

## How Vulnerable are You to stress?

In modern society, most of us can't avoid stress. But we can learn to behave in ways that lessen its effects. Researchers have identified a number of factors that affect one's vulnerability to stress -- among them are eating and sleeping habits, caffeine and alcohol intake, and how we express our emotions. The following questionnaire is designed to help you discover your vulnerability quotient and to pinpoint trouble spots. Rate each item from 1 (always) to 5 (never), according to how much of the time the statement is true to you. Be sure to mark each item, even if it seems not to apply to you -- for example, if you don't smoke, check off 1 next to item 5.

	Always	2	Some- times	4	Never
1. I eat at least one hot, balanced meal a day.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I get seven to eight hours of sleep at least four nights a week.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I give and receive affection regularly.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I have at least one relative within 50 miles, on whom I can rely.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I exercise to the point of perspiration at least twice a week.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I limit myself to less than half a pack of cigarettes a day.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I take fewer than five alcoholic drinks a week.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I am the appropriate weight for my height.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I have an income adequate to meet basic expenses.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I get strength from my religious beliefs.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I regularly attend club or social activities.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I have a network of friends and acquaintances.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I have one or more friends to confide in about personal matters.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I am in good health (including eye-sight, hearing, teeth).	1	2	3	4	5
15. I am able to speak openly about my feelings when angry or worried.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I have regular conversations with the people I live with about domestic problems -- for example, chores and money.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I do something for fun at least once a week.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I am able to organize my time effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I drink fewer than three cups of coffee (or other caffeine-rich drinks) a day.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I take some quiet time for my self during the day.	1	2	3	4	5

## **How vulnerable are You to Stress?**

### **Scoring:**

To get your score, add up the figures and subtract 20. A score below 10 indicates excellent resistance to stress. A score over 30 indicates some vulnerability to stress; you are seriously vulnerable if your score is over 50.

You can make yourself less vulnerable by reviewing the items on which you scored 3 or higher and trying to modify them. Notice that nearly all of them describe situations and behaviors over which you have a great deal of control. Concentrate first on those that are easiest to change -- for example, eating a hot, balanced meal daily and having fun at least once a week -- before tackling those that seem more difficult.

**Source:** University of California, Berkeley Wellness Letter, August, 1985.  
**Scale Developers:** Lyle Miller and Alma Dell Smith of Boston University Medical Centre.

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