

How well do you handle stress?

Most people would agree that life is stressful. And most of us could manage the stress in our lives better than we do. To determine how well you handle stress, complete the quiz below, marking each statement *true* or *false*.

- ___ 1. Although I sometimes feel frustrated because of normal everyday problems (like getting caught in a traffic jam), I can usually put these events out of my mind and get through the day without dwelling on past upsets.
- ___ 2. I have been diagnosed as having physical ailments (now or in the recent past) caused partially by stress.
- ___ 3. I do some form of meditation or relaxation exercises regularly.
- ___ 4. When an unexpected problem crops up at the office, I may panic for a moment or two; then I settle down and focus on what I can do to solve the problem.
- ___ 5. If I have had a bad day at work, I have a hard time relaxing and enjoying the evening when I get home.
- ___ 6. I can usually see the humorous side of a stressful situation, and may make a joke to lighten my spirits and make others laugh.
- ___ 7. Although I sometimes worry about problems, I can usually stop myself from dwelling on things that I can't control.
- ___ 8. If too many problems happen at once, I tend to get flustered and have trouble concentrating.
- ___ 9. Although I sometimes wear myself out by working too hard, I make a point of scheduling time for rest and relaxation before I completely burn out.
- ___ 10. When under pressure to meet a deadline or solve a problem, I can usually maintain a cool head and stay focused on what needs to be done.
- ___ 11. There's no question that I'm a "worry wart". I can really get myself upset just imagining the bad things that might happen.
- ___ 12. Day-to-day problems at home and work don't really bother me that much, and I usually take things in stride pretty well.

Give yourself five points for every *true* response you gave to questions 2, 5, 8, and 11, three points for every *true* response to questions 1, 4, 7 and 9, and zero points for every *true* response to questions 3, 6, 10, and 12. Add up your score.

If you scored between zero and ten, it is likely that you handle most problems and stressors in a cool, calm, and collected manner. You are able to see the humorous side of most stressful situations, and generally keep yourself from taking things too seriously.

If you scored between 11 and 23, you probably cope with stress as well as the average person. Although you may sometimes feel overwhelmed and stressed by unexpected problems or an exceptionally heavy workload, you are usually able to collect yourself, regroup, and get on with whatever needs to be done. You might benefit from incorporating relaxation techniques and regular exercise into your daily routine.

If you scored between 24 and 32, you may find getting through days of unexpected problems or deadlines very challenging. You may feel “it’s a jungle out there” and have trouble letting go of the day’s problems when you get home. On occasion, you may be plagued by stress-related illnesses. If this describes you, look for a stress management course that will give you additional tools and techniques for making positive changes so that you can reduce the stress in your life.