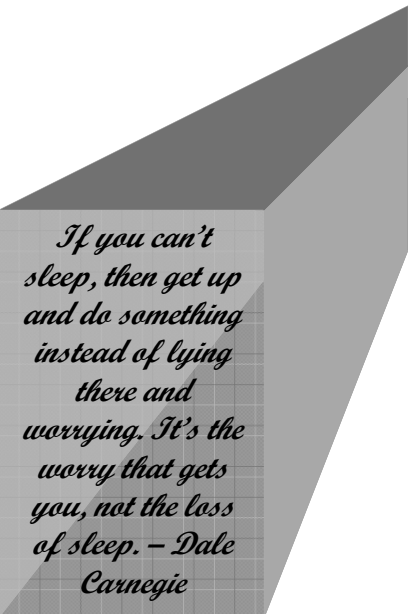
Although the quality of health and the life-span of your ancestors is not within your control, it has been said that the key to long life is to choose your parents carefully. If all the males in your family died in their thirties from the same heart disease, and you do not bother seeing a doctor until you are twenty-nine, it is quite likely you could inherit their “bad luck”. Select this if you have bad health problems in your family.

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Insomnia

Score -20

If you are chronically unable to sleep efficiently and wake refreshed, you will be at the mercy of the following day's stresses. Caffeine and alcohol will interfere with sleep, as will a large meal before bedtime, a snoring spouse or a crying baby. For those who wake each morning still feeling fatigued, there are many valuable relaxation techniques.



If you can't sleep, then get up and do something instead of lying there and worrying. It's the worry that gets you, not the loss of sleep. – Dale Carnegie

Bad Diet

Score -30

If you eat too many or too few calories or the wrong foods, or if you eat too quickly, you are choosing to weaken your resistance to stress. Fad diets often lack key food elements (essential fats, carbohydrates, protein, fiber, water and vitamins). Excess salt can be harmful to blood pressure, and low fluid intake (less than 8 glasses of water a day) affects the viscosity of the blood and the function of the kidneys.

Obesity

Score -40

The body tends to lose weight when under stress, and thus requires determined overeating to stay fat. Even being ten percent over your ideal weight, at which you look and feel your best, is a detriment to health and well-being. Real obesity affects the lungs, liver and pancreas (diabetes may result) and the heart will not last for as many beats as it should. Select this if you are more than 10% over your ideal weight.

Unrealistic Goals

Score -50

The short person who dreams of being a basketball player or the tall person who wants to be a jockey both have unrealistic goals. Continual unhappiness resulting from unrealistic goals can have a

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very negative effect on a person's ability to resist stress. Select this if you consistently fail to reach your goals.

Poisons

Score -60

Excessive alcohol interferes with sleep patterns and the stomach lining. Long-term tranquilizers decrease mental awareness, and excessive caffeine can double the adrenalin in your bloodstream at a time when your body is already doing the same.

Smoking

Score -70

This is a common and disastrous response to stress. During stress, when lungs are already being dilated and sucking in air to maximum capacity, the inhaled cigarette smoke is able to do its maximum amount of damage. The only way to salvage the remaining lung tissue is to give up cigarettes.

Wrong Job

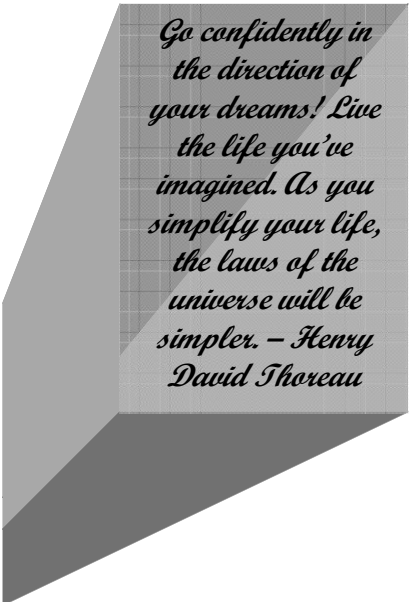
Score -80

Are you happy in your work? Lack of satisfaction on the job breeds discontent, lowered self-image, brooding, moody behavior and often leads to more arguments at home. This is true whether you are over educated for the job or under educated and poorly prepared. Select if you are always unhappy in your work.

Financial Distress

Score -90

As evidenced in the stock market crash of 1929, a financial crisis can evoke a lot of ledge jumping. But financial distress may also apply to those people who are making a good wage, but lack perspective, discipline and organization in managing their money. Without stress reduction, you will continue to spin your wheels, ultimately undermining both your health and your ability to



Go confidently in the direction of your dreams! Live the life you've imagined. As you simplify your life, the laws of the universe will be simpler. – Henry David Thoreau

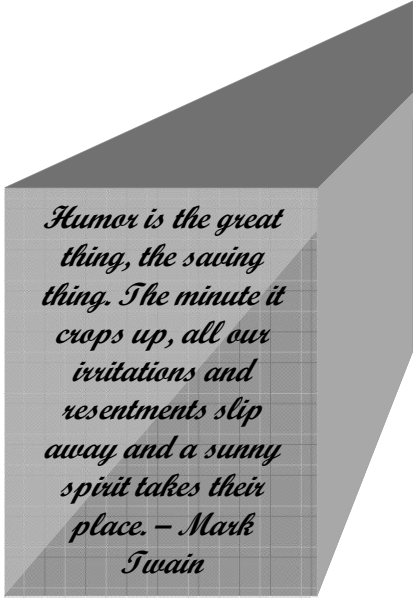
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perform well in your job. Select this if you lack financial organization.

Unstable Home and Social Support

Score -100

This rates the highest score on the list. The typical workaholic, when under stress, tends to de-emphasize his or her family as being inconsequential. In fact nothing could be further from the truth. Such an attitude can end in marital strife or even break-up, which will further add to the stress score. Family, friends, even pets provide much needed support. By relegating them to the back seat in your life, you could be greatly weakening your stress resistance.



Humor is the great thing, the saving thing. The minute it crops up, all our irritations and resentments slip away and a sunny spirit takes their place. – Mark Twain

There are many positive responses to stress that will balance out the negative score received in the past section. After this section is completed you will see how the score of this analysis combined with the score from the Holmes-Rahe stress-rating questionnaire leads to an overall indication of the stress in your life.

Good Genetics

Score +10

Bad genetics need not automatically mean a shorter life and good genetics should not give false confidence. However, copying good points of your ancestors' life style and making the correct choices in responses to new stresses, could certainly help you.

Sense of humor

Score +20

One reason why comedy makes you feel good is that it helps you forget your woes; it also gives some medical benefit, in that laughter seems to increase the body's level of endorphins, which can "ease the pain" and aid resistance to stress.

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The right diet

Score +30

The best diet for stress is natural, with few additives; calorie correct to maintain your ideal weight; eaten at a reasonable rate; and balanced, with no more than 30% fats and at least 30 grams of fiber a day. Eat lots of fresh fruits and vegetables and whole (unprocessed) foods, such as wholesome bread, and preferring white meats and fish to fatty meats.

Alternative stress

Score +40

The best way to unwind is to switch to something else which is also stressful, but which involves different circuits of the brain and body. Thus obviously stressful activities such as racket sports or mountain climbing have tremendous value in the reduction of your ordinary stresses.

Realistic Goals

Score +50

Proper goal setting involves getting to know yourself. Financial goals and career choice are important, and in deciding what assets you wish to own, it is better to underestimate potential earnings. Also, decide how much time you wish to spend at work, and how much with family and friends. If you are realistic, you have a greater chance of resisting the effects of stress.

Understanding of stress

Score +60

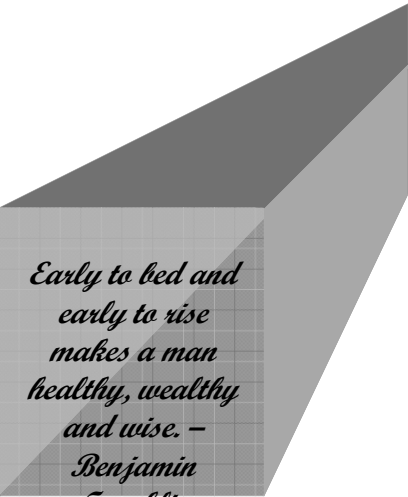
Know your body, identify stresses around you and learn correct ways to manage stress. This sort of understanding is one of the best weapons of defense; with proper knowledge, you can avoid the ill health and possible premature death that attend cigarette smoking and many other stress related habits.

Exercise alone provides psychological and physical benefits. However, if you also adopt a strategy that engages your mind while you exercise, you get a whole host of psychological benefits fairly quickly.
– James Rippe MD

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Relaxation skills and efficient sleep Score +70

During even the most stressful day, some people can count to ten, suddenly be at complete rest, and then wake up refreshed. They have learned relaxation skills, which slow the pulse and breathing rate and reverse many of the natural stress responses in the body. You can use similar relaxation skills to help in getting to sleep at night.



