

Stress *Management*



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STRESS INDICATORS QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire will show how stress affects different parts of your life. Circle the response which best indicates how often you experience each stress indicator during a typical week.

When you have answered all the questions add the point totals for each section.

- 5- Almost Always (on five days a week)
- 4- Most of the time (on three days a week)
- 3- Some of the time (on one and one-half days a week)
- 2- Almost never (less than two hours a week)
- 1- Never

PHYSICAL INDICATORS: How often would you say:

	Almost always	Most of the time	Some of the time	Almost never	Never
My body feels tense all over.	5	4	3	2	1
I have a nervous sweat or sweaty palms.	5	4	3	2	1
I have a hard time feeling really relaxed.	5	4	3	2	1
I have severe or chronic lower back pain.	5	4	3	2	1
I get severe or chronic headaches.	5	4	3	2	1
I get tension or muscle spasms in my face, jaw, neck or shoulders.	5	4	3	2	1
My stomach quivers or feels upset.	5	4	3	2	1
I get skin rashes or itching.	5	4	3	2	1
I have problems with my bowels (constipation, diarrhea).	5	4	3	2	1

I need to urinate more than most people.	5	4	3	2	1
My ulcer bothers me.	5	4	3	2	1
I feel short of breath after mild exercise like climbing up four flights of stairs.	5	4	3	2	1
Compared to most people, I have a very small or a very large appetite.	5	4	3	2	1
My weight is more than 15 pounds higher than what is recommended for a person my height and build.	5	4	3	2	1
I smoke tobacco.	5	4	3	2	1
I get sharp chest pains when I'm physically active.	5	4	3	2	1
I lack physical energy.	5	4	3	2	1
When I'm resting, my heart beats more than 100 times a minute.	5	4	3	2	1
Because of my busy schedule I miss at least two meals during the week.	5	4	3	2	1
I don't really plan my meals for balanced nutrition.	5	4	3	2	1
I spend less than 3 hours a week getting vigorous physical exercise (running, playing basketball, tennis, swimming, etc).	5	4	3	2	1

Physical Indicators Point total _____

SLEEP INDICATORS: How often would you say:

I have trouble falling asleep.	5	4	3	2	1
I take pills to get to sleep.	5	4	3	2	1
I have nightmares or repeated bad dreams.	5	4	3	2	1
I wake up at least once in the middle of the night for no apparent reason.	5	4	3	2	1
No matter how much sleep I get, I awake feeling tired.	5	4	3	2	1

Sleep Indicators Point Total _____

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS: How often would you say:

I stutter or get tongue tied when I talk to other people.	5	4	3	2	1
I try to work while I'm eating lunch.	5	4	3	2	1
I have to work late.	5	4	3	2	1
I go to work even when I feel sick.	5	4	3	2	1
I have to bring work home.	5	4	3	2	1
I drink alcohol or use drugs to relax.	5	4	3	2	1
I have more than two beers, eight ounces of wine or three ounces of hard liquor a day.	5	4	3	2	1

When I drink, I like to get really drunk.	5	4	3	2	1
I get drunk or "high" with other drugs more than once a week.	5	4	3	2	1
When I'm feeling high from alcohol or drugs I will drive a motor vehicle.	5	4	3	2	1
I tend to stumble when walking, or have more accidents than other people.	5	4	3	2	1
In any given week, I take at least one prescription drug without the recommendation of a physician, e.g. amphetamines, barbiturates.	5	4	3	2	1
I have problems with my sex life.	5	4	3	2	1
At least once during the week I will make bets for money.	5	4	3	2	1
After dinner I spend more time alone or watching TV than I do talking with my family or friends.	5	4	3	2	1
I arrive at work late.	5	4	3	2	1
At least once during the week I have a shouting match with a co-worker or supervisor.	5	4	3	2	1

Behavioral Indicators Point Total _____

EMOTIONAL INDICATORS: How often would you say:

