

# STRESS MANAGEMENT

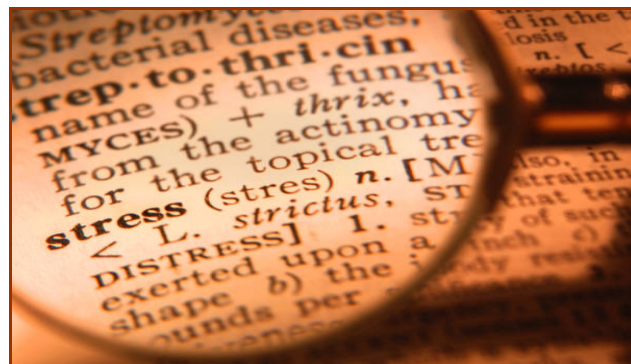


A PRACTICAL APPROACH

# STRESSORS

Below, list the first five things that come to your mind that cause you stress.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_



# THE 20 POINT STRESS

## TEST

- \_\_\_1. Your stomach tightens into a knot when you think about your job and all that you have to do.
- \_\_\_2. You have trouble sleeping at night.
- \_\_\_3. You frantically race from place to place trying to get everything done that is required of you.
- \_\_\_4. You seem "on edge" or angry with people for no apparent reason.
- \_\_\_5. You feel depressed at the end of the day for not accomplishing all that you had planned to do.
- \_\_\_6. You experience frequent mood changes including overreacting to minor problems.
- \_\_\_7. You need some type of drug, alcohol or tobacco to get through the day.
- \_\_\_8. You have difficulty maintaining intimate relationships.
- \_\_\_9. You neglect your diet or exercise routine making excuses that you don't have time.
- \_\_\_10. You tend to keep everything bottled up inside.
- \_\_\_11. You think there is only one right way to do everything.
- \_\_\_12. You fail to find humor in many situations others see as funny.
- \_\_\_13. You do not leave the office for lunch or short breaks.
- \_\_\_14. You make a "big deal" out of everything.
- \_\_\_15. You get angry when you have to wait on anything.
- \_\_\_16. You try to do everything yourself.
- \_\_\_17. You feel that most people move too slowly for you.
- \_\_\_18. You feel guilty when you take time for yourself.
- \_\_\_19. You cut people off mid-sentence so that you can tell your point of view or opinion.
- \_\_\_20. You experience memory loss.

\_\_\_ Total number of check marks

### SCORES

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 0-5  | too little stress, you need more activities |
| 5-10 | moderate stress, manage it wisely           |
| 10+  | high stress, consider health issues         |

# STRATEGIES FOR COPING WITH STRESS

## Negative Coping

Alcohol/Drugs  
Denial of problems  
Eating/Not Eating  
Fault-finding  
Illnesses  
Zoning out (TV, Computer)  
Revenge thinking  
Stubbornness  
Tantrums  
Tobacco/Caffeine  
Anger/Violence  
Withdrawing from friends  
Sleeping too much  
Staying too Busy

## Positive Coping

Play  
Work  
Faith  
Limits  
Exercise  
Laughter  
Flexibility  
Surrender  
Counseling  
Relaxation  
Meditation  
Alone Time  
Affirmations  
Commitment  
Togetherness  
Conflict Resolution



Be nice to yourself...

# Common Mechanisms for Coping with Stress

---

- **Recognize that you have a problem when stress levels escalate.**  
Don't deny that something is wrong, and don't think of it as your fault. It is a problem that needs your immediate attention. Ask someone for guidance or help.
- **Take responsibility for finding solutions to the problem of stress.**  
Seek out likely sources of support. Talk to people who want to help you.
- **Use relaxation or meditation exercises.** If you do not have a routine that works for you, you may wish to buy a CD that teaches progressive muscle relaxation and relaxation through imagery.
- **Get physical exercise.** Studies show that a brisk fifteen-minute walk can be more calming than a tranquilizer. A regular program of aerobic exercise can keep tension from building up.
- **Drink a glass of water.** Many people don't drink enough water and our bodies need constant hydration. A glass of water can change your attitude in 15 minutes.
- **Find emotional support from friends or relatives.**  
Talk to others; share your anxiety.
- **Write your feelings down.** Writing can help you let go of your fears or clarify things.
- **Breathe slowly and deeply.** Forgot to breathe? Practice taking slow, deep breaths periodically during the day. Getting air into your body can change your attitude quickly.
- **Take a warm bath or shower or swim.** Water is a great stress reducer. Use progressive muscle relaxation while you are soaking.
- **Try the blow-up technique.** Describe your situation to yourself in exaggerated terms. Blow it totally out of proportion to the point of absurdity. You will be able to smile and get a calmer perspective on your predicament.
- **Practice better time management.** Review your time management skills and practice with a daily planner. Remember to look at your planner DAILY!
- **Prioritize tasks.** Take care of the most important tasks first and let the others wait.
- **Seek professional help.** Talking to a supportive counselor can help you get a better perspective on your situation and give you ideas for change.
- **Redefine your goals or set more sensible standards.** Be realistic! Do not try to achieve the impossible.
- **Take control of your life.** Systematically reduce some of the sources of stress. Learn to say "No" to unreasonable demands. Find a way out of a dead-end job or relationship.
- **Try to see your problem in a different light.** Highlight the positive aspects of your situation. Focus on the long-term benefits or reasons for your problem. Try to find a funny side to the situation in which you find yourself.
- **Distract yourself.** Some problems cannot be resolved now, so don't think about the situation. Go out with a friend, see a movie, or immerse yourself in a book. Let go of the situation and busy yourself with something else...
- **Plan your life so that you find satisfaction in more than one place.**  
You are more likely to find support and appreciation if you engage in a variety of activities.

