

Stress Management: A Review of Principles

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This document presents the core concepts of stress management education. It originally developed from the efforts of Kathy Hellweg and Wes Sime. It has been used as the Body of Knowledge for Certification in Stress Management Education.

(June '97) Appreciation goes to Tina Carter for incorporating the sound clips.

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You are being forwarded to Wes Sime's new web site.

The new URL is <http://tc.unl.edu/stress>

Please update you bookmarks accordingly.

Stress Management

Dr. Sime's
Information



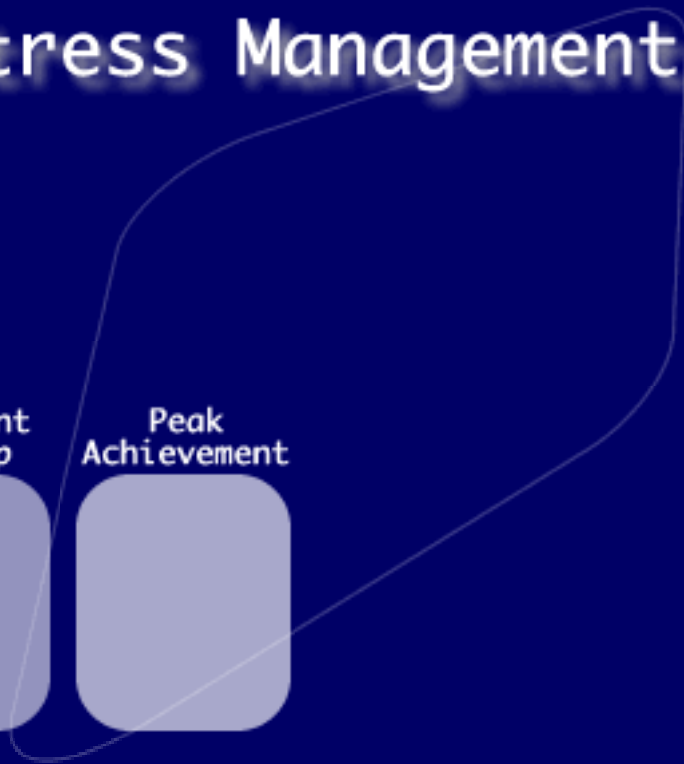
Class
Resources



Online
Stress
Management
Workshop



Peak
Achievement



Stress -- A Conceptual Understanding



1. Explain the concepts of stress in physiological terms describing arousal.
 - Excitement -- emotional reaction which elevates cognitive and physiological activity levels
 - Stimuli — Demands upon the system for physical or cognitive productivity.
2. Identify examples of eustress and distress citing Selye's theory.
 - Eustress = Positive exhilarating challenging experiences of success followed by higher expectations
 - Distress = Disappointment, failure, threat, embarrassment and other negative experiences
3. Explain the difference between stress management and stress reduction.
 - Stress Reduction = eliminating the source of stress making changes, taking action.
 - Stress Management = coping, recovery, re-interpretation, reframing cognitive restructuring.
4. Discriminate between stress, stressor, stress reaction, and strain.
 - Stress = General concept describing a "load" on the system, usually external, with humans it is internal.
 - Stressor = a specific problem, issue, challenge, personal conflict (External/internal)
 - Stress Reaction = an individual response to a given stressor (physiological, behavioral, emotional, cognitive, signs and symptoms)
 - Strain = the prolonged impact of a the stressor on the system (overload), fatigue, precursor to illness
5. Define the term stress reactivity noting cardiovascular research.
 - Hot reactor testing reveals unique physiological profiles of heart and vessel responses.
 - Monitor HR, BP, cardiac output and peripheral resistance during a stress test
 - Standardized challenge (mental arithmetic, video game) progressively increasing demands and frustrations.
 - Those at risk show exaggerated responses to a minimum stress load (over-reactive emotionally)
 - Research on the risk associated with reactivity is marginally supportive (not all studies show reactivity to be a risk factor)
6. Define the term stress stereotypy as determined by stress profiling
 - Stress stereotypy: unique individual response pattern comparable to fingerprinting.
 - Some are vascular responders (Heart rate, Blood pressure, hypertension)
 - Some are skeletal muscle responders (EMG — measures muscle tension)
 - Some respond peripherally (cold, sweaty hands). Blushing or blanching too.
 - Everyone has some variation in proportion of these responses.
 - Responses may vary according to intensity of stress and due to personal vulnerability
7. Explain the potential benefits of stress management training for the individual.
 - Learn to recognize and respond to early warning signs of overload and burnout

(headache and fatigue)

- Learn new models of effective stress management and pick those right for you (lifestyle, symptoms)
- Become aware of the immediate physical signs of stress (cold, sweaty hands, nervous tense)
- Recognize and respond to emotionally distressing events in your life (change exposure if possible)
- Learn to recognize speech patterns that reflect "tension" (rapid, accelerating, staccato, couplets)
- Develop more efficient and relaxing breathing patterns to reduce tension (abdominal breathing)
- Discover ways to use these warning signs as signals to change work or leisure circumstances to reduce stressors

8. Identify realistic goals/benefits of stress management training for organizations.

- reduced turnover (loss of valuable employees costs a great deal of time and money to replace)
- reduced sick leave, workers compensation and medical costs
- increased morale and decreased conflict, dissatisfaction
- enhanced performance, reduced errors, mistakes, accidents

9. Explain the limitations of stress management, noting research issues documenting its effectiveness.

- no guarantee that health risks are reduced, however many infectious and chronic diseases can be prevented
- no guarantee that medical illness can be cured. (spontaneous remission may be related to stress)
- no guarantee everyone responds well to training. (personality, background, habits may obviate success)
- potential risk of avoiding other psychological issues. (stress symptoms may be early manifestations of more serious psychological problems like anxious depression)

10. History of stress management training. Describe the historical development of stress management training, including the contributions of individuals such as Cannon, Selye, Mason and Lazarus.

- Walter Cannon: "Flight-or-Flight"
- Hans Selye: "General Adaptation Syndrome" (arousal, resistance, exhaustion)
- John Mason: Challenged "Non-Specific" response & Demonstrated unique specific responses to stress
- Richard Lazarus: "Appraisal and Coping" (primary and secondary appraisal)

11. Identify physical signs and symptoms of stress, including but not limited to: increased heart rate; pounding heart; elevated blood pressure; sweaty palms; tightness of the chest, neck, jaw and back muscles; headache; diarrhea; constipation; urinary hesitancy; trembling, twitching; stuttering and other speech difficulties; nausea; vomiting; sleep disturbances; fatigue; shallow breathing; dryness of the mouth or throat; susceptibility to minor illness, cold hands, itching; being easily startled; chronic pain and dyspnea.

12. Identify emotional signs and symptoms of stress, including but not limited to: irritability, angry outbursts, hostility, depression, jealousy, restlessness, withdrawal, anxiousness, diminished initiative, feelings of unreality or overalertness, reduction of personal involvement with others, lack of interest, tendency to cry, being critical of others, self-deprecation, nightmares, impatience, decreased perception of positive experience opportunities, narrowed focus, obsessive rumination, reduced self-esteem, insomnia, changes in eating habits and weakened positive emotional response reflexes.

 13. Identify cognitive/perceptual signs and symptoms of stress, including but not limited to: forgetfulness, preoccupation, blocking, blurred vision, errors in judging distance, diminished or exaggerated fantasy life, reduced creativity, lack of concentration, diminished productivity, lack of attention to detail, orientation to the past, decreased psychomotor reactivity and coordination, attention deficit, disorganization of thought, negative self-esteem, diminished sense of meaning in life, lack of control/need for too much control, negative self-statements and negative evaluation of experiences

 14. Identify behavioral signs and symptoms of stress, including but not limited to: increased smoking, aggressive behaviors (such as driving), increased alcohol or drug use, carelessness, under-eating, over-eating, withdrawal, listlessness, hostility, accident-proneness, nervous laughter, compulsive behavior and impatience.

 15. Stress vs. mental and/or physical illness Distinguish between stress symptoms and those symptoms which may indicate serious underlying physical or mental illness requiring referral to appropriate clinical professionals.
 - Red flags that indicate chronic symptoms (clinical experience needed)
 - Check whether medical clearance has been obtained (consult your doctor)
 - Know your limitations as an educator (caution, caution, caution)
 - Use experience to guide judgment about contra-indications (reasons not to use it)

 16. Recognize cultural, age-dependent and gender-dependent factors influencing susceptibility to stress.
 - Cultural: self-esteem, values, introversion/extroversion
 - Age-dependent: children's susceptibility, elderly persons at risk
 - Males: heart disease, stoicism, anger/hostility
 - Women: cancer, susceptibility to immune system disorders
-



Personality, Perception and Sources of Stress



1. **Explain the role of self-concept in an individual's perception of stress and ability to cope with stressors.**

- Self-concept
- Self-esteem
- Self-worth
- Self-acceptance
- Self-confidence
- Self-actualization
- Rudiments of perception - values, heritage, previous experience, trauma, family scripts

2. **Identify specific components of the Type A behavior pattern which are associated with coronary risk.**

- aggression
- irritation
- anger
- impatience
- hostility

3. **Distinguish between Type A and Type B personality patterns via various traits.**

- fast speech
- impatience
- competitiveness
- hard-driving
- achievement-oriented
- verbal sparring

4. **Explain the concept of locus of control as it relates to stress responses and stress management.**

- internal-external dominance (independence)
- choice and control versus fate and others in control
- under stressful circumstances the intensity of response is related to the feeling of control

or lack thereof

5. Explain the concept of learned helplessness as it relates to stress responses and stress management.

- Seligman demonstrated a helpless/hopeless syndrome which impairs survival efforts
- Learned helplessness - also produces chemical imbalance, depression and the tendency toward self-destructive thoughts and actions

6. Discriminate between assertive, passive, aggressive and passive/aggressive behavior.

- Assertive = standing up for legitimate rights
- Passive = acquiescing to pressure (implied or real)
- Aggressive = to go beyond legitimate rights to get revenge or to get special treatment or take advantage of others
- Passive/Aggressive = failing to be assertive in a direct manner and making covert efforts of aggression (sabotaging efforts or withholding customary rewards).

7. Explain the concept of perception as it is used in the interpretation of stressful events.

- Keeping things in perspective
- What is the worst possible outcome?
- Can we look for unexpected benefit during crises
- Make lemonade out of lemons

8. Identify and explain how these factors may influence an individual's cognitive appraisal of a stressor:

- Past experience(s).
- Personality.
- Cultural background.
- Moral values.
- Family background.
- Social support network.
- Gender.
- Life-style.
- Personal belief system.

9. Define cognitive appraisal as it relates to the amount of stress perceived.

- Assessment of the situation (immediate need?)
- Factor in past experience with similar problem
- Determine the potential sequences (worst possible outcome)
- Consider problem-solving options (take action)
- Make a decision regarding action vs. acceptance

10. **List Attitudes that are at high risk for burnout.**

"High Risk for Burnout" [sound clip](#) (aiff format - 1.6 Mg)

- Having very high ideals
- Always getting impatient/annoyed with others
- Feeling only your ideas are RIGHT!
- Blaming yourself ("shoulding on yourself")
- Having a tendency to always blame others
- Feeling like you have to do every job for yourself
- Feeling equally upset with minor hassles, etc. vs. something more serious
- Feeling you have more and more to do and less and less time to do it in
- Accepting social obligations that you know you will not have time for later
- Spending more time and energy on trivial tasks while avoiding the more difficult ones

11. **Define Stages of Burnout.**

"Stages of Burnout" [sound clip](#) (aiff format - 1.0 Mg)

- **Stage 1:** Early Stress Arousal
- **Stage 2:** Struggle & Resistance
- **Stage 3:** Exhaustion & Breakdown

12. **Describe the concept of hardiness as it relates to the perception of a stressful event.**

13. **Explain how attentional focus and/or level of concentration can distort one's perception of a stressor.**

- Attentional Focus = visual/auditory monitoring of events, circumstances or internal thoughts
- Fully attended focus on a neutral event prevents one from being affected by other stressors
- Failing to concentrate fully upon a central topic allows one to over-estimate the impact of a stressor

14. Describe how self-efficacy influences stress response.

- Efficacy = capacity to accomplish tasks
- Self-efficacy = perceived capability to handle problems, to overcome hardship
- Stress is minimal among those who look upon problems as opportunities to overcome adversity and to gain new experience
- a crisis can be a challenge or an opportunity for a change to something better (oriental philosophy)

15. Identify the major types of stressors:

- Psychological: Attitude, personality, self-esteem, ethnicity
- Give an example how one of these caused stress
- Physical: Environment, nutrition, drugs/chemicals
- Describe a situation where one caused added stress
- Role: Role conflict/ambiguity, multiple roles
- Describe a situation where one caused added stress
- Sociological: Political, economic, ethnic, cultural background Describe a situation in which one of these has influenced your stress level
- Physical Illness/Residual Disability: Birth defect/chronic illness
- Biomechanical Stressors: Job site design flaw (ie. carpal tunnel syndrome, repetitive motion)
- Stages of Human Development: Birth, adolescence, adulthood, maturity, death

16. Explain the concept of secondary stressor.

- Indirect effects spin-off from higher order source
- Loss of job = shortage of \$ = "hand me down" clothes = embarrassed child under stress

17. Describe the impact of change in life events

- Disruption of usual pattern of behavior
- Anticipation of future problems
- Accumulation of several difficult adjustments

18. The role of uncertainty causing stress.

- Some individuals have need for control
- Uncertainty leaves one feeling "out of control"
- Lacking control is a threat to some people

19. Overload and Burnout at Work (Stress Arousal Stage)

- Persistent irritability and anxiety
- Bruxism and/or Insomnia
- Occasional forgetfulness and/or inability to concentrate

20. **Overload and Burnout (Stress Resistance Stage)**

- Absenteeism or tardiness for work
- Tired and fatigued for no reason
- Procrastination and indecision
- Social withdrawal with cynicism
- Resentful, indifferent, defiant
- Increased use of coffee, alcohol, tobacco, etc.

21. **Overload and Burnout (Severe Exhaustion Stage)**

- Chronic sadness or depression
- Chronic mental and physical fatigue
- Chronic stress related illnesses (headache, stomach ache, bowel problems, etc.)
- Isolation, withdrawal, self-destructive thoughts

22. **Self-generated stressors: unnecessary worry**

- Making mountains out of mole-hills
- What other statements describe this phenomenon?
- Give examples of unnecessary worry
- Describe the stress responses you observed

23. **Factors causing maladaptive stress**

- Losing sleep worrying about problem
- Overeating or failing to eat due to worry
- What other factors have you seen?

24. **Intensity, duration and frequency of stressful event**

- Intensity - the level, degree, extent of upset
- Duration - short, moderate, long (second to years)
- Frequency - how often does the issue arise

25. **Distinguish between defense mechanisms and coping mechanisms**

Usual Defense	Coping Strategy
Repression (blocking out)	Letting go of the past
Denial (refusal to accept)	Maintain hope for the better
Displacement (take it out on others)	Take it out on a punching bag
Projection (blaming others)	Help others get over it
Rationalization (excuses)	Re-structure the incident



Psychophysiology: the body's response to emotional states



1. Autonomic Nervous System

- Involuntary, vegetative functions
- Heart rate, blood pressure, blood flow....
- Influenced greatly by cognition/thoughts

2. Sympathetic vs. Parasympathetic Dominance

- Battle=accelerator vs. the brake
- Emergency response and recovery

3. Skeletal/Muscular System

- Facial muscles: expression/mastication
- Jaw Clenching (can lead to bruxism -- teeth grinding)
 - "Jaw Clenching" [sound clip](#) (aiff format --370 K)
- Neck/Back: alignment, support, balance

4. Central Nervous System

- Control of skeletal muscle system
- Contraction beyond functional needs
- Dysponesis, bracing and spasm
- Sense of touch, temperature and heat

5. Endocrine System

- Hormones in prep for battle/injury
- Immediate, intermediate response

6. Respiratory System

- Ventilation: oxygen/CO2 exchange
- Hyperventilation: disrupted rate and depth

- Thoracic vs. abdominal breath patterns

7. Cardiovascular System

- Myocardium: Output (rate/pressure)
- Circulation: perfusion of tissue
- Vasoconstriction..dilation,vasospasm
- Long term stress reaction/struggle

8. Immune System

- Resistance to disease and infection
- WBC's, T-lymphocytes, killer cells
- Depression = immunosuppressor



Physiological connection between events and stress responses



1. Explain the concept of homeostasis

- Maintaining same internal status
- Struggle to return to stability, normal condition
- Body thermostat = shivering, sweating or normal
- Hunger & thirst response to deficiency
- Blood glucose and insulin balance

2. Explain "General Adaptation Syndrome" -- Selye

- Alarm Reaction: short term, acute, response
- Resistance: intermediate hormonal response
- Exhaustion: prolonged worry/fatigue/breakdown

3. Explain "Fight-or-Flight" Response -- Cannon

- Survival response: potent, immediate
- Elicits potential for extra-ordinary strength
- Usually unnecessary in twentieth century, western world
- Creates high potential for cardiovascular spasms and sudden death

4. Explain "Appraisal and Coping" -- Lazarus

- Daily hassles and uplifts
- Inputs, outputs, responses and mediators
- Adaptation to frequency, severity and content of real and imagined events

5. John Mason contradicts the argument of Hans Selyes' "Non-Specific" Response

- Endocrine system has very specific response to different stressors
- Individuals respond in stereotypic manner

6. The concept: Relaxation Response

- Trophotropic slowing of metabolism
- General decrease in muscle tension throughout the body
- Differs from functional, differential relaxation

7. Explain individual unique stress profile.

- Compare two individuals and their stereotypical responses
- Evaluate your awareness of these responses

8. Specific localized stress response and the General Adaptation Syndrome.

- Singular isolated responses vs. overwhelming systemic "stressed out" reactions

9. The relaxation response according to the Benson.

- Herbert Benson (Harvard Medical School)
- Author of book "Relaxation Response"
- Non-cultic meditation: focal point/attention
- Universally active & appropriate for all
- Lehrer reports contradicting evidence that various relaxation techniques have unique effects



Stress Pathophysiology and Stress-Related Disorders



1. Identify possible physical disorders caused by or exacerbated by stress:

- hypertension
- cardiovascular disorders
- migraine and tension headaches
- cancer
- arthritis
- respiratory disease
- ulcers
- colitis
- muscle tension problems.

2. Identify possible emotional disorders caused by or exacerbated by stress:

- anxiety
- panic attack
- depression
- adjustment disorders.

3. Identify possible behavioral disorders caused by or exacerbated by stress:

- conduct disorders
- eating disorders
- alcoholism
- hyperchondricism

4. Discuss the relationship between stress and illness.



The Relationship Between Lifestyle Behavior Patterns and Stressors/Stress Response



1. **Explain how stress is influenced by specific dietary deficits and excesses:**
 - Physiological arousal is exaggerated
 - Behaviors may be altered dramatically
 - caffeine
 - sugar
 - fatty foods
 - sodium
 - alcohol
 - nicotine.

2. **List three vitamins that are depleted in the body during prolonged periods of stress.**
 - Vitamin C
 - Vitamin B complex
 - Vitamin D

3. **Sympathomimetic agents (e.g. caffeine, sugar)**
 - Describe the effect of reducing the intake of foods and over-the-counter medications which have high caffeine, sugar, sodium, alcohol and nicotine content.
 - Agents producing sympathetic nervous system responses
 - List several substances containing nicotine, caffeine and/or sugar

4. **Physiological/psychological effect of exercise in controlling or relieving stress.**
 - Ergotropic (work):metabolizes stress hormones
 - Vigorous motion breaks up bracing patterns
 - Mood-enhancing effect (anti-depressant)
 - Anxiolytic effect

5. **Sleep and ability to cope with stress.**

- Necessary recovery from effort/stress/strain
- Sleep: not restful amidst stress (nightmares)
- REM sleep influences quality of sleep
- Discuss your experience with stressful sleep

6. **Using cognitive and behavioral strategies, including relaxation, to improve sleep patterns.**

- Regular patterns of sleep onset and awakening
- Minimize disturbances (telephone) during sleep
- Use "cognitive set" to aid relaxation and sleep
- Thought stopping techniques and reminder list

7. **Sex and intimacy to reduce stress or stress inhibits satisfactory sexual response.**

- Security, comfort, social support and commitment
- Problems with impotency & difficulty achieving pregnancy
- Alleviating stress reactions may resolve the sexual dysfunction issues

8. **Recreational activities to unwind, to control stress but excess may be avoidance behavior**

- Leisure and recreation should be rejuvenating
- Avoidance (goofing off) linked to stress/worry

9. **Psychotropic medications for emotional stress**

- Antipsychotics = powerful medications for serious mental conditions
- Antidepressants = for sleep & pain control
- Anxiolytics = for panic attack (tranquilizers)
- Sedative/hypnotics = sleep onset/continuity
- Antimanic Drugs = for treatment of the manic (euphoric phase of some depressed patients)

10. **Understand that anxiolytics and sedative/hypnotics are the most commonly prescribed medications for stress-related problems.**

- Medications are for short term treatment

- Cognitive behavioral techniques used to facilitate readjustment and replace medications

11. **Do not discourage the use of medical prescriptions.**

- Some people may need medications for stress related symptoms, treatment for depression and anxiety
- Treatment may be needed above and beyond stress management
- Ethical principle: heed medical advise

12. **Dependence on prescribed medications**

- Dependence upon medications is comparable to other substance abuse
- Secondary gain = maintaining symptoms unnecessarily for attention; for some, it may be the only way to get social support
- Differentiate between appropriate medications for short-term situational stressors and long-term prescriptions risking dependency
- In all circumstances it is prudent to refer participant to medical personnel in regard to these substances

13. **Know when to refer participants to medical personnel for answers to questions about these substances:**

- Antipsychotics
- Antidepressants
- Anxiolytics
- Sedative/hypnotics
- Antimanic Drugs

14. **Drugs abused through self-medication in misguided attempts to cope with life stressors:**

- Alcohol,
- Amphetamines
- Cannabis
- Cocaine
- Hallucinogens,
- PCP
- Opioids
- Inhalants
- Nicotine
- Sedatives
- Hypnotics
- Anxiolytics, etc.



Decision Making Under Stress



"Decision Making Under Stress" [sound clip](#) (aiff format - 1.4 Mg)

1. The greater the stress, the greater the likelihood that a decision-maker will choose a risky alternative.
2. Groups experiencing substantive conflict more frequently employ creative alternatives to achieve more productive decisions than groups without conflict.
3. The greater the group conflict aroused by a crisis, the number of communication channels available to handle incoming information decrease.
4. During crisis, the ability of the group to handle difficult tasks requiring intensely focused attention is decreased.
5. The greater the stress, the greater the tendency to make a premature choice of alternatives for a correct response.
6. The greater the stress, the less likely that individuals can tolerate "ambiguity".
7. Under increasing stress, there is a decrease in productive thoughts and an increase in distracting

thoughts.

8. The greater the stress, the greater the distortion in perception of threat and poor judgment often occurs.
9. The greater the fear, frustration and hostility aroused by a "crisis", the greater the tendency to aggression and escape behaviors.
10. In a stressful situation (whether real or perceived stress), only immediate survival goals are considered which means that longer range considerations must be sacrificed.



Social and Environmental Change Strategies



1. Explain the following strategies:

- Assertiveness Training
- Time Management
- Decision Making
- Social Support
- Problem Solving
- Conflict Resolution
- Social Engineering
- Environmental Engineering

2. Identify signs of successful coping:

- the ability to carry out jobs effectively
- taking responsibility
- working well under rules and limits
- tolerating frustration
- adapting to change
- being reliable
- having a sense of belonging
- having a sense of humor and fulfillment
- being self-directed
- having a reasonable sense of self-reliance and independence

3. Discuss the relevance of socio-cultural factors when planning/providing stress management interventions.

4. Explain how "learning to assume responsibility for one's actions" is related to stress management.



Cognitive and Behavioral Interventions



1. **Explain the following intervention strategies and their applications:**
 - Behavioral Rehearsal
 - Cognitive Restructuring/Reframing
 - Stress Inoculation
 - Systematic Desensitization
 - Anger Management
 - Thought Stopping Techniques
 - Control and Perception of Control
 - Self-Esteem Enhancement
 - Goal Setting
 - Active (Reflective) Listening
 - Strategies for Coping with Deprivational Stress (Lack of Stimulation and Challenge)
 - Modification of Life-style (Nutrition, Sleep, etc.)
2. **Explain the concept of self-monitoring.**
3. **Discuss the importance of candid, two-way communication for stress management.**
 - "Unhealthy Stoicism" [sound clip](#) (aiff format - 260 K)
4. **Explain the use of cueing strategies in stress management training.**
5. **Explain the problem of resistance in changing behaviors that are stress-inducing.**
6. **Discuss the role of adaptation, flexibility and adjustment in stress management.**
 - "Making Adjustments" [sound clip](#) (aiff format - 430 K)
7. **Recognize appropriate physiological arousal**

- exercise
- anger
- struggles

8. Explain how each of the following self-evaluation instruments (questionnaires) can be used to facilitate awareness:

- locus of control
- Type A behavior
- self-esteem
- social support
- interpersonal skills
- physical activity
- nutrition
- eating patterns
- sleeping patterns
- coping skills.



Strategies to Achieve a Relaxation Response



1. **Identify each of the following techniques, providing the rationale for using each and its limitations:**
 - Progressive Muscle Relaxation
 - Autogenic Training
 - Diaphragmatic Breathing
 - Quieting Reflex
 - Imaging/Visualization
 - Meditation
 - Exercise/Yoga
2. **Identify the criteria to use for selecting appropriate techniques for different situations**
3. **Explain the role of the placebo effect in learning relaxation skills.**
4. **Discuss the importance of passive attention in learning physiological self-regulation relaxation skills**
5. **Troubleshoot problems with poor skill acquisition**
6. emotions surface during relaxation session
7. **Identify appropriate practice regimes make it feasible for selected relaxation strategies**
 - time
 - location, etc.
8. **Explain the need for frequent self-monitoring of stress and/or relaxation states during self-regulation training**
9. **Explain the need to teach generalization of skills so that these**

techniques can be applied in "real world" circumstances

10. **Recognize typical and atypical relaxation training responses**
11. **Explain how the following attributes may influence the relaxation training learning process both positively and negatively:**
 - personality
 - life-styles
 - individual differences, etc.
12. **Identify the contributions by individuals to the development of relaxation training:**
 - Jacobson
 - Schultz
 - Luthé
 - Benson
 - Stroebel, etc.
13. **Explain the need for medical referral/clearance prior to relaxation training for those individuals with complicated medical disorders:**
 - diabetes
 - hypertension
 - epilepsy, etc.
14. **Identify potential adverse effects during relaxation training for individuals:**
 - asthma
 - hypertension
 - ulcers
 - diabetes, etc.
15. **Explain the concept of dyspnea**
16. **Know basic emergency first-aid procedures**



Learning Theory for the Teaching of Stress Management



1. Identify the needs of the audience (individual or group).
2. Establish appropriate goals and specific learning objectives for specific training sessions.
3. Select appropriate content to match goals, learning objectives and time available.
4. Select appropriate teaching/learning strategies based on age, educational level, occupation, interest of participants, group size, length of training and training intervals, facilities and environment.
5. Sequence instructional strategies appropriately.
6. Explain the importance of establishing set, internal transition and pacing.
7. Provide opportunities for appropriate practice by participants.
8. Explain the importance of modeling.
9. Demonstrate good presentation skills.

10. Analyze group dynamics in simulated situations and identify strategies for handling specific situation, i.e. slow learners and resistant group members.
11. Evaluate understanding and skills acquisition.
12. Provide appropriate reinforcement and feedback.
13. Establish appropriate levels of mastery.
14. Select appropriate equipment, audio-visuals, instructional materials and facilities.
15. Evaluate training and modify it based on evaluation.
16. Establish a method for follow-up to evaluate effectiveness of the program for future development.
17. Explain the role of behavior modification strategies in promoting life-style change.
18. Apply motivational theory in designing instructional strategies for use with specific types of groups or individuals.
19. Discuss the importance of feedback and reinforcement in learning stress management coping skills.
20. Identify how part/whole learning is important in

teaching relaxation skills.

21. Explain the need for proper timing and progression in teaching intervention strategies.
22. Explain state-dependent learning.



Measurement of Stress Reactions and Relaxation Responses



1. Identify self-evaluation instruments (questionnaires) which facilitate awareness of stress responses.
2. Be aware of the clinical resources for psychological and psychophysiological assessment of more severe stress reactions.
3. Use simple thermometers/liquid crystal thermometry devices to demonstrate stress/relaxation responses.
4. Explain the limitations of single modality measurements, such as a thermometer, for assessing physiological responses.
5. Identify the types of biofeedback used for stress management applications.
6. Recognize how biofeedback can be used to illustrate the physiological response that occurs within the body during a stress response and a relaxation response.
7. Understand the elementary principles of biofeedback in order to communicate with clinicians when students become clients and are referred to other professionals.

8. Identify educational assessment instruments and their appropriate use, including biochemical assessment instruments, psychophysiological profiles, personality profiles, and psychosocial instruments.
9. Identify selection criteria, including the advantages and disadvantages of various assessment instruments for use in specific situations.
10. Explain the role of health history, life-style, attitudes and beliefs in assessing the role of stress in an individual's life.
11. Differentiate between self-awareness assessment instruments and empirical research evaluation tools.
12. Explain the law of initial values.



Stress Management Research and Experimental Design



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1. Understand the basics of research design.
 2. Apply current research results as an instructional tool in stress management training.
 3. Recognize the need to modify instructional strategies/content as a result of current research findings.
 4. Identify resources for reliable and relevant professional articles.
 5. Recognize the need for statistical expertise when carrying out research in stress management.



Professional Conduct and Ethical Practices



1. Be able to identify the ethical standards relevant to each of the following areas:
 - Copyright Laws
 - Exploitation
 - Conflict of Interest
 - Confidentiality
 - Advertising/Marketing
 - Contraindications
2. Assume personal responsibility for continuing education to maintain a current knowledge base in stress management.
3. Provide stress management education within the boundaries of his/her qualifications, competence, skill and training.
4. Make referrals to other professionals when appropriate.
Professional Conduct and Ethical Practices
5. Function as an educator and do not construe certification in stress management education as justification for independent clinical practice with patients.
6. Understand the personal responsibility/liability

involved in providing stress management education.

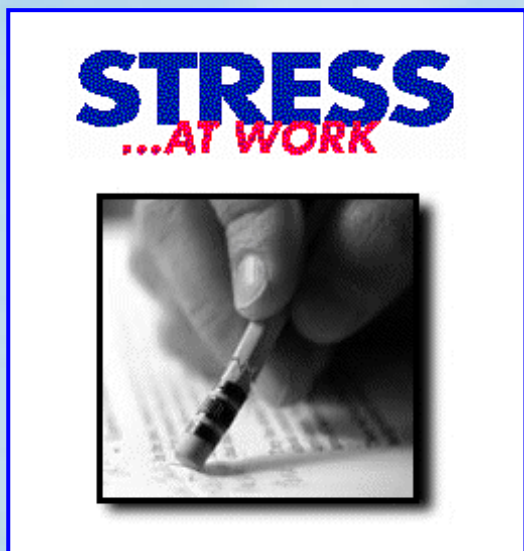
7. Model appropriate stress management techniques.
8. Know the procedures for dealing with unethical behavior of other stress management educators.



JOB STRESS



Numerous surveys and studies confirm that occupational pressures and fears are far and away the leading source of stress for American adults and that these have steadily increased over the past few decades. While there are tons of statistics to support these allegations, how significant they are depends on such things as how the information was obtained (self-report vs. answers to carefully worded questions), the size and demographics of the targeted group, how participants were selected and who sponsored the study. Some self-serving polls claiming that a particular occupation is "the most stressful" are conducted by unions or organizations in an attempt to get higher wages or better benefits for their members. Others may be conducted to promote a product, such as the "Stress In the Nineties" survey by the maker of a deodorant that found housewives were under more stress than the CEO's of major corporations. Such a conclusion might be anticipated from telephone calls to residential phones conducted in the afternoon. It is crucial to keep all these caveats in mind when evaluating job stress statistics.



The [NIOSH](#) report on the left is an excellent resource that cites the following:

- * 40% of workers reported their job was very or extremely stressful;
- * 25% view their jobs as the number one stressor in their lives;
- * Three fourths of employees believe that workers have more on-the-job stress than a generation ago;
- * 29% of workers felt quite a bit or extremely stressed at work;
- * 26 percent of workers said they were "often or very often burned out or stressed by their work";
- * Job stress is more strongly associated with health complaints than financial or family problems.

This information was obtained in the 1990's in large surveys by Northwestern National Life Insurance Co, Princeton Survey Research Associates, St. Paul Fire and Marine Insurance Co., Yale University and The Families and Work Institute.

More recently, the 2000 annual "**Attitudes In The American Workplace VI**" Gallup Poll sponsored by the Marlin Company found that:

- * 80% of workers feel stress on the job, nearly half say they need help in learning how to manage stress and 42% say their coworkers need such help;
- * 14% of respondents had felt like striking a coworker in the past year, but didn't;
- * 25% have felt like screaming or shouting because of job stress, 10% are concerned about an individual at work they fear could become violent;
- * 9% are aware of an assault or violent act in their workplace and 18% had experienced some sort of threat or verbal intimidation in the past year.

To read the 2001 "**Attitudes in the American Workplace VII**" report and take a quick "Workplace Stress" quiz created by the Marlin Company and The American Institute of Stress

[Click Here](#)

A subsequent **2000 Integra Survey** similarly reported that:

- * 65% of workers said that workplace stress had caused difficulties and more than 10 percent described these as having major effects;
- * 10% said they work in an atmosphere where physical violence has occurred because of job stress and in this group, 42% report that yelling and other verbal abuse is common;

- * 29% had yelled at co-workers because of workplace stress, 14% said they work where machinery or equipment has been damaged because of workplace rage and 2% admitted that they had actually personally struck someone;
- * 19% or almost one in five respondents had quit a previous position because of job stress and nearly one in four have been driven to tears because of workplace stress;
- * 62% routinely find that they end the day with work-related neck pain, 44% reported stressed-out eyes, 38% complained of hurting hands and 34% reported difficulty in sleeping because they were too stressed-out;
- * 12% had called in sick because of job stress;
- * Over half said they often spend 12-hour days on work related duties and an equal number frequently skip lunch because of the stress of job demands.

These findings are supported by other studies that put their significance in perspective.

Violence has become an increasingly serious problem

According to two studies the United States has the dubious distinction of having the highest violent crime rate of any industrialized nation. An average of 20 workers are murdered each week in the U. S. making homicide the second highest cause of workplace deaths and the leading one for females. 18,000 non-fatal violent crimes such as sexual and other assaults also occur each week while the victim is working, or about a million a year. The figures are probably higher since many are not reported. Certain dangerous occupations like police officers and cab drivers understandably have higher rates of homicide and non-fatal assaults. Nevertheless, postal workers who work in a safe environment have experienced so many fatalities due to job stress that "going postal" has crept into our language. "Desk rage" and "phone rage" have also become increasingly common terms.

Americans are working longer and harder

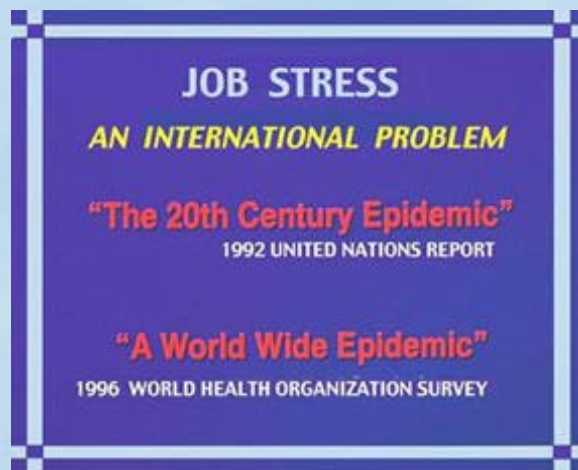
A 1999 government report found that the number of hours worked increased 8% in one generation to an average 47 hrs/week with 20% working 49 hrs/week. U.S. workers put in more hours on the job than the labor force of any other industrial nation, where the trend has been just the opposite. According to an International Labor Organization study, Americans put in the equivalent of an extra 40-hour work week in 2000 compared to ten years previously. Japan had the record until around 1995 but Americans now work almost a month more than the Japanese and three months more than Germans. We are also working harder. In a 2001 survey, nearly 40% of workers described their office environment as "most like a real life survivor program."

Absenteeism due to job stress has escalated

According to a survey of 800,000 workers in over 300 companies, the number of employees calling in sick because of stress tripled from 1996 to 2000. An estimated 1 million workers are absent every day due to stress. The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work reported that over half of the 550 million working days lost annually in the U.S. from absenteeism are stress related and that one in five of all last minute no-shows are due to job stress. If this occurs in key employees it can have a domino effect that spreads down the line to disrupt scheduled operations. Unanticipated absenteeism is estimated to cost American companies \$602.00/worker/year and the price tag for large employers could approach \$3.5 million annually. A 1997 three year study conducted by one large corporation found that 60% of employee absences could be traced to psychological problems that were due to job stress.

Stress due to job insecurity has skyrocketed

A 1999 government study reported that more jobs had been lost in the previous year than any other year in the last half century, and that the number of workers fearful of losing their jobs had more than doubled over the past decade. That was several years ago and the problem has worsened considerably since then. A February 2000 poll found that almost 50 percent of employees were concerned about retaining their job and with good reason. There were massive layoffs due to down-sizing and bankruptcies including the collapse of over 200 dot.com companies. The unemployment rate by the end of the year was the highest it had been in 16 months. Nor have things improved since then. A report released on September 10, 2001 stated that "more than 1 million Americans lost their jobs this year, 83% higher than last year's total." That was a day before the Twin Towers disaster, which added to the problems of job stress and insecurity for many workers. Since then we have witnessed the collapse of Enron and its tidal wave of repercussions on other companies and their employees. There are fears that this may be just the tip of the iceberg as accounting irregularities of a similar nature may augur the downfall of other large organizations widely assumed to be on a solid financial footing.



Nor is the problem limited to the U.S. A 1992 United Nations Report labeled job stress "The 20th Century Disease" and a few years later the World Health Organization said it had become a "World Wide Epidemic." A 1998 study reported that rapid changes in the workforce had resulted in a staggering unemployment rate of 10% in the European Union and higher rates of job stress complaints. Japan had a similar problem as a result of a major and prolonged recession. A subsequent European Commission survey found that:

- * more than half of the 147 million workers in the European Union complained of having to work at a very high speed and under tight deadlines;
- * approximately half reported having monotonous or short, repetitive tasks and no opportunity to rotate tasks.

Occupational pressures are believed responsible for:

- * 30% of workers suffering from back pain;
- * 28% complaining of "stress";
- * 20% feeling fatigued;
- * 17% having muscular pains;
- * 13% with headaches.

Job stress is also very costly with the price tag for U.S. industry estimated at over \$300 billion annually as a result of:

- accidents
- absenteeism
- employee turnover
- diminished productivity
- direct medical, legal, and insurance costs
- Workers' compensation awards as well as tort and FELA judgments



Consider the following statistics:

- * 40% of job turnover is due to stress.

- * Xerox estimated that it cost them \$1 to \$1.5 million to replace a top executive and that was two decades ago.
- * Replacing an average employee today costs between \$3,000 and \$13,000.
- * 60 to 80% of accidents on the job are stress related and some, like the Three Mile Island and Exxon Valdez disasters, can affect untold thousands many miles away.
- * In California, the number of Workers' compensation claims for mental stress increased by almost 700 percent over eight years and ninety percent were successful with an average award of \$15,000 compared to a national average of \$3,420.
- * In 1987, California shelled out almost \$1,000,000,000 for medical and legal fees alone, which is more than most states spend on actual awards.
- * Double digit increases in Workers' compensation premiums every year as a result of mental stress claims threaten to bankrupt the system in several states.
- * A jury in New York awarded nearly \$6 million in 1996 to three women for repetitive stress injury allegedly due to faulty computer keyboards.
- * Repetitive musculoskeletal injuries like carpal tunnel syndrome have become the nation's leading workplace health cost and account for almost a third of all Workers' compensation awards.
- * Studies show that keyboard entry operators who are under stress (because they are uncertain as to whether their activities are being monitored for performance evaluation), have a significantly higher incidence of such complaints and injuries.

Although we are often asked to construct lists of the "most" and "least" stressful occupations, such rankings have little importance for several reasons. It is not the job but the person-environment fit that matters. Some individuals thrive in the time urgent pressure cooker of life in the fast lane, having to perform several duties at the same time and a list of things to do that would overwhelm most of us — provided they perceive that they are in control. They would be severely stressed by dull, dead end assembly line work enjoyed by others who shun responsibility and simply want to perform a task that is well within their capabilities. The stresses that a policeman or high school teacher working in an inner city ghetto are subjected to are quite different than those experienced by their counterparts in rural Iowa. It is necessary to keep this in mind when sweeping statements are made about the degree of stress in teachers, police personnel, physicians and other occupations. Stress levels can vary widely even in identical situations for different reasons.

Stress is a highly personalized phenomenon and can vary widely even in identical situations for different reasons. One survey showed that having to complete paper work was more stressful for many police officers than the dangers associated with pursuing criminals. The severity of job stress depends on the magnitude of the demands that are being made and the individual's sense of control or decision-making latitude he or she has in dealing with them. Scientific studies based on this model confirm that workers who **perceive** they are subjected to high demands but have little control are at increased risk for cardiovascular disease.

Many more statistics and other information can be found in our [Informational Packages](#) that deal with such topics as: the financial repercussions of job stress, cost effectiveness of stress management training in the workplace, sources of workplace stress, signs and symptoms of stress, health effects of job stress, stress reduction strategies, tips on how to deal with stress, job stress in different demographic groups and occupations, the growing problem of repetitive stress musculoskeletal injuries, gender differences, rankings of stressful occupations based on the demand/control model and their proven adverse health consequences, etc. [Consultation Services](#) are also available for evaluation of specific job stress related health problems and workplace stress management training programs.

....People are disturbed not by things, but by their perception of things....

- Epictetus -

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[International Congress on Stress](#) [Mementos](#)

STRESS

...AT WORK



About NIOSH

The **National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health** (NIOSH) is the Federal agency responsible for conducting research and making recommendations for the prevention of work-related illness and injury. NIOSH is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; it is distinct from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), which is a regulatory agency located in the U.S. Department of Labor.

STRESS

...AT WORK

As part of its mandate, NIOSH is directed by Congress to study the psychological aspects of occupational safety and health, including stress at work. NIOSH works in collaboration with industry, labor, and universities to better understand the stress of modern work, the effects of stress on worker safety and health, and ways to reduce stress in the workplace.

STRESS

...AT WORK



Prepared by a NIOSH working group

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DHHS (NIOSH) Publication No. 99-101



STRESS...AT WORK

The nature of work is changing at whirlwind speed. Perhaps now more than ever before, job stress poses a threat to

the health of workers and, in turn, to the health organizations. Through its research program in job stress and through educational materials such as this booklet, NIOSH is committed to providing organizations with knowledge to reduce this threat.

This booklet highlights knowledge about the causes of stress at work and outlines steps that can be taken to prevent job stress.

Stress in Today's Workplace

The longer he waited, the more David worried. For weeks he had been plagued by aching muscles, loss of appetite, restless sleep, and a complete sense of exhaustion. At first he tried to ignore these problems, but eventually he became so short-tempered and irritable that his wife insisted he get a checkup. Now, sitting in the doctor's office and wondering what the verdict would be, he didn't even notice when Theresa took the seat beside him. They had been good friends when she worked in the front office at the plant, but he hadn't seen her since she left three years ago to take a job as a customer service representative. Her gentle poke in the ribs brought him around, and within minutes they were talking and gossiping as if she had never left.

"You got out just in time," he told her. "Since the reorganization, nobody feels safe. It used to be that as long as you did your work, you had a job. That's not for sure anymore. They expect the same production rates even though two guys are now doing the work of three. We're so backed up I'm working twelve-hour shifts six days a week. I swear I hear those machines humming in my sleep. Guys are calling in sick just to get a break. Morale is so bad they're talking about bringing in some consultants to figure out a better way to get the job done."

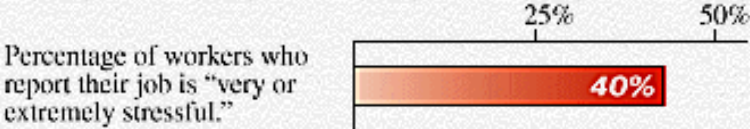


"Well, I really miss you guys," she said. "I'm afraid I jumped from the frying pan into the fire. In my new job, the computer routes the calls and they never stop. I even have to schedule my bathroom breaks. All I hear the whole day are complaints from unhappy customers. I try to be helpful and sympathetic, but I can't promise anything without getting my boss's approval. Most of the time I'm caught between what the customer wants and company policy. I'm not sure who I'm supposed to keep happy. The other reps are so uptight and tense they don't even talk to one another. We all go to our own little cubicles and stay there until quitting time. To make matters worse, my mother's health is deteriorating. If only I could use some of my sick time to look after her. No wonder I'm in here with migraine headaches and high blood pressure. A lot of the reps are seeing the employee assistance counselor and taking stress management classes, which seems to help. But sooner or later, someone will have to make some changes in the way the place is run."



What Workers Say About Stress on the Job

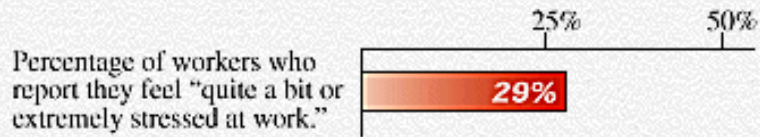
Survey by Northwestern National Life



Survey by the Families and Work Institute



Survey by Yale University



Scope of Stress in the American Workplace

David's and Theresa's stories are unfortunate but not unusual. Job stress has become a common and costly problem in the American workplace, leaving few workers untouched. For example, studies report the following:

- One-fourth of employees view their jobs as the number one stressor in their lives.

-Northwestern National Life

- Three-fourths of employees believe the worker has more on-the-job stress than a generation ago.

-Princeton Survey Research Associates

- Problems at work are more strongly associated with health complaints than are any other life stressor-more so than even financial problems or family problems.

-St. Paul Fire and Marine Insurance Co.

Fortunately, research on job stress has greatly expanded in recent years. But in spite of this attention, confusion remains about the causes, effects, and prevention of job stress. This booklet summarizes what is known about job stress and what can be done about it.

What is Job Stress?

Job stress can be defined as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker. Job stress can lead to poor health and even injury.

The concept of job stress is often confused with challenge, but these concepts are not the same. Challenge energizes us psychologically and physically, and it motivates us to learn new skills and master our jobs. When a challenge is met, we feel relaxed and satisfied. Thus, challenge is an important ingredient for healthy and productive work. The importance of challenge in our work lives is probably what people are referring to when they say "a little bit of stress is good for you."

But for David and Theresa, the situation is different-the challenge has turned into job demands that cannot be met, relaxation has turned to exhaustion, and a sense of satisfaction has turned into feelings of stress. In short, the stage is set for illness, injury, and job failure.



Job stress results when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker.

What are the Causes of Job Stress?

Nearly everyone agrees that job stress results from the interaction of the worker and the conditions of work. Views differ, however, on the importance of *worker characteristics* versus *working conditions* as the primary cause of job stress. These differing viewpoints are important because they suggest different ways to prevent stress at work.

According to one school of thought, differences in individual characteristics such as personality and coping style are most important in predicting whether certain job conditions will result in stress—in other words, what is stressful for one person may not be a problem for someone else. This viewpoint leads to prevention strategies that focus on workers and ways to help them cope with demanding job conditions.

Although the importance of individual differences cannot be ignored, scientific evidence suggests that certain working conditions are stressful to most people. The excessive workload demands and conflicting expectations described in David's and Theresa's stories are good examples. Such evidence argues for a greater emphasis on working conditions as the key source of job stress, and for job redesign as a primary prevention strategy.

In 1960, a Michigan court upheld a compensation claim by an automotive assemblyline worker who had difficulty keeping up with the pressures of the production line. To avoid falling behind, he tried to work on several assemblies at the same time and often got parts mixed up. As a result, he was subjected to repeated criticism from the foreman. Eventually he suffered a psychological breakdown.

By 1995, nearly one-half of the States allowed worker compensation claims for emotional disorders and disability due to stress on the job [note, however, that courts are reluctant to uphold claims for what can be considered ordinary working conditions or just hard work].