*Early to bed and
early to rise
makes a man
healthy, wealthy
and wise. –
Benjamin
Franklin*

Thorough job preparation Score +80

Ideally, in the right job you should be at your level of competence, with all the appropriate skills. You should know if you need to take on extra-curricular activities to increase your efficiency, or if you should say no to any added duties. This combined with thorough preparation for that day's tasks, gives you a better ability to resist the stresses of those tasks.

Financial Security Score +90

Not vast riches, but spending habits within your net means, and enough in the form of positive cash flow, assets, skills or insurance to avoid being thrown on the street if you lose your job. This provides a crucial "control button" to fight stress. You should also allow some money for stress defense, as simple as going to the movies regularly or employing home help.

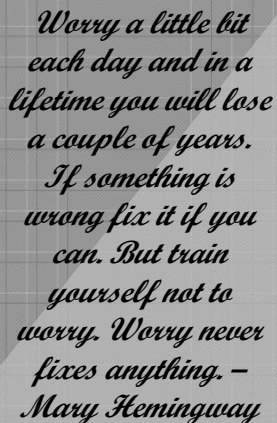
Stable Home Score +100

Maintaining an adequate network of friends and support from your family is the most valuable defense you can possibly have against stress. Strong faith in a religion and/or high code of ethical behavior can also be of tremendous solace. Cuddling pets decreases their

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owner's blood pressure and pulse. And married people tend to live longer than single people.

The Hanson Scale of life stress resistance is all about choices – areas of your life in which you are in control and which you can alter, for weaker or stronger.



Worry a little bit each day and in a lifetime you will lose a couple of years. If something is wrong fix it if you can. But train yourself not to worry. Worry never fixes anything. – Mary Hemingway

To get a view of your total score simply add up all of your selections. The higher the score in a positive direction means that you are making healthy choices. If your score is negative it may be time to look at some of the choices you are making to see what can be done to relieve the stress caused by those choices.

The rest of this workbook is focused on ways to reduce or manage stress. The difference between stress reduction and management once again lies in the choices that you make. If you have the opportunity to eliminate something from your life that causes you stress then the stress from that specific stressor is eliminated. If you decide you want or need that stressor in your life then the stress management tools will help you to cope.

There are so many stress management methods that it may be stressful just deciding which to use! Once the choice is made, stick with it until you see real results. If after time it is not something with which you are comfortable then select another reduction technique.

The next section is on Resilience. The resilience section was created by Faith Wood owner of Inspiring Minds in Alberta Canada as part

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of her Critical Incidence Stress Management package, used with
permission.

Resiliency

What is resilience?

Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or even significant sources of stress such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors. It refers to the “bouncing back” from difficult experiences. Research has shown that resilience is ordinary, not extraordinary. People commonly demonstrate resilience.

Resilience, resilient and resiliency refer to the ability to:

- Cope well with high levels of ongoing disruptive change
- Sustain good health and energy under constant pressure
- Bounce back from set backs (overcome adversity)
- Adapt to a new way of working and living when the old way is no longer possible
- Do all of this without acting in a dysfunctional manner

Resiliency is something you do, not something you have.

Being resilient does not mean that a person does not experience difficulty and distress. Emotional pain and sadness are common in people who have suffered major adversity or trauma in their lives. In fact, the road to resilience is likely to involve considerable emotional distress.

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How resilient are you?

(Al Siebert, PhD, author of “The Resiliency Advantage”)

How do you react to unexpected difficulties? Healthy, resilient people have stress resistant personalities and learn valuable lessons from rough experiences. They rebound from major setbacks to end up even stronger than before.

When hurt or distressed, resilient people expect to find a way to have things turn out well. They feel self-reliant and have learning/coping reaction rather than victim/blaming reaction that is so common these days.

Resiliency Quiz

Rate yourself from 1 to 5 on the following: (1 = very little, 5 = very strong)

1	2	3	4	5	In a crisis or chaotic situation, I calm myself and focus on taking useful actions.
1	2	3	4	5	I'm usually optimistic. I see difficulties as temporary and expect to overcome them.
1	2	3	4	5	I can tolerate high levels of ambiguity and uncertainty about situations.
1	2	3	4	5	I adapt quickly to new developments. I'm good at bouncing back from difficulties.
1	2	3	4	5	I'm playful. I find humor in rough situations, and can laugh at myself.
1	2	3	4	5	I'm able to recover emotionally from losses and setbacks. I have friends I can talk with. I can express my feelings to others and ask for help. Feeling of anger, loss and discouragement don't last long.
1	2	3	4	5	I feel self-confident, appreciate myself, and have a healthy concept of who I am.

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1	2	3	4	5	I'm curious. I ask questions. I want to know how things work. I like to try new ways of doing things.
1	2	3	4	5	I learn valuable lessons from my experiences and from the experiences of others.
1	2	3	4	5	I'm good at solving problems. I can use analytical logic, be creative, or use practical common sense.
1	2	3	4	5	I'm good at making things work well. I'm often asked to lead groups and projects.
1	2	3	4	5	I'm very flexible. I feel comfortable with my paradoxical complexity. I'm optimistic and pessimistic, trusting and cautious, unselfish and selfish, and so forth.
1	2	3	4	5	I'm always myself, but I've noticed that I am different in different situations.
1	2	3	4	5	I prefer to work without a written job description. I'm more effective when I'm free to do what I think is best in each situation.
1	2	3	4	5	I "read" people well and trust my intuition.
1	2	3	4	5	I'm a good listener. I have good empathy skills.
1	2	3	4	5	I'm non-judgmental about others and adapt to people's different personality styles.
1	2	3	4	5	I'm very durable. I hold up well during tough times. I have an independent spirit underneath my cooperative way of working with others.
1	2	3	4	5	I've been made stronger and better by difficult experiences.
1	2	3	4	5	I've converted misfortune into good luck and found benefits in bad experiences.

Tally your score: _____

Scoring:

80 or higher:	Very resilient!
65-80	Better than most
50-65	Slow, but adequate
40-50	You're struggling
40 or Under	Seek help!

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Interpretation of the quiz:

Over 30 years of research into the inner nature of highly resilient survivors has created a clear understanding of human resiliency and how it develops. Highly resilient people show many similar qualities.

Playful, childlike curiosity. Ask lots of questions; want to know how things work. Play with new developments, Enjoy themselves as children do. Have a good time almost anywhere. Wonder about things, experiment, make mistakes, get hurt, laugh. Ask: “What is different now? What if I did this? Who can answer my questions? What is funny about this?”

Constantly learn from experience. Rapidly assimilate new or unexpected experiences and facilitate being changed by them. Ask: “What is the lesson here? What early clues did I ignore? The next time that happens I will...”

Adapt quickly. Very mentally and emotionally flexible. Comfortable with contradictory personality qualities. Can be both strong and gentle, sensitive and tough, logical and intuitive, calm and emotional, serious and playful, and go forth. The more the better. Can think in negative ways to reach positive outcomes. “What could go wrong, so it can be avoided?”

Have solid self-esteem and self-confidence. Self-esteem is how you feel about yourself. It determines how much you learn after

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something goes wrong. It allows statements while being receptive to constructive criticism. “I like, appreciate, and love myself....”

Self-confidence is your reputation with yourself. It allows you to take risks without waiting for approval or reassurance from others. You expect to handle new situations well because of your past successes. “These are my reliable strengths....”

Have good friendships, loving relationships. Research shows that people in toxic working conditions are more stress resistant and are less likely to get sick when they have a loving family and good friendships. Loners are more vulnerable to distressing conditions. Talking with friends and family diminishes the impact of difficulties and increases the feelings of self-worth and self-confidence.

Express feelings honestly. Able to experience and express anger, love, dislike, appreciation, grief – the entire range of human emotions honestly and openly. Can also choose to suppress their feelings when they believe it would be best to do so.

Expect things to work out well. Deep optimism guided by internal values and standards. High tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty. Can work without a job description, is a good role model for professionalism. Has a synergistic effect, brings stability to crises and chaos. Ask: “How can I interact with this so that things turn out well for all of us?”

Read others with empathy. See things through the perspectives of others, even antagonists. Win/win/win attitude in conflicts. Ask:

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“What do others think and feel? What is it like to be them? How do they experience me? What is legitimate about what they feel, say and do?”

Use intuition, creative hunches. Accept subliminal perception and intuition as valid, useful sources of information. Ask: “What is my body telling me? Did that daydream mean anything? Why don’t I believe what I am being told? What is I did this?”