	Almost always	Most of the time	Some of the time	Almost never	Never
I have found the best way to deal with hassles and problems is to consciously avoid thinking or talking about them.	5	4	3	2	1
I have trouble remembering things.	5	4	3	2	1
I feel anxious or frightened about problems I can't really describe.	5	4	3	2	1
I worry a lot.	5	4	3	2	1
It is important for me not to show my emotions to my family.	5	4	3	2	1
It is hard for me to relax at home.	5	4	3	2	1
It's best if I don't tell even my closest friend how I'm really feeling.	5	4	3	2	1
I find it hard to talk when I get excited.	5	4	3	2	1
I feel very angry inside.	5	4	3	2	1
I have temper outbursts I can't control.	5	4	3	2	1
When people criticize me, even in friendly, constructive way, I feel offended.	5	4	3	2	1

I feel extremely sensitive and irritable.	5	4	3	2	1
My emotions change unpredictably and without any apparent reason.	5	4	3	2	1
I feel like I really can't trust anyone.	5	4	3	2	1
I feel like other people don't understand me.	5	4	3	2	1
I really don't feel good about myself.	5	4	3	2	1
Generally I am not optimistic about my future.	5	4	3	2	1
I feel very tired and disinterested in life.	5	4	3	2	1
Impulsive behavior has caused me problems.	5	4	3	2	1
I have felt so bad that I thought of hurting myself.	5	4	3	2	1
When I have an important personal problem I can't solve myself, I do not seek professional help.	5	4	3	2	1

Emotional Indicator Point Total _____

No single question in this questionnaire proves you are experiencing stress, but by looking at the results of groups of questions, it may be possible to define what areas of your life stress affects the most. To determine these areas, add the circled numbers in each section and mark the point total for each section with an "X" on the appropriate dotted line below.

PERSONAL STRESS LEVELS

	Very Low	Medium	High	Very High	Danger
Physical Indicators					
Point Total	22.....	30.....	38.....	48.....	54+
Sleep Indicators					
Point Total	5.....	8.....	10.....	12.....	14+
Behavior Indicators					
Point Total	18.....	27.....	36.....	45.....	50+
Emotional Indicators					
Point Total	21.....	29.....	37.....	46.....	55+
Personal Habits					
Point Total	9.....	15.....	20.....	25.....	30+

Note the areas where you showed "very high" or "danger" levels of stress. These are problem areas you should focus on when you develop your Personal Stress Management Plan later in the course. If you have no points totals in the "very high" or "danger" zones, congratulations- you are doing a very good job of managing stress. In your Personal Stress Management plan, focus on:

1) building stress resources and 2) stress prevention through aerobic exercise, relaxation, nutrition and sleep.

- Early Warning Signs

On the lines below, write the three signs which occur earliest and most regularly when you're under stress. You may want to look back at your questionnaire to get an idea of what your early warning signs are. These signs give advance notice of being stressed and allow you to identify what causes you stress, and to take action before serious problems result.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Date Questionnaire Completed _____

(Keep this completed questionnaire for your future use)

Health: The American Way

An estimated 63 million Americans have some form of major heart or blood vessel disease.

An estimated 1.5 million have heart attacks each year.

Of those, 550,000 (including 200,000 between ages 45 and 65) die.

Complications of arteriosclerosis account for about 1/2 of all deaths (1/3 between ages 35-65).

About 58 million Americans have hypertension (high blood pressure).

Approximately 60,000 die each year of hypertension, not counting those whose high blood pressure precipitates a heart attack or stroke.

An estimated 8-10 million Americans have ulcers.

As many as 10,000 die each year of hemorrhages of abdominal perforations that result from peptic ulcers.

Approximately 4.5 million Americans suffer from migraine headaches at some time.

Alcoholism affects at least 10 million Americans and causes at least 200,000 deaths each year.

Approximately 8 million are diabetics.

Americans consume 16,000 tons of aspirin each year, at an expenditure of 500 million dollars.

More than 1.5 billion prescriptions are filled each year, including 61 million doses of tranquilizers and 33 million doses of anti-depressants.

Urban dwellers have more stress-related illnesses than rural dwellers.

Parents of young children report more feelings of pressure and stress than any other age or marital-status group.

How Stressful Is Your Diet???

Use the following checklist of healthy anti-stress food choices and eating patterns to see how your diet measures up.