-1995 Workers Compensation Yearbook

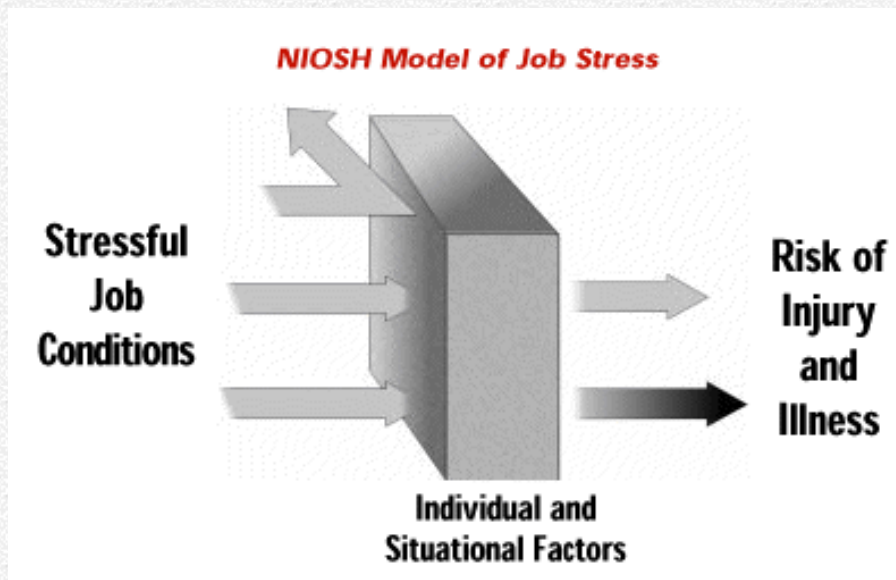
NIOSH Approach to Job Stress

On the basis of experience and research, NIOSH favors the view that working conditions play a primary role in causing job stress. However, the role of individual factors is not ignored. According to the NIOSH view, exposure to stressful working conditions (called job stressors) can have a direct influence on worker safety and health. But as shown below, individual and other situational factors can intervene to strengthen or weaken this influence. Theresa's need to care for

her ill mother is an increasingly common example of an individual or situational factor that may intensify the effects of stressful working conditions. Examples of individual and situational factors that can help to reduce the effects of stressful working conditions include the following:

- Balance between work and family or personal life
- A support network of friends and coworkers
- A relaxed and positive outlook

NIOSH Model of Job Stress



Job Conditions That May Lead to Stress

The Design of Tasks. Heavy workload, infrequent rest breaks, long work hours and shiftwork; hectic and routine tasks that have little inherent meaning, do not utilize workers' skills, and provide little sense of control.

Example: David works to the point of exhaustion. Theresa is tied to the computer, allowing little room for flexibility, self-initiative, or rest.

Management Style. Lack of participation by workers in decision-making, poor communication in the organization, lack of family-friendly policies.

Example: Theresa needs to get the boss's approval for everything, and the company is insensitive to her family needs.

Interpersonal Relationships. Poor social environment and lack of support or help from coworkers and supervisors.

Example: Theresa's physical isolation reduces her opportunities to interact with other workers or receive help from them.

Work Roles. Conflicting or uncertain job expectations, too much responsibility, too many "hats to wear."

Example: Theresa is often caught in a difficult situation trying to satisfy both the customer's needs and the company's expectations.

Career Concerns. Job insecurity and lack of opportunity for growth, advancement, or promotion; rapid changes for which workers are unprepared.

Example: Since the reorganization at David's plant, everyone is worried about their future with the company and what will happen next.

Environmental Conditions. Unpleasant or dangerous physical conditions such as crowding, noise, air pollution, or ergonomic problems.

Example: David is exposed to constant noise at work.

Job Stress and Health

Stress sets off an alarm in the brain, which responds by preparing the body for defensive action. The nervous system is aroused and hormones are released to sharpen the senses, quicken the pulse, deepen respiration, and tense the muscles. This response (sometimes called the fight or flight response) is important because it helps us defend against threatening situations. The response is preprogrammed biologically. Everyone responds in much the same way, regardless of whether the stressful situation is at work or home.

Short-lived or infrequent episodes of stress pose little risk. But when stressful situations go unresolved, the body is kept in a constant state of activation, which increases the rate of wear and tear to biological systems. Ultimately, fatigue or damage results, and the ability of the body to repair and defend itself can become seriously compromised. As a result, the risk of injury or disease escalates.

In the past 20 years, many studies have looked at the relationship between job stress and a variety of ailments. Mood and sleep disturbances, upset stomach and headache, and disturbed relationships with family and friends are examples of stress-related problems that are quick to develop and are commonly seen in these studies. These early signs of job stress are usually easy to recognize. But the effects of job stress on chronic diseases are more difficult to see because chronic diseases take a long time to develop and can be influenced by many factors other than stress. Nonetheless, evidence is rapidly accumulating to suggest that stress plays an important role in several types of chronic health problems-especially cardiovascular disease, musculoskeletal disorders, and psychological disorders.

Health care expenditures are nearly 50% greater for workers who report high levels of stress.

-Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine

Early Warning Signs of Job Stress

Headache
Sleep disturbances
Difficulty in concentrating
Short temper
Upset stomach
Job dissatisfaction
Low morale



Job Stress and Health: What the Research Tells Us

Cardiovascular Disease

Many studies suggest that psychologically demanding jobs that allow employees little control over the work process increase the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Musculoskeletal Disorders

On the basis of research by NIOSH and many other organizations, it is widely believed that job stress increases the risk for development of back and upper- extremity musculoskeletal disorders.

Psychological Disorders

Several studies suggest that differences in rates of mental health problems (such as depression and burnout) for various occupations are due partly to differences in job stress levels. (Economic and lifestyle differences between occupations may also contribute to some of these problems.)

Workplace Injury

Although more study is needed, there is a growing concern that stressful working conditions interfere with safe work practices and set the stage for injuries at work.

Suicide, Cancer, Ulcers, and Impaired Immune Function

Some studies suggest a relationship between stressful working conditions and these health problems. However, more research is needed before firm conclusions can be drawn.

-Encyclopaedia of Occupational Safety and Health

Stress, Health, and Productivity

Some employers assume that stressful working conditions are a necessary evil-that companies must turn up the pressure on workers and set aside health concerns to remain productive and profitable in today's economy. But research findings challenge this belief. Studies show that stressful working conditions are actually associated with increased absenteeism, tardiness, and intentions by workers to quit their jobs-all of which have a negative effect on the bottom line.

Recent studies of so-called healthy organizations suggest that policies benefiting worker health also benefit the bottom line. A healthy organization is defined as one that has low rates of illness, injury, and disability in its workforce and is also competitive in the marketplace. NIOSH research has identified organizational characteristics associated with both healthy, low-stress work and high levels of productivity. Examples of these characteristics include the following:

- *Recognition of employees for good work performance*
- *Opportunities for career development*
- *An organizational culture that values the individual worker*
- *Management actions that are consistent with organizational values*

Stress Prevention and Job Performance

St. Paul Fire and Marine Insurance Company conducted several studies on the effects of stress prevention programs in hospital settings. Program activities included (1) employee and management education on job stress, (2) changes in hospital policies and procedures to reduce organizational sources of stress, and (3) establishment of employee assistance programs.

In one study, the frequency of medication errors declined by 50% after prevention activities were implemented in a 700-bed hospital. In a second study, there was a 70% reduction in malpractice claims in 22 hospitals that implemented stress prevention activities. In contrast, there was no reduction in claims in a matched group of 22 hospitals that did not implement stress prevention activities.

-Journal of Applied Psychology

According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, workers who must take time off work because of stress, anxiety, or a related disorder will be off the job for about 20 days.

-Bureau of Labor Statistics



What Can Be Done About Job Stress?

The examples of Theresa and David illustrate two different approaches for dealing with stress at work.

Stress Management. Theresa's company is providing stress management training and an employee assistance program (EAP) to improve the ability of workers to cope with difficult work situations. Nearly one-half of large companies in the United States provide some type of stress management training for their workforces. Stress management programs teach workers about the nature and sources of stress, the effects of stress on health, and personal skills to reduce stress—for example, time management or relaxation exercises. (EAPs provide individual counseling for employees with both work and personal problems.) Stress management training may rapidly reduce stress symptoms such as anxiety and sleep disturbances; it also has the advantage of being inexpensive and easy to implement. However, stress management programs have two major disadvantages:

- The beneficial effects on stress symptoms are often short-lived.
- They often ignore important root causes of stress because they focus on the worker and not the environment.

Organizational Change. In contrast to stress management training and EAP programs, David's company is trying to reduce job stress by bringing in a consultant to recommend ways to improve working conditions. This approach is the most direct way to reduce stress at work. It involves the identification of stressful aspects of work (e.g., excessive workload, conflicting expectations) and the design of strategies to reduce or eliminate the identified stressors. The advantage of this approach is that it deals directly with the root causes of stress at work. However, managers are sometimes uncomfortable with this approach because it can involve changes in work routines or production schedules, or changes in the organizational structure.

As a general rule, actions to reduce job stress should give top priority to organizational change to improve working conditions. But even the most conscientious efforts to improve working conditions are unlikely to eliminate stress completely for all workers. For this reason, a combination of organizational change and stress management is often the most useful approach for preventing stress at work.

Preventing Stress at Work: A Comprehensive Approach



ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE



STRESS MANAGEMENT



A HEALTHY WORKPLACE

Reduced stress disorders
Satisfied and productive workers
Profitable and competitive organizations

How to Change the Organization to Prevent Job Stress

- Ensure that the workload is in line with workers' capabilities and resources.
- Design jobs to provide meaning, stimulation, and opportunities for workers to use their skills.
 - Clearly define workers' roles and responsibilities.
- Give workers opportunities to participate in decisions and actions affecting their jobs.
- Improve communications-reduce uncertainty about career development and future employment prospects.
 - Provide opportunities for social interaction among workers.
- Establish work schedules that are compatible with demands and responsibilities outside the job.

-American Psychologist

Preventing Job Stress - Getting Started

No standardized approaches or simple "how to" manuals exist for developing a stress prevention program. Program design and appropriate solutions will be influenced by several factors-the size and complexity of the organization, available resources, and especially the unique types of stress problems faced by the organization. In David's company, for example, the main problem is work overload. Theresa, on the other hand, is bothered by difficult interactions with the public and an inflexible work schedule.



Although it is not possible to give a universal prescription for preventing stress at work, it is possible to offer guidelines on the process of stress prevention in organizations. In all situations, the process for stress prevention programs involves three distinct steps: problem identification, intervention, and evaluation. These steps are outlined beginning on page 17. For this process to succeed, organizations need to be adequately prepared. At a minimum, preparation for a stress prevention program should include the following:

- Building general awareness about job stress (causes, costs, and control)
- Securing top management commitment and support for the program
- Incorporating employee input and involvement in all phases of the program
- Establishing the technical capacity to conduct the program (e.g., specialized training for in-house staff or use of

job stress consultants)

*Bringing workers or workers and managers together in a committee or problem-solving group may be an especially useful approach for developing a stress prevention program. Research has shown these participatory efforts to be effective in dealing with ergonomic problems in the workplace, partly because they capitalize on workers' firsthand knowledge of hazards encountered in their jobs. However, when forming such working groups, care must be taken to be sure that they are in compliance with current labor laws.**

**The National Labor Relations Act may limit the form and structure of employee involvement in worker-management teams or groups. Employers should seek legal assistance if they are unsure of their responsibilities or obligations under the National Labor Relations Act.*

Steps Toward Prevention

Low morale, health and job complaints, and employee turnover often provide the first signs of job stress. But sometimes there are no clues, especially if employees are fearful of losing their jobs. Lack of obvious or widespread signs is not a good reason to dismiss concerns about job stress or minimize the importance of a prevention program.

Step 1 - Identify the Problem. *The best method to explore the scope and source of a suspected stress problem in an organization depends partly on the size of the organization and the available resources. Group discussions among managers, labor representatives, and employees can provide rich sources of information. Such discussions may be all that is needed to track down and remedy stress problems in a small company. In a larger organization, such discussions can be used to help design formal surveys for gathering input about stressful job conditions from large numbers of employees.*

Regardless of the method used to collect data, information should be obtained about employee perceptions of their job conditions and perceived levels of stress, health, and satisfaction. The list of job conditions that may lead to stress (page 9) and the warning signs and effects of stress (page 11) provide good starting points for deciding what information to collect.

Objective measures such as absenteeism, illness and turnover rates, or performance problems can also be examined to gauge the presence and scope of job stress. However, these measures are only rough indicators of job stress-at best.

Data from discussions, surveys, and other sources should be summarized and analyzed to answer questions about the location of a stress problem and job conditions that may be responsible—for example, are problems present throughout the organization or confined to single departments or specific jobs?

Survey design, data analysis, and other aspects of a stress prevention program may require the help of experts from a local university or consulting firm. However, overall authority for the prevention program should remain in the organization.

- **Hold group discussions with employees.**
- **Design an employee survey.**
- **Measure employee perceptions of job conditions, stress, health, and satisfaction.**
- **Collect objective data.**
- **Analyze data to identify problem locations and stressful job conditions.**

Step 2 - Design and Implement Interventions. *Once the sources of stress at work have been identified and the scope of the problem is understood, the stage is set for design and implementation of an intervention strategy.*

In small organizations, the informal discussions that helped identify stress problems may also produce fruitful ideas for prevention. In large organizations, a more formal process may be needed. Frequently, a team is asked to develop recommendations based on analysis of data from Step 1 and consultation with outside experts.

Certain problems, such as a hostile work environment, may be pervasive in the organization and require company-wide interventions. Other problems such as excessive workload may exist only in some departments and thus require more narrow solutions such as redesign of the way a job is performed. Still other problems may be specific to certain employees and resistant to any kind of organizational change, calling instead for stress management or employee assistance interventions. Some interventions might be implemented rapidly (e.g., improved communication, stress management training), but others may require additional time to put into place (e.g., redesign of a manufacturing process).

Before any intervention occurs, employees should be informed about actions that will be taken and when they will occur. A kick-off event, such as an all-hands meeting, is often useful for this purpose.

- **Target source of stress for change.**
- **Propose and prioritize intervention strategies.**
- **Communicate planned interventions to employees.**
- **Implement interventions.**

Step 3 - Evaluate the Interventions. *Evaluation is an essential step in the intervention process. Evaluation is necessary to determine whether the intervention is producing desired effects and whether changes in direction are needed.*

Time frames for evaluating interventions should be established. Interventions involving organizational change should receive both short- and long-term scrutiny. Short-term evaluations might be done quarterly to provide an early indication of program effectiveness or possible need for redirection. Many interventions produce initial effects that do not persist. Long-term evaluations are often conducted annually and are necessary to determine whether interventions produce lasting effects.

Evaluations should focus on the same types of information collected during the problem identification phase of the intervention, including information from employees about working conditions, levels of perceived stress, health problems, and satisfaction. Employee perceptions are usually the most sensitive measure of stressful working conditions and often provide the first indication of intervention effectiveness. Adding objective measures such as absenteeism and health care costs may also be useful. However, the effects of job stress interventions on such measures tend to be less clear-cut and can take a long time to appear.

- **Conduct both short- and long-term evaluations.**
- **Measure employee perceptions of job conditions, stress, health, and satisfaction.**
- **Include objective measures.**
- **Refine the intervention strategy and return to Step 1.**

The job stress prevention process does not end with evaluation.

Rather, job stress prevention should be seen as a continuous process that uses evaluation data to refine or redirect the intervention strategy.

The following pages provide examples of actions some organizations have taken to help prevent stress in their workplaces.

Stress Prevention Programs: What Some Organizations Have Done

Example 1

A Small Service Organization. A department head in a small public service organization sensed an escalating level of tension and deteriorating morale among her staff. Job dissatisfaction and health symptoms such as headaches also seemed to be on the rise. Suspecting that stress was a developing problem in the department, she decided to hold a series of all-hands meetings with employees in the different work units of the department to explore this concern further. These meetings could be best described as brainstorming sessions where individual employees freely expressed their views about the scope and sources of stress in their units and the measures that might be implemented to bring the problem under control.



Using the information collected in these meetings and in meetings with middle managers, she concluded that a serious problem probably existed and that quick action was needed. Because she was relatively unfamiliar with the job stress field, she decided to seek help from a faculty member at a local university who taught courses on job stress and organizational behavior.

After reviewing the information collected at the brainstorming sessions, they decided it would be useful for the faculty member to conduct informal classes to raise awareness about job stress—its causes, effects, and prevention—for all workers and managers in the department. It was also decided that a survey would be useful to obtain a more reliable picture of problematic job conditions and stress-related health complaints in the department. The faculty member used information from the meetings with workers and managers to design the survey. The faculty member was also involved in the distribution and collection of the anonymous survey to ensure that workers felt free to respond honestly and openly about what was bothering them. He then helped the department head analyze and interpret the data.

Analysis of the survey data suggested that three types of job conditions were linked to stress complaints among workers:

- Unrealistic deadlines
- Low levels of support from supervisors
- Lack of worker involvement in decision-making.

Having pinpointed these problems, the department head developed and prioritized a list of corrective measures for implementation. Examples of these actions included (1) greater participation of employees in work scheduling to reduce unrealistic deadlines and (2) more frequent meetings between workers and managers to keep supervisors and workers updated on developing problems.

Example 2

A Large Manufacturing Company. Although no widespread signs of stress were evident at work, the corporate medical director of a large manufacturing company thought it would be useful to establish a stress prevention program as a proactive measure. As a first step he discussed this concept with senior management and with union leaders. Together, they decided to organize a labor-management team to develop the program. The team comprised representatives from labor, the medical/employee assistance department, the human resources department, and an outside human resources consulting firm. The consulting firm provided technical advice about program design, implementation, and evaluation. Financial resources for the team and program came from senior management, who made it clear that they supported this activity. The team designed a two-part program. One part focused on management practices and working conditions that could lead to stress. The second part focused on individual health and well-being.



To begin the part of the program dealing with management practices and job conditions, the team worked with the consulting firm to add new questions about job stress to the company's existing employee opinion survey. The survey data were used by the team to identify stressful working conditions and to suggest changes at the work group and/or organizational level. The employee health and well-being part of the program consisted of 12 weekly training sessions. During these sessions, workers and managers learned about common sources and effects of stress at work, and about self-protection strategies such as relaxation methods and improved health behaviors. The training sessions were offered during both work and nonwork hours.

The team followed up with quarterly surveys of working conditions and stress symptoms to closely monitor the effectiveness of this two-part program.

These examples are based on adaptations of actual situations. For other examples of job stress interventions, see the Conditions of Work Digest, Vol. 11/2, pp. 139-275. This publication may be obtained by contacting the ILO Publications Center at P.O. Box 753, Waldorf, MD 20604 (Telephone: 301-638-3152). Or call NIOSH at 1-800-35-NIOSH.

Need Additional Information?

• More about NIOSH

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)

4676 Columbia Parkway

Cincinnati, Ohio 45226-1998

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh>

1-800-35-NIOSH

Outside the U.S.: 1-513-533-8328

NIOSH provides information and publications about a wide range of occupational hazards, including job stress. NIOSH information about job stress can be found on the NIOSH job stress internet page

(<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/jobstres.html>), or call [1-800-35-NIOSH](tel:1-800-35-NIOSH) (1-800-356-4674)

• More Information about Job Stress

The Encyclopaedia of Occupational Health and Safety, 4th Edition

(ISBN 92-2-109203-8) contains a comprehensive summary of the latest scientific information about the causes and effects of job stress (see Vol. 1, Chapter 5, Mental Health; Vol. 2, Chapter 34, Psychosocial and Organizational Factors).

International Labour Office (ILO) Publications Center

P.O. Box 753

Waldorf, MD 20604

301-638-3152

• **Other Publications about Job Stress**

Go to the NIOSH job stress internet site (<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/jobstres.html>), or call the NIOSH 800 number ([1-800-35-NIOSH](tel:1-800-35-NIOSH)).

• **Location of a Psychologist or Consultant in Your Area**

American Psychological Association (APA)
750 First St., N.E.
Washington, DC 20002-4242

1-800-964-2000
fax: 202-336-5723

State psychological associations maintain a listing of licensed psychologists who may be able to help with stress-related issues. Call the APA or your State psychological association for more information, or refer to the APA internet site with this information <http://helping.apa.org/find.html>.

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For further information about the survey or the data, please call The Marlin Company at 1-800-344-5901, or you may call company President Frank Kenna, III evenings at 203-483-7893 or Managing Editor, Ed LaFreniere at 860-664-9411.



Attitudes in the American Workplace VII

The Seventh Annual Labor Day Survey

Telephone Polling for The Marlin Company by Harris Interactive

Summary of the findings:

Stress: More than a third of workers (35%) say their jobs are harming their physical or emotional health and 42% say job pressures are interfering with their personal relationships; half say they have a more demanding workload this year than last.

The Workplace Stress Scale™: The Marlin Company and the American Institute of Stress have created a quick test for people to measure their job stress levels and compare themselves with the rest of the American work force.

Bullying: It goes hand in hand with anger and stress and low job satisfaction – and 19% of us say it's happened in our workplace in the last year.

The American Dream? 73% of American workers say they would NOT want their boss's job!

Note to Media: The telephone survey was conducted by Harris Interactive from May 31 to June 17, 2001. The sample consisted of 751 American workers, 18 or older, employed either full- or part-time. The margin of error is plus or minus 3.6 percentage points.

Major findings:

The vast majority of American workers say they are stressed, more than a third say that their job is harming their physical or emotional well-being, 42% say job pressures are interfering with their family or personal lives, and half report more demanding workloads than they had a year ago.

Those are among the main conclusions of “*Attitudes in the American Workplace VII*,” the seventh annual Labor Day poll by The Marlin Company, a North Haven, CT, workplace communications firm that publishes motivational, educational and safety materials for companies throughout North America.

The telephone survey, conducted by Harris Interactive, also showed that roughly half of workers (48%) say that they at least sometimes have too many unreasonable deadlines and/or too much work to do and that 42% feel they sometimes, rarely or never have adequate control or input over their work duties.

- **Bullying:** One worker in five (19%) is aware of physical or verbal bullying in his or her workplace in the last year. Those who said they are aware of it reported higher anger and stress levels, lower satisfaction levels and generally more negative views of the workplace than those who said they were not aware of it. And on our annual question about whether in the past year a respondent had been angered by a co-worker to the point where he or she felt like striking the other person but didn't, 15% said yes, virtually the same as last year. But among those who said they were aware of bullying, the percentage of those who said yes was 38%, as opposed to 10% of those who said they were *not* aware of it.

“Half of American workers say that they have a more demanding workload this year than they did a year ago, and 38% say they are feeling more pressure at work this year,” said Frank Kenna III, President of The Marlin Company. “Stress has become the emotional toothache of the workplace. It leads to serious impairment that can cause big mistakes and serious injuries. As the economy worsens, we need the equivalent of a root canal – employers need to help educate their people on how to fight the infection and ease the pain.”

Take this quiz

The Workplace Stress Scale™

**Copyright © The Marlin Company, North Haven, CT,
and the American Institute of Stress, Yonkers, NY**

Thinking about your current job, how often does each of the following statements describe how you feel?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
A. Conditions at work are unpleasant or sometimes even unsafe.	1	2	3	4	5
B. I feel that my job is negatively affecting my physical or emotional well being.	1	2	3	4	5
C. I have too much work to do and/or too many unreasonable deadlines.	1	2	3	4	5
D. I find it difficult to express my opinions or feelings about my job conditions to my superiors.	1	2	3	4	5
E. I feel that job pressures interfere with my family or personal life.	1	2	3	4	5
F. I have adequate control or input over my work duties.	5	4	3	2	1
G. I receive appropriate recognition or rewards for good performance.	5	4	3	2	1
H. I am able to utilize my skills and talents to the fullest extent at work.	5	4	3	2	1

To get your score, add the numbers you answered to all of the eight questions and see how you compare.

Interpreting Workplace Stress Scale™ scores

Total score of 15 or lower (33% of us are in this category): Chilled out and relatively calm. Stress isn't much of an issue.

Total score 16 to 20 (35%): Fairly low. Coping should be a breeze, but you probably have a tough day now and then. Still, count your blessings.

Total score 21-25 (21%): Moderate stress. Some things about your job are likely to be pretty stressful, but probably not much more than most people experience and are able to cope with. Concentrate on seeing what can be done to reduce items with the worst scores.

Total score 26-30 (9%): Severe. You may still be able to cope, but life at work can sometimes be miserable. Several of your scores are probably extreme. You could be in the wrong job, or even in the right job but at the wrong time, and might benefit from counseling.

Total score 31- 40 (2%): Stress level is potentially dangerous – the more so the higher your score. You should seek professional assistance, especially if you feel your health is affected, or you might need to consider a job change.

Workplace Stress Scale™ scores by demographic:

Overall: 18.4.....Men: 18.6.....Women: 18.1
Ages 18-34: 17.6.....Ages 35-49: 19.2.....Ages 50+: 18.4

SOME USEFUL TIPS ON REDUCING STRESS

- Analyze all the items showing high stress levels and figure out how to rein them in, particularly if you feel your health is being significantly affected. But keep in mind that any such scale, along with its categories, is subjective and that some stressors, such as deadlines, can actually have positive consequences.
- Remember that stress differs for all of us. Things like bungee jumping that are distressful for some may be pleasurable for others. Similarly, no stress-reduction technique works for everyone. Jogging, meditation or yoga are great for some but can actually prove stressful when arbitrarily imposed on others. Find out what works for you.
- Don't automatically assume that your headaches or other complaints are stress-related just because you have a high job stress score. A physician should always be consulted if you experience new symptoms, or if past problems seem to be getting worse, because they may be due to something else that is much easier to treat in its early stages.
- Finally, although stress is difficult to define, the feeling of having little control is always distressful. Anything you can do to gain more control over your daily activities will provide powerful stress reduction rewards.

Detailed results of the survey, by category

Stress

- 82% of workers report that they are at least a little stressed at work: 6% extremely stressed, 12% quite a bit, 34% somewhat, 30% a little, and 18% not at all.
- 50% say they and their fellow workers have a more demanding workload than they had a year ago.
- 38% say they are feeling more pressure at work this year than they were a year ago.
- 35% say their job is negatively affecting their physical or emotional well-being: 20% sometimes, 8% often and 7% very often.
- 48% say they have too much work to do and/or too many unreasonable deadlines: 27% sometimes, 14% often and 8% very often.
- 42% say that job pressures interfere with their family or personal life: 25% sometimes, 10% often and 7% very often.
- 42% say they at least sometimes do not have adequate control or input over their work duties: 8% never, 8% rarely and 26% sometimes.
- 30% say that conditions at work are at times unpleasant or even unsafe: 18% sometimes, 6% often and 6% very often.
- 36% say they at least sometimes find it difficult to express their opinions or feelings about their job conditions to their superiors: 19% sometimes, 8% often and 9% very often.
- What causes the majority of stress in your life? 28% said workplace demands; 21% family or personal demands; 42% said both equally; 8% said neither, and 2% said they don't feel stressed. Those who said that workplace demands cause the bulk of their stress are much more likely to have high (i.e., negative) scores on the Workplace Stress Scale™ than those who say more of their stress comes from family or personal demands.
- 26% said they rarely or never receive appropriate recognition or rewards for good performance (11% never, 15% rarely). And 30% said only sometimes. Fewer than half said they are recognized or rewarded frequently (26% often and 18% very often).
- 30% disagreed (8% of them strongly) with the statement that the management where they work is sufficiently sensitive to the needs, conflicts or other problems that are stressful for employees. And 27% disagreed (8% of them strongly) that management is sufficiently helpful in resolving such needs, conflicts or other problems.

Bullying

- 19% say that in the past year, they have witnessed or been aware of bullying – that is, physical or verbal bullying – in their workplace.
- Those who reported lower job satisfaction levels, higher anger levels, higher stress levels and more demanding workloads were more likely to say they were aware of bullying.
- Bullying is tied to attitudes: 35% of those who said negative attitudes are more likely to spread in their workplace than positive attitudes said they were aware of bullying, compared with 8% of those who said that positive attitudes were more likely to spread than negative attitudes.
- Bullying and stress: 46% of those who said they were aware of bullying also said that the majority of their stress comes from workplace demands (as opposed to 23% of those who said they were *not* aware of bullying).
- Regarding those who were aware of bullying vs. those who were *not* aware: Those who were aware of it had higher (more negative) scores on the Workplace Stress Scale™ and also were more likely to say that they are feeling more pressure at work this year than they were a year ago and have more demanding workloads than they had a year ago; are more than three times more likely to say that they had been angered by a coworker in the past year to the point where they felt like striking him or her but didn't; and are more than twice as likely to disagree with the statements that management is either sufficiently sensitive to, or sufficiently helpful in resolving, the needs, conflicts or other problems that are stressful for employees.

“A bully poisons the well of the entire workplace,” said Frank Kenna, III, President of The Marlin Company. “Where bullying exists, workers report higher stress and anger levels, lower job satisfaction and more negative attitudes. The lesson for managers is that if you have a bully, deal with him or her right away. Develop standards on acceptable – and unacceptable – behavior, and create a non-threatening method of reporting abusive behavior. It’s too easy to rationalize and to think, ‘I need this person. I’m going to hope this goes away.’ Fifty people under that person may be miserable and **THEY may go away.”**

Want your boss's job? No way!

Seventy-three percent of workers in the survey said they would NOT want the boss's job.

Unmarried people, those with children under 18, and younger workers were slightly more inclined to say they'd want it, as were those who were only marginally less stressed, less angry and more satisfied. But the desire – or lack thereof – for the boss's job had virtually nothing to do with type of occupation, education level or whether the workload had increased in the last year. Those with the highest incomes, more than \$75,000, were most likely to say they wanted the boss's job (37% of them said they'd want it, as did 29% of those earning less than \$20,000 a year; 19% of those earning \$20,000 to \$34,999; 25% of those at \$35,000 to \$49,999, and 22% of those between \$50,000 and \$74,999.

“What exactly IS the ‘American Dream’ these days?” asked Frank Kenna, III, President of The Marlin Company. “Traditionally, many of us think of climbing the corporate ladder as the path to success. But our findings soundly refute this. Today, people find it important to strike a balance between dedication to their professional lives, spending time with their families and pursuing personal goals. The lock-step march toward corporate advancement has been pushed aside by a desire to live life to the fullest.”

Added Ed LaFreniere, Managing Editor of The Marlin Company: “The economic expansion of recent years has enabled many workers to find jobs for which they are well-suited, both economically and temperamentally. The question people are asking is, ‘Why should I make myself miserable in a job I hate – especially if it will mean more hours and more headaches in a no-win situation? Why shouldn't I continue to feel a sense of accomplishment while enjoying a reasonable comfort level – and still save a lot of energy for the things that matter most outside of work?’”

The questions

NOTE: Following are the overall raw-data responses to the questionnaire. Percentages may total slightly less or more than 100 because of rounding.

1. Thinking about your current job, please tell me how often each of the following statements describes how you feel. Please think of a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 represents “never,” 2 represents “rarely,” 3 represents “sometimes,” 4 represents “often,” and 5 represents “very often.” How often does the following describe how you feel:

1A. I have adequate control or input over my work duties.

Never.....8%
Rarely.....8%
Sometimes..... 26%
Often.....29%
Very often.....29%

1B. Conditions at work are unpleasant or sometimes even unsafe.

Never.....48%
Rarely.....23%
Sometimes.....18%
Often.....6%
Very often.....6%

1C. I receive appropriate recognition or rewards for good performance.

Never.....11%
Rarely.....15%
Sometimes.....30%
Often.....26%
Very often.....18%

1D. I feel that my job is negatively affecting my physical or emotional well-being.

Never.....45%
Rarely.....21%
Sometimes.....20%
Often.....8%
Very often.....7%

1E. I have too much work to do and/or too many unreasonable deadlines.

Never.....29%
Rarely.....23%
Sometimes.....27%
Often.....14%
Very often.....8%

1F. I am able to utilize my skills and talents to the fullest extent at work.

Never.....6%
Rarely.....9%
Sometimes.....22%
Often.....30%
Very often.....33%

1G. I find it difficult to express my opinions or feelings about my job conditions to my superiors.

Never.....42%
Rarely.....22%
Sometimes.....19%
Often.....8%
Very often.....9%

1H. I feel that job pressures interfere with my family or personal life.

Never.....37%
Rarely.....21%
Sometimes.....25%
Often.....10%
Very often.....7%

2. In general, how satisfied do you feel at work?

Extremely.....21%
Quite a bit.....32%
Somewhat.....30%
A little.....11%
Not at all.....5%

3. In general, how angry do you feel at work?

Extremely.....2%
Quite a bit.....7%
Somewhat.....18%
A little.....30%
Not at all.....43%

4. In general, how stressed do you feel at work?

Extremely.....6%
Quite a bit.....12%
Somewhat.....34%
A little.....30%
Not at all.....18%

5. Are you feeling more pressure at work this year than you were a year ago?

Yes.....38%
No.....59%

6. Would you say that you and your fellow workers have a more demanding workload than you had a year ago?

Yes.....50%
No.....46%

7. How concerned are you about losing your job in the next six months?

Very concerned.....7%
Somewhat concerned.....13%
Not very concerned.....21%
Not at all concerned.....59%

8. In the past year, have you witnessed or been aware of bullying, that is, physical or verbal bullying, in your workplace?

Yes.....19%
No.....80%

9. In the past year, have you been angered by a co-worker to the point where you felt like striking him or her but didn't?

(*Please note that 2001 survey was done by Harris Interactive. Prior surveys were done by the Gallup Organization.)

<u>2001*</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>1999</u>
Yes.....15%	Yes.....14%	Yes.....16%
No.....84%	No.....86%	No.....83%

10. Which of the following causes the majority of stress in your life?

Workplace demands.....28%
Family or personal demands.....21%
Both equally.....42%
Neither.....8%
Don't feel stressed.....2%

11. Which of the following statements best describes your workplace?

Positive attitudes are more likely to spread among employees.....55%
Negative attitudes are more likely to spread among employees.....40%
Not sure.....5%

**12. Thinking about management where you work, please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the following statement:
The management where I work is sufficiently sensitive to the needs, conflicts, or other problems that are stressful for employees:**

Strongly agree.....19%
Agree.....50%
Disagree.....22%
Strongly disagree.....8%

**13. Thinking about management where you work, please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the following statement:
The management where I work is sufficiently helpful in resolving needs, conflicts, or other problems that are stressful for employees:**

Strongly agree.....21%
Agree.....51%
Disagree.....19%
Strongly disagree.....8%

14. Would you want your boss's job?

Yes.....24%
No.....73%

INFORMATIONAL PACKETS

Informational Packets can be obtained on any stress or health related issue, especially those listed in our monthly [Newsletter](#) . Continually updated material is culled from medical and scientific publications as well as reliable lay media sources. Some frequently requested topics include:

- **Job Stress**
- **Stress in Specific Occupations**
- **Stress Management Techniques**
- **Stress Reduction Strategies**
- **Stress Reduction Effects of Social Support**
- **Stress Assessment Questionnaires**
- **Stress and Gender Differences**
- **Stress in Children**
- **Stress and Cardiovascular Disease**
- **Stress and Cancer**
- **Stress and Neurologic Disorders**
- **Stress and Obesity**
- **Stress and Aging**
- **Stress and Pain**
- **Stress Statistics (Job Stress Statistics or General Stress Statistics)**
- **Holiday Stress**
- **Post Traumatic Stress Disorder**
- **Subtle Energy Medicine (see [International Congress on Stress](#))**

Informational packets start at \$35.00 (per packet/topic) for approximately 15 pages of reprints with a reduced sliding scale for larger amounts. (\$10.00 additional for overseas orders.) Each packet is individually designed so please be as specific as possible about the information you require and how much you have budgeted for this.

A basic *Stress* Informational Packet is available for \$25.00 and contains the following:

- **information on the birth and development of the "stress" concept**
- **a list of 50 common signs and symptoms of stress**
- **ten crucial tips on how to deal with stress**
- **ten simple stress reduction exercises**
- **tips on how to prevent or relieve tension headaches**
- **assorted job stress statistics with references**
- **a short quiz to determine your level of job stress**

Requests may be sent by fax: (914) 965-6267, e-mail: stress125@optonline.net or surface mail to:

**Director of Communications
The American Institute of Stress
124 Park Avenue
Yonkers, New York 10703**

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CONSULTATION AND REFERRAL SERVICES



We are occasionally asked for referrals to authorities in various stress-related topics such as:

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Cardiovascular Disease - heart attacks, rhythm disturbances, congestive failure, hypertension, stroke, sudden death

Neurological and Psychiatric Disorders - tension headache, migraine, Parkinson's Disease, Alzheimer's and memory loss problems, multiple sclerosis anxiety and panic disorders, depression

Gastrointestinal Dysfunction - esophageal reflux, peptic ulcer, irritable bowel syndrome, regional ileitis, ulcerative colitis

Dermatological Complaints - itching, rashes, hives, angioneurotic edema, hair loss

Endocrine Disturbances - diabetes, hyperthyroidism, virilism

Job Stress - sources, manifestations, health and fiscal effects, designing and evaluating stress management training workplace programs

Stress Reduction Techniques -Meditation, Progressive Muscular Relaxation, Yoga, Biofeedback, Cognitive Restructuring, Behavioral Modification, Time Urgency, Assertiveness Training

Stress Assessment and Measurement Techniques

Type A Coronary Prone Behavior - measurement instruments, structured personal interview, behavioral modification, stress inoculation training

Stress in Different Demographic Groups – children, teens, the elderly, working women, specific occupations (CEO's, teachers, police officers, physicians, nurses, emergency service personnel).

Our Board Of Trustees and Fellows include individuals with expertise in the above areas and many are available for lectures, consultation or to serve as Expert Witnesses in Workers' Compensation, FELA and other litigation.

All inquiries and requests should be directed to:

Paul J. Rosch, M.D., President
The American Institute of Stress
124 Park Avenue
Yonkers, New York 10703

Phone: (914) 963-1200 «» Fax: (914) 965-6267 «» E-mail:
stress124@optonline.net

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Beat Job Stress - Starting Now!

Tackle the causes of stress, not just the symptoms. [More >>](#)



Stress Management Techniques

This stress management section of Mind Tools shows you how to survive and thrive under the intense stress that comes with a challenging career.

The first articles help you to understand stress and what causes it: This is an important starting point for effective stress management. They introduce you to the three main approaches to stress management, and then shows you how you can identify the key sources of stress in your life.

We then look at range of stress management techniques. Unlike other approaches to stress management, the Mind Tools approach is, where possible, to tackle stress at source. This means that not only do we show you how to deal with the symptoms of stress, we show you how to deal with the underlying causes as well.

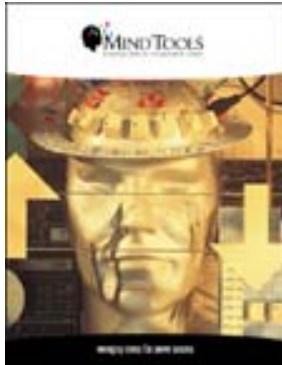
By the end of the section, you should have a much clearer understanding of stress and the importance of managing it. You should be able to analyze the points of pressure in your life, and plan to neutralize them. You will also have access to a wide range of different stress management techniques. Enjoy the articles below!

[James Manktelow](#) and the [Mind Tools Stress Team](#)

- [Stress Management - What you need to know about stress](#)
- [Stress Diary](#) - Identifying the short-term stress in your life
- [Job Analysis](#) - The first step in managing work overload and job stress

Stress Management

Masterclass



As well as helping you deal with the symptoms of stress, our Stress Management Masterclass shows you how to tackle the deep structural problems that may be making your working life a misery.

Not only does it introduce you to important relaxation techniques, its unique approach shows you how to win control of your job and career, build positive relationships with powerful people and co-workers and thrive, even under intense pressure.

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- [Performance Planning](#) - Planning ahead to reduce performance stress
- [Imagery](#) - Mental stress management
- [Physical Relaxation Techniques](#) - Deep breathing, PMR and the 'Relaxation Response'
- [Thought Awareness, Rational Thinking and Positive Thinking.](#)
- [Rest, Relaxation and Sleep](#) - Starting to manage long term stress
- [Burnout Self-Test](#) - Testing yourself to avoid burnout
- [Stress Resources](#)

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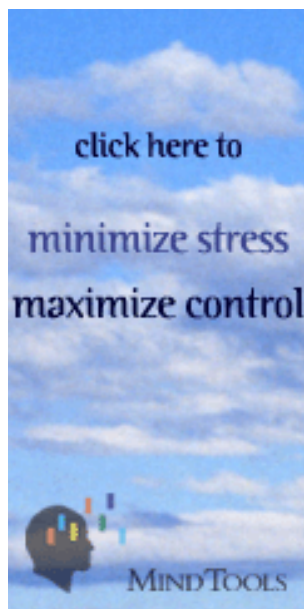
These techniques and many others are explained in Mind Tools' [Stress Management Masterclass](#). As well as showing you how to relax, the Stress Management Masterclass shows you how to win control of your job, build strong and positive working relationships, and build the the buffers against stress that help you thrive in challenging situations. Click [here](#) to find out more...

Where to go from here:

- Want new career skills like these in your Inbox? [Subscribe](#) to our [newsletter](#) today.
 - Is work overload a particular problem? Go to our [time management](#) section.
- To read the first article in this series (and find out about what stress really is) go to our [Stress Management Basics](#) page...

Articles: [How I Overcame Stress Addiction](#) - by Misty Mills

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Links:

- [Mind Tools Stress Management Links](#) - Many, many more links to good stress management sites on the web
- [RelaxandBreathe.com](#) - supports your desire for health and well-being by helping you initiate and maintain consistent stress-reduction efforts.
- [Life Coach Success Courses](#) - On line success courses from Life Coach Studio
- [Self Esteem World](#) - Your confidence will no longer be an issue with our free resources. Improve your self confidence with our confidence building exercises and tools.
- [StressLess](#) - StressLess is a multi-disciplinary stress management company retailing high quality, stress reduction products and programs.
- [Centre for Stress Management](#) - Information about our stress management, stress prevention and cognitive therapy training programmes.
- [Royal & Sun Alliance Stress Management](#) - We all experience stress sometimes. Whether it is related to work, family, travel, money, friends, studying, love or the future - feeling under pressure is part of being human.
- [Stress Management](#) - Stress management web sites registered and linked for the World-Wide Web Virtual Library
- [Stress Management](#) - Links to stress management information on the web
- [Stress Management Resources for Stressed and Overworked People](#) - Weekly stress management tips and lots of practical resources for stressed people



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[Tools for Improving Your Memory](#)



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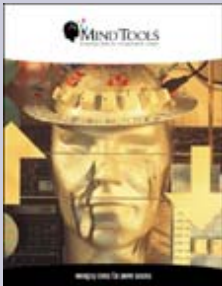
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In this new Mind Tools course, you'll learn how to tackle the deep structural problems that cause stress in your working life.

As well as introducing you to relaxation techniques, its unique approach shows you how to win control of your job and career, build positive relationships with powerful people and co-workers and thrive under intense pressure.

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■ [Mind Tools Ebook](#)



This e-book brings together all of the tools on the Mind Tools site into one downloadable PDF file. We have excluded advertising to enhance clarity and have formatted sections to be easy to read, print and use.

Click [here](#) to find out more...

Welcome to Mind Tools!

Since 1999, Mind Tools has helped improve and advance the careers of more than 8,500,000 visitors. Isn't it time you discovered the secrets to their success?

Mind Tools outlines important life and career skills in easy to understand language. These are supported by simple examples and exercises that expand and reinforce your understanding. Backed by Mind Tools, discover the essential skills and techniques that help you excel in your career - whatever your profession. Learn personal effectiveness, goal setting, and stress management. Further, discover techniques that improve creativity, assist problem solving, organize time and deadlines, and improve your memory.

Mind Tools outlines more than 100 of the most important thinking skills in nine essential areas. These skill areas are:

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- [Memory Improvement](#)
- [Information Assimilation](#)
- [Practical Creativity](#)
- [Managing Complexity](#)
- [Decision Making](#)
- [Project Planning & Management](#)
- [Job Hunting Skills](#)

Use the color-coded drop down menus above to access each essential skill area. The books and resources on the sidebars help you extend your knowledge.

Enjoy using Mind Tools - have a great career and an excellent life!

[James Manktelow](#), Director, Mind Tools

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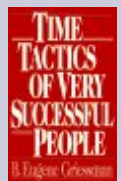


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[Time Tactics of Very Successful People](#)

by B. Eugene Griessman



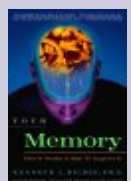
Griessman compiles critical time management tactics from high achievers in various fields and career levels.

\$10.47, ships in 24hrs



[Your Memory: How it Works and How to Improve It](#)

by Kenneth Higbee PhD

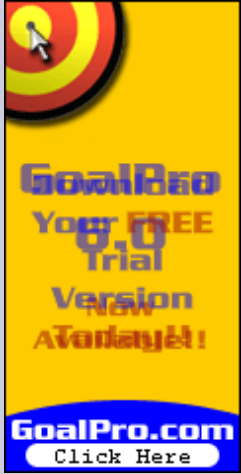


Free career test

Mind Tools is pleased to work in partnership with MAPP to offer a free career assessment. This helps you find the career path that's meant for you.

Click [here](#) to take the free test

GoalPro 7



You understand the importance of goal setting. But, do you ever get around to it? GoalPro software makes this confusing and tedious task simple! Finally a fun project, set personal goals and monitor your achievement. Right now, GoalPro is offering their software package FREE on a trial basis.

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An advertisement for an Online MBA program. It features a photo of a student on the left. The text says 'Choosing the best Online MBA program used to be difficult. Not any more.' Below this is a dark button with the text 'Click for schools' in white.

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Kenneth Higbee's book is a classic in this area. He covers various mnemonics, taking Mind Tools information to the next level. He relates his memory techniques to the latest medical and scientific research, as well as to practical experience with students.

\$13.97, ships in 24hrs

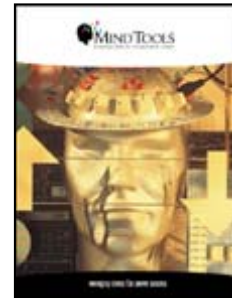


Beat Job Stress - Starting Now!



Mind Tools' Stress Management Masterclass - "Helping You Tackle The Causes Of Stress In Your Life, As Well As The Symptoms..."

Perhaps you are experiencing intense stress right now. Maybe you have a challenging job with a punishing workload, intense demands and over-tight deadlines. Or perhaps your boss or clients just keep piling on the pressure. Maybe problems with your coworkers or your team are making your life a misery, or perhaps you are just not getting the support you need. Or maybe you are increasingly exhausted as the things you enjoy about your job are submerged in a relentless flood of humdrum demands.



Manage both the sources and symptoms of stress

“The Solution to Your Problems With Stress”

Mind Tools' Stress Management Masterclass shows you how to tackle these problems at root. Where you have some control over the situation, it helps you to target the causes of stress quickly and effectively. Where you have no control, it shows you how to build robust buffers against stress.

You'll learn how to cope with intense pressure, win back control of your workload, improve working relationships, and live a happier, more relaxed life. These same skills will help you to become highly effective in your career.

This powerful course discusses:

“No-Nonsense, Practical Psychology For Stress Management”

The Stress Management Masterclass combines the latest psychological research with Mind Tools' practical and proven approach to personal effectiveness - an approach that has advanced the careers of more than 8,500,000 people since 1999.

You will master all the critical skills necessary to control and alleviate the different demands you face, including many that are new and unique to this course. Even better, the course helps you quickly identify the most important skills for you, so you can rapidly deal with the problems you face.

“Modules That Make A Real Difference To Your Life”

Skills are organized into easy-to-use modules teaching you step-by-step how to manage stress in different areas of your career. Modules open by explaining the research on which the skills are based. Next, you are helped to master the practical skills necessary to manage the different sources of stress. The modules then show you how to apply these skills to your life, so that you can truly change it for the better.

Modules help you to:

- Understand Stress
- Pin-Point the Sources of Stress in Your Life
- Cope with Work Overload

What People Have Said About the Masterclass (1):

"I am thrilled with the material. It is and will always be a fantastic resource tool for me. I have diplomas in Stress Management and Advanced Stress Management but neither course really covered Workplace Stress in any useful detail. I work in Operations so stress is a genuine concern for me. I am sure I will see the rewards from having worked my way through the Masterclass material."

Jill Prisgrove
Bristol, UK

"I have no complaints about the quality of service and I am extremely pleased with the material. I printed it and made a book for myself. I am currently working on a project for grad school, gathering related information from various resources, and haven't found anything that compares to the depth and clarity of Mind Tools. Thank you for the excellence."

Beth Piersma
Michigan, USA

- Survive Problem Jobs
- Work Successfully With Powerful People
- Reduce Co-Worker and Team Stress
- Manage Performance Stress
- Reduce Stress With Rational Thinking
- Build Defenses Against Stress, and
- Avoid or Recover From Burnout

Click [here](#) to see the course [contents table](#) - this shows you the detail of what the course covers. This is in Adobe Acrobat format - click [here](#) if you need to install [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#).

Mind Tools' Stress Management Masterclass comes as a full length, 180-page manual with practical skills and practice exercises. You can download the course for just \$19.99, with immediate availability. The Masterclass also has a 30-day guarantee – If you're not completely satisfied, you'll receive a full refund with no questions asked.

Mind Tools' Guarantee:

If you are not completely satisfied, we will give you a **full** refund for up to 30 days - **no questions asked.**

[Order now](#) and take control of your life. Or [read on](#) and see the detail of what the Masterclass can do for you....

“Overcoming Work Overload - And Bringing Joy Back Into Your Life”

The first modules give you an accurate, realistic understanding of what stress is, and show you how to pin-point the sources of stress in your life. You can then quickly and efficiently target the most important sources of stress for early attention.

Next, you learn how to manage the intense stress that can come with work overload. You'll learn to distinguish the essential tasks that you must complete from the distractions that contribute to overload. You'll also discover ways to balance conflicting time demands, correct job design flaws, develop focus and efficiency and, through this, regain control of your workload. You'll then learn how to identify the inconsistencies and structural problems within your job that can cause enormous stress. Once identified, these become easy to resolve.

A side effect of these modules is that you will learn to be more effective and productive in your work – this can only enhance your career. With your job under control you can win back your leisure time, spend more time with friends and family, and do the things that bring real joy to your life.

“Taking The Stress Out Of Working Relationships”

The next modules help you deal with stress coming from other people.

In 'Working with Powerful People', you learn how to fairly defend your rights, protect your free time, handle seemingly unreasonable demands, and manage the complex politics of a challenging role. These skills will win you respect in the workplace, and mark you out as someone who can maturely and positively handle difficult situations.

The team stress module gives you important new skills for resolving stressful conflict with your coworkers and your team. Backed by practical exercises, you're introduced to the latest techniques for correcting structural problems within teams and working smoothly with team members. You'll master issue resolution techniques for your mutual satisfaction. You'll discover how to work harmoniously with coworkers, reasonably defend your rights, manage unreasonable demands and, in doing so, become a valued member of a happy, effective and successful team.