Defend self well. Avoid and block attacks, fight back. See through and side-step cons, “games”, and manipulations that others attempt. Find allies, resources, and support.

Have a talent for serendipity. Learning lessons in the school of life is the antidote to feeling victimized. They can convert a situation that is emotionally toxic for others into something emotionally nutritious for them. They thrive in situations distressing to others because they learn good lessons from bad experiences. They convert misfortune into good luck and gain strength from adversity.

A good indicator of exceptional mental health is when a person talking about a rough experience says “I would never willingly go through anything like that again, but it was one of the best things that ever happened to me.” Ask “how can I turn this around? Why is it good that this happened? What is the gift?”

Get better and better every decade. Become increasingly life competent, resilient, durable, playful and free. Spend less time surviving than others and survive major adversities better. Enjoy life more and more.

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10 Ways to build resilience:

Some or many of the following ways to build resilience may be appropriate to consider when developing your personal strategy:

1. Make connections.
2. Avoid seeing crises as insurmountable problems.
3. Accept that change is a natural and inevitable part of living.
4. Move toward your goals. Do something regularly – even if it seems like a small accomplishment – that enables you to move forward.
5. Take decisive actions. Action allows us to begin to feel less helpless.
6. Look for opportunities for self-discovery. Many people who have experienced tragedies and hardship have reported better relationships, greater sense of strength (even while feeling vulnerable), increased sense of self-worth, a more developed spirituality, and a heightened appreciation for life.
7. Nurture a positive view of yourself.
8. Keep things in perspective.
9. Maintain a hopeful outlook.
10. Take care of yourself. Pay attention to your own needs and feelings.

In addition to the strategies mentioned above, some people find strength and purpose in writing about their deepest thoughts and feelings related to stressful events in their life. The key is to identify ways that are likely to work well for you as part of your own personal strategy for fostering resilience.

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Learning from your past

Focusing on your prior experiences can assist with the discovery of strategies for building resilience, which works best for you. By exploring answers to the following questions about yourself and your reactions to challenging life events, you may uncover your own strategies for coping with difficult situations in your life.

Some questions to ask yourself:

- What kinds of events have been most stressful for me?
- How have those events typically affected me?
- Have I found it helpful to think of important people in my life when I am distressed?
- Whom have I reached out to for support in working through stressful experiences?
- What insights have I gathered about how I interact with others during difficult times?
- Has it been helpful for me to assist someone else going through a similar experience?
- Have I been able to overcome obstacles, and if so, how?
- What has helped make me feel more helpful about the future?

Staying flexible

Resilience involves maintaining flexibility and balance in your life as you deal with stressful circumstances and events. This happens in several ways, including:

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- Letting yourself experience strong emotions and also realizing when you may need to avoid experiencing them at times in order to continue functioning.
- Stepping forward and taking action to deal with your problems and meet the demands of daily living, and also stepping back to rest and re-energize yourself.
- Spending time with loved ones to gain support and encouragement, and also nurturing yourself.
- Relying on others, and also relying on yourself.

Continuing on your journey

To help summarize, think of resilience as similar to taking a raft trip down a river. On a river you may encounter rapids, turns, slow water, and shallows. As in life, the changes you experience affect you differently along the way. In traveling the river, it helps to have knowledge about it and previous experience in dealing with it. Your journey is guided by a plan, a strategy that you consider likely to work well for you.

Perseverance and trust in your ability to work your way around boulders and other obstacles are important. You can gain courage and insight by successfully navigating your way through the white water. Trusted companions who accompany you on the journey can be especially helpful for dealing with rapids, upstream currents, and other difficult stretches of the river.

You can climb out to rest alongside the river. Nevertheless, if you wish to get to the end of your journey, you need to ultimately get back in the raft and continue.

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Take a moment and consider what strengths and characteristics you currently possess which demonstrate your natural state of resiliency and perseverance.

What characteristics have you seen in others and feel would be worthwhile for you to have?

Documentary: Shackleton's Antarctic Adventure

A great example of how resiliency and perseverance can affect psychological and physical responses is revealed in the telling of the tale of "Shackleton and his quest to the Antarctic" during "the heroic age of exploration" (1914-1916). At the time, polar explorers were revered for their sacrifices and held up as heroes, albeit often tragic ones.

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Shakelton distinguished himself as a hero, not only among the masses, but also among the 27 men- officers, scientists and seamen – who were his crewmembers on the expedition.

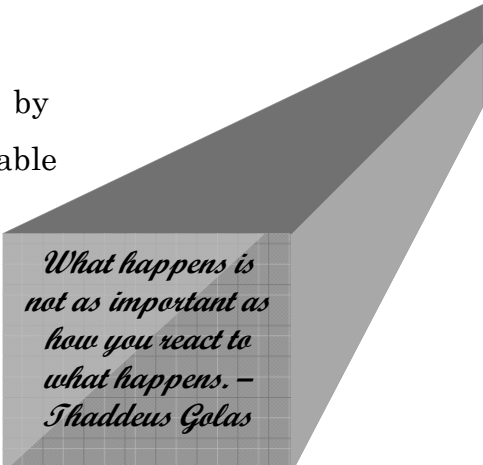
Shakleton sustained morale and created a unified team by keeping everyone busy. He encouraged more than work-based camaraderie. Shackleton's mantra of unity and show of humanity was infectious. While his men were suffering from the most terrible deprivation, they often rose to his example and showed tremendous compassion for each other. In the face of changing circumstances and constant danger, Shakleton remained positive and decisive, which buoyed his crew.

Twenty-eight ordinary-turned-extraordinary men, led by Shakleton's example, survived nearly two years of unimaginable hardship at the end of the earth.

Stress Management Techniques:

The stress you experience is something that is largely under your control. As we have seen the sources of stress are varied. Now that you understand what is causing your stress you are able to create an action plan for stress management. This will give you positive goals to work towards.

Short-term stress occurs when you find yourself under pressure in a particular situation. A certain level of short-term stress is needed to



*What happens is
not as important as
how you react to
what happens. –
Thaddeus Golas*

Stress Management for Individuals

feel alert and alive and too much is unpleasant and can negatively impact performance. Short-term stress is best handled through the mental and physical techniques that are described below.

Long-term stress comes from a build up of stress over a long period of time. If not controlled, long-term stress can lead to serious physical and mental illnesses. Long-term stress is best managed by changes to lifestyle, attitude and environment. Examples of these changes are described.

Stress Management Technique #1

Deep Breathing



*The best way to
get something
done is to begin. -
Anonymous*

We breathe differently, (faster, higher in the chest) when we are stressed. Deep breathing is a very effective method of relaxation. In deep breathing we expand the abdomen which is how we breathed as babies and how we still breathe when deeply asleep. Some of the best advice you can take is the admonition to “take 10 deep breaths” before reacting to something unexpected that has happened. Deep breathing is at the core of other relaxation techniques such as meditation, imagery and progressive muscular relaxation.

The steps to breathing deeply are:

- Breathe in through your nose and out through your slightly opened mouth.
- Feel your tummy rise as you inhale and fall as you exhale breath by breathing into the abdomen.
- Breathe slowly to prevent hyperventilation

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- Pay attention to your breathing, observe it

Try it now; you'll feel the effects of this technique on the first breath.

Stress Management Technique #2

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

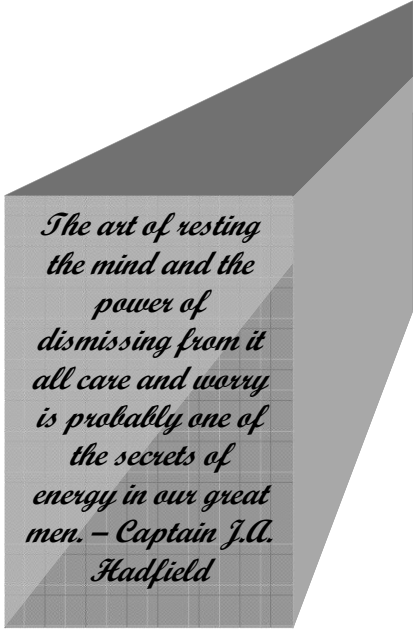
This method of stress management will help to counteract the tension that is built up in the muscles in response to stress. Your muscles may be carrying a certain level of tension although you feel as if you are relaxed and through this technique you can actually feel the difference.

There are two ways in which progressive muscular relaxation can be done. The first is to focus on the various muscle groups in your body and consciously let them relax. Begin at the toes and work your way up slowly with your awareness on the specific group that is being worked. The second method is to purposely tense the muscle groups and then consciously allow them to relax.