- ___ Relaxed, pleasant mealtime
- ___ Breakfast eaten daily
- ___ 2-3 servings of low fat protein foods daily (fish, poultry, lean meat, dried beans and peas)
- ___ High fat meats are seldom eaten (bacon, sausage, luncheon meats, fried chicken, steak, corned beef, etc.)
- ___ A minimum of 6 servings of bread, cereal, pasta, or grains daily
- ___ At least half of the breads and cereals are whole grain varieties
- ___ Two to four servings of lowfat or nonfat milk products daily
- ___ At least four servings of fruits and vegetables daily
- ___ Majority of fruit and vegetable servings are fresh or frozen
- ___ One or two fruit and vegetable servings are high in vitamin C such as orange, grapefruit, broccoli, strawberries, tomatoes or guava
- ___ One fruit or vegetable serving is high in beta carotene (the plant form of vitamin A), such as yams, carrots, spinach, broccoli or asparagus
- ___ Intake of added fats is low; butter, margarine, gravy, cream, non-dairy creamer, shortenings, salad dressings, etc.
- ___ Caffeine intake is low to moderate (no more than two cups daily)
- ___ Sugar intake is low (table sugar, honey, syrup, candy, donuts, etc.)
- ___ Fluid intake (excluding coffee and alcohol) is at least 6-8 glasses daily.

STRESS INVENTORY

LAST 18 MONTHS

<u>EVENT</u>	<u>VALUE</u>	<u>YOUR SCORE</u>
Divorce	100	_____
Death of spouse	73	_____
Marital Separation	65	_____
Jail term	63	_____
Death of close family member	63	_____
Personal injury or illness	63	_____
Marriage	50	_____
Fired from work	47	_____
Marital reconciliation	45	_____
Retirement	45	_____
Change in family member's health	44	_____
Pregnancy	40	_____
Sex difficulties	39	_____
Addition to family	39	_____
Business readjustment	39	_____
Change in financial status	38	_____
Death of a close friend	37	_____
Change to different line of work	36	_____
Change in number of marital arguments	35	_____
Mortgage or loan over \$100,000	31	_____
Foreclosure of mortgage or loan	30	_____
Change in work responsibility	29	_____
Son or daughter leaving home	29	_____
Trouble with in-laws	29	_____
Outstanding personal achievement	28	_____
Spouse begins or stops work	26	_____
Starting or finishing school	26	_____
Change in living conditions	25	_____
Revision of personal habits	24	_____
Trouble with boss	23	_____
Change in work hours, condition	20	_____
Change in residence	20	_____
Change in schools	20	_____
Change in recreational habits	19	_____
Change in church activities	19	_____
Change in social activities	18	_____
Mortgage or loan under \$100,000	17	_____
Change in sleeping habits	16	_____

		LAST 18 MONTHS
<u>EVENT</u>	<u>VALUE</u>	<u>YOUR SCORE</u>
Change in number of family gatherings	15	_____
Change in eating habits	15	_____
Vacation	13	_____
Christmas Season	12	_____
Minor violation of the law	11	_____
		TOTAL _____

(From Thomas H. Holmes, M.D., "Social Readjustment Rating Scale.")

THE STRESS OF ADJUSTING TO CHANGE

The list you just scored are events in life which have been found to produce individual stress reactions in a cross section study conducted by Dr. Thomas H. Holmes at the University of Washington. The scale value of each event reflects the amount of stress and disruption they cause in the life of the average person's life. If your total score is less than 150 your chance of getting sick in the next two years is 37%, a score of 150 - 300 raises the odds to 51%; with a score of more than 300 points, your chances of illness rises to 80% and continues to increase as your score goes up. Remember, these figures are of possible illness, not certain illness.

Personal Plan To Prevent Or Alleviate Stress

Three sources of stress that affect me:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Three strengths or experiences I can utilize to prevent or alleviate stress:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Three methods/techniques I can implement in my daily life to prevent or alleviate stress:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Three ways I can evaluate if my personal plan to prevent or alleviate stress is effective for me:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Date I intend to implement my personal plan: _____

