Lifetime Physical Fitness & Wellness
A Personalized Program

WERNER W. K. HOEGER
Professor Emeritus (Active)
Department of Kinesiology
Boise State University

and

SHARON A. HOEGER
Fitness and Wellness, Inc.
Boise, Idaho
Stress Assessment and Management Techniques

“If we all threw our problems in a pile and saw everyone else’s, we’d grab ours back.”

Regina Brett

Objectives

▶ Understand the importance of the mind/body connection in the manifestation of emotions and disease.
▶ Learn the consequences of sleep deprivation on mental and physical health.
▶ Define stress, eustress, and distress.
▶ Explain the role of stress in maintaining health and optimal performance.
▶ Identify the major sources of stress in life.
▶ Define the two major types of behavior patterns.
▶ Learn to lower your vulnerability to stress.
▶ Develop time management skills.
▶ Define the role of physical exercise in reducing stress.
▶ Describe and learn to use various stress management techniques.
Is all stress detrimental to health and performance?
Living in today’s world is nearly impossible without encountering stress. The good news is that stress can be self-controlled. Unfortunately, most people have accepted stress as a normal part of daily life, and even though everyone has to face it, few seem to understand it or know how to cope with it effectively. It is difficult to succeed and have fun in life without “runs, hits, and errors.” In fact, stress should not be avoided entirely, because a certain amount is necessary for motivation, performance, and optimum health and well-being. When stress levels push you to the limit, however, stress becomes distress and you will no longer function effectively.

How can I most effectively deal with negative stress?
Feelings of stress are the result of the body’s instinct to defend itself. If you start to experience mental, social, and physical symptoms such as exhaustion, headaches, sleeplessness, frustration, apathy, loneliness, and changes in appetite, you are most likely under excessive stress and need to take action to overcome the stress-causing event(s). Do not deal with these symptoms through alcohol, drugs, or other compulsive behaviors, as such will not get rid of the stressor that is causing the problem. Stress management is best accomplished by maintaining a sense of control when excessive demands are placed on you.

First, recognize when you are feeling stressed. Early warning signs include tension in your shoulders and neck and clenching of your fists or teeth. Now, determine if there is something that you can do to control, change, or remove yourself from the situation. Most importantly, change how you react to stress. Be positive, avoid extreme reactions (anger, hostility, hatred, depression), try to change the way you see things, work off stress through physical activity, and master one or more stress management techniques to help you in situations where it is necessary to cope effectively.

Finally, take steps to reduce the demands placed on you by prioritizing your activities—“don’t sweat the small stuff.” Realize that it is not stress that makes you ill, but the manner in which you react to stress that leads to illness and disease.

Real Life Story  Ben’s Experience

My whole life I have definitely been a type A person. I have always been goal-oriented and very driven to succeed. I don’t think that is necessarily a bad thing, but it can definitely lead to stress. In college I had a very demanding engineering major. I also worked part time. Between homework and work I was extremely busy, so I would be very upset if anything got in the way of what I needed to do. Traffic jams would make me so stressed that I could actually feel my blood pressure rising. If a friend called me up to chat, I would try to get rid of him quickly. I would feel very annoyed and impatient if he seemed to want to stay on the line. Even when I finally managed to do something that was supposed to be “relaxing,” like going for a bike ride, I would find myself becoming really competitive and trying to pass all the other bikers. In the end I would work out so hard that I was exhausted and not relaxed. It was only when I took a health class and did a stress survey that I realized how stressful my lifestyle was. I also learned that much of the stress was caused by my own attitude. So I made some changes in my thought process. My new philosophy was to focus more on trying to enjoy the moment, rather than always pushing ahead toward some distant goal. Now I try to make a little time for myself each day, and I try to appreciate little things like talking with friends, going for a walk, or just sitting under a tree. I am still working on a hard major and I am very busy, but I have managed to be a little more low-key about it all. My attitude now has helped me to be happier and less stressed.

According to a growing body of evidence, virtually every illness known to modern humanity—from arthritis to migraine headaches, from the common cold to cancer—appears to be influenced for good or bad by our emotions. To a profound extent, emotions affect our susceptibility to disease and our immunity. The way we react to what comes along in life can determine in great measure how we will react to the disease-causing organisms that we face. The feelings we have and the way we express them can either boost our immune system or weaken it.

Emotional health is a key part of total wellness. Most emotionally healthy people take care of themselves physically—they eat well, exercise, and get enough rest. They work to develop supportive personal relationships. In contrast, many people who are emotionally unhealthy are self-destructive. For example, they may abuse alcohol and other drugs or may overwork and not have balance in their lives. Emotional health is so important that it affects what we do, who we meet, who we marry, how we look, how we feel, the course of our lives, and even how long we live.
Personal Stress Management Survey

I. Do you experience mostly eustress or distress in your daily life? Explain.

II. Identify a recent life stressor and can you explain the general adaptation syndrome stage that you are currently experiencing?

III. List three significant factors that cause stress in your life and indicate how you deal with those situations when they arise.

IV. Explain personal time management techniques that you use given the many challenges and responsibilities you face in daily life.

V. Have you ever used relaxation techniques to effectively manage stress? If so, explain the experience.

The Mind/Body Connection

Emotions cause physiological responses that can influence health. Certain parts of the brain are associated with specific emotions and specific hormone patterns. The release of certain hormones is associated with various emotional responses, and those hormones affect health. These responses may contribute to development of disease. Emotions have to be expressed somewhere, somehow. If they are suppressed repeatedly, and/or if a person feels conflict about controlling them, they often reveal themselves through physical symptoms. These physiological responses may weaken the immune system over time.

The Brain

The brain is the most important part of the nervous system. For the body to survive, the brain must be maintained. All other organs sacrifice to keep the brain alive and functioning when the entire body is under severe stress. The brain directs nerve impulses that are carried throughout the body. It controls voluntary processes, such as the direction, strength, and coordination of muscle movements; the processes involved in smelling, touching, and seeing; and involuntary functions over which you have no conscious control. Among the latter are many automatic, vital functions in the body, such as breathing, heart rate, digestion, control of the bowels and bladder, blood pressure, and release of hormones. The brain is the cognitive center of the body, the place where ideas are generated, memory is stored, and emotions are experienced. The brain has a powerful influence over the body via the link between the emotions and the immune system. That link is extremely complex.

The Mind/Body Connection

The brain’s natural chemicals form literal communication links among the brain, its thought processes, and the cells of the body, including those of the immune system.

The Immune System

The immune system patrols and guards the body against attackers. This system consists of about a trillion cells called lymphocytes (the cells responsible for waging war against disease or infection) and many trillions of molecules called antibodies. The brain and the immune system are closely linked in a connection that allows the mind to influence both susceptibility and resistance to disease. A number of immune system cells—including those in the thymus gland, spleen, bone marrow, and lymph nodes—are laced with nerve cells. Cells of the immune system are equipped to respond to chemical signals from the central nervous system. For example, the surface of the lymphocytes contains receptors for a variety of central nervous system chemical messengers, such as catecholamines, prostaglandins, serotonin, endorphins, sex hormones, the thyroid hormone, and the growth hormone. Certain white blood cells possess the ability to receive messages from the brain. Because of these receptors on the lymphocytes, psychological stress alters the immune system. Stress causes the body to release several powerful neurohormones that bind with the receptors on the lymphocytes and suppress immune function.

Key Terms

Immunity  The function that guards the body from invaders, both internal and external.
Lymphocytes  Immune system cells responsible for waging war against disease or infection.
Antibodies  Substances produced by the white blood cells in response to an invading agent.
Sleep and Wellness

Sleep is a natural state of rest that is vital for good health and wellness. It is an anabolic process that allows the body to restore and heal itself. During sleep, we replenish depleted energy levels and allow the brain, muscles, organs, and various body tissues to repair themselves.

Sleep deprivation weakens the immune system, impairs mental function, and has a negative impact on physical, social, academic, and job performance. Lack of sleep also impacts stress levels, mood, memory, behavioral patterns, and cognitive performance. Cumulative long-term consequences include an increase in the risk for cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes, and psychological disorders. What most people notice is a chronic state of fatigue, exhaustion, and confusion.

Stress-wise, getting to bed too late often leads to oversleeping, napping, missing classes, poor grades, and distress. It further increases tension, irritability, intolerance, and confusion, and may cause depression and life dissatisfaction. Not getting enough sleep can also lead to vehicle accidents with serious or fatal consequences as people fall asleep behind the wheel. More than 40,000 injuries and 1,500 deaths each year are attributed to sleepy drivers (sleepy drivers are just as dangerous as drunk drivers). Irregular sleep patterns, including sleeping in on weekends, also contribute to many of the aforementioned problems.

Although more than 100 sleep disorders have been identified, they can be classified into four major groups:

- Problems with falling and staying asleep
- Difficulties staying awake
- Difficulty adhering to a regular sleep schedule
- Sleep-disruptive behaviors (including sleep walking and sleep terror disorder)

College students are some of the most sleep-deprived people of all. On average, they sleep about six and a half hours per night and approximately 30 percent report chronic sleep difficulties. Only eight percent report sleeping eight or more hours per night. For many students, college is the first time they have complete control of their schedule, including when they go to sleep and how many hours they sleep.

Lack of sleep during school days and pulling all-nighters interferes with the ability to pay attention, and to learn, process, and retain new information. You may be able to retain the information in short-term memory, but most likely it will not be there for a cumulative exam or when you need it for adequate job performance. Deep sleep that takes place early in the night, and a large portion of the REM (rapid eye movement) dream sleep that occurs near the end of the night, have both been linked to learning. The brain has been shown to consolidate new information for long-term memory while you sleep. Convincing sleep-deprived students to get adequate sleep is a real challenge because they often feel overwhelmed by school, work, and even family responsibilities. Students who go to sleep early and get about eight hours of sleep per night are more apt to succeed.

Compounding the problem is staying up late Friday and Saturday nights and crashing the next day. Doing so further disrupts the circadian rhythm, the biological clock that controls the daily sleep/wake schedule. Such disruption influences quantity and quality of sleep and keeps people from falling asleep and rising at the necessary times for school, work, or other required activities. In essence, the body wants to sleep and be awake at odd times of the 24-hour cycle.

A term used to describe the cumulative effect of needed sleep that you don’t get is sleep debt. Crashing on weekends, although it may help somewhat, does not solve the problem. You need to address the problem behavior by getting sufficient sleep each night so that you can be at your best the next day.