“Surviving the Stress You Can't Avoid”

What People Have Said About the Masterclass (2):

"The materials were excellent and I've used the burnout chapter extensively. Overall, very pleased with the materials and the ease of purchase!"

*Jay Hargis
Massachusetts, USA*

As you would expect, the Stress Management Masterclass thoroughly explains the important topics of performance stress management, minimizing environmental stress, use of relaxation techniques, and building buffers against stress with changes to your lifestyle.

These help you to perform well under pressure, relax when under unavoidable stress, and eliminate the background irritations that 'niggle' away at us, increasing our experience of stress.

“From Negative Thinking to Self-Confidence”

But as well as this, you’ll learn important rational- and positive-thinking skills. These help you to see the good within situations as well as the bad, and spot opportunities in the difficulties that arise.

You’ll also learn Emotional Analysis and Cognitive Restructuring – new and enormously powerful stress management tools. With Emotional Analysis you learn to use your emotions as the powerful “early warning system” they are – this helps to alert you to problem situations before they become serious. With Cognitive Restructuring you learn to turn around the deep unhappiness that lies at the root of much stress.

Together, these skills help you to overcome the negative thinking that accompanies and sometimes even causes the experience of stress. They help you to move from unhappiness to a positive and self-confident frame of mind.

“Finding Real Job Satisfaction”

You’ll also learn to identify the things that give deep meaning to your work so that you can protect yourself against ill-health and burnout. Once you have identified these things, you’ll know what you have to defend to protect the sense of fulfillment that is so important in a satisfying career.

You’ll learn how to monitor yourself for burnout, and find out what to do to protect yourself against it. All of these things help you to get complete satisfaction out of your job, and keep alive the enthusiasm, energy and commitment that will mark you out for success - even when under intense pressure.

Course Information

The Stress Management Masterclass comes in Adobe Acrobat format for immediate use. The course is exceptional value at just \$19.99. Again, we’ll remind you of our full, 30-day money-back guarantee: If you aren’t completely satisfied with the Stress Management Masterclass, we’ll refund your money – no questions asked.

By downloading now you can start dealing with your problems with stress straight away. By delaying, you could continue, day-by-day, suffering a stressful, unhappy life.

Download the course now, and learn to take unpleasant pressure out of your life, regain control over your time, improve your working relationships and develop a positive and self-confident outlook on life. You’ll have more time to spend more time with your friends and family, and enjoy a more satisfying, meaningful and successful career. All for only \$19.99!

How to Order

For corporate or group purchase, please contact Customer.Services@mindtools.com.

Mind Tools' Guarantee:

If you are not completely satisfied, we will give you a **full** refund for up to 30 days after you receive the course - **no questions asked.**

What People Have Said About the Masterclass (3):

"I particularly appreciate the clear structure of the course and the modular design which permits one to manage time involvement and to see clearly what is expected and what will be gained."

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Adèle Wilkinson
Christchurch, New
Zealand

Yes! Download the Stress Management Masterclass (in PDF format)

*Cost: US\$19.99. Download the Stress Management Masterclass in PDF format.
Available for immediate download.*

"I'm very satisfied. It was all that I hoped it would be. I'm glad I found the site."

Phil Bowers
North Carolina, USA

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Mind Tools - Essential Skills for an Excellent Career!

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What People Have Said About the Masterclass (4):

"[The Stress Management Master-class] is something I wish I had all those years ago when I first entered the workforce. All the hard lessons I had to quickly learn are all covered in this book but, moreso, there are some techniques that I wish I had known, especially in the negative to positive section."

Peter Ivancsits
Chicago, USA

*"Incredible value.
Amazing scope.
Distillation without
distortion. Sources
acknowledged. Plus a
certain generosity of spirit
shines through."*

*Patrick Wiggins
Florida, USA*

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Mind Tools Top Resources...

■ [GoalPro5](#)



GoalPro is a powerful software package which helps you to set and monitor the achievement of personal goals. Using GoalPro regularly helps you to get into the habit of setting and achieving personal goals.

■ [WorkTree.com](#)



Once your resume is prepared, WorkTree (the biggest job portal on the web) is a great place to start job hunting. Among other services, it pulls together more than 330 Internet job sites into one place and gives you tools to search them all in one go. Click [here](#) to visit WorkTree.

■ [PatentWizard](#)

PatentWizard helps you to prepare and file a US Provisional Patent application with the US Patent Office. The software costs a fraction of the amount that you would have to pay a patent attorney.

■ [WetFeet.com](#)

James Manktelow

James Manktelow has edited Mind Tools since it first went on-line in 1995. The concept for the site started with his research into the practical skills and techniques he needed to progress his own career - he found it frustrating that so many simple but important life and career skills were so poorly known.

The Mind Tools site exists to correct this - our team works with experts and specialists spanning three continents to bring you the best and most up-to-date career skills we can find.

Since 1999, more than 8,500,000 visitors have used the site to develop their career skills. Many have been kind enough to send us enthusiastic testimonials saying how the techniques we have helped to popularize have helped them in their lives and their careers.

As well as leading the Mind Tools team, James has written two books, "[Mind Tools](#)" and "[The Stress Management Masterclass](#)". He and the Mind Tools team are currently developing new books on Time Management, Leadership skills and Career Development.

In addition to work with Mind Tools, James is Marketing Vice President of UK financial software house, [CQ Systems Ltd](#), which produces Europe's leading [leasing systems](#) and [loan systems](#). His career has spanned strategic analysis, business development, marketing, production and project management, business and systems analysis, software development and consultancy for major corporations in most European countries.

James holds an MBA from London Business School with specialties in entrepreneurship, finance, and strategy. He lives in Wimbledon in London with his wife Rachel (also an LBS MBA) and son Alex.



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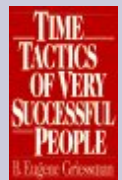


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[Time Tactics of Very Successful People](#)

by B. Eugene Griessman



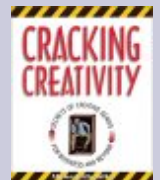
Griessman's book gathers together important time management tips from high achievers in many fields. Its style is concise, informative and very entertaining.

\$10.47, ships in 24hrs



[Cracking Creativity](#)

by Michael Michalko



Wet Feet is one of the leading career research resources on the web - its sections cover career management information, career search advice, background on key companies, etc, etc. Its Insider Guides give well researched, clear and practical information on key areas. Wet Feet is an essential site for people who are serious about their careers.

■ [MAPP](#)

use a range of well-researched psychometric tests to help you to find the career that best fits your temperament and abilities.

■ [CV Sage](#)

provides an intelligent and completely up-to-date course helping you to create the perfect resume and covering letter. It helps you to create a resume that you are completely comfortable with and that stands out from the crowd. The course is designed by [Steve Holmes](#), the resident career expert at Monster.co.uk.

■ [WorkTree.com](#)

Once your resume is prepared, WorkTree (the biggest job portal on the web) is a great place to start your job search. Among other services, it pulls together more than 330 Internet job sites into one place and gives you tools to search them all in one go.

■ [CareerXpress](#)

An alternative approach is to use a service like CareerXpress to send your resume to tens of thousands of recruiters. This positions you not only for jobs already being advertised, but also for jobs which have not been offered outside these organization.

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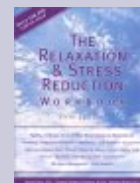
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by Martha Davis



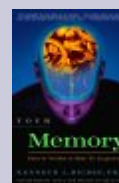
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by Kenneth Higbee PhD



Kenneth Higbee's book is a classic in this area. As you would expect, it gives a good coverage of many different mnemonics, taking Mind Tools information to the next level of detail. A particularly good feature of the book is the way he relates his memory techniques to the latest medical and scientific research, as well as to practical experience with students. This book is not the easiest of reads on mnemonics, however it is certainly one of the most authoritative.

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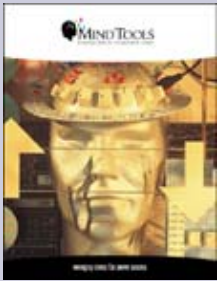
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I would like to thank the following people for their help and hard work in developing the Mind Tools [Stress Management Masterclass](#), from which this section of Mind Tools is drawn:

- Dr Susan Michie of the Centre for Outcomes Research and Effectiveness, Department of Psychology, University College London, for her advice and detailed review of content.
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- And Rachel Manktelow, for her help and professional advice.

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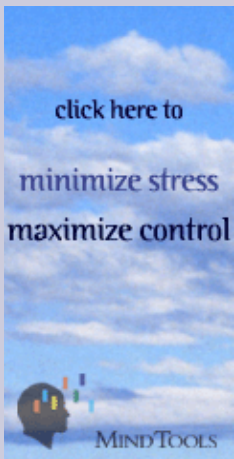
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Stress Management Techniques

Much research has been conducted into stress over the last hundred years. Some of the theories behind it are now settled and accepted; others are still being researched and debated. During this time, there seems to have been something approaching open warfare between competing theories and definitions: Views have been passionately held and aggressively defended.

What complicates this is that intuitively we all feel that we know what stress is, as it is something we have all experienced. A definition should therefore be obvious...except that it is not.

Definitions

Hans Selye was one of the founding fathers of stress research. His view in 1956 was that "stress is not necessarily something bad – it all depends on how you take it. The stress of exhilarating, creative successful work is beneficial, while that of failure, humiliation or infection is detrimental." Selye believed that the biochemical effects of stress would be experienced irrespective of whether the situation was positive or negative.

Since then, a great deal of further research has been conducted, and ideas have moved on. Stress is now viewed as a "bad thing", with a range of harmful biochemical and long-term effects. These effects have rarely been observed in positive situations.

The most commonly accepted definition of stress (mainly attributed to Richard S Lazarus) is that **stress is a condition or feeling experienced when a person perceives that "demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilize."**

This is the main definition used by this section of Mind Tools, although we also recognize that there is an intertwined instinctive stress response to unexpected events. The stress response inside us is therefore part instinct and part to do with the way we think.

Fight-or-Flight

Some of the early research on stress (conducted by Walter Cannon in 1932) established the existence of the well-known "fight-or-flight" response. His work showed that when an organism experiences a shock or perceives a threat, it quickly releases hormones that help it to survive.

In humans, as in other animals, these hormones help us to run faster and fight harder. They increase heart rate and blood pressure, delivering more oxygen and blood sugar to power important muscles. They increase sweating in an effort to cool these muscles, and help them stay efficient. They divert blood away from the skin to the core of our bodies, reducing blood loss if we are damaged. As well as this, these hormones focus our attention on the threat, to the exclusion of everything else. All of this significantly improves our ability to survive life-threatening events.

Not only life-threatening events trigger this reaction: We experience it almost any time we come across something unexpected or something that frustrates our goals. When the threat is small, our response is small and we often do not notice it among the many other distractions of a stressful situation.

Unfortunately, this mobilization of the body for survival also has negative consequences. In this state, we are excitable, anxious, jumpy and irritable. This actually reduces our ability to work effectively with other people. With trembling and a pounding heart, we can find it difficult to execute precise, controlled skills. The intensity of our focus on survival interferes with our ability to make fine judgments by drawing information

from many sources. We find ourselves more accident-prone and less able to make good decisions.

There are very few situations in modern working life where this response is useful. Most situations benefit from a calm, rational, controlled and socially sensitive approach.

In the short term, we need to keep this fight-or-flight response under control to be effective in our jobs. In the long term we need to keep it under control to avoid problems of poor health and burnout.

Introducing Stress Management

There are very many proven skills that we can use to manage stress. These help us to remain calm and effective in high pressure situations, and help us avoid the problems of long term stress.

These skills fall into three main groups:

- **Action-oriented skills:** In which we seek to confront the problem causing the stress, often changing the environment or the situation;
- **Emotionally-oriented skills:** In which we do not have the power to change the situation, but we can manage stress by changing our interpretation of the situation and the way we feel about it;
- and **Acceptance-oriented skills:** Where something has happened over which we have no power and no emotional control, and where our focus must be on surviving the stress.

In the rest of this section of Mind Tools, we look at some important techniques in each of these three groups.

This is a much-abridged excerpt from the 'Understanding Stress and Stress Management' module of [Managing Stress for Career Success](#), the Mind Tools [Stress Management Masterclass](#). As well as covering this material in more detail, it also discusses:

- *Long-term stress: The General Adaptation Syndrome and Burnout*
- *The Integrated Stress Response*
- *Stress and Health*
- *Stress and its Affect on the Way We Think*
- *Pressure & Performance: Flow and the 'Inverted-U'*

These sections give you a deep and robust understanding of stress, helping you to develop your own stress management strategies for handling unique circumstances. Click [here](#) to find out more about [the Stress Management Masterclass](#)...

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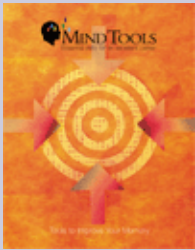
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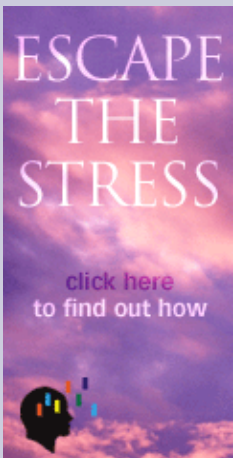
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Stress Diary - Identifying the sources of short-term stress in your life

Introduction:

Before you can deal effectively with the stress in your life, you need to identify the key sources of stress in it. This helps you to deal with the most important sources of stress first and separate these from the things that are, in reality, minor irritants. Stress Diaries are useful tools for doing this.

Stress Diaries are important for understanding the causes of short-term stress in your life. They also give you an important insight into how you react to stress, and help you to identify the level of stress at which you prefer to operate.

The idea behind Stress Diaries is that, on a regular basis, you record information about the stresses you are experiencing, so that you can analyse these stresses and then manage them. This is important because often these stresses flit in and out of our minds without getting the attention and focus that they deserve.

As well as helping you capture and analyse the most common sources of stress in your life, Stress Diaries help you to understand:

- The causes of stress in more detail;
- The levels of stress at which you operate most efficiently; and
- How you react to stress, and whether your reactions are appropriate and useful.

Stress Diaries, therefore, give you the important information that you need to manage stress.

Using the Tool:

Stress Diaries are useful in that they gather information regularly and routinely, over a period of time. This helps you to separate the common, routine stresses from those that only occur occasionally. They establish a pattern that you can analyse to extract the information that you need.

Make regular entries in your Stress Diary (for example, every hour). If you have any difficulty remembering to do this, set an alarm to remind you to make your next diary entry.

Also make an entry in your diary after each incident that is stressful enough for you to feel that it is significant.

Every time you make an entry, record the following information:

- The date and time of the entry.
- How happy you feel now, using a subjective assessment on a scale of -10 (the most unhappy you have ever been) to +10 (the happiest you have been). As well as this, write down the mood you are feeling.
- How efficiently you are working now (a subjective assessment, on a scale of 0 to 10). A 0 here would show complete inefficiency, while a 10 would show the greatest efficiency you have ever achieved.
- How stressed you feel now, again on a subjective scale of 0 to 10. As before, 0 here would be the most relaxed you have ever been, while 10 would show the greatest stress you have ever experienced.
- The most recent stressful event you have experienced.
- The symptom did you feel (e.g. “butterflies in your stomach”, anger, headache, raised pulse rate, sweaty palms, etc.).
- The fundamental cause of the stress (being as honest and objective as possible).

- How well you handled the event: Did your reaction help solve the problem, or did it inflame it?

You will reap the real benefits of having a stress diary in the first few weeks. After this, the benefit you get will reduce each additional day. If, however, your lifestyle changes, or you begin to suffer from stress again in the future, then it may be worth using the diary approach again. You will probably find that the stresses you face have changed. If this is the case, then keeping a diary again will help you to develop a different approach to deal with them.

Analyze the diary at the end of this period.

Analyzing the Diary

Analyze the diary in the following ways:

- First, look at the different stresses you experienced during the time you kept your diary. List the types of stress that you experienced by frequency, with the most frequent stresses at the top of the list. Next, prepare a second list with the most unpleasant stresses at the top of the list and the least unpleasant at the bottom. Looking at your lists of stresses, those at the top of each list are the most important for you to learn to control. Working through the stresses, look at your assessments of their underlying causes, and your appraisal of how well you handled the stressful event. Do these show you areas where you handled stress poorly, and could improve your stress management skills? If so, list these.
- Second, compare the values you entered for “Happiness” and “Efficiency” against the values for “Feeling of Stress”. You may find, for example, that you are most efficient when you are moderately stressed.
- Next, look through your diary at the situations that cause you stress. List these.
- Finally, look at how you felt when you were under stress. Look at how it affected your happiness and your efficiency, understand how you behaved, and think about how you felt.

Having analyzed your diary, you should fully understand what the most important and frequent sources of stress are in your life. You should appreciate the levels of stress at which you are happiest. You should also know the sort of situations that cause you stress so that you can prepare for them and manage them well.

As well as this, you should now understand how you react to stress, and the symptoms that you show when you are stressed. When you experience these symptoms in the future, this should be a trigger for you to use appropriate stress management techniques.

Summary

Stress Diaries help you to get a good understanding of the routine, short-term stresses that you experience in your life. They help you to identify the most important, and most frequent, stresses that you experience, so that you can concentrate your efforts on these. They also help you to identify areas where you need to improve your stress management skills, and help you to understand the levels of stress at which you are happiest, and most efficient.

To keep a stress diary, make a regular diary entry with the headings above. For example, you may do this every hour. Also make entries after stressful events.

Analyze the diary to identify the most frequent and most serious stresses that you experience. Use it also to identify areas where you can improve your management of stress.

This is an abridged excerpt from the ‘Knowing Yourself’ module of [Managing Stress for Career Success](#), the Mind Tools [Stress Management Masterclass](#). The full article on Stress Diaries also gives you Stress Diary templates that ease your use and analysis of your Stress Diary.

While Stress Diaries help you understand short-term stress, other powerful techniques in the ‘Knowing Yourself’ module help you to understand the long-term stress in your life and show you how to deploy your own resources most effectively to manage this stress. The ‘Planning for Change’ module then helps you to identify and use the most effective techniques to deal with this stress.

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Job Analysis (Short Form) - The First Step in Managing Job overload

How to use tool:

We have all experienced that appalling sense of having far too much work to do and too little time to do it in. We can choose to ignore this, and work unreasonably long hours to stay on top of our workload. The risks here are that we become exhausted, that we have so much to do that we do a poor quality job, and that we neglect other areas of our life. Each of these can lead to intense stress.

The alternative is to work more intelligently, by focusing on the things that are important for job success and reducing the time we spend on low priority tasks. Job Analysis is the first step in doing this.

The first of the action-oriented skills that we look at is Job Analysis. Job Analysis is a key technique for managing job overload – an important source of stress.

To do an excellent job, you need to fully understand what is expected of you. While this may seem obvious, in the hurly-burly of a new, fast-moving, high-pressure role, it is oftentimes something that is easy to overlook.

By understanding the priorities in your job, and what constitutes success within it, you can focus on these activities and minimize work on other tasks as much as possible. This helps you get the greatest return from the work you do, and keep your workload under control.

Job Analysis is a useful technique for getting a firm grip on what really is important in your job so that you are able to perform excellently. It helps you to cut through clutter and distraction to get to the heart of what you need to do.

Note that this tool takes two forms - the short-form we discuss here assumes that your organization is already well organized and that its job descriptions, review criteria and incentives are well-aligned and correct. The long-form (discussed within [the Stress Management Masterclass](#)), helps you to deal with jobs where this is not the case – here, inconsistent job design can cause enormous stress.

Using the Tool:

To conduct a job analysis, go through the following steps:

1. Review formal job documentation:

- Look at your job description. Identify the key objectives and priorities within it.
- Look at the forms for the periodic performance reviews. These show precisely the behaviors that will be rewarded and, by implication, show those that will be punished.
- Find out what training is available for the role. Ensure that you attend appropriate training so that you know as much as possible about what you need to know.
- Look at incentive schemes to understand the behaviors that these reward.

2. Understand the organization's strategy and culture:

Your job exists for a reason – this will ultimately be determined by the strategy of the organizational unit you work for. This strategy is often expressed in a mission statement. In some way, what you do should help the organization achieve its mission (if it does not, you have to ask yourself how secure the job is!). Make sure

you understand and perform well the tasks that contribute to the strategy.

Similarly, every organization has its own culture – its own, historically developed values, rights and wrongs, and things that it considers to be important. If you are new to an organization, talk through with established, respected members of staff to understand these values.

Make sure that you understand this culture. Make sure that your actions reinforce the company's culture, or at least do not go against it. Looked at through the lens of culture, will the company value what you do?

Check that your priorities are consistent with this mission statement and the company culture.

3. Find out who the top achievers are, and understand why they are successful:

Inside or outside the organization, there may be people in a similar role to you who are seen as highly successful. Find out how they work, and what they do to generate this success. Look at what they do, and learn from them. Understand what skills make them successful, and learn those skills.

4. Check that you have the people and resources to do the job:

The next step is to check that you have the staff support, resources and training needed to do an excellent job. If you do not, start work on obtaining them.

5. Confirm priorities with your boss:

By this stage, you should have a thorough understanding of what your job entails, and what your key objectives are. You should also have a good idea of the resources that you need, and any additional training you may need to do the best you can.

This is the time to talk the job through with your boss, and confirm that you share an understanding of what constitutes good performance in the role.

It is also worth talking through serious inconsistencies, and agreeing how these can be managed.

6. Take Action:

You should now know what you have to do to be successful in your job. You should have a good idea of the most important things that you have to do, and also the least important.

Where you can drop the less-important tasks, do so. Where you can de-prioritize them, do so.

Where you need more resource or training to do your job, negotiate for this.

Remember to be a little sensitive in the way you do this: Good teamwork often means helping other people out with jobs that do not benefit you. However, do not let people take advantage of you: Be assertive in explaining that you have your own work to do. If you cannot drop tasks, delegate them or negotiate longer time scales.

Summary:

Job analysis is a five-step technique for:

- Understanding and agreeing how to achieve peak performance in your job;
- Ensuring that you and your boss agree on the areas you should concentrate on when time gets tight; and the areas that can be de-emphasized during this time; and
- Making sure that you have the resources, training and staff needed to do a good job.

By using the Job Analysis technique, you should gain a good understanding of how you can excel at your job. You should also understand your job priorities.

This helps you to manage the stress of job overload by helping to decide which jobs you should drop.

Job Analysis is just one of many practical action-oriented techniques for reducing the stress of job overload.

These and other types of technique help you to resolve structural problems within jobs, work more effectively with your boss and powerful people, improving the way your teams function and become more assertive so that other people respect your right not to take on an excessive workload. These are all important techniques for bringing job stress under control, for improving the quality of your working life, and for achieving career success.

These action-oriented techniques and many others are explained in [Managing Stress for Career Success](#), the Mind Tools [Stress Management Masterclass](#). Click [here](#) to find out more...

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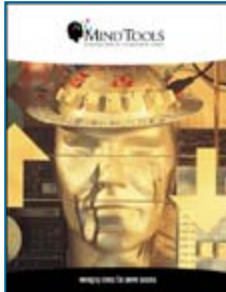
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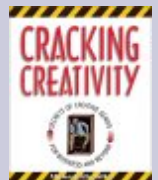


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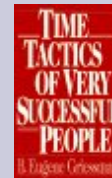
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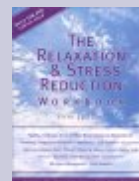


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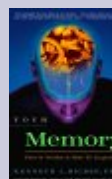


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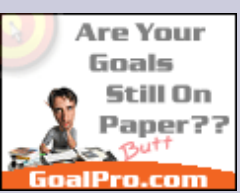
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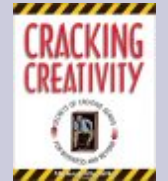
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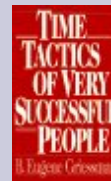
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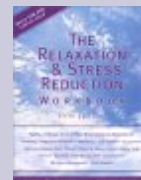


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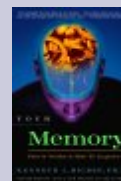


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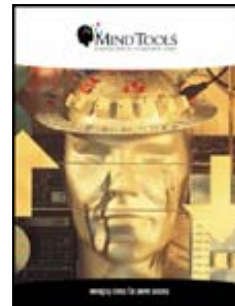
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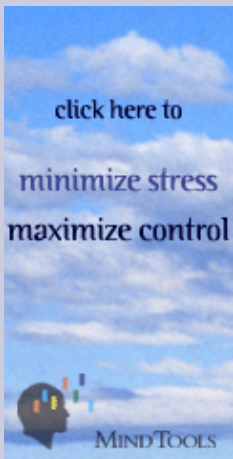
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Performance Planning - Planning to manage performance stress

We all know the feeling of sickness in our stomach before an important presentation or performance. We have all experienced the sweaty palms, the raised heart rate, and the sense of agitation that we feel as these events approach. We have probably all also experienced how much worse this becomes when things go wrong in the run up to an event.

This article helps you deal with this by helping you to prepare well for future performances.

How to use tool:

The Thought Awareness, Rational Thinking and Positive Thinking technique that we look at later may be enough to help you manage the fears, anxieties and negative thoughts that may arise in a small performance.

For larger events, it is worth preparing a Performance Plan. This is a pre-prepared plan that helps you to deal effectively with any problems or distractions that may occur, and perform in a positive and focused frame of mind.

Using the Tool:

To prepare your Performance Plan, begin by making a list all of the steps that you need to do from getting prepared for a performance through to its conclusion.

Start far enough in advance to sort out any equipment problems. List all of the physical and mental steps that you need to take to:

- Prepare and check your equipment, and repair or replace it where it does not work;
- Make travel arrangements;
- Pack your equipment and luggage;
- Travel to the site of your performance;
- Set up equipment;
- Wait and prepare for your performance; and
- Deliver your performance.

Next, work through each of these steps. Think though:

- Everything that could reasonably go wrong at each step with equipment and arrangements; and
- Any distractions and negative thinking that could undermine your confidence or stop you having a positive, focused frame of mind at the start of and during your performance.

Work through all of the things that could go wrong. Look at the likelihood of the problem occurring. Many of the things you have listed may be extremely unlikely. Where appropriate, strike these out and ignore them from your planning.

Look at each of the remaining contingencies. These will fall into three categories:

1. Things you can eliminate by appropriate preparation, including making back-up arrangements and acquiring appropriate additional or spare equipment;
2. Things you can manage by avoiding unnecessary risk; and

3. Things you can manage with a pre-prepared action or with an appropriate stress management technique

For example, if you are depending on using a data projector for a presentation, you can arrange for a back up projector to be available, purchase a replacement bulb, and/or print off paper copies of the presentation in case all else fails. You can leave earlier than strictly necessary so that you have time for serious travel delays. You can also think through appropriate alternatives if your travel plans are disrupted. If you are forced to wait before your event in an uncomfortable or unsuitably distracting place, prepare the relaxation techniques you can use to keep a calm, positive frame of mind. Research all of the information you will need to take the appropriate actions quickly, and ensure that you have the appropriate resources available.

Also, prepare the positive thinking you will use to counter fears and negative thoughts both before the event and during it. Use stress anticipation skills to ensure that you are properly prepared to manage stress. Then use thought awareness, rational thinking and positive thinking skills to prepare the positive thoughts that you will use to protect and build your confidence.

Write your plan down on paper in a form that is easy to read and easy to refer to. Keep it with you as you prepare for, and deliver, your performance. Refer to it whenever you need it in the time leading up to the event, and during it.

Summary

Performance Plans help you to prepare for an important performance. They bring together practical contingency planning with mental preparation to ensure that you are fully prepared to handle any situations and eventualities that may realistically occur.

This gives you the confidence that comes from knowing you are as well prepared for an event as is practically possible to be. It also helps you to avoid the unpleasant stresses that come from poor preparation, meaning that you can deliver your performance in a relaxed, positive and focused frame of mind, whatever problems or upsets may have occurred.

This article is an abridged version of just one of the techniques used to manage performance stress explained in "Managing Stress for Career Success", Mind Tools' [Stress Management Masterclass](#).

The 'Managing Performance Stress' module explains how to prepare for the event, how to manage negative thinking leading up to it and how to learn lessons from your experience of stress. As well as this, it shows you how to use a range of useful adrenaline management techniques for controlling the anxiety you will inevitably feel just before your performance.

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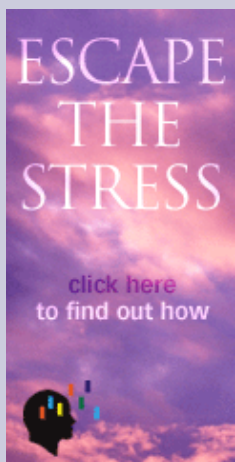
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Imagery – Mental stress management

Sometimes we are not able to change our environment to manage stress – this may be the case where we do not have the power to change a situation, or where we are about to give an important performance. Imagery is a useful skill for relaxing in these situations.

Introduction:

Imagery is a potent method of stress reduction, especially when combined with physical relaxation methods such as deep breathing.

You will be aware of how particular environments can be very relaxing, while others can be intensely stressful. The principle behind the use of imagery in stress reduction is that you can use your imagination to recreate, and enjoy, a situation that is very relaxing. The more intensely you imagine the situation, the more relaxing the experience will be.

This sounds unlikely. In fact, the effectiveness of imagery can be shown very effectively if you have access to biofeedback equipment. By imagining a pleasant and relaxing scene (which reduces stress) you can objectively see the measured stress in your body reduce. By imagining an unpleasant and stressful situation, you can see the stress in your body increase. This very real effect can be quite alarming when you see it happen the first time!

Using the Tool:

Imagery in Relaxation

One common use of imagery in relaxation is to imagine a scene, place or event that you remember as safe, peaceful, restful, beautiful and happy. You can bring all your senses into the image with, for example, sounds of running water and birds, the smell of cut grass, the taste of cool white wine, the warmth of the sun, etc. Use the imagined place as a retreat from stress and pressure.

Scenes can involve complex images such as lying on a beach in a deserted cove. You may “see” cliffs, sea and sand around you, “hear” the waves crashing against rocks, “smell” the salt in the air, and “feel” the warmth of the sun and a gentle breeze on your body. Other images might include looking at a mountain view, swimming in a tropical pool, or whatever you want. You will be able to come up with the most effective images for yourself.

Other uses of imagery in relaxation involve creating mental pictures of stress flowing out of your body, or of stress, distractions and everyday concerns being folded away and locked into a padlocked chest.

Imagery in Preparation and Rehearsal

You can also use imagery in rehearsal before a big event, allowing you to run through the event in your mind.

Aside from allowing you to rehearse mentally, imagery also allows you to practice in advance for anything unusual that might occur, so that you are prepared and already practiced in handling it. This is a technique used very commonly by top sports people, who learn good performance habits by repeatedly rehearsing performances in their imagination. When the unusual eventualities they have rehearsed using imagery occur, they have good, pre-prepared, habitual responses to them.

Imagery also allows you to pre-experience achievement of your goals, helping to give you the self-confidence you need to do something well. This is another technique used by successful athletes.

Summary:

With imagery, you substitute actual experience with scenes from your imagination. Your body reacts to these imagined scenes almost as if they were real, calming you down and letting adrenaline disperse.

To relax with imagery, imagine a warm, comfortable, safe and pleasant place, and enjoy it in your imagination.

Imagery can be shown to work by using biofeedback devices that measure body stress. By imagining pleasant and unpleasant scenes, you can actually see or hear the changing levels of stress in your body diminish.

This is an excerpt from "Managing Stress for Career Success", the Mind Tools [Stress Management Masterclass](#). Imagery is just one of the important mental relaxation techniques that you learn with this course. Not only does the course show you how to use these techniques, it also explains the sound practical psychology that lies behind them.

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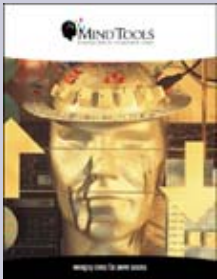


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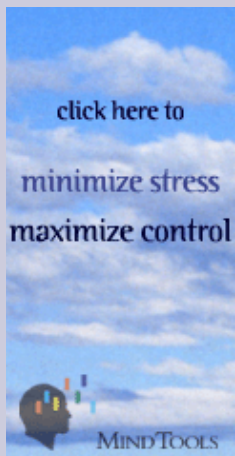
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Physical Relaxation Techniques - Deep Breathing, PMR and 'The Relaxation Response'

Physical relaxation techniques are as effective as mental techniques in reducing stress. In fact, the best relaxation is achieved by using physical and mental techniques together.

Introduction:

This tool introduces three useful physical relaxation techniques that can help you reduce muscle tension and manage the effects of the fight-or-flight response on your body. This is particularly important if you need to think clearly and perform precisely when you are under pressure.

The techniques we will look at are Deep Breathing, Progressive Muscular Relaxation and "The Relaxation Response".

Deep Breathing

Deep breathing is a simple, but very effective, method of relaxation. It is a core component of everything from the "take ten deep breaths" approach to calming someone down, right through to yoga relaxation and Zen meditation. It works well in conjunction with other relaxation techniques such as Progressive Muscular Relaxation, relaxation imagery and meditation to reduce stress.

To use the technique, take a number of deep breaths and relax your body further with each breath. That's all there is to it!

Progressive Muscular Relaxation

Progressive Muscular Relaxation is useful for relaxing your body when your muscles are tense.

The idea behind PMR is that you tense up a group of muscles so that they are as tightly contracted as possible. Hold them in a state of extreme tension for a few seconds. Then, relax the muscles normally. Then, consciously relax the muscles even further so that you are as relaxed as possible.

By tensing your muscles first, you will find that you are able to relax your muscles more than would be the case if you tried to relax your muscles directly.

Experiment with PMR by forming a fist, and clenching your hand as tight as you can for a few seconds. Relax your hand to its previous tension, and then consciously relax it again so that it is as loose as possible. You should feel deep relaxation in your hand muscles.

The Relaxation Response

'The Relaxation Response' is the name of a book published by Dr Herbert Benson of Harvard University in 1968. In a series of experiments into various popular meditation techniques, Dr. Benson established that these techniques had a very real effect on reducing stress and controlling the fight-or-flight response. Direct effects included deep relaxation, slowed heartbeat and breathing, reduced oxygen consumption and increased skin resistance.

This is something that you can do for yourself by following these steps:

- Sit quietly and comfortably.

- Close your eyes.
- Start by relaxing the muscles of your feet and work up your body relaxing muscles.
- Focus your attention on your breathing.
- Breathe in deeply and then let your breath out. Count your breaths, and say the number of the breath as you let it out (this gives you something to do with your mind, helping you to avoid distraction).

Do this for ten or twenty minutes.

An even more potent alternative approach is to follow these steps, but to use relaxation imagery instead of counting breaths in step 5. Again, you can prove to yourself that this works using the biofeedback equipment.

Summary

“Deep Breathing,” “Progressive Muscular Relaxation,” and the steps leading to the “Relaxation Response” are three good techniques that can help you to relax your body and manage the symptoms of the fight-or-flight response.

These are particularly helpful for both handling nerves prior to an important performance, and reducing stress generally.

This is an excerpt from "Managing Stress for Career Success", the Mind Tools [Stress Management Masterclass](#). These physical relaxation techniques are just some of the important skills that we explain. As well as explaining relaxation techniques, the Stress Management Masterclass shows you how to take action to tackle the root causes of job stress - a side-effect of this approach is that you become more effective and successful in your career.

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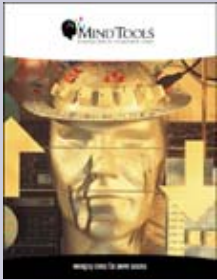
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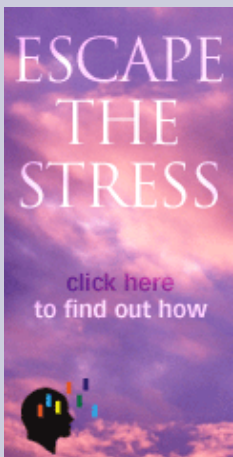
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Thought Awareness, Rational Thinking and Positive Thinking

Quite often, our experience of stress comes from our perception of the situation. Often that perception is right, but sometimes it is not. Often we are unreasonably harsh with ourselves or instinctively jump to wrong conclusions about people's motives. This can send us into a downward spiral of negative thinking that can be hard to break.

Thought Awareness, Rational Thinking and Positive Thinking are simple tools that help you to change this negative thinking.

Introduction:

We have already mentioned that the most common accepted definition of stress is that it occurs when a person perceives that "demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilize." In becoming stressed, people must make two main judgments: First, they must feel threatened by the situation, and second, they must judge whether their capabilities and resources are sufficient to meet the threat. How stressed someone feels depends on how much damage they think the situation can do them, and how closely their resources meet the demands of the situation.

Perception is key to this as situations are not stressful in their own right. Rather it is our interpretation of the situation that drives the level of stress that we feel.

Quite obviously, sometimes we are right in what we say to ourselves. Some situations may actually be dangerous, may threaten us physically, socially or in our career. Here, stress and emotion are part of the early warning system that alerts us to the threat from these situations.

Very often, however, we are overly harsh and unjust to ourselves in a way that we would never be with friends or co-workers. This, along with other negative thinking, can cause intense stress and unhappiness and can severely undermine self-confidence.

Using the Tool: Thought Awareness

You are thinking negatively when you fear the future, put yourself down, criticize yourself for errors, doubt your abilities, or expect failure. Negative thinking damages confidence, harms performance and paralyzes mental skills.

A major problem with this is that negative thoughts tend to flit into our consciousness, do their damage and flit back out again with their significance, having barely been noticed. Since we do not challenge them, they can be completely incorrect and wrong. Yet, this does not diminish their harmful affect.

Thought Awareness is the process by which you observe your thoughts and become aware of what is going through your head.

One approach to it is to observe your stream of consciousness as you think about a stressful situation. Do not suppress any thoughts: Instead, you just let them run their course while you watch them, and write them down as they occur.

Another more general approach to Thought Awareness comes with logging stress in your Stress Diary. One of the benefits of using the Stress Diary is that you log all of the unpleasant things in your life that cause you stress for one or two weeks. This will include negative thoughts and anxieties, and can also include difficult or unpleasant memories and situations that you perceive as negative. All of these can be looked at using the techniques in this module. By logging your negative thoughts for a reasonable period of time, you will quickly see patterns in your negative thinking. When you analyze your diary at the end of the period, you should be able to see the most common and the most damaging thoughts. Tackle these as a priority.

Thought awareness is the first step in the process of managing negative thoughts, as you cannot manage thoughts that you are unaware of.

Rational Thinking

The next step in dealing with negative thinking is to challenge the negative thoughts that you identified using the Thought Awareness technique. Look at every thought you wrote down and rationally challenge it. Ask yourself whether the thought is reasonable: Does it stand up to fair scrutiny?

As an example, by analyzing your Stress Diary you might identify that you have frequently had the following negative thoughts:

- **Feelings of inadequacy**
- **Worries that your performance in your job will not be good enough**
- **An anxiety that things outside your control will undermine your efforts**
- **Worries about other people's reactions to your work**

Starting with these, you might challenge these negative thoughts in the ways shown:

- **Feelings of inadequacy:** Have you trained and educated yourself as well as you reasonably should to do the job? Do you have the experience and resources you need to do it? Have you planned, prepared and rehearsed appropriately? If you have done all of these, are you setting yourself unattainably high standards for doing the job?
- **Worries about performance:** Do you have the training that a reasonable person would think is needed to do a good job? Have you planned appropriately? Do you have the information and resources you need? Have you cleared the time you need and cued up your support team appropriately? Have you prepared appropriately? If you have not, then you need to do these things quickly. If you have, then you are well positioned to give the best performance that you can.
- **Problems with issues outside your control:** Have you conducted appropriate contingency planning? Have you thought through and managed all likely risks and contingencies appropriately? If so, you will be well prepared to handle potential problems.
- **Worry about other people's reactions:** If you have put in good preparation, and you do the best you can, then that is all that you need to know. If you perform as well as you reasonably can, then fair people are likely to respond well. If people are not fair, then this is something outside your control.

Often, the best thing to do is to rise above unfair comments.

Tip:

If you find it difficult to look at your negative thoughts objectively, imagine that you are your best friend or a respected coach or mentor. Look at the list of negative thoughts and imagine the negative thoughts were written by someone you were giving objective advice to, and think how you would challenge these thoughts.

When you challenge negative thoughts rationally, you should be able to see quickly whether the thoughts are wrong or whether they have some substance to them. Where there is some substance, take appropriate action. In these cases, negative thinking has been an early warning system showing where you need to direct your attention.

Positive Thinking & Opportunity Seeking

Where you have used Rational Thinking to identify incorrect negative thinking, it can often be useful to prepare rational positive thoughts and affirmations to counter them. It can also be useful to look at the situation and see if there are any useful opportunities that are offered by it.

Affirmations help you to build self-confidence. By basing your affirmations on the clear, rational assessments of facts that you made using Rational Thinking, you can use them to undo the damage that negative thinking may have done to your self-confidence.

Tip:

Your affirmations will be strongest if they are specific, are expressed in the present tense and have strong emotional content..

Continuing the examples above, positive affirmations might be:

- **Feelings of inadequacy:** “I am well trained for this. I have the experience, the tools and the resources I need. I have thought through and prepared for all possible issues. I can do a superb job.”
- **Worries about performance:** “I have researched and planned well for this, and I thoroughly understand the problem. I have the time, resources and help I need. I am well prepared to do an excellent job.”
- **Problems issues outside your control:** “We have thought through everything that might reasonably happen and have planned how we can handle all likely contingencies. Everyone is ready to help where necessary. We are very well placed to react flexibly and effectively to unusual events.”
- **Worry about other people’s reaction:** “I am well-prepared and am doing the best I can. Fair people will respect this. I will rise above any unfair criticism in a mature and professional way.”

If appropriate, write these affirmations down so that you can use them when you need them.

As well as allowing you to structure useful affirmations, part of Positive Thinking is to look at opportunities that the situation might offer to you. In the examples above, successfully overcoming the situations causing the original negative thinking will open up opportunities. You will acquire new skills, you will be seen as someone who can handle difficult challenges, and you may open up new career opportunities.

Make sure that identifying these opportunities and focusing on them is part of your positive thinking.

Tip:

In the past people have advocated positive thinking almost recklessly, as if it is a solution to everything. Positive thinking should be used with common sense. First, decide rationally what goals you can realistically attain with hard work, and then use positive thinking to reinforce these.

Summary:

This set of tools helps you to manage and counter the stress of negative thinking.

Thought Awareness helps you to understand the negative thinking, unpleasant memories and misinterpretation of situations that may interfere with your performance and damage your self-confidence.

Rational Thinking is the technique that helps you to challenge these negative thoughts and either learn from them or refute them as incorrect.

Positive thinking is then used to create positive affirmations that you can use to counter negative thoughts. These affirmations neutralize negative thoughts and build your self-confidence. It is also used to find the opportunities that are almost always present to some degree in a difficult situation.

This article is an excerpt from our [Stress Management Masterclass](#). It is the simplest technique in the “From Negativity to Positive Energy” module, which then goes on to show you how to use two powerful new tools, “Emotional Analysis” and “Cognitive Restructuring”. Whereas this tool helps with general negative thoughts, Emotional Analysis helps you to get in tune with your emotions, helping you to understand them and use them as the powerful “early-warning system” they really are. Cognitive Restructuring helps you to come to terms with deep, pervasive negative thoughts and moods, giving you a robust approach for turning them around and overcoming unhappiness. Used together, these techniques help you to overcome the intense stress that negative thinking can cause.

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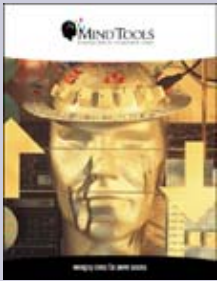
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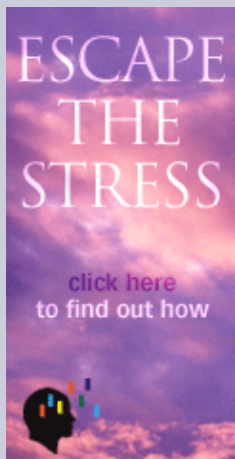
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Rest, Relaxation and Sleep

Up to now we have looked at ways of managing specific, short-term stresses. Within Mind Tools' Stress Management Masterclass, we also look at long-term stress. A key facet of this is the way that people can sustain intense levels of stress for a while, but then burn out.

We will look at burnout in more detail in the next article. It is something that typically affects people who are highly committed to the work they do, probably much like you. When these people are faced by a stressful situation, more-often-than-not they respond with complete commitment, by working intensely hard at resolving it. To do this, they will work all hours, cancel vacations and cut back on sleep, all to make more time to tackle the problem.

If this is short-lived, then negative effects will be minimal and success will often be spectacular. If this hard work is sustained for a long time without relief, these people increasingly risk burnout.

We rest and sleep because we need to.

Rest and Relaxation

Rest is what we do to let stress subside. Rest at the end of a day, and at the end of a week, helps us to calm down.

Doing fun things that we enjoy in our leisure time compensates us for the unpleasant stress we experience at work, bringing some balance back into life. This is particularly important if we routinely experience unpleasant levels of stress.

A good way of getting rest and reducing long-term stress is to take up an enjoyable, non-rushed sport or hobby. If you spend all your working day competing, then can be very pleasant to be completely noncompetitive for some of your free time. Slow physical activities such as sailing or walking are good for this, as are others where there is little or no pressure for performance. Reading novels, watching television or socializing can also be very restful.

Vacations are particularly important, and you really do need to take these. Where possible, take two weeks off rather than just one week. A common observation that people make is that they really do not start to relax properly until the end of their first week of vacation.

Make sure that you take your vacations and that you use them to relax. Also, make sure that you get enough good quality rest during the week to keep on enjoying life to its fullest.

Sleep

The average person needs approximately eight hours sleep a night (although this can vary between three hours and eleven hours, depending on the person and his or her age).

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

This diminishes our effectiveness in our job, and can therefore 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 that you get enough sleep. If you have become used to being tired all the time, you will be amazed by how sharp and energetic you will feel once you start sleeping normally.

This article is an excerpt from “Managing Stress for Career Success”, the Mind Tools [Stress Management Masterclass](#). It is just one example of the things that you can do to reduce stress in your life, explained in the ‘Buffers Against Stress’ module of the course. Other tools in this module discuss the importance of social support networks and of a balanced lifestyle. As well as this, the ‘Managing Environmental Stress’ module shows you how to control the background environmental stresses that raise our overall stress levels. Small changes to our environment can often significantly reduce the stress we experience and improve our quality of life.

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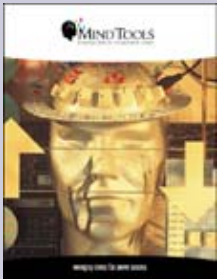
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Burnout Self-Test - Checking Yourself for Burnout

Burnout occurs when passionate, committed people become deeply disillusioned with a job or career from which they have previously derived much of their identity and meaning. It comes as the things that inspire passion and enthusiasm are stripped away, and tedious or unpleasant things crowd in. This tool helps you to check yourself for burnout.

Introduction:

This next tool is a useful self-check for burnout. By using it on a regular basis, you can keep a check on yourself to see whether you are at risk of burnout, and therefore whether you need to take action to avoid it.

Using the Tool:

There are two easy ways of using the test. Either:

- Work through the table below on paper and calculate values manually, or
- Download the template from <http://www.mindtools.com/courses/SMMC/BurnoutSelfTest.xls>, and fill in values appropriately on the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. This will automatically calculate scores for you and interpret these scores, showing the score and interpretation in row 30.

To use this technique, either work through the template or print off and work through the table below.

Figure 1: Checking Yourself for Burnout

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For each question, put a tick in the column that most applies. Put one tick only in each row.

#	Question	Not At All	Rarely	Some times	Often	Very Often
1	Do you feel run down and drained of physical or emotional energy?					
2	Do you find that you are prone to negative thinking about your job?					
3	Do you find that you are harder and less sympathetic with people than perhaps they deserve?					
4	Do you find yourself getting easily irritated by small problems, or by your co-workers and team?					
5	Do you feel misunderstood or unappreciated by your co-workers?					
6	Do you feel that you have no one to talk to?					

7	Do you feel that you are achieving less than you should?					
8	Do you feel under an unpleasant level of pressure to succeed?					
9	Do you feel that you are not getting what you want out of your job?					
10	Do you feel that you are in the wrong organization or the wrong profession?					
11	Are you becoming frustrated with parts of your job?					
12	Do you feel that organizational politics or bureaucracy frustrate your ability to do a good job?					
13	Do you feel that there is more work to do than you practically have the ability to do?					
14	Do you feel that you do not have time to do many of the things that are important to doing a good quality job?					
15	Do you find that you do not have time to plan as much as you would like to?					
Total of weighted scores (see instructions):						

Score 1 for every tick in the “Not At All” column, 2 for every tick in the “Rarely” column, and so on up to 5 for every tick in the “Very Often” column. Add up your total and check your result using the table below.

If you choose to use the manual method, then calculate the total of the scores as described in the instructions (note that this uses a slightly different scoring method from the spreadsheet). Apply the score to the table below to get the interpretation:

Figure 2 - Score Interpretation

Score	Interpretation
15 – 18	No sign of burnout here
19 – 32	Little sign of burnout here, unless some factors are particularly severe
33 – 49	Be careful - you may be at risk of burnout, particularly if several scores are high
50 – 59	You are at severe risk of burnout - do something about this urgently
60 - 75	You are at very severe risk of burnout – do something about this urgently

Use this test regularly (for example, each calendar quarter) so that you can spot burnout before it develops, and take early action to counter it.

Summary:

This tool helps you to assess your likelihood of burnout. Use it as a burnout “health check” on a routine basis (perhaps every quarter). This helps to ensure you take early preventative action.