Stress Management Techniques #3

The Relaxation Response

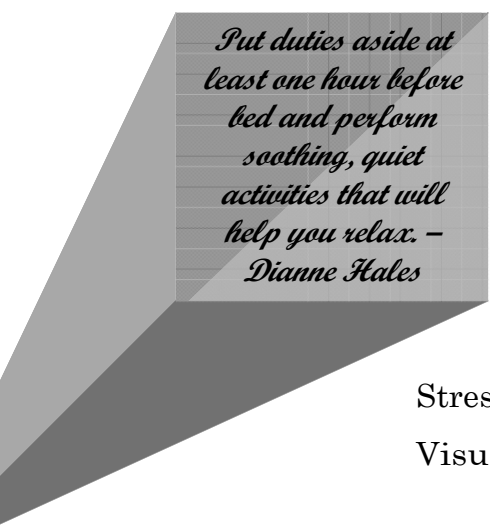
Herbert Bensen, M.D. coined the phrase "Relaxation Response" after studying people who practiced Transcendental Meditation (TM). TM has been shown to help people reduce the activity of their autonomic nervous systems. Bensen removed the relaxation principles of TM from their Eastern religious context to make them more accessible to Westerners. Here are the steps:



*The art of resting
the mind and the
power of
dismissing from it
all care and worry
is probably one of
the secrets of
energy in our great
men. – Captain J.A.
Hadfield*

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- Sit quietly in a comfortable position
- Close your eyes
- Deeply relax all your muscles, beginning at the feet and progressing up to your face. Keep them relaxed
- Breathe through your nose. Become aware of your breathing. As you breathe out, say the word “ONE”, silently to yourself. For example, breath IN...OUT, “ONE”, - IN...OUT, “ONE”, etc. Breathe easily and naturally.
- Continue for 10 to 20 minutes. You may open your eyes to check the time, but do not use an alarm. When you finish, sit quietly for several minutes, at first with your eyes closed and later with your eyes opened. Do not stand up for a few minutes.
- Do not worry about whether you are successful in achieving a deep state of relaxation. Maintain a passive attitude and permit relaxation to occur at its own pace. When distracting thoughts occur, try to ignore them by not dwelling upon them and return to repeating “ONE.”



Put duties aside at least one hour before bed and perform soothing, quiet activities that will help you relax. – Dianne Hales

Stress Management Technique #4

Visualization

This is a good way to mentally move away from a stressful situation or the feelings of being stressed. The steps are:

- Sit or lie comfortably
- Close your eyes
- Perform the progressive muscle relaxation exercise

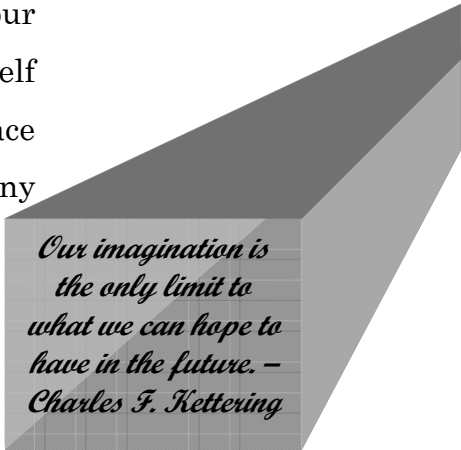
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- Allow thoughts to pass through your mind without dwelling on them
- Imagine you are somewhere that makes you feel good, such as the beach, or the woods, a favorite vacation spot, or a place you have never been physically such as a garden or a room that only exists in your own mind.
- Breathe slowly and deeply
- Use all five senses. Imagine what you see, hear, feel, taste and smell in your selected scene.
- Continue to visualize yourself in this place for 5 to 10 minutes.
- Gradually return your focus to your current surroundings.

If you find that your mind wanders in this exercise you may want to consider a guided visualization. You can write out the scene you want to visualize and then create a script that directs you through the creation of a scene to visualize. This can be recorded using your own voice. All you have to do is follow along as you guide yourself through your visualization. Next is a script that describes the place I use when I visualize. Feel free to use it as your own or make any change you desire so that it is a personal experience.

Guided Visualization (My Library)

Close your eyes if you would and begin to breath deeply and easily. Imagine, see, visualize or think about a beautifully carved door of mahogany. Set into the door is a keyhole and the key is in hand ready to turn the lock. As you hear the click of the lock you turn the brass knob firmly with your hand. Walking through the doorway you have the opportunity to admire the craftsmanship of the

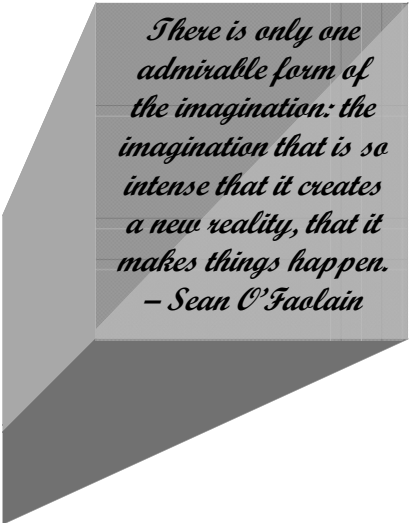


*Our imagination is
the only limit to
what we can hope to
have in the future. –
Charles F. Kettering*

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carving knowing that everything in this room is up to the same standards of quality. Stepping through and closing the door behind you see an amazing place that will become more familiar with each visit.

The room itself is large yet very cozy. Bookcases made of the same mahogany as the door makes up two sides of the room. They are two stories high and contain books that have been carefully selected throughout the years. The third wall is made entirely of glass. Looking out you can see the gardens and the sky. At any time you can draw the heavy drapes blocking the outside world and highlighting the soft globes of light from the lamps, chandelier and other hidden sources of light that are spread throughout the room. On the opposite wall of the room is a fireplace above which you see mementoes of all of your life accomplishments. To the left of the fireplace is the most modern electronic equipment you can imagine, this too can be hidden from view behind a panel of carved mahogany. To the right of the fireplace is a work area, desk, computer and everything else needed to be most productive and efficient.



*There is only one
admirable form of
the imagination: the
imagination that is so
intense that it creates
a new reality, that it
makes things happen.
– Sean O’Faolain*

The ceiling is made of mahogany wood panels and the floor is hardwood with a beautifully designed and woven carpet in front of the fireplace.

Throughout the room you can see and feel the highest quality furnishings, accessories and materials needed for various hobbies and interests. Of special importance is the leather recliner in front of the fire. This is where all my best thinking is done! There is a second armchair for any guests I invite.

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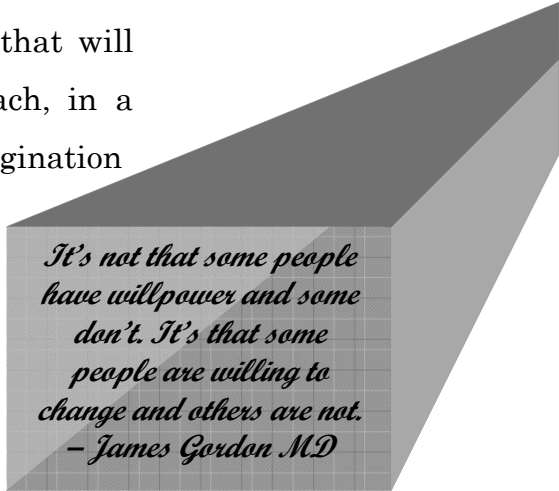
Each time I use my room I can feel a sense of relaxation and peace. I know that this is my place, others may enter with permission and at times I may invite them, in order to have a conversation. These guests are not limited to people that I know or even that are alive today. I've had talks with Thomas Edison, Aristotle, Anton Mesmer and many others. I can see them, hear them and even shake their hand.

The possibilities in this room are limitless. I can dream, rest, feel comforted, discuss possibilities, as well as to see, hear, feel, taste and smell anything I desire. Entering my library is a wonderful way to spend a few minutes or an hour simply unwinding from the stresses of the day.

If you decide to use my library to begin your guided visualization activities you will quickly find yourself making changes that will make it your own. You may also prefer to be on a beach, in a garden, or even a cloud. As Albert Einstein once said, "Imagination is more important than knowledge."

Stress Management Technique #5 Self-Hypnosis

Meditation, visualization, self-hypnosis, in many ways these techniques are common. Where self-hypnosis differs is in the intent to give affirmations or suggestions for change. In hypnosis your conscious mind is occupied, through a visualization routine, a point of focus or even through confusion. While the conscious mind is

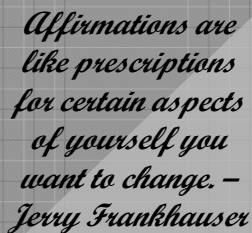


*It's not that some people
have willpower and some
don't. It's that some
people are willing to
change and others are not.
- James Gordon M.D*

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busy the subconscious mind becomes more accessible. It is at that point that properly worded suggestions can be delivered to the subconscious mind.

