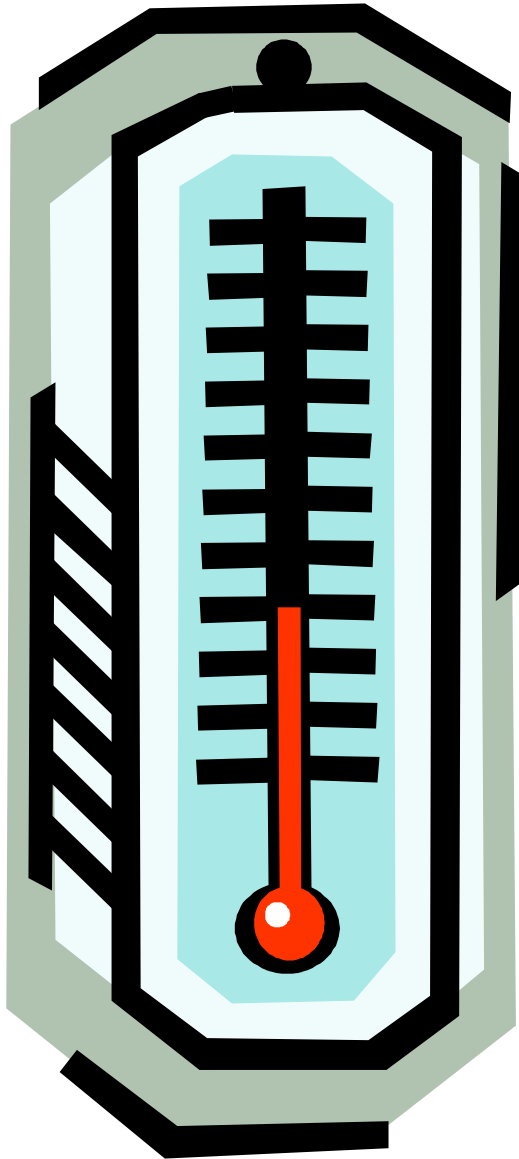


The Stress Thermometer



Examples of Ratings

10 – Cannot get things done – struggling immensely

8 – Having difficulty completing things, feeling very overwhelmed

6 – Struggling, but still getting things done

3 – Getting things done, with not a lot of difficulty

0 – No stress – the feeling like when you are still in bed

Remember that stress affects everyone differently. What you see as a rating of 5 might be like someone else's rating of 10. It is helpful to know how you rate on a daily basis (or even hourly basis), so you can learn more effectively how to cope.

ABCs of Stress Management

This model of looking at Stress Management is based on a behavioural model of change.

A – antecedent – what is going on – the situation or circumstance

B – behaviour – what you do

C – consequence – the result or outcome

What we see is that the antecedent (the situation) affects the behaviour, and that there is always a consequence, good or bad!

You may or may not like the antecedent, and you can change it

You may or may not like your behaviour, and you can change it

If you change your behaviour, you will have a changed result!

ANTECEDENT	BEHAVIOUR	CONSEQUENCE
Everyone is hassling you about not working or going to school	Racing thoughts "I can't find a job" "I am such a loser"	Substance use

How could you change your behaviour?

What consequence(s) might you have as a result of the changed behaviour?

ANTECEDENT	BEHAVIOUR	CONSEQUENCE
Get your OW cheque and you have nothing to do all day	Go to One Roof and get high	Money for the month is gone

How could you change the antecedent?

Now think of your own situation. Think about the antecedents that stress you out. Think about the behaviours that you do that lead to negative consequences. Think about what you have the power to change.

ANTECEDENT	BEHAVIOUR	CONSEQUENCE

The Three Stages of Stress

Stage 1: Fight or Flight

- we have reactions to events that release adrenaline, a natural body chemical. This is the first stage of stress and can also happen when you put yourself in a situation where you will feel stress.

What are signs that I am in stage 1?

Stage 2: Exhaustion or Consuming Energy

- if there is no escape from stage 1, the body begins to release stored sugars and fats, using up it's bodily resources. The body tries to hold onto energy, or at least use less than usual.

What are signs that I am in stage 2?

Stage 3: Draining Energy Stores

- if the stressful situation is not resolved, you could become chronically stressed. The need for energy resources exceeds it's ability to produce them.

What are signs that I am in stage 3? If I have never been in stage 3 before, what should I be concerned about for my situation?

Suggestions to Help Stop Procrastination

1. Stop worrying. You probably spend more time worrying about chores that you do not want to do than you would spend by simply doing them.
2. Start Small. Once you start doing an unpleasant task, you may find that it isn't as bad as anticipated.
3. Count the Cost. Make a list of all the unpleasant aspects of doing the activity that you are avoiding and then make a second list of the consequences of putting it off. Look at the discomfort of doing it versus the cost of delay and ask yourself which list creates the greater degree of unpleasantness.
4. Look for the Hidden Reward. Look for any pay-offs that you may be receiving for not getting the distasteful job done. Also examine the advantages of avoiding whatever changes might follow from completing the task.
5. Confront Negative Beliefs. It is helpful to confront beliefs that may be interfering with doing what you need to do. Are you making statements to yourself that make it even worse?
6. Double your Resistance. Exaggerate and intensify whatever you are doing that is putting off beginning a task. Keep it up until you are really bored and getting to work seems like a more attractive alternative.
7. Take responsibility for each delay. You are the one wasting your precious time. Make a list of each procrastination or escape activity and note how long it took. Add up the total and list all of the positive things you could have done with that time if you had simply finished the job to begin with.
8. Tie a distasteful activity to an activity that you know you will do.
9. Reward yourself for doing activities that are unpleasant for you.
10. Finish things. Avoid beginning a new task until you have completed a specific segment of your current task. The experience of finishing something is itself a great reward.

Types of Breathing

Breathing for Awareness

With your eyes open or closed, put your right hand on your abdomen at your waistline and put your left hand on your chest, right in the centre.

Without trying to change your breathing simply notice how you are breathing – which hand rises more as you inhale? Is it your chest or your belly?

Deep Abdominal Breathing

This can be done in a variety of poses. The one that is often recommended is to lie on a blanket on the floor, bend your knees and move your feet eight inches apart with toes turned slightly outward. Scan body for tension. Place one hand on your abdomen and one hand on your chest. Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose into your abdomen to push your hand as much as feels comfortable. Chest should only move a little and only with your abdomen. Concentrate on your abdomen moving up and down, concentrate on the air moving in and out of your lungs and imagine tension flowing out of your body with each breath. Enjoy the feeling of relaxation that deep breathing gives you.

When you feel at ease, smile and inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth making a quiet, relaxing whooshing noise as you exhale. Your mouth, tongue and jaw are relaxed and focus on the sound of your breath as you become more relaxed. Continue for 5-10 minutes, 1-2 times a day. At the end of deep breathing, take time to scan your body for tension.

Breathing to Release Tension

Breath Counting

Sit or lie down with your spine straight. Breathe into your abdomen. Let yourself pause before you exhale. As you exhale count "one" to yourself. As you continue to exhale count each exhalation. Continue for 4 or 5 minutes. Notice as your breathing gradually slows, your body relaxes and your mind calms.

Relaxing Sigh

Sit or stand straight up. Sigh deeply, letting out a sound of deep relief as the air rushes out of your lungs. Don't think about inhaling – just let the air come in naturally.

Take 8-12 sighs.