The exact amount of sleep that each person needs varies among individuals. Around eight hours are required by most people. According to the National Sleep Foundation, currently most people get about seven hours of sleep per night. Experts believe that the last two hours of sleep are the most vital for well-being. Thus, if you need eight hours of sleep and you routinely get six, you may be forfeiting the most critical sleep hours for health and wellness. Most students do not address sleep disorders until they start to cause mental and physical damage.

While there is no magic formula to determine how much sleep you need, if you don't need an alarm clock to get up every morning, you wake up at about the same time, and you are refreshed and feel alert throughout the day, you most likely have a healthy sleeping habit.

To improve your sleep pattern, you need to exercise discipline and avoid staying up late to watch a movie or leaving your homework or studying for an exam at the last minute. As busy as you are, your health and well-being is your most important asset. You only live once. Keeping your health and living life to its fullest potential includes a good night’s rest. To enhance the quality of your sleep you should:

- Exercise and be physically active (avoid exercise four hours prior to bedtime).
- Avoid eating a heavy meal or snacking two to three hours before going to bed (digestion increases your metabolism).
- Limit the amount of time that you spend (primarily in the evening) surfing and socializing on the Internet, texting, IMing (instant messaging), and watching television.
- Go to bed and rise at about the same time each day.
- Keep the bedroom cool, quiet, and dark.
- Develop a bed-time ritual (meditation, prayer, white noise).
- Use your bed for sleeping only (do not watch television, do homework, or use a laptop in bed).
Stress Assessment and Management Techniques

• Relax and slow down 15 to 30 minutes before bed time.
• Do not drink coffee or caffeine-containing beverages several hours before going to bed.
• Do not rely on alcohol to fall asleep (alcohol disrupts deep sleep stages).
• Avoid long naps (a 20- to 30-minute “power nap” is beneficial during an afternoon slump without interfering with night-time sleep).
• Have frank and honest conversations with roommates if they have different sleep schedules.
• Evaluate your mattress every five to seven years for comfort and support. If you wake up with aches and pains or you sleep better when you are away from home, it is most likely time for a new mattress.

Stress

Living in today’s world is nearly impossible without encountering stress. In an unpredictable world that changes with every new day, most people find that working under pressure has become the rule rather than the exception. As a result, stress has become one of the most common problems we face and undermines our ability to stay well. Current estimates indicate that the annual cost of stress and stress-related diseases in the United States exceeds $100 billion, a direct result of health care costs, lost productivity, and absenteeism. Many medical and stress researchers believe that “stress should carry a health warning” as well.

Just what is stress? Dr. Hans Selye, one of the foremost authorities on stress, defined it as “the nonspecific response of the human organism to any demand that is placed upon it.”1 “Nonspecific” indicates that the body reacts in a similar fashion, regardless of the nature of the event that leads to the stress response. In simpler terms, stress is the body’s mental, emotional, and physiological response to any situation that is new, threatening, frightening, or exciting.

The body’s response to stress has been the same ever since humans were first put on the earth. Stress prepares the organism to react to the stress-causing event, also called the stressor. The problem arises in the way in which we react to stress. Many people thrive under stress; others under similar circumstances are unable to handle it. An individual’s reaction to a stress-causing agent determines whether that stress is positive or negative.

Dr. Selye defined the ways in which we react to stress as either eustress or distress. In both cases, the nonspecific response is almost the same. In the case of eustress, health and performance continue to improve even as stress increases. On the other hand, distress refers to the unpleasant or harmful stress under which health and performance begin to deteriorate. The relationship between stress and performance is illustrated in Figure 12.1.

Stress is a fact of modern life, and every person does need an optimal level of stress that is most conducive to adequate health and performance. When stress levels reach mental, emotional, and physiological limits, however, stress becomes distress and the person no longer functions effectively.

Chronic distress raises the risk for many health disorders—among them, coronary heart disease, hypertension, eating disorders, ulcers, diabetes, asthma, depression, migraine headaches, sleep disorders, and chronic fatigue—and may even play a role in the development of certain types of cancers.2 Recognizing this

Key Terms

- **Stress** The mental, emotional, and physiological response of the body to any situation that is new, threatening, frightening, or exciting.
- **Stressor** Stress-causing event.
- **Eustress** Positive stress: Health and performance continue to improve, even as stress increases.
- **Distress** Negative stress: Unpleasant or harmful stress under which health and performance begin to deteriorate.
adaptation syndrome (GAS), is composed of three stages: alarm reaction, resistance, and exhaustion/recovery.

**Alarm Reaction**

The alarm reaction is the immediate response to a stressor (whether positive or negative). During the alarm reaction, the body evokes an instant physiological reaction that mobilizes internal systems and processes to minimize the threat to homeostasis (see also “Coping with Stress” on page 409). If the stressor subsides, the body recovers and returns to homeostasis.

**Resistance**

If the stressor persists, the body calls upon its limited reserves to build up its resistance as it strives to maintain homeostasis. For a short while, the body copes effectively and meets the challenge of the stressor until it can be overcome (see Figure 12.2).

**Exhaustion/Recovery**

If stress becomes chronic and intolerable, the body continues to resist, draining its limited reserves. The body then loses its ability to cope, and enters the exhaustion/recovery stage. During this stage, the body functions at a diminished capacity while it recovers from stress. In due time, following an “adequate” recovery period (which varies greatly), the body recuperates and is able to return to homeostasis. If chronic stress persists during the exhaustion stage, however, immune function is compromised, which can damage body systems and lead to disease.

An example of the stress response through the general adaptation syndrome can be illustrated in college test performance. As you prepare to take an exam, you experience an initial alarm reaction. If you understand the material, study for the exam, and do well (eustress), the body recovers and stress is dissipated. If, however, you are not adequately prepared and fail the exam, you trigger the resistance stage. You are now concerned about your grade, and you remain in the resistance stage until the next exam. If you prepare and do well, the body recovers. But, if you fail once again and can no longer bring up the grade, exhaustion sets in and physical and emotional breakdowns may occur. Exhausion may be further aggravated if you are struggling in other courses as well.

The exhaustion stage is often manifested by athletes and the most ardent fitness participants. Staleness is usually a manifestation of overtraining. Peak performance can be sustained for only about 2 to 3 weeks at a time. Any attempts to continue intense training after peaking leads to exhaustion, diminished fitness, and mental and physical problems associated with overtraining (see Chapter 9, page 321). Thus, athletes and some fitness participants also need an active recovery phase following the attainment of peak fitness.
Perceptions and Health

The habitual manner in which people explain the things that happen to them is their explanatory style. It is a way of thinking when all other factors are equal and when there are no clear-cut right and wrong answers. The contrasting explanatory styles are pessimism and optimism. People with a pessimistic explanatory style interpret events negatively; people with an optimistic explanatory style interpret events in a positive light—every cloud has a silver lining.

A pessimistic explanatory style can delay healing time and worsen the course of illness in several major diseases. For example, it can affect the circulatory system and general outlook for people with coronary heart disease. Blood flow actually changes as thoughts, feelings, and attitudes change. People with a pessimistic explanatory style have a higher risk of developing heart disease.

Studies of explanatory style verify that a negative explanatory style also compromises immunity. Blood samples taken from people with a negative explanatory style revealed suppressed immune function, a low ratio of helper/suppressor T-cells, and fewer lymphocytes.

In contrast, an optimistic style tends to increase the strength of the immune system. An optimistic explanatory style and the positive attitude it fosters can also enhance the ability to resist infections, allergies, autoimmunities, and even cancer. A change in explanatory style can lead to a remarkable change in the course of disease. An optimistic explanatory style and the positive emotions it embraces—such as love, acceptance, and forgiveness—stimulate the body’s healing systems.

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is a way of viewing and assessing yourself. Positive self-esteem is a sense of feeling good about one’s capabilities, goals, accomplishments, place in the

Key Terms

- **Homeostasis** A natural state of equilibrium; the body attempts to maintain this equilibrium by constantly reacting to external forces that attempt to disrupt this fine balance.
- **General adaptation syndrome (GAS)** A theoretical model that explains the body’s adaptation to sustained stress that includes three stages: Alarm reaction, resistance, and exhaustion/recovery.
- **Explanatory style** The way people perceive the events in their lives from an optimistic or a pessimistic perspective.
- **Self-esteem** A sense of positive self-regard and self-respect.
world, and relationship to others. People with high self-esteem respect themselves. Self-esteem is a powerful determinant of health behavior and, therefore, of health status. Healthy self-esteem is one of the best things a person can develop for overall health, both mental and physical. A good, strong sense of self can boost the immune system, protect against disease, and aid in healing.

Whether people get sick—and how long they stay that way—may depend in part on the strength of their self-esteem. For example, low self-esteem worsens chronic pain. The higher the self-esteem, the more rapid the recovery. If we have strong self-esteem, the outlook is good. If our self-esteem is poor, however, our health can decline in direct proportion, as our attitude and negative perceptions worsen.

Belief in oneself is one of the most powerful weapons people have to protect health and live longer, more satisfying lives. It has a dramatic and positive impact on wellness, and we can work to harness it to our advantage.

**Fighting Spirit**

A fighting spirit involves the healthy expression of emotions, whether they are negative or positive. At the other extreme is hopelessness, a surrender to despair. Fighting spirit can play a major role in recovery from disease. People with a fighting spirit accept their disease diagnosis, adopt an optimistic attitude filled with faith, seek information about how to help themselves, and are determined to fight the disease. A fighting spirit makes a person take charge.

A fighting spirit may be the underlying factor in what is called spontaneous remission from incurable illness. More and more physicians believe that the phenomenon is real and that the patient is the key in spontaneous remission. They believe the patient’s attitude, especially the presence of a fighting spirit, is responsible for victory over disease. Fighters are not stronger or more capable than others—they simply do not give up as easily. They enjoy better health and live longer, even when physicians and laboratory tests say they should not. Fighters are intrinsically different from people who give up, and their health status reflects those differences.

**Sources of Stress**

Several instruments have been developed to assess sources of stress in life. A practical instrument to assess stressors is the Stress Events Scale, presented in Activity 12.1, which identifies life events within the past 12 months that may have an impact on your physical and psychological well-being.

The Stress Events Scale is divided into two sections. Section 1, to be completed by all respondents, contains a list of potential stress-causing life events with four additional blank spaces for other events experienced but not listed in the survey. Section 2 contains additional statements designed for students only (students should fill out both sections). Common stressors in the lives of college students are depicted in Figure 12.3.

The scale requires the testee to rate the extent to which his or her life events had a positive or negative impact on his or her life at the time these events occurred. The ratings are on a 7-point scale. A rating of −3 indicates an extremely undesirable impact (shocking). A zero (0) rating indicates neither a positive nor a negative impact (neustress). A rating of +3 indicates an extremely desirable impact (jubilation).

