

Stress Vulnerability Self-Test

In modern society, most of us can't avoid stress. But we can learn to behave in ways that lessen its effects. Researchers have identified a number of factors that affect one's vulnerability to stress - among them are eating and sleeping habits, caffeine and alcohol intake, and how we express our emotions.

The following questionnaire is designed to help you discover your vulnerability quotient and to pinpoint trouble spots.

- Rate each item from 1 (always) to 5 (never), according to how much of the time the statement is true of you.
- Be sure to mark each item, even if it does not apply to you - for example, if you don't smoke, circle 1 next to item six.

1. I eat at least one hot, balanced meal a day.

1 (always)	2	3 (sometimes)	4	5 (never)
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2. I get 7 to 8 hours of sleep at least four nights a week.

1 (always)	2	3 (sometimes)	4	5 (never)
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3. I give and receive affection regularly.

1 (always)	2	3 (sometimes)	4	5 (never)
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4. I have at least one relative within 50 miles on whom I can rely.

1 (always)	2	3 (sometimes)	4	5 (never)
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5. I exercise to the point of perspiration at least twice a week.

1 (always)	2	3 (sometimes)	4	5 (never)
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6. I limit myself to less than half a pack of cigarettes a day.

1 (always)	2	3 (sometimes)	4	5 (never)
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7. I drink fewer than five alcoholic drinks a week.

1 (always)	2	3 (sometimes)	4	5 (never)
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8. I am the appropriate weight for my height.

1 (always)	2	3 (sometimes)	4	5 (never)
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9. I have an income adequate to meet basic expenses.

1 (always)	2	3 (sometimes)	4	5 (never)
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10. I get strength from my religious or spiritual beliefs.

1 (always)	2	3 (sometimes)	4	5 (never)
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Continued over

11. I regularly attend club or social activities.	1 (always)	2	3 (sometimes)	4	5 (never)
12. I have a network of friends and acquaintances.	1 (always)	2	3 (sometimes)	4	5 (never)
13. I have one or more friends to confide in about personal matters.	1 (always)	2	3 (sometimes)	4	5 (never)
14. I am in good health (including eyesight, hearing, and teeth).	1 (always)	2	3 (sometimes)	4	5 (never)
15. I am able to speak openly about my feelings when angry or worried.	1 (always)	2	3 (sometimes)	4	5 (never)
16. I converse regularly with the people I live with about domestic problems – e.g., chores or money.	1 (always)	2	3 (sometimes)	4	5 (never)
17. I do something for fun at least once a week.	1 (always)	2	3 (sometimes)	4	5 (never)
18. I am able to organize my time effectively.	1 (always)	2	3 (sometimes)	4	5 (never)
19. I drink fewer than three cups of coffee (or other caffeine-rich drinks) a day.	1 (always)	2	3 (sometimes)	4	5 (never)
20. I take some quiet time for myself during the day.	1 (always)	2	3 (sometimes)	4	5 (never)

Results:

To get your score, add up the figures and subtract 20. A score below 10 indicates excellent resistance to stress. A score over 30 indicates some vulnerability to stress; you are seriously vulnerable if your score is over 50.

You can make yourself less vulnerable by reviewing the items on which you scored three or higher and trying to modify them. Notice that nearly all of the items describe situations and behaviors over which you have a great deal of control.

Concentrate first on those that are easiest to change – for example, eating a hot, balanced meal daily and having fun at least once a week – before tackling those that seem difficult.