To use the tool, fill in the table above and score appropriately, or download the template from <http://www.mindtools.com/courses/SMMC/BurnoutSelfTest.xls> and fill this in.

This is an excerpt from the “Avoiding Burnout” module of our [Stress Management Masterclass](#). The rest of the Burnout module:

- helps you to identify burnout pressure points so that you can defend what you enjoy about your job

- shows you how to avoid burnout if you are at risk of it,
- and talks you through recovery from burnout if it has already occurred.

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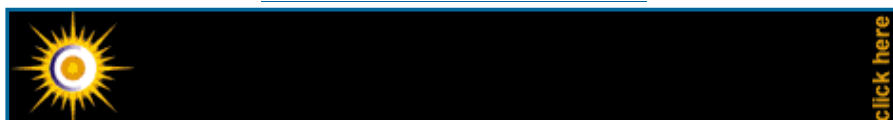
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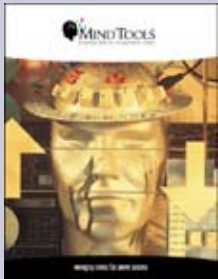
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How I Overcame Stress Addiction

by [Misty Mills](#). *Misty comments: "As a full-time worker and student, managing stress is a topic I am quite familiar with. As a practicing massage therapist, my clients often ask me what they can do to manage the unbelievable stress their jobs, families and daily obligations often place on them. While I obviously encourage them to receive massages, I also talk to them about my own stress addiction and the many ways I manage it - through humor, simple diet changes and self care. I wrote this article in the hope that Mind Tools' readers will benefit from my experiences."*

Hi, My Name is Misty.

Almost every night I fill my bathtub with scalding hot water. I sprinkle some "Zen"-scented bubble bath under the faucet. I light aromatherapy candles. Sometimes I'll have a glass of wine. I put some soft blues music on the stereo, and I sink in up to my neck and steep.

It's a nice ritual - relaxation. Ahhh. I try to clear my mind, go to a happy place, let myself unwind, and take a couple of deep breaths. But inevitably I find myself thinking things like, "I don't have time for this. I still have two loads of laundry to do," or "Maybe I should rewrite that research paper just one more time." "Did I forget to turn off the coffee maker?" "Do I have enough money to pay rent tomorrow?" "Why won't my academic advisor return my e-mail?!" "I have a headache!" and finally, "WHAT THE HECK IS A LOOFAH, AND WHY DO I HAVE THREE OF THEM?!"

Hello, my name is Misty, and I'm a stress junkie. Like most recovering addicts, I remember when I hit bottom. I was working full-time as a newspaper reporter spending about 50 hours a week dealing with the best sorts of people. Covering the crime beat, I had the privilege of meeting the finest drunk drivers, wife beaters, petty thieves, gang bangers, addicts and politicians. In addition, I was a full-time communications student with a 4.0 GPA. I volunteered at the local women's shelter. I planned the annual Peace Officers Charity Benefit Golf Tournament. I was chauffeur to my drunk friends and therapist to my sober ones.

On the day I finally crashed, I hadn't slept in three days. There were simply too many very important things to do - laundry, wash and wax the car, rewrite my column for the Sunday edition, study for my art history exam, make the pairings for the golf tournament and call my best friend who'd just broken up with her boyfriend. You get the picture.

I was on the phone with her when out of nowhere I felt my chest cave in on itself. I couldn't breathe without being in agonizing pain. I thought my heart was going to implode, and worst of all, this was going to happen before I'd had the chance to scrub the bathtub. I couldn't stop sobbing, and my arms and legs wouldn't move. I told my friend I was dying. She rushed over and took me to the emergency room.

I was poked and prodded for the next several hours. Blood tests. Urine tests. Drug tests. They thought I might have been a cocaine user who was too embarrassed to admit it. They did psychological tests. I was force fed when I admitted to the nurse I didn't recall eating the last few days because I'd been so busy. Then they doped me to the gills, and I finally slept for a few hours.

This is how stress junkies work. We live for drama, and if there isn't enough to go around we'll manufacture some. Still, I'm better off than a lot of addicts. My habit didn't leave me bankrupt, in jail or alienated from my family and friends.

The substances I abused were easy to get. I didn't have to go to the ghetto, across the tracks, to a friend's or even outside of my own home to get them. My own body would manufacture the drugs I needed free of charge and on demand. I craved them - cortisol, norepinephrine, adrenaline and glucocorticoids - stress hormones.

These chemicals have all the side effects of drugs like heroine and PCP, and those side effects can kill you. Initially, they provide a psychological boost. You become more alert. You sense less pain, hunger and loneliness. You experience a sense of euphoria. Unpleasant memories are harder to recall. Your world seems more vivid and intense. If you could bottle these chemicals and sell them on the street... well, there's no telling how much money you could make.

But these same hormones, pumped through your body at high doses over long periods of time contribute to ulcers, immune system disorders, depression, fatigue, anxiety attacks (which is what the doctors determined had happened to me) and a host of other stress related illnesses like cancer. Under the influence of these substances you become more prone to automobile accidents, emotional outbursts and troubled relationships. And like other addicts, stress junkies will go to incredible lengths to get a high.

My favorite way to get high involves taking on way more than I can handle; then holding myself to impossible, perfect standards; and then obsessing about the outcome of every foreseeable event in my or anyone else's life. It's the stress junkie's equivalent of snorting, shooting up and smoking a joint at the same time.

I have a third degree black belt in What If. I'm a certified instructor of What Could Go Wrong. I am a Queen of Obsession. I can obsess about my own life and problems, and if I don't have a big enough problem, I'll obsess about yours. I don't know you that well? Ha! That's never stopped me before. I need my fix, and I need it now.

Sometimes the best way to get a fix is through obsessive worrying. I worry about terrorism. I worry about child abuse. I worry about flesh-eating bacteria and killer bees. I worry about terrorists abusing children with killer bees infected with flesh-eating bacteria.

And it just gets better. Just like other kinds of addiction, a stress junkie eventually develops a tolerance. It begins to take more and more stress to produce the same numbing effect. What's worse is unlike an alcoholic or pot head, you can't just quit cold turkey. There is no way to abstain. An alcoholic can refuse to go to restaurants that serve liquor or can stop himself before he goes in to buy a case of beer. I don't have that sort of luxury.

And the kicker of it all is that we all need stress. Yes, we need it. Stress and the hormones it produces do serve a biological function. In a healthy person, stress serves as a motivator.

We've all heard of the fight-or-flight response. It goes like this. If you're being chased (hypothetically of course) by a tiger, your body begins to pump adrenaline into your blood stream. You are faced with a decision. You can stay and attempt to fight off the tiger or you can run away.

Either way, blood is diverted from your digestive system and other non-vital systems and pushed to your muscles to make you faster and stronger than you would normally be. If you sprain an ankle or get cut while rushing past a thorny tree, you don't feel any pain. Your vision is enhanced. You are totally focused.

And in this hypothetical jungle, once you were out of danger, your body would return itself to a normal state. It's a great way to escape a charging animal, but this type of response is not so well-adapted to say, office politics, your dry cleaning being late or rush hour traffic. Unfortunately, our bodies are not equipped with a separate stress response for charging wild animals and irritating radio commercials. Stress is a necessary part of life. It keeps us out of danger and motivates us to action. That's why stress addiction is so hard to battle.

And forgive me, but I couldn't possible continue without mentioning that psychologically, addiction is a great way to avoid all the things that frighten you. Not thinks like spiders or snakes, I mean really scary things like recognizing your own dishonesty, taking responsibility for solving your own problems and getting the courage up to pursue your most secret dream. When you're working overtime and obsessing about details, you can't beat yourself up for being emotionally immature or being lackadaisical about your family

obligations.

Although stress addiction distracts us from all these scary monsters that hide in our emotional broom closets and temporarily keeps us from experiencing pain and sadness, it also ultimately robs us of real joy and happiness and gratitude and the ability to have lasting friendships and all the deep emotions that make life worth living.

I certainly cannot place the blame for my addiction anywhere but squarely on my own shoulders, yet I still cannot help but notice that we live in a society that not only tolerates stress addiction but might actually encourage it.

In school, we reward the students that go above and beyond course requirements to the detriment of the rest of their lives, even if they learn no more than the “average“ students. A straight A student is “better” than a B student. We shower praise upon the kids who conform to the pre-fabricated idea of academic success and neglect or even punish the ones who don’t.

At work, the employee who works overtime, volunteers to chair the committees and plans the Christmas party is the one who gets the raises and promotions. It’s never the employee who shows up on time, works hard, then goes home to spend time with her family.

And even within our families we encourage stress addiction. Soccer moms all over the country neglect their own health and well-being to make sure that three kids are at separate activities all at the same time. When she succeeds we shower her with accolades.

And in any of these cases, when someone puts their foot down and says, “I will not live like this anymore! I can’t do it.” We all secretly think they just can’t hack it. There must be something wrong with them. No wonder we’re a nation of addicts. We’re addicted to addiction.

After my bout in the emergency room several years ago, I half-heartedly battled my addiction. I would binge for months on projects and obsessions then tell myself I was recovering when I sat down for half an hour to watch TV, went for a walk or got a massage.

But over time, I’ve developed some tools that help me manage my stress levels and stay out of the emergency rooms with anxiety attacks. I found some of the standard responses from doctors did not work for me, but here are the three things which help me on a regular basis:

1. I knew I would not stick to an exercise schedule, even though exercise is a great stress buster. But I was able to cut out caffeine and alcohol (most of the time) from my diet. This helps me sleep better at night, so even if I don’t get the recommended 8 hours per night, at least I am getting quality sleep. And if it’s a nice day outside I park at the back of the parking lot and enjoy the walk to the grocery store, video rental store or work.
2. A therapist I saw once also taught me to flex or clench every single muscle in my body for about three seconds then relax. I do this three times when I’m feeling particularly frazzled, take a couple of deep breaths and head back out into the world. The contrast I feel physically between being tense and being relaxed helps me remember to un-tense my shoulders where I carry a lot of stress. The nice thing about this exercise is that I can do it almost any time of day. If I feel like I’m about to snap, I’ll take a 2 minute bathroom break, do my flexing exercise, and I almost inevitably feel better.
3. I try to get a massage once a month. Sometimes I slip, but my reasoning is this: I spend money to maintain my home and my car because they are some of the biggest investments I’ve made. But I can still replace my car if it breaks down or move to a new house if the one I’m in has too many repair issues. Unfortunately, I can’t do this with my mind or body. So I try to get a massage to keep me relaxed and healthy. Besides, the \$80 I spend on a massage costs a lot less than a trip to the emergency room or a prescription for Xanax.

I’ve developed a nice relationship with myself since I recognized my stress addiction. And although I know it will be something I must deal with on a daily basis, I’ve decided I’m worth the extra effort it takes to manage this condition. I would tell you more, but my bathtub is full, and a nice glass of wine is calling my name.

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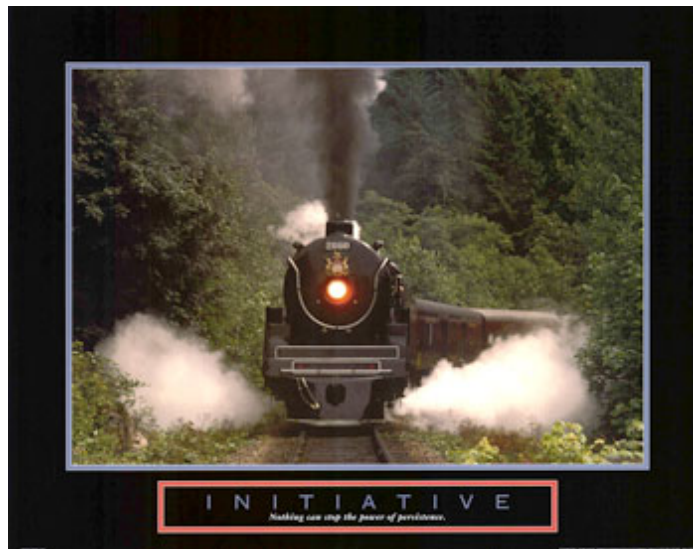
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pages found, links found, score <http://www.pp.okstate.edu/ehs/links/stress.htm>
- ★ **[Stress Management...](#)**
Stress management and relaxation website. Site includes information on stress management video tape, stress management consultation, worksite stress management and wellness programs....
0 pages found, 0 links found, 0 score <http://faculty.weber.edu/molpin/bushea/stress.html>

[Stress Management Techniques - Inner Changes - Hypnotherapy, NLP and Stress...](#)

Bring Calm to Your Life now!...

0 pages found, 0 links found, 0 score <http://www.hypnotize.me.uk/stress.htm>

[WorkSciences: The work stress management programme...](#)

The work stress management programme from WorkSciences, helping to build a contented and productive workforce with reduced staff turnover and absenteeism...

pages found, links found, score <http://www.worksciences.com>

Other links

[Andy Smith's Anxiety, Panic and Stress Advice: How NLP and TFT can help...](#)

How Thought Field Therapy (TFT) and NLP can help with anxiety, stress, rejection, phobias and panic....

17 pages found, 21 links found, 3897 score <http://www.trance.dircon.co.uk>

[Anxiety and Stress Management - Oxford Hypnotherapy and Hypnosis...](#)

Stress and anxiety can be helped with hypnosis. Oxford Hypnotherapy offer a complete stress management program for individuals or groups. Useful products, information and resources including hypnosis ...

pages found, links found, score <http://www.hypnos.info/cds/cd09.html>

[Anxiety Treatment Australia...](#)

Provides information about : anxiety disorders, treatment and therapy, stress management tips, Australian psychologists who treat anxiety, support groups, depression, chronic pain management...

pages found, links found, score <http://www.anxietyaustralia.com.au>

[Articles, reviews and resources on health care and inspiration....](#)

...

17 pages found, 72 links found, 19958 score <http://www.bookpatch.com>

[Baylor College of Medicine...](#)

Women and Stress: Successfully juggling your busy life.....

0 pages found, 0 links found, 0 score http://www.bcm.tmc.edu/we_care/womenstress.htm

[Breathing Online - Welcome to The Art of Breathing Web Site...](#)

Breathing exercises to improve performance, health, and well-being....

43 pages found, 17 links found, 4419 score <http://www.TheArtofBreathing.com>

[Center for Anxiety and Stress Treatment...](#)

Anxiety? Stress? Panic? Phobias? Worry? Our resources can help you manage and regain control of your life. Visit our site to find out how we can help you reduce stress, become free from panic attacks and get on the road to a happier, healthier life....

28 pages found, 6 links found, 5970 score <http://www.stressrelease.com>

[Centre for Stress Management...](#)

The site provides information about our stress management, stress prevention and cognitive therapy training programmes. The Centre also runs life, executive and performance coaching and coaching psychology courses. ...

7 pages found, 4 links found, 4768 score <http://www.managingstress.com>

[Cognitive behavior therapy...](#)

Description and explanation of cognitive behavior therapy (CBT), also called cognitive-behavioral therapy. Includes self-help reading list and links to other Web resources on CBT....

19 pages found, 38 links found, 487 score <http://www.cognitivetherapy.com>

[counseling links...](#)

Stress Management and Emotional Wellness Links Life Esteem Eating Disorders Dealing with Depression Depression Depot Manic Moments: A Bipolar's World ADDA - National Attention Defic...

pages found, links found, score <http://www.sa.armstrong.edu/Counseling/counselinks.html>

[David Baldwin's Trauma Information...](#)

The support links on this page are primarily for those seeking information about types of trauma, trauma responses, ways of coping with stress, treatment approaches, and related mental health issues. ...

0 pages found, 0 links found, 0 score <http://www.trauma-pages.com/pg4.htm>

Get a grip on your life...

Welcome to Get-A-Grip-On-Your-Life.com Home page. Around the New Year especially, daily stress becomes too much to bear. Get-a-grip-on-your-life.com helps you cope...

5 pages found, 12 links found, 1158 score <http://www.Get-A-Grip-On-Your-Life.com>

GHR Training Solutions - Experts in Workplace Violence, Employee Motivation and Stress Reduction...

Our Mission is to help you protect and optimize your greatest asset - your people. Learn how to prevent violence and harassment, reduce stress, motivate and retain employees, embrace diversity and build high-performance teams....

31 pages found, 38 links found, 7407 score <http://www.ghr-training.com>

Guided Imagery...

Guided imagery, Inc. offers cassette tapes and CDs designed to decrease stress, anxiety, pain and headaches and enhance healing through visualization....

9 pages found, 0 links found, 9278 score <http://www.guidedimageryinc.com>

Health Guide - mental health...

Links to a wide range of mental health sites, including to Stress sites and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder sites....

0 pages found, 0 links found, 0 score <http://healthguide.co.uk/mentalhealth.html>

Imagine That! - interactive guided imagery...

...

12 pages found, 5 links found, 1893 score <http://www.imageryguide.com>

Inspired Living - Stress Management...

Links to stress management articles and sites on the web....

0 pages found, 0 links found, 0 score <http://www.inspiredliving.com/stress/stress.htm>

International Stress Management Association (UK)...

The International Stress Management Association exists to promote sound knowledge and best practice in the prevention and reduction of human stress. ...

79 pages found, 79 links found, 2455 score <http://www.isma.org.uk>

John Kupersmith's Technostress Page...

Listings and abstracts of works on technostress....

0 pages found, 0 links found, 0 score <http://www.jkup.net/tstress.html>

Karen Guy, Stress Management for Professionals....

The web's premier contact site: Karen Guy offers nationwide stress management training for both the smaller business and international companies....

6 pages found, 2 links found, 7447 score <http://www.karenguy.com>

Learn how to study with howtostudy.com...

Includes links for helping with exam stress....

0 pages found, 0 links found, 0 score <http://www.howtostudy.com/stress.htm>

Lifelines @ Work - For Health, Productivity, and Effectiveness...

Re-energize yourself, reduce stress, improve health and performance. It includes health questionnaires and instant results, a daily cartoon, tip, quote and a monthly newsletter....

26 pages found, 1 links found, 838 score <http://www.lifelines.com>

Mental physical wellbeing, stress relief through self hypnosis...

Mental physical wellbeing is a site designed to help visitors improve their mental health. Dr. Brian Alman is an expert in the fields of self hypnosis and meditation....

19 pages found, 7 links found, 18136 score <http://www.mental-physical-wellbeing.com>

Positive Path ~ Life by Choice - not by Chance...

Positive Path Network provides positive ideas on motivation, personal growth, meditation, stress management, goal setting, achievement, life coaching and inspirational quotations searchable from its archive....

31 pages found, 5 links found, 2612 score <http://www.positivepath.net>

Powerful Effective Personal Growth, Self Help, Meditation and Mind Development - Centerpointe Research Institute...

Experience the most powerful personal growth, self-help and mind development tool in the world with this FREE on-line demo. Holosync sound technology creates deep, super-pleasurable meditative states, razor-sharp thinking, quantum leaps in self-awareness....

33 pages found, 2 links found, 10781 score <http://www.centerpointe.com>

Practical EQ: Emotional Intelligence, NLP, Time Line Therapy (tm)...

Developing emotional intelligence with NLP Contact Andy Smith....

17 pages found, 46 links found, 946 score <http://www.practicaleq.com>

Psychology Links...

Exploring Psychology Text Psychology 101 Library Assignment Substance Abuse Page General Psychology Web Directories The DSM-IV Online - Most of the information available in the book is at this site...

pages found, links found, score <http://www.tmcc.edu/library/links/psych.htm>

Psychology Self-Help Resources on the Internet...

Back to Psych Web Home Page Psychology Self-Help Resources on the Internet Updated 08 09 02. This page [<http://www.psywww.com/resource/selfhelp.htm>] contains links to non-commercial sites providing i...

pages found, links found, score <http://www.psywww.com/resource/selfhelp.htm>

Relax, take it easy... you're at the Calm Centre....

Escape stress, depression and boredom at the Calm Centre. Bestselling author, Paul Wilson, has gathered a group of writers, artists, musicians and psychologists to develop entertaining, uplifting ways to help you make your life more calm and enjoyable....

33 pages found, 1 links found, 801 score <http://www.calmcentre.com>

Royal & SunAlliance Stress Management...

We all experience stress sometimes. Whether it is related to work, family, travel, money, friends, studying, love or the future - feeling under pressure is part of being human. ...

37 pages found, 37 links found, 14150 score <http://www.howtomanagestress.co.uk>

Salix Publishing Ltd: Home Page...

Welcome to Salix Publishing Ltd, independent publishers of health promotion leaflets specialising in mental health topics. ...

pages found, links found, score <http://www.salixedu.demon.co.uk>

School Psychology Resources Online A to Z Index...

Online resources for school psychologists, parents and educators. Find information on learning disabilities, ADHD, gifted, autism, adolescence, parenting, psychological assessment, classroom management,...

0 pages found, 0 links found, 0 score http://www.schoolpsychology.net/p_indexaz.html

Shyness and Social Anxiety Treatment Australia ...

Information about social anxiety, treatment and therapy, stress management tips, Australian psychologists who treat social anxiety, support groups, self help resources, depression, children and social anxiety, blushing and sweating, public speaking tips...

0 pages found, 0 links found, 0 score <http://www.socialanxietyassist.com.au>

Stess Counseling & Biofeedback Systems...

Our goal is to offer individuals a path to self-regulation, self control and long term recovery, without medicine or invasive treatment. ...

12 pages found, 1 links found, 1288 score <http://www.stresscounseling.com>

Stress - A Collection of Resources...

WebSource @ the Flint Public Library. Everyone experiences stress. We all need some stress in our lives. Unfortunately too many people are affected adversely, sometimes catastrophically, by stress. ...

0 pages found, 0 links found, 0 score <http://www.flint.lib.mi.us/fpl/resources/stress>

Stress - ed-u.com Educational Resources...

Stress - Students, Teachers and Parents Click Here - Your Education Mega-Site for Fun, Homework, Careers, Revision, Webmastering, and Much More!...

pages found, links found, score <http://www.ed-u.com/stress.htm>

Stress - Management...

Stress web sites registered and linked for the World-Wide Web Virtual Library....

pages found, links found, score <http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/gthursby/stress/manage.htm>

Stress - The State of the Nation...

Stress gives one in five thoughts of suicide Problem most acute on West Coast, The Globe and Mail reports More Finding relief Canada AM nutrition expert Leslie Beck and fitness expert Chris Batist...

pages found, links found, score <http://www.globeandmail.com/special/stress/resources.html>

Stress And Health: resources for coping with stress...

Stress and health offers definitions, descriptions, explanations and links related to how to cope with stress, anxiety, sleep problems, drug use and much more....

pages found, links found, score <http://www.alleydog.com/links-sp/stress.asp>

Stress Dynamics...

Stress Dynamics is a site dedicated to bringing you the latest, most accurate information on stress and relaxation....

47 pages found, 22 links found, 12233 score <http://www.stressdynamics.com>

Stress Education Center...

Resources and training for stress and stress management....

62 pages found, 34 links found, 34218 score <http://www.dstress.com>

Stress Free - Welcome...

Stress, anxiety, psychological and emotional pressures affect all of us in our daily lives. Welcome to the StressFree Net home page and virtual offices for the StressFree Network. ...

23 pages found, 2 links found, 587 score <http://www.stressfree.com>

Stress Less ®...

Stress Less is a multi-disciplinary stress management company retailing high quality, stress reduction products and programs. ...

46 pages found, 35 links found, 8304 score <http://www.stressless.com>

Stress Management...

Stress management and relaxation website. Site includes information on stress management video tape, stress management consultation, worksite stress management and wellness programs....

0 pages found, 0 links found, 0 score <http://faculty.weber.edu/molpin/bushea/stress.html>

Stress Management...

Links to stress management information on the web....

pages found, links found, score <http://www.pp.okstate.edu/ehs/links/stress.htm>

stress management About.com...

This site is your guide to the Internet on everything related to stress, stress-induced conditions, and managing stress. Find the latest research on medical conditions related to stress and learn tips for its control and management. Also find time-saving tips, self-assessment tools, and articles to help you balance career and family. Find net links to hundreds of choice sites....

138 pages found, 26 links found, 16550 score <http://stress.about.com>

Stress Management Resources for Stressed and Overworked People...

Free weekly stress management tips and lots of practical resources for stressed people....

113 pages found, 153 links found, 7433 score <http://www.stresstips.com>

Stress Management Techniques - Inner Changes - Hypnotherapy, NLP and Stress...

Bring Calm to Your Life now!...

0 pages found, 0 links found, 0 score <http://www.hypnotize.me.uk/stress.htm>

Stress- Teen-Matters.com...

Stress management for teens.....

0 pages found, 0 links found, 0 score <http://www.teen-matters.com/textonly/stress.html>

Success Strategies for College Students - Suite101.com...

The college experience is often discussed from the standpoint of gaining admission. However, various stressors and obstacles during this important period of life can be overlooked. Success Strategie...

pages found, links found, score http://www.suite101.com/welcome.cfm/success_strategies

The American Institute of Stress...

The American Institute of Stress is a non profit organization dedicated to advancing our understanding of the role of stress in health and illness....

14 pages found, 5 links found, 2407 score <http://www.stress.org>

The Anxiety Network International Home Page...

Social Anxiety Disorder (social phobia), panic, and generalized anxiety disorder are covered by The Anxiety Network....

64 pages found, 7 links found, 4857 score <http://www.anxietynetwork.com>

The Blonz Guide to Medical Resources...

A comprehensive, nutrition, foods and health resource compiled by a nationally syndicated

scientist journalist...

0 pages found, 0 links found, 0 score <http://blonz.com/med.htm>

[The Caregiving Years: Stage 2 Resources...](#)

Caregiving.com helps persons who care for aging relatives. At Caregiving.com, we walk with family caregivers through their caregiving journeys....

pages found, links found, score <http://www.caregiving.com/years/html/resources2.htm>

[The Institute for Stress Management...](#)

Tools to help you survive and thrive in a world changing at the speed of light....

26 pages found, 3 links found, 10176 score <http://www.hyperstress.com>

[The Web's Stress Management and Emotional Wellness Page...](#)

This page is intended as an educational resource page dedicated to those interested in managing stress and maximizing performance. ...

0 pages found, 0 links found, 0 score <http://www.imt.net/~randolfi/StressPage.html>

[Thriving, not just surviving, in a world of STRESS - Stressmaster UK...](#)

Stressmaster UK is unique, we are not just another management consultancy or training company that has developed a stress management program, we are STRESS SPECIALISTS and as such are able to offer a TOTAL STRESS SOLUTION to corporate clients....

11 pages found, 0 links found, 1607 score <http://www.stressmasteruk.co.uk>

[Using self hypnosis and meditation to reduce stress...](#)

Self-hypnosis and meditation can help you manage stress, improve relationships and free yourself from addictions....

14 pages found, 7 links found, 1387 score <http://www.Relax-and-heal.com>

[Weid's Psychlinks...](#)

Links to information on a wide range of disorders, including stress....

0 pages found, 0 links found, 0 score <http://www.fidnet.com/~weid/disorders.htm>

[Welcome to STRESSMAP...](#)

...

19 pages found, 1 links found, 8609 score <http://www.stressmap.ca>

[WorkSciences: The work stress management programme...](#)

The work stress management programme from WorkSciences, helping to build a contented and productive workforce with reduced staff turnover and absenteeism...

pages found, links found, score <http://www.worksciences.com>

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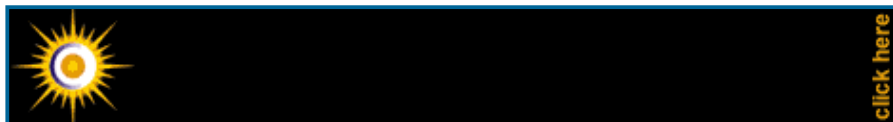
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Iain Hunter

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You're obviously looking for ways to help build your **self esteem** so you've come to the right place and you can sign up to all of the **FREE** material by just clicking [here](#) now.

So, what are your **self esteem** worries?

Maybe you want to:

- Feel good about yourself rather than knocking yourself down all of the time

- Remove the self doubt and say "I can" rather than "I can't"

- Take some risks but your **self esteem** is holding you back

-

Stick up for yourself rather than have people walk all over you

Be able to say NO!

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<u>Hotel & Lodging</u>	<u>Hypnosis</u>
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<u>Telecommunications</u>	<u>Travel</u>
<u>Web Resources & Development</u>	<u>Work At Home Parents</u>
<u>Misc</u>	<u>Others</u>

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[**self confidence**](#)
[**Refinance mortgage home equity loan**](#)
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- [Job Stress](#)
<http://www.jobstresshelp.com/>
A full-service site offering information, newsletters, consultants, and other resources to deal with job-related stress.
 - [StopStress.Com](#)
<http://www.stopstress.com/>
Free information about stress management, assessment, cures, occupational stress, coping through humor, anxiety, holiday stress, relaxation, and more.
 - [Stress Management](#)
<http://www.ivf.com/stress.html>
A brief primer on stress-management provided as a service of the Atlanta Reproductive Health Centre.
 - [Stress Management: A Review of Principles](#)
<http://www.unl.edu/stress/mgmt/>
An online essay by Wesley E. Sime, Ph. D., MPH, a Professor in the Department of Health and Human Performance at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. The purpose of the paper is to present core concepts of stress-management education.
 - [Stress Management International](#)
<http://www.less-stress.com/inter/index.htm>
Advice for individuals and services for managers based on the "changing times" method.
 - [Stress Tips](#)
<http://www.stresstips.com/>
Practical advice from John Townsend in Coffs Harbour, NSW, Australia.
 - [Virtual Psych](#) (Canada)
<http://www.virtualpsych.com/>
Practical stress management information offered as a non-commercial hobby venture by a clinical psychologist with noted expertise in this field.
-



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[Online Safety Library: Stress Management](#)

Articles and Information

- [The Medical Basis of Stress, Depression, Anxiety, Sleep Problems & Drug Use](#) (**excellent site!**)
- [Stress Management and Emotional Wellness Links](#) (excellent collection)
- [Children and War: What Parents Need to Know](#) (OU Children's Hospital)
- [Dealing With Bullies](#) (KidsHealth)
- [Developing a Stress Management and Relaxation Center for the Worksite](#) (Dr. Ernesto A. Randolph)
- [Facts About Job Stress](#) (JobStress Help)
- [Facts About Post Traumatic Stress Disorder](#) (Natl. Center for PTSD)
- [Grief Awareness](#) (Cosmic Sparkle)
- [HeartMath Library](#) (Collection of stress management related stuff)
- [How to Fight and Conquer Stress](#) (Rose Medical Center)
- [How to Master Stress](#) (Mind Tools)
- [Job Stress Resource Center](#) (What You Need to Know About)
- [Overcoming Procrastination](#) (Univ at Buffalo)
- [Professional Life Stress Scale](#) (Univ Hawaii)
- [Psychosocial & Post Traumatic Stress Resources](#) (AMA)
- [Public Performance Anxiety](#) (Wellspring)
- [Public Speaking and Stress](#) (Stresscure.com)
- [Put In The Big Rocks First](#) (Univ. Nebraska Cooperative Extension)
- [Strategies for Stress Management](#) (College of St Benedict & St John's Univ)
- [Stress and Anxiety](#) (Univ at Buffalo)
- [Stress and Alcohol FAQs](#) (What You Need to Know About)
- [Stress in Relationships](#) (Stresscure.com)
- [Stress Busters](#) (StressRelease)
- [Stress Management](#) (ARHC)
- [Stress Management](#) (collection from What You Need to Know About)
- [Stress and Arthritis](#) (Univ Washington)
- [Stress Management: A Review of Principles](#) (UNL)
- [Stress Management for College Students](#) (Univ. at Buffalo)
- [Stress Management for Patient and Physician](#) (Internet Mental Health)
- [Stress Management Techniques](#) (Mind Tools)
- [Stress Model](#) (Stress Free Net)
- [Surviving the Stress of the Holidays](#) (What You Need to Know About))
- [Time Management](#) (Univ at Buffalo)
- [Workplace Stress](#) (Ireland Health & Safety Authority)

Resources

[Stress Management and Emotional Wellness Links](#) (excellent collection)
[National Institute of Mental Health](#)
[International Critical Incident Stress Foundation](#)
[National Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder](#)

[The Stress Doc](#)
[The Web's Stress Management and Emotional Wellness Page](#)
[International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies](#)
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What Is Stress?

It is different things to different people. To a mountaineer it is the challenge of pushing physical resources to the limit by striving to achieve a demanding goal. To the homeward bound motorist it can be the hassles of heavy traffic and obnoxious exhaust fumes. To the student it can be exam pressure.

Take a piece of paper and write the word stress at the top. Now write down all the words and images that come to your mind as you think about this word.

Most people respond to the word stress in negative ways. They see it as a destructive, debilitating force. However, not all stress is negative. The word eustress has been coined to describe positive stress. Eustress results from exhilarating experiences. It is the type of stress you are likely to experience when you inherit a large amount of money or receive an unexpected promotion or reward. Eustress is the stress of winning and achieving.

Negative stress is distress. It is the stress of losing, failing, overworking and not coping. Distress affects people in a negative often harmful manner. We all experience distress from time to time. It is a normal, unavoidable part of living.

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Stressors Cause Stress

Stress results from failure to adequately cope with stressors. Stressors could be loud noise, uncomfortable air-conditioning, debts, ringing telephones, broken relationships, unrealistic deadlines, discouragement, fear, pain and thousands of other things that impact upon us in the normal course of life.

It is impossible to avoid stressors. The only totally stress-free state is death! Stressors will always be there because we live in an imperfect and unpredictable world which is going to cause us to frequently get stressed. We experience stress as the body adjusts to the external demands placed upon it. Our body constantly seeks to maintain stability and stress is usually sensed as the body readjusts to too much pressure.

Scientists use the term HOMEOSTASIS (homeo = the same; stasis = standing) to define the physiological limits in which the body functions efficiently and comfortably. Stress disturbs homeostasis by creating a state of imbalance. The source of stress may be outside the body or it may originate from within the body in the form of blood pressure, pain, tumours, distressing events or disturbing thoughts.

We need to assist our bodies to cope with being stressed because our natural biological stress-adjustors are not ideally suited to the demands of modern living. Our bodies are well suited to cope with the distressing events faced by our primitive ancestors. The stressors faced by humans conditioned to a nomadic hunter-gatherer lifestyle are obviously different to the distressing lifestyle of today. Our distant ancestors needed chemical responses to stress to enable them to trigger physical flight or fight

responses to the perils and pleasures of hunting. These types of responses are inappropriate today. If you physically ran away from your workplace whenever things got on top of you then this would not enhance your standing in the Organisation. Conversely if you punch the boss on the nose when he/she gives you a tough time then the resulting dismissal and assault charges will generate considerably greater levels of distress. Consequently we need to develop special skills to deal with special stressors.

We are all very aware of specific distressing circumstances that affect us. As already discussed these assume many shapes and forms. In addition to the specific stressors there are also back-ground stressors that can have a more subtle but equally damaging impact on us.

The Consequences of Stress

One of the pioneers of stress research, Dr. Hans Selye wrote that " ... stress is essentially reflected by the rate of all the wear and tear caused by life."

His research convinced him that the body has only a finite reserve of adaptation energy to apply to the stressors of life. Selye likened this reserve to a bank account upon which we can make withdrawals from time to time but into which we cannot make deposits. It is a non-renewable reserve of energy which we draw on throughout life until eventually it is consumed and death results. Some people squander their reserves and experience premature ageing as a result; others exercise more discretion and so they maintain a supply over a longer period of time.

Over a long period of time the stress response begins to take a toll on the

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body. One of the prime targets affected is the thymus gland (a mysterious pale grey gland that sits behind the breastbone, above the heart) which plays a key role in the body's immune system. The thymus gland pumps out millions of lymphocytes each day to patrol throughout the body and to kill off bacterial invaders. Killer cells called macrophages literally eat invading bacteria. They operate in all parts of the body and we depend on them for our survival. Macrophages are weakened by a steroid called cortisol which is released by the adrenal gland when we experience stress. A weakened immune system makes us vulnerable to infection and this is why people under stress often experience regular attacks of colds and flu.

Psychological stress does have physical ramifications. We can do ourselves a great deal of harm by stressful thinking. We can flood our body with stress hormones and this can create a vicious cycle making us more and more stressful. (I explain 15 ways methods of dealing with stress in the [Get Tough With Stress book](#).)

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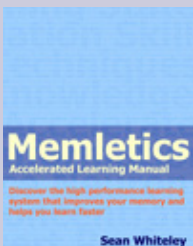
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Memletics Accelerated Learning



The Memletics Accelerated Learning Program is an impressive, well-researched accelerated learning course that helps you improve your memory and assimilate information more effectively.

The author's knowledge shines through at every step in the Memletic process, making this a course packed with helpful hints and suggestions for optimizing your learning.

Information Skills

Good information skills are essential for successful professionals.

Early in your career you must successfully study and digest a huge volume of information, simply to become effective. As you become increasingly successful, you will need to assimilate a vast number of documents, data and reports, as well as all the information you need to keep up-to-date in your field.

This section of Mind Tools gives you a range of skills to help you do this. The articles on reading help you to increase your reading speed and become highly selective in what you read. The item on review techniques helps you to keep information fresh in your mind. The article on note-taking gives you a powerful tool for recording useful information.

While you are reading these articles, have a look at the study skills book reviews, resources and stores on the sidebars - these will help you to develop your study skills even further.

- [Introduction to Information & Study Skills](#)
- [Effective Note-Taking with Mind Maps](#)
- [SQ3R](#) - Increasing Your Retention of Written Information
- [Speed Reading](#) - Substantially Increase Your Reading Speed
- [Reading Strategies](#) - Reading Efficiently by Reading Intelligently
- [Reviewing Learned Information](#) - Keeping Knowledge 'Fresh'
- [Other Tools - Reviewed...](#) - Our reviews of other important information skills resources

■ **Information & Study Skills Resources**

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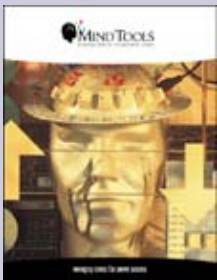
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Stress Management Masterclass



This new Mind Tools course shows you how to tackle the deep structural problems that cause stress in your working life.

As well as introducing you to relaxation techniques, its unique approach shows you how to win control of your job and career, build positive relationships with powerful people and co-workers and thrive under intense pressure.

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David Riklan's Top 101 Experts is an exceptional and comprehensive guide to the world's top self-improvement gurus, including Robert Kiyosaki, Brian Tracy, Napoleon Hill, Daniel Goleman, Stephen Covey, Dale Carnegie and many, many more.

It concisely introduces their key messages, helps you find the best starting points for understanding their work, and shows you where to find out more. It is particularly good for finding the experts who best suit your needs, personal ambitions and style of thinking.

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Tools for Understanding Complexity

The tools in this section help you understand complicated, difficult situations.

By using these techniques you can start to tackle problems which might otherwise seem huge, overwhelming and excessively complex. These complexity tools give you a starting point in problem solving where other people would just feel helpless and intimidated by the situation.

The section starts with some simple complexity skills and then moves on to more powerful, 'industrial strength' techniques like use of Systems Diagrams, SWOT Analysis, Cash Flow Forecasting and Risk Analysis.

This is a complex and well-developed area - we can only go 'so far' in these articles, introducing you to relatively simple techniques. The books on the right hand side bar will help you to take your skills much further. Alternatively, complexity and decision making skills are core components of most good MBA courses - some of the resources on the left will introduce you to these.

- [Introduction](#)
- [Appreciation](#) - Extracting All Most Information From Facts
- [Drill-Down](#) - Breaking Problems Down into Manageable Parts
- [Cause & Effect Diagrams](#) - Identifying Likely Causes of Problems
- [Systems Diagrams](#) - Understanding How Factors Affect Each Other
- [SWOT](#) - Analyzing Your Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats
- [Cash Flow Forecasting With Spreadsheets](#) - Analyzing Whether an Idea is Financially Viable
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[Techniques for Effective Decision-Making](#)



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[Advanced Mega Memory](#)

by Kevin Trudeau



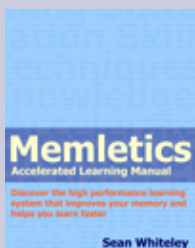
Designed by Kevin Trudeau, founder of the American memory Institute, this detailed course shows you how to develop a strong memory for names, dates, numbers and general business information.

The material is presented as an audio and video program, helping you learn these important techniques at a time and in a way that suits you.

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[Memletics](#)

[Accelerated Learning](#)



Tools for Improving Your Memory

This section helps you to improve your memory.

The techniques it explains are particularly helpful in studying for exams or in situations where you need to remember detailed, structured information. They also make things like learning foreign languages and remembering people's names much easier.

This section is split into three parts: first of all, the introduction explains the principles behind the use of mnemonics. We then discuss a range of individual tools that you can use to remember information. Finally we discuss how to use the skills in practice to remember peoples names, languages, exam information, etc.

While you are reading these articles, have a look at the memory technique book reviews and resources on the sidebars - these will help you to develop your memory skills further.

- [Introduction to Memory Techniques](#)
- [Remembering a Simple List](#) - The Link Method and Story Method
- [Remembering Ordered Lists](#) - The Number/Rhyme Mnemonic
- [Remembering Ordered Lists](#) - The Number/Shape Mnemonic
- [Remembering Middle Length Lists](#) - The Alphabet Technique
- [Remembering Long Lists](#) - The Journey System
- [Remembering Grouped Information](#) - The Roman Room System
- [Remembering Very Long Numbers](#) - The Major System
- [Using Concept Maps to Remember Structured Information](#)
- [Using Aide Memoires](#)
- [How to... Learn a Foreign Language](#)
- [How to... Remember Information for Exams](#)
- [How to... Remember People's Names](#)
- [How to... Remember Lists and Long Numbers](#)
- [Other Memory Tools - Reviewed...](#) - Our reviews of other important memory resources

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- See [our review](#) of the [Advanced MegaMemory](#) audio program, which helps you learn important memory techniques at a time and place that suits you
- Find out how to learn a [foreign language](#) as quickly as possible
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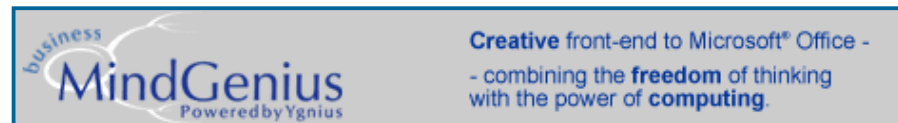
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Memory Optimiser - Memory Optimiser takes the information in Mind Tools to the next dimension. It introduces you to 57 new memory techniques that help you to develop a reliable and powerful memory.

Managing Stress for Career Success - This practical course shows you how to win control of your job and career, build positive relationships with powerful people and co-workers and thrive under intense pressure.

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The books on the right-hand sidebar are Amazon.com's best sellers in the memory technique area - if you find these Mind Tools articles useful, these books will take your knowledge even further, ensuring that you are up-to-date with the latest thinking in the field.

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The Art of Relaxation

by Avadhutika Ananda Mitra Acarya

Watch a baby asleep on a bed. It gives up its weight entirely to the bed, without any muscular tension

Nomadic peoples all over Asia, journeying night and day, reach an oasis or camping place and at once throw themselves on the ground and lie there limp, apparently lifeless from head to foot. One hour of this rest refreshes them with as much new vitality and energy as a night's sleep for the average person. These wanderers are able to undertake surprisingly long journeys with very little rest.

Babies and so-called primitive people have not yet forgotten the art of relaxation, the ability to completely rest at will. This art has been practiced by yogis since ancient times. They began their experimentation on this state by watching animals in deep relaxation during sleep, and especially during hibernation.

During even a few minutes of deep relaxation, there is a rapid fall in blood pressure and pulse rate; and the strain on the heart is reduced. The overtaxed nerve centers are revitalized and muscle tension drops even below the basal muscular tension level. Since during deep relaxation only a very small amount of vital energy is being consumed, the remaining energy which is being constantly produced by the cells of the body can be conserved and accumulated for future use.

Yoga practitioners do not need to go on vacation to relax. They can remain seated in a room open to the traffic of a busy metropolis and can transform themselves to the point that they hear no sounds, being relaxed and quickly self-possessed on a chair, just as if they were in a green Swiss valley. Translated into medical language, this capacity of voluntary sensory--motor inhibition is achieved through a gradual and conscious inversion of biological current: no longer a flux from the interior to the exterior, but a flux from the exterior to the interior.

"To give an example, again taken from electricity, yoga practitioners can voluntarily put themselves in the position of a telephone or radio operator who wants rest, and so switches off all the contacts of his or her sets; impulses still reach the sets, but are no longer perceived and, therefore, do not disturb the operator. Lying thus in a state of perfect and conscious peace, yoga practitioners can, through respiration, connect themselves with pranic energy. Now they are like batteries put into contact with a source of electrical energy, whereas a common person is like a battery working continuously, unable to recharge itself .

POISE IN ACTION

When this deep relaxation is carried over to the state of activity, the muscular reflexes respond more rapidly to stimuli and every task can be performed more efficiently, more effortlessly.

A cat crouches before a mouse-hole, gracefully motionless. It exhibits tremendous strength and vitality in repose. The machinery of action is not strained in waiting,

but all is ready... and when it darts forward, action bursts like a flash of lighting from its stillness.

Every genius consciously or unconsciously relaxes during the process of creation, and for this reason is so efficient in his or her art. (contrast this poised grace to the movements of today's hurried business people, who with their exaggerated, wasteful movements, fidget and fume, and wear themselves out before the hour for action has arrived.

Through the regular practice of deep relaxation, yoga practitioners develop the ability to keep their minds and bodies in perfect equilibrium in all situations. Learning how to relax and maintain "grace and pressure" in this age of rapid change-when high blood pressure and heart disease are the number one killers in technological societies- is one of the most valuable abilities of human life.

DEAD POSE

Shavasana or "Dead Pose" can be done anytime, even at times when most other Asanas are prohibited, such as during sickness, menstruation, or pregnancy. In this pose, the body remains completely motionless and becomes recharged with pranic energy, and the mind's attention is gradually withdrawn from the body and surroundings to be absorbed in a state of deep inter tranquility. The body and mind together attain a perfect blissful repose.

To receive the complete benefit from the practice of Asanas, the Dead Pose should be performed for about ten seconds to one minute between two postures. The proper rest in Dead Pose completely calms the body and prevents (the overstraining of muscles and the over-stimulation of the glandular, circulatory and respiratory systems. One should rest at least until the breathing and heartbeat have become calm. Asanas and massage should always be followed by the deep relaxation pose for at least three minutes. Those with high blood pressure should do at least five or ten minutes of deep relaxation daily; for as we have seen this is one of the best treatments of hypertension.

To perform the Dead Pose lie down on your back, covering yourself with a sheet if you feel a chill. Stretch the arms and legs gently apart and aim the palms up; the fingers will naturally curl in. Close the eyes. Do not move any muscle of your body, even your eyeballs. Remain as motionless as if you were dead. Immerse your mind in the flow of your breathing, in a state of refreshing peace.

Relax your feet and your toes... your calves, knees and thighs.... feel that both your legs are completely relaxed-there is no tension or pressure anywhere. Now relax all your internal organs-your digestive system, your lungs, your heart... relax your back and spine... Now feel your fingers: relax your fingers and hands, your wrists, your lower arms and elbows, your upper arms and shoulders, and your neck... Now you should feel that your entire body from the neck down is completely relaxed; there is no tension anywhere.

Feel that flow of relaxation now moving up into your face, relaxing your cheeks, your mouth and lips, your ears, your nose, and your eyes-feel all the tension around your eyes completely dissolving-your forehead and head are completely relaxed... Feel your brain inside your skull... your brain is also completely relaxed. Now your whole body from the tips of your toes to the top of your head, is completely relaxed. You feel as light as a feather, and very comfortable.

Now be aware of your breathing. Breathe slowly and deeply, from the diaphragm. As you inhale, imagine that you are inhaling cosmic energy into every cell of your body; your mind and body are becoming completely recharged. Feel the energy from the cosmos flowing through you, washing away all the tensions and negativity, cleansing you inside and out... Feel yourself full to overflowing with this purifying **energy**, radiating from every pore of your body.... filling your whole being with joy

and love...

Remain in this position for as long as you like. Afterwards you will feel completely refreshed in body, mind and spirit.

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Mind and Meditation

by **Acarya Pranakrsnananda Avadhuta**

The mind is composed of five layers. These five layers resemble the petals of a banana flower which has many layers of petals. The outer layers of the flower are harder and the inner layers are softer. So the layers of the mind are similar to the petals of the banana flower. The outer layers of the mind are harder or crude and the inner layers of the mind are softer or subtle.

In order to properly utilize the mind, we must be very clear about its resources. We must understand the mind by what it does, so that we can follow the best method to develop a particular layer of the mind. Yoga is an exact science which prescribes a systematic procedure for each human resource, therefore we must clearly know the function of each resource and apply the necessary technique.

FIRST LAYER OF THE MIND

The first layer of the mind performs three functions--sensing, desiring and acting. This layer of the mind is the link between the five senses and thought, between thought and the five motor organs. The five senses are eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin. The five motor organs are the vocal chords, hands, feet, genital organs and anus. Because the five senses come in contact with the outside world, the first layer of the mind has desire. This mind then wants to fulfill its desires through the five motor organs.

If this layer of mind is not in contact with the senses, then no desire results. It is like a child sitting in the class-room thinking of his/her favorite TV program or imagining some fantastic thoughts of voyages to outer space. The teacher may be giving a lesson in math's or science, but because the child's first layer of mind is not in contact with the sensory organs, the child's senses do not see or hear the lesson. The first layer of the mind must be in contact with the senses so that an impression can be made.

MORALITY

Morality is the process to develop the first layer of the mind. Morality is the force which carries you to your destination. Obviously the mind must have a goal. In which direction should the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin move. Before moving you should decide where you are going. What is the goal of life? Why did you come to this planet? If you do not have a direction, then your energy is scattered, you achieve nothing.