**Critical Thinking**

Technological advances provide many benefits to our lives.

- What positive and negative effects do these advances have on your daily living activities, and what impact are they having on your stress level?

**Key Terms**

- **Fighting spirit** Determination; the open expression of emotions, whether negative or positive.
- **Spontaneous remission** Inexplicable recovery from incurable disease.
- **Stress Events Scale** A questionnaire used to assess sources of stress in life.
- **Neustress** Neutral stress; stress that is neither harmful nor helpful.
# Stress Assessment and Management Techniques

## ACTIVITY 12.1 Stress Events Scale

Name: ____________________________ Date: ______________

Course: __________________ Section: ___________ Gender: _______ Age: _______

### Introduction

The list of stress-causing life events below may have potential adverse effects on your physical and psychological well-being. Check only those events that occurred during the past 12 months and rate the event on a 7-point scale (−3, −2, −1, 0, +1, +2, +3) using the following guidelines:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Effect</th>
<th>Indifferent</th>
<th>Positive Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>−3 Shocked</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+3 Jubilant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>−2 Dismayed</td>
<td></td>
<td>+2 Delighted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>−1 Dissatisfied</td>
<td></td>
<td>+1 Pleased</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Section 1: General

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Life Event</th>
<th>Stress Rating</th>
<th>Life Event</th>
<th>Stress Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Death of a family member</td>
<td></td>
<td>10. Change/status of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Death of a close friend or acquaintance</td>
<td></td>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Substance abuse (addiction to drug/alcohol)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Boyfriend/girlfriend</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Imprisonment</td>
<td></td>
<td>Family relationships</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Law violation (including traffic violations)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Personal health (illness/disease/injury)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Marriage</td>
<td></td>
<td>Family or friend(s) health status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Sexual intimacy</td>
<td></td>
<td>Fitness level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Pregnancy</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sleeping habits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Divorce</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nutrition habits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your own</td>
<td></td>
<td>Study habits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your parents</td>
<td></td>
<td>Friendship(s)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other close relative or friend</td>
<td></td>
<td>Peer acceptance</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Social activities</td>
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<td>Recreational activities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mode of transportation</td>
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Stress Events Scale (continued)

Section 1: General (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Life Event</th>
<th>Stress Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11. Ability to laugh and have fun</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Financial status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient for needs</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase/decrease in income</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mortgage loan</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Vehicle loan</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Student loan(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other (specify):</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other (specify):</td>
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Section 2: Education

<table>
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<th>Stress Rating</th>
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<tr>
<td>24. Choice of school</td>
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<tr>
<td>25. Change in school</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>26. Starting or stopping school</td>
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<tr>
<td>27. Loneliness</td>
<td></td>
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<td>28. Privacy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>29. Military obligations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>30. Selecting/Changing a major or minor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. School-related activities</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Change in school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Starting or stopping school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Loneliness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Privacy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Military obligations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Selecting/Changing a major or minor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. School-related activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How to Score

Upon completion of the questionnaire, add all the negative and positive scores separately (e.g., positive ratings: 2, 1, 3, and 3 = 9 points positive score; negative ratings: −3, −2, −2, −1, and −2 = 10 points negative score). A final “total stress score” can be obtained by adding the positive score and the negative score together as positive numbers (total stress score: 9 + 10 = 19 points). Stress ratings based on your score are given below. The negative score is the best indicator of stress (distress or negative stress) in your life.

Score Interpretation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stress Category</th>
<th>Negative Score</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>≥15</td>
<td>≥30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>9–14</td>
<td>20–29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>6–8</td>
<td>15–19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>1–5</td>
<td>6–14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1–5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stress Events Scale Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stress Category</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Stress Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negative score:</td>
<td></td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive score:</td>
<td></td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total score:</td>
<td></td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After the person evaluates his or her life events, the negative and the positive points are totaled separately. Both scores are expressed as positive numbers (e.g., positive ratings of 2, 1, 3, and 3 = 9 points of positive score; negative ratings of −3, −2, −2, −1, and −2 = 10 points of negative score). A final “total life change” score can be obtained by adding the positive score and the negative score together as positive numbers (total stress events score: 9 + 10 = 19 points).

Because negative and positive changes alike can produce nonspecific responses, the total life change score is a good indicator of total life stress. Most research in this area, however, suggests that the negative change score is a better predictor of potential physical and psychological illness than the total change score. More research is necessary to establish the role of total change and the role of the ratio of positive to negative stress.

Behavior Patterns

Common life events are not the only source of stress in life. All too often, individuals bring on stress as a result of their behavior patterns. The two main types of behavior patterns, Type A and Type B, are based on several observable characteristics.

Several attempts have been made to develop an objective scale to identify Type A individuals properly, but these questionnaires are not as valid and reliable as researchers would like them to be. Consequently, the main assessment tool to determine behavioral type is still the structured interview, during which a person is asked to reply to several questions that describe Type A and Type B behavior patterns. The interviewer notes not only the responses to the questions but also the individual’s mental, emotional, and physical behaviors as he or she replies to each question.

Based on the answers and the associated behaviors, the interviewer rates the person along a continuum, ranging from Type A to Type B. Along this continuum, behavioral patterns are classified into five categories: A-1, A-2, X (a mix of Type A and Type B), B-3, and B-4. The Type A-1 exhibits all of the Type A characteristics, and the B-4 shows a relative absence of Type A behaviors. The Type A-2 does not exhibit a complete Type A pattern, and the Type B-3 exhibits only a few Type A characteristics.

Type A behavior characterizes a primarily hard-driving, overambitious, aggressive, and at times hostile and overly competitive person. Type A individuals often set their own goals, are self-motivated, try to accomplish many tasks at the same time, are excessively achievement-oriented, and have a high degree of time urgency.

In contrast, Type B behavior is characteristic of calm, casual, relaxed, easygoing individuals. Type B people take one thing at a time, do not feel pressured or hurried, and seldom set their own deadlines.

Over the years, experts have indicated that individuals classified as Type A are under too much stress and have a significantly higher incidence of coronary heart disease. Based on these findings, Type A individuals have been counseled to lower their stress level by modifying many of their Type A behaviors.

Many of the Type A characteristics are learned behaviors. Consequently, if people can learn to identify the sources of stress and make changes in their behavioral responses, they can move along the continuum and respond more like Type B’s. The debate, however, has centered on which Type A behaviors should be changed, because not all of them are undesirable.

We also know that many individuals perform well under pressure. They typically are classified as Type A but do not demonstrate any of the detrimental effects of stress. Drs. Robert and Marilyn Kriegel came up with the term Type C to characterize people with these behaviors.

Type C individuals are just as highly stressed as Type A’s but do not seem to be at higher risk for disease than Type B’s. The keys to successful Type C performance seem to be commitment, confidence, and control. Type C people are highly committed to what they are doing, have a great deal of confidence in their ability to do their work, and are in constant control of their actions. In addition, they enjoy their work and maintain themselves in top physical condition to be able to meet the mental and physical demands of their work.

Type A behavior by itself is no longer viewed as a major risk factor for coronary heart disease, but Type A individuals who commonly express anger and hostility are at higher risk. Therefore, many behavioral modification counselors now work on changing the latter behaviors to prevent disease.

Next time you feel like getting even with someone for what he/she has done to you, you may want to consider that your anger may be more likely to hurt you. Anger increases heart rate, blood pressure, and leads to constriction of blood vessels. Over time, these changes can cause damage to the arteries and eventually lead to a
Changing a Type A Personality

- Make a contract with yourself to slow down and take it easy. Put it in writing. Post it in a conspicuous spot, then stick to the terms you set up. Be specific. Abstracts (“I’m going to be less uptight”) don’t work.
- Work on only one or two things at a time. Wait until you change one habit before you tackle the next one.
- Eat more slowly and eat only when you are relaxed and sitting down.
- If you smoke, quit.
- Cut down on your caffeine intake, because it increases the tendency to become irritated and agitated.
- Take regular breaks throughout the day, even as brief as 5 or 10 minutes, when you totally change what you’re doing. Get up, stretch, get a drink of cool water, walk around for a few minutes.
- Work on fighting your impatience. If you’re standing in line at the grocery store, study the interesting things people have in their carts instead of getting upset.
- Work on controlling hostility. Keep a written log. When do you flare up? What causes it? How do you feel at the time? What preceded it? Look for patterns and figure out what sets you off. Then do something about it. Either avoid the situations that cause you hostility or practice reacting to them in different ways.
- Plan some activities just for the fun of it. Load a picnic basket in the car and drive to the country with a friend. After a stressful physics class, stop at a theater and see a good comedy.
- Choose a role model, someone you know and admire who does not have a Type A personality. Observe the person carefully, then try out some techniques the person demonstrates.
- Simplify your life so you can learn to relax a little bit. Figure out which activities or commitments you can eliminate right now, then get rid of them.
- If morning is a problem time for you and you get too hurried, set your alarm clock half an hour earlier.
- Take time out during even the most hectic day to do something truly relaxing. Because you won’t be used to it, you may have to work at it at first. Begin by listing things you’d really enjoy that would calm you. Include some things that take only a few minutes: Watch a sunset, lie out on the lawn at night and look at the stars, call an old friend and catch up on news, take a nap, sauté a pan of mushrooms and savor them slowly.
- If you’re under a deadline, take short breaks. Stop and talk to someone for 5 minutes, take a short walk, or lie down with a cool cloth over your eyes for 10 minutes.
- Pay attention to what your own body clock is saying. You’ve probably noticed that every 90 minutes or so, you lose the ability to concentrate, get a little sleepy, and have a tendency to daydream. Instead of fighting the urge, put down your work and let your mind wander for a few minutes. Use the time to imagine and let your creativity run wild.
- Learn to treasure unplanned surprises: a friend dropping by unannounced, a hummingbird outside your window, a child’s tightly clutched bouquet of wildflowers.
- Savor your relationships. Think about the people in your life. Relax with them and give yourself to them. Give up trying to control others and resist the urge to end relationships that don’t always go as you’d like them to.


Try It If Type A describes your personality, pick three of the above strategies and apply them in your life this week. At the end of each day determine how well you have done that day and evaluate how you can improve the next day.

Research is also focusing on individuals who have anxiety, depression, and feelings of helplessness when they encounter setbacks and failures in life. People who lose control of their lives or who give up on their dreams in life, knowing that they could and should be doing better, probably are more likely to have heart attacks than hard-driving people who enjoy their work.
Vulnerability to Stress

Researchers have identified a number of factors that can affect the way in which people handle stress. How people deal with these factors can actually increase or decrease vulnerability to stress. The questionnaire provided in Activity 12.2 lists these factors so you can determine your vulnerability rating. Many of the items on this questionnaire are related to health, social support, self-worth, and nurturance (sense of being needed). All of these factors are crucial to a person’s physical, social, mental, and emotional well-being and are essential to cope effectively with stressful life events. The more integrated people are in society, the less vulnerable they are to stress and illness.

