

Stress can be a positive force in life. It can drive someone to meet a deadline, finish a project around the house, even to achieve something that may have once seemed impossible.

But too much stress for a long period of time can be a problem. It can lead to poor health, strained relationships at home and work and mental and emotional problems.

The first steps to managing stress are to identify when you're feeling overly stressed and what caused it. The next step is to use a technique that addresses the cause of the stress. Techniques might include relaxation exercises, developing assertiveness or time-management skills or prioritizing your work/life goals and taking steps to actualize them.

This pamphlet begins with a list of questions to determine if stress is interfering with your ability to enjoy life. It concludes with some helpful techniques to manage stress and how to find stress-management resources in your community.

Answer the following questions honestly. The more yes answers you tally up, the greater the likelihood that stress is a problem.

### *Signs of stress in your personal, home or family life*

**In the past 12 months, have you experienced any of the following events?**

	Yes	No
Have you experienced the death of a close family member?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has a close friend died?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you gone through a divorce, marital separation or the end of a long-term relationship?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Have you reunited with a spouse or significant other?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you gotten married?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has there been a change in the number of arguments you've had with your spouse or significant other?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has a close family member experienced a personal injury or been diagnosed chronically ill?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you had an addition to your family either through birth or adoption?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has there been a change in the number of family gatherings (either more or fewer)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you returned to or finished school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you had a serious argument with a close friend?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you had a significant change in your financial status?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you moved?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you assumed a new mortgage or loan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you experienced an outstanding personal achievement?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you spent time in jail?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has a family member been jailed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### *Signs of stress at work*

**In the past 12 months, have you experienced any of the following events?**

	Yes	No
Have you been fired or laid off from a job?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has your significant other been fired or laid off?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you changed employers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you changed careers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Did you get a promotion, reassignment or change in responsibilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has your significant other had a job change?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did you get a new boss?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you missed work because you felt overwhelmed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you or your significant other started working a different shift?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you experienced conflict with your boss?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has your office relocated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you had a serious argument with a co-worker?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### *Other signs of stress*

**In the past 12 months, have you experienced any of the following events?**

	Yes	No
Have you had a major personal injury or been diagnosed with a chronic illness?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you become pregnant?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you quit or started smoking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you been using alcohol or other drugs more frequently?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you experienced a change in your eating or sleeping habits?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you entered treatment for a mental health problem?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you entered treatment for an alcohol or other drug problem?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you noticed that you're getting more forgetful?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you noticed that you have difficulty concentrating?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### **Stress management**

Most stress management techniques fall into one of four categories:

#### *Physical/mental relaxation techniques* —

Techniques like guided imagery (taking a calming moment away from your day to picture something relaxing to you, like a recent camping vacation), breathing exercises, self-massage and progressive muscle relaxation (alternately tensing and relaxing your muscles) can help temporarily overcome the effects of stress.

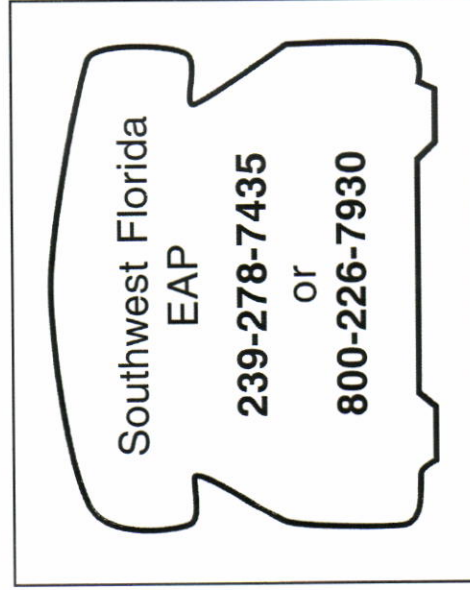
*Time management/organization skills* — Multitasking, learning a more efficient filing system and other skills can help make maximum use of available time.

*Assertiveness skills* — Stress can result from taking on too many responsibilities. Learning how to be assertive and say “no” to some of the many demands placed upon one’s time can help.

*Goal-setting and prioritizing* — The pace of modern life leads some people to feel as if they’re on an express train that never stops. Goal-setting and prioritizing can help a person step off the train and decide what’s important in life and to make choices that re-orient their lives around these priorities so that life has more meaning.

### **Help is available**

Just talking about your problems sometimes leads to new solutions. If you or someone you know needs information, guidance or help, contact the resource listed below or look online for local professionals who can help.



# STRESS SELF-ASSESSMENT