

Stress

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This report is on stress, what causes it, how and why, and how it can be cured. It will tell you all about stress, why it's important for people to understand, and what it can do to you and other people. Stress affects everyone and everything, that's why it's important that we all be properly educated on it.

First We need to understand what stress is. Stress is basically the body's nonspecific response to any demand. Another way of describing stress is any nervousness or anxiety. Almost all people relate the word stress to discomfort or pressure. What they are actually thinking of is distress, which is often referred to as stress.

There are many things that cause stress. In my opinion, this is the most important part of this whole report because knowing the cause for stress can help you avoid stressful situations. Just about any problem using thought can cause stress. One of the most stressful of all things, especially for teenagers, are social events. Popularity, friends, relationships, and looks are

more stressful things to teenagers than parents. However, adults tend to face such stressors as meeting deadlines, fear of failure, anger, and frustration at the workplace. Everybody is effected by stress when it comes to things like wars, pollution, poverty, overcrowding, and crime. It is important to learn how to live with these situations, because it is nearly impossible to get through life without encountering them.

Most people know that stress could be bad, but how bad? Physicians have proven that stress-related disorders, diseases brought on or worsened by psychological stress, are more likely to happen to people with very busy lives. The sad results of too much stress can be:

depression, drug use, crime, dropping out of school, accidents, and even suicide. These psychosomatic disorders commonly involve the autonomic nervous system, which controls the body's internal organs. Some kinds of headache and back and facial pain, asthma, stomach ulcers, high blood pressure, and premenstrual stress are examples of stress-related disorders. (Funk & Wagnall's.) Respiratory disorders also can be affected by stress. Most common of these is asthma which may be caused by emotional upsets. (Funk & Wagnall's.) In addition, emotional stress can cause or aggravate many skin disorders, from those that produce itching, tickling, and pain to those that cause rashes and pimples.

Treatment of stress-related disorders is sometimes limited to relieving the particular physical symptom involved; for example, hypertension may be controlled with drugs. (Funk & Wagnall's.) Psychological treatments are attempts to help the person to relieve the source of stress or to learn to deal with it. Combinations of physical and psychological treatments are often recommended. There are many type of "toys," that help deal with stress also, these are things that you can buy at a local store or make at home. These things consist of toys like the stress balloon, this lets you get rid of stress and frustration by tightly gripping a balloon filled with flour. Another stress toy would be the stress puppet, a doughy-like figure shaped as little person, or a cotton filled doll that you can slam to temporarily to get rid of your stress and frustration. More accessible methods are drumming your fingers, shaking your feet, or deep breathing.

You can test your stress by taking the stress test or exercise electrocardiography, a test that evaluates the performance of the heart by subjecting it to controlled amounts of physical stress. (Appley, M. H., and Trumbull, R. A.) Some examples of these tests would be walking on a treadmill while measuring the heart's reaction to an increased demand for oxygen. The test ends when the patient reaches a predetermined heart rate or experiences chest pain or fatigue.

Not very long ago some Physicians realized that many people are much more vulnerable to disease and illness when they suffer from mass amounts of stress. Negative events such as the death of a loved one seem to cause enough distress to lower the body's resistance to disease. Something not so obvious though, is that even positive things such as a new job or a new baby in the house, can also worsen a person's ability to fight off disease. Below is a chart that some social scientists have devised. It is a list of life events rating the stressfulness of each. The death of a spouse rates a 100 on the scale, but something like trouble with one's employer rates 23; being fired, 47; going to jail, 63; and a change in sleeping habits, 16.

Change, both good and bad, can create stress. Stress, if sufficiently severe, can lead to illness. Drs. Thomas Holmes and Richard Rahe, psychiatrists at the University of Washington in Seattle, developed the Social Readjustment Rating Scale. In their study, they gave a point value to stressful events. The psychiatrists discovered that in 79 percent of the persons studied, major illness followed the accumulation of stress-related changes totaling over 300 points in one year.

The Social Readjustment Rating Scale

| Life Event | Value |
|---|-------|
| Death of Spouse | 100 |
| Divorce | 73 |
| Marital separation from mate | 65 |
| Detention in jail or other institution | 63 |
| Death of a close family member | 63 |
| Major personal injury or illness | 53 |
| Marriage | 50 |
| Being fired at work | 47 |
| Marital reconciliation with mate | 45 |
| Retirement from work | 45 |
| Major change in the health or behavior of a family member | 44 |
| Pregnancy | 40 |
| Sexual difficulties | 39 |
| Gaining a new family member (e.g., through birth, adoption, moving in, etc.) | 39 |
| Major business readjustment (e.g., merger, reorganization, bankruptcy, etc.) | 39 |
| Major change in financial state (e.g., a lot worse off or a lot better off than usual) | 38 |
| Death of a close friend | 37 |
| Changing to a different line of work | 36 |
| Major change in the number of arguments with spouse (e.g., either a lot more or a lot less than usual.) | 35 |
| Taking out a mortgage or loan for a major purchase (e.g. for a home, business, etc.) | 31 |
| Foreclosure on a mortgage or loan | 30 |
| Major change in responsibilities at work (e.g., promotion, demotion, lateral transfer) | 29 |
| Son or daughter leaving home (e.g., marriage, attending college, etc.) | 29 |
| In-law troubles | 29 |
| Outstanding personal achievement | 28 |
| Wife beginning or ceasing work outside the home | 26 |
| Beginning or ceasing formal schooling | 26 |

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| Major change in living conditions (e.g., building a new home, remodeling, deterioration of home.) | 25 |
| Revision of personal habits (dress, manners, association, etc.) | 24 |
| Troubles with the boss | 23 |
| Major change in working hours or conditions | 20 |
| Change in residence | 20 |
| Changing to a new school | 20 |
| Major change in usual type and/or amount of recreation | 19 |
| Major change in church activities (e.g., a lot more or a lot less than usual) | 19 |
| Major change in social activities (e.g., clubs, dancing, movies, visiting, etc.) | 18 |
| Taking out a mortgage or loan for a lesser purchase (e.g., for a car, TV, freezer, etc.) | 17 |
| Major change in sleeping habits (a lot more or a lot less sleep, or change in part of day when asleep) | 16 |
| Major change in number of family get-togethers (e.g., a lot more or a lot less than usual) | 15 |
| Major change in eating habits (a lot more or a lot less food intake.) | 15 |
| Vacation | 13 |
| Christmas | 12 |
| Minor violations of the law (e.g., traffic tickets, jaywalking, disturbing the peace, etc.) | 11 |

In conclusion, if we learn to understand where stress comes from, it will be easier to deal with. Stress can not always be avoided, but it can almost always be treated. Rest and relaxation are the best ways to prevent illness due to stress. Vacationing, taking time to relax, and venting out your anger are also good ways to relieve stress. With this proper practice, we will be on the road to healthier, happier, better lives.