Positive correlations have been found between social support and health outcomes. People can draw on social support to weather crises. Knowing that someone else cares, that people are there to lean on, that support is out there, is valuable for survival (or growth) in times of need.

The health benefits of physical fitness have already been discussed extensively. The questionnaire in Activity 12.2 will help you identify specific areas in which you can make improvements to help you cope more efficiently.

As you complete Activity 12.2, you will notice that many of the items describe situations and behaviors that are within your own control. To make yourself less vulnerable to stress, you will want to improve the behaviors that make you more vulnerable to stress. You should start by modifying the behaviors that are easiest to change before undertaking some of the most difficult ones. After completing the questionnaire, record the results in Activity 12.3 and in your fitness and wellness profile in Appendix A.

Tips to Manage Anger

- Commit to change and gain control over the behavior.
- Remind yourself that chronic anger leads to illness and disease and may eventually kill you.
- Recognize when feelings of anger are developing and ask yourself the following questions:
  - Is the matter really that important?
  - Is the anger justified?
  - Can I change the situation without getting angry?
  - Is it worth risking my health over it?
  - How will I feel about the situation in a few hours?
  - Tell yourself, “Stop, my health is worth it” every time you start to feel anger.
- Prepare for a positive response: Ask for an explanation or clarification of the situation, walk away and evaluate the situation, exercise, or use appropriate stress management techniques (breathing, meditation, imagery) before you become angry and hostile.
- Manage anger at once; do not let it build up.
- Never attack anyone verbally or physically.
- Keep a journal and ponder the situations that cause you to be angry.
- Seek professional help if you are unable to overcome anger by yourself: You are worth it.

Try It

If you and others feel that anger is disrupting your health and relationships, the above management strategies are critical to help restore a sense of well-being in your life. In your Online Journal or class notebook, list all of the strategies on a separate sheet of paper, study them each morning, and then evaluate yourself every night for the next week. If you gain control over the behavior, continue with the exercise until it becomes a healthy behavior. If you still struggle, professional help is recommended. “You are worth it.”

Anger and hostility can increase the risk for disease.

Vulnerability to Stress

Researchers have identified a number of factors that can affect the way in which people handle stress. How people deal with these factors can actually increase or decrease vulnerability to stress. The questionnaire provided in Activity 12.2 lists these factors so you can determine your vulnerability rating. Many of the items on this questionnaire are related to health, social support, self-worth, and nurturance (sense of being needed). All of these factors are crucial to a person’s physical, social,
## Stress Vulnerability Questionnaire

**Name:** __________________________  **Date:** __________________

**Course:** __________  **Section:** __________  **Gender:** __________  **Age:** __________

### Item

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Mildly Agree</th>
<th>Mildly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I try to incorporate as much physical activity* as possible in my daily schedule.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I exercise aerobically 20 minutes or more at least three times per week.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I regularly sleep 7 to 8 hours per night.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I take my time eating at least one hot, balanced meal a day.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I drink fewer than two cups of coffee (or equivalent) per day.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I am at recommended body weight.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I enjoy good health.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I do not use tobacco in any form.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I limit my alcohol intake to no more than one drink for women or two drinks for men per day.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I do not use hard drugs.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I have someone I love, trust, and can rely on for help if I have a problem or need to make an essential decision.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. There is love in my family.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I routinely give and receive affection.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I have close personal relationships with other people who provide me with a sense of emotional security.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. There are people close by whom I can turn to for guidance in time of stress.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. I can speak openly about feelings, emotions, and problems with people I trust.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Other people rely on me for help.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. I am able to keep my feelings of anger and hostility under control.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. I have a network of friends who enjoy the same social activities I do.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. I take time to do something fun at least once a week.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. My religious beliefs provide guidance and strength to my life.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. I often provide service to others.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. I enjoy my job (major or school).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. I am a competent worker.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. I get along well with coworkers (or students).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. My income is sufficient for my needs.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. I manage time adequately.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. I have learned to say “no” to additional commitments when I am already pressed for time.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. I take daily quiet time for myself.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. I practice stress management as needed.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Walk instead of driving, avoid escalators and elevators, or walk to neighboring offices, homes, and stores.

**Rating:**

- 0–30 points: Excellent (great resistance to stress)
- 31–40 points: Good (little vulnerability to stress)
- 41–50 points: Average (somewhat vulnerable to stress)
- 51–60 points: Fair (vulnerable to stress)
- ≥61 points: Poor (highly vulnerable to stress)

**Total Points:**

---

*Record total points and rating in Activity 12.3.
### Stress Profile

Name: ____________________________ Date: __________

Course: ________________ Section: ___________ Gender: _______ Age: _______

#### I. Assessments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Score (negative points only)</th>
<th>Stress Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Stress Events Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Stress Vulnerability Questionnaire**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Stress Management**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technique(s) to be used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### II. In your own words, express how life stresses and your personality affect you in daily life.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

#### III. In the space provided below, list, in order of priority, behaviors you would like to change to help you decrease your vulnerability to stress. Also, briefly outline how you intend to accomplish these changes.

**Behavior(s)**

1. ___________________________________________
2. ___________________________________________

**How to accomplish the change(s)**

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Time Management

According to Benjamin Franklin, “Time is the stuff life is made of.” The present hurry-up style of American life is not conducive to wellness. The hassles involved in getting through a routine day often lead to stress-related illnesses. People who do not manage their time properly will quickly experience chronic stress, fatigue, despair, discouragement, and illness.

Surveys indicate that most Americans think time moves too fast for them, and more than half of those surveyed think they have to get everything done. The younger the respondents, the more they struggled with lack of time. Almost half wished they had more time for exercise and recreation, hobbies, and family. Healthy and successful people are good time managers, able to maintain a pace of life within their comfort zone, and attribute their success to smart work, not necessarily hard work.

Five Steps to Time Management

Trying to achieve one or more goals in a limited time can create a tremendous amount of stress. Many people just don’t seem to have enough hours in the day to accomplish their tasks. The greatest demands on our time, nonetheless, frequently are self-imposed—trying to do too much, too fast, too soon.

Some time killers, such as eating, sleeping, and recreation, are necessary for health and wellness, but, in excess, they’ll lead to stress in life. You can follow five basic steps to make better use of your time (also see Activity 12.4):

1. Find the time killers. Many people do not know how they spend each part of the day. Keep a 4- to 7-day log and record at half-hour intervals the activities you do. Record the activities as you go through your typical day, so you will remember all of them. At the end of each day, decide when you wasted time. You may be shocked by the amount of time you spent on the phone, on the Internet, sleeping (more than 8 hours per night), or watching television.

2. Set long-range and short-range goals. Setting goals requires some in-depth thinking and helps put your life and daily tasks in perspective. What do I want out of life? Where do I want to be 10 years from now? Next year? Next week? Tomorrow? You can use Activity 12.5 to list these goals.

3. Identify your immediate goals and prioritize them for today and this week (Use Activity 12.6—make as many copies as necessary). Each day sit down and determine what you need to accomplish that day and that week. Rank your “today” and “this week” tasks in four categories: (a) top priority, (b) medium priority, (c) low priority, and (d) trash.

   Top-priority tasks are the most important ones. If you were to reap most of your productivity from 30 percent of your activities, which would they be? Medium-priority activities are those that must be done but can wait a day or two. Low-priority activities are those to be done only upon completing all top- and middle-priority activities. Trash activities are not worth your time (e.g., cruising the hallways, channel surfing).

4. Use a daily planner to help you organize and simplify your day. In this way you can access your priority list, appointments, notes, references, names, places, phone numbers, and addresses conveniently from your coat pocket or purse. Many individuals think that planning daily and weekly activities is a waste of time. A few minutes to schedule your time each day, however, may pay off in hours saved.

As you plan your day, be realistic and find your comfort zone. Determine the best way to organize your day. Which is the most productive time for work, study, errands? Are you a morning person, or are you getting most of your work done when people are quitting for the day? Pick your best hours for top-priority activities. Be sure to schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Time Killers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you minimized the role of these time killers in your life?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I PLAN TO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Watching television, listening to radio/music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Excessive sleeping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Surfing/socializing on the Internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Unnecessary texting, IMing, emailing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Daydreaming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Shopping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Socializing/parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Excessive recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Talking on the telephone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Worrying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Procrastinating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Drop-in visitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Confusion (unclear goals)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Indecision (what to do next)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Interruptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Perfectionism (every detail must be done)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I DID IT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Try It Using Activity 12.4, find the time killers in your life and make the necessary changes as required.
enough time for exercise and relaxation. Recreation is not necessarily wasted time. You need to take care of your physical and emotional well-being. Otherwise, your life will be seriously imbalanced.

5. Conduct nightly audits. Take 10 minutes each night to figure out how well you accomplished your goals that day. Successful time managers evaluate themselves daily. This simple task will help you see the entire picture. Cross off the goals you accomplished and carry over to the next day those you did not get done. You also may realize that some goals can be moved down to low priority or be trashed.

Time Management Skills

In addition to the five major steps, the following can help you make better use of your time:

- Delegate. If possible, delegate activities that someone else can do for you. Having another person type your paper while you prepare for an exam might be well worth the expense and your time.
- Say “no.” Learn to say no to activities that keep you from getting your top priorities done. You can do only so much in a single day. Nobody has enough time to do everything he or she would like to get done. Don’t overload either. Many people are afraid to say no because they feel guilty if they do. Think ahead, and think of the consequences. Are you doing it to please others? What will it do to your well-being? Can you handle one more task? At some point you have to balance your activities and look at life and time realistically.
- Protect against boredom. Doing nothing can be a source of stress. People need to feel that they are contributing and that they are productive members of society. It is also good for self-esteem and self-worth. Set realistic goals and work toward them each day.
- Plan ahead for disruptions. Even a careful plan of action can be disrupted. An unexpected phone call or visitor can ruin your schedule. Planning your response ahead of time will help you deal with these saboteurs.
- Get it done. Select only one task at a time, concentrate on it, and see it through. Many people do a little here, do a little there, then do something else. In the end, nothing gets done. An exception to working on just one task at a time is when you are doing a difficult task. Rather than “killing yourself,” interchange with another activity that is not as hard.
- Eliminate distractions. If you have trouble adhering to a set plan, remove distractions and trash activities from your eyesight. Television, radio, the Internet, magazines, open doors, or studying in a park might distract you and become time killers.
- Set aside “overtimes.” Regularly schedule time that you did not think you would need as overtime to complete unfinished projects. Most people underschedule rather than overschedule time. The result is usually late-night burnout! If you schedule overtimes and get your tasks done, enjoy some leisure time, get ahead on another project, or work on some of your trash activities.
- Plan time for you. Set aside special time for yourself daily. Life is not meant to be all work. Use your time to walk, read, or listen to your favorite music.
- Reward yourself. As with any other healthy behavior, positive change or a job well done deserves a reward. We often overlook the value of rewards, even if they are self-given. People practice behaviors that are rewarded and discontinue those that are not.