Properly worded suggestions are simple, positive, and delivered in the present tense. They can be formulated in such a way as to help you relieve stress or make changes in your life that lead to less stress. For example, if you have a tough time saying “no” and you don’t have enough time in the day already then a suggestion can be formulated to remind you that saying “no” is a choice that you do have the ability to make.



*Affirmations are
like prescriptions
for certain aspects
of yourself you
want to change. –
Jerry Frankhauser*

Another method of using hypnosis in the management of stress is to anchor the relaxed state you feel. Anchoring is simply associating the state you are in (relaxed) with something else, perhaps making the OK sign with your left hand. As you fire the anchor the state of relaxation returns. This is quite useful when someone talking on a cell phone cuts you off in traffic!

There are a number of ways to enter self-hypnosis. I’ll list the steps below and also provide a “script” which you can simply read into a tape recorder and play back. Although it will be your own voice and using your own suggestions, the tape player will allow your conscious mind to disconnect from the process even more.

Steps to self-hypnosis

- Breathe deeply, exhale and close your eyes.
- Go through the progressive muscle relaxation process.

Stress Management for Individuals

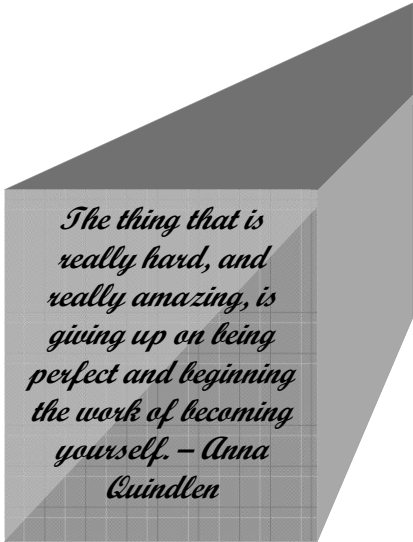
- When finished begin to count down slowly from 10 to 1. You may want to imagine that you are walking down a set of stairs or descending in an elevator.
- In between each count, suggest that you are becoming more relaxed and going deeper into hypnosis.
- Upon reaching the count of one you can deliver the suggestions/affirmations that you have created. It is best to work on one issue at a time. Repetition will help to reinforce the suggestions.
- When finished delivering the suggestions allow yourself to emerge from hypnosis perhaps upon counting up from 1 to 3.

A second way to enter hypnosis is to focus at a spot on the wall just slightly above eye level. Suggest to yourself that as your eyes become more tired, heavier they will close and you will go into hypnosis at that moment.

The script that follows may be modified or used as is. This script uses progressive relaxation and visualization to induce hypnosis. Simply read it into a tape recorder adding your affirmations where indicated.

Self-hypnosis Script

Please sit comfortably in the chair... sink in and relax.... take a deep breath in through your nose... and out through your mouth.... Take another breath in through your nose... and as you breathe out allow your eyes to gently close. Take another breath in through the



*The thing that is
really hard, and
really amazing, is
giving up on being
perfect and beginning
the work of becoming
yourself. – Anna
Quindlen*

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nose... breathing in relaxation and comfort... and exhale... breathing out tension and stress.

Allow me the use of your imagination as we take a trip to the seashore. A beautiful white sand beach is all around; warmed by the sun it is the perfect temperature for relaxing. As you lie on the warm sandy beach you can hear the gently rolling waves as they meet the shore. You can also hear the sounds of children playing on the beach... The children are far enough away that their playful noises are enjoyable to hear. In fact you may hear other sounds and that is perfectly okay... the other sounds when heard can be ignored as you focus on the sound of my voice.



*I am careful not
to confuse
excellence with
perfection.
Excellence, I can
reach for;
perfection is
God's business. –
Michael J. Fox*

As you feel the warm sand below you and the warm sun pleasantly warming your body from above... you can also feel a slight warm breeze carrying with it the smell of the ocean. The water is a perfect mix of greens and blues... sailboats can be seen on the horizon. The beach is so inviting that you feel a wave of relaxation begin to wash over you.

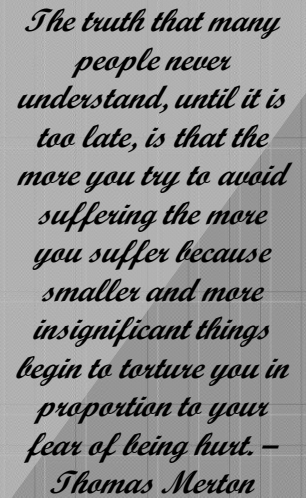
As you feel the warmth of the sand and sun... as you smell the salt air carried to you on the pleasant breeze... as you hear the sounds of children playing far down on the beach... as you hear the rhythm of the waves on the shore... you feel yourself relaxing more and more. Feel the top of your head... your scalp... as it begins to smooth out and relax. As you listen to the rhythm of the waves on the shore you feel the relaxation flowing down from your scalp to your forehead... relaxation flowing over your eyes... nose... cheeks... chin and jaw. Feel it seep down over your entire face as you feel the warmth of the sun on your face and body as you lie on the beach.

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Allow your facial muscles to relax and smooth out as tension drains away.

The relaxation flowing down the back of your head and seeping into your neck is beginning to melt away tension in your neck muscles. As you hear the waves lapping on the shore and feel the warmth of the sand under you the relaxation continues to flow. All of your facial muscles... even the tiny muscles of your eyelids feel pleasantly relaxed. Feel the warm sand and sun as your neck muscles begin to relax. Smell the salt air and hear the waves lapping on the shore as your neck muscles continue to relax... as the wave of relaxation reaches your shoulders. The sounds of the children playing are further away now as you drift and dream and float in pleasant relaxation. Feel the relaxation reach your shoulder muscles as you begin to drift into deep within.

Feel the warm sun... the warm sand... hear the waves on the shore as the relaxation flows over your shoulders and down into your arms... your upper arms... lower arms... wrists... hands... all the way to the tips of your fingers are feeling the wave of relaxation. Continue to feel the warmth of the sun as the relaxation flows over your chest muscles... feel your breathing become easy as your lungs relax. Feel the flow of relaxation as your abdominal muscles and stomach muscles relax all the way to your waist. Hear the waves on the shore as the relaxation flows over your shoulder blades... down your back... along your spine... all the way to the small of your back. With each breath you take you are becoming more and more relaxed. With each breath you take you are going deeper and deeper into within.



The truth that many people never understand, until it is too late, is that the more you try to avoid suffering the more you suffer because smaller and more insignificant things begin to torture you in proportion to your fear of being hurt. – Thomas Merton

Stress Management for Individuals


Feel the warmth of the sun on your body... feel the warmth of the sandy beach beneath you... hear the waves lapping on the shore. The sounds of children playing are fading as you continue to relax and go deeper and deeper.

The wave of relaxation continues to flow. Over your waist and into your thighs... from your thighs... over your knees... into your shins and calf muscles the wave of relaxation flows. Feel the warm sun and sand as you relax more and more with each breath you take. Hear the rhythm of the waves take you more deeply relaxed with each breath you take.

Feel the relaxation from your shins and calves... over your ankles and into your feet the relaxation flows. From the top your head all the way to the tips of your toes you can feel the relaxation deepen with each breath you take.

Feel the warm sun... the warm sand; hear the rhythm of the waves as you drift deeper and deeper into relaxed a peaceful state.

As you sit very comfortably relaxed use your imagination once again to become aware of a staircase - a beautiful staircase with a polished, ornate banister running down alongside and a deep, rich carpet underneath your bare feet. As you look down the stairs you notice that there are ten steps leading gently down - ten steps leading down, and down, and down; these are the steps that will lead you deep into dreamtime - deep into relaxation - and in a moment walk down those steps as they are counted off for you one at a time, and you will find that the deeper down you go, the more comfortable and the more relaxed will you become.



*Humor is just
another defense
against the
universe. - Mel
Brooks*

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Placing your hand gently on the banister begin to slowly descend the stairs as they are counted off from 10 to 1.

