

Homework: Daily Stressors

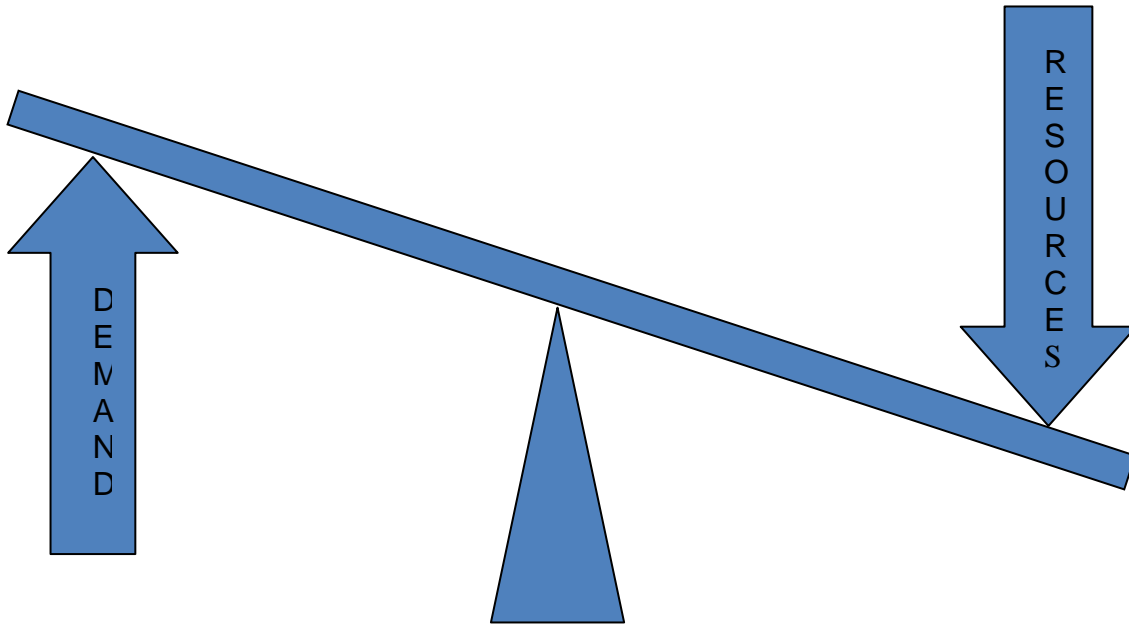
Each day we experience many different situations that we perceive as stressful. Examples may include traffic, social commitments, or work load. Sometimes we are not be aware of just how many things we are reacting to each day.

Pick a typical day and keep track of all of your stressors.

7am and earlier
8am
9am
10am
11am
Noon
1pm
2pm
3pm
4pm
5pm
Evening

How does stress begin?

- When demands are high and resources are low, we feel stressed.



When do we experience stress?

		Resources	
		Low	High
Demands	High	STRESS	Coping
	Low	Getting by	Sense of Well Being

“People are disturbed not by a thing, but by their perception of a thing.” Epictetus

High-Risk Situations and Stressors

My High-risk situations:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

My current stressors (temporary):

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

My chronic stressors (long-term):

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

Review of Homework: Daily Stressors

- 1) How many different stressors did you notice during the 24hr period that you kept track?
- 2) How did you feel with each stressor (physically, emotionally, etc.)?
- 3) How did you cope with each stressor?
- 4) Looking back, how many of those were really worth stressing about?
- 5) Will this impact the way that you respond to your daily stressors in the future? How?

Tips for Reducing and Coping With Stress

- **Exercise regularly:** Your body can fight stress more effectively when it is “fit”. Try to engage in cardiovascular exercise 3-4 times a week. Moderate intensity activities, such as walking, swimming, cycling, and jogging are best. Exercise relieves tension and provides an escape from stressful situations. The release of endorphins during exercise can also improve mood, increase feelings of well-being, and reduce feelings of stress. Try taking a brisk walk during the day for a “stress break” and to improve your physical health.
- **Go to bed earlier:** More sleep makes you stronger and better able to handle daily responsibilities. Sleep deprivation leads to increased levels of cortisol and ghrelin, which can trigger cravings for high-fat, high-sugar foods and overeating.
- **Avoid nicotine, caffeine, and other stimulants:** Good nutrition and health behaviors can reduce the negative effects of stress. Stimulants, such as caffeine and nicotine, can worsen the physical symptoms of stress.
- **Allow yourself regular leisure time:** Set aside time for yourself when you can relax, start or engage in a hobby, read a good book, or spend time doing things that you enjoy. It’s also important to have time set aside to allow yourself to “unwind” from daily stressors.
- **Simplify your life:** Cut out some activities and/or delegate tasks to others in order to avoid feeling overwhelmed.
- **Practice relaxation techniques regularly:** Controlling your breathing by breathing deeply, clearing your mind, and relaxing your muscles can improve psychological and physical symptoms of stress. A lack of oxygen restricts blood flow and causes muscles to tighten; hence, slow, deep breathing can reduce the muscle tension by increasing the flow of oxygen and bringing your heart rate and breathing back to normal. These techniques can also help lower the level of oxidative chemicals in the blood, which in turn lowers the risk of atherosclerosis. Praying and meditation are also effective ways to revitalize your mind and body. Daily practice of these techniques can reduce your stress levels.
- **Communicate with your family and friends:** Social support can serve as a buffer against stress. Don’t try to cope alone!
- **Don’t overdo it:** Get help when you need it, and take minibreaks from what you’re doing during the day, whether you’re at work or home.
- **Set realistic goals for yourself:** Focus on one thing at a time, if possible