One more activity that you should perform weekly is to go through the list of strategies in Activity 12.7 to determine if you are becoming a good time manager. Provide a yes or no answer to each statement. If you are able to answer yes to most questions, congratulations. You are becoming a good time manager.

Coping with Stress

The ways in which people perceive and cope with stress seem to be more important in the development of disease than the amount and type of stress itself. If individuals perceive stress as a definite problem in their lives or if it interferes with their optimal level of health and performance, they can call upon several excellent stress
Finding Time Killers

Name: ___________________________ Date: ______________

Course: ___________________________ Section: ___________ Gender: _______ Age: _______

Keep a 4- to 7-day log and record at half-hour intervals the activities you do (make additional copies of this form as needed). As you go through your typical day, record the activities so you will remember them all. At the end of each day, decide when you wasted time. Using a highlighter, identify, on this form, the time killers and plan necessary changes for the next day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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</table>
Planning Long- and Short-Range Goals

Name: ___________________________ Date: ________________

Course: _________________________ Section: _______________ Gender: ________ Age: ________

Below, list your goals as indicated. You may want to keep this form and review it in years to come.

I. List three goals you wish to accomplish in life:
   1. _____________________________________________________________
   2. _____________________________________________________________
   3. _____________________________________________________________

II. List three goals you wish to see accomplished 10 years from now:
   1. _____________________________________________________________
   2. _____________________________________________________________
   3. _____________________________________________________________

III. List three goals you wish to accomplish this year:
   1. _____________________________________________________________
   2. _____________________________________________________________
   3. _____________________________________________________________

IV. List three goals you wish to accomplish this month:
   1. _____________________________________________________________
   2. _____________________________________________________________
   3. _____________________________________________________________

V. List three goals you wish to accomplish this week:
   1. _____________________________________________________________
   2. _____________________________________________________________
   3. _____________________________________________________________

Signature: ___________________________ Date: ________________
**ACTIVITY 12.6**

**Name:** __________________________  **Date:** __________  **Course:** __________  **Section:** ______  **Gender:** ______  **Age:** ______

Take 10 minutes each morning and write down the goals or tasks you wish to accomplish that day. Rank them as top, medium, low, or trash priorities (make as many copies of this form as needed). At the end of the day, evaluate how well you accomplished your tasks for the day. Cross off the goals you accomplished and carry over to the next day those you did not get done.

**Date:** __________________________  **Day of the Week:** __________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top-Priority Goals</th>
<th>Medium-Priority Goals</th>
<th>Low-Priority Goals</th>
<th>Trash (do only after all other goals have been accomplished)</th>
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<tbody>
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Take a few minutes each Sunday night and write down the goals or tasks you wish to accomplish during the upcoming week. As with your daily goals, rank them as top, medium, low, or trash priorities (make as many copies of this form as needed). At the end of the week, evaluate how well you accomplished your goals. Cross off the goals you accomplished and carry over to the next week those you did not get done.

**Week:** ______/______/20____ to ______/______/20____

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top-Priority Goals</th>
<th>Medium-Priority Goals</th>
<th>Low-Priority Goals</th>
<th>Trash (do only after all other goals have been accomplished)</th>
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Evaluating Time Management Skills

Name: ___________________________ Date: ________________

Course: ________________ Section: ________________ Gender: _______ Age: _______

Weekly, go through the list of strategies below and write a “yes” or “no” in response to each statement. If you are able to answer “yes” to most questions, congratulations. You are becoming a good time manager.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I evaluate my time killers periodically.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. I have written down my long-range goals.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. I have written down my short-term goals.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. I use a daily planner.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. I conduct nightly audits.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. I conduct weekly audits.</td>
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<td>7. I delegate activities that others can do.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. I have learned to say “no” to additional tasks when I’m already in overload.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. I plan activities to avoid boredom.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. I plan ahead for distractions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. I work on one task at a time until it’s done.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. I have removed distractions from my work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. I reward myself for a job well done.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Common Symptoms of Stress

Check those symptoms you experience regularly.
- Headaches
- Muscular aches (mainly in neck, shoulders, and back)
- Grinding teeth
- Nervous tic, finger tapping, toe tapping
- Increased sweating
- Increase in or loss of appetite
- Insomnia
- Nightmares
- Fatigue
- Dry mouth
- Stuttering
- High blood pressure
- Tension or pain in the chest
- Impotence
- Hives
- Dizziness
- Depression
- Irritation
- Anger
- Hostility
- Fear, panic, anxiety
- Stomach pain, flutters
- Nausea
- Cold, clammy hands
- Poor concentration
- Pacing
- Restlessness
- Rapid heart rate
- Low-grade infection
- Loss of sex drive
- Rash or acne

Try It If you regularly experience some of the above symptoms, use your Online Journal or class notebook to keep a log of when these symptoms occur and under what circumstances. You may find out that a pattern emerges when experiencing distress in life.

management techniques that can help them cope more effectively.

First, of course, the person must recognize the presence of a problem. Many people either do not want to believe that they are under too much stress or they fail to recognize some of the typical symptoms of distress. Not-
ing some of the stress-related symptoms (see “Common Symptoms of Stress”) will help a person respond more objectively and initiate an adequate coping response.

When people have stress-related symptoms, they should first try to identify and remove the stressor or stress-causing agent. This is not as simple as it may seem, because in some situations eliminating the stressor is not possible, or a person may not even know the exact causing agent. If the cause is unknown, keeping a log of the time and days when the symptoms occur, as well as the events preceding and following the onset of symptoms, may be helpful.

For instance, a couple noted that every afternoon around 6 o’clock, the wife became nauseated and had abdominal pain. After seeking professional help, both were instructed to keep a log of daily events. It soon became clear that the symptoms did not occur on weekends but always started just before the husband came home from work during the week. Following some personal interviews with the couple, it was determined that the wife felt a lack of attention from her husband and responded subconsciously by becoming ill to the point at which she required personal care and affection from her husband. Once the stressor was identified, appropriate behavior changes were initiated to correct the situation.

In many instances, the stressor cannot be removed. Examples of such situations are the death of a close family member, the first year on the job, an intolerable boss, or a change in work responsibility. Nevertheless, stress can be managed through relaxation techniques.

The body responds to stress by activating the fight-or-flight mechanism, which prepares a person to take action by stimulating the vital defense systems. This stimulation originates in the hypothalamus and the pituitary gland in the brain. The hypothalamus activates the sympathetic nervous system, and the pituitary activates the release of catecholamines (hormones) from the adrenal glands.

These hormonal changes increase heart rate, blood pressure, blood flow to active muscles and the brain, glucose levels, oxygen consumption, and strength—all necessary for the body to fight or flee. For the body to relax, one of these actions must take place. However, if the person is unable to take action, the muscles tense up and tighten (see Figure 12.4). This increased tension and tightening can be dissipated effectively through some coping techniques.

### Physical Activity

The benefits of physical activity in reducing the physiological and psychological responses to stress are well established. Exercise is one of the simplest tools to control stress. The value of exercise in reducing stress is related to several factors, the main one being a decrease in muscular tension. For example, a person can be distressed because he or she has had a miserable 8 hours of work with an intolerable boss. To make matters worse, it is late and, on the way home, the car in front is going much slower...
than the speed limit. The fight-or-flight mechanism—already activated during the stressful day—begins again: catecholamines rise, heart rate and blood pressure shoot up, breathing quickens and deepens, muscles tense up, and all systems say “go.” No action can be initiated or stress dissipated, though, because the person cannot just hit the boss or the car in front.

A real remedy would be to take action by “hitting” the swimming pool, the tennis ball, the weights, or the jogging trail. Engaging in physical activity reduces the muscular tension and metabolizes the increased catecholamines (which were triggered by the fight-or-flight mechanism and brought about the physiological changes). Further, while you are concentrating on your tennis game, there isn’t enough time to think about an irrational boss or other undesirable events. Although exercise does not solve problems at work or take care of slow drivers, it certainly helps the person cope with stress and prevents stress from becoming a chronic problem.

Stress management experts often recommend selecting activities like yoga, tai chi, and Pilates that combine physical activity with additional stress reduction techniques. The latter activities regularly incorporate meditation, breathing, and/or muscle relaxation techniques—

along with physical activity—to help people dissipate stress.

The early evening hours are a popular time to exercise for a lot of highly stressed executives. On the way home from work, they stop at the health club or the fitness center. Exercising at this time helps them to dissipate the stress accumulated during the day. Not only does evening exercise help to get rid of the stress, but it also provides an opportunity to enjoy the evening more. At home, the family will appreciate Dad or Mom coming home more relaxed, leaving work problems behind, and being able to dedicate all energy to family activities.

Many people can relate to exercise as a means of managing stress by remembering how good they felt the last time they concluded a strenuous exercise session after a long, difficult day at the office. A fatigued muscle is a relaxed muscle. For this reason, many people have said that the best part of exercise is the shower afterward.

Research also has shown that physical exercise requiring continuous and rhythmic muscular activity, such as aerobic exercise, stimulates alpha-wave activity in the brain. These are the same wave patterns seen commonly during meditation and relaxation.

Further, during vigorous aerobic exercise lasting 30 minutes or longer, morphine-like substances referred to as endorphins are thought to be released from the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Terms</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fight-or-flight</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Yoga</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Tai chi</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Endorphins</strong></td>
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pituitary gland in the brain. These substances not only act as painkillers but also seem to induce the soothing, calming effect often associated with aerobic exercise.

Another way by which exercise helps lower stress is to deliberately divert stress to various body systems. Dr. Hans Selye explains in his book *Stress without Distress* that, when one specific task becomes difficult, a change in activity can be as good or better than rest itself. For example, if a person is having trouble with a task and does not seem to be getting anywhere, jogging or swimming for a while is better than sitting around and getting frustrated. In this way the mental strain is diverted to the working muscles, and one system helps the other to relax.

Other psychologists indicate that when muscular tension is removed from the emotional strain, the emotional strain disappears. In many cases, the change of activity suddenly clears the mind and helps put the pieces together.