Consider the effort football players exert in training to participate in league championships. Do you think they would have the same enthusiasm for the game if the goals on either side of the field were removed? All the practice of the team players with the help of experienced coaches is done to be able to score more goals than the opponent. If there are no goals, then what is the point of practicing days and weeks for competition. Even the thousands of football fans would never come to the game just to watch the players expertly kick the ball around the field for hours. It is the goal that makes the sport of life interesting and exciting.

Morality means the proper use of the sensory and motor organs. The eyes should see only those objects which bring the mind closer to the goal of life. The ears should hear only those sounds which carry the mind within reach of Infinite Happiness. The skin should only bring the mind in touch with those objects which

remind us of His all pervading presence. Each and every sensory and motor organ should be utilized in relationship with the goal of Infinite Happiness, Love and Peace. The sensory organs should bring the mind closer to the Supreme Goal and the motor organs should inspire others to follow our example.

SECOND LAYER OF MIND

The second layer of the mind thinks, remembers and experiences. Whatever has been received through the doors of the mind, the five senses, passes through the first layer to the second layer of the mind. The experience is held here for a short time to analyze all its qualities, to compare this thought with memories of the past and to enjoy its pleasure or pain. The most important quality of this layer of the mind is its capacity to hold the experience.

Everything in this universe is rhythmic. The brain gives a specific number of impulses per second, the heart beats regularly a number of times per minute and the body breathes a certain number of cycles per minute. Now a normal healthy human being breathes 16 to 18 times per minute or approximately 1 breath every 4 seconds. The pattern of breath is as follows: breathing in --pause-- breathing out --pause-- breathing in --pause-- breathing out --pause-- etc.

As you can see there are two times in the cycle of breathing when the breath stops or pauses. These two pause periods are important for different reasons. The pause with the breath in is important for lifting things. A weightlifter breathes in before lifting heavy weights during the Olympics. However when you are watching a very exciting program on the television, perhaps a fight between good and evil, while the struggle is going on, your mind is completely absorbed in the action on the screen. When the exciting scene is completed, your natural reaction will be to take a very deep breath and exhale. Why? Because of your complete concentration, the breath is automatically held in the pause with the breath out. Therefore it is important in the strengthening of concentration to consciously develop the pause with the breath out.

PRANAYAMA

This process of breath control is called pranayama in yoga. Prana in Sanskrit language means vitality. Vitality is that quality of a thing that makes it alive, a living being. Yama in Sanskrit means control. The control of the vitality of the body is pranayama. The practice of pranayama in yoga means the control of the breath. Breath is the link with the prana, therefore the control of breath leads to the control of prana.

Since the practice of pranayama is for deeper concentration of mind in meditation and for greater power of will, pranayama must always be linked with ideation, the sentimental and intellectual meaning of mantra (an acoustic sound appropriate to the individual empowered by the Guru). Increasing psychic strength without proper psychic direction is dangerous. A car driving at high speed without the aid of the steering wheel will lead to disaster.

To understand clearly the relationship between the mind and the breath, we need a good analogy. The mind in thought behaves like a lake full of water. Every time we think a thought, the water of our mind-like lake reflects that thought. Perhaps you have seen in the cinema or television a drama where a beautiful princess is sitting by the side of the lake admiring her reflection in the water. Because there are no ripples, no waves in the water, she can see her reflection clearly. Meanwhile a mischievous boy or man, most likely the future husband of the princess, throws a stone in the water to tease the princess. When the stone enters the water, it breaks the calmness of the water destroying the reflection of the princess by creating ripples or waves.

The breath is like the stone entering the water. The mind wants to hold the reflection of the thought, but every breath breaks the reflection, disturbing the mind. If a person breathes 16 to 18 times per minute, the psychic reflection is broken every 3 to 4 seconds. In meditation our effort is to keep the flow of thought continuous without break or pause. Pranayama is taught to increase the holding power on thought by reducing the number of breaths per minute.

In Stanford University in California and at the University of Connecticut Medical College, the Ananda Marga meditators were monitored with the help of highly

sophisticated machines to determine the heart rate, blood pressure, basal skin tension, breath rate, etc. during meditation. The average breath rate of all the participants was 2.2 times per minute. This means that the flow of concentration in thought was only broken every 30 seconds or more depending on the efficiency of the practitioner.

Since meditation is the process to increase the speed of the mind towards the Supreme Goal, pranayama is an essential ingredient and should be learned by every meditator from a competent teacher. However, without morality, proper direction of the mind toward the goal is unlikely. Pranayama practiced without a firm base of morality will lead to degeneration. Therefore the spiritual aspirant should be careful in the observance of morality.

THIRD LAYER OF MIND

The third layer of mind is the storehouse, library of all experiences which the second layer of mind has ever held. Whenever anyone performs an action, the mind associates with the action in three ways. (1) The mind identifies the object, makes the object part of itself, it has a sense of ownership, control, domination. (2) The mind has the vanity that it is doing the action. The mind wants to take credit for acting. It looks around to see if others have noticed that it is acting now. (3) It wants to maintain its separateness, its individuality. It wants others to see that somehow it is different, unique. These three dimensions of the same action create a distortion in the mind, colors the mind. It is through this distortion or color that the mind views the world, communicates and makes decisions.

If the mind is filled with positive, good and noble experiences, then it sees the world as good and noble. However, if its experiences are negative, evil and degrading, then it sees the world as bad. It is because of these distortions that the spiritual aspirant cannot see beyond itself, gets entangled in life's ups and downs, heavens and hells. Some call this opportunity and accept the challenge, others call it fate and submit to it.

SENSE WITHDRAWAL

If mind is to go beyond this layer of distortion, it must withdraw its identity from these three conditions. At the time of learning meditation from a competent teacher, you will be told to withdraw your mind from the external influence of the society i.e. family, friends, professional associates, etc. during the 20 to 30 minutes of meditation. Our behavior is strongly influenced by the environment. Most people do not have the courage or strength to act according to their own inner voice. Society pushes and pulls the mind this way and that, demanding and expecting, emotionalizing and pressurizing until we are unsure whether the desires we have are our own or someone else's. Pass the examination very well, get into the science stream, go to the University, get married to this girl not that, have five children or have two, like these people, shun those people, this fashion, that fashion, etc. are all decisions demanding action, but based on external influences. So in developing the mind, one has to bring the mind temporarily away from these outside forces.

Then that mind, disassociated from external pressures and influences, is brought beyond identity with the body. Human mind is more attached to the body than its environment. It will save its life at the expense of others. Again it is more attached to the face than the foot. A scar on the foot, arm or leg does not disturb the mind, but a scar on the face needs to be hidden with clothing, cosmetics or removed by plastic surgery. The mind must be brought beyond body consciousness.

The mind is then brought to a point, a seat. The body has a seat, the mind also. The subtlest mind, the existential feeling of "I EXIST" has a seat. If someone asks you, "where are you?" Your reply will be, "I am here." But where is that "here" where "you" are? That point where "you" are is your mental seat. To withdraw the mind to that mental seat is called sense withdrawal.

This accelerates the process of reaction of all your previous actions, good and bad, which act as a barrier to the real experience of Infinite Happiness. The person who properly performs this technique of yoga finds the mind rapidly changing in attitude, emotion, rationality, conviction, compassion and motivation.

The distortions of the mind are removed one by one. The world and its Creator are seen as they are and not as we imagined them to be. The mind is purified.

FOURTH LAYER OF THE MIND

Discrimination and non-attachment are the functions of the fourth layer. Decisions are based on the capacity of the mind to see the situation clearly, sharply and precisely. The greater the capacity of this layer of the mind to discriminate, the better the possibility for proper decisions, without fear or favor. However decisions must be acted on. Action is prejudiced by the attachments of mind and proper action depends on non-attachment.

The ship's captain may decide to sail away from the harbor into the vast sea, but if the ship is still tied, attached to the pier, the ship will not move. Those attachments, ropes tied to the pier must be cut or loosened so that the ship can reach its destination.

CONCENTRATION

Once we have decided on the Goal of life, all our physical and mental strength must be focused on it. The procedure for developing a precise mind, able to pierce through each attachment as it is confronted with the power of passionate love for the Supreme is called concentration. Concentration focuses power. The fine tuning of a sitar or the precise focusing of the camera gives the music or the picture its impact. The impact, the power of the mind gives speed to action, accelerates movement towards the Goal. As the mind moves nearer the Goal, as the iron filings move closer to the magnet, the speed of its movement increases. In that movement decisions must be made and acted out sacrificing whatever is necessary to achieve that Infinite Love. The process of concentration contains the elements which enhance this movement.

THE FIFTH LAYER OF MIND

"I" feeling is the subtlest mind. It is the very edge of the mind. If one goes beyond "I" feeling, one's individuality, specialty and uniqueness merges in its Origin. It is because one identifies with the society, the body, the senses, the intellect, the past, the conscience or the ego that the "I" cannot experience its true essence. The "I" associates itself with so many limitations that its thirst for limitlessness is frustrated.

MEDITATION

The endeavor to associate the "I" feeling with its true Self by the use of acoustic sound, sentimental and intellectual meaning by the power of Guru is called meditation. Morality is the foundation, meditation is the means and the Supreme Entity is the Goal.

To make meditation effective, five fundamental elements are needed--morality, sense withdrawal, concentration, breath control and grace of Guru (Mantra). Each aspect of meditation develops the appropriate layer of mind unfolding tremendous mental strength and stamina leading to the real experience of the existence of God with an overwhelming devotion.

By the repetition of the proper acoustic vibration following the breath with sentimental understanding of the meaning, the power of the Guru (Mantra) awakens the spiritual potentiality in the mind and body and brings the "I" feeling in union (Yoga) with God. This is the meaning of Yoga and the motivation for the development of mind.

This is the systematic and scientific process for the realization of God and for the development of sacrifice in service to the suffering plants, animals and human beings of this entire universe.

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The Characteristics of a Mantra

by Avadhutika Ananda Mitra Acarya

The mantra is like a rocket engine that propels the mind beyond the "gravitational fields" of the lower levels of consciousness, through all the turbulence of the subconscious mind, to the superconscious - and beyond. Thus, a correct process of meditation *involves the generation of immense psychic energy through intense concentration on the mantra.*

Some systems of meditation which involve internal repetition of certain sounds, advise the meditators *not* to concentrate on them. Such techniques are quite relaxing and refreshing, but for spiritual elevation, concentration is essential - the intense effort to focus the mind on the mantra. Like the farmer whose mind was concentrated on his sick son, or the chemist concentrated on his research, or the medium concentrated on her crystal ball - the fixed attention of the mind on any object of thought will produce the necessary internal energy to elevate the mind to subtler levels. Experiments on Ananda Marga meditators whose process begins with concentration have shown that, rather than being asleep or passively relaxed, their bodies and minds are in a state of *intense physiological activation: more energy, rather than less, is flowing through them.*

THREE QUALITIES OF A MANTRA:

PULSATIVE

What is the special effect of the mantra, that by focusing the mind on it, one can transcend the ignorance and illusions of the lower mind?

A mantra must have three qualities to hold the restless mind steady, to energise it, and to transport it to subtler realms. It must be **pulsative**, **incantative** and **ideative**.

First, it must be pulsative. It must be of two syllables so that it can flow rhythmically with the breathing, for the breathing has a profound effect upon the state of one's consciousness. You may have noticed that whenever you are angry or upset, your breathing is fast and short; but when you are absorbed in any task, you naturally breathe slowly and deeply.

The functioning of breathing is closely associated with the flow of vital energy in the body, called *prana*, which in turn greatly affects the mind. If the breathing is fast and irregular, the *prana* becomes unsteady and agitated; the mind becomes disturbed and perception and thinking are unclear. Thus control of breathing pranayama is an important part of yoga training. The more the breathing is slowed and regulated, the greater the composure in the *prana*, and the greater the concentration and control of the mind.

Once there was a minister who had greatly displeased his king. As punishment, the king ordered him imprisoned in the top of a very high tower, and the minister was left there to perish. That night, the minister's faithful wife came to

the tower, crying, to see if there was any way she could help him escape. He told her to return to the tower the following night, bringing with her a long rope, some string, some silken thread, a beetle, and a pot of honey. Wondering at this strange command, the wife obeyed, and the next night brought him the desired articles. The minister directed her to tie the silken thread firmly around the beetle's leg, then to smear its feelers with a drop of honey and place it on the tower wall, with its head pointing upward. Attracted by the scent of the honey, the beetle crawled slowly up the wall, drawing the silken thread behind it. Hours later, it reached the top, and the minister caught it and untied the silken thread. Then he told his wife to tie the other end of the thread, dangling on the ground, to the long string. The minister then pulled up the thread until he could grasp the end of the string. Next he instructed her to tie the rope to the other end of the string, and pulling up the string, he grabbed the rope and tied it to the tower window - and slid down to freedom.

The silken thread is the motion of breathing the string is the prana or vital energy, and the rope is the mind. By controlling the motion of breathing, we can gain control over the *prana*; by controlling the *prana*, we can control the mind. Then we attain liberation from all bondages.

Thus the mantra must be of two syllables so that its slow and rhythmic internal chanting will serve to slow the breathing, steady the *prana*, and calm and control the restless wandering of the mind.

THE SECOND QUALITY OF A MANTRA: INCANTATIVE

The second quality is incantative. The mantra must have a certain sound, a certain vibrational pattern so that when it is chanted internally, it will elevate the individual's own vibration, or "entitative rhythm".

Each entity of this creation has its own particular entitative rhythm, its own note in the universal harmony. From pulsing quasars to oscillating electrons - from the ultrasonic melody of mountain ranges to the ceaseless reverberation of the creatures, singing and drumming, whirring and clicking, laughing and crying - all the notes are orchestrated in a vast cosmic concert.

The source of this ceaseless rhythmic movement is the Infinite Consciousness, soundless and still, the ocean of peace. Undisturbed by any vibration, it flows in an infinite straight line through eternity.

The ancient sages, who had merged their minds in this sea of unexpressed Consciousness, realised that the universe is a vibrational play of varied waves with different wavelengths. By their intutional powers, they came to understand the laws of universal harmonics governing this vibrational flow, and they developed a subtle science of sound to affect the rhythms of creation - without any mechanical apparatus.

Indian music, developed by the great yoga master, Shiva, over seven thousand years ago, was one branch of that science. The classical *ra'gas*, or musical scales, are so subtly attuned to the rhythms of nature that each *raga* is to be played or sung only in a certain season and at a certain time of the day, to produce a specific emotional effect in the musician and audience. One *raga* is played only at dawn in the spring, to evoke the mood of universal love, another is sung only during the evening in summer, to arouse compassion; still another only during midday in the rainy season, to summon courage.

It is said that the masters of music had control over not only human emotions, but all natural manifestations as well they could produce heat and rainfall at will, and the vibrations of their voices alone would cause finely-tuned musical

instruments to resonate in accompaniment! Historical documents describe the remarkable powers possessed by Tansen, the 16th Century court musician of Akbar the Great. Commanded by the Emperor to sing a night *raga* while the sun was overhead, Tansen's vibrational song instantly caused the whole palace to become enveloped in darkness.

But the subtlest of all these sciences of sound was the science of mantra. The masters knew that each individual's entitative rhythm vibrates at a particular frequency. Like many instruments in a symphony playing in harmony, the combination of all the various "bio-rhythms" of mind and body (psychic waves, heart-beat, metabolic rate, etc.) produces the individual's particular "melody". If this individual melody is raised to subtler and slower frequencies, it ultimately becomes infinite - and the mind merges in boundless Cosmic Consciousness.

Through long inner experimentation, the yogis developed a series of powerful sounds or mantras which, when chanted internally, resonate with the individual's entitative rhythm and gradually transform it into the infinite straight line of Supreme Peace.

These sounds originated from inside their own bodies, and were systematised into the oldest alphabet and language on earth - Sanskrit.

SANSKRIT: THE HUMAN BODY'S ETERNAL SONG

Close your eyes for a moment and just listen.

What did you hear? Even when we are in a "quiet" environment, so many sounds bombard our ears : the dull drone of machines, distant voices carried on the wind, birdsongs, telephones, construction noises, traffic it seems impossible to escape external noise in this modern world.

But if we can withdraw our minds from these external sounds, we will hear much subtler, inner vibrations. In the absolute stillness of soundproof chambers in scientific laboratories, insulated from all external noise, some people have been able to hear some of these internal sounds : a high-pitched resonance, and a deep throbbing the vibrations of their own nervous system, and the pulsing of their blood.

Thousands of years ago, yogis meditating in the utter silence of caves or mountains, were able to withdraw their minds not only from external sounds, but from the noises of the physical body as well. They could then focus their minds on centres of subtle energy inside them. Along the spine and in the brain, there are seven psychic energy centres or *chakras* which control the functioning of mind and body. Most human beings are unaware of these *chakras*, but when the mind and body become more refined through meditation, these subtle energy centres can be perceived and controlled.

The *chakras* have been described by enlightened saints and mystics of all spiritual paths and cultures - by Buddhists, ancient Chinese, Hindus, Tantriks, Christian and Jewish mystics*, Sufis, and Native American Indians. Recently, science has detected them as well. Sensitive instruments have measured energy emanations (beyond frequencies which are known to come from biochemical, anatomic systems), surging from the surface of the body at the *exact locations of the chakras.* '~

Those ancient yogis who directed their inner ear toward these energy centres, were able to *hear* the subtle vibrations emanating from each of them - 49 different vibrations in all. Then they spoke them aloud, and *each of these subtle inner sounds became one letter of the Sanskrit alphabet*

Thus, the Sanskrit language - sometimes called "the mother of all languages" - was developed from the externalised sounds of our subtle internal energies. It is the human body's eternal song.

MANTRA TRANSFORMS THE ENTITATIVE RHYTHM

The yogis then combined these powerful sounds into mantras which are attuned to the universal rhythms of the cosmos. For thousands of years, these mantras were never written down, lest they be misused by unworthy power-seekers, but were passed down directly from guru to disciple. Even today, they must be learned personally from a qualified teacher of Ananda Marga; for different individuals, with different entitative rhythms, will receive different mantras for concentration. Thus, people of all nationalities, regardless of their language, will use Sanskrit mantras for meditation, because Sanskrit is the universal language for self-realisation.

The repeated chanting of the subtle inner music of the mantra (the "incantative rhythm") in meditation vibrates the *chakras* and stills the restlessness of the mind:

Gradually, the meditator's entitative rhythm slows down in resonance with the mantra

Finally, it is transformed into the straight line cosmic rhythm, and merges into the eternally still and serene sea of Cosmic Consciousness, the goal of all yoga practice.

THE THIRD QUALITY OF A MANTRA : IDEATIVE

The mantra is not only a vibratory, pulsating sound that harmonises all the rhythms of the mind and body with the Supreme Rhythm, it has a specific expansive *meaning* as well.

Yogis have taught for centuries the simple truth : "As you think, so you become." It is now an accepted psychological fact that the mind becomes like its object of ideation. Many experiments have shown that our consciousness tends to merge or identify with any focus of attention that is maintained for a sufficient period. Thus visualisations and affirmations will gradually transform our minds according to their object of concentration.

Understanding that people are often limited by the negative or inferior ideas they have of themselves, psychologists attempt to change our "self-image" and thus to completely transform our personality. In one experiment, a man - sweating and straining as hard as he could - could only lift 150 kg. of weight. Then he was hypnotised, and the hypnotist repeated, "You are the strongest man in the world you have tremendous strength!" Under hypnosis, he lifted 200 kg. without the slightest strain or difficulty.

Today, the "power of positive thinking," positive affirmations and creative visualisations are being used by many people all over the world to become more successful, more popular, more wealthy. But the goal of yoga is not so narrow or limited as worldly success or wealth. It is nothing less than infinity - the infinite expansion of one's mind to merge with the Supreme Consciousness.

Thus, the process of meditation also employs a repeated affirmation - the meaning of the mantra "I am Infinite Consciousness" "I am one with That." Actually, this *is* the reality - on the highest levels of our being, we *are* infinite and we always have been; we only do not realise it because we identify with our small egos, with the limited lower levels of our minds.

So by daily practice, by the constant ideation, "I am That," we gradually lessen our false identification with our body and lower mind, and identify with the blissful Self within. As the mind gradually, imperceptibly expands through higher and higher layers, one glorious day we become completely free from all the bondages of ego and realise that we are not this body, we are not this mind, we are not this imperfect personality - we are infinite. We *are* the Supreme Consciousness. In that moment, we go beyond the mantra - beyond pulsation, beyond vibration, beyond ideation - and in breathless silence, we dissolve into ecstatic union with the origin of all.

Sooner or later, we will all experience it - it is the birthright of every human being. Each person is a channel for infinite power and energy and knowledge - a vessel to be filled with this never-ending bliss. The revelations of dreams, hypnosis, hallucinations, creative flashes, and intuitional foresight have given us some idea of the limitless resources of our inner spaces. Now we must check the external drift of our minds and turn our awareness in upon itself so we can explore the Kingdom of Light within.

"The Supreme Consciousness is inside you like butter in milk; churn your mind through meditation and He will appear - you will see that the resplendence of the Supreme Consciousness illumines your whole inner being. He is like a subterranean river in you. Remove the sands of mind and you will find the clear, cool waters within."

--Shrii Shrii Anandamurti

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Initiation and the process of Self-Realization

by **Acarya Pranakrsnananda Avadhuta**

There is in every living being a thirst for limitlessness. This thirst motivates human beings to search in every nook and corner of their environment for something, someone to satisfy this thirst. When every possibility has been truly explored without satisfaction, the individual is ready to learn the correct process, the exact method from a competent teacher. The individual, humbled by his/her exhaustive search, surrenders to the authority of the teacher. The Yogi's say, "When the disciple is ready, the Guru appears."

In teaching meditation to the disciple four factors make the initiation complete. The student makes a commitment to a moral life, understands the exact system of concentration in the Goal of life, is clear about the devotional meaning of the acoustic syllables or mantra empowered by the authority of the Guru and surrenders to the authority of the Guru as the new born child in the arms of the father's care.

In ancient times the teachers of yoga practice wanted to communicate the idea of initiation to the common people in a language which could be equally understood by all. Therefore, they took an example from everyday life. In India there are people who specialize in snake charming. They travel from village to village carrying their basket of live snakes to earn money entertaining the people. They prepare a gourd, dry it, clean it and poke holes in its side to create the notes of music that they play on this gourd like flute. Attached to the end of the flute they tie a stick.

Playing the flute with a particular tune, the snake charmer moves through the villages of India attracting the curious who like to see the snake "dance". When he reaches the center of the village, he puts the uncovered basket of snakes on the ground, spreads a small cloth and strikes the head of the snake to wake it up.

The sleeping snake, instinctively knowing someone is attacking, raises its head and threatens to bite. While the snake is poised to strike, the charmer points the stick at the end of the flute in the face of the snake. The snake watches the end of the stick expecting it to strike again. As the snake is watching the stick, the snake charmer continues to play his simple tune while moving the end of the flute from side to side. Still expecting another attack, the snake follows the end of the flute also moving from side to side. Although the snake is deaf, it seems as though the snake is dancing to the music.

Using the familiar situation, the yoga teachers explained the process of initiation. At the base of the spine located within the spinal fluid is a potential spiritual force. This force is said to be coiled like a sleeping snake. At the time of initiation this sleeping potential force is awakened like the sleeping snake was aroused by the snake charmer. However, this spiritual force is awakened by the power of a scientifically prepared acoustic sound and the authority of the teacher, not by physical force.

This acoustic power of the teacher, repeated by the student with the breath causes the awakened spiritual power in the student to move upwards within the central canal of the spinal cord. It is the teacher's authority which causes this upward movement until the ultimate experience of union of the soul with Supreme

Consciousness is achieved. Therefore, it is essential that the acoustic power of the teacher have this capacity.

It should be very clear from the time of initiation that because of the authority of the teacher or Guru there is spiritual progress. The responsibility of the student is to follow the instructions of the teacher very strictly and precisely for physical and psychic purification. As a result of the sincerity of the student and the competence of the teacher, the student gets various experiences. These stages of realization are experienced as the spiritual force in the student rises up through the spinal cord to the crown of the head.

It is this process which is taught to the disciple by the Guru through His representative or Acarya at the time of initiation. By a very exact method of concentration the mind or "I feeling" of the meditator is brought very carefully and slowly from its association with the external world through the body to a point where the "I" sits. Each and every person has their own special, personal mental seat where the small self begins its movement towards the Universal Self. Just as our body occupies a physical seat, our mind also has a spot, a seat. That point differs from person to person depending on their psychic momentum. The seat of the mind and how to get there are explained by the Acarya/teacher.

The meditator must be very clear about the goal of meditation. After the mind is brought to its seat, it must be aimed, directed at the target. Exploration of the heavens and hells within the mind is not the goal. No finite, limited experience of physical or mental pleasure will satisfy the soul's longing for peace and joy. There will always be a desire for more until limitless happiness is achieved. So the disciple must be very clear from the start that the soul longs for freedom and the mind must be focused on that goal. Only then will the mantra, given by the Acarya, carry the mind to its destination.

The scientifically prepared acoustic sound, enlivened by the power of the teacher is called mantra in yoga. The effectiveness of the mantra depends on three conditions. First, it must be repeated with the breath. The mantra has two syllables. The first syllable is repeated with the inhaled breath associated with the sense of existence. The second syllable is repeated with the exhaled breath associated with the Supreme Consciousness. Our individuality or separateness is to be absorbed in that Supreme State of Being by the power of the mantra.

Therefore, the mantra must be repeated with each and every breath. This repetition, the second requirement, creates a momentum which the student must develop so that there will be no break or pause in concentration. All physical energy and all mental force is to be directed, channeled to the mantra in a continuous unbroken flow of mantra. Meditation practice gradually develops this ability through regular practice daily.

The meaning of the mantra is very important. There are two meanings of the mantra. One is the intellectual meaning which we can find in the dictionary. The second meaning is the sentimental meaning or the meaning derived from the practice of meditation. These two meanings come together resulting in ideation, the third essential characteristic. Mere repetition of the mantra with the breath will not yield the desired result. There must be proper understanding of the underlying spirit of the mantra and the mind must be absorbed in that spirit.

As a result of this mental struggle to move in the proper direction to bring the "I feeling" to its seat, to focus the momentum of the mind in the goal, to repeat the mantra with the meaning and breath, the mind is steadily expanded. This expansion of mind allows greater expression of love for the Supreme Being. Meditation is the process of knowing, realizing the true Self within. Knowing leads to loving and love inspires sacrifice for the Beloved. The mother sacrifices for the children, the wife for the husband, the husband for the wife, the children for the parents. This sacrifice leads to giving without expecting anything in return. The tremendous power of Supreme Love experienced in meditation overwhelms the student, inspires sacrifice for the Beloved.

Through genuine spiritual practice the mind expands creating the feeling that everything and everyone in the world is a part of oneself in a similar way that one feels the human body to be a part of oneself. Analytical, compartmentalized thinking excludes, differentiates, separates, sees everything as outside oneself. Spirituality causes compassion, sharing, caring, sacrifice and service to arise spontaneously. Materialism, however, stimulates selfishness, greed,

indifference and expectation of reward.

There are six stages of knowing or realization called "samadhi" in yoga. Samadhi is a word composed of two parts--"sama" plus "adhi". "Sama" means together or oneness. "Adhi" means goal. So the complete meaning is oneness with the goal. As the spiritual force within the student rises up within the spinal cord, it passes through six controlling centers or chakras.

As the spiritual force leaves the home center at the base of the spine and crosses the next controlling center, there is a feeling that God is here in this same place with me. Prior to this the student only believed in or perhaps doubted the existence of God, but now he/she knows. This gives a particular kind of joy which invigorates the mind.

By further practice of meditation the spiritual force crosses the third controlling center, located at the navel. Here the feeling is that God is near to me. This is an emotional nearness which results in a more intense joy than the first. As we come closer to the one we love, familiarity increases. Not only does God exist, but my hesitation is gone. I feel that I can approach Him and find comfort and peace.

When the spiritual force passes through the heart center, the relationship is very intimate, no formalities, no barriers exist between us. I am with Him always and He knows all my thoughts and feelings. There are no secrets, everything is shared. We care for each other.

As the devoted meditator tries to absorb more deeply the meaning of the mantra, the spiritual force crosses the center at the vocal cord. Here the "I feeling" of the disciple and the "I feeling" of God seem to be the same. Although separate, they appear to be identical. The devotee loses himself/herself in the desires of the Beloved. There is extreme joy.

The spiritual force now reaches the pituitary gland. The mind bursts, individuality merges in oneness, the soul is satisfied, yoga occurs. "I am That" there is only God and my "I feeling" and His have become One. This universe is My body and My mind is expressed in it.

The final realization occurs by the powerful attraction of limitlessness as the spiritual force unites with the seventh center. The "I" has merged in oneness. It is beyond expression, beyond any description or qualification.

Initiation is not complete unless the disciple surrenders to the authority of the Guru. Without the Guru's involvement in the process of meditation from initiation to final realization these spiritual experiences cannot even be imagined. The disciple becomes like a child in the lap of the father. That is why the Guru is called "Baba" or Father. He is just like a father on the path to infinite happiness.

When we call a taxi to take us somewhere, we simply tell the taxi driver our destination, get inside the car and let the driver do the rest. We don't ask the driver if he knows how to drive or not, whether he has had any accidents or not, whether he knows the roads or not. We simply get into the car and relax. Similarly, accepting the authority of the Guru is just like leaving the driving to Him. Of course,, He knows our destination better than we do. He knows where we have been, what we are now and what needs to be done to make our journey successful.

However, there is another aspect of His involvement. Let us take an example. A man has lived for 20 years. Each year has 365 days so we multiply 20 by 365. Each day has 24 hours so we multiply the total by 24. Every hour has 60 minutes so we multiply the total by 60. The total is 10.5 million. If the man has done one action, good or bad, every minute of his life, then he has accumulated 10.5 million reactions to these actions. As time passes the interest also increases.

As he continues to live the number of reactions builds up. Suppose we place a dollar sign before 10.5 million. Consider that you are this person and that you have to pay this debt to the bank with your present salary. How long will it take? If the debt continues to increase daily along with the interest, it becomes a never ending burden. Who will help you? Guru will help you, but only if you let Him. Only if you surrender to Him.

He helps us to pay our debts which are hindering our movement. Suppose a father gives his son a hockey stick for the son's birthday. Excited, the child runs outside to play with his new gift. In his enthusiasm he hits the hockey puck through the neighbor's window. Naturally, the neighbor will come out of his house to scold

the boy. He will say, "Who's going to pay for my broken window?" The child in all innocence will say, "My father will pay!" When the father accepts the son as his own, he also accepts the responsibility for child's needs until he is mature enough to stand on his own.

The relationship between the disciple and the Guru is mutual. You accept the Guru and He accepts you. When you take the shelter of the Guru, then you have certain obligations. You must follow His instructions very carefully. The process of meditation which you learn at the time of initiation must be done regularly. His help is much more than your effort, but your sincerity is essential.

According to the science of Tantra Yoga whenever a worthy disciple is taught by a competent preceptor, spiritual progress is a certainty. Therefore, the student will have to take the trouble to practice this science precisely. It will not be enough to read the cookbook to satisfy hunger. We have to cook the food according to the recipe and then taste and enjoy it. It will not be enough to read or listen to this explanation. We will have to get initiated and meticulously follow the system so that with the Guru's help our soul will be truly satisfied.

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The Secret of Initiation

by Acarya Pranakrsnananda Avadhuta

At the time of initiation the student or disciple makes a solemn promise to do as much good as possible, to avoid harmful behavior and to maintain the confidentiality of the meditation process and mantra. Doing good and postponing bad actions is quite understandable, but keeping the secrecy of the process of meditation is difficult for some to understand.

It has become somehow important today that everything should be made public knowledge. If it is not, then it must be bad, selfish or harmful. Others consider secrecy a violation of their fundamental right enshrined in some unwritten constitution. Unfortunately everything has become valueless as a result.

The purpose of maintaining the secrecy of the initiation is not to keep the information hidden away from genuine spiritual aspirants, but to maintain its value. Each individual has got his/her personal relationship with the Supreme Being. That special relationship is established by having a clear understanding of where the disciple is now, what is his/her Ultimate Goal and in what acoustic form the meditator relates with that Infinite and Universal Being.

Each person has a very specific, exact acoustic sound which brings the meditator in close contact with the Goal. It is private, personal and valuable to the meditator in a way only Guru can evaluate. To place the devotional relationship of the disciple on a public platform for analysis, exposure and perhaps comparison by others who do not share his/her value for that relationship, sentimental and spiritual, is cold to the touch and tears the heart.

It would be similar to an intellectual debate on the words of endearment used by faithful husbands for their dearest wives. Who could say that "sweetheart" is more affectionate than "darling", for the secret of that love is only known to the lover. If meditation is viewed from a dry intellectual analysis, it would die for lack of blood and suffocate for want of air.

Those things which are kept secretly in the mind have a greater impact on the personality. That is why psychoanalysts try to expose the hidden phobias, neurosis and psychosis to show the patient the ordinariness of the feelings so that mental disease will not accumulate momentum in the mind. It is the secret pain in the mind which causes mental illness.

Psychic energy given to negative thoughts causes greater personality disorder, but psychic energy directed toward good and noble thoughts leads to wholesomeness and fearlessness. How much more beneficial if the mind holds on to the secret love of the Supreme within.

Therefore the meditator promises to maintain the secrecy of the specific, individual aspects of the meditation, although the general science of meditation is clearly explained in books and articles. Those who wish to learn the correct process should approach a properly qualified teacher (Acarya) authorized by the Guru. It is through proper, practical and persistent effort that success is achieved.

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Tips for Better Meditation

Being not satisfied with the objective life, human beings dive deep into their subjective Self with the help of Spiritual science to transcend the limitations of the Relative World around them and enjoy the eternal bliss of the Self. This attainment is possible through deep meditation.

What are the ways to better meditation ?

This is an important question which has been attempted to answer in a practical manner.

1. Minimize Interruptions

Take the phone off the hook, let your friends and family know that during this time you don't wish to be interrupted; close the door, close your eyes and for the time being leave the ordinary world behind. This has tremendous psychological impact. If, while meditating, one part of your mind is listening for the doorbell, or is ready to jump up if the phone rings, or to come out if someone wants to talk, it will be very difficult to concentrate. Give yourself completely to the task at hand, letting the people around you know that it is important to you. They will learn to respect it too. Establish right away that during that period of time you do not wish to be disturbed, making whatever arrangements are necessary (childcare trade-offs, phone message arrangements etc.) and you will feel freer and happier in your meditation.

2. Meditate at the Same Time of Day

Experienced meditators find that if they always meditate at, say, 6am and 5:30 pm, when that time of day occurs they naturally want to meditate. Optimum times are usually considered sometime around sunrise and again sometime around sunset.-

If one sincerely desires to explore meditation it is important to establish a habit of regular meditation. Twice daily, in the morning to tune in and charge up to start the day, and in the evening to establish a rhythm and harmony in our life. This twice a day meditation ties us in with the world's daily rhythms. It is important to maintain this regularity. Even if there is an "emergency" (like being late for work), take 5-10 minutes to meditate.

People beginning meditation frequently report having difficulty finding the time to meditate. Writing out your daily schedule and then "brain-storming" (figuring out possibilities and listing as many as you can) all sorts of different ways to make time may help to get over this hump. Experienced meditators frequently report a considerably reduced need for sleep (due to the deep state of physiological rest during meditation) and so may gain as much as 1-3 hours of usable time.

We should not forget that life is very meaningful. We have an aim in life. When we do not know our aim or goal in life, we are unable to get Ananda (infinite happiness).. Rich or poor big or small, educated or uneducated, most people today are suffering physically, mentally or spiritually. Why? Because they are aimless in their lives. When people try to find happiness in limited physical wealth, they do not satisfy the human mind.

3. Twice a Day, Invariably

This is the key to success in meditation. If one sincerely desires to explore the heights and depths of meditation, it is important to establish a habit of never missing your practices. Meditation can be likened to a beautiful chain—each day we add delicate links; the overall effect is a strong and useful instrument. But if we miss a meditation we create a situation of a "missing link". In order to make the mind strong, try never to miss. Be uncompromising. Even in an emergency, it is possible to do your meditation for five to ten minutes if you resolve always to go it. Though difficult at first, in the long run it becomes like brushing one's teeth or eating—something one just does without thinking.

4. Meditate in the Same Place

Try to arrange a corner or even a small room for your meditation place. Keep it clean and fresh and try to do your meditation there all the time. You will find that place becoming very meaningful for you. When you go to that spot your mind will naturally want to meditate.

Of course you can meditate anywhere—in an office or a car, on the bus, outside—but it helps, especially in the beginning to have a quiet and special place.

5. On a Light Stomach

After eating, the energies of the body are directed toward the digestive processes at the expense of the mental processes (we have all noticed the sluggishness that follows a heavy meal). Because meditation requires alertness, concentration, mental energy and "awakeness", it is helpful stomach. If you are really famished take a glass of juice or milk or eat lightly. If your body is really hungry, your meditation may be distracted.

6. In a Comfortable, Erect Posture

When meditation proceeds properly, there is a tremendous flow of energy upwards through the spinal column. Slumping or slouching impedes this energy flow, impairs breathing, and diminishes mental alertness. So it is important to sit as straight as possible. A firm surface is very helpful. Gentle stretches or warm-ups can help to prepare the body for meditation. Some people find that putting a small pillow underneath their seats alleviates pressure on the knees and induces better posture by elevating the spinal column.

It is important to be comfortable so that your mind is free to concentrate on the meditation process. If sitting on a rug, cushion or folded blanket is not comfortable, you may want to meditate sitting in a chair. With twice daily practice of good sitting posture and some stretches and warm-ups to loosen the muscles, most people are amazed to discover how relaxed and flexible their bodies can become in just a few weeks time.

7. Associate With Spiritual People

One of the greatest supports through the ups and downs of your spiritual growth is time spent with others who are treading the path of meditation. Weekly group meditation are a must for the serious meditator.

Ananda Marga conferences and seminars offer meditators a chance to immerse themselves in their spiritual practices and learn more about the philosophy of yoga.

8. Read Spiritually Elevating Books

The intellect, which has to keep quiet during meditation, also needs scope for growth and development. Therefore, it is recommended that one set aside some time each day for reading spiritually uplifting books. After meditation is a good time to take a few minutes for this, as the mind is clear and calm and more easily-

absorbs ideas.

9. Talk to a Meditation Teacher

Teachers of meditation (acharyas) travel through your area regularly. They can answer questions about meditation and teach you a personal meditation technique. Local members of Ananda Marga can tell you when acharyas are expected and what kind of activities are planned (lectures, group meditations, etc.) while they are visiting. Acharyas are highly trained women and men who are dedicated to the task of serving humanity. Their job is to teach meditation and spiritual practices to any one who sincerely desires to learn. Many problems or difficulties you may be having can be easily solved with the help of an acharya. So never miss the opportunity for a consultation with a teacher. Ask your class instructor or the person coordinating the acharya's visit to sign you up for a consultation. They can tell you what to expect so that you can utilize your consultation to the fullest.

10. Be Persevering

Many people experience a sense of discouragement or frustration when the results of their first few meditations do not measure up to their expectations or hopes. They may feel that it is their own fault, and even give up the practice with a sense of failure or inferiority. Everyone who has meditated has had to deal with this in some way. It is a great help to know that others are also having similar experiences, and to understand what is actually taking place during this time. Especially in the beginning, the mind may seem uncontrolled. A great Yogi, Ramakrishna, once said: "The mind is like a drunken monkey stung by a scorpion." You may find when you sit down to meditate that many thoughts arise in your mind; you set your mantra going and then drift off to something else. Sounds and noises from without may sidetrack your internal concentration and your body may become restless. At times like this, one can easily get discouraged and think nothing is happening. However, many of the benefits of meditation come from deep within the mind and do not show themselves immediately. By constantly bringing your mind back to the mantra, you are building up your capacity to hold your mind steady in the future.

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Learn how to meditate, now!

For best results in meditation, it is necessary to contact a meditation teacher. However there are some preliminary steps which you can do before you meet a teacher.

1. You can practice the [deep relaxation](#) exercise which we have explained previously. After finishing the deep relaxation, sit up in a cross legged position. Keep your back straight and your hands folded in your lap and your eyes closed. Sit quietly like this for five minutes. Don't try to "accomplish" anything. Just sit in an alert but relaxed position. Practice this twice a day for one week or more, and then go on to step 2.

2. **Practice meditation using a general mantra.** As has been explained in other articles, a personal mantra is used in the Ananda Marga meditation system. There is however a universal mantra which can be used by anyone. The mantra consists of three Sanskrit words: **Baba Nam Kevalam**. **Baba** means "beloved" and it refers to your deepest Supreme Self. **Nam** means "name", and **Kevalam** means, "only". The meaning of the mantra is "Only the name of the Beloved". It is important to keep the idea of the mantra in your mind while you do the repetition of the Sanskrit words.

The **Baba Nam Kevalam** Mantra can be sung before you do silent meditation. You can sing it to any tune you like or you can use a tune on one of our recordings (refresh the page to hear it again). After singing for some time, you should get ready for silent meditation. Sit comfortably with your back straight. It is best to sit cross legged on the floor. Close your eyes and begin to repeat "**Baba Nam Kevalam**" in your mind. As you repeat the Sanskrit words, also keep in mind the meaning "Only the name of the Beloved". If your mind wanders to other thoughts, just bring it back to the mantra, **Baba Nam Kevalam**. Sit for 15 minutes. (Use a clock or watch to keep time; if you open your eyes before 15 minutes, then just close them and continue meditating. After some time your "internal clock" will be able to tell you when it is time to stop meditating. Consult our article "[Tips for Better Meditation](#)" and try to improve your practice.

Do the meditation two times a day. In the morning after waking up and washing, sit for meditation and after that begin your normal daily activities. In the evening, just before the evening meal, sit for meditation again. If you can get into the daily routine of doing meditation you are on the way to success.

3. If you find the **Baba Nam Kevalam** meditation rewarding, then you might want to go on to our more advanced practices. Please contact the [Ananda Marga center nearest](#) you to make an appointment with a meditation teacher.

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EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

HONORS AND AWARDS

BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH



EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

1991 Ph.D. Counseling Psychology University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska

1975 Ph.D. Exercise and Stress Physiology, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

1975 MPH Epidemiology of Chronic Disease, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

1968-69 Post-Graduate Study in Human Anatomy and Physiology, Loyola School of Medicine, Chicago, Illinois

1967 M.S. Health Education and Exercise Physiology, George Williams College, Downers Grove, Illinois

1965 B.S. Natural Science; Health, and Education, George Williams College, Downers Grove, Illinois

1961-63 Liberal Arts Education, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota



PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Present Professor, Department of Health and Human Performance, University of Nebraska-Lincoln,

1985 - 1987 Chairman, Biofeedback Certification Institute America

1975 - 1977 Assistant Professor, Kinesiology/Health Studies, University of Waterloo, Ontario

1971 - 1975 Teaching Fellow and Research Assistant, University of Pittsburgh

1965 - 1971 Assistant Director, Cardiopulmonary Fitness Testing Laboratory, Chicago Health Research Foundation, Northwestern University, Chicago, Illinois

1968 -1969 Teaching Assistant, Human Anatomy and Kinesiology, George Williams College, Downers Grove, Illinois

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS:

Association for Applied Psychophysiology and Biofeedback
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National Certification in Stress Management Education, Director
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Biofeedback Certification Institute of America
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Society for Psychophysiological Research
American Association for Counseling and Development
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HONORS AND AWARDS:

Kappa Delta Pi (Honorary Society)

Arthur H. Steinhaus Distinguished Scientist Award

Distinguished Teaching Award, University of Nebraska (1992)



BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:

Wesley E. Sime is a native of Minnesota having received his MPH/Ph.D. in 1975 from the University of Pittsburgh. He first began study in exercise physiology, stress physiology and neuromuscular relaxation under Arthur Steinhaus in 1963. After completion of a B.Sc. degree, he worked as a research assistant under Jeremiah Stamler at the Chicago Health Research Foundation. Combining graduate study and research on long-term exercise training for prevention of heart disease, he completed a M.S. degree in Health Education in 1967. After several years of research and clinical practice in exercise physiology and cardiac rehabilitation, he began further graduate studies at the University of Pittsburgh under Bruce J. Noble. Additional experience in cardiac rehabilitation and epidemiology of physical activity and heart disease was obtained through several Heart Association research projects and through participation in the Multiple Risk Factor Intervention Trial (MRFIT) in cooperation with Lewis Kuller. His graduate studies culminated with an emphasis in Stress Physiology based upon the Ph.D. dissertation, "Psychophysiology of Muscle Tension/Relaxation: A Comparative Study of EMG Biofeedback and Autosensory Relaxation Training.' Supplementary training in Advanced Methods of Progressive Relaxation was obtained through the personal and individualized tutorship of Edmund Jacobson.

At the University of Waterloo (Ontario, CAN) in the Kinesiology/Health Studies Department, Dr. Sime taught Health Science, Prevention of Chronic Disease and Lifestyle Behavior Modification and conducted stress physiology research on post-infarct cardiac patients and on students with high test anxiety.

Dr. Sime developed the Stress Physiology Laboratory at University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and was a Research Associate in the Cardiovascular Center, University of Nebraska Medical Center, Omaha, Nebraska. He is also Past Chairman of the Biofeedback Certification Institute of America, and co-developer of the Stress Management Certification Program.

In recent years his teaching and research has focused on health psychology and sport psychology. From 1987-91 Dr. Sime was enrolled in a second Ph.D. program, this one

in Counseling Psychology. He completed the degree and became a clinical psychologist licensed by the State of Nebraska. He has collaborated on numerous research projects spanning several departments and across national and international boundaries. Most recently in June, 1995 he completed a three week teaching tour in Scandinavia. He currently is cooperating on the development of a new interactive computerized Stress Profile for assessing individual and organizational stress and strain factors.

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Ten Benefits of Stress Management

- **Reduce Tension (e.g. stammering) in Public Speaking**
 - **Learning "How to Relax" under Pressure**
 - **Stress Management in Competitive Situations**
 - **Making Stress Work For You not Against You in Negotiations**
 - **Production Line Efficiency without Strain**
 - **Coping with "Customer Relations" Problems**
 - **Quick Relief from Headache and Back Pain**
 - **Healthy Exercise to Cope with Stress**
 - **Improving Creativity and Problem Solving Ability**
 - **Using Leisure Activities & Time Wisely to Prevent Burnout**
-



Six Important Signs of Stress Are:

1. **MUSCLE TENSION BRACING HABITS** -- Tension in the face, neck and back is a very common indicator of stress. Another common indicator is jaw clenching which can lead to headaches, jawbone damage and teeth grinding. Shoulder, neck and back tension is very fatiguing and can be quite painful.
2. **HYPER-VIGILANT, AGGRESSIVE OVER-REACTIVITY** -- Attitudes and personality play a huge role in how stress affects you. Unrealistically high expectations and the struggle against time and other people to achieve superficial success is a serious problem. Consider setting reasonable goals and focus on quality not quantity as your measure of success. Take action to resolve conflicts and overcome obstacles.

3. **CARING TOO MUCH OR TOO LITTLE** -- Making mountains out of molehills is a way of describing over-reaction to problems or concerns. Some have a tenacious persistence in fighting "hard-to-win" battles. Choose wisely when to persist and when to let go.
 4. **DISRUPTED BREATHING PATTERNS** -- A nice way of saying that you may be holding your breath or restricting the natural breath pattern. Every time you hear someone give a "Big Sigh of Relief," stress an Indication that during the previous 5-10 seconds the stress of the situation has caused restricting or holding the breath in . . . perhaps in anticipation of some great happening or minor disaster. Other people may "hyperventilate." Listen and watch closely for these signs of distress in disrupted breathing habits.
 5. **COLD, SWEATY HANDS**-- when you shake hands with people in a greeting or farewell, you have a very direct indication of that person's emotional state at that moment. Hands should be warm and dry when in a comfortable, relaxed state.(When you crawl out of bed In the morning, check you hands and note how comfortably warm and dry they can be). If the other person's hand feels cold and/or damp when you shake hands, then you probably are a great deal more "at ease" than he or she is.
 6. **NEGATIVE SELF-TALK** --This Is just a nice way of saying, "You have been stinking thinking again, dummy!" These are self-defeating statements about how bad I'm going to do or how things never seem to work out right. They can cause serious physical disruption in your body if you allow them to ruminate obsessively In your mind. For chronic worry, use the following **REALITY TEST**: "If you can live with the worst possible outcome, then it is not worth worrying about."
-



Three Stages of Stress Management:

1. **ACTION-ORIENTED SOLUTION** -- If you are procrastinating, get going and do it! Set reasonable goals and "go for it."
2. **REALITY TESTING** -- Anticipate the potential consequences of a stressful situation and assess the effects of the worst possible outcome. If you can live the worst outcome, then it is not worth worrying about. If not, go back

to Action step (above).

3. **STRESS COPING GUIDELINES** -- (summarized below)



1. **Determine how real the actual stressor is by assessing the worst possible outcome, then determine the manageability of this outcome.**
2. **Accept it if necessary, change it if possible. . .**
3. **Check hands for coolness and sweating . . .**
4. **Take 2-3 deep breaths, exhale through your mouth . . .**
5. **Let jaw and shoulders fall while exhaling . . .**
6. **Imagine a wave of warmth flowing down your arms and legs with each breath your exhale . . .**
7. **Verbalize a positive self-statement, e.g. "Inside every dark cloud there is a silver lining."**
8. **Get enough sleep so that you awaken naturally without an alarm**
9. **Exercise for at least 30 minutes every other day.**
10. **Nurture the healthy, social relationships with others important to you in your life, this can include renewing contact with acquaintances from the past or forming new friendships.**

[Biofeedback & Sport Psychology](#)

[Peak Performance Neurofeedback in Sports](#)

[How Peak Achievement Trainer has been used](#)

[Establishing Outcome Goals](#)

[Getting in "The Zone"](#)

[Optimal Functioning in Sport Psychology](#)

[Using Peak Achievement Trainer for football](#)

[Peak Achievement Trainer's use in Corporate Training](#)

SPECIFIC CONCEPTS RELATED TO STRESS

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Stress response: When challenged, the body undergoes a progressive series of responses that are first triggered by an external stimulus termed the **stressor**. The more prolonged and accelerating reactions produce an intense and severe disruption called **strain**. All of this moves the body away from **homeostasis**, the maintenance of equilibrium of the internal body functions in response to external changes.

