

Stress Quiz: How Stressed Are You?

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. Enter a number in the box for each question. When you complete the questionnaire, add up your total number of points and type it in the box. An answer key is provided below.

1. Do you try to do as much as possible in the least amount of time?
2. Do you become impatient 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 have been feeling non-productive and may need to add some stimulation to your life. A score between 31 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 significant and you are bordering on being excessively tense. If your total number of points exceeds 60, you may be a candidate for heart disease! Take some time for yourself and relax—the tips on the following page can help.

Beliefs that Lead to Stress

- We must be loved by everyone and everyone must approve of everything we do.
- We must be thoroughly competent, adequate, intelligent, and achieving in all possible respects.
- Certain acts are wrong or wicked or villainous, and people who perform them should be severely punished.
- It is a terrible catastrophe when things are not as we would like them to be.
- Unhappiness is the result of external events and happenings that are focused on us and that we have no control over.
- We should be greatly concerned about dangerous and fearful things and must center our thinking on them until the danger has passed.
- It is easier to avoid difficulties and responsibilities in life than to face them.
- We need someone or something stronger than ourselves to rely on.
- Because something greatly influenced us in the past, it must determine our present behavior: the influence of the past cannot be overcome.
- What other people do is vitally important to us, and we should make every effort to change them to be the way we think they should be.
- There is one perfect solution to every problem, and if it is not found, the results will be terrible.
- One has virtually no control over her emotions; she is their victim and cannot help how she feels.

Tips for Reducing Stress

- Accept only your own responsibility in situations.
- Set realistic expectations for yourself.
- Focus on the process rather than the results.
- Focus on successes rather than on failures.
- Develop your own personal definition of success, instead of society's.
- Be realistic about time expectations and perspectives.
- Remember, life does have troublesome problems. This is normal.
- Recognize that you will be criticized more than praised by parents, partners, and supervisors.
- Create variety: do old things in new ways.
- Make your work/study area more stimulating: redecorate, add music, change colors.
- Leave the office/campus for lunch and errands, if possible.
- Do paperwork immediately. Don't procrastinate.
- Ask others for positive feedback.
- Develop a hobby and spend time on it regularly.
- Learn and practice sound money management.
- Don't bring work home with you.
- Decrease television time.
- Keep physically fit — good diet and adequate exercise.
- Spend time in active family activities.