Effective Time Management

Barriers to Effective Time Management

1. Over commitment – can't say no	N	S	T	
2. Values and objectives not clarified.		N	S	T
3. Role not properly defined.	N	S	T	
4. Baggage from past experience.		N	S	T
5. Unusual family expectations.		N	S	T
6. Physical illness.		N	S	T
7. Telephone interruptions.		N	S	T
8. Failure to delegate.	N	S	T	
9. Poor T.V. planning.		N	S	T
10. Wasted commuting time.	N	S	T	
11. Traditions of the office, e.g., millions of meetings.		N	S	T
12. Assumption that this state is a temporary condition.		N	S	T
13. Life controlled by boss or spouse/significant other.		N	S	T
14. Protestant ethic – keeping busy.		N	S	T
15. Crisis management.		N	S	T

TOTAL

No Control (N)_____

Some Control (S)_____

Total Control (T)_____

Things I Love To Do

List 20 things you love to do. They can be big or little things in your life; things appealing to the senses or more abstract pleasures; things you've always enjoyed or relatively new experiences; things that you do or that others do for you: things done indoors or outdoors, at night or during the day, or in different seasons of the year. Be as specific as you can. Instead of listing "sports" write "watching football on TV" or "playing tennis with Joyce".

This is your list: Put down whatever comes to mind without judging it or wondering what others would think about it. There are no right or wrong answers. You may have more or less than 20 items.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____
17. _____
18. _____
19. _____
20. _____

Now circle the five that are your favorites

Breathing Exercises

Practice these initial exercises to control tension. They may, or may not, be enough. Try each one 3 times a day for a week. As with most things, doing something just one or two times will not produce much noticeable change. You will probably feel most comfortable with one of the three exercises. Pick a quiet spot each day. Concentrate on the exercise and shut out any distractions. Get into a comfortable position before starting any exercise.

EXERCISE #1: 1 TO 8 Count

Take a deep, slow breath and close your eyes. Exhale fully and completely, making sure to get the last bit of air out of your lungs. Breathe in again. As you inhale, imagine the number **1** in your mind; at the same time, focus on the inhalation. Hold your breath for three seconds. Exhale, and as you breathe out the air fully and completely, mentally say **2** and visualize the number two in your mind. Breathe in again and mentally say **3** focusing on the three and on the inhalation. Hold your breath for three seconds. Exhale fully and completely, while mentally visualizing and saying **4**. Inhale, saying **5**, exhale saying **6**. Remember to visualize the number and focus on the inhalation. Inhale, counting **7** and exhale counting **8**. Repeat the entire sequence from **1** to **8**. Slowly open your eyes.

Do you feel calmer?

Did you have any difficulty visualizing the numbers?

Were you able to focus in the inhalation?

Did you finish the exercise?

If you had any trouble on the inhalation or visualizing the numbers, clear your mind of any distractions and try again. You might have been trying too hard if you didn't finish the exercise.

This exercise is not a race. Learn to be patient with yourself and the exercise. Breathe slowly and pause between breaths. Do not try to force relaxation— this will only make it harder for you to relax and you may find this very frustrating. Instead, find a way to give into relaxation.

EXERCISE #2: Three-Part Breathing

Take a deep breath. Imagine that your lungs are divided into three parts. Visualize the lowest part of your lungs filling with air. Use only your diaphragm; your chest should remain relatively still. Imagine the middle part of your lungs filling, and as you visualize the expansion, allow your rib cage to move slightly forward. Visualize the upper part filling with air and your lungs becoming completely full. Your shoulders will rise slightly and move backwards. Exhale fully and completely. As you empty your upper lungs, drop your shoulders slightly. Visualize the air leaving the middle portion of your lungs, and feel your rib cage contract. Pull in your abdomen to force out the last bit of air from the bottom of your lungs.

-Repeat this exercise four times.

-Did you have any trouble visualizing your lungs expanding and contracting?

-Were you able to complete the inhaling visualization before you started to exhale?

If you had trouble visualizing, take a moment to clear your mind of thoughts. You can get back to them later when you are calm and relaxed. The visualization may seem more complex to you than it actually is. If you found yourself exhaling while still visualizing the inhalation, try to inhale more slowly. Be sure to exhale completely and push all of the carbon dioxide out of your lungs. This allows more room for life-giving oxygen to fill your lungs when you inhale.

EXERCISE #3: Alternate Nostril Breathing

Once you are comfortable with **THREE PART BREATHING** try this more advanced exercise.

