



Make Prevention a CHOICE

The “Stress Test”

Circle below those Life Events which you have experienced within the last year. Then, add up the numbers beside each of those events.

<u>LIFE EVENT</u>	<u>SCORE</u>	<u>LIFE EVENT</u>	<u>SCORE</u>
Death of spouse	100	Foreclosure	31
Divorce	73	Change in job responsibilities	29
Marital Separation	65	Child leaving home	29
Deployment	65	Trouble with in-laws	29
Jail Term	63	Outstanding personal success	28
Death of family member	63	Spouse begins/stops work	26
Personal injury or illness	63	Begin or end school	26
Marriage	50	Change in living conditions	25
Fired from job	47	Revision of personal habits	24
Marital reconciliation	45	Trouble with boss	23
Reunion	45	Change in work hours/conditions	20
Retirement	45	Change in residence	20
Health change in family member	44	Change in schools	20
Pregnancy	40	Change in recreation	19
Sexual difficulties	39	Change in church activities	19
Gain of new family member	39	Change in social activities	18
Business readjustment	39	Mortgage/loan less than \$50,000	17
Change in financial state	38	Change in sleep habits	16
Death of close friend	37	Change in number of family gatherings	15
Career change	36	Change in eating habits	15
Change in number of arguments with spouse	35	Vacation	13
Mortgage/loan over\$50,000	31	Christmas	12
		Minor violations of the law	11

TOTAL: _____

0 - 149	Mild Life Stress	30% chance of illness
150 - 299	Moderate Life Stress	50% chance of illness
300+	Major Life Stress	80% chance of illness

UNDERSTANDING STRESS

“Stress” is the “wear and tear” on body and mind - our physical and psychological response to events that WORRY, PRESSURE, THREATEN, THRILL, CHALLENGE, or SCARE us. Physical stress can be anything from accidental injury to exposure to air pollution. Psychological stress is usually something we see as causing a THREAT to or CHANGE in our way of life, self-esteem or relationships. Stress can drain us physically and emotionally and lower our resistance to illness. However, **STRESS IS ONLY AS HARMFUL AS OUR REACTION TO IT.**

GOOD STRESS/BAD STRESS

Stress can be stimulating as well as destructive. It helps us survive and it motivates us. Without stress we would stop growing and changing. Each of us needs to understand the difference between “good” and “bad” stress for ourselves; only then can we try to keep the good stress while reducing the bad.

Good Stress is exciting and stimulating. When the situation is over, you look back and feel proud. You were under control. You rose to the challenge and brought out the best in yourself.

Bad Stress is exhausting and draining. When the situation is over, you look back and feel you were not in control of things. You could have done more if you hadn’t been so stressed. Little good came out of it, and you felt like a victim of the situation.

SOME COMMON SYMPTOMS OF STRESS:

headaches	back or neck pains	excessive fatigue	pounding heart
irritability	restlessness	trouble sleeping	anger/hostility
sexual disinterest	change in eating habits	depression	feeling keyed up
poor concentration	phobias	recurring illness	

INEFFECTIVE WAYS OF COPING WITH STRESS:

excessive drinking or substance abuse	excessive eating	avoiding problem situations	
withdrawing from people	excessive smoking	fighting/arguing	procrastinating

EFFECTIVE STRESS MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES:

- talking things over with a trusted friend or advisor
- getting regular physical exercise
- learning relaxation techniques that work for you and using them
- eating healthier, more nutritious food
- focusing on deep breathing a few times during the day
- listening to music with a pulse slower than your heartbeat (72bpm)
- taking time to have fun
- learning time and task management skills and using them
- religious/spiritual practice
- cultivating self-enhancing self-talk

◆ ***IF STRESS BECOMES OVERWHELMING, SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP***

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