Some sources of stress

Life Events Stress Analysis

To learn your level of stress, circle the number to the right of any event that has happened in your life during the past 12 months.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Death of spouse</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorce</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital separation</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jail term</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death of close family member</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal injury or illness</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fired from job</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital reconciliation</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in family member's health</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnancy</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual difficulties</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addition to family</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business readjustment</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in financial status</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death of close friend</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career change</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in number of marital arguments</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortgage or loan over $10,000</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreclosure of mortgage or loan</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in work responsibilities</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Son or daughter leaving home .................................................................29
Trouble with in-laws .............................................................................29
Outstanding personal achievement .......................................................28
Spouse begins or ceases working .........................................................26
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Change in living conditions ..................................................................25
Revision of personal habits .................................................................24
Trouble with boss .................................................................................23
Change in work hours, conditions .........................................................20
Change in residence .............................................................................20
Change in schools ...............................................................................20
Change in recreational habits ..............................................................19
Change in church activities .................................................................19
Change in social activities ...................................................................18
Mortgage or loan under $10,000 ................................................................17
Change in sleeping habits ..................................................................16
Change in number of family gatherings .................................................15
Change in eating habits ......................................................................15
Vacation ...............................................................................................13
Christmas season ...............................................................................12
Minor violation of the law ....................................................................11

How to analyze your score:

Add the circled values. If your total score is more than 150, find ways to reduce stress in your daily life so that your stress level doesn't increase. The higher the score, the harder one needs to work at staying physically well.

Suggested uses for personal **Life Events** analysis:

1. Become familiar with the different events and the amounts of stress they promote.
2. Put the list of events where your family can easily refer to it several times a day.

3. Practice recognizing the stress level when one of these events happens.

4. Think about the meaning of the event for you and identify your feelings.

5. Think about the different ways you can adjust to the event.

6. Take your time in arriving at decisions.

7. Anticipate life changes and plan for them well in advance whenever possible.

8. Pace yourself. It can be done even if you are in a hurry.

9. Look at the accomplishment of a task as a part of ongoing daily living; avoid looking at such an achievement as a stopping point. Congratulate yourself and push ahead.

10. Recognize that your internal mechanism of coping with stress is directly tied to how your health and well being will be influenced by it.

*Note: This scale is derived from the Holmes-Rahe Social Readjustment Scale. Holmes, T. & Rahe, R. (1967) "Holmes-Rahe Social Readjustment Rating Scale", Journal of Psychosomatic Research, vol. II.
What is Stress?
Stress is simply the body's non-specific response to any demand made on it. Stress is not by definition synonymous with nervous tension or anxiety. Stress provides the means to express talents and energies and pursue happiness; it can also cause exhaustion and illness, either physical or psychological; heart attacks and accidents. The important thing to remember about stress is that certain forms are normal and essential.

As the body responds to various forms of physical or psychological stress, certain predictable changes occur. These include increased heart rate, blood pressure (systolic and diastolic), and secretions of stimulatory hormones. These responses to stress will occur whether the stress is positive or negative in nature. In lay terms, it is known as the "fight or flight" mechanism. Continual exposure lowers the body's ability to cope with additional forms of psychological or physiological stress.

The results of continuing stress may cause disruption in one or more of the following areas of health: physical, emotional, spiritual and/or social.

Recognizing Stress
The following are indicators that you may be experiencing

- General irritability
- Elevated heart rate
- Increased blood pressure
- Increased accident proneness
- Floating anxiety-anxious feeling for no specific reason
- Trembling
- Insomnia
- Headaches
- Indigestion
- Pain in neck and/or lower back
- Changes in appetite or sleep pattern

Stress is a process that builds. It's more effective to intervene early in
the process rather than later. Try to become aware of the signs that suggest the process has begun.

**Stress Management Strategies**
The following are tips on how to maintain a healthier lifestyle and to prepare you to cope with the stress of everyday living.

1. Structure each day to include a minimum of 20 minutes of aerobic exercise.

2. Eat well balanced meals, more whole grains, nuts, fruits and vegetables. Substitute fruits for desserts.

3. Avoid caffeine. The substance may aggravate anxiety, insomnia, nervousness and trembling.

4. Reduce refined sugars. Excess sugars cause frequent fluctuation in blood glucose levels, adding stress to the body's physiological functioning.

5. Reduce alcohol and drugs. These substances may add to headaches and swelling, decrease coping mechanisms and add to depression.

6. Get at least 7 hours of sleep nightly.

7. Spend time each day with at least one relaxation technique - imagery, daydreaming, prayer, yoga or meditation.

8. Take a warm bath or shower.

9. Go for a walk.

10. Get in touch! Hug someone, hold hands, or stroke a pet. Physical contact is a great way to relieve stress.