

SIGNS OF STRESS

A Self-Assessment Exercise

Read each statement below and circle the number which best reflects how often you have experienced that symptom during the past 4-6 weeks using the following scale:

0	=	Hardly ever
1	=	Sometimes
2	=	Often
3	=	Very frequently

COMMON PHYSICAL EFFECTS OF PROLONGED/UNHEALTHY STRESS

Pounding heart/palpitations	0	1	2	3
High blood pressure	0	1	2	3
Headaches/Migraines	0	1	2	3
Dizzy spells	0	1	2	3
Tense and/or aching muscles (neck, shoulders, back, face)	0	1	2	3
Increased tendency to illnesses	0	1	2	3
Rapid, shallow over breathing and/or difficulty in breathing	0	1	2	3
Sense of choking in the throat and/or chest	0	1	2	3
Dry mouth	0	1	2	3
Excessive sweating	0	1	2	3
Facial flushing/blushing	0	1	2	3
Inability to physically relax	0	1	2	3
Frequent urination	0	1	2	3
Diarrhoea	0	1	2	3
Churning and/or tight knot in stomach	0	1	2	3
Nausea or indigestion	0	1	2	3
Tiredness/lethargy/lack of energy/physically worn out	0	1	2	3

COMMON MENTAL EFFECTS OF PROLONGED/UNHEALTHY STRESS

Poor concentration/staying focused on tasks	0	1	2	3
Difficulty in making decisions and/or making rash decisions	0	1	2	3
Forgetfulness/poor memory/absent-mindedness	0	1	2	3
Racing thoughts	0	1	2	3
Sense of being under constant time pressures	0	1	2	3
Self critical and/or thoughts of low self worth	0	1	2	3
Thoughts of being trapped/cornered/seeing no way out	0	1	2	3
General pessimistic thinking	0	1	2	3
Sense of having no mental energy	0	1	2	3

SIGNS OF STRESS (Cont.)

COMMON EMOTIONAL EFFECTS OF PROLONGED/UNHEALTHY STRESS

Persisting moodiness/changeable moods	0	1	2	3
Breaking into tears easily	0	1	2	3
Sense of not coping or of not feeling in control	0	1	2	3
On-going feelings of uncertainty, confusion and being lost	0	1	2	3
Prevailing self doubts and low self confidence	0	1	2	3
Growing feelings of emptiness, loneliness and/or feeling numb	0	1	2	3
Feeling insecure and vulnerable	0	1	2	3
Over- sensitivity to criticism	0	1	2	3
Feelings of helplessness and/or hopelessness	0	1	2	3
Continuing worry/anxiety/inner agitation/restlessness	0	1	2	3
Very irritable and/or quick to anger	0	1	2	3
Increased feelings of hostility, resentment or animosity	0	1	2	3
Panic attacks or increased fears	0	1	2	3
Depression	0	1	2	3
Intolerance/impatience towards others	0	1	2	3
Growing sense of personal failure and/or inadequacies	0	1	2	3
Loss of sense of fun	0	1	2	3

COMMON BEHAVIOURAL EFFECTS OF PROLONGED/UNHEALTHY STRESS

Poor sleeping patterns/difficulty getting to sleep/early waking	0	1	2	3
Nightmares/bad dreams	0	1	2	3
Loss of appetite or eating excessively	0	1	2	3
Increasing absenteeism or workaholism	0	1	2	3
Increasing arguments/conflict with family/friends/others	0	1	2	3
Increased alcohol consumption/smoking/other drug use	0	1	2	3
Proneness to accidents	0	1	2	3
Nail-biting, hair-pulling, frowning, clenching jaw, grinding teeth or similar habits	0	1	2	3
Repetitive mannerisms such as knee jigging, finger tapping etc.	0	1	2	3
Obsessive-compulsive behaviours/rituals	0	1	2	3
Loss of sense of humour	0	1	2	3
Self-injurious, self destructive, reckless behaviour	0	1	2	3
Withdrawing socially and generally disengaging from others	0	1	2	3
Lowered sexual interests	0	1	2	3
Difficulty sitting still; always restless	0	1	2	3
Loss of interest in sporting/recreational activities and/or hobbies	0	1	2	3

Any items given a 2 or 3 rating need to be particularly noted and targeted for change. If you have rated more than two or three items in each section with a 2 or 3 rating or if you feel that one or more items rated with a 2 or 3 have already over taxed your existing coping resources then please don't delay. Your body is trying to signal to you that something is wrong. Please heed you body's warning signals and ring and make an appointment to see a health professional today before your physical and psychological health deteriorates any further.