Place your right forefinger over your right nostril, pressing lightly to close off the nostril. Take a deep, full breath, inhaling with your left nostril. Visualize your lungs filling fully and expanding completely. Remove your finger from the right nostril and lightly closed off the left nostril. Exhale slowly through the open right nostril. Be certain to exhale fully and completely.

Begin the sequence again by inhaling fully and completely through the left nostril.

-Repeat slowly and rhythmically for ten more breaths.

-Did you find it difficult to breath through your nose?

-Did you find one nostril easier to breathe through than the other?

If you repeat this exercise at different times during the day, you will find that sometimes it is easier to breath through the right nostril, and sometimes the left. This happens because your primary breathing nostril actually changes about every four hours. The exercise will make you more aware of the changes in your breathing patterns.

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Common Sense For Stress Management

1. Eat three meals a day, including breakfast.
2. Avoid sugar, salt, animal fat, and processed white flour.
3. Pursue regular program of physical exercise or other leisure pastime.
4. Nurture and maintain friendships.
5. Get enough sleep (6 to 8 hours).
6. Practice abdominal breathing and relaxation.
7. Schedule time and activities alone, and with others to maintain a well-rounded life style.
8. Stop smoking.
9. Limit alcohol (one drink with meals) and caffeine intake.
10. Pace yourself and allow for an even flow of demands.
11. Identify and accept emotional needs.
12. Recognize early warnings.
13. Allocate time and energy to allow for stimulation.
14. Take appropriate supplements, if needed, for proper nutrition.
15. Avoid self-medication.
16. Take one thing at a time.
17. Give in once in while.
18. Talk out your worries.
19. Make yourself available.
20. Learn to accept the things you cannot change.

Ways of Combating Job Stress

Here are some ways to cope with job stress you might consider trying. Begin with the easier and simpler ones to get a feel for how it works and to establish a pattern of success. As a wise man once said, "**Nothing Predicts Success Like Success**". By setting up a reasonable and achievable goals, you will be more likely to keep with it and also more likely to move on to a higher goal level.

1. Start each day with breakfast. Eat at home if possible because you'll probably eat better. If not, you might try meeting a friend for breakfast--allow time to enjoy it.
2. If you are used to drinking caffeinated beverages throughout the day, cut down. Try decaffeinated coffee or soda, fruit juice or water.
3. Organize your work. Setting priorities and reasonable goals helps things to seem, and actually be, more manageable.
4. Write things down. Why over-burden your memory with trivial things?
5. Don't try to be perfect. There are some things worth doing that aren't worth doing well.
6. Seek to concentrate on one task at a time, finish it, and move on to the next task. If you are working on something and come to a place where you can go no farther at that time, set it aside and move on. The key here is to keep moving towards completion and to avoid dwelling on factors over which you have no control.
7. If possible, reduce the noise level in your immediate surroundings. Noise can often be a source of controllable stress.
8. Seek to establish uninterrupted blocks of time to work on specific tasks. You will find that you get more accomplished, you will feel more relaxed, and the final product will have a "tighter" feel to it.
9. Create as pleasant a work environment as possible. Surround yourself with objects that help you to feel good about yourself and where you are.
10. Avoid taking your job with you when you take a break.
11. Take up meditation and do a 10-20 minute meditation morning and afternoon for your break.

12. Optimize your health with good nutrition, exercise, sleep, and rest.
13. Monitor your work-rest-recreation balance. Are things out of balance? Do you need to make some adjustments?
14. Reduce your consumption of alcohol, and if you smoke, **QUIT!!!**
15. Take up a regular aerobic activity such as racquetball, running, or rowing and do it four days each week.
16. Avoid excuses for **NOT** doing any of the above. It is often easier to find reasons not to do, than it is reasons to do, something.

While these activities will not eliminate the stress related to your job, they **can** and **will** help in controlling the effects of stress. When that happens, you will be in a better position and frame of mind to focus on the primary job at hand:

STAYING ALIVE!