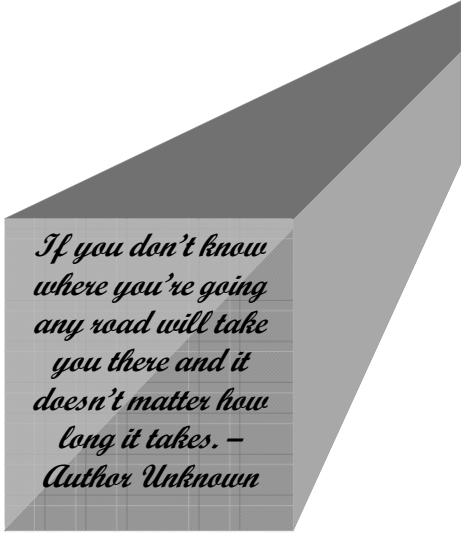
10...deeply relaxed, deeply comfortable. 9...more deeply relaxed, more deeply comfortable, with each breath. 8...more and more and more relaxed. 7... more deeply relaxed, more deeply comfortable, with each step. 6... deeper and deeper and deeper. 5... more and more and more relaxed. 4...deeply relaxed, deeply comfortable. 3...more and more and more relaxed with each breath, with each step. 2...almost at the bottom now, just one more step to go. And 1...going deeper and deeper down into hypnosis now, all the way down - to that deeper, healthier level of mind.

And as you reach the bottom step you can let the stairs and the ordinary, everyday world fade, as you drift further and further down - as you go deeper and deeper.

You are now standing at the bottom of the steps and feeling very comfortable, very relaxed and at peace with the world. All the way down where you become very open to the positive suggestions that follow.

Affirmation can then be inserted in the script at this point. Keep them simple, positive, in the present tense and repetition is a good thing!

After completing your affirmations or suggestions it will be time to emerge from the hypnotic state. Continuing with the tape simply record the following:




*If you don't know
where you're going
any road will take
you there and it
doesn't matter how
long it takes. –
Author Unknown*

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In a moment I will count from 1 to 3. As I do I will begin to emerge from hypnosis feeling relaxed and energized. I can leave the hypnotic state at my own pace. One...emerging now, eyes fluttering. Two...energy surging into my body and mind as I become more awake and aware with each passing moment. And, three... at my own pace, eyes opening, emerged from hypnosis and feeling wonderful.

Stress Management Technique #6

A healthy diet



We are indeed much more than what we eat, but what we eat can nevertheless help us to be much more than what we are. – Adelle Davis

Much of today's research is showing that a good nutritional diet has a direct impact on a person's ability to manage stress. A body that is well nourished and healthy is far more resilient to stressful conditions than a poorly nourished body.

While this workshop is not about nutrition keep in mind that as certain foods are helpful in dealing with stress, other types of food are known to have a detrimental effect and quite possibly add extra levels of stress particularly when consumed in large amounts. For example, too much caffeine can increase anxiety and cause inability to sleep. Large amounts of alcohol may initially cause you to feel sleepy but will ultimately disrupt sleep. Nicotine, while not a food, raises the heart rate and is quite simply bad for the body. Finally too much sugar may give an initial burst of energy but can cause an energy dip as the body in response to the sugar generates the naturally occurring insulin.

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As you can see the impact of these food types, do not only add to your stress levels, but also can affect your ability to deal with stress.

Stress Management Technique #7

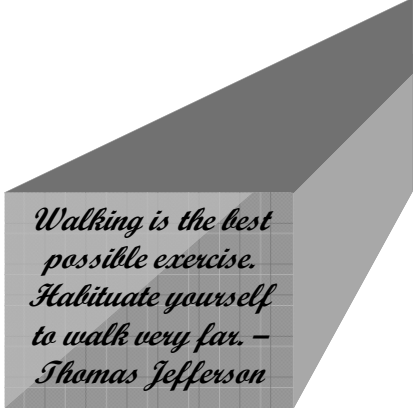
Exercise

Numerous studies show that exercise can reduce stress. For maximum effect, try an aerobic exercise (running, swimming, brisk walking) for 20 minutes or more. If you can't do that then even a 10-minute walk will help reduce your stress levels. Yoga or movement such as stretching can reduce stress by inducing a calmer state. The more you like the activity you choose for exercise the more likely you are to do it and to stay with it.

Exercise reduces stress in a number of ways. For one it will take your attention away from the causes of your stress. It has a calming effect, decreasing emotional suffering and enhancing concentration. More strenuous exercise will help to consume excess adrenaline in your body.

Working out can also help to counter possible diseases that are made worse by chronic stress, such as heart disease.

If you're not used to exercising it is difficult to start and stay with an exercise routine. Start small and work up, the small successes like walking around the block will build your self-esteem and provide encouragement to continue or perhaps even increase your activity.

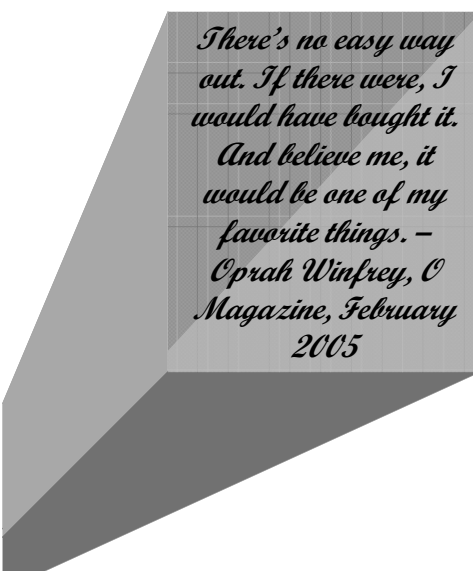


Walking is the best possible exercise. Habituate yourself to walk very far. – Thomas Jefferson

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Taking frequent exercise is probably one of the best physical stress-reduction techniques available. Exercise not only improves your health and reduces stress caused by unfitness, it also relaxes tense muscles and helps you sleep.

Exercise has a number of other possible benefits you may not be aware of:



There's no easy way out. If there were, I would have bought it. And believe me, it would be one of my favorite things. – Oprah Winfrey, O Magazine, February 2005

- It improves blood flow to your brain, bringing additional sugars and oxygen which may be needed when you are thinking intensely.
- When you think hard, the neurons in your brain function more intensely. As they do they build up toxic waste products that cause foggy thinking in the short term, and can damage the brain in the long term. By exercising you speed the flow of blood through your brain, moving these waste products faster. You also improve this blood flow so that even when you are not exercising, waste is eliminated more efficiently.
- It can cause the release of chemicals called endorphins into your blood stream. This gives you a feeling of happiness and well being.

The important thing to remember is that exercise should be fun. If you do not enjoy it you will probably not keep doing it.

Simply going for a walk can clear your mind, reduce tension and increase energy. Walking can provide a needed escape and may help to increase the brain's production of endorphins.

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Stress Management Technique #8

Get enough sleep

There are some easy ways to determine if you are getting enough sleep.

- Do you need an alarm clock to wake you up in the morning? Or two alarm clocks? The one by the bed with the snooze alarm and the one across the room to make you get up out of bed to turn it off?
- Do you wake up feeling refreshed or tired?
- How is your daytime energy? Do you find yourself running out of steam halfway through the day?
- How much sleep do you get when you don't have to wake up such as on weekends or vacations?
- How quickly do you fall asleep at night? This is called the sleep latency period by sleep researchers. For normal, well-rested people, this transition period between waking and sleep takes about 15-20 minutes. If you fall asleep in less than 10 minutes and especially if you fall asleep in less than 5 minutes, you are, by definition, sleep deprived.




*It is better to
sleep on things
beforehand than
to lie awake
about them
afterward. -
Baltasar
Gracian*

Ask yourself two questions. How much sleep are you getting each night? And, how much sleep do you need each night? You may already know the answer to some of your stress.

On average people need about 8 hours of sleep per night. This can vary widely from 3 to 11 hours depending on the person and his or her age.

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If we are regularly short of sleep, then our concentration and our effectiveness suffer and our energy levels decline. We have all seen and experienced this from time to time.



*To achieve the
impossible
dream, try going
to sleep. – Joan
Klempner*

The effects of this lack of sleep will diminish our effectiveness, in our job and in our daily lives and therefore could increase stress. As our concentration wanders, we start to make mistakes. As our energy declines, we become less proactive in what we do, reducing our control over events. This means that a situation that is already difficult and stressful can become worse, needing even more sacrifice to bring it back under control.

Make sure you get enough sleep. If you become used to being tired all of the time, you will be amazed by how sharp and energetic you feel once you start sleeping normally.

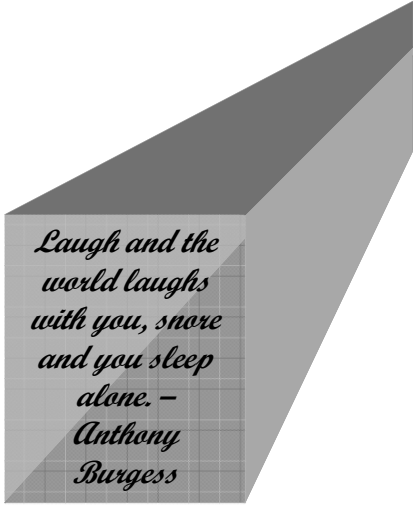
When we are stressed and anxious, we can often find it difficult to get to sleep as thoughts keep on whizzing through our heads, stopping us from relaxing enough to fall asleep.

