**Stress & Coping Self-Test**

**Instructions:** Answer all 18 of the following questions about how you feel and how things have been going with you during the past month. Mark the response that best applies to you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTION</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How have you been feeling in general?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you been bothered by nervousness?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you been in firm control of your behavior, thoughts, emotions, and feelings?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you been feeling so sad, discouraged, or hopeless, or had so many problems that you wondered if anything was worthwhile?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you been feeling that you were under any strain, stress, or pressure?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How happy or satisfied have you been with your personal life?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you had any reason to wonder if you were losing your mind or memory, or losing control over the way you act, talk, think, or feel?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you been anxious, worried, or upset?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often have you awakened refreshed and rested?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you been bothered by an illness, bodily disorder, pain, or fear about your health?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has your daily life been full of things that were interesting to you?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you been feeling down-hearted and blue?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you been feeling emotionally stable and sure of yourself?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you been feeling tired, worn out, used-up, or exhausted?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ADD UP THE NUMBERS NEXT TO EACH CHECKED BOX.
Coping with stress in your life. Then see the suggestions listed below for
improving your coping ability and keeping stress loads reasonable.

Unrelieved stress can adversely affect your health. Take the Stress and
Coping Self-Test to help you become aware of how you are currently

### Sources of Stress

Stress that results in feelings of tension and anxiety can arise from many
sources. Here are a few:

- Work stressors (long hours, difficult people to work with, deadlines, etc.)
- Home stressors (conflict with children or spouse, home demands, etc.)
- Finances (debt, spending conflict, job loss, difficult economy, etc.)
- Feeling a loss of control over one’s life
- Feeling sad and depressed
- Major life events (divorce, moving, new job, loss of a loved one, a
  tragedy, etc.)
- Health problems

Whatever the cause, when the stress load becomes too great for you to
cope with, your mental and physical health decline. See the suggestions
in the next column for ways of improving your coping ability and keeping
stress loads reasonable.

### Improving Coping Skills

**Stress and Coping**

Some stress is a normal part of daily life. If it becomes excessive, however,
and exceeds your ability to cope, it can result in feelings of:

- Tension
- Irritability
- Anxiety
- Difficulty sleeping

Unrelieved stress can adversely affect your health. Take the Stress and
Coping Self-Test to help you become aware of how you are currently
coping with stress in your life. Then see the suggestions listed below for
help in making improvement.

### Sources of Stress

Stress that results in feelings of tension and anxiety can arise from many
sources. Here are a few:

- Work stressors (long hours, difficult people to work with, deadlines, etc.)
- Home stressors (conflict with children or spouse, home demands, etc.)
- Finances (debt, spending conflict, job loss, difficult economy, etc.)
- Feeling a loss of control over one’s life
- Feeling sad and depressed
- Major life events (divorce, moving, new job, loss of a loved one, a
  tragedy, etc.)
- Health problems

Whatever the cause, when the stress load becomes too great for you to
cope with, your mental and physical health decline. See the suggestions
in the next column for ways of improving your coping ability and keeping
stress loads reasonable.

### Scoring

Your score for each question is the number beside each check box. Add
the scores for all questions to get a total score (use summary grid below).
Your total score should be between 0 and 110.

#### What Your Score Means

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coping Score</th>
<th>Stress/Coping Description</th>
<th>Percent of Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>76-110</td>
<td>Coping well. You are in the “Positive Well Being” zone.</td>
<td>65.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71-75</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56-70</td>
<td>Not coping very well. You are in the “Stress” zone.</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-55</td>
<td>Not coping well at all. You are in the “Distress” zone.</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The higher your score the better you are coping with stress in your life.
Scores of 76 or above indicate that you are coping well. A score of 71-75 is
“marginal” and scores of 70 or less indicate you are having trouble coping
and need to improve your coping skills. Read **Improving Coping Skills** below.
Get additional help if needed from your health coach, a mental health
counselor, or your doctor.

**Source:** National Center for Health Statistics. NHANES Study.

### How to Cope Better with Stress

- **Reduce your stress load.** Learn to say “no” if already overloaded.
- **Develop a good support system** – people you can talk with and get
  help from when needed.
- **Break the stress cycle with relaxation.** Do something you enjoy
every day.
- **Get regular, moderate exercise,** such as walking or biking in park or by
  a scenic lake.
- **Do stretching exercises** and practice deep breathing to relax the body.
- **Learn to forgive and forget.** Resentment hurts you the most.
- **Get help from your supervisor at work** to deal with work stressors.
- **Don’t be hard on yourself.** Realize that everyone makes mistakes.
- **Take care of yourself.** Get 7-8 hours of sleep daily. Eat regular meals.
  Limit caffeine and alcohol.
- **Live one day at a time.** Don’t worry excessively about future problems
  which likely won’t happen anyway. Focus on what you can do today.
- **Be positive and optimistic in your thinking.** Humans tend to
  experience in life what they expect.
- **Join an encouraging faith or support group.** Caring friends can help
  you cope.
- **Get professional help when needed.** Talk to a financial counselor, a
  dietitian, a mental health counselor, or your doctor as needed.

A person who takes control of his or her life and approaches stressful life
events as opportunities to learn or grow is more resistant to stress and lives
a healthier, more fulfilled life.

**Sources:** Mental Health America. 2009
Harvard Medical Center. 2008

© 2009 Wellsource, Inc., Clackamas, OR. All rights reserved. For personal use only – do not make unauthorized copies.
Written by Don Hall, DrPH, CHES.