Researchers have found that physical exercise gives people a psychological boost because exercise does all the following:

- Lessens feelings of anxiety, depression, frustration, aggression, anger, and hostility.
- Alleviates insomnia.
- Provides an opportunity to meet social needs and develop new friendships.
- Allows the person to share common interests and problems.
- Develops discipline.
- Provides the opportunity to do something enjoyable and constructive that will lead to better health and total well-being.

Beyond the short-term benefits of exercise in lessening stress, a regular aerobic exercise program actually strengthens the cardiovascular system itself. Because the cardiovascular system seems to be affected seriously by stress, a stronger system should be able to cope more effectively. For instance, good cardiorespiratory endurance has been shown to lower resting heart rate and blood pressure. Because both heart rate and blood pressure rise in stressful situations, initiating the stress response at a lower baseline will counteract some of the negative effects of stress. Cardiorespiratory-fit individuals can cope more effectively and are less affected by the stresses of daily living.

**Relaxation Techniques**

Although benefits are reaped immediately after engaging in any of the several relaxation techniques, several months of regular practice may be necessary for total mastery. The relaxation exercises that follow should not be considered cure-alls. If these exercises do not prove to be effective, more specialized textbooks and professional help are called for. (Some symptoms may not be caused by stress but may be related to a medical disorder.)

**Biofeedback**

Clinical application of biofeedback has been used for many years to treat various medical disorders. Besides its successful application in managing stress, it is commonly used to treat medical disorders such as essential hypertension, asthma, heart rhythm and rate disturbances, cardiac neurosis, eczematous dermatitis, fecal incontinence, insomnia, and stuttering. Biofeedback as a treatment modality has been defined as a technique in which a person learns to influence physiological responses that are not typically under voluntary control or responses that normally are regulated but regulation has broken down as a result of injury, trauma, or illness.

In simpler terms, biofeedback is the interaction with the interior self. This interaction enables a person to learn the relationship between the mind and the biological response. The person actually can “feel” how thought processes influence biological responses (such as heart rate, blood pressure, body temperature, and muscle tension) and how biological responses influence the thought process.

As an illustration of this process, consider the association between a strange noise in the middle of a dark,
quiet night and the heart rate response. At first the heart rate shoots up because of the stress the unknown noise induces. The individual may even feel the heart palpitating in the chest and, while still uncertain about the noise, attempts not to panic to prevent an even faster heart rate. Upon realizing that all is well, the person can take control and influence the heart rate to come down. The mind, now calm, is able to exert almost complete control over the biological response.

Complex electronic instruments are required to conduct biofeedback. The process itself entails a three-stage, closed-loop feedback system:

1. A biological response to a stressor is detected and amplified.
2. The response is processed.
3. Results of the response are fed back to the individual immediately.

The person uses this new input and attempts to change the physiological response voluntarily—this attempt, in turn, is detected, amplified, and processed. The results then are fed back to the person. The process continues with the intent of teaching the person to reliably influence the physiological response for the better (see Figure 12.5). The most common methods used to measure physiological responses are monitoring the heart rate, finger temperature, and blood pressure; electromyograms; and electroencephalograms. The goal of biofeedback training is to transfer the experiences learned in the laboratory to everyday living.

Although biofeedback has significant applications in treating various medical disorders, including stress, it requires adequately trained personnel and, in many cases, costly equipment. Therefore, several alternative methods that yield similar results are frequently substituted for biofeedback. For example, research has shown that exercise and progressive muscle relaxation, used successfully in stress management, seem to be just as effective as biofeedback in treating essential hypertension.

**Figure 12.5** Biofeedback mechanism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Stressor</strong></th>
<th><strong>Person</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Feedback</strong></td>
<td><strong>Processing</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Detection and amplification</strong></td>
<td><strong>Biological response</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Progressive Muscle Relaxation**

**Progressive muscle relaxation**, developed by Dr. Edmund Jacobsen in the 1930s, enables individuals to relearn the sensation of deep relaxation. The technique involves progressively contracting and relaxing muscle groups throughout the body. Because chronic stress leads to high levels of muscular tension, acute awareness of how progressively tightening and relaxing the muscles feels can release the tension in the muscles and teach the body to relax at will.

Feeling the tension during the exercises also helps the person to be more alert to signs of distress, because this tension is similar to that experienced in stressful situations. In everyday life, these feelings then can cue the person to do relaxation exercises.

Relaxation exercises should be done in a quiet, warm, well-ventilated room. The recommended exercises and the duration of the routine vary from one person to the next. Most important is that the individual pay attention to the sensation he or she feels each time the muscles are tensed and relaxed.

The exercises should encompass all muscle groups of the body. Following is an example of a sequence of progressive muscle relaxation exercises. The instructions for these exercises can be read to the person, memorized, or tape-recorded. At least 20 minutes should be set aside to complete the entire sequence. Doing the exercises any faster will defeat their purpose. Ideally, the sequence should be done twice a day.

The individual performing the exercises stretches out comfortably on the floor, face up, with a pillow under the knees, and assumes a passive attitude, allowing the body to relax as much as possible. Each muscle group is to be contracted in sequence, taking care to avoid any strain. Muscles should be tightened to only about 70 percent of the total possible tension to avoid cramping or some type of injury to the muscle itself.

To produce the relaxation effects, the person must pay attention to the sensation of tensing up and relaxing. The person holds each contraction about 5 seconds and then allows the muscles to go totally limp. The person should take enough time to contract and relax each muscle group before going on to the next. An example of a complete progressive muscle relaxation sequence is as follows:

1. Point your feet, curling the toes downward. Study the tension in the arches and the top of the feet.

**Key Terms**

**Biofeedback** A stress management technique in which a person learns to influence physiological responses that are not typically under voluntary control or responses that typically are regulated but for which regulation has broken down as a result of injury, trauma, or illness.

**Progressive muscle relaxation** A stress management technique that involves sequential contraction and relaxation of muscle groups throughout the body.
10.
12.
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16.
Press your teeth together. Hold, and study the tension. Relax. Repeat.

17.
Close your eyes tightly. Hold them closed and note the tension. Relax, leaving your eyes closed. Do this one more time.

18.
Wrinkle your forehead and note the tension. Hold and relax. Repeat.

When time is a factor during the daily routine and an individual is not able to go through the entire sequence, he or she may do only the exercises specific to the area that feels most tense. Performing a partial sequence is better than not doing the exercises at all. Completing the entire sequence, of course, yields the best results.

Breathing Techniques for Relaxation

Breathing exercises also can be an antidote to stress. These exercises have been used for centuries in the Orient and India to improve mental, physical, and emotional stamina. In breathing exercises, the person concentrates on “breathing away” the tension and inhaling a large amount of air with each breath. Breathing exercises can be learned in only a few minutes and require considerably less time than the progressive muscle relaxation exercises.

As with any other relaxation technique, these exercises should be done in a quiet, pleasant, well-ventilated room. Any of the three examples of breathing exercises presented here will help relieve tension induced by stress.

1. Deep breathing. Lie with your back flat against the floor and place a pillow under your knees. Feet are slightly separated, with toes pointing outward. (The exercise also may be done while sitting up in a chair or standing straight up.) Place one hand on your abdomen and the other hand on your chest.

   Slowly breathe in and out so that the hand on your abdomen rises when you inhale and falls as you exhale. The hand on the chest should not move much at all. Repeat the exercise about 10 times.

   Next, scan your body for tension and compare your present tension with the tension you felt at the beginning of the exercise. Repeat the entire process once or twice.

2. Sighing. Using the abdominal breathing technique, breathe in through your nose to a specific count (e.g., 4, 5, or 6). Now exhale through pursed lips to double the intake count (e.g., 8, 10, or 12). Repeat the exercise 8 to 10 times whenever you feel tense.

3. Complete natural breathing. Sit in an upright position or stand straight up. Breathing through your nose, gradually fill your lungs from the bottom up. Hold your breath for several seconds. Now exhale slowly by allowing your chest and abdomen to relax completely. Repeat the exercise 8 to 10 times.

Hold, continue to note the tension, and then relax. Repeat once.

2. Flex the feet upward toward the face and note the tension in your feet and calves. Hold and relax. Repeat once.

3. Push your heels down against the floor as if burying them in the sand. Hold and note the tension at the back of the thigh. Relax. Repeat once.

4. Contract the right thigh by straightening the leg, gently raising the leg off the floor. Hold and study the tension. Relax. Repeat with the left leg. Hold and relax. Repeat each leg.

5. Tense the buttocks by raising your hips ever so slightly off the floor. Hold and note the tension. Relax. Repeat once.


7. Suck in your stomach. Try to make it reach your spine. Flatten your lower back to the floor. Hold and feel the tension in the stomach and lower back. Relax. Repeat once.

8. Take a deep breath and hold it, then exhale. Repeat. Note your breathing becoming slower and more relaxed.

9. Place your arms at the sides of your body and clench both fists. Hold, study the tension, and relax. Repeat.

10. Flex the elbow by bringing both hands to the shoulders. Hold tight and study the tension in the biceps. Relax. Repeat.

11. Place your arms flat on the floor, palms up, and push the forearms hard against the floor. Note the tension on the triceps. Hold and relax. Repeat.

12. Shrug your shoulders, raising them as high as possible. Hold and note the tension. Relax. Repeat.


14. Gently bring the head against the chest, push forward, hold, and note the tension in the neck. Relax. Repeat.

15. Press your tongue toward the roof of your mouth. Hold, study the tension, and relax. Repeat.
Visual Imagery

Visual or mental imagery has been used as a healing technique for centuries in various cultures around the world. In Western medicine, the practice of imagery is relatively new and not widely accepted among healthcare professionals.

Research is now being done to study the effects of imagery on the treatment of conditions such as cancer, hypertension, asthma, chronic pain, and obesity. Imagery induces a state of relaxation that rids the body of the stress that leads to illness. It improves circulation and increases the delivery of healing antibodies and white blood cells to the site of illness. Imagery also helps with self-confidence, to regain control and power over the body, and to lower feelings of hopelessness, fear, and depression.

Visual imagery involves the creation of relaxing visual images and scenes in times of stress to elicit body and mind relaxation. Imagery works by offsetting the stressor with the visualization of relaxing scenes such as a sunny beach, a beautiful meadow, a quiet mountain top, lying in a hammock in a quiet backyard, soaking in a hot tub, or some other peaceful setting. If you are ill, you can also visualize your white blood cells attacking an infection or a tumor. Imagery is also used in conjunction with breathing exercises, meditation, and yoga.