This stress cycle has four main components:

Stressor: The external threat, challenge or task or an internal thought, perception or worry that acts as a stimulus or provocation disrupting homeostasis.

Strain: The internal struggle to regain homeostasis & to overcome the effects of a stressor (i.e., fatigue, insomnia).

Stress reaction: An emotional and/or a physical disruption in normal functioning (nervous, anxious, irritable & discouraged, which is associated with disregulated body systems (i.e. circulation, digestion, skeletal, muscular, & excretory).

Stress coping: The process of dealing with the stress reaction by one of many different methods ranging from action steps in problem solving to reframing interpretations of events and circumstances.

Stressor ---> Strain ---> Stress Reaction ---> Coping ---> To resolution or repeat of the coping phase.

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PSYCHOPHYSIOLOGY OF STRESS ACCORDING TO HANS SELYE

HOME

General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS): Hans Selye is credited with creating the first definition of stress as a non-specific response of the body to any demand made upon it. Selye's theory about the effects of stress he demonstrated to be applicable to any sort of stress.

The 3 stages of the GAS are:

- Alarm Reaction: Similar to fight or flight.
- Resistance: Struggle to overcome, hard work, limited rest/sleep.
- Exhaustion: Body systems crash, fatigue, errors, irritability, vulnerable to illness (colds, flu, acne).

Non-specific stress response: Selye's theory was that injury, overload and fear all produce the same body reaction. He believed that both eustress and distress both produced the same response in the body. Both situations, he said, resulted in some degree of wear and tear in the body which finally **accumulated to produce aging**. This theory was oversimplified as you will see below.



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CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF STRESS & COPING

HOME

Stress management: The process of organizing, acting upon problems, letting go, learning & resolving.

To remain in control:

- Be very organized and efficient
- Take initiative for action when it is appropriate
- Get out of the situation if you need to (say "No" to unnecessary extra activities)

Stress reduction: Eliminating, avoiding, or making necessary changes to prevent stress. Learn from a stressful experience & make adjustments to minimize re-occurrence.

Stress relief:

- Pseudo relief: Alcohol/drugs and other modes of escape for a short period (temporary form of denial).
- Natural relief: Exercise acts as short term stress reliever; relaxing experiences, recreation and entertainment.
- Skillful relief: Assertiveness, time management and functional relaxation training.

Print out the [Checklist of Signs and Symptoms](#) of Stress in College Students

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PSYCHOPHYSIOLOGY OF STRESS SPECIFICITY

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Though Selye postulated a non-specific stress response, it has been proved that this is not necessarily always the case. In addition, a fear response may not be the same as the anger response physiologically.

Hormone specificity: John Mason showed **unique cardiovascular and endocrine responses** specific to a variety of different types of stressors (fear, anger).

Voodoo death: George Engle demonstrated **vasospasm and constriction of coronary arteries** (scared to death reaction). This is an extreme stress reaction caused by excessive fright or anxiety.

Reactivity: Robert Eliot originated the concept of "**hot reactors**" to describe individuals who over-react to mild stressors (e.g. cardiovascular, skeletomuscular, gastrointestinal responses). These are some of the selective measures of testing stress in those prone toward excessive responses to intellectual challenge or routine crises.

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DEFINITIONS OF STRESS

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What is stress: Stress is the excitement, feeling of anxiety and/or physical tension that occurs when demands placed on an individual exceed his or her ability to cope. This definition has evolved from the following concepts:

Physics definition: Exposure to external physical pressure (force in foot pounds, kilopascals) were a object such as brittle metal will deform and eventually break.

Biological definition: Body's reaction to disruptive external forces (heat, altitude, overload, lack of sleep).

Modern society's definition: Vulnerability to multiple work demands, time pressures and psychosocial conflicts inherent in today's world.

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PSYCHOPHYSIOLOGY OF STRESS: FIRE ALARM EXAMPLE

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Psychophysiological reaction to a crisis: Stimulus (smoke/fire) > Perception (smell smoke/ see fire) > Appraisal (is it serious or life-threatening) > Arousal (get scared, tense up run for help) > Disruption (heart pounding, out of breath, cold hands) > Prolonged reaction (worry about insurance, fear of another fire) > Possible anxiety disorder (insomnia, panic).

Mind-body interaction: Brain-behavior link. Often, the link is so strong that our thoughts & worries can become self-fulfilling prophecies. e.g. You are afraid that you will fail the test, worry and fall ill and will probably end up failing the test.

Suggestible physiology: A person feels that the situation is changed by just the idea that it has. This is used during **hypnosis, trance, placebo** (just believing it can cure can act as a cure), healing, relapse, remission. The last two are also dependent on the way a person thinks or feels. Often, if a patient believes he or she cannot become better or loses hope of cure, it can lead to a relapse. Courage and the will to beat the situation can lead to a remission.

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TYPES OF STRESS

HOME

Stress is often a positive phenomenon. It is stress that will take you out of the path of a charging bull and it is stress that makes you hurry to meet a deadline. Some people even admit that they enjoy what they term the "**adrenalin rush**," that energizes you to get a job done. Stress can be positive and negative at the same time. (e.g. There is excitement stress prior to facing a challenge that could yield accolades for a successful outcome but could be degrading or embarrassing if the outcome is unsatisfactory).

Eustress: Positive stress (exciting opportunities & challenges).

Distress: Negative stress (high demands & undesirable tasks).

Overload: Unrealistic expectations and punitive interpersonal responses by self or others to accomplish too much in too little time.

Arousal: Physical and emotional excitation alerting the body for action (heart pounding, adrenaline rush) to meet a physical or cognitive challenge.

Physical stress: The body is often subjected to physical stress like exercise, sports and hard physical labor, which in some cases can be invigorating and refreshing. It can be eustress or distress.

Environmental stress: This form of stress occurs with exposure to a change of altitude, climate, or pollution in the atmosphere. Even extreme temperature changes from hot to cold or vice versa can strain the human adaptation processes.

Emotional stress: This form of stress includes all of the cognitive and behavioral causes and outcomes that strain our coping mechanisms.

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PSYCHOPHYSIOLOGY OF STRESS: BANKRUPTCY EXAMPLE

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Psychophysiological reaction to a long term, chronic stressor.

Neurohormonal Interaction: Cortex Stimulus (see, hear, smell danger) > Thalamus (appraisal) > Limbic System (emotional reaction) > Hypothalamus (central control) > Pituitary (master gland) > Adrenal (potent stress hormones).

Temporal (Time Dependent) Stress Stages:

1. **Fight or Flight:** Alarm = Sympathetic Arousal Short term: Reaction for immediate crises, emergency responses (duration is in minutes)
 2. **SAM:** SympathoAdrenoMedulla (Hypothalamic responses) Intermediate: angry, upset, frustrated, argumentative (duration is for hours)
 3. **PAC:** PituitaryAdrenoCortical - effects are more long-lasting with greater damage potential (duration is for days/weeks).
 4. **Chronic stress:** Long term worry, guilt, worry and apprehension leads to insomnia, fatigue and illness.
-

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UNIQUE ASPECTS OF STRESS

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Stimulation: A sound, sight or thought which requires a response to relieve some disruption, (e.g. an alarm followed by emergency response).

Challenge: A special kind of a stressful circumstance that is motivating, initiates growth, strength, maturity & development & conditioning to succeed.

Overload: When the prolonged demands of numerous stressors accumulate beyond capacity, the reaction may be to feel a burden that is crushing or consuming.

External demands: When the external assignments or expectations are excessive. These might be goals/quotas with harsh consequences to follow if they are not met.

Internal demands: Internal pressures based upon unrealistic expectations of what one can or "should" do.

What expectations or demands have you placed upon yourself that might produce an overload?

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ANATOMY & PHYSIOLOGY OF RESPIRATION & MUSCLE TENSION

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Thoracic breathing: Uses chest and neck muscles, raising the shoulders, which is more effort and less efficient because it works against gravity. Useful during vigorous activity but not during rest and relaxation.

Abdominal breathing: Flattens the diaphragm, expands the area below the lungs leading to more efficient & relaxed breathing. Lets the stomach muscles relax to accommodate respiration.

Normal, efficient, relaxed breathing: Gradual inhalation (nose or mouth) to a peak, collapse to let all air out.

Hyperventilation: Short, rapid, shallow breaths causes anxiety & poor O₂/CO₂ exchange ratio. Often occurs in reaction to situations of great emotional stress.

Hypoventilation: Restricted frequency & volume of breaths causes increased tension and pain.

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BIO-PSYCHO-SOCIAL CAUSES OF STRESS

HOME

Biological: Sugar, Caffeine = sympathomimetic agents. These substances produce physical, cognitive behavioral and emotional reactions that mimic the sympathetic nervous system in kick-starting the body to meet a stressful situation, but fatigue results from overuse.

Psychological: Attitudes like perfectionism, obsessiveness, and compulsive behaviors induce stress when desired outcomes cannot be met.

Social: A person lacking social skills becomes shy, bashful, withdrawn and insecure, perhaps leading to loneliness and isolation.

How would you convince a friend that he/she should risk embarrassment in a social situation? Or find a satisfying relationship?

HOME

STRESS INDUCED PAIN & ANALGESIA

HOME

Sensation of pain: It is a useful, necessary warning e.g. heat = signal that it burns; pressure = signal that it may crush.

Pain modulation: Throbbing, piercing pain can be relieved by vigorous massage, by exercise or by highly distracting events or cognitive intrusions.

Stress-induced analgesia: Some situations that cause pain can also lead to a situation where the pain is so great you don't feel it. This is termed stress induced analgesia. For example, injury in battle may be so stressful that some soldiers feel no pain; histamines & endorphins are released.

Exercise: Causes the same effect of releasing endorphins and histamines that are responsible for the "feel good" effect. It is a kind of **microtrauma** where some parts of the body are subjected to stress. Results in the euphoric response to vigorous activity.

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PERCEPTIONS THAT CAUSE STRESS

HOME

Absence of inner peace: Unsettled by current life situations (job, family, accomplishments) and caught in a joyless struggle to survive, a person becomes unfulfilled and unhappy.

Loss of control: Shifting from an independent, autonomous self-employment position to working in an assembly line at a factory can result in boredom and frustration and a sense of **invisible entrapment**. Trying to control everything without delegating is also very stressful.

New events or tasks: Produce unexpected changes that require adaptation (e.g. when older people have to move or face retirement).

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STRESS, IMMUNITY & DISEASE

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Immune system: Fights foreign objects like a sliver or infections. It usually protects tissues and organs by preventing disease through increased resistance. Occasionally it can get out of hand as in the case of **systemic lupus or arthritis**. These diseases occur when the body's overactive immune system turns on itself.

Immunosuppression: Occurs under stress, stops natural inflammatory responses that normally protect the body. During stress situations, **cortisol** production inhibits regular inflammatory responses.

Diseases occur: Because you (the host) become vulnerable and have exposure to an infectious agent (bacteria/virus) you can get sick with illness (cold, flu, mono, etc.). Typically, stress reactions manifest as vulnerability to disease 2-7 days after the peak exposure to the stressor. So if you have undergone a particularly stressful time, about a week later you might develop a cold.

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OTHER PERCEPTIONS THAT CAUSE STRESS

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Emergency reaction: Stress situations cause mobilization of extra resources to meet increased demands (i.e. accident rescue efforts, students cramming late at night).

Vigilance: Always on the lookout for danger or a problem (i.e. police, firefighters). Poses a serious stress hazard in long term exposure without relief. Vigilance is necessary to prevent harm (i.e. air traffic controllers).

On the edge: Pushing the limits of one's capacity -- overworked, under-rested. Trying to do too much in too little time. Unrealistic expectations: Under pressure by having very high expectations of self and others. The "**could haves**" and "**should haves**" cause feelings of guilt if goals are not met.

What are some of your unrealistic expectations?

HOME

STRESS-RELATED DISORDERS

HOME

Skin disorders: Acne, hives, other blemishes, eczema (dry skin), psoriasis, rosacea (breaking of blood vessels to appear rash like on skin), **vitiglio** (loss of pigmentation resulting in white spots on skin).

Tension disorders (S/M): Headache, neck/back pain, Temporal Mandibular Joint disorder, fibrositis (muscle and joint pain seen in women between 25-45), **carpal tunnel** (stress on wrist due to long hours at a keyboard or typewriter), **torticolis** (wry neck caused by excessive tension in neck muscles), **blepharospasm** (eye twitch).

Gastrointestinal disorders: Ulcers, colitis, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). Cardiovascular disorders: Angina, hypertension, coronary heart disease. Immune System disorders: colds, flu, mono, asthma & allergies

Do you know anyone: who has one or more of these that could be considered stress- related? Explain.

HOME

COMMON CAUSES OF STRESS

HOME

What causes stress?

Psychological causes: Life changes (events, circumstances or perceptions such as being fired from a job), overload, insufficient resources (not enough money or time) frustration, trauma or loss (death of a close friend or relative).

External causes: Occupation, environmental strain (noise, temperature, etc.), substance abuse (alcohol/drugs), nutritional excesses (caffeine, sugar) or deficiencies (vitamins or nutrients).

Personality causes: Self-perception, anxious reactivity (hypervigilance, worry), need for control, time urgency, anger or hostility.

Which of these types of stress may apply to you?

Print out the [list of stressors](#).

HOME

MORE STRESS-RELATED DISORDERS

HOME

Other disorders with a strong correlation to stress:

- **Alopecia:**Characterized by abnormal hair loss, unrelated to balding or radiation therapy.
- **Bruxism:**Grinding of teeth to wear them down during nights. Habit often forms because people tend to clench their jaws during the day.
- **Insomnia:** Difficulty getting to sleep or staying asleep.
- **Chronic fatigue syndrome**
- **Post Traumatic Stress disorder (PTSD)**
- **Depression Raynaud's syndrome:** The hands become painfully cold and may turn white, due to lack of circulation.
- **Hyperhidrosis:** or excessive sweating of the palms and soles of the feet.
- **Urinary incontinence:** due to lack of muscle tone in pelvic sphincters.
- **Herpes**

Print out a [list of symptoms and diseases](#) associated with stress.

HOME

STAGES OF BURNOUT: AROUSAL TO BREAKDOWN

HOME

Arousal and alarm: Initial reaction to a threat of injury, embarrassment or potential loss, followed by feeling anxious, irritable and vulnerable until it is resolved.

Struggle & resistance: Continuation of unresolved problems that cause strain, worry, cynicism and insomnia or poor quality sleep.

Exhaustion & breakdown: Prolonged period of overload. Strain, agony/ ecstasy and hypervigilance that cause fatigue, depression and numerous, insidious stress-related disorders.

Print out and do the [checklist of other symptoms](#) of burnout that apply to you.

HOME

STRESS RELATED PROBLEMS, ORGAN CHANGES & BIOFEEDBACK

HOME

Print out and do the checklist on [stress related problems](#).

Identify reasons why you might have been bothered by a particular problem:

- Difficulty sleeping because "I worry too much."
- Timid, shy because "I was horribly embarrassed at the prom."

Fight or Flight response to stress situations causes:

- Pupils to dilate to see better.
- The pancreas to increase glucose production. This facilitates energy and active coping but it also depletes reserves. This can often lead to stress related diabetes.
- Digestion to slow down or stop leading to constipation.

What is Biofeedback (a clinical procedure): To increase awareness of body changes under stress, to enhance personal control, and to speed up recovery from stress reactions. Biofeedback is obtained using instruments that give you information about what is happening to your body and how you react to stressors. This information helps you gain control over your body for conscious relaxation to be more effective. For example, palmar sweating increases during stressful times. This reaction can be measured by a biofeedback instrument that detects the increase. The person can then consciously try to relax the next time they face a similar situation.

HOME

SPECIFIC OUTCOMES OF BEING "BURNED OUT"

HOME

Unexpected changes produce: Increased wear and tear on the body.

Feeling vulnerable: Helpless and unable to cope with threats (real or perceived).

Physiological reaction: Arousal to attack, defend or flee (e.g., muscle tightness, bracing, insomnia).

Do you know what causes you to be "burned out"? How?

HOME

APPLIED PSYCHOPHYSIOLOGY: BIOFEEDBACK

[HOME](#)

Measures of awareness: The awareness levels of stress in people can be measured quantitatively in terms of how fast their heart is beating as they prepare to face a stressful situation like talking to strangers or an exam. Some of the parameters used to determine stress are **heart rate**, **blood pressure**, **temperature of fingers or toes** (peripheral blood flow), **EMG** (electromyography -- muscle tension), **EEG** (electroencephelography -- brain waves), **EDR** (electrodermal response -- palmar sweating).

Palmar sweating is one of the characteristic reactions to stress marked by increased sweating in the palms and soles of the feet. It occurs because of increased sweat gland activity in response to stress.

[HOME](#)

SPECIFIC SITUATIONS THAT CAN CAUSE STRESS

HOME

Life-style disruption: e.g. new baby = awake at night, feeling tied down, tired and irritable. Or retirement can lead to feelings of being useless, "not being yourself," a loss of identity and "boredom".

Circumstantial changes: Moving to a new location, changing jobs, going to school, getting married or divorced.

Need for readjustment: Make time, seek assistance, be willing to ask for help.

Significant losses: Death of a friend, relative or spouse. Important to accept, grieve and then move on with your life. The loss of a spouse especially has been pointed out as one of the biggest factors that can cause stress. It includes not only the emotional trauma, but also the life change events and the actual problems of getting on with the business of living for the survivor.

Print out and record your score from the [Checklist of Life Change Events](#)

What life change events or losses have you experienced? How did they affect you?

HOME

APPLIED PSYCHOPHYSIOLOGY: SLEEP STUDY

HOME

Sleep Hygiene: Habits like excessive caffeine intake and low levels of exercise can also lead to insomnia. It is best to **avoid caffeine after about 6 p.m.** as it may otherwise keep you awake. **Alcohol** may initially induce sleep due to its depressive effect, but when its effects wear off, it will keep you awake through the night.

Reticular Activating System: (RAS) A system of nerve fibers, the RAS acts as a communicator between body and brain and alerts the brain to critical information stimulating arousal and consciousness. RAS activity levels determine sleep & wakefulness in the brain.

Insomnia: Sleep is one of the best forms of recovery for the body from its exertions. When deprived of sleep the body is subject to stress. **Sleeplessness or insomnia** is a result of sensory reverberation, mind racing, obsessing and a refusal to let go of worries and tension.

Physical exertion to the point of exhaustion: is the best way to rest the body and exercising regularly allows the body to relax completely and sleep. Maintain a journal of things to do tomorrow whenever your mind wanders, perpetually thinking instead of sleeping; keep a routine.

Chronobiology: is the study of sleep/wake patterns. One of the measures of success in stress management is not needing an **alarm clock**. This works for people whose body has been rested adequately where they regain wakefulness in response to ambient sounds (like birds) and light. If you need an alarm clock to wake up, this shows that your body has not had enough rest.

Print out the checklist to determine your [lifestyle habits](#) as they relate to stress.

HOME

FACTORS THAT CAN INCREASE VULNERABILITY TO STRESS

HOME

Poor resource management: Time and money are precious and limited resources. Wasting either of these creates serious tension and stress. Unwillingness to delegate or let go of control also increases stress.

Personal relationships: Romance and love are exciting eustress experiences while conflict, jealousy and resentment are common distresses when a relationship breaks down.

Self-perception: Low self-esteem and self-confidence together with the absence of feeling connected or empowered, can all precipitate stress reactions. Taken to excess (self-confidence) these can lead to egoism and cockiness which will cause different stress reactions.

Beliefs and attitudes: Family scripts like "A penny saved is a penny earned," "A job worth doing is worth doing well" can cause undue stress and force the person to live up to an unrealistic image.

What family scripts are hanging over your head?

HOME

SOCIAL/ENVIRONMENTAL STEPS USEFUL FOR STRESS MANAGEMENT

HOME

Social/Environmental strategies: Steps to reduce stress include: assertiveness, time management and seeking healthy, positive relationships can prevent or minimize stress through compatibility matching (finding a good partner, roommate, etc.)

Dealing with change: Learn to expect occasional changes or disruptions; then negotiate options and employ productive decision making strategies.

Dealing with problems: Identify the source of the problem > Know the potential consequences of every option/outcome > Pick an action plan > Do It > Evaluate the outcomes > Reinforce your successes.

Describe a problem you are currently grappling with and apply these problem solving strategies to it.

HOME

INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVES ON STRESS

HOME

Inventory success in coping: Efficiency, reliability, effectiveness, flexibility, adaptability, patience, sensitivity and altruism are common qualities among those who cope well with stress.

Perception/interpretation: All situations can be viewed differently (e.g. some people love snowstorms while others hate it; pet lovers versus those who are allergic to cats; she loves to travel while he hates it; choice of music may either be stress-relieving or stressful).

Perceptual influences: Greatly affect interpretation of stress (diversity in each person's background might influence extent of stress).

Past experience: Being embarrassed or disciplined harshly once may sensitize one toward extreme fear of situations that might invoke shame or criticism.

Personality: Some are outgoing and trusting of others while others may be shy and wary due to personality differences.

Cultural background: Asian, Hispanic, Caucasian, Black, American Indian and numerous other cultures have unique vulnerabilities to stress and very special ways of coping with it.

HOME

ACTION STEPS FOR STRESS MANAGEMENT

HOME

Take specific action: Do what is necessary to resolve the problem (even if it is difficult) study, work, leave, 'bail out', avoid, escape, apologize, protest, ask questions or any other creative solution.

Time & resource management: Budget time appropriately, delegate to others (if possible) and let go of some things when necessary.

Get organized: Structure environment to be able to find what you need: identify essential items (throw some away), label, file, schedule, plan ahead to be organized for the future.

No procrastination: Make a contract, divide duties, set deadlines, chart progress, withhold rewards, discipline yourself for inaction, persuade.

What is your most difficult time/resource management problem or challenge now?

HOME

MORE PERSPECTIVES ON STRESS

HOME

Moral codes: Spiritual values, measures of guilt, prejudices, repentance and forgiveness all contribute to the amount of stress you put yourself under. They become guidelines to the way you perceive situations.

Traumatic experiences: Injury, abuse, neglect and isolation are all experiences that shape the way you view things. An abused or neglected childhood could forever color your perception of life.

Social support network: Helpful and supportive backgrounds and a strong social support network of good friends and strong relationships help build confidence.

Print and fill in your [Social Support Network](#).

Habit patterns: Always late or early, messy or fastidious.

Gender: Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus. Inherent differences between the ways men and women view and handle situations can be a source of conflict and lead to stress.

What unique perceptual influence affects you the most?

HOME

RELATIONSHIP ISSUES IN STRESS MANAGEMENT

HOME

Relationships with friends and significant others: can be a great source of social support. However, conflicts often arise due to misunderstandings or being inconsiderate.

Criteria of good friendship: Friendships are a strong social and emotional support. Everyone needs friends to share & care for, listen & help, laugh or cry with, ... or just be there for you.

When you have encountered a very exciting or a very challenging relationship issue that may involve conflict, consider the following strategies:

- **Where to start?** Be assertive, write out the problem to gain better perspective, talk it out with friends, practice, (script it & role play) use strong diplomacy & public relations skills
- **Resolving or preventing conflict:** Find a solution to a current stressful situation by avoiding a fight for example, trying to be more understanding, changing perspective, using good-natured humor, mediating, apologizing and by trying to reach a compromise that will suit both parties.
- **Practice confrontation amidst conflict:** Acknowledge the conflict exists, share the responsibility for it, offer possible solutions and ask for suggestions.

Print out a diagram filling in the names in your [web of relationships](#).

Describe a recent conflict you have experienced with another person(s). How did you handle the situation then and how would you approach it differently now?

When you are stressed, do you have a friend who offers you constructive criticism when needed and who helps you through the rough times? Are you there for them when they need it? Explain how these work together.

HOME

GENDER TRAITS, ANDROGYNY & STRESS

HOME

Males generally: Are stronger and faster; they often lack insight about themselves and are less responsive to emotional feelings.

Females generally: Are more social & empathetic; they are often more self-critical about their work and have more home-life expectations.

Androgyny: Is a blend of masculine and feminine traits. Finding a blend of strengths from both gender traits can be both desirable and stress relieving.

Print and check where you fit on the [Androgyny Scale](#).

How accurately does this portray you as related to your stressors?

HOME

COGNITIVE/BEHAVIORAL STRATEGIES FOR STRESS COPING

HOME

Cognitive Restructuring: Changing the way a stressful situation is viewed. The tendency to assume negative consequences can exacerbate the stress reactions. By contrast, it is possible to consciously change one's outlook about a stressor toward a more positive expectation.

Reality testing: An important initial step in cognitive restructuring. Ask yourself the question (in regard to the stressor), "**What is the worst possible outcome in this situation?**" For example, if there is an accident resulting in a dented fender, but there is no injury or loss of life, that could be very frustrating and upsetting to some people. However, because the accident did not result in permanent harm, it may not warrant getting stressed about. Self control of thoughts and actions in this way, helps settle emotions and cope more effectively.

Reinterpretation of a situation: provides the follow through in cognitive restructuring. While the dented fender may be initially aggravating and potentially stressful, the process of getting estimates and negotiating repairs might bring you new acquaintances and rejuvenate old friendships. Consider how your values influence your interpretations, and how you can change your attitude to interrupt negative thoughts associated with routine stressors.

Print out and examine the list of [Specific stress thoughts](#).

Identify those you have had in the past. How will you now work to avoid the negative consequences of these?

HOME

STRESS HARDINESS & ILLNESS

HOME

Stress resilience, hardiness: Can be built up over time. People can overcome illness by the way they feel or think or because of their belief system. Listed below are some of the ways resistance to stress and illness can be developed.

Protection from illness is associated with:

- **Commitment:** To work, family & community; provides meaning to life & reason to strive (Care about what is going on with others, work hard to ensure their happiness and well-being).
 - **Control:** Feeling that we have control over our destiny, life situations & personal/professional growth is an important factor for health.
 - **Challenges:** Interpreting problems as minor aggravations not insurmountable obstacles. Provides opportunity for adaptability and growth.
 - **Connected:** To be close to friends, family & colleagues in a positive, healthy & supportive manner.
-

HOME

EMOTIONAL COPING TECHNIQUES

HOME

Among the strongest emotions: Anger, fear and depression can cause a great deal of personal stress. **Catharsis** is the release or active expression of these emotions, sometimes in negative ways (breaking things in anger), but more appropriately in positive ways (verbalize it, act it out, work it off) and other anger management or fear reduction methods.

Anger Diffusion: To prevent destructive and unhealthy effects of long-standing grudges or persistent anger experiences, it is important to break the cycle, to become aware of when you get angry or irritated and to find a way to calm yourself (e.g. count to 10, take several deep breaths and reinterpret the provocation). Then reinforce (reward) yourself for achieving the composure and continue warding off other unproductive stress thoughts.

Automatic Stress Thoughts: Day dreaming, mind wandering, and other unstructured thinking are some examples of automatic thoughts. These thinking patterns often feature topics of a stressful nature, and tend to gravitate toward negative and distressing outcomes. For example, anticipating an upcoming job interview usually leads to worry about inadequate preparation and about the disappointment and embarrassment associated with failure.

Print out and examine the list of [Automatic Stress Thoughts](#).

What is your strongest emotion? (anger, fear) Explain.

Print out and do the [Worry Inventory Checklist](#).

Worry: What do you worry about most?

HOME

STRESSORS BASED ON PERSONALITY VARIABLES

[HOME](#)

Defense mechanisms: Denial, repression (bury it), projection (onto others), humor, rationalization and displacement can be temporarily effective in avoiding immediate stressors but are poor methods for long-term stress coping.

Optimism/Pessimism: Pessimists tend to inflate problems while optimists minimize them.

Locus of control: Internal vs. external (blaming vs. accepting responsibility). Externals believe in fate while internals feel they can control destiny.

Co-dependency: Sense of worth derived from meeting the needs of others. Hesitating to get out of bad relationships and tolerating abuse are examples. The spouse of an alcohol abuser may cover up and make excuses, thus enabling the behavior to continue.

Cite an example where someone was stressed out by one of these.

[HOME](#)

THE QUIETING REFLEX & RELAXATION RESPONSE

HOME

Throughout each day, there are times when you have 5-10 seconds of down time (stopped at a traffic light, being placed "on-hold" during a phone call or waiting for an appointment). Use this time as a refreshing catch-up opportunity to regain some relaxation and composure. Try these simple steps:

1. **Take** 2-3 deep breaths and exhale vigorously enough to blow out a candle.
2. **Shrug** your shoulders to break up residual tension then let it go while also letting your jaw fall with each exhalation.
3. **Imagine** a wave of warmth going down to your arms, hands & fingers every time you exhale to facilitate increased peripheral circulation.
4. **Make** a positive self statement such as: "This too will pass"... "Whatever will be -- will be!" to be comforting and reassuring amidst the stressor.

Look out for these [signs of relaxation](#).

HOME

PASSIVE VS. AGGRESSIVE VS ASSERTIVE

HOME

Passive (weak): Giving in and submitting to intrusions for fear of losing friends or attention.

Passive-Aggressive: Lacking confidence to confront a personal conflict directly -- instead using subtle sabotage to get back at a person. This sort of person tends to stab people in the back instead of directly confronting them with the problem.

Print out the [Table on assertiveness](#).

Irrational beliefs: Several examples --

- I must be good at everything
- I feel everyone should like me a lot
- There is only one good way to do it
- It's my way or the highway (for you)

What are some of your irrational beliefs?

HOME

STRATEGIES FOR FUNCTIONAL RELAXATION

HOME

Differential relaxation uses only the necessary muscles and the minimum level of effort to carry out the task.

1. **Learn** progressive relaxation and muscle control in a quiet setting.
 2. **Recognize** residual tension and startle response.
 3. **Apply** your skills in relaxation to other functional tasks like driving or studying.
 4. **Minimize** unnecessary effort to reduce long-term fatigue.
 5. **Practice** calming down and letting go.
 6. **Use** available postural support to relieve muscle strain and residual tension (like back rest, arm rest, etc.) This is especially useful for those engaged in office work.
 7. **Stretch** & strengthen back and neck muscles.
-

HOME

STRESSORS BASED ON STRONG EMOTIONS & FEARS

HOME

Strong emotions and fears are some of the main reasons for stress in many people. The emotions can range from stage fright that affects a lot of people at some point in their lives to phobias which are extreme forms of fear. Many social situations, like parties and get togethers can be a source of stress for people who are otherwise shy and are forced to talk with strangers. These are some of the situations and emotions that could cause stress.

Strong emotions: Angry, lonely, discouraged, enraged, helpless embarrassed, insecure, jealous, ashamed and numerous others (see checklist).

Fear inventory: Nervous, fidgety, stage fright, flying, heights, needles, spiders, blood, darkness, crowds, water (see checklist).

Panic attacks: Sudden, overpowering surge of anxiety for no apparent reason. Person may have severe physiological reactions like a pounding heart and shortness of breath.

Phobias: Any obsessing morbid fear or dread. These may occur as a result of significant childhood events relating to fearful circumstances.

Print out and do the [checklist on Strong Emotions](#).

Print out and do the [Fear Inventory Checklist](#).

HOME

RELAXATION TRAINING TECHNIQUES

[HOME](#)

Autogenic training: Feelings of warmth/heaviness which are generated by means of self suggestion (self hypnosis).
e.g. "My right arm is getting heavy and warm."

Guided imagery/visualization: Create a visual image or kinesthetic feeling to recall a successful event (in sports, in a social setting, in a job interview, etc.)

Progressive relaxation: Tensing specific muscles (arms, legs, back, shoulders) at varying levels of contraction to develop awareness & control of tension. When the body is then allowed to relax, little by little, creating total awareness of each part to control tension.

Quieting reflex: Combines progressive relaxation, autogenic training and cognitive stress management with systematic respiration to create a short intense method method of achieving instant functional relaxation.

[HOME](#)

"TYPE A" CHARACTERISTICS

HOME

If you're the type with the proverbial "short fuse" who gets angry for even the smallest thing. Or if you are extremely aggressive and hard-driving, you are probably a Type A personality. You may be more likely to be the victim of a heart attack than more placid persons. These are some of the strong characteristics of a Type A person.

Type A: They are coronary-prone, hard-driving, competitive, aggressive, impatient, irritable. Type A people can often be detected by the way they speak in both context and stylistics.

Speech stylistics common among "Type A" people:

- Rapid and accelerating speech with staccato sound bites.
- Loud and explosive intonation (piercing voice).
- Short response latency (quick reply) with no pause to deliberate after a question.
- Verbal competition (verbal couplets) the person usually finishes sentences for others.
- Sarcastic, rude and hostile responses. Sometimes appearing to be humorous but with underlying hurtfulness.

Print out and check off your [Type A behaviors](#).

HOME

PREPARATION FOR FUNCTIONAL RELAXATION

[HOME](#)

Relaxation misconceptions: Relaxation is not the same as recreation. The latter can be a means of relaxation, but never completely. Relaxation does not occur naturally, it's a skill that must be learned. It is also not a waste of time nor is it laziness to be functionally relaxed.

Awareness of muscle tension: To be able to effectively use functional relaxation, you need to know where stress is affecting you, i.e., the neck, back, etc. Discover what you tend to when you get stressed, like knotting your forehead, clenching your jaw, getting fidgety or restless.

Sensory awareness relaxation training: Kinesthetic peripheral sensations allow you to feel movement, to be able to visualize an action before you can do it. Determines the degree of relaxation. It involves a loss of sense of touch.

[HOME](#)

PSYCHOPHYSIOLOGY OF STRESS & RELAXATION

HOME

To adequately comprehend what happens to the body under stress, it is essential to understand certain terms describing the physiology of stress and relaxation. Often, the body, which strives for perfect internal balance at all times, shows physical signs and symptoms of disturbance caused by stress.

Homeostasis: This is the body's **internal self-correcting mechanism** that helps it maintain systemic balance following disruption. Homeostatic responses include shivering when feeling cold that increases the body's heat or sweating when hot, to cool the body through evaporation.

Other homeostatic responses include hunger, thirst, exertional strain and emotional stress. Blushing when embarrassed and having cold hands during an interview, are classic examples of **homeostatic disruption**. Relaxation is essential to recover from this state.

Ergotropic responses: Makes the body ready for work. It is a state of charged readiness. Gearing up of the nervous system for action. Trophotropic responses: The body is brought down to a **quiescent state**. It is a tune down process that brings the body to an equilibrium rest state. It is a **restoring** response and **regenerates the body reserves**, both physical and emotional.

HOME

STRESS INOCULATION

HOME

Stress Inoculation: Anticipating a stressful situation and preparing for it in advance, can be a good way of preventing unpleasant stress reactions. It works a lot like a vaccine. By identifying the potential stressor and attenuating its potency, you become somewhat immunized to the effects of the stressor in real life. For example, in anticipation of giving a speech, you can prepare ahead of time, then practice with a friend (who is supportive, but constructively critical). Then learn to recognize your stress and arousal followed by using many coping strategies and relaxing effectively to perform well. Then you must reinforce your success in that experience in order to be more resistant and immune to stress of speaking in the future.

Refer to the list of [Your Legitimate Rights](#).

When do you find it most difficult to assert your rights?

HOME

PSYCHOPHYSIOLOGY OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM UNDER STRESS

HOME

A basic concept in any study of stress is the acknowledgment of the link between what the brain says and the way the body behaves. This is known as the body-mind connection. The two are often inseparable and most studies on stress-related behavior emphasize the role of the brain and the biology of stress in great detail.

Print out a diagram to show the [body-mind connection](#).

The following are some essential terms needed to understand the basic concepts of stress behavior and how we can use the body to tackle stress.

Autonomic nervous system: The central nervous system is composed of two main parts: the sympathetic nervous system and the parasympathetic system. The ANS controls heart rate, respiration, blood pressure, digestion, elimination, sensory intake & electrodermal responses.

Sympathetic nervous system: This part of the ANS is responsible for preparing the body to meet stress. Its responses include: increased heart rate, increased blood pressure, respiratory rate accelerating. The sympathetic nervous system also stimulates endocrine glands like the adrenal gland and thyroid to produce hormones. **Adrenaline and noradrenaline and cortisol** are some of the hormones produced by the adrenal cortex during the stress response.

Parasympathetic nervous system: This portion of the ANS is responsible for the relaxation response and brings the body back to the relaxed stage. If the sympathetic reactions are comparable to the accelerator of the car then the parasympathetic responses are like the brakes.

The major reactions of the body during stress include:

- Increase in heart rate --> increased blood pressure.
- Increased respiration rates.
- The SNS also increases sweating and is obvious as the electrodermal response. Also termed palmar sweating, it is often accompanied by cold hands and feet. The cold hands and feet occur because of the vasoconstriction of the peripheral arteries that serve the hands and feet. The arteries are constricted by the medullary hormones.

Print out the [Checklist on Physiological Signs](#) of the flight/fight response.

Fight or Flight: Originally described by Walter Cannon, it is a short, intense stress reaction. Emergency reaction for survival. It is the immediate response of the body in the presence of a stressor. This response stimulates the sympathetic nervous system to prepare the body to meet the stress situation.

HOME

Stress Management: A Review of Principles

Presented by: [Wesley E. Sime](#), PhD./MPH./PhD.

Professor, Department of Health and Human Performance
University of Nebraska Lincoln

This document presents the core concepts of stress management education. It originally developed from the efforts of Kathy Hellweg and Wes Sime. It has been used as the Body of Knowledge for Certification in Stress Management Education.

(June '97) Appreciation goes to Tina Carter for incorporating the sound clips.



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BIOFEEDBACK & SPORT PSYCHOLOGY

The relationship between attention and skill development can be assessed with new technology (EEG) biofeedback. Recent brain imaging research has implicated this prefrontal area, and particularly the underlying anterior cingulate cortex, located on both sides of the fissure between the hemispheres, as the location most involved with the executive control of focussed attention and new learning. Brainwave biofeedback methods based on these findings appear to be highly responsive to concentration, particularly on new material, and/or deliberate, narrowly-focused, absorbed attention. Clinical insights into the sequences of concentration and microbreaks in various athletic activities, particularly golf, are being confirmed by brainwave measurements from the frontal midline, which reflect the degree of idling in the Executive Attention Network. Research into the effects skill acquisition on many other brain locations has uncovered a pattern suggesting that expertise involves less cortical activation, corresponding to greater cortical economy, particularly in areas thought to be involved with self-talk. Minimizing this internal conversation during athletic activities can be very beneficial. This colloquium will explore the potential for combining both of these promising approaches to mental skills training.

The assessment of heart rate, muscle tension, brainwave activity and other relevant psychophysiological variables has become valuable in developing awareness of both somatic and cognitive manifestations of confidence as well as anxiety. One set of studies focussed on how trait anxiety and cognitive strategy influenced relaxed attention. In other preliminary work we have discovered that cognitive strategies (e.g., imagery cues, self-talk cues, visual/auditory distractions can serve to condition the athlete's level of concentration. Since trait anxiety yielded no significant results when comparing EEG frequencies across low, moderate, and high anxious groups, we are pursuing more salient indicators of trophotropic states that are conducive optimum performance.

Participants face the challenge of handling eyeblink reflexes as both an artifact as well as a useful indication of arousal/anxiety. Other research considerations include the use of case/control subjects; decisions on how much data and what sampling speed to use when collecting data; a need to counterbalance conditions/instructions given to participants; and the problems associated with an eyes-closed condition (i.e.; EEG patterns indicating drowsiness and/or conversely participant discomfort with eyes closed and experimenters nearby). Our purpose is to develop new methods of training and conditioning ordinary concentration and attentional focus using modern technology not commonly used in sport psychology.

Peak Performance Neurofeedback Training in Sport: Shaping Concentration and Attentional Focus.

Presented at the American Psychological Association Meeting in San Francisco, CA August 28th, 2001.

Some athletes appear to have natural ability in maintaining attentional focus and optimal concentration throughout a complex psychomotor task even when faced with high demands and multiple distractions. While repeated practice and extensive competitive experience strategies are used to develop the mental as well as physical skills, there remains considerable variation in how well athletes develop the disciplined concentration and attentional focus skills necessary to excel consistently. Recent improvements in the technology of brainwave (EEG) measurements and in neurofeedback have enabled researchers to develop new approaches to sport psychology featuring exercises designed to create optimal "flow" states ala Csikszentmihalyi. Another descriptor for this state of competitive readiness is the capability of becoming totally absorbed by a cognitive task as shown by Tellegen. The absorption scale assesses inclination to become lost in thought such that input from other senses (e.g., auditory) is diminished or sublimated. It appears that an ideal performance state exists when either or both of these conditions exists prior to and during complex psychomotor tasks.

The purpose of this workshop is to demonstrate the link between several theories of performance excellence that may have a common root in the form of a unique brainwave pattern. Demonstrations of InAllBand EEG waveform feedback together with performance challenges will be conducted in this workshop. Applications will be made to several sport venues including golf, baseball, swimming, diving, equestrian, etc. A number of psychomotor tasks including reaction time, directional speed control, and working memory capacity

will be used as assessment measures of the changes associated with neurofeedback, flow states, and depth of absorption.

Peak achievement training features a simple EEG biofeedback instrument that transforms the brainwave signal into a meaningful and relevant display of the athlete's level of attentional focus. The fluctuations in wave form characteristic of brain activity appears as jagged valleys and peaks that reflects random distractions and longer periods of intense focus. The computerized graphic display can also be placed along side a video replay of action footage and then used as stimuli for recall of emotions and visualization of performance moving toward ideal outcomes.

First off, there is nothing technical or magical that will reliably put a performer into the Zone. It is an elusive state of mind/body performance that occurs infrequently and is almost never at the disposal of the person who experiences it. You can't make it happen; it just occurs spontaneously under rare circumstances usually in the context of being in a very relaxed state with relatively little physical effort (or so it seems to be effortless to the person) needed to accomplish the task.

The second problem is that the Peak Achievement Trainer is certainly not a "Coach". This term is reserved for highly skilled training specialists who rely on experience and insight as well as multiple and varied teaching techniques to inspire or cajole athletes (individually or as a team) to perform at or near their ability. Occasionally coaches are deemed capable of getting the athlete to perform above his or her ability for short periods of time.

In some cases simply watching the graphic line trace across the screen with irregular squiggles up and down reveals to the athlete his/her level of attentiveness. When the line goes up on the graph, it is

generally a reflection of disturbance in concentration, i.e., being distracted by wandering thoughts or intrusion of sounds or visual cues from the surrounding area. When the line goes down on the graph, it reflects a moment of intense focus that may last only a short while or in the more skilled individuals it will vacillate up a little and return to lower as the athlete regains the intense focus.

When athletes become experienced at controlling their attentional focus very well simply by watching the screen as a reflection of current state, then it is possible to introduce more complex tasks such as reviewing the last few holes of golf played recently. I find that I can listen to the auditory signal while visualizing a particular shot and be reinforced by the sound as to the degree of single-minded focus I have in imagining clearly and without disturbance from past mistakes or future celebrations. While looking at the screen it seems to be possible to have a split focus with minimal (and occasional) attention to the line while projecting a vague scene from the golf course in the background. As such, I can alternate between the intense focus in the few seconds before, during and after the shot shifting then to a broad focus of seeing the potential trajectory of the shot and savoring the feeling of that experience in real time. The latter experience demonstrates a sense of "flexibility" athletes can develop to be able to shift from intense narrow focus to broad scanning (more relaxed awareness without concentration) and back again as needed.

At the other extreme from either being in the zone or in a flow state, we can recognize attentional deficit symptoms.... In athletes that does manifest classically as hands and legs twitching, eyes darting, rapid blinking, fumbling with play things, chewing fingernails, pacing the floors, nervous eating or lack of appetite. In addition, these athletes are constantly plagued with an inner voice emitting desperation thoughts about failure and embarrassment. For an elite athlete, in this state of

mind it is nearly impossible to concentrate during anticipation of competition when the greatest stress is experienced.

Measurement is the key to all advances in sport, and that measuring the intangibles like thought and feeling represents the future of athletic progress. Being able to take a bead on the structure of the mind's eye and ear may lead us to an answer as to whether we can quantify the "zone" in performance? However, the more important question is whether an athlete can be trained to allow the "zoned in" experience to appear more often; to stay with it longer and ultimately how to regain it if he/she gets distracted?

Standing in the batter's box awaiting a pitcher's 96 mph fastball with steady thoughts is nearly impossible. The realistic fear of being hit and hurt badly looms heavily on the mind. Swinging the bat is a very routine natural motion, however it requires millions of neurons in the brain to be activated instantaneously. The reaction time is in the range of 3 tenths of a second and the eye to hand coordination becomes a foggy blur and a guessing game for most baseball players. Only the very best have instincts to read early signals from the pitchers' release of the ball and to sense where and when to swing for contact. Those who succeed at it regularly, have innate composure and synchrony of thought, feeling and motion.

Some have called it being in the zone, having zen sensitivity, being in the flow or having great willpower. If it is measurable it will be displayed in a new generation of EEG readouts to reach that final frontier of discovering the code or combination of physical, mental or metaphysical in achieving the perfect level of consciousness for performance.

There are some performers who naturally have a gift of consciousness for excellence. They seem to flow with artistic and athletic movements

unimpeded by tension and stress. These are the rare few and they have honed this skill with practice and with ideal training conditions. Too much or too little criticism and embarrassment will destroy the sensitive balance between mind and body in control of performance.

Other the other hand, there are many roads to Rome, suggesting that many ancient and modern methods of quieting the mind have worked well in the past. It is somewhat akin to learning how to drive with only one eye open, without windows or mirrors and without speedometer or brakes. The inherent learning process is to just go and hope that it works out okay. Then some other methods of meditation, relaxation, subconscious controls (Open Focus) have allowed some trained participants to gradually smooth out the control of the vehicle. More recently, the PAT has come along with other EEG feedback devices to provide a shaping device for the conscious mind. To be able to see the hazards in the road is like being able to see the distractions immediately as they arise and to make a correction in conscious thought or feeling is the ultimate goal.

Blocking out distractions in performance is easier said than done. Keep your eye on the ball is logical and effective until you try to do it consistently. Only the most disciplined can do it time after time to achieve success. The rest of have must shape this behavior with guidance and discipline. The neurofeedback technology found in the Peak Achievement Trainer is capable making difficult attentional focus tasks easier giving us a light beam of feedback to the inner most recesses of the mind in a real time scenario. How many thoughts do you have competing with your sense of absorption right now as you are reading this material? Wouldn't it be nice to have a warning bell go off when you space off in mid-sentence? The same kind of transference into the field of competition or performance is possible with this new age technology.

While applied psychophysiology and competitive stress management are essential components of effective performance in sport, the applications of traditional biofeedback (EMG, Temp, EDR and Heart Rate) have been limited. The demonstration of stress and tension outcomes before and during performance is extremely enlightening for athletes and coaches, however the actual use of feedback in training and competition has been only moderately useful in shaping athlete's performance toward excellence, primarily because of the obtrusiveness of equipment and sensors. Obviously the same problem exists for traditional neurofeedback, wherein the sophistication of 10-20 lead placement (with sticky EEG paste), complicated filters, multiple channel interpretation, and exotic feedback display makes it far too cumbersome for use in a competitive field setting.

However, portable, user-friendly neurofeedback has the practical advantage of being readily accessible while also providing face validity in the form of a signal that is directly related to the quality of visualization a performer may experience in preparation for competition. This training can be exceptionally relevant if the client appreciates that the vividness of mental rehearsal may be enhanced with the objective confirmation of attentional focus and/or concentration. It is even more relevant to the performer if the apparatus is portable and can be utilized in the backstage or sidelines of competition wherein all the stimuli and distractions are realistic for the client to struggle with and hopefully overcome.

HOW PEAK ACHIEVEMENT TRAINER HAS BEEN USED

"I used that unit (Peak Achievement Trainer) with every athlete who showed any interest during the past 3-4 months. To my amazement, the athletes were able to discover very quickly how the EEG wave pattern related to their fluctuations in attentiveness and concentration to a task."

EXAMPLES:

1) An injured diver (cracked vertebra) was frustrated by his inability to practice and seriously considered quitting. During the first session of training he was able to visualize his dives (in place of physical practice) with such precision and clarity that he came back for several additional sessions until his back healed enough to dive again...His coach has been raving about the outcome. It seems that the diver is now performing better in competition after the layoff from practice than he did before the injury. He said "The young man has become a better diver, with more patience and awareness of his kinesthetic feeling of control in the air." He also says that he has changed from just doing dives to being "a diver". He has since placed first in the Big 12 championship meet. The diver tells me, "A comeback like that is unheard of in Big 12 competition...It kept me in touch with what I should've been doing at the time mentally, even though I wasn't physically able to do it. When I got back in (the pool), I didn't really miss that much because my brain was trained for it. It was just a matter of getting my muscles to respond again. It's done wonders for me...I'm able to relax a lot more than I use to by knowing how to focus and get into it...I've been really relaxed and low key and just been a much happier person in general."

2) Two baseball players who were eager to gain an advantage with their off season training tried the unit in a laboratory session and liked it so well they insisted that I bring it to the batting cage for their hitting coach to see. While one player was in the cage hitting, I had the other one on the Peak Achievement Trainer. We could see clearly when the player was "zoned in" versus when he was distracted by sounds or by anticipatory thoughts. Both players reported they could see the ball better and could stay focused on the hitting coach's instruction more intensely.