If you find this is the case:

- Make sure you stop doing mentally demanding work several hours before coming to bed – give your brain time to calm down before you try to sleep.
- Try reading a calming, undemanding book for a few minutes, again to relax your body, tire your eyes and help you forget the things that are worrying you.

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- Write persistent thoughts and worries in a notebook and then put them out of your mind. Review the notebook in the morning and take action if appropriate.
- Keep the same bedtime. Let your body and mind get used to a predictable routine.
- Cut back on caffeine and alcohol. Some people find that they sleep badly if they drink coffee or cola after 4 PM. Others find that if they drink alcohol to excess, they wake up in the middle of the night and cannot get back to sleep.



*Laugh and the
world laughs
with you, snore
and you sleep
alone. –
Anthony
Burgess*

And if you still can't sleep? Well, get up. Don't even try to sleep. All that tossing and turning and watching the clock is not for you. It will only succeed in making you more tense. Get out of bed and into a comfortable chair. Read a book, watch television or play solitaire. Stay up as late as you like. Enjoy yourself. Before you know it, you will be dozing. If you don't actually fall asleep, at least you will be relaxed. The point is to reduce your stress about not sleeping and therefore make it easier to do.

Stress Management Technique #9

Break the Stress Cycle

There are a number of ways to break the stress cycle including daily relaxation. Take frequent breaks throughout the day. Stretch, get a drink of water, take a brief walk, practice deep breathing or take a 1-minute vacation to somewhere that is peaceful to you.

Do something you enjoy each day. A crossword puzzle, gardening, writing in a journal, reading a book or magazine, make something, try a new recipe.

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Try setting aside 15 minutes after getting home from work to simply relax. Take the time for yourself before thinking about making dinner, helping the kids with homework, or worrying about tomorrow.

Stress Management Technique # 10

Eliminate Environmental Stress



*They always
say time
changes things,
but you
actually have
to change them
yourself. -
Andy Warhol*

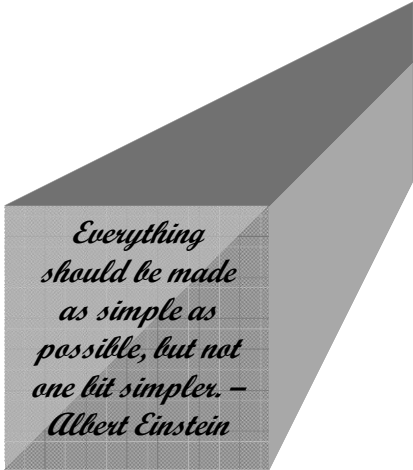
If your living and working environments are badly organized then they can be a major source of stress. If your environment is well organized and pleasant, then it can help to reduce stress and increase productivity. While the points listed may each contribute in a small way toward creating a more pleasant environment, taken together they can have a significant effect in reducing stress.

- Air quality. Changes such as introducing plants, opening a window, banning smoking will help to improve air quality and reduce stress caused by poor air quality.
- Lighting. Bad lighting can cause eyestrain and increase fatigue. Lighting that is too bright can also cause eyestrain and fatigue. The quality of light is also important. Most people are happiest in bright sunshine. Artificial light, which typically encompasses only a few wavelengths of light, does not have the same effect on mood that sunlight has.
- Tidiness and clutter. If your environment is dirty, uncomfortable or neglected, it will cause you stress. Similarly if your living or working area is cluttered, untidy or chaotic then it can be distracting. It is

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important however to be realistic about tidiness: while it is very difficult to successfully coordinate many tasks in an untidy work area, it is perfectly possible to work on one task successfully. The recent trend of 'clear desk' policy ignores one of the most important lessons about human beings: that people work in different ways.

- Furniture and ergonomics. Another source of stress is muscular tension and pain caused by bad furniture or bad use of good furniture. Arrange your working environment so that it is comfortable. If you work at a computer is it worth ensuring the seat is not causing you pain and that the monitor and keyboard are properly positioned.
- Personal Space. It is important for people to feel that they have sufficient personal space at work and at home. You may have experienced the dissatisfaction, stress and irritation of working at a different desk each day, or of sleeping in a different hotel room each night. This unpleasant situation is largely caused by lack of power to organize and control the space in which you operate.



*Everything
should be made
as simple as
possible, but not
one bit simpler. –
Albert Einstein*

Stress Management Technique #11

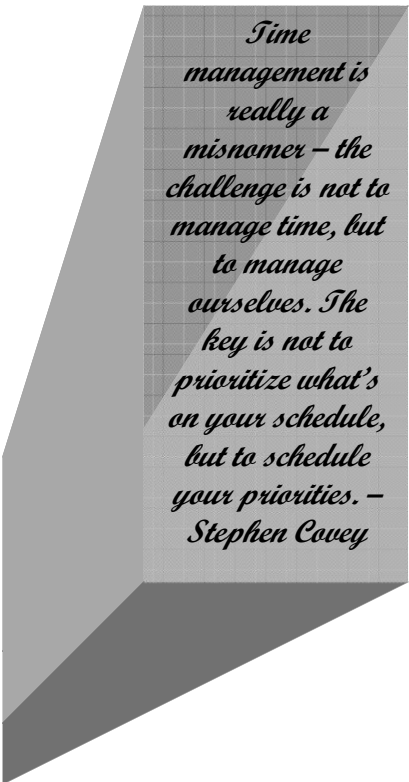
Following are a hodgepodge of ideas for managing stress

We are often harder on ourselves than others are on us. Negative self-talk is often the culprit. When people talk to themselves it is most often in a negative way. It is worthwhile to see if some of the comments have a basis in reality. For example, "I can't say no", or "I can never get that right" are generalizations. There may be one thing that is causing you problems but your mind generalizes that

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to everything you do. Take a look, you'll find many things you do right, and you can say no, if you choose to do so.

Organize, prioritize and manage your time. There are thousands of books available on these topics. A "to do" list is one way of setting priorities. Try this; as you add things to the to do list ask, what if this doesn't get done? You may find yourself eliminating things from the list before you even start!



Time management is really a misnomer – the challenge is not to manage time, but to manage ourselves. The key is not to prioritize what's on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities. – Stephen Covey

Avoid procrastination. Another 1000 books! Procrastination causes a reduction in the choices that are available. If you procrastinate about saving for retirement then you may have to continue working when your choice could have been to retire. Even small things can become major irritants if not taken care of in a timely manner.

Positive thinking and affirmations can help change the way that you perceive the world. While much of our self-talk is negative we can purposely counter the negative with positive comments. "I can", "I did it before and can do it again", "I get better with each day", "I feel more relaxed than ever". As you see positive changes occurring you can use that feedback to enhance the affirmations even more. "I knew I could do it"

Laugh! Purposely find ways to bring humor into your life. When you make those mistakes feel free to laugh at yourself too.

The Texas Woman's University has a list of 52 proven stress reducers. Many of them are very easy to implement, here they are:

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1. Get up 15 minutes earlier in the morning. The inevitable morning mishaps will be less stressful.
2. Prepare for the morning the evening before. Set the breakfast table, make lunches, put out the clothes you plan to wear, etc.
3. Don't rely on your memory. Write down appointment times, when to pick up the laundry, when library books are due, etc.
4. Do nothing, which, after being done, leads you to tell a lie.
5. Make duplicates of all keys. Bury a house key in a secret spot in the garden and carry a duplicate car key in your wallet, apart from your key ring.
6. Practice preventative maintenance. Your car, appliances, home, and relationships will be less likely to break down/fall apart "at the worst possible moment".
7. Be prepared to wait. A paperback can make a wait in a post office line almost pleasant.
8. Procrastination is stressful. Whatever you want to do tomorrow, do today; whatever you want to do today, do it now.
9. Plan ahead. Don't let the gas tank get below one-quarter full; keep a well stocked "emergency shelf" of home staples; don't wait until you are down to your last bus token or postage stamp to buy more; etc.
10. Don't put up with something that doesn't work right. If your alarm clock, wallet, shoe laces, windshield wipers – whatever – are a constant aggravation, get them fixed or get new ones.
11. Allow 15 minutes of extra time to get to appointments. Plan to arrive at an airport one hour before domestic departures.
12. Eliminate (or restrict) the amount of caffeine in your diet.
13. Always set up contingency plans, "just in case." ("if for some reason either of us is delayed, here is what we'll do..." kind of

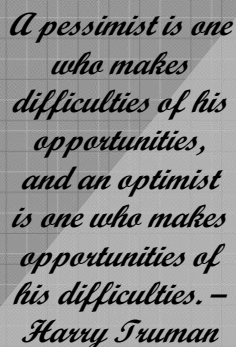


*Make no fear
of perfection –
you'll never
reach it. –
Salvatore Dali*

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thing. Or, “If we get split up in the shopping center, here’s where we’ll meet.”)