As with other stress management techniques, imagery should be performed in a quiet and comfortable environment. You can either sit or lie down for the exercise. If you lie down, use a soft surface and place a pillow under your knees. Be sure that your clothes are loose and that you are as comfortable as you can be.

To start the exercise, close your eyes and take a few breaths using one of the breathing techniques previously described. You then can proceed to visualize one of your favorite scenes in nature. Place yourself into the

Breathing exercises help dissipate stress.

**Critical Thinking**

List the three most common stressors that you face as a college student. • What techniques have you used to manage these situations, and in what way have they helped you cope?

**Behavior Modification Planning**

**Five-Minute De-Stress Technique**

The following simple exercise can be used as an effective stress management technique, especially when coming home at the end of the day. De-stress by taking five minutes before getting into your evening routine by removing your shoes, lying on the carpet, and placing your feet up on a chair. Use a rolled up towel at the base of the skull for neck tension or along the middle of the spine for back tension. The lower back should be flat on the floor. Completely relax and practice deep breathing for five minutes.

**Try It** This simple exercise will help you start your evening right and be kinder to those around you.

**Key Terms**

- **Breathing exercises** A stress management technique wherein the individual concentrates on “breathing away” the tension and inhaling fresh air to the entire body.
- **Imagery** Mental visualization of relaxing images and scenes to induce body relaxation in times of stress or as an aid in the treatment of certain medical conditions such as cancer, hypertension, asthma, chronic pain, and obesity.
Visual imagery of beautiful and relaxing scenes helps attenuate the stress response.

scene and visualize yourself moving about and experiencing nature to its fullest. Enjoy the people, the animals, the colors, the sounds, the smells, and even the temperature in your scene. After 10 to 20 minutes of visualization, open your eyes and compare the tension in your body and mind at this point with how you felt prior to the exercise. You can repeat this exercise as often as you deem necessary when you are feeling tension or stress.

You may not always be able to find a quiet/comfortable setting in which to sit or lie down for 10 to 20 minutes. If you think imagery works for you, however, you can perform this technique while standing or sitting in an active setting. If you are able, close your eyes and disregard your surroundings for a short moment and visualize one of your favorite scenes. Once you feel that you have regained some control over the stressor, open your eyes, and continue with your assigned tasks.

**Autogenic Training**

**Autogenic training** is a form of self-suggestion in which people place themselves in an autohypnotic state by repeating and concentrating on feelings of heaviness and warmth in the extremities. This technique was developed by Johannes Schultz, a German psychiatrist who noted that hypnotized individuals developed sensations of warmth and heaviness in the limbs and torso. The sensation of warmth is caused by dilation of blood vessels, which increases blood flow to the limbs. Muscular relaxation produces the feeling of heaviness.

In this technique the person lies down or sits in a comfortable position, eyes closed, and concentrates progressively on six fundamental stages and says (or thinks) the following:

1. **Heaviness**
   - My right (left) arm is heavy.
   - Both arms are heavy.
   - My right (left) leg is heavy.

2. **Warmth**
   - My right (left) arm is warm.
   - Both arms are warm.
   - My right (left) leg is warm.
   - Both legs are warm.

3. **Heart**
   - My heartbeat is calm and regular. (Repeat four or five times.)

4. **Respiration**
   - My body breathes itself. (Repeat four or five times.)

5. **Abdomen**
   - My abdomen is warm. (Repeat four or five times.)

Both legs are heavy.
My arms and legs are heavy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior Modification Planning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Characteristics of Good Stress Managers</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good stress managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• are physically active, eat a healthy diet, and get adequate rest every day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• believe they have control over events in their life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• understand their own feelings and accept their limitations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• recognize, anticipate, monitor, and regulate stressors within their capabilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• control emotional and physical responses when distressed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• use appropriate stress management techniques when confronted with stressors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• recognize warning signs and symptoms of excessive stress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• schedule daily time to unwind, relax, and evaluate the day’s activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• control stress when called upon to perform.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• enjoy life despite occasional disappointments and frustrations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• look success and failure squarely in the face and keep moving along a predetermined course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• move ahead with optimism and energy and do not spend time and talent worrying about failure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• learn from previous mistakes and use them as building blocks to prevent similar setbacks in the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• give of themselves freely to others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• have a deep meaning in life.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Try It** Change for many people is threatening, but often required. Pick three of the above strategies and apply them in your life. After several days, determine the usefulness of these strategies to your physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being.
Stress Assessment and Management Techniques

A stress management technique used to gain control over one’s attention by clearing the mind and blocking out the stressor(s) responsible for the increased tension.

This technique can be learned rather quickly but first-time users often drop out before reaping benefits because they feel intimidated, confused, bored, or frustrated. In such cases, a group setting is best to get started. Many colleges, community programs, health clubs, and hospitals offer classes.

Initially the person who is learning to meditate should choose a room that is comfortable, quiet, and free of all disturbances (including telephones). After learning the technique, the person will be able to meditate just about anywhere. A time block of approximately 10 to 15 minutes is adequate to start, but as you become more comfortable with meditation you can lengthen the time to 30 minutes or longer. To use meditation effectively, meditate daily—just once or twice per week may not provide noticeable benefits.

Meditation “101”
Of the several forms of meditation, the following routine is recommended to get started.

1. Sit in a chair in an upright position with the hands resting either in your lap or on the arms of the chair. Close your eyes and focus on your breathing. Allow your body to relax as much as possible. Do not try to consciously relax, because trying means work. Rather, assume a passive attitude and concentrate on your breathing.
2. Allow the body to breathe regularly, at its own rhythm, and repeat in your mind the word “one” every time you inhale, and the word “two” every time you exhale. Paying attention to these two words keeps distressing thoughts from entering into your mind.
3. Continue to breathe in this way about 15 minutes. Because the objective of meditation is to bring about a hypometabolic state leading to body relaxation, do not use an alarm clock to remind you that the 15 minutes have expired. The alarm will only trigger your stress response again, defeating the purpose of the exercise. Opening your eyes once in a while to keep track of the time is fine, but do not rush or anticipate the end of the session. This time has been set aside for meditation, and you need to relax, take your time, and enjoy the exercise.

Mindless Meditation
In addition to alleviating stress, mindless meditation is frequently used to help people relieve chronic pain and increase pain tolerance. Chronic pain increases stress hormones that lead a person to think that pain is much more severe than it actually is. Mindless meditation is a form of self-suggestion, wherein an individual is able to place himself or herself in an autohypnotic state by repeating and concentrating on feelings of heaviness and warmth in the extremities.

Stress Coping Strategies
- Balance personal, work, and family needs and obligations.
- Have a sense of control and purpose in life.
- Increase self-efficacy.
- Be optimistic.
- Express your emotions.
- Get adequate sleep.
- Eat well-balanced meals.
- Be physically active every day.
- Do not worry about things that you cannot control (the weather, for example).
- Actively strive to resolve conflicts with other people.
- Prepare for stressful events the best possible way (public speaking, job interviews, exams).
- Limit or abstain from alcohol intake.
- Do not use tobacco in any form.
- View change as positive and not as a threat.
- Obtain social support from family members and friends.
- Use stress management programs and counselors available through work and school programs.
- Seek help from church leaders.
- Engage in nonstressful activities (reading, sports, hobbies, and social events).
- Get involved in your community.
- Practice stress management techniques.
- Adopt a healthy lifestyle.

Key Terms

**Autogenic training** A stress management technique using a form of self-suggestion, wherein an individual is able to place himself or herself in an autohypnotic state by repeating and concentrating on feelings of heaviness and warmth in the extremities.

**Meditation** A stress management technique used to gain control over one’s attention by clearing the mind and blocking out the stressor(s) responsible for the increased tension.
worse than it really is. Research indicates that chronic pain sufferers who use this technique not only have greater pain tolerance than nonpractitioners, but discomfort is eased by helping the brain stop anticipating the pain itself. As pain decreases, stress decreases, and the individual is able to sleep better, hurt less, and exercise more—all of which lead to greater comfort and relaxation.

Slightly different from Meditation 101, these steps can be followed to use this technique:

1. Close your eyes, breathe slowly and naturally, and focus on the feeling of each inhalation and exhalation.
2. Recognize your feelings, thoughts, and body sensations, but do not dwell on them.
3. Continue to focus on your breathing pattern and your feelings for about 15 minutes.
4. Open your eyes and notice your surroundings while maintaining a calm and gentle breathing pattern.
5. You can now proceed to your daily activity schedule with this peaceful, calm, and serene feeling.

**Yoga**

Yoga is an excellent stress-coping technique. It is a school of thought in the Hindu religion that seeks to help the individual attain a higher level of spirituality and peace of mind. Although its philosophical roots can be considered spiritual, yoga is based on principles of self-care.

Practitioners of yoga adhere to a specific code of ethics and a system of mental and physical exercises that promote control of the mind and the body. In Western countries, many people are familiar mainly with the exercise portion of yoga. This system of exercises (postures or asanas) can be used as a relaxation technique for stress management. The exercises include a combination of postures, diaphragmatic breathing, muscle relaxation, and meditation that help buffer the biological effects of stress. Although we are unable to avoid all life stressors, we can definitely change the emotional response through yoga postures, observing and controlling the breathing pattern, and reflecting on the moment, all of which are actions that help calm the mind and the body.

Western interest in yoga exercises developed gradually over the last century, particularly since the 1970s. The practice of yoga exercises helps align the musculoskeletal system and increases muscular flexibility, muscular strength and endurance, and balance. People pursue yoga exercises to help dispel stress by raising self-esteem, clearing the mind, slowing respiration, promoting neuromuscular relaxation, and increasing body awareness. In addition, the exercises help relieve back pain and control involuntary body functions like heart rate, blood pressure, oxygen consumption, and metabolic rate. Yoga also is used in many hospital-based programs for cardiac patients to help manage stress and decrease blood pressure.

In addition, yoga exercises have been used to help treat chemical dependency, insomnia, and prevent injury. Research on patients with coronary heart disease who practiced yoga (among other lifestyle changes) has shown that it slows down or even reverses atherosclerosis. These patients were compared with others who did not use yoga as one of their lifestyle changes.

Of the many different styles of yoga, more than 60 are presently taught in the United States. Classes vary according to their emphasis. Some styles of yoga are athletic, while others are passive in nature.

The most popular variety of yoga in the Western world is **hatha yoga**, which incorporates a series of static stretching postures performed in specific sequences (“asanas”) that help induce the relaxation response. The postures are held for several seconds while participants concentrate on breathing patterns, meditation, and body awareness.