# ATTITUDES THAT HINDER CHANGE

Being aware of your attitude is important when it comes to your personal growth and achieving your goals. Negative attitudes can rob you of opportunity & happiness. Do you use any of the attitudes below to keep you from success?

- ✘ The “I can’t” syndrome (“I can’t do math.”)
- ✘ Apathy or the “I don’t care” syndrome (“I don’t care if I fail”)
- ✘ Closed Mindedness (“Everyone in my family is a bad writer and so am I”)
- ✘ Unfound anxiety (“Everyone in the class is smarter than me”)
- ✘ Fear of taking chances (“I’ll feel stupid talking to my instructor”)
- ✘ Loss of motivation (“I don’t feel like going to class.”)
- ✘ The “let someone else deal with it” syndrome (“It was my teachers’ fault that I failed the class.”)

## **Responsibility**

1. **Look around and find the most responsible person you know and ask for help or model their behavior.**
2. **Take on small projects and see them through to completion. Then slowly increase the amount of responsibility you take on. The more we do, the more we can do, and the better we get.**
3. **Accept 100% responsibility for what happens in your life, and know that you have the power to take control of many aspects of your life, mental and physical.**
4. **Stop blaming and start making decisions. Be responsible for the outcome good or bad.**

# ATTITUDE IS EVERYTHING

**Attitude** is important—it affects:

1. **How successful you are** in achieving your academic and personal goals
2. **How you feel**, mentally and physically
3. **How you look**, what you say and what you do

## **Do you have a positive attitude?**

1. **Are you willing to learn**, no matter how difficult it is?
2. **Do you do your best when studying**, and try to improve how you do your work?
3. **Do you demonstrate enthusiasm** in whatever you say and do?
4. **Do you welcome challenges**, experiment, try new ideas?
5. **Do you have a sense of humor** by not taking yourself too seriously?

## **7 Easy Ways to Develop a Positive Attitude:**

1. **Be confident**
2. **Be positive**
3. **Be punctual**
4. **Be patient:** some things just take time to do
5. **Believe in yourself:** you are unique in this world, and so are your talents
6. **Set goals for yourself:** then WORK hard to achieve them
7. **Get fun out of life:** don't take yourself too seriously

## Stress and SELF-TALK

### Negative

1. I'll wait until I'm in the mood to do it.
2. It's ok to celebrate...besides, I'll start my diet (sobriety) tomorrow.
3. My health problem isn't that bad. Time will heal this pain.
4. There's plenty of time to get it done.
5. Why does the boss give us so much to do? It's not fair.
6. It's too hard to talk about. I don't know where to begin.
7. I work better under pressure so I don't need to do it right now.
8. I've got too many other things to do first.

### Positive

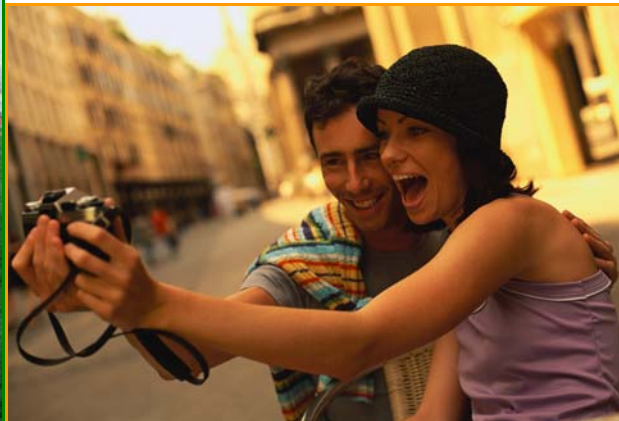
1. There's no time like the present.
2. The sooner I get it done, the sooner I can play.
3. There's no such thing as perfectionism. It's an illusion that keeps me from doing what I have to do right now.
4. It's cheaper and less painful if I do it now rather than wait until it gets worse.