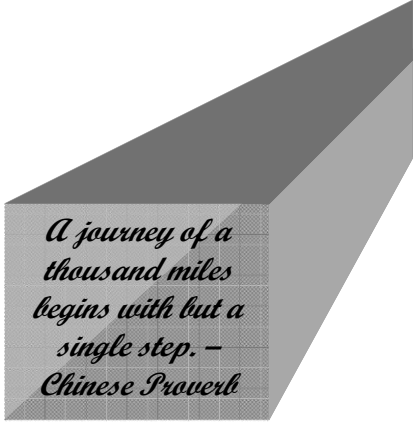
14. Relax your standards. The world will not end if the grass doesn’t get mowed this weekend.
15. Pollyanna-Power! For every one thing that goes wrong there are probably 10 or 50 or 100 blessings. Count ‘em!
16. Ask questions. Taking a few moments to repeat back directions, what someone expects of you etc., can save hours. (The old “the hurrieder I go, the behinder I get,” idea.)
17. Say “No!” Saying “no” to extra projects, social activities, and invitations you know you don’t have the time or the energy for takes practice, self-respect, and a belief that everyone, everyday, needs quiet time to relax and be alone.
18. Unplug your phone. Want to take a long bath, meditate, sleep, or read without interruption? Drum up the courage to temporarily disconnect. (The possibility of there being a terrible emergency in the next hour or so is almost nil.) Or use an answering machine.
19. Turn “needs” into preferences. Our basic physical needs translate into food, water, and keeping warm. Everything else is a preference. Don’t get attached to preferences.
20. Simplify, simplify, simplify...
21. Make friends with non-worriers. Nothing can get you into the habit of worrying faster than associating with chronic worrywarts.
22. Get up and stretch periodically if your job requires that you sit for extended periods.
23. Wear earplugs. If you need to find quiet at home, pop in some earplugs.



A pessimist is one who makes difficulties of his opportunities, and an optimist is one who makes opportunities of his difficulties. – Harry Truman

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24. Get enough sleep. If necessary, use an alarm clock to remind you to go to bed.
25. Create order out of chaos. Organize your home and workspace so that you always know exactly where things are. Put away things where they belong and you won't have to go through the stress of losing things.
26. When feeling stressed, most people tend to breathe short, shallow breaths. When you breathe like this, stale air is not expelled, oxidation of the tissues is incomplete, and muscle tension frequently results. Check your breathing throughout the day, and before, during, and after high-pressure situations. If you do find your stomach muscles knotted and your breathing is shallow, relax all your muscles and take several deep, slow breaths.
27. Writing your thoughts and feelings down (in a journal, or on paper to be thrown away) can help you clarify things and can give you a renewed perspective.
28. Try the following yoga technique whenever you feel the need to relax. Inhale deeply through your nose to the count of eight. Then, with lips puckered, exhale very slowly through your mouth to the count of 16, or for as long as you can. Concentrate on the long sighing sound and feel the tension dissolve. Repeat 10 times.
29. Inoculate yourself against a feared event. Example: before speaking in public, take time to go over every part of the experience in your mind. Imagine what you'll wear, what the audience will look like, how you will present your talk, what the questions will be and how you will answer them, etc. Visualize the experience the way you would have it be. You'll likely find



*A journey of a
thousand miles
begins with but a
single step. –
Chinese Proverb*

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that when the time comes to make the actual presentation, it will be “old hat” and much of your anxiety will have fled.

30. When the stress of having to get a job done gets in the way of getting the job done, diversion – a voluntary change in activity and/or environment – may be just what you need.
31. Talk it out. Discussing your problems with a trusted friend can help clear your mind of confusion so you can concentrate on problem solving.
32. One of the most obvious ways to avoid unnecessary stress is to select an environment (work, home, leisure), which is in line with your personal needs and desires. If you hate desk jobs, don't accept a job that requires you to sit at a desk all day. If you hate to talk politics, don't associate with people that love to talk politics, etc.
33. Learn to live one day at a time.
34. Every day, do something you really enjoy.
35. Add an ounce of love to everything that you do.
36. Take a hot bath or shower (or a cool one in summertime) to relieve tension.
37. Do something for somebody else.
38. Focus on understanding rather than on being understood; on loving rather than on being loved.
39. Do something that will improve your appearance. Looking better can help you feel better.
40. Schedule a realistic day. Avoid the tendency to schedule back-to-back appointments; allow time between appointments for a breathing spell.
41. Become more flexible. Some things are worth not doing perfectly and some issues are fine to compromise upon.

*Rule 1. Don't sweat
the small stuff.*

*Rule 2. It's all
small stuff.*

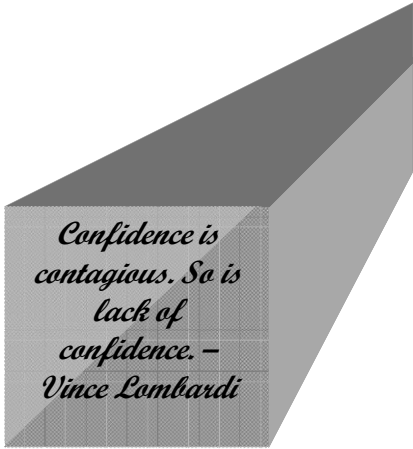
*Rule 3. If you can't
fight or flee, then
flow.*

*If you don't mind, it
don't matter. –*

Author Unknown

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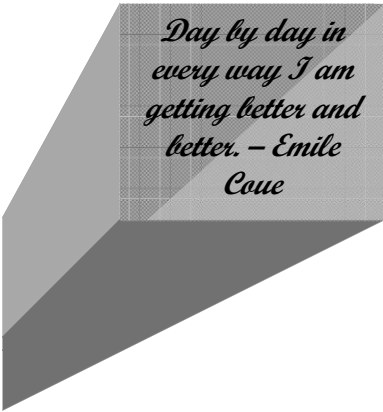
42. Eliminate destructive self-talk: “I’m too old to...,” “I’m too fat to...,” etc.
43. Use your weekend time for a change of pace. If your workweek is slow and patterned, make sure there is action and time for spontaneity built into your weekends. If your workweek is fast-paced and full of people and deadlines, seek peace and solitude during your days off. Feel as if you aren’t accomplishing anything at work? Tackle a job on the weekend that you can finish to your satisfaction.
44. “Worry about pennies and the dollars will take care of themselves.” That’s another way of saying: take care of the today’s as best you can and the yesterdays and the tomorrows will take care of themselves.
45. Do one thing at a time. When you are with someone, be with that person and with no one or nothing else. When you are busy with a project, concentrate on doing that project and forget about everything else you have to do.
46. Allow yourself time – everyday – for privacy, quiet, and introspection.
47. If an especially unpleasant task faces you, do it early in the day and get it over with, then the rest of your day will be free of anxiety.
48. Learn to delegate responsibility to capable others.
49. Don’t forget to take a lunch break. Try to get away from your desk or work area in body and mind, even if it’s just for 15 or 20 minutes.
50. Forget about counting to 10. Count to 1,000 before doing something or saying anything that could make matters worse.
51. Have a forgiving view of events and people. Accept the fact that we live in an imperfect world.



*Confidence is
contagious. So is
lack of
confidence. –
Vince Lombardi*

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52. Have an optimistic view of the world. Believe that most people are doing the best they can.



*Day by day in
every way I am
getting better and
better. – Emile
Coue*

Summary

You may have heard much of the material presented here in one context or another. You may already use some of the techniques for reducing stress that are shown. You may already have your own ways to combat stress. If so congratulations you are way ahead of the average person.

Most people are content to deal with life until life deals them a blow. If your stress is already high what will you do if life happens and a major change comes your way? By reducing your stress levels now you will be much more capable of effectively dealing with the life crises which will eventually come your way.

Now that you have an understanding of the causes and effects of stress and the ability to measure the stress in your life, I recommend the following:

1. Baseline your stress using the questionnaires in this workbook.
2. Select one or two stress management techniques to implement.
3. Keep doing it!! It takes 21 days to form a habit, stick with your plan.
4. Measure your stress again after a month of using these techniques to see how much you have reduced your stress

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levels. Keep in mind that as life changes your stress will tend to have peaks and valleys.

5. Continue to implement techniques and measure periodically, perhaps monthly or quarterly.

The majority of people will simply go on with their lives and not make any of the changes that have been discussed. They are often the most stressed!!! Go with Nancy Reagan's suggestion to the right and you will find the benefits are enormous.



*Just do it... -
Nancy Reagan*