Most yoga classes now are variations of hatha yoga and many of the typical stretches used in flexibility exercises today have been adapted from hatha yoga. Examples include:

1. **Integral yoga and viny yoga** that focus on gentle/static stretches
2. **Iyengar yoga**, promotes muscular strength and endurance
3. **Yogalates**, incorporates Pilates exercises to increase muscular strength
4. **Power yoga or yogarobics**, a high-energy form that links many postures together in a dance-like routine to promote cardiorespiratory fitness.

As with flexibility exercises, the stretches in hatha yoga should not be performed to the point of discomfort. Instructors should not push participants beyond their physical limitations. Similar to other stress management techniques, yoga exercises are best performed in a quiet place for 15 to 60 minutes per session. Many yoga participants like to perform the exercises daily.

To appreciate yoga exercises, a person has to experience them. The discussion here serves only as an introduction. Although yoga exercises can be practiced with the instruction of a book or video, most participants take classes. Many of the postures are difficult and complex, and few individuals can master the entire sequence in the first few weeks.

Individuals who are interested in yoga exercises should initially pursue them under qualified instruction. Many universities offer yoga courses, and you also can check the phone book for a listing of yoga instructors or classes. Yoga courses are offered at many health clubs and recreation centers. Because instructors and yoga styles vary, you may want to sit in on a class before enrolling. The most important thing is to look for an instructor whose views on wellness parallel your own. Instructors are not subject to any national certification standards. If you are new to yoga, you are encouraged to compare a couple of instructors before you select a class.

**Tai Chi**

Tai chi chuan (full name) originated in China centuries ago and is practiced today for defense training and physical and mental health benefits. The martial side, however, is no longer the focus of its practice, so the activity can be performed by young and old, and even the very old. Many fitness practitioners use it in conjunction with aerobic and strength training.

Tai chi is often described as “meditation in motion” because it is performed with flowing/rhythmic movements that focus heavily on breathing and the slow execution of its movements. The main objective is to promote tranquility and reflection through postures that combine meditation and dance. The postures are performed in sequences known as “sets” that require concentration, coordination, controlled breathing, muscle relaxation, strength, flexibility, gait, and body balance.

Research has attributed many health benefits to tai chi, including diabetes management, arthritis relief, lower blood pressure, faster recovery from heart disease and injury, improved strength and flexibility, better sleep, and improved physical work capacity. Among older adults, improved gait and the capability to perform activities of daily living are frequently reported.

Tai chi is frequently used for stress management to relieve tension, stress, and anxiety. The mental aspect of having to concentrate on leading the movement and paying attention to detail through gentle actions dissipates stress. The activity leaves no room to think or worry about other problems, thus calming and relaxing the mind and body.

To master tai chi, you need initial professional guidance. You are encouraged to join a group or a class available at many college campuses or community health clubs. The class should emphasize fitness and health benefits rather than combat techniques. Once you have mastered many of the sets available, you can practice the activity on your own.

### Which Technique Is Best?

Each person reacts to stress differently. Therefore, the best coping strategy depends mostly on the individual. Which technique is used does not really matter, as long as it works. An individual may want to experiment with several or all of them to find out which works best. A combination of two or more is best for many people.

All of the coping strategies discussed here help to block out stressors and promote mental and physical relaxation by diverting the attention to a different, non-threatening action. Some of the techniques are easier to learn and may take less time per session. As a part of your class experience, you may participate in a stress management session (see Activity 12.8). Regardless of which technique you select, the time spent doing stress management exercises (several times a day, as needed) is well worth the effort when stress becomes a significant problem in life. After completing your stress management experience, use Activity 12.9 to conduct a self-assessment of the impact of stress in your life and ways by which you can personally counteract or avoid stress-inducing events.

Keep in mind that most individuals need to learn to relax and take time for themselves. Stress is not what makes people ill; it’s the way they react to the stress-causing agent. Individuals who learn to be diligent and start taking control of themselves find that they can enjoy a better, happier, and healthier life.

---

**Key Terms**

**Hatha yoga** A form of yoga that incorporates specific sequences of static stretching postures to help induce the relaxation response.
Stress Management Experience

Name: ________________________ Date: ________________

Course: ________________ Section: ________________ Gender: _______ Age: _______

I. Stage of Change for Stress Management

Using Figure 2.5 (page 61) and Table 2.3 (page 60), identify your current stage of change for a stress management program:

II. Stress Management

Instructions: The class should be divided into groups of about five students per group. Each group should select and go through a minimum of two of the following stress management techniques outlined in this chapter:

1. Progressive Muscle Relaxation
2. Breathing Techniques for Relaxation
3. Visual Imagery
4. Autogenic Training
5. Meditation

A group leader is chosen who will lead the exercise according to the instructions provided for each relaxation technique in this chapter. Be sure this experience is conducted in a comfortable room that is as free of noise as possible. If trained personnel or a tape-recording for progressive muscle relaxation exercises or visual imagery is available, the entire class may participate in this experience at once. Institutions that have biofeedback equipment may use it in this activity as well. After completing this activity, answer the four questions given below.

1. Indicate the two relaxation techniques used in your class:
   A. ________________________
   B. ________________________

2. In your own words, relate your feelings as you were going through exercises A and B above:

   Exercise A: ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

   Exercise B: ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

3. Indicate how you felt mentally, emotionally, and physically after participating in this experience:

   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

4. Are there situations in your daily life in which you think you would benefit from practicing the selected stress management exercises?

   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

5. Number of daily steps: ____________ Activity category (see Table 1.2, page 12): __________________
Self-Assessment Stress Evaluation

Name: ______________________  Date: ______________________

Course: ______________________  Section: __________  Gender: ________  Age: ________

1. Do you currently perceive stress to be a problem in your life?  ☐ Yes  ☐ No

2. Do you experience any of the typical stress symptoms listed in the box on page 414? If so, which ones?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

3. Indicate any specific events in your life that trigger a stress response.

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

4. Write specific objectives to either avoid or help you manage the various stress-inducing events listed above, including one or more stress management technique.

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

5. Do you have any behavior patterns you would like to modify? List those you would like to change.

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

6. List specific techniques of change you will use to change undesirable behaviors (see Table 2.2, page 60).

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

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Assess Your Behavior

Log on to www.cengagebrain.com to access CengageNOW and the Behavior Change Planner where you can take the stress inventory to identify the main stressors in your life and to create a plan for dealing more effectively with them.

1. Are you able to channel your emotions and feelings to exert a positive effect on your mind, health, and wellness?

2. Do you use time management strategies on a regular basis?

3. Do you use stress management techniques and do they allow you to be in control over the daily stresses of life?

Assess Your Knowledge

Evaluate how well you understand the concepts presented in this chapter using the chapter-specific quizzing available in the online materials at www.cengagebrain.com.

1. Positive stress is also referred to as
   a. eustress.
   b. posstress.
   c. functional stress.
   d. distress.
   e. physiostress.

2. Which of the following is not a stage of the general adaptation syndrome?
   a. alarm reaction
   b. resistance
   c. compliance
   d. exhaustion/recovery
   e. All are stages of the general adaptation syndrome.

3. The behavior pattern of highly stressed individuals who do not seem to be at higher risk for disease is known as Type
   a. A.
   b. B.
   c. C.
   d. E.
   e. X.

4. Effective time managers
   a. delegate.
   b. learn to say “no.”
   c. protect from boredom.
   d. set aside “overtimes.”
   e. do all of the above.

5. Hormonal changes that occur during a stress response
   a. decrease heart rate.
   b. sap the body’s strength.
   c. diminish blood flow to the muscles.
   d. induce relaxation.
   e. increase blood pressure.

6. Physical activity decreases stress levels by
   a. deliberately diverting stress to various body systems.
   b. metabolizing excess catecholamines.
   c. diminishing muscular tension.
   d. stimulating alpha-wave activity in the brain.
   e. doing all of the above.

7. Biofeedback is
   a. the interaction with the interior self.
   b. the biological response to stress.
   c. the nonspecific response to a stress-causing agent.
   d. used to identify biological factors that cause stress.
   e. most readily achieved while in a state of self-hypnosis.

8. The technique where a person breathes in through the nose to a specific count and then exhales through pursed lips to double the intake count is known as
   a. sighing.
   b. deep breathing.
   c. meditation.
   d. autonomic ventilation.
   e. release management.

9. During autogenic training, a person
   a. contracts each muscle to about 70 percent of capacity.
   b. concentrates on feelings of warmth and heaviness.
   c. visualizes relaxing scenes to induce body relaxation.
   d. learns to reliably influence physiological responses.
   e. notes the positive and negative impact of frequent stressors on various body systems.

10. Yoga exercises have been successfully used to
    a. stimulate ventilation.
    b. increase metabolism during stress.
    c. slow down atherosclerosis.
    d. decrease body awareness.
    e. accomplish all of the above.

Correct answers can be found at the back of the book.
Chapter 12:
Notes
5. See note 1.

Suggested Readings
Answer Key

Chapter 12
1. a  2. c  3. c  4. e  5. e  6. e  7. a  8. a  9. b  10. c

This page contains answers for this chapter only
Common Symptoms of Stress

Check those symptoms you experience regularly.

- Headaches
- Muscular aches (mainly in neck, shoulders, and back)
- Grinding teeth
- Nervous tic, finger tapping, toe tapping
- Increased sweating
- Increase in or loss of appetite
- Insomnia
- Nightmares
- Fatigue
- Dry mouth
- Stuttering
- High blood pressure
- Tightness or pain in the chest
- Impotence
- Hives
- Dizziness
- Depression
- Irritation
- Anger
- Hostility
- Fear, panic, anxiety
- Stomach pain, flutters
- Nausea
- Cold, clammy hands
- Poor concentration
- Pacing
- Restlessness
- Rapid heart rate
- Low-grade infection
- Loss of sex drive
- Rash or acne
Tips to Manage Anger

❑ Commit to change and gain control over the behavior.
❑ Remind yourself that chronic anger leads to illness and disease and may eventually kill you.
❑ Recognize when feelings of anger are developing and ask yourself the following questions:
  • Is the matter really that important?
  • Is the anger justified?
  • Can I change the situation without getting angry?
  • Is it worth risking my health over it?
  • How will I feel about the situation in a few hours?
❑ Tell yourself, “Stop, my health is worth it” every time you start to feel anger.
❑ Prepare for a positive response: Ask for an explanation or clarification of the situation, walk away and evaluate the situation, exercise, or use appropriate stress management techniques (breathing, meditation, imagery) before you become angry and hostile.
❑ Manage anger at once; do not let it build up.
❑ Never attack anyone verbally or physically.
❑ Keep a journal and ponder the situations that cause you to be angry.
❑ Seek professional help if you are unable to overcome anger by yourself. You are worth it.