Coping Strategies

"Most people are about as happy as they make their minds up to be."
Abraham Lincoln

- A. **Stress management is a decision-making process.** When we are feeling the effects of a stressful lifestyle, we have three major ways we could deal with that stress:
- **Alter it**
 - **Avoid it or**
 - **Accept it by
**building our resistance or
changing our perception****
- * All three of these approaches can be effective coping techniques. The trick is choosing the proper approach for the situation at hand and the person involved.
- * **Alter** which implies **removing the source of stress** by changing something. Problem-solving, direct communication, organizing, planning and time management are common techniques for altering.
- * **Avoid** which implies **removing oneself from the stressful situation** or figuring out how not to get there in the first place!
- * **Accept** which involves **equipping oneself physically and mentally for stress**.
- * **b** stands for **building resistance**.
People can increase their capacity to tolerate stress **physically** through proper diet, regular aerobic exercise and systematic relaxation techniques. Relaxation and exercise provide the double bonus of releasing stored up tension as well! **Mental** resistance is bolstered through positive affirmation, taking time for mental health, and getting clear about goals/values/priorities. **Social** resistance is strengthened by building and maintaining support systems, investing in relationships, clear communication and intimacy. **Spiritual** resistance is especially important in times of high stress. Meditation, prayer, worship, faith and commitment strengthen people.
- * **c** stands for **change**
One way to Accept stress is to **change the way you perceive the situation** or yourself. Changing unrealistic expectations and irrational beliefs such as *"I should succeed at everything I try,"* or *"it would be awful if my spouse were angry with me,"* is a good start. *Building self-esteem and cultivating a positive attitude help as well.*
Redefining the situation in a less stress-provoking way is always an option-when people play "isn't it funny" or "isn't it grand" instead of "isn't it awful," their stress resistance increases.
- * **Stress is a product of our interaction with the world.** Our environment provides us with many challenges, changes and demands. None of these are, by themselves,

stressful.

- * **Our beliefs about the world and ourselves, our feelings, and our assessment or our coping resources act as a perceptual filter** through which we view the world. It is our very own perceptual filter that triggers a stress reaction.

EVENT A	PERCEPTUAL FILTER B	RESPONSE C
Pressures	Past experience	Psychophysical stress response
Demands	Expectations	Burnout
Changes	Evaluation	Effective coping mechanism
Challenges	Beliefs	

Some slight common errors of thinking are:

- **Black-or-white thinking:** Any performance short of perfection is a total failure.
- **Over generalization:** Seeing one negative event as a never-ending pattern of defeat.
- **Disqualifying the positive:** Rejecting positive experiences by insisting they "don't count."
- **Catastrophizing:** Exaggerating the importance of errors or problems.
- **"Should" statements:** Trying to motivate yourself to improve with "shoulds" and "shouldn'ts."
- **Self-labeling:** An extreme form of over generalization; instead of saying "I made a mistake," the person attaches a negative label, i.e., "I am a loser."
- **Personalization:** Blaming yourself inappropriately as the cause of a negative event.
- **Reflect on the things that you say about an event** just after something difficult or stressful takes place, and think about how realistic and helpful it is for you to come to such conclusions.

RULES TO PROMOTE RATIONAL THINKING

- * It doesn't do anything to me.**
- * Everything is exactly the way it should be.**
- * All humans are fallible creatures.**
- * It takes two to have a conflict.**
- * The original cause is lost in antiquity.**
- * We feel the way we think.**

Institute For Creative Aging

If I had my life to live over, I'd try to make more mistakes next time.
I would limber up. I would be sillier than I have been this trip.
I know of very few things I would take seriously. I would be crazier.
I would be less hygienic.

I would climb more mountains, swim more rivers and watch more sunsets.
I would eat more ice cream and less beans.
I would have more active troubles and fewer imaginary ones.

You see, I am one of those people who lives life prophylactically and sensibly and sanely, hour after hour, day after day.
Oh, I have had my moments, and if I had it to do over again,
I'd have more of them .

In fact, I'd try to have nothing else .
Just moments, one after another,
instead of living so many years ahead each day.

I have been one of those people who never go anywhere
without a thermometer, a hot-water bottle, a gargle,
a raincoat and a parachute.

If I had it to do over again, I would go places and
do things and travel lighter than I have.
If I had my life to live over, I would start barefooted
earlier in the spring and stay that way later in the fall.

I would play hooky more . I wouldn't make such
good grades except by accident.
I would ride on more merry-go-rounds.
I'd pick more daises.