3) The Rifle Coach found the instrument relevant enough during one session on the Trainer in her own shooting practice to buy the unit for her athletes in preparation for the national championships in March. This coach has a masters degree in sport psychology and has a history of experience with other EEG equipment, but chose the Peak Achievement Trainer based on ease of operation and meaningfulness of the feedback signal.

What appears to be new and exciting is the fact that EEG Neurofeedback (especially the Peak

Achievement Trainer) is a procedure that has unique relevance for training athletes (or students, or executives) to maintain an intense level of attention or concentration upon a given task. The feedback signal is so candid (like watching yourself in a mirror) that the subject can monitor his/her own ability to stay focused on a task, thus learning how to modulate distractions. The distractions we have monitored include crowd noise, bat-to-ball contact in baseball, and the rebounding sound of a diving board. Even more interesting is the fact that the athlete can review his/her performance over a 1-2 minute visualization period and point out specifically where the attention waned and exactly what the internal thought or feeling was (e.g., "I started to worry about the coach's criticism" or "I got excited about my highest score ever") right at this particular point in the EEG trace. In all performance issues, the effect of distraction, either external (crowd noise) or internal (worry, fear, excitement, etc.) is profound in causing athletes to try too hard and often to choke.

Using the Peak Achievement Trainer I cannot measure what the athlete is thinking, but when the brainwave signal goes "off the chart" the athlete instantly knows that he/she "spaced off" and can make an independent valuation of what thoughts intruded upon the mental rehearsal of the performance. That is the beauty of EEG biofeedback. The Peak Achievement Trainer makes this self-discovery process about attention and concentration very realistic and user-friendly."

USER FRIENDLY

"What I like is that the unit is portable enough to take on the road or onto the practice area."
For example:

- 1) The injured diver I worked with sat in a video room adjacent to the diving pool and watched either live practice or old videos of his pre-injury performance (in the background alternating) while monitoring his attentiveness to the mental imagery with the Trainer. It was exceptionally realistic and challenging for him.
- 2) For the baseball players, I had them stationed 20 feet outside the hitting cage watching and listening to the sound of bat contacting the ball while monitoring their EEG wave form indicators of attentiveness or inattentiveness to the hitting coach's comments.

The Peak Achievement Trainer is extremely user-friendly. Once the athlete is setup and oriented to the procedure, he/she can do it alone. However, I prefer to be side by side with the subject some of the time to be sure they are getting specific coaching and reinforcement of their most successful periods of ideal visualization. The biggest advantage of the Peak Achievement Trainer over other currently available units is that there is no messy electrode paste that sticks in the athlete's hair and makes it seem like a medical procedure. Because of this, I have discovered also that I can alternate using the unit with 2-3 athletes, thus letting them compare and compete with each other. More importantly, however, with the ease of setup and removal, I

can have the athlete alternate between sport specific tasks (baseball hitters in the cage) and ten minutes on the Peak Achievement Trainer."

FOCUSING TO OVERCOME PAIN

I saved the best part of my personal experience until last. One of the reasons I began working in biofeedback was that I had a lot of back pain from old injuries, strain working at a desk, etc. While the regular biofeedback helped me relax generally, it didn't provide carry over benefit from day to day. Thus, it was a very pleasant surprise to me that within short while of becoming absorbed in the Peak Achievement (neurofeedback) signal, I didn't have the usual back pain sensations. In addition, the effects of the pain relief lasted much longer than expected (well into the next day or two). I am still experimenting with the training, but I must concur with other professionals who report that the neurofeedback seems to get to a higher level of central control in the brain for absolution of pain impulses. What a joy!

In addition, I do find that my own ability to stay focused on writing and reading tasks seems to be improved in the last few months since I began using this unit. Ironically, I only train on it for a few minutes at a time, while checking the unit initially and alternating with a client who I am training.

I had avoided messing with neurofeedback for many years, but the preponderance of evidence I discovered in the last year showed me that we, as professionals in this field, cannot ignore this technology any longer.

Wes Sime, Ph.D. Sport Psychologist and Professor, Health and Human Performance, University of Nebraska, and Certified by the Olympic Registry

For more Peak Achievement Training information go to www.peakachievement.com/endorsements.htm.

PERFORMANCE RESULTS

Our clients typically report significant increases in their ability to concentrate, and improved memory, after only three or four training sessions. Look at the significant early improvement in learning to cycle between concentration and brief periods of unfocused relaxation between session 2 and session 4. This level of improvement in concentration in the early stages of neurofeedback training has not been seen with prior training approaches.

Establishing Outcome Goals

Process Goals and Action Goals - - Not OUTCOMES... Forget about the statistics now....

Develop Focus and Control.....Work on Constant Self-improvement

What we want is Quality Thoughts ...No Self-Doubt... No Hoping...Just Believing...

Goals Must Be:

- **Compatible**
- **Limited in Number**
- **Prioritized**
- **Put in Writing**
- **Reviewed Regularly**
- **Evaluated against Progress**
 - **Specific to job at Hand**

*** Living up to the Expectations can be very HARD....**

*** Dedication is Translating Desire into Action....**

Desire

> Goals > Dedication > Action > Success

*** Responsibility.. Who has it?**

Mistakes, errors, Accepting

Responsibility or giving Excuses

*** Attitudes... Getting the Breaks or Making them**

*** Confidence.. Eliminating Fear.....Do a reality check**

*** Visualization.. Practicing in the Mind's Field**

*** Concentration...Control of your Attention...versus Distractions**

*** Mental Discipline...Control of Pressure....Control Thoughts**

The Winner Within: Coaching You To Get in the Zone

By Wes Sime

Recently the New York Times published an article titled "The Winner Within" with a catchy subtitle 'The Coach who will put you in the Zone'. First off, there is nothing technical or magical that will put a football player into the Zone. It is an elusive state of mind/body performance that occurs infrequently and never at the disposal of the player who experiences it. Michael Jordan often said that when he was really on to his game - - It just happened and he could not miss. However, even the great players can't make it happen; it just occurs spontaneously under rare circumstances usually in the context of being in a very relaxed state and it seems to produce effortless, yet powerful, sweet swings and solid hits.

The coaches in this game of football are highly skilled training specialists who rely on experience and insight to inspire or cajole players to perform at or near their ability. Occasionally these coaches are able to get some players to perform above their ability. That is the goal of every coach, manager and general manager. But ultimately you, the player, are responsible for getting the most out of your skills.

There are some football players who naturally have a gift for excellence. They seem to flow with tremendous athletic movements unimpeded by tension and stress. These are the rare few and they have honed this skill with practice and with ideal training conditions. Too much or too little criticism and embarrassment will destroy the sensitive balance between mind and body in control of performance

It is very difficult to be a quarterback standing in the pocket waiting for a receiver to come open knowing you will eventually get hit hard; that it will really hurt; and that you could become injured. To stay relaxed with steady thoughts is nearly impossible under these conditions is nearly impossible, but you still have to do it. The realistic fear of being hit and hurt badly looms heavily on the mind. Throwing a pass is a very routine natural motion, however it requires millions of neurons in the brain to be activated instantaneously. The reaction time you must have is in the range of 3 tenths of a second and the eye to hand coordination becomes a foggy blur and a guessing game for most quarterbacks who have felt the pressure. Only the very best have instincts to read early signals from the defense and to sense where and when to throw for a completion and for protection. Those who succeed at it regularly, have innate composure and synchrony of thought, feeling and motion.

When great players perform well, we have called it being in the "zone", being in the "flow" state or having great willpower. If it is measurable it will be displayed in a new generation of EEG readouts to reach that final frontier of discovering the code or combination of physical, mental or metaphysical in achieving the perfect level of consciousness for performance.

The New York Times article described some new technology called the Peak Achievement Trainer which is simply an EEG biofeedback device (commonly referred to as neurofeedback) that transforms the brainwave signal into a meaningful and relevant display of the player's current or immediate level of attentional focus. The goal is to get the quarterback to be totally absorbed in a single focus of attention, i.e., the defensive scheme, while quickly shifting to the routes of the receivers and the quality of the blocking as needed.

In football it is very difficult to avoid momentary disturbances in concentration, i.e., being distracted by crowd noise, thoughts about interceptions, past mistakes, or future victories, big contract disputes, etc. Some of the great players are so confident that they never worry about stats/numbers etc. However, most players have a difficult time staying completely focused on the task at hand:

See the receiver - - fire the ball on instinct.

Of course, it is easy to do in practice and much more difficult in game situations.

The New York Times article suggested that measurement is the key to all advances in sport, and that measuring the intangibles like thought and feeling represents the future of progress in sports like football. Being able to take a bead on the structure of the mind's eye and ear may lead us to the answer: Can we quantify the skill needed to "get into the zone" in on the football field? However, the more important question is whether the quarterback can be trained to allow the "zoned in" experience to appear more often; to stay with it longer and ultimately how to regain it if he gets distracted?

The technology is available; the question is whether you will step forward to be one of the first to pioneer the effort as a quarterback. We want you to condition your mental state just like you shape your strength and power physically in the weight room. Taking your brain to the gym is the best way to describe Peak Achievement Training. The system and the training techniques are currently available and used by a number of major league ball players, a few Olympic athletes, but you are the first professional football player to have this opportunity.

Wes Sime

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Optimal Functioning in Sport Psychology: Helping Athletes Find Their "Zone of Excellence"

By Wes Sime, Ph.D, Thomas W. Allen, Ed.D. and Catalina Fazzano, Ph.D

Abstract: Sport psychologists and peak achievement trainers are continuously seeking cutting edge methods of achieving the most expedient route to confidence, trust in one's ability, appropriate focus, composure and explosive power with graceful, efficient movement patterns. This is characteristic of almost all high level performance including team and individual sports, as well as aesthetic performances in music, dance, artistry, etc. All are rewarded when graceful yet powerful movements can be performed with seemingly effortless composure

While applied psychophysiology and competitive stress management are essential components of effective performance in sport, the applications of traditional biofeedback (EMG, Temp, EDR and Heart Rate) have been limited. The demonstration of stress and tension outcomes before and during performance is extremely enlightening for athletes and coaches, however the actual use of feedback in training and competition has been only moderately useful in shaping athlete's performance toward excellence, primarily because of the obtrusiveness of equipment and sensors. Obviously the same problem exists for traditional neurofeedback, wherein the sophistication of 10-20 lead placements (with sticky EEG paste), complicated filters, multiple channel interpretation, and exotic feedback display makes it far too cumbersome for use in a competitive field setting.

Today's portable, user-friendly neurofeedback equipment, however, has the practical advantage of being readily accessible while also providing face validity via a feedback signal -- labeled as a "concentration line" -- that is inversely related to the quality of visualization a performer may experience in preparation for competition. It is generally easy for the client to become absorbed in vivid mental rehearsal that is reinforced by objective confirmation of attentional focus on the concentration line. It is even more relevant to optimal performance if the apparatus is portable and can be utilized in the backstage or sidelines of competition, wherein all the stimuli are realistic distractions for the client to struggle with and hopefully overcome.

While we admire our colleagues who have access to (and the skills to use) the most sophisticated neurofeedback equipment available, we have opted to rely primarily on simple equipment that is less complicated for our protocols with athletes and other performers who have no clinical symptoms. On some occasions we refer clients to our peers for more sophisticated clinical assessment and treatment (with or without QEEG when symptoms indicate the need). Using a simpler format with portable, and user-friendly equipment, we find our clients are less reluctant to engage in training activities than if we were to utilize obtrusive measurements. Thus we routinely use the neurofeedback system called the Peak Achievement

Trainer[®] (PAT). The PAT emphasizes a wideband signal, which includes all cortical activity in the frequency range of 0.5 to 40 Hz, measured at a forehead site just below the hairline. Concentrating more intensely inhibits or lowers the amplitude of this signal, which is therefore referred to as the "InhibitAllband" (or "InAll") level. Our case examples include performance training in diving, golf, equestrian (jumping), and music, with a minor focus on ADD/HD.

Neurofeedback Training in Diving

Case Study #1: The diver missed his opening dive from the platform ten meters above the water and landed hard "splat" on his back. The result was a fracture of the transverse process of one of his thoracic vertebrae. In effect he had figuratively "broken his back." He was ambulatory but had considerable pain during six months of rehabilitation.

As the months of recovery passed slowly, he became increasingly frustrated that he was falling behind his teammates while unable to practice in the pool. During history and intake, this diver mentioned that he had used imagery routinely for his diving in the past, but had difficulty doing so at the present time. Thus when offered a chance to try neurofeedback for the purpose of enhancing the quality and intensity of his visualization process, he eagerly accepted. In weekly sessions lasting 30-50 minutes, the diver alternated between watching a video of his previous healthy diving with several 2-5 minute bouts of doing neurofeedback while creating slow and meticulously designed visualization of the dive. He was encouraged to add a kinesthetic (feeling) component to his visualization exercises. Observations of his work on the neurofeedback showed that he became very composed during the training and was almost entranced by the experience.

In the first opportunity to compete after eight neurofeedback training sessions over as many weeks, the diver won a major competition. While this could be a spurious outcome, the coach's comment after the meet was quite interesting. He said, "I don't know what you were doing with all that brain stuff, but it is literally unheard of in the world of diving to have an athlete come off a major injury with minimal preparation time in the water and win a meet like this. Before his injury, this kid could do well in 8 out of 10 dives, but now he is a 'diver,' i.e., he makes something positive out of all 10 competitive dives."

Later in the season with minimal follow-up training, this diver won the League Championships in NCAA Division I competition. Shortly thereafter, during a critical time for preparation in the NCAA Championships, the diver was arbitrarily and unavoidably deprived of booster sessions on the neurofeedback as he faced more intense competition and anxiety. In effect, the treatment was withdrawn and shortly thereafter his performance faltered dramatically. While the outcome could have been coincidental, the diver reported in debriefing that he was simply not able to replicate the intense imagery that had accounted for previous success when using the

neurofeedback. As a result of the performance decrements, he missed the opportunity to participate in the Olympic trials.

In this single case, quasi-experimental A-B-A design, it appeared that initiation of neurofeedback training followed by withdrawal thereof was related to the patterns of success and failure for a performer coming off a very serious injury and rehabilitation. Furthermore the coach's report that the diver's performance after neurofeedback training surpassed that which the diver had achieved pre-injury seems to substantiate our enthusiasm for this application of neurofeedback with divers.

Neurofeedback Training With Golfers

Much of what we study in sport psychology is manifested in subtle cognitive experiences that only appear in self-report. Athletes tell us about the level of concentration or distraction experienced during their best and worst performances and we seek to improve performances using exercises designed to channel their cognitions to replicate ideal states of consciousness leading to outstanding performances. Unfortunately, some athletes have very unreliable self-reports either because they lack awareness thereof or because they were overwhelmed by outside factors that mask their intuitive perceptions. Thus we seek technology and methodologies that afford us a window into the minds of athletes (or other skilled performers) as they rehearse to reflect upon ideal states of attention and concentration either performing a task or imaging it in real time. The results are noted in Case Studies # 2-5.

Case Study #2: We observed that when skilled readers read or when experienced meditators meditate, the concentration line on the neurofeedback (PAT) goes down indicating a reduction in the "idling rhythms" (0.5 to 40 Hz. at AFz). We therefore decided to monitor data on a number of recreational golfers and local pros, while they took 33 putts of 6, 10, and 20-feet. The output of the neurofeedback concentration line (on the PAT) was ordered in virtually every case in such a way that it was meaningfully related to the degree of accuracy of the putts. Surprisingly, EMG artifact was not a problem, as the movement of the club by the golfer had no discernible effect on the EEG record.

Of course putting is a multi-factorial event. Across players the various elements of process pull different weights. Sometimes concentration is a major player; at other times it is eclipsed by other factors. Sometimes concentration is more crucial during the planning of a shot (period 1); sometimes during the preparation to take the shot (period 2); and sometimes at the point of action (period 3).

Most players appear to utilize variations from a general pattern. There are significant valleys in the Peak Achievement Training™ EEG record (indicating heightened concentration) during period 1 (planning). That is, players concentrate for a moment on the nature of the shot. Then they relax for a few seconds before bearing down again as they prepare (period 2), accessing the (visual or kinesthetic) template for the shot they believe they need. Finally they take a last

short break before turning up concentration levels once more right before the backswing.

For one dedicated recreational golfer, concentration appeared to play a major role in how true to the target the surface of his putter head was as he struck the ball (period 3). Thus, the mean InAll score at the moment of contact was significantly lower at contact for the 7 putts that were on target than it was for the 18 putts that were not ($t=3.655$; $p=.001$).

Case Study #3: On the other hand, for an experienced instructor, the "preparation phase" (period 2) was critical. The level of concentration he achieved during the second phase of the putting process predicted how close his 20-ft. putts were to the target. Concentration was measured by how low the InAll score went during this phase ($r=0.69$, $p = .003$).

Case Study #4: For another veteran 2-handicap player, it was the first stage or "planning phase" that was most telling. The greater the level of concentration during pre-shot routine and the lower it was as he struck the ball, the better the outcome of the putt. More specifically, we measured "putting error", the number of inches the ball ends up from the cup after the putt. Putting error correlated $r = 0.63$ ($p = .009$) with the delta (difference between level of concentration during preparation from that recorded when the ball was struck). However, in one trial his performance slipped dramatically when he was asked to formulate what he was thinking about during the putt. Not surprisingly, his concentration was disturbed and he "choked" dramatically during the contemplation of a narrative for his thoughts.

Case Study #5: Ironically, performance for one novice golfer actually improved under the "thinking" conditions described above. In this case, a very well-ordered picture of the relationship between the PAT measure of concentration and putting performance was observed, i.e., the better he concentrated, the worse he putted. For this individual, there was an inverse correlation between concentration and putting error $r = -0.637$ ($p=.014$). As an after thought in one of those trials, it was suggested that he focus only on the stroke. Giving up his usual concern with a host of other variables and attending only to "the feel of the stroke" this inexperienced golfer produced his best putt and his highest level of concentration.

In summary of the golfing case studies, while matching this EEG index of concentration with levels of performance in putting, the neurofeedback "concentration line" behaved just as one would expect a valid measure of attention to behave. Thus it appears that optimal level of concentration at various phases of performance may differ dramatically among participants, and across different cognitive strategies.

Neurofeedback Training in Equestrian Sports

Case Study #6: The use of EEG biofeedback in equestrian sports has not been reported previously. The client was a 13-year-old dyslexic, female rider with six years of competitive experience, who was treated on a short-term crisis intervention basis. She had been

experiencing difficulty completing the course that involved eight jumps over fences in a judged event. In addition she had previously experienced several falls instilling emotional trauma or performance anxiety and was intimidated by a parent who was impatient and quite verbally abusive.

This client was trained on neurofeedback in two separate sessions, each conducted at the competition site and immediately prior to her getting on her horse. The sessions consisted of training in concentration followed by visualization of the course while sitting next to the show ring. Emphasis was placed on planning for appropriate spots where she needed to narrow the focus of her concentration. At the end of the first day of competition following session one of training, this rider was awarded a third place ribbon, the first time she placed all season. A week later, she had her second training session immediately prior to competition under much more difficult circumstances.

The previous year she had been traumatized by a bad fall during competition at the same site where she was about to compete. Fortunately her neurofeedback training went very well and she was successful immediately thereafter in the competition. Following these brief, but intense training sessions, this client was able to ride without fear and with continued success for the rest of the season, undeterred by the trauma of previous falls.

Neurofeedback Cross-Training Effects

It is interesting to note that clients seen primarily for athletic, artistic or academic (ADD/HD) concerns often report independently that their training effects spill over to another area of their lives. For example, training that is intended for academic deficiencies may have treatment outcomes not specifically addressed in therapy. Case Study #7 exemplifies this principle.

Case Study #7. The client was a 9-year-old male with a history of academic and behavioral difficulties and a diagnosis of AD/HD. He was failing academically and had been lying to his parents about it. The mother had been told by a neurologist that, "You should resign herself to the fact that your son will never be a brain surgeon" (apparently because of his AD/HD).

Both parents were opposed to the use of Ritalin and were seeking an alternative treatment. This child received 30 neurofeedback training sessions, which included work on the PAT as well as SMR and hand warming using the Biograph/Multitrace. Additionally two screens were created that would assist in lowering theta at Cz, with an occasional attempt to increase beta at the same site. The results were remarkable.

After 12 sessions, his teacher reported that he was finishing all his schoolwork, and a normal TOVA was obtained after 16. At the 27th session it was reported that his behavior in the classroom was acceptable and that he was able to remain on task for extended periods. He had a normal Connors' Rating Scale as noted by his teachers at school and by his parents. At 8-week follow up he continued to show progress; his grades were mostly A's and B's.

To our surprise, while the treatment was not initiated for performance beyond the classroom, this young child had independently learned to read music and to play several tunes on the piano during the period that he was undergoing the neurofeedback training. Previously, at least three music teachers had given up on trying to teach him to play the piano.

Summary and Conclusion

Helping athletes and other elite performers find their "Zone of Excellence" is a very complex, frustrating task. Until recently, there has been no technical or behavioral strategy that would reliably allow a performer to get into the Zone on command. It is an elusive state of mind/body performance that occurs infrequently and is almost never at the disposal of the person who experiences it. One cannot make it happen. It just occurs spontaneously under rare circumstances usually in the context of being fairly relaxed and unconcerned.

Neurofeedback that transforms the conglomerate brainwave signal into a single, meaningfully relevant display of the athlete's concentration or level of attentional focus appears to be one salient route to get close to "The Zone." When the user learns quickly to become totally absorbed in a single focus of attention (whether task relevant or not), he or she may be on a course leading to an ideal state of consciousness for performance.

When athletes become experienced at controlling their attentional focus simply by watching the screen as a reflection of low idling rhythms, then it is possible to introduce more complex tasks such as reviewing a bad performance and revising it to correct the errors. We also postulate that the most advanced control of this attentional process involves the ability to switch quickly from an idling mode in one central task to a secondary task and alternately shifting back again with ease and control. This is called multi-tasking and we do it routinely while driving an automobile with kids and traffic. The ability to shift between a narrow intense internal focus to a broad externally vigilant attentiveness rapidly is the essence of control for flexibility in elite performance.

With our clinical case studies of outstanding performers in diving, golf and equestrian, we have illustrated unique examples our efforts to identify optimal states of consciousness for performance as well as the ability to shape the attentional focus relatively quickly. The quintessential contribution of neurofeedback to performance in sport is to give the client the opportunity to become more aware of the internal processes associated with success versus failure. In effect, this training enriches the discovery process for novice as well as experienced performers.

ⁱ [Editor's Note] This protocol features a placement of one active monopolar electrode in the midline on the forehead, just below the (non-receded) hairline, 17% of the distance from the nasion to theinion. The protocol defines the InAll signal as an integration of cortical activity between 0.5 Hz and 40 Hz. The manufacturer of "The Peak Achievement Trainer™," Neurotechnology, Inc., states that the patented protocol defines the "concentration line" as the inverse of the Inall level. The InAll level is also inversely related to attention in performance tasks. The more the subject focuses on a task, the lower the concentration line drops. The manufacturer warns that results may not be reproducible on other equipment, due to differences in signal filtering, averaging, and/or display.

ⁱⁱ All of the case studies cited here were presented in October, 2000 at the Association for the Advancement of Applied Sport Psychology, held in Nashville, TN.

Peak Achievement Training Associates

7901 East Avon, Lincoln, NE 68505

In order to keep up with new technology and "cutting edge" innovations to the game of football you must take the steps necessary to explore the future. It is possible that Peak Achievement Training (together with Quick Reaction Training) can become one of your greatest new innovations in the NFL.

While you use a myriad of instructional and motivational techniques to continually stretch performance thresholds, it is not always possible to get players to reach the peak of their potential every day in practice or in every critical game. Players are often vulnerable to emotions and distractions that can deter from their ultimate achievements. Sometimes the players make mistakes because they are "trying too hard" to perform well under the scrutiny of the camera, coaches and the media.

Every NFL player comes out of college with a terrific memory bank of great plays and wonderful victories. Many have been into that sublime state of "playing perfection" known as "**The Zone**", wherein the game slows down to allow performance to be effortless and precise, almost as if divinely inspired. They come into NFL camp with the expectation of more great success in the Zone. Of course, with all the competition with other highly talented players, it is virtually impossible to duplicate their college successes and each player must adjust to some physical breakdown and the tendency to make "mental mistakes" while trying desperately to earn a roster spot.

While all NFL players have plenty of talent and are motivated toward perfection, they often succumb to the pressure. With the constant barrage of external pressure (media, roster decisions, etc.) and internal pressure (stress and anxiety), some players with outstanding talent and very high levels of motivation are released before the beginning of the season. Even though you have outstanding assistant coaches, it is very possible that some of the most **talented players may never reach their full potential**. These "underachievers" may simply need more disciplined "will power" conditioning to ward off those occasional moments of mental mutiny.

Our goal as leaders and thinkers in the NFL is to find new methods to draw out the players' talents and get them to perform consistently. One element of this difficult task, in player development, is to solidify their confidence and belief in themselves based upon tangible evidence of hard work and stepwise progression in their daily performance working toward lofty goals.

You have ample physical evidence of the player's performance record in the weight room and on the field. However, until very recently there were no objective measures to predict tendency toward mental mistakes. More importantly, there were no valid training methods for

conditioning the brain for high levels of **focus and concentration** to prevent mistakes. With the Peak Achievement Trainer, we have the latest technology available to help players overcome the inevitable "mental mistakes" on the field while nurturing their sincere efforts to get "Back Into the Zone" again.

Rather than waiting for the "Zone" to happen serendipitously, we feel it is possible to shape the mental foundation of the brain to allow a player to achieve the "Zone" more frequently and for longer periods of time. We have the technology to **connect brainpower with God given physical talent** to actually condition each player's brain to achieve peak levels of concentration at critical moments in the game.

Earnest - - you are getting very close to becoming a highly trained expert as a Mental Edge Instructor (comparable to the strength and conditioning coaches). Like pumping iron, you are using the Peak Achievement Trainer to strengthen players control over subtle thoughts and emotions to enhance their playing performance. In effect, you are offering a way to take your **brain to the weight room**. However, there are some additional options that you must consider to become fully prepared to do this work at the highest level.

The Peak Achievement Trainer gets players to:

- **Improve concentration and visualization to play better**
- **Recharge their brain between periods of intense competition**
- **Reduce performance anxiety and increase pain tolerance**
- **Improve the ability to control anger and stay focused**

Working with Players on Quicker Reaction Time

We now have new technology to train quick reactions on the snap while counter-conditioning to prevent the "offsides" penalties. I assume that you would like your players conditioned for an ideal "mental state" prior to the snap of the ball. In addition to monitoring ideal mental state with the Peak Achievement Trainer, we use a reaction time testing and training system.

This is a very user-friendly system that allows a player to see how quickly he can react to the "snap of the ball" simulated on the screen. The nerve transmission speed from eye to brain to muscle reacting occurs at about **two tenths of a second**, so any reaction longer than 0.2 sec is impeded by tension, trying too hard, failure to be attentive, etc. We feel certain that increasing

reaction time while counter conditioning against false starts (same as "off sides") will reduce the number of these penalties on the field.

How Peak Achievement Training Works with Reaction Testing

The Peak Achievement Trainer works like a "mirror on the mind." However, when used with the reaction training, players easily see the relevance to football. As you know, when the line on the graph drops dramatically and stays low the players are fully absorbed (single focused). The new addition is the two graph system allows us to monitor whether the player is concentrating intently upon a given tasks (listening to coaching instructions, mentally imaging the pass route or the line technique. There is a delicate balance between the relaxed state and the finely tuned intense focused state that you must consider for the near future.

Regular use of the Peak Achievement Trainer has the potential to train (or condition) the mind to stay on task with greater discipline automatically, thus we must make the player transfer what he learns to the field of play. This may also be the essence of shaping the players mental state toward the experience of being "In the Zone". Our purpose is to **get to that ideal mental state** more frequently and reliably when we need it. The Peak Achievement Training is like taking your brain to the weight room, especially when we add the two graph system and the reaction testing and training to it. When would you like to start using the new system - - now or after returning from training camp???

Wes Sime

402/304-1161 (cell phone)

College Life can be very Stressful



Stressors especially felt in college	Check if "yes"	Describe a time you have experienced this
Increased competition for good grades		
Potential for course overload		
Work versus study versus party		
Making friends, losing friends		
Homesickness, adjusting to change		
Jealousy, breakups		
Pressures of love and sexual drives		
Developing professional competencies		
Managing emotions (anger, fear, etc.)		
Freedom in developing relationships		
Development of identity (Who am I?)		

Signs and Symptoms of Stress in College Students

X	Signs and Symptoms	X	Signs and Symptoms
	Headache: tension/migraine		Upset Stomach/Nausea
	Cold Hands/Feet		Moist, Sweaty Palms
	Heart Pounding/Fluttering		Shaky Hands/Tremor
	Undue Urge to Urinate		Fatigue/Exhaustion
	Stiff Neck		Bruxism/Grinding Teeth
	Skin Blemishes/Acne		Indigestion
	Skin Rash		Face Hot/Flushing
	Butterflies in Stomach		Oily Skin
	Diarrhea or constipation		Muscle Cramps
	Frequent Colds and Flu		Asthma, Allergy Attack
	Cold Sores (Cankers)		Inability to Slow Down & Relax
	Feeling Trapped & Helpless		Frequent Outbursts of Anger
	Frequent Low-grade Infections		Dry Throat & Mouth

Accident Prone	Nightmares/Sleeplessness
Loss of or excessive appetite	Too much or too little sleep
Nervous, fidgety	Stammering, stuttering
Nervous laughter	Easily startled
Nervous tick	Biting nails, tapping feet
Drumming fingers	Inability to concentrate
Urge to run or cry	Impulsive behavior
Irritable, grouchy	Feeling overwhelmed
Unable to cope	Feeling Anxious, Afraid for no reason
Withdrawing from people	Always acting hurried or rushed
Never laughing or enjoying life	Increased use of medication
Increased use of alcohol/drugs	Increased use of tobacco products
Feeling low, discouraged or depressed	Feeling rejected most of the time
Feeling light-headed/faint	Diffuse, undirected anger

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Major Areas of Stress Causation

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Psychosocial	External	Personality
Life changes	Occupation	Self-perception
Overload	Noise	Anxious reactivity
Frustration	Nutrition	Time urgency
Deprivation	Drugs, substance	Need for control
Trauma, loss	Environment	Anger, hostility

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DIAGNOSIS AND/OR SYMPTOMS ASSOCIATED WITH STRESS

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Alopecia, Angina, Arrhythmia, Asthma, Anxiety, Acne, Arthritis,

Back Pain, Back Strain, Blepharospasm, Bruxism,

Chest Pain, Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, Crohn's Disease, Colitis, Causalgia,

Depression, Diabetes, Diarrhea, Duodenal Ulcer, Dysphagia, Dermatitis, Dysmenorrhea, Dizziness, Dyspnea,

Emphysema, Esophageal Reflux, Enuresis {Nocturnal/Incontinence}, Epilepsy,

Fatigue, Fibrositis, Fibromyalgia, Fecal Incontinence

Gastric Ulcer, Gastritis,

Headache (Tension), Hypertension (Essential), Hyperthyroidism, Hyperkinesia, Herpes

Irritable Bowel, Insomnia,

Low Back Pain, Learning Disabilities,

Migraine Headache, Myositis, Muscle Spasm, Multiple Sclerosis, Myofascial Pain Dysfunction

Neck Pain, Neuralgia,

Overeating, Overweight Syndrome, Obesity,

Pain (Chronic), Paralytic Muscles, Parkinson's Disease, Psychogenic Emesis,

Raynaud's Syndrome, Respiratory Disorders, Rosacea,

Sciatica, Stress Urinary Incontinence, Sleep Disorders, Speech Disorders, Stuttering

Tinnitus, TMJ Pain Syndrome, Thoracic Outlet Syndrome, Tic, Torticollis,

Ulcer

Weight Loss, Writer's Cramp

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Stages of Burnout from Arousal to Breakdown

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Review these symptoms of the three stages of burnout. **Identify someone you know who exhibits a number of these symptoms.** _____

Stage 1: Early Stress Arousal	ch if "yes"
Occasional irritability	
Occasional anxiety	
Skin rash or acne	
Bruxism (grinding your teeth at night)	
Persistent tiredness in the mornings	
Forgetfulness, loss of concentration	
Difficulty concentrating	
Occasional headaches	
Stage 2: Struggle & Resistance	
Frequently irritable and grouchy	
Frequently anxious and worried	
Psoriasis or eczema	
Decreased sexual desire	
Insomnia or waking often at night	
Social withdrawal (from friends/family)	
Resentful or cynical attitude	
Increased alcohol/drug consumption	
Increased coffee, tea, or cola use	
Feeling apathetic and disillusioned	

Stage 3: Exhaustion and Breakdown	
Chronic sadness or depression	
Chronic stomach or bowel problems	
Chronic mental fatigue	
Chronic physical fatigue	
Chronic headaches	
The desire to "drop out" or give up	
Chest discomfort or shortness of breath	
Unusual heart rhythms (skipped beats)	
Total loss of libido	
Thoughts about committing suicide	

Describe the life circumstances (job, family, and other stressors) that might be associated with the onset of these symptoms for this person.



Problem Checklist	Check if "yes"	Elaborate on the reasons for each of the items that you have checked
Health		
Difficulty sleeping		
Weight problems		
Feeling physically tired and run down		
Stomach trouble		
Chronic physical problems		
Difficulty getting up in the morning		
Poor diet and nutrition		
Finances		
Difficulty making ends meet		
Insufficient money for necessities		
Increasing amounts of debt		
Unexpected expenses		
Lacking money for recreation		
No steady source of income		

Life Change Events for College Students

Circle the point value for each event that has happened to you during the last twelve months.

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Life Event	Point Value	If applicable, describe how this has affected you
Death of a close family member	10	
Arrested with time spent in jail	8	
Final year or first year of college	6	
Pregnancy (to you or caused by you)	6	
Severe personal illness or injury	5	
Getting married or divorced	5	
Financial difficulties	4	
Death of a close friend	4	
Arguments with your roommate (more than every other day)	4	
Major disagreements with your family	4	
Major change in personal habits	3	
Change in living environment	3	
Beginning or ending a job	3	
Problems with your boss or professor	2	

Outstanding personal achievement	2	
Failure in a course	2	
Difficulty with final exams	2	
Increased or decreased dating	2	
Change in working conditions	2	
Change in your major	2	
Change in your sleeping habits	2	
Several-day vacation	1	
Change in eating habits	1	
Family reunion	1	
Change in recreational activities	1	
Minor illness or injury	1	
Minor violations of the law	1	
Add up the point values for all the items you checked	Score:	

Compare your scores to others around you. Determine whether you feel this score and these items are a good measure of your stress level in your life?

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Feeling and Lifestyle Diary

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At this moment, record your mood and feeling. Circle the appropriate number that fits for you.		
Dull	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Alert
Sluggish	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Energetic
Sad	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Happy
Doubtful	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Self-assured
Anxious	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Mellow, relaxed
Withdrawn	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Outgoing
Depressed	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Exhilarated
Hungry	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Satisfied
Worried	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Confident
Concentration (poor)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Concentration (good)
Stress level high	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Stress level low
Not a good day	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Very good day
Lifestyle characteristics		
Lack of exercise	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Plenty of exercise
Lack of quality sleep	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Plenty of quality sleep
Poor dietary intake	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Good dietary intake

Identify one or more of the categories above that you circled with a lower number (1,2,3) and try to figure out what is going on in your life that is associated with these feelings. Please describe: _____

Now, what could be done to relieve the symptoms you experience? _____

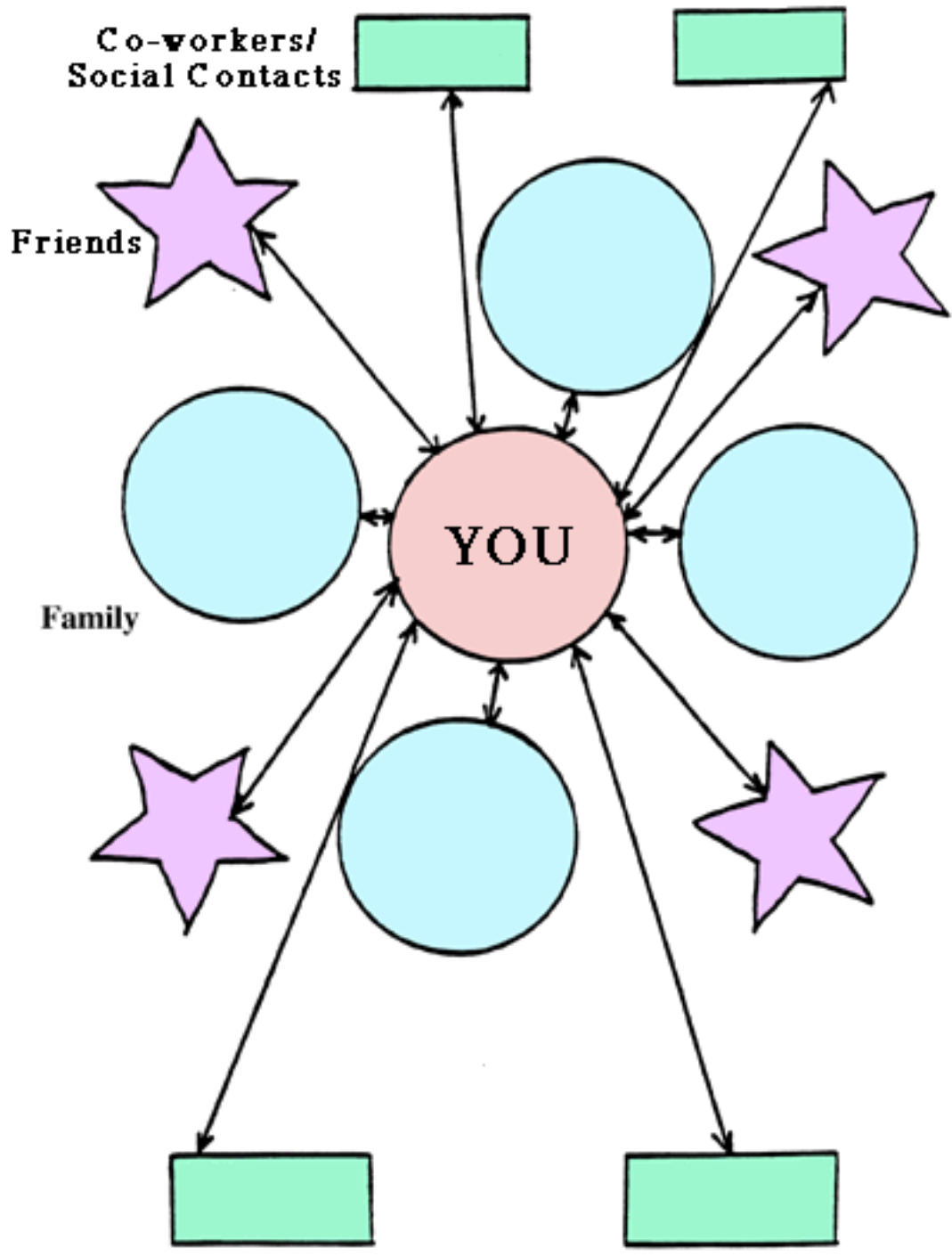
Identify one or more of the categories that you circled with higher numbers (4,5,6,7) and try to figure out what might account for those feelings. Please describe: _____

Do you feel that exercise, sleep or diet contribute to your sense of well being or lack thereof? If so, how?

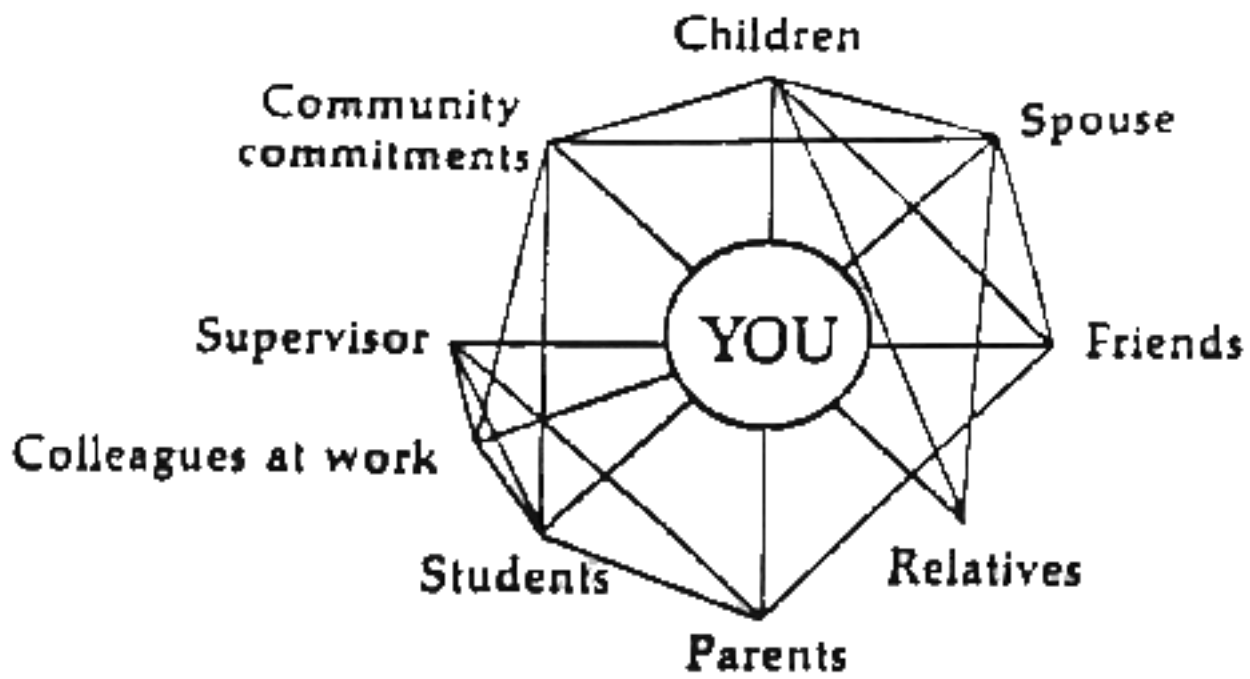
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Social Support Network

Fill in the names of those in your network



Web of relationships



Masculine Traits	No Gender Difference for these variables	Feminine Traits
stronger , faster	capacity for intelligence/creativity	have better verbal skills
have better math skills (except arithmetic)	analytic - rote learning	have better tactile sense, fine motor skills
more active and aggressive	assertiveness, dominance	more social, empathetic, nurturing
show low self-disclosure maintain facade - macho	sexuality, erotic responsiveness	more disease-resistant, will seek medical help
lack insight, incapable of deeper feeling		find meaning beyond their working role
miss more work from chronic illnesses		have more work demands & dissatisfactions

Some individual are clearly masculine or feminine in keeping with their anatomical gender. Others are more androgynous meaning that they have a balance of both masculine and feminine traits. There are definite advantages for women who can demonstrate some masculine traits (when needed, e.g. at work) and for men who can exhibit more feminine traits, such as self-disclosure, personal insight, empathy, nurturance and social communication skills.

Please circle one how you would describe yourself according to these criteria:

Masculine		Androgynous			Feminine	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Now describe what advantages this has provided for you in the past and how you can enhance those effects further in the future.

Please describe what disadvantages this has provided for you in the past and how you might minimize those problems in the future.

Automatic Stress Thoughts

1. **Automatic Stress Thoughts** are usually bothersome, self-deprecating generalizations. For example, when I spill and make a mess - - my brain fires out instantly with, "You dummy, why weren't you more careful.....when are you ever going to learn...maybe never..."
2. **Automatic Stress Thoughts** may come to you in short phrases, i.e., "You dummy" or in images flashing across your visual screen. For example, when I am afraid of hitting a golf ball in the water - - my brain shows me flashes of the ball going directly into the water.....
3. **Automatic Stress Thoughts** may be quite irrational and ridiculous, but we still tend to believe them because they are such a big part of who we are....We have been accumulating the beliefs behind these thoughts since early childhood and they will stick in our minds unless we make a direct confrontation to eliminate them. Ask the question of yourself and others, "Can this interpretation be for real or is it my imagination."
4. **Automatic Stress Thoughts** often consist of "I should, I ought to, or I must." My friend who lost her husband in a tragic death thought to herself, "You have to go it alone, you shouldn't burden your friends." Every time this happened, she felt a wave of despair and helplessness." It is non-productive to feel that "I should be happy...I should be more energetic or responsible. It only "brings on a sense of guilt or low self-esteem.
5. **Automatic Stress Thoughts** tend to "awfulize." These thoughts anticipate danger in everything, and always expect the worst. When I don't hear from a friend or relative for a longer than usual period of time, I conclude that I must of done something wrong or may they prefer others over me. Awfulizers are the major source of anxiety and stress.
6. **Automatic Stress Thoughts** are hard to get rid of. Over the years they have become such a natural part of our thinking that they go unnoticed in our consciousness. They seem to pop up in the least expected moments and tend to prevail until we catch ourselves thinking about it.... Thus it is very important to setup natural triggers for reflection upon our thoughts....i.e., every time the phone rings or you come to a stop light - - ask yourself, "what was I thinking and was it useful."

What are the most recent "bothersome thoughts that you have had." Take a look at the sample of a Thoughts Diary on the next page.

Record your most recent bothersome thought : _____

What feelings went along with that thought: _____

Was there a serious impact for you to consider: _____

Do you expect this issue to be a problem: (next week, next year, etc.)

Thoughts Diary

To appreciate the power of your automatic thoughts and the part they play in your emotional life, make your own thoughts diary. Make a notation each time you experience an unpleasant emotion. Include everything you tell yourself to keep the emotion going. Review the following sample and continue beyond with your own reflection of thoughts...

Time	Emotion	Example Situation	Automatic Stress Thoughts	How serious is it now?	Will it still be a problem next week?
9:15	anger	Waiting in line	Late ... Boss angry ... last one in ... have to rush	very much, I am mad	probably not
10:30	anxiety	Discovered there was more work to be done than time available.	I'll be here all night ... can't stand it... must get done	scary and frustrating	I'll have it done by then
11:50	anxiety	Computer breaks down	I'll never get it done now ... Oh God ... I should work faster or he'll get angry.	I have to get help	Will have a new computer by then
12:30	anxiety	Have to work through lunch	My stomach is really going to hurt ... I can't stand this.	could be ulcer	could be worse by then
Time	Emotion	Your Situation	Automatic Stress Thoughts	How serious is it now?	Will it still be a problem next week?

<h1 style="text-align: center;">Worry Inventory</h1>	Check if "yes"	Extent of difficulty (much/little)
Do you worry about being on time more than others you know?		
Do you worry about leaving the lights on, or the doors unlocked?		
Do you worry about losing your personal belongings?		
Do you worry about keeping the house always clean and tidy?		
Do you worry about keeping things in their right place?		
Do you worry about your physical health, and risk of disease?		
Do you worry about doing things in their right order?		
Do you ever have to count things several times or go through numbers in your mind just to be able to feel comfortable?		
Do you often have a guilty conscience over quite ordinary things?		
Do unpleasant or frightening thoughts or words ever keep going over and over in your mind?		
Have you ever been troubled by certain thoughts of harming yourself or others? thoughts which come and go without any particular reason?		
Do you worry about household things that might chip or splinter if they were to be knocked over or broken?		
Do you ever have persistent ideas that someone you know might be having an accident or that something might have happened to them?		
Are you preoccupied with the fear of being raped or assaulted?		

Do you go back and think about a task you have already completed, wondering how you could have done it better?		
Do you find yourself overly concerned with germs or dirt?		
Do you have to turn things over and over in your mind before being able to decide about what to do?		
Are there any particular things that you try to keep away from or that you avoid doing, because you know that you would be upset by them?		
Do you ever worry that things will never get better, or may get worse?		
Do you become preoccupied with angry or irritated thoughts when people don't do things carefully or correctly?		
Do guilt-tinged memories return to you over and over?		
Do you have recurring feelings of jealousy, or fear of being rejected?		
Do you feel nervous about heights (tall buildings, cliffs, etc.)?		
Are you at times preoccupied with desire for things you cannot have?		
Are you unnecessarily concerned about car accidents?		
Do you find yourself rehashing thoughts about your faults?		
Do you feel nervous when thinking about being alone?		
Are you ever worried about knives, hammers, hatchets, or guns?		
Do you tend to worry a bit about personal cleanliness or tidiness?		
Do you worry about getting trapped in crowds, bridges, or elevators?		
Do you think frequently of certain things of which you are ashamed?		

For three of the worst worries that you have identified above, please describe any past experiences that you feel may have contributed to the development of these worries.

 HOME

A FEW SIGNS OF RELAXATION

Jaw slightly open, not clenched

Forehead smooth

Facial muscles soft and less well defined

Neck muscles soft

More frequent swallowing

Neck pulse less visible and slower

Abdominal breathing

Lengthened breathing cycle

Exhalation less controlled

Extremities warm, heavy, or tingling

Palms are consistent pink (not speckled or white)

Fingernail beds consistent pink

Legs separate slightly (if seated)

Toes point outward more (if lying on back)

Shoulders drop

Feel the pull of gravity

Lightness

Time perception altered (time expands or contracts)

Increased salivation

Heart rate slower

Heartbeats less pronounced

Growling in stomach

Increased or decreased awareness of hunger or thirst

Awareness of gas in intestines

Increased awareness of bladder fullness

Blank spots (not knowing the mind was the last few seconds)

Loss of sensory proprioceptive input (can't feel clothing jewelry or position of hand in contact with other surfaces)

Eyelids stop fluttering with eyes closed

Felt like floating on a cloud or sinking (melting) into the rug

 HOME

Passive	Assertive	Aggressive
Shy & Withdrawing	Usually more extroverted	Somewhat hostile
Reluctant to assert rights and privileges. Timid and lets others make decisions	Focused on rights and options but uses them constructively and enjoyably	A vehement defender of own rights yet often violates or usurps the rights of others
Socially inhibited	Socially productive	Socially destructive

1. Describe a situation where you or someone you know exhibited "**PASSIVE**" somewhat inhibited behavior in a situation where more assertiveness was needed.