- **Learn how to say “no”:** There is only so much that one person can do. Sometimes you must say “no” to additional requests in order to effectively complete current responsibilities. Finish what you can before taking on additional projects.
- **Go Easy with criticism and be flexible:** No one is perfect, so don’t expect perfection from yourself or others. Expecting too much of yourself and others can lead to feelings of frustration, disappointment, and being let down. Remember that everyone is unique and has his or her own shortcomings, virtues, and personal stressors that may impact daily performance. Also, arguing intensifies stressful feelings and is an ineffective way to solve problems. Assertive, rather than aggressive, communication and compromise are less stressful ways to find solutions.
- **Locate the source of your stress and your reactions to it:** Notice your distress and don’t ignore it. Determine the source of your distress. What are you telling your self about these events? Changing your reaction to these events may reduce the amount of stress that you experience. Remember, anxious stressed people tend to interpret situations as more dangerous, difficult, or painful and decide that they don’t have the resources to cope.
- **Time management:** If you often feel that there isn’t enough time in the day, try keeping a record of how you spend your time for an entire week. This may help to identify “free time slots” and periods where too much or too little time is dedicated.

Stress-Related Links:

www.stress.org : American Institute of Stress

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/stress.html#diseasemanagement>

Medline health information and topics related to stress

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/> : National Institute of Mental Health

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/homepage.html> : Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Self-Care: Pleasant Activities Scheduling and Rewards

Doing fun and relaxing things is actually good for your health. It can help decrease anxious and depressed feelings, improve your ability to manage stress more effectively, and can help you to sleep better. Many people believe that they are too busy to take the time to enjoy themselves. However, failing to take time for yourself can lead to increased stress and tension which can negatively impact your relationships, your health, your progress with weight management, and your overall well-being. In addition, all of the activities listed below can be ways to treat yourself without using food. There is a wide variety of pleasant activities that people enjoy doing. You may think of other ideas to add to this list. As you begin to make constructive changes it is helpful to add some things in, not just take out favorite past times, like eating.

Listen to music Plant a garden Take a walk in your neighborhood Take a pottery class Scrap booking Go fishing Write poetry Sing Sit by a fire Take a bath or shower for as long as you want Arrange flowers Go somewhere beautiful and enjoy being in nature Read a novel Watch a sunrise/sunset Doodle Play a board game Sew Swim Sign up for a yoga class Play a musical instrument Photography Painting Play with your dog or cat Refinish a piece of furniture Write a letter Go to a museum Go to a ball game Go to a concert Call a friend Plan an evening with friends Take a quiet evening at home Throw a Frisbee Take a walk in the grass with your shoes off Take in a funny movie Repair something around the house Redecorate Keep a journal Go window-shopping Play golf Aroma therapy Flea markets	Do a crossword puzzle or Sudoku Go on a date Draw Watch the rain Dance Sit in a hot tub* Fly a kite Go to bed early Play a board game Read a magazine Candle light Deep breaths Professional massage Yoga class Museum Reading without interruption Buy a new coffee cup A cold glass of water A hot cup of coffee A spicy cup of tea Stretch Go ice skating Dancing Take a ten minute walk X-Country skiing Buy a pedometer Work in my garden Fresh cut flowers Music Whistle Join a club Go swimming Walk on the beach alone See a kid's soccer game Singing Doing anything spontaneously, instead of planning ahead A new writing pen A neck rub Build or repair something Aerobics Art exhibits Theater Write a letter	Pretty stamps and stationary Sitting with my feet up Cuddling a baby Playing a kids' game Riding a bicycle Looking at photo albums Cleaning out a drawer/organizing Word games Go to a movie Buy and read a new novel Buy a new plant Needle point Go to a garage sale Set table with linen, napkins, and silver when I eat alone. Visit a friend Fire in the fire place Sheets dried in the sunshine Send flowers to a friend A fuzzy robe on a cold night Community Service/volunteering Sitting in the sunshine Feed the ducks A favorite magazine New hair style or color Take a sauna* Soak your feet* Rubbing your feet* Heating pad on my back* Give myself a facial Woodwork Going to a car show Going to a sporting event _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
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(*) People with Diabetes may need to be careful using heat or sharp points.

Homework

Tracking

<input type="checkbox"/> Food & activity records online (myfitnesspal)	<input type="checkbox"/> Meditation practice _____ days this week
<input type="checkbox"/> Food, activity & mood journal (paper)	<input type="checkbox"/> Journal 3 pages _____ mornings this week
<input type="checkbox"/> Specific food or eating behavior goal: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Specific action related to support system: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Specific activity /fun goal: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Relaxation practice _____ days this week
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____

Notes