STRESS: HOW TO HANDLE IT

1. TALK IT OUT – When tensions build up, try discussing the problem with a close friend or with the people involved.

2. ESCAPE FOR A WHILE – Don’t wait until you’ve lost control. Act while you are still able to decide for yourself.

3. TAKE A BREAK – A change of pace, no matter how short, can give you a new outlook on an old problem.

4. EXERCISE REGULARLY – Any sport will help you relax and let off steam. How about swimming, tennis, bicycling, jogging – you can reduce stress while having fun!

5. EAT PROPERLY – Your nutritional needs increase when you are under stress. You need protein, vitamins, and minerals to repair damage caused by stress.

6. AVOID STRESS – Many changes at once can result in increased stress. When you can, plan to avoid too many big changes at the same time.

7. PLAN YOUR WORK – Tension and anxiety really build up when your work seems endless. Plan your work to use time and energy more effectively.

8. POSSIBLE RESOLUTION OF STRESSFUL SITUATIONS – Learn to be an effective problem solver.

9. TAKE ONE THING AT A TIME – When work seems endless, tension and anxiety really build up. Planning can help you reduce stress as you use your time and energy more effectively.

10. SHUN THE “SUPERMAN” URGE – Be realistic. People who expect too much of themselves can become tense if their plans don’t work out. Set practical goals.

11. GO EASY WITH YOUR CRITICISM – Too much criticism of others and of yourself can lead to frustration. Instead of criticizing, search for good points.

12. ACCEPT WHAT YOU CANNOT CHANGE – When a problem is beyond your control, learn to recognize and accept it. It beats spinning your wheels and getting nowhere.

13. GIVE IN OCCASIONALLY – It’s not always urgent to be right. If you yield, others probably will too. Working out disagreements with others will help you reduce and even avoid stressful situations.
14. GIVE THE OTHER FELLOW A BREAK – Competition is contagious, but so is cooperation. Giving the other fellow a break can make things easier for you too.

15. LEARN TO RELAX – Everyone needs and deserves some relaxation. Just a few minutes of peace and quiet each day make a big difference! Try it!

16. GET RID OF YOUR ANGER – Anger is a normal emotion. You use it to combat attack. Anger becomes a problem only when it’s unreasonable – out of control. It not only hurts others but also you.

17. DO SOMETHING FOR SOMEONE ELSE – It breaks the stranglehold of your moodiness, and brings a feeling of strength.

18. THINK POSITIVE – CHANGE ATTITUDE – Be positive and optimistic.

19. LEARN HOW TO HAVE FUN – Learn how to play!

20. DEVELOP A SENSE OF HUMOR – Laughter is good for the soul!

21. QUIT FEELING SORRY FOR YOURSELF.

22. IF YOU NEED HELP, GET AN EXPERT – When stress gets out of hand, professional help is available to you in your community.

People who handle stress well tend to have the characteristics listed below. Strive to develop these characteristics.

1. He/she views change as a challenge, not as a threat.

2. The person feels committed to something he/she is involved with (in personal life, on the job, or both).

3. The person feels a sense of control – realizes that he/she is ultimately in control of their own life and situations to be dealt with.
HOW VULNERABLE ARE YOU TO STRESS?

The following test was developed by Psychologist Lyle H. Miller and Alma Dell Smith at Boston University Medical Center. Score each item from 1 (almost always) to 5 (never), according to how much of the time each statement applies to you.

1. I eat at least one hot, balanced meal a day.
2. I get seven to eight hours sleep at least four nights a week.
3. I give and receive affection regularly.
4. I have at least one relative within 50 miles on whom I can rely.
5. I exercise to the point of perspiration at least twice a week.
6. I smoke less than half a pack of cigarettes a day.
7. I take fewer than five alcoholic drinks a week.
8. I am the appropriate weight for my height.
9. I have an income adequate to meet basic expenses.
10. I get strength from my religious beliefs.
11. I regularly attend club or social activities.
12. I have a network of friends and acquaintances.
13. I have one of more friends to confide in about personal matters.
14. I am in good health (including eyesight, hearing, teeth).
15. I am able to speak openly about my feelings when angry or worried.
16. I have regular conversations with the people I live with about domestic problems, e.g. chores, money and daily living issues.
17. I do something for fun at least once a week.
___ 18. I am able to organize my time effectively.
___ 19. I drink fewer than three cups of coffee (or tea or cola drinks) a day.
___ 20. I take quiet time for myself during the day.

___ TOTAL

To get your score, add up the figures and subtract 20. Any number over 30 indicates a vulnerability to stress. You are seriously vulnerable if your score is between 50 and 75, and extremely vulnerable if it is over 75.
HOW TO TELL IF YOU ARE A STRESS-PRONE PERSONALITY

Rate yourself as to how you typically react in each of the situations listed below. There are no right or wrong answers.

4 - Always          3 - Frequently          2 - Sometimes         1 - Never

____ 1.   Do you try to do as much as possible in the least amount of time?
____ 2.   Do you become inpatient with delays or interruptions?
____ 3.   Do you always have to win at games to enjoy yourself?
____ 4.   Do you find yourself speeding up the car to beat the red light?
____ 5.   Are you unlikely to ask for or indicate you need help with a problem?
____ 6.   Do you constantly seek the respect and admiration of others?
____ 7.   Are you overly critical of the way others do their work?
____ 8.   Do you have the habit of looking at your watch or clock often?
____ 9.   Do you constantly strive to better your position and achievements?
____ 10. Do you spread yourself "too thin" in terms of your time?
____ 11. Do you have the habit of doing more than one thing at a time?
____ 12. Do you frequently get angry or irritable?
____ 13. Do you have little time for hobbies or time by yourself?
____ 14. Do you have a tendency to talk quickly or hasten conversations?
____ 15. Do you consider yourself hard driving?
____ 16. Do your friends or relatives consider you hard driving?
____ 17. Do you have a tendency to get involved in multiple projects?
____ 18. Do you have a lot of deadlines in your work?
19. Do you feel vaguely guilty if you relax and do nothing during leisure?

20. Do you take on too many responsibilities?

TOTAL

ANSWER KEY

If your score is between 20 and 30, chances are you are non-productive or your life lacks stimulation.

A score between 30 and 50 designates a good balance in your ability to handle and control stress.

If you tallied up a score ranging between 51 and 60, your stress level is marginal and you are bordering on being excessively tense.

If your total number of points exceeds 60, you may be a candidate for heart disease.

STRESS SYMPTOM CHECKLIST

1. Buzzing or ringing in the ears
2. Fatigue I can’t account for
3. Dizziness
4. Blushing
5. Sweating (other than from exercise or caused by physical environment)
6. Peculiar numbness of any part of body
7. Unexplained heightened sensitivity of any part of the body
8. Stiffness or pain of muscle or joints (not due to exercise)
9. Intestinal disturbance
10. Stomach complaints
11. Breathing difficulties (not caused by disease)
12. Itching (I can’t explain)
13. Urinary problems or complaints
14. Visual disturbances
15. Pain (I can’t explain)
16. Nervous mannerisms (e.g., flinching, “tics,” nail biting, drumming fingers)
17. Restlessness
18. Tearfulness
19. Irritability
20. Confusion
21. Trouble concentrating
22. Insomnia
23. Diarrhea
24. Headaches
25. Fever blisters
26. Hunger or lack of appetite
27. Clumsiness, fainting, trembling
28. Heart palpitations
29. Forgetfulness
30. Immobilization
31. Constipation
32. Excessive sleep
33. Coldness of extremities
34. Dry mouth
35. Others (please describe)

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