How would you suggest handling the situation you have described above differently.

2 Describe a situation where you or someone you know exhibited "**AGGRESSIVE**" possibly hostile behavior in a situation where more assertiveness was needed.

How would you suggest handling the situation you have described above differently?

RECALL OF STRONG EMOTIONS

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1. Think of a recent stressful experience that stirred some very strong feelings for you. Recall where it occurred and who was there; get a very clear picture of the situation; note what everyone was saying, including what you were saying to yourself; allow yourself to experience the feelings you felt then and immediately afterward. Now describe the situation

2. Please identify all of your feelings during and after the situation by putting a check below in front of those that you recall:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Feeling	(anger or fear)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Feeling	(anger or fear)
	anxious			hostile	
	lonely			bewildered	
	submissive			embarrassed	
	confused			insecure	
	inadequate			bored	
	irritated			jealous	
	miserable			ashamed	
	critical			hateful	
	discouraged			insignificant	
	foolish			rejected	
	depressed			stupid	
	enraged			inferior	
	helpless			weak	
	guilty			frustrated	

	furious			mad	
--	---------	--	--	-----	--

3. The two strongest stressful emotions are **anger** and **fear**. On the lines above after each feeling you have checked, write the one that best describes your reaction at the time.

For example:

	rejected	ANGER		guilty	FEAR
--	----------	--------------	--	--------	-------------

4. Determine how many "ANGER" reactions and how many "FEAR" reactions you experienced, What is your interpretation of this exercise in regard to what you learned about yourself?

 HOME

Sometimes people find that it helps to make a list of the things and experiences that bother you. The following questionnaire will help you remember and rate your fears. After each item, check the one box that best describes how much you are disturbed by it these days.

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Fear Inventory	Not At All	A little	A Fair Amount	Much	Very Much
Open wounds					
Being alone or in a strange place					
Speaking in public					
Automobiles, trucks, tractors, trains					
Being teased by people you respect					
Dentists or dental procedures					
Thunder and lightening					
Failure or embarrassment thereof					
Looking down from high buildings or cliffs					
Worms, ants or cockroaches					
Receiving injections, needles, etc.					
Seeing other people injected					
Flying on a commercial jet					
Flying in a small plane					
Flying insects or bats					
Tough looking people					
Being in an elevator or closed spaces					
Witnessing surgical operations					

Human blood from cuts or accident					
Prospect of a surgical operation					
Parting from friends					
Feeling rejected by others					
Harmless snakes or spiders					
Cemeteries, mortuaries, and caskets					
Darkness or shadows					
Doctors or medical procedures					
Looking foolish in front of friends					
Being in charge or responsible for decisions					
Sight of knives or sharp objects					
Becoming mentally ill or suicidal					
Being with a member of the opposite sex					
Taking written tests					
Feeling different from others					
Others (please specify)					

For three of the worst fears that you have identified above, please describe any past experiences that you feel may have contributed to the development of these fears.



Type A Behavior (check those that apply to you)



1. ___ Are you are prone to worry about finishing all the things you have to get done. Recognize that life is basically unfinished business and pleasure; thus learn to enjoy what you get done and what you have to do for tomorrow.
2. ___ Do you hurry much of the time? Are you always checking your watch or clock? Consider whether, in the past, when hurrying you have made a mistake, caused an accident or forgot something that cost you much more time and effort.
3. ___ Do you feel you have to complete projects yourself in order to get them done right? Consider that you can never do it all by yourself, and whether you can help others and yourself by sharing the task.
4. ___ Do you try to do more and more in less and less time, and then get anxious when tasks don't get completed? Consider whether you need to make better decisions on what has to be done, and that it is okay if some things don't get done
5. ___ Are you often disappointed that others don't live up to your high standards? Consider that others have a right to a different style and that sometimes their approach can be just as good as yours.
6. ___ Do you get impatient and annoyed seeing others working slowly? Consider anticipating another task that would be helpful, then relax since your impatience could cause them to make a mistake or work slower.
7. ___ Do you jump in and help others finish a sentence? Do so only when necessary and encourage them with your support of their conversation. Then consider slowing down the tempo since the speed & pressure of your style makes other people tense and less able to concentrate.
8. ___ Do you have a hard time sitting still and doing nothing? Consider that relaxing comfortably without distractions for a few minutes can help prepare you for serious decisions or for a period of very productive work.
9. ___ Do you often think about two or more things at once? Consider writing some notes about one or both (so as not to lose them) and then refocus your unencumbered attention on the task at hand.
10. ___ Do you spend as much time at trivial tasks as the important ones? Recognize that this is a sign of avoidance and procrastination since the important tasks are often more difficult, choose one that you feel you can accomplish, then get on it knowing that you can allow yourself to do one of the more trivial, more enjoyable tasks after that.
11. ___ Do you feel your ideas alone are absolutely correct? If you are serious in this response, you have a great deal of painful experiences ahead of you.
12. ___ Do you measure your success by what others think of you? If you wish to find true happiness in life, you will have do discover what is deeply meaningful to you more so than what others think.



Your Legitimate Rights: You have a right to ...

put yourself first sometimes

make mistakes occasionally

give your own opinions

change your mind occasionally

protest unfair treatment or criticism

interrupt in order to ask for clarification

negotiate for change

ask for help or emotional support

feel and express pain

ignore the advice of others

receive formal recognition for your work and achievements

say "No" when it just doesn't feel right to you

be alone, even if others would prefer your company

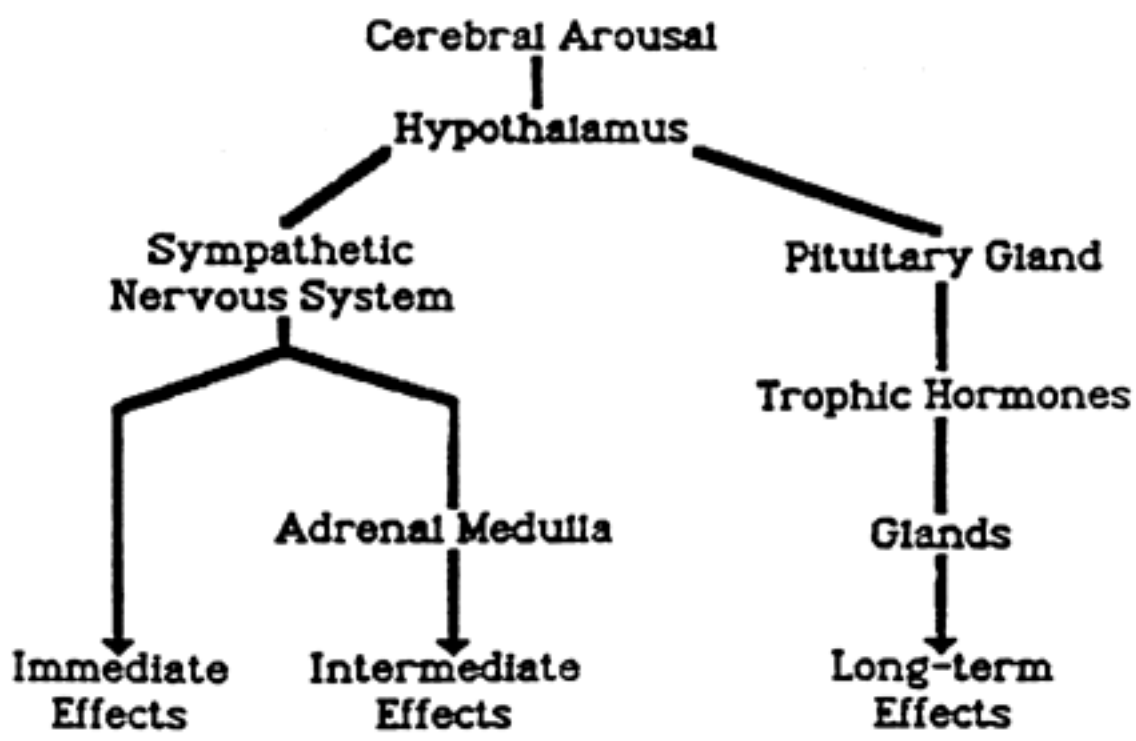
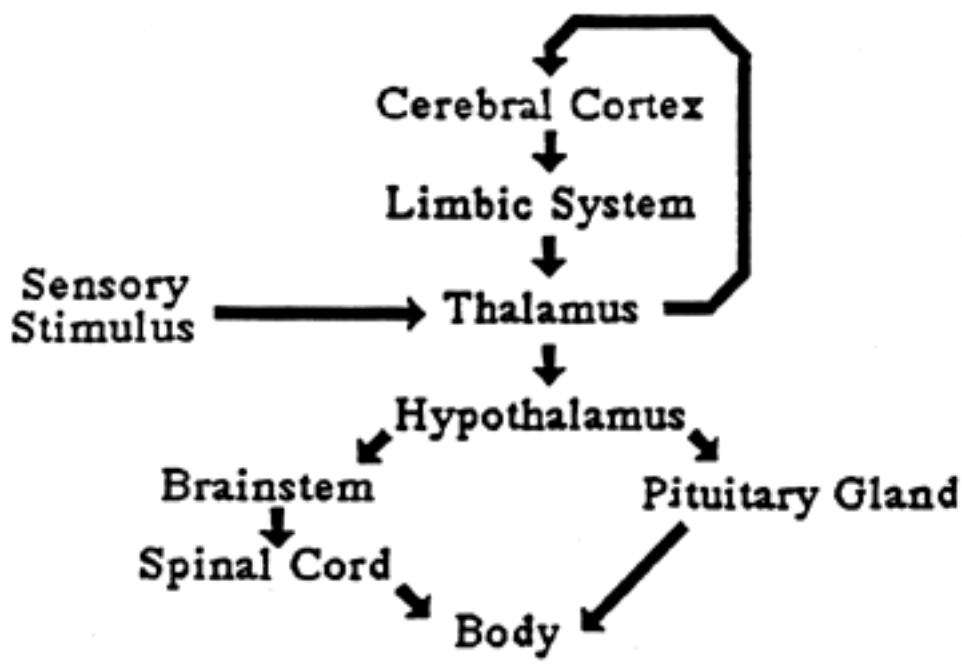
You have a right not to ...

have to justify yourself to others

take responsibility for someone else's problem

have to anticipate others' needs and wishes

always worry about the goodwill of others



Physiological Changes in the Flight-or-Fight Response

◀ HOME

Organ	Change
Pupils of the Eye	Enlarge to facilitate greater acuity to see danger and escape routes
Brain	Increased blood flow, increased metabolism of glucose, focusing more intense, fatiguing thoughts
Heart	Increased heart rate and vasospasm for risk of stroke and heart attack
Lungs	Increased respiratory rate, dilation of bronchi, increased oxygen supply to enable rigorous physical response to attack
Liver	Increased glucose production via gluconeogenesis which depletes energy reserve
Muscles	Increased breakdown of glycogen to glucose for immediate energy, increased residual tension causing neurons behavior, irritability and discomfort
Fat tissue	Increased breakdown of stored fat, more fatty acids in the bloodstream increasing heart disease risk
Digestion	Increased acidity and decreased motility causing discomfort, possible constipation (at first) followed by diarrhea (if reaction is severe)
Excretory	Neuron stimulation of the bladder producing the urge to urinate in spite of the fact that urine flow is reduced
Lymph tissue	Increased release of T cells and natural killer cells depleting the reserves thus decreasing immune function
Skin	Decreased blood flow causing cold hands/feet
Sweat Glands (mouth, throat)	Increased sympathetic nervous response causes sweating and hyperhydrosis

Salivary Glands

Decreased flow of saliva causing thicker, sticky, dry mouth "cotton mouth"

 HOME

Stress -- A Conceptual Understanding



1. Explain the concepts of stress in physiological terms describing arousal.
 - o Excitement -- emotional reaction which elevates cognitive and physiological activity levels
 - o Stimuli Ñ Demands upon the system for physical or cognitive productivity.
2. Identify examples of eustress and distress citing Selye's theory.
 - o Eustress = Positive exhilarating challenging experiences of success followed by higher expectations
 - o Distress = Disappointment, failure, threat, embarrassment and other negative experiences
3. Explain the difference between stress management and stress reduction.
 - o Stress Reduction = eliminating the source of stress making changes, taking action.
 - o Stress Management = coping, recovery, re-interpretation, reframing cognitive restructuring.
4. Discriminate between stress, stressor, stress reaction, and strain.
 - o Stress = General concept describing a "load" on the system, usually external, with humans it is internal.
 - o Stressor = a specific problem, issue, challenge, personal conflict (External/internal)
 - o Stress Reaction = an individual response to a given stressor (physiological, behavioral, emotional, cognitive, signs and symptoms)
 - o Strain = the prolonged impact of a the stressor on the system (overload), fatigue, precursor to illness
5. Define the term stress reactivity noting cardiovascular research.
 - o Hot reactor testing reveals unique physiological profiles of heart and vessel responses.
 - o Monitor HR, BP, cardiac output and peripheral resistance during a stress test
 - o Standardized challenge (mental arithmetic, video game) progressively increasing demands and frustrations.
 - o Those at risk show exaggerated responses to a minimum stress load (over-reactive emotionally)
 - o Research on the risk associated with reactivity is marginally supportive (not all studies show reactivity to be a risk factor)
6. Define the term stress stereotypy as determined by stress profiling
 - o Stress stereotypy: unique individual response pattern comparable to fingerprinting.
 - o Some are vascular responders (Heart rate, Blood pressure, hypertension)
 - o Some are skeletal muscle responders (EMG Ñ measures muscle tension)
 - o Some respond peripherally (cold, sweaty hands). Blushing or blanching too.
 - o Everyone has some variation in proportion of these responses.
 - o Responses may vary according to intensity of stress and due to personal vulnerability
7. Explain the potential benefits of stress management training for the individual.
 - o Learn to recognize and respond to early warning signs of overload and burnout (headache and fatigue)
 - o Learn new models of effective stress management and pick those right for you (lifestyle, symptoms)
 - o Become aware of the immediate physical signs of stress (cold, sweaty hands, nervous tense)
 - o Recognize and respond to emotionally distressing events in your life(change exposure if possible)
 - o Learn to recognize speech patterns that reflect "tension"(rapid, accelerating, staccato, couplets)
 - o Develop more efficient and relaxing breathing patterns to reduce tension (abdominal beathing)
 - o Discover ways to use these warning signs as signals to change work or leisure circumstances to reduce stressors
8. Identify realistic goals/benefits of stress management training for organizations.
 - o reduced turnover (loss of valuable employees costs a great deal of time and money to replace)
 - o reduced sick leave, workers compensation and medical costs
 - o increased morale and decreased conflict, dissatisfaction

- enhanced performance, reduced errors, mistakes, accidents
9. Explain the limitations of stress management, noting research issues documenting its effectiveness.
 - no guarantee that health risks are reduced, however many infectious and chronic diseases can be prevented
 - no guarantee that medical illness can be cured.(spontaneous remission may be related to stress)
 - no guarantee everyone responds well to training. (personality, background, habits may obviate success)
 - potential risk of avoiding other psychological issues.(stress symptoms may be early manifestations of more serious psychological problems like anxious depression)
 10. History of stress management training.Describe the historical development of stress management training, including the contributions of individuals such as Cannon, Selye, Mason and Lazarus.
 - Walter Cannon: "Flight-or-Flight"
 - Hans Selye: "General Adaptation Syndrome" (arousal, resistance, exhaustion)
 - John Mason: Challenged "Non-Specific" response & Demonstrated unique specific responses to stress
 - Richard Lazarus: "Appraisal and Coping" (primary and secondary appraisal)
 11. Identify physical signs and symptoms of stress, including but not limited to: increased heart rate; pounding heart; elevated blood pressure; sweaty palms; tightness of the chest, neck, jaw and back muscles; headache; diarrhea; constipation; urinary hesitancy; trembling, twitching; stuttering and other speech difficulties; nausea; vomiting; sleep disturbances; fatigue; shallow breathing; dryness of the mouth or throat; susceptibility to minor illness, cold hands, itching; being easily startled; chronic pain and dyspnea.
 12. Identify emotional signs and symptoms of stress, including but not limited to:irritability, angry outbursts, hostility, depression, jealousy, restlessness, withdrawal, anxiousness, diminished initiative, feelings of unreality or overalertness, reduction of personal involvement with others, lack of interest, tendency to cry, being critical of others, self-deprecation, nightmares, impatience, decreased perception of positive experience opportunities, narrowed focus, obsessive rumination, reduced self-esteem, insomnia, changes in eating habits and weakened positive emotional response reflexes.
 13. Identify cognitive/perceptual signs and symptoms of stress, including but not limited to:forgetfulness, preoccupation, blocking, blurred vision, errors in judging distance, diminished or exaggerated fantasy life, reduced creativity, lack of concentration, diminished productivity, lack of attention to detail, orientation to the past, decreased psychomotor reactivity and coordination, attention deficit, disorganization of thought, negative self-esteem, diminished sense of meaning in life, lack of control/need for too much control, negative self-statements and negative evaluation of experiences
 14. Identify behavioral signs and symptoms of stress, including but not limited to:increased smoking, aggressive behaviors (such as driving), increased alcohol or drug use, carelessness, under-eating, over-eating, withdrawal, listlessness, hostility, accident-proneness, nervous laughter, compulsive behavior and impatience.
 15. Stress vs. mental and/or physical illnessDistinguish between stress symptoms and those symptoms which may indicate serious underlying physical or mental illness requiring referral to appropriate clinical professionals.

- Red flags that indicate chronic symptoms (clinical experience needed)
- Check whether medical clearance has been obtained (consult your doctor)
- Know your limitations as an educator (caution, caution, caution)
- Use experience to guide judgment about contra-indications (reasons not to use it)

16. Recognize cultural, age-dependent and gender- dependent factors influencing susceptibility to stress.

- Cultural: self-esteem, values, introversion/extroversion
- Age-dependent: children's susceptibility, elderly persons at risk
- Males: heart disease, stoicism, anger/hostility
- Women: cancer, susceptibility to immune system disorders

Personality, Perception and Sources of Stress



1. Explain the role of self-concept in an individual's perception of stress and ability to cope with stressors.

- Self-concept
- Self-esteem
- Self-worth
- Self-acceptance
- Self-confidence
- Self-actualization
- Rudiments of perception - values, heritage, previous experience, trauma, family scripts

2. Identify specific components of the Type A behavior pattern which are associated with coronary risk.

- aggression
- irritation
- anger
- impatience
- hostility

3. Distinguish between Type A and Type B personality patterns via various traits.

- fast speech
- impatience
- competitiveness
- hard-driving
- achievement-oriented
- verbal sparring

4. Explain the concept of locus of control as it relates to stress responses and stress management.

- internal-external dominance (independence)
- choice and control versus fate and others in control
- under stressful circumstances the intensity of response is related to the feeling of control or lack thereof

5. Explain the concept of learned helplessness as it relates to stress responses and stress management.

- Seligman demonstrated a helpless/hopeless syndrome which impairs survival efforts
- Learned helplessness - also produces chemical imbalance, depression and the tendency toward self-destructive thoughts and actions

6. Discriminate between assertive, passive, aggressive and passive/aggressive behavior.

- Assertive = standing up for legitimate rights
- Passive = acquiescing to pressure (implied or real)
- Aggressive = to go beyond legitimate rights to get revenge or to get special treatment or take advantage of others
- Passive/Aggressive = failing to be assertive in a direct manner and making covert efforts of aggression (sabotaging efforts or withholding customary rewards).

7. Explain the concept of perception as it is used in the interpretation of stressful events.

- Keeping things in perspective
- What is the worst possible outcome?
- Can we look for unexpected benefit during crises
- Make lemonade out of lemons

8. Identify and explain how these factors may influence an individual's cognitive appraisal of a stressor:

- Past experience(s).
- Personality.
- Cultural background.
- Moral values.
- Family background.
- Social support network.
- Gender.
- Life-style.
- Personal belief system.

9. Define cognitive appraisal as it relates to the amount of stress perceived.

- Assessment of the situation (immediate need?)
- Factor in past experience with similar problem
- Determine the potential sequences (worst possible outcome)
- Consider problem-solving options (take action)
- Make a decision regarding action vs. acceptance

10. List Attitudes that are at high risk for burnout.

"High Risk for Burnout" [sound clip](#) (aiff format - 1.6 Mg)

- Having very high ideals
- Always getting impatient/annoyed with others
- Feeling only your ideas are RIGHT!
- Blaming yourself ("shoulding on yourself")
- Having a tendency to always blame others
- Feeling like you have to do every job for yourself
- Feeling equally upset with minor hassles, etc. vs. something more serious
- Feeling you have more and more to do and less and less time to do it in
- Accepting social obligations that you know you will not have time for later
- Spending more time and energy on trivial tasks while avoiding the more difficult ones

11. Define Stages of Burnout.

"Stages of Burnout" [sound clip](#) (aiff format - 1.0 Mg)

- **Stage 1:** Early Stress Arousal
- **Stage 2:** Struggle & Resistance
- **Stage 3:** Exhaustion & Breakdown

12. Describe the concept of hardiness as it relates to the perception of a stressful event.

13. Explain how attentional focus and/or level of concentration can distort one's perception of a stressor.

- Attentional Focus = visual/auditory monitoring of events, circumstances or internal thoughts
- Fully attended focus on a neutral event prevents one from being affected by other stressors
- Failing to concentrate fully upon a central topic allows one to over-estimate the impact of a stressor

14. Describe how self-efficacy influences stress response.

- Efficacy = capacity to accomplish tasks
- Self-efficacy = perceived capability to handle problems, to overcome hardship
- Stress is minimal among those who look upon problems as opportunities to overcome adversity and to gain new experience
- a crisis can be a challenge or an opportunity for a change to something better (oriental philosophy)

15. Identify the major types of stressors:

- Psychological: Attitude, personality, self-esteem, ethnicity
- Give an example how one of these caused stress
- Physical: Environment, nutrition, drugs/chemicals
- Describe a situation where one caused added stress
- Role: Role conflict/ambiguity, multiple roles
- Describe a situation where one caused added stress
- Sociological: Political, economic, ethnic, cultural background Describe a situation in which one of these has influenced your stress level
- Physical Illness/Residual Disability: Birth defect/chronic illness
- Biomechanical Stressors: Job site design flaw (ie. carpal tunnel syndrome, repetitive motion)
- Stages of Human Development: Birth, adolescence, adulthood, maturity, death

16. Explain the concept of secondary stressor.

- Indirect effects spin-off from higher order source
- Loss of job = shortage of \$ = "hand me down" clothes = embarrassed child under stress

17. Describe the impact of change in life events

- Disruption of usual pattern of behavior
- Anticipation of future problems
- Accumulation of several difficult adjustments

18. The role of uncertainty causing stress.

- Some individuals have need for control
- Uncertainty leaves one feeling "out of control"
- Lacking control is a threat to some people

19. Overload and Burnout at Work (Stress Arousal Stage)

- Persistent irritability and anxiety
- Bruxism and/or Insomnia
- Occasional forgetfulness and/or inability to concentrate

20. Overload and Burnout (Stress Resistance Stage)

- Absenteeism or tardiness for work
- Tired and fatigued for no reason
- Procrastination and indecision
- Social withdrawal with cynicism
- Resentful, indifferent, defiant
- Increased use of coffee, alcohol, tobacco, etc.

21. Overload and Burnout (Severe Exhaustion Stage)

- Chronic sadness or depression
- Chronic mental and physical fatigue
- Chronic stress related illnesses (headache, stomach ache, bowel problems, etc.)
- Isolation, withdrawal, self-destructive thoughts

22. Self-generated stressors: unnecessary worry

- Making mountains out of mole-hills
- What other statements describe this phenomenon?
- Give examples of unnecessary worry
- Describe the stress responses you observed

23. Factors causing maladaptive stress

- Losing sleep worrying about problem
- Overeating or failing to eat due to worry
- What other factors have you seen?

24. Intensity, duration and frequency of stressful event

- Intensity - the level, degree, extent of upset
- Duration - short, moderate, long (second to years)
- Frequency - how often does the issue arise

25. Distinguish between defense mechanisms and coping mechanisms

Usual Defense	Coping Strategy
---------------	-----------------

Repression (blocking out)	Letting go of the past
Denial (refusal to accept)	Maintain hope for the better
Displacement (take it out on others)	Take it out on a punching bag
Projection (blaming others)	Help others get over it
Rationalization (excuses)	Re-structure the incident



Psychophysiology: the body's response to emotional states



1. Autonomic Nervous System

- Involuntary, vegetative functions
- Heart rate, blood pressure, blood flow....
- Influenced greatly by cognition/thoughts

2. Sympathetic vs. Parasympathetic Dominance

- Battle=accelerator vs. the brake
- Emergency response and recovery

3. Skeletal/Muscular System

- Facial muscles: expression/mastication
- Jaw Clenching (can lead to bruxism -- teeth grinding)
 - "Jaw Clenching" [sound clip](#) (aiff format --370 K)
- Neck/Back: alignment, support, balance

4. Central Nervous System

- Control of skeletal muscle system
- Contraction beyond functional needs
- Dysponesis, bracing and spasm
- Sense of touch, temperature and heat

5. Endocrine System

- Hormones in prep for battle/injury
- Immediate, intermediate response

6. Respiratory System

- Ventilation: oxygen/CO2 exchange
- Hyperventilation: disrupted rate and depth
- Thoracic vs. abdominal breath patterns

7. Cardiovascular System

- Myocardium: Output (rate/pressure)

- Circulation: perfusion of tissue
- Vasoconstriction..dilation,vasospasm
- Long term stress reaction/struggle

8. Immune System

- Resistance to disease and infection
- WBC's, T-lymphocytes, killer cells
- Depression = immunosuppressor



Physiological connection between events and stress responses



1. Explain the concept of homeostasis

- Maintaining same internal status
- Struggle to return to stability, normal condition
- Body thermostat = shivering, sweating or normal
- Hunger & thirst response to deficiency
- Blood glucose and insulin balance

2. Explain "General Adaptation Syndrome" -- Selye

- Alarm Reaction: short term, acute, response
- Resistance: intermediate hormonal response
- Exhaustion: prolonged worry/fatigue/breakdown

3. Explain "Fight-or-Flight" Response -- Cannon

- Survival response: potent, immediate
- Elicits potential for extra-ordinary strength
- Usually unnecessary in twentieth century, western world
- Creates high potential for cardiovascular spasms and sudden death

4. Explain "Appraisal and Coping" -- Lazarus

- Daily hassles and uplifts
- Inputs, outputs, responses and mediators
- Adaptation to frequency, severity and content of real and imagined events

5. John Mason contradicts the argument of Hans Selyes' "Non-Specific" Response

- Endocrine system has very specific response to different stressors
- Individuals respond in stereotypic manner

6. The concept: Relaxation Response

- Trophotropic slowing of metabolism
- General decrease in muscle tension throughout the body
- Differs from functional, differential relaxation

7. Explain individual unique stress profile.

- Compare two individuals and their stereotypical responses
- Evaluate your awareness of these responses

8. Specific localized stress response and the General Adaptation Syndrome.

- Singular isolated responses vs. overwhelming systemic "stressed out" reactions

9. The relaxation response according to the Benson.

- Herbert Benson (Harvard Medical School)
- Author of book "Relaxation Response"
- Non-cultic meditation: focal point/attention
- Universally active & appropriate for all
- Lehrer reports contradicting evidence that various relaxation techniques have unique effects



Stress Pathophysiology and Stress-Related Disorders



1. Identify possible physical disorders caused by or exacerbated by stress:

- hypertension
- cardiovascular disorders
- migraine and tension headaches
- cancer
- arthritis
- respiratory disease
- ulcers
- colitis
- muscle tension problems.

2. Identify possible emotional disorders caused by or exacerbated by stress:

- anxiety
- panic attack
- depression
- adjustment disorders.

3. Identify possible behavioral disorders caused by or exacerbated by stress:

- conduct disorders
- eating disorders
- alcoholism
- hyperchondricism

4. Discuss the relationship between stress and illness.



The Relationship Between Lifestyle Behavior Patterns and Stressors/Stress Response



1. Explain how stress is influenced by specific dietary deficits and excesses:

- Physiological arousal is exaggerated
- Behaviors may be altered dramatically
 - caffeine
 - sugar
 - fatty foods
 - sodium
 - alcohol
 - nicotine.

2. List three vitamins that are depleted in the body during prolonged periods of stress.

- Vitamin C
- Vitamin B complex
- Vitamin D

3. Sympathomimetic agents (e.g. caffeine, sugar)

- Describe the effect of reducing the intake of foods and over-the-counter medications which have high caffeine, sugar, sodium, alcohol and nicotine content.
 - Agents producing sympathetic nervous system responses
 - List several substances containing nicotine, caffeine and/or sugar

4. Physiological/psychological effect of exercise in controlling or relieving stress.

- Ergotropic (work):metabolizes stress hormones
- Vigorous motion breaks up bracing patterns
- Mood-enhancing effect (anti-depressant)
- Anxiolytic effect

5. Sleep and ability to cope with stress.

- Necessary recovery from effort/stress/strain
- Sleep: not restful amidst stress (nightmares)
- REM sleep influences quality of sleep
- Discuss your experience with stressful sleep

6. Using cognitive and behavioral strategies, including relaxation, to improve sleep patterns.

- Regular patterns of sleep onset and awakening
- Minimize disturbances (telephone) during sleep
- Use "cognitive set" to aid relaxation and sleep
- Thought stopping techniques and reminder list

7. Sex and intimacy to reduce stress or stress inhibits satisfactory sexual response.

- Security, comfort, social support and commitment
- Problems with impotency & difficulty achieving pregnancy
- Alleviating stress reactions may resolve the sexual dysfunction issues

8. Recreational activities to unwind, to control stress but excess may be avoidance behavior

- Leisure and recreation should be rejuvenating
- Avoidance (goofing off) linked to stress/worry

9. Psychotropic medications for emotional stress

- Antipsychotics = powerful medications for serious mental conditions
- Antidepressants = for sleep & pain control
- Anxiolytics = for panic attack (tranquilizers)
- Sedative/hypnotics = sleep onset/continuity
- Antimanic Drugs = for treatment of the manic (euphoric phase of some depressed patients)

10. Understand that anxiolytics and sedative/hypnotics are the most commonly prescribed medications for stress-related problems.

- Medications are for short term treatment
- Cognitive behavioral techniques used to facilitate readjustment and replace medications

11. Do not discourage the use of medical prescriptions.

- Some people may need medications for stress related symptoms, treatment for depression and anxiety
- Treatment may be needed above and beyond stress management
- Ethical principle: heed medical advice

12. Dependence on prescribed medications

- Dependence upon medications is comparable to other substance abuse
- Secondary gain = maintaining symptoms unnecessarily for attention; for some, it may be the only way to get social support
- Differentiate between appropriate medications for short-term situational stressors and long-term prescriptions risking dependency
- In all circumstances it is prudent to refer participant to medical personnel in regard to these substances

13. Know when to refer participants to medical personnel for answers to questions about these substances:

- Antipsychotics
- Antidepressants

- Anxiolytics
- Sedative/hypnotics
- Antimanic Drugs

14. Drugs abused through self-medication in misguided attempts to cope with life stressors:

- Alcohol,
- Amphetamines
- Cannabis
- Cocaine
- Hallucinogens,
- PCP
- Opioids
- Inhalants
- Nicotine
- Sedatives
- Hypnotics
- Anxiolytics, etc.



Decision Making Under Stress



"Decision Making Under Stress" [sound clip](#) (aiff format - 1.4 Mg)

1. The greater the stress, the greater the likelihood that a decision-maker will choose a risky alternative.
2. Groups experiencing substantive conflict more frequently employ creative alternatives to achieve more productive decisions than groups without conflict.
3. The greater the group conflict aroused by a crisis, the number of communication channels available to handle incoming information decrease.
4. During crisis, the ability of the group to handle difficult tasks requiring intensely focused attention is decreased.
5. The greater the stress, the greater the tendency to make a premature choice of alternatives for a correct response.
6. The greater the stress, the less likely that individuals can tolerate "ambiguity".
7. Under increasing stress, there is a decrease in productive thoughts and an increase in distracting thoughts.
8. The greater the stress, the greater the distortion in perception of threat and poor judgment often occurs.
9. The greater the fear, frustration and hostility aroused by a "crisis", the greater the tendency to aggression and escape behaviors.
10. In a stressful situation (whether real or perceived stress), only immediate survival goals are considered which means that longer range considerations must be sacrificed.



Social and Environmental Change Strategies



1. Explain the following strategies:

- Assertiveness Training
- Time Management
- Decision Making
- Social Support
- Problem Solving
- Conflict Resolution
- Social Engineering
- Environmental Engineering

2. Identify signs of successful coping:

- the ability to carry out jobs effectively
- taking responsibility
- working well under rules and limits
- tolerating frustration
- adapting to change
- being reliable
- having a sense of belonging
- having a sense of humor and fulfillment
- being self-directed
- having a reasonable sense of self-reliance and independence

3. Discuss the relevance of socio-cultural factors when planning/providing stress management interventions.

4. Explain how "learning to assume responsibility for one's actions" is related to stress management.



Cognitive and Behavioral Interventions



1. Explain the following intervention strategies and their applications:

- Behavioral Rehearsal
- Cognitive Restructuring/Reframing
- Stress Inoculation
- Systematic Desensitization
- Anger Management
- Thought Stopping Techniques
- Control and Perception of Control
- Self-Esteem Enhancement
- Goal Setting
- Active (Reflective) Listening
- Strategies for Coping with Deprivational Stress (Lack of Stimulation and Challenge)
- Modification of Life-style (Nutrition, Sleep, etc.)

2. Explain the concept of self-monitoring.

3. Discuss the importance of candid, two-way communication for stress management.

- "Unhealthful Stoicism" [sound clip](#) (aiff format - 260 K)

4. Explain the use of cueing strategies in stress management training.

5. Explain the problem of resistance in changing behaviors that are stress-inducing.

6. Discuss the role of adaptation, flexibility and adjustment in stress management.

- "Making Adjustments" [sound clip](#) (aiff format - 430 K)

7. Recognize appropriate physiological arousal

- exercise
- anger
- struggles

8. Explain how each of the following self-evaluation instruments (questionnaires) can be used to facilitate awareness:

- locus of control
- Type A behavior
- self-esteem

- social support
- interpersonal skills
- physical activity
- nutrition
- eating patterns
- sleeping patterns
- coping skills.



Strategies to Achieve a Relaxation Response



1. **Identify each of the following techniques, providing the rationale for using each and its limitations:**
 - Progressive Muscle Relaxation
 - Autogenic Training
 - Diaphragmatic Breathing
 - Quieting Reflex
 - Imaging/Visualization
 - Meditation
 - Exercise/Yoga
2. **Identify the criteria to use for selecting appropriate techniques for different situations**
3. **Explain the role of the placebo effect in learning relaxation skills.**
4. **Discuss the importance of passive attention in learning physiological self-regulation relaxation skills**
5. **Troubleshoot problems with poor skill acquisition**
6. **emotions surface during relaxation session**
7. **Identify appropriate practice regimes make it feasible for selected relaxation strategies**
 - time
 - location, etc.
8. **Explain the need for frequent self-monitoring of stress and/or relaxation states during self-regulation training**
9. **Explain the need to teach generalization of skills so that these techniques can be applied in "real world" circumstances**
10. **Recognize typical and atypical relaxation training responses**
11. **Explain how the following attributes may influence the relaxation training learning process both positively and negatively:**
 - personality
 - life-styles
 - individual differences, etc.
12. **Identify the contributions by individuals to the development of relaxation training:**

- Jacobson
- Schultz
- Luthe
- Benson
- Stroebel, etc.

13. Explain the need for medical referral/clearance prior to relaxation training for those individuals with complicated medical disorders:

- diabetes
- hypertension
- epilepsy, etc.

14. Identify potential adverse effects during relaxation training for individuals:

- asthma
- hypertension
- ulcers
- diabetes, etc.

15. Explain the concept of dyspnoea

16. Know basic emergency first-aid procedures



Learning Theory for the Teaching of Stress Management



-
1. Identify the needs of the audience (individual or group).
 2. Establish appropriate goals and specific learning objectives for specific training sessions.
 3. Select appropriate content to match goals, learning objectives and time available.
 4. Select appropriate teaching/learning strategies based on age, educational level, occupation, interest of participants, group size, length of training and training intervals, facilities and environment.
 5. Sequence instructional strategies appropriately.
 6. Explain the importance of establishing set, internal transition and pacing.
 7. Provide opportunities for appropriate practice by participants.
 8. Explain the importance of modeling.
 9. Demonstrate good presentation skills.
 10. Analyze group dynamics in simulated situations and identify strategies for handling specific situation, i.e. slow learners and resistant group members.
 11. Evaluate understanding and skills acquisition.
 12. Provide appropriate reinforcement and feedback.
 13. Establish appropriate levels of mastery.
 14. Select appropriate equipment, audio-visuals, instructional materials and facilities.
 15. Evaluate training and modify it based on evaluation.
 16. Establish a method for follow-up to evaluate effectiveness of the program for future development.
 17. Explain the role of behavior modification strategies in promoting life-style change.
 18. Apply motivational theory in designing instructional strategies for use with specific types of groups or individuals.

19. Discuss the importance of feedback and reinforcement in learning stress management coping skills.
 20. Identify how part/whole learning is important in teaching relaxation skills.
 21. Explain the need for proper timing and progression in teaching intervention strategies.
 22. Explain state-dependent learning.
-



Measurement of Stress Reactions and Relaxation Responses



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1. Identify self-evaluation instruments (questionnaires) which facilitate awareness of stress responses.
 2. Be aware of the clinical resources for psychological and psychophysiological assessment of more severe stress reactions.
 3. Use simple thermometers/liquid crystal thermometry devices to demonstrate stress/relaxation responses.
 4. Explain the limitations of single modality measurements, such as a thermometer, for assessing physiological responses.
 5. Identify the types of biofeedback used for stress management applications.
 6. Recognize how biofeedback can be used to illustrate the physiological response that occurs within the body during a stress response and a relaxation response.
 7. Understand the elementary principles of biofeedback in order to communicate with clinicians when students become clients and are referred to other professionals.
 8. Identify educational assessment instruments and their appropriate use, including biochemical assessment instruments, psychophysiological profiles, personality profiles, and psychosocial instruments.
 9. Identify selection criteria, including the advantages and disadvantages of various assessment instruments for use in specific situations.
 10. Explain the role of health history, life-style, attitudes and beliefs in assessing the role of stress in an individual's life.
 11. Differentiate between self-awareness assessment instruments and empirical research evaluation tools.
 12. Explain the law of initial values.



Stress Management Research and Experimental Design



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1. Understand the basics of research design.
 2. Apply current research results as an instructional tool in stress management training.
 3. Recognize the need to modify instructional strategies/content as a result of current research findings.
 4. Identify resources for reliable and relevant professional articles.
 5. Recognize the need for statistical expertise when carrying out research in stress management.
-



Professional Conduct and Ethical Practices



-
1. Be able to identify the ethical standards relevant to each of the following areas:
 - Copyright Laws
 - Exploitation
 - Conflict of Interest
 - Confidentiality
 - Advertising/Marketing
 - Contraindications
 2. Assume personal responsibility for continuing education to maintain a current knowledge base in stress management.
 3. Provide stress management education within the boundaries of his/her qualifications, competence, skill and training.
 4. Make referrals to other professionals when appropriate. Professional Conduct and Ethical Practices
 5. Function as an educator and do not construe certification in stress management education as justification for independent clinical practice with patients.
 6. Understand the personal responsibility/liability involved in providing stress management education.
 7. Model appropriate stress management techniques.
 8. Know the procedures for dealing with unethical behavior of other stress management educators.



The Power Of The Mind At Its Best

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The New York Times Magazine included the Peak Achievement Trainer in a special issue on new technology that will change our lives in the next decade. Read about why they called it "The Coach Who Will Put You in the Zone."



FoxNews article on Peak Achievement Trainer

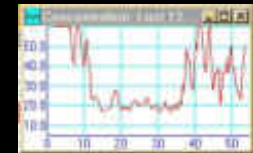
Peak Achievement Trainer™ Endorsements

"The Peak Achievement Trainer is a brilliant and promising new approach to biofeedback. Coupled with Jonathan D. Cowan's InAll protocol, it's a tremendous system. The manual that comes with the unit is clear and well-written, helping the user get the most out of the equipment. The Peak Achievement Trainer is a tremendous way to aid concentration and focus."

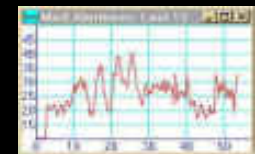
Erik Olesen, Certified Neurofeedback Trainer, Psychotherapist & Author of the best seller, "Mastering the Winds of Change: Peak Performers Reveal How to Stay on Top in Times of Turmoil!"

"A year ago I broke my back in a diving accident. For 3-4 months I was unable to train for competition. Then I discovered the Peak Achievement Trainer and used it to enhance my mental training (visualization) in place of the physical training in the pool. Five weeks later, after only a couple weeks in the water, I returned to competition and got to the finals (a comeback like that is unheard of in Big 12 competition following an injury of that severity). A week later I won the biggest diving meet in Texas and two months later I won the Big 12 Conference championships in diving. There is no question in my mind that the Peak Achievement Training made it possible for me to return to competition quicker and it allowed me to increase my national ranking (not lose it) despite several months of the debilitating injury rehabilitation. In addition, I was able to block out the pain that naturally occurs during competition. I would not have had this success without using the Peak Achievement Trainer."

Erik Cook, University of Nebraska Diver and USA National Team Member 2000, Big 12 Conference 1-Meter Champion



Check out the new ConAlert Program -- training both concentration and alertness!!!



8 types of training with the Peak Achievement Trainer

The Discovery of Neureka!

The Peak Achievement Trainer is more than a neurofeedback instrument; It is a complete program that trains concentration, alertness, and relaxation to achieve peak performance.



The Peak Achievement Trainer is based on US Air Force and NASA Research



Brainwave Basics for Peak Achievement Training



Peak Performance Training in Corporations, Schools, Sports, Performing Arts and the Military - workshops

[All Articles](#)

"The PAT has become the centerpiece of my sport psychology consulting efforts because I can demonstrate quickly and definitively the objective indicators of highly focused concentration. In addition, I can train the ability to resist distractions and internal negative thoughts, which is essential in higher level performance in any sport. In some situations, it has helped gain access to top athletes and coaches because there is a tangible, visual product on display.

I am excited about the new alertness protocol. In preliminary testing on myself and on several clients I find that the combination of the Concentration graph together with the Alertness graph allows me to discern instantly the transition from "spaced out" consciousness to a highly focused and intensely alert state of mind. The quality of a client's visualization or mental rehearsal of an upcoming event can be monitored and reinforced.

There is no more guess work as to whether the athlete is really getting "into" the mental skills training effectively. When I review the graph with the athlete immediately after a mental skills challenge, I get acknowledgement of what was really going on. We can both see the moment to moment changes in their alertness and concentration during their visualization. For example, a 13 year old elite gymnast was visualizing a routine on the pommel horse (30-45 seconds) while on the Peak Achievement Trainer.

When he finished I froze the screen and then asked him whether he thought it was a high quality visualization experience. Initially he said, "Yeah, it was okay". Then I showed him the computer screen with the combined Concentration and Alertness graphs and suggested that during some parts of the session it appeared that he was really locked in--totally absorbed in the experience--and then he lost it momentarily. His response was, "Wow, you are right, I lost it about half way through and then I got it back again even more intensively at the very end. That is really neat!" We then worked together to improve the quality of his visualization and to optimize his use of Concentration and Alertness during the visualization, and to transfer it to his performance."

**Dr. Wes Sime, Sports Psychologist and Professor - Health and Human Performance, University of Nebraska, Lincoln,
Certified by the Olympic Registry**

**Peak Achievement Trainer®
Customers Include:**

- * U.S. Army National Marksmanship Team
- * MIT Media Lab
- * Norwegian Olympic Training Center
- * Top Executives of a Fortune 1000 Manufacturing Company
- * A recent Super Bowl championship team
- * Major League Baseball star pitcher
- * PGA Tour Golfers
- * Olympic Silver Medallist Swimmer
- * Professional Strength and Conditioning Coach
- * Boston University
- * Canadian National Olympic Sport Center – Toronto
- * University of Kentucky
- * Ernest & Young LLP
- * Jackson Leadership Systems
- * LGE Performance Systems
- * Penn State University
- * St. Lawrence University
- * Singapore Olympic Sports Council
- * Swing Solutions, Inc.
- * University College, Dublin, Ireland
- * University of Madrid
- * University of Nebraska
- * University Of North Texas
- * University of Pittsburgh
- * University of Western Sydney - Australia
- * United States Military Academy's Performance Enhancement Center
- * United States Olympic Training Center
- * Virginia Tech
- * Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri
- * Wingate Institute of Sports & Physical Education, Israel
- * Numerous other individual athletes, sport psychologists, schools, companies, therapists, and the general public

NeuroTek welcomes
the IMG Academies in
Bradenton, FL to the
family of Peak
Achievement users:

David Leadbetter Golf
Academy

Bollettieri Tennis Academy

IMG Academies Sport
Psychology

The Baseball Academy

The Basketball Academy

The Soccer Academy

The Hockey Academy

International Performance
Institute (IPI)

Check out
imgacademies.com

"As the Strength and Conditioning Coach for a professional baseball team, I am constantly looking for ways to help my athletes increase their performance on the field. Most of my work is usually done below neck level, with the occasional attempt at improving psyche by use of encouraging words. Recently, I had the opportunity to work with a product known as the Peak Achievement Trainer. This product has the capability to help your athletes develop and train one of the most powerful tools at our disposal, their ability to concentrate effectively. The Peak Achievement Trainer shows an athlete through a PC and easy to use software what it means to concentrate and relax. Helping an athlete understand how to concentrate may allow them easier access to the 'zone', that area of performance where every pitch looks as big as a grapefruit moving in slow motion. I would encourage anyone who is interested in helping with an athlete's performance to look at the Peak Achievement Trainer and see for yourself what it has to offer."

Kevin Harmon A.T., C/L., C.S.C.S.

"By staying really focused, I have recently been swimming faster in my workouts than I ever have before. The 400 meter freestyle is a race that hurts. When I look back, I remember my best races being races that didn't really hurt. I believe I was in what people refer to as 'the Zone'. With the Peak Achievement Training system, I've been able to capture this 'Zone' and maintain my concentration level through the pain. Another area I've seen vast improvement in is during workouts. I've been able to avoid 'negative' thoughts. Workouts can become monotonous at times and your mind can wander. The Peak Achievement Training system has enabled me to avoid those lapses during workout and has helped me to feel good about my workouts. Overall, my temperament is great. I feel calm and content even when things aren't going my way."

**Chad Carvin, United States Silver Medallist,
4 X 200 Meter Men's Relay Team, 2000 Olympic Games**

"The Peak Achievement Trainer helps athletes develop the mental discipline that every true champion needs. I truly believe that if you want to move your team up a few places next year, this is an approach that can do it for you. We all know how difficult it is to keep many high school players consistently focused, especially when they are fatigued. There are many times when this can make the difference in a game. Since training an athlete to focus can also improve his grades, this type of practice can be done as a part of their academic program."

Earl Browning, President, Telecoach, Inc.

"The bottom line for me is that Peak Achievement Training is effective, and it is more effective than any other counseling or medication I have ever seen."

Karen Laidlaw, LCSW
Mother of a child with attention problems

"The Peak Achievement Trainer is the most responsive neurofeedback I have ever tried."

Les Fehmi, Ph.D., Inventor,
Open Focus neurofeedback training

Dan Chartier, Ph.D., President,
Society for the Study of Neuronal Regulation

"I personally like working with it better than the Lubar protocol. The kids love it. It has the best validity of any neurofeedback approach."

Dr. George Fritz, pioneering neurofeedback therapist,
and co-author of The Open Focus Handbook

"We began using the Peak Achievement Trainer as part of our School based Biofeedback program in the spring of 2000. The children responded favorably to the training and my staff was pleased with the ease of using the equipment. I recommend this tool as an adjunct along with the other modalities that we use in our schools."

Dr. Mary Jo Sabo, Administrator, Biofeedback Consultants Inc.,
Yonkers, NY School Based EEG Program

"It's a great human resources tool. It created an opportunity to provide something pre-emptive with a positive, rather than a negative or critical, approach to seeking improved employee performance. It opened channels of communication for better supervisor-employee relations."

Brian Finnegan
Quality Control Manager of a major hardware distributor

"Through using the Peak Achievement Trainer now, I'm able to focus better, able to concentrate better. If I'm on the telephone, for instance, I can cut out 15 or 20 of the things that normally go on in my mind or your mind, and I'm able to focus on exactly what that individual is talking about. Now the Peak Achievement Trainer has become a part of my weekly routine... This has been a wonderful experience for me, and I am very, very committed to continuing to use the Peak Achievement Trainer in the future."

**Neil Kuvin, CEO
Convention Channel, Inc.**

"I learned to train myself to relax during moments of intense stress and anxiety, and then direct my focus and concentration on the priority matters requiring my immediate attention. The value of this training was impressed on me a few months later when I took a professional skills test ... This [training] enabled me to eliminate the distracting thoughts and relax, which enabled me to concentrate and pass the test. As a result, I was offered a position which clearly advanced me toward my professional goals."

**John Mark Powell, News Writer
Major television network**

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