### Twelve Quick Tips to Reduce Stress

1. Replace the phrase "I have to..." with "I get to..." to help give a positive feeling to your daily tasks.
2. Cut out the coffee, hot chocolate and soft drinks. These can elevate your anxiety and stress levels.
3. Keep toys on your desk to play with during stressful moments. A stress ball comes in real handy!
4. Write down your stressful situation to help transfer emotions from the mind to something material. Try crumpling the paper and tossing it in the waste receptacle. Trash that pesky stress!
5. Tackle the most stressful tasks first while your mind and body are the most alert.
6. Exercise at your desk or during breaks. Try to free your mind from stressful thoughts.
7. Get some oxygen into your body by practicing deep breathing techniques.
8. Eat a sweet or two of sugary candy. (Beware of chocolate that contains caffeine, though!) Research has found that a little bit of sugar can reduce stress levels.
9. Make yourself at home by decorating your space with photos, posters or plants.
10. Drink some orange juice or eat other foods rich in vitamin C. Vitamin C can reduce the making of stress hormones.
11. Sing a song to relax the body and assist in deep breathing.
12. Watch a funny video that can make you guffaw! Laughter really is the best medicine.



Have some fun...



Adapted from "Twelve Tips to Reduce Stress" by Justin Tyme <http://www.ideasandtraining.com/>

## PREMISES ABOUT CHANGE...

“The key to change... is to let go of fear.”  
Rosanne Cash

- CHANGE IS NEVER EASY
- CHANGE IS ALMOST ALWAYS MET WITH RESISTANCE
- THE PERSON WHO INITIATES CHANGE IS ALMOST ALWAYS UNPOPULAR
- CHANGE CREATES UNFAMILIAR GROUND
- CHANGE TAKES COURAGE
- IT'S ALL ABOUT *YOUR* ATTITUDE



When one door closes another door opens, or a window, or a mouse hole.



# GOOD HEALTH

**Key Point: You are what you eat, you feel what you think, and you do what you chose.**

<b>The basic ingredients</b>	<p><b>Food</b> Eat to live don't live to eat. Eat several small meals, rather than two or three large meals a day. Emphasize fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds and grains. High protein meals give high energy and are best eaten in the morning. High carbohydrate meals produce sleepiness and are best in the evening. Drink lots of water. Our bodies love water.</p> <p><b>Exercise</b> Exercise can release tension, boost energy, build self-esteem and create a good all-around feeling. Try to exercise daily by jogging, swimming, dancing, walking, bicycling, or whatever gets the heart and lungs working.</p> <p><b>Sleep</b> Most people have a natural 24-hour rhythm of sleep and wakefulness. The best sleep occurs when the body and mind expect it.</p>
<b>Doing more</b>	<p><b>Vitamins and minerals</b> Some people never need vitamins and minerals. Some people need vitamins and minerals occasionally. Some people need vitamins and minerals most of the time. Which person are you? It's worth finding out. If you get sick or have low energy levels or eat mostly processed food, then try a daily vitamin and mineral supplement for 3 months to see how you feel.</p> <p><b>Relaxation</b> The simplest, cheapest and most underrated ingredient to good health is relaxation, especially deep relaxation.</p>
<b>Problem areas</b>	<p><b>Sugar Blues</b> For some people, sugar can create an emotional roller coaster, sending blood sugar and energy levels sky high, and then sinking both to depressing or irritating lows. If it happens to you, try snacks of fruits, veggies and nuts.</p> <p><b>Colds and flu</b> Keep contact with colds and flu to a minimum by washing your hands often.</p> <p><b>Stress</b> The major cause of stress is uncertainty: uncertainty about jobs, money, health, school, friends, lovers and self-esteem. Start dealing with harmful stress by transferring doubts and worries to a list and by exercising, relaxing and cultivating a positive attitude.</p>
<b>Let your emotions help</b>	<p><b>Alcohol and drugs</b> Both destroy brain cells and reduce mental ability. Avoid or restrict them.</p> <p><b>Emotions</b> Good health begins and ends with emotions. Smile easily, laugh often, and be positive, friendly and helpful. Like who you are!</p>

## RELAXATION

### An Incompatible Response to Anxiety & Tension

#### The Relaxation Process Includes Four Stages:

1. Deep Breathing
2. Cognitive Muscle Relaxation
3. Visualization or Imagery
4. Awakening State

#### A simple relaxation exercise at your desk

1. Sit straight up in your chair, feet flat on the floor, hands resting in your lap face up and with your eyes closed.  
Let the noise in the room pass through your mind but don't focus on it. Let it go. Take slow deep breathes, in through the nose out through your mouth, feel the air enter and exit slowly. Do this 6 times. Fill your lungs slowly and slowly let the air out. You are slowing down.
2. Starting with your feet, tighten both of your feet, as tight as you can, count to 6 and let go.  
Breathe in and breathe out. Move to your calves, then your thighs, your bottom, your stomach, your chest, then your arms and hands. Hold each area tight for 6 counts, then let go. Feel the tingling and relax into it. Pull your shoulders up to your ears and hold for 6 counts and then let go. Scrunch your face up and tighten the top of your head, count to 6, then let go.  
Feel the tension leave your body. Relax. Breathe easy.
3. After you have tightened each of your muscles, continue to sit for 3 minutes more breathing gently, letting thoughts pass through and out of your head. Eventually try not to think about anything at all, try to clear your mind of thoughts and just breathe.
4. After 3 minutes slowly bring yourself back into the room and feel the quiet calm throughout your body.

