

A Dateline Special
“Stress Out”
2002

Dateline's National Stress Test

Dateline's National Stress Test was designed in cooperation with a stress researcher at North Carolina State University. Answer the questions below to see how much stress you have and how you scored. In the past 12 months have you:

	Points
1. Suffered a big investment setback? 55 points	_____
2. Had too little sleep on a regular basis? 45 points	_____
3. Started a serious relationship, or started dating again after a break-up? 45 points	_____
4. Dated several people? 35 points	_____
5. Are you the one doing the asking out? 5 points	_____
6. Are you a single parent? 70 points	_____
7. Had constant frustrations over paying bills? 60 points	_____
8. Not enough time for family and friends? 40 points	_____
9. Not enough time for yourself? 45 points	_____
10. Experienced the death of a child? 100 points	_____
11. Made frequent short trips from home? 30 points	_____
12. Traveled for long periods of time? 10 points	_____
13. Had travel-related problems, such as delays and cancellations? 35 points	_____
14. Faced frequent performance evaluations in your job? 45 points	_____
15. Frequently had a difficult commute to work? 35 points	_____
16. Had to give frequent public speeches? 40 points	_____
17. Started a new job or had major changes in your job? 45 points	_____

18. Had a major salary loss for you or your spouse? **60 points** _____
19. Suffered the death of a parent, sibling, spouse or close friend? **90 points** _____
20. Been responsible for a sick or elderly loved one? **75 points** _____
21. Frequently had trouble with your boss or co-workers? **50 points** _____
22. Quit or retired from your job? **40 points** _____
23. Frequently worked too many hours on the job? **45 points** _____
24. Frequently had too many assignments or deadlines? **45 points** _____
25. Constantly competed to maintain your position? **50 points** _____
26. Had a chronic illness or long-term hospitalization of you,
a family member or close friend? **80 points** _____
27. Had too many errands and not enough time? **40 points** _____
28. Frequently rushed your children to and from too many activities? **35 points** _____
29. Often contended with a difficult or misbehaving child or teen? **45 points** _____
30. Had frequent problems with computers, cell phones or pagers? **30 points** _____
31. Had a significant new expense, a major purchase or renovation? **45 points** _____
32. Frequently had to wait in lines or on the phone? **30 points** _____
33. Often contended with rude and/or poor service? **30 points** _____
34. Engaged in frequent dieting or felt major guilt about your weight? **35 points** _____
35. Had a pregnancy, miscarriage or abortion within the household? **60 points** _____
36. Experienced increased tension in a close relationship? **55 points** _____
37. Suffered impotence, other sexual problems or constant friction
with your partner about sex? **55 points** _____
38. Had a marital separation or major relationship breakup? **70 points** _____

Total: _____

Total Your Points:

280 or less – Stress is not a problem for you
You run a low risk of getting a stress-related illness

281-780 – You are at risk of getting sick
Stress can lower immunity

781 and above – Get a check-up

Ways To Combat Stress:

YOU DON'T HAVE to get hit by an earthquake or lose your job to suffer real stress. Life's everyday bumps and bruises can be tough enough. And no matter how severe your stress, there are healthy ways to combat it. Our experts have come up with 10 of the best coping tips:

1) Listen to music, read, write in a journal

"In writing, try to get in touch with your feelings and try to make sense of what's happening to you," says North Carolina State psychology professor Kitty Klein, who teaches about stress and coping, and is the architect of Dattelmeier's National Stress Test. "And it's more effective than a lot of talk therapies."

2) Do yoga and meditation

3) Exercise

4) Spend time with family and friends

5) Play with pets

"It's a really nice feeling to have a very affectionate social relationship, even if it's not with another person," says Dr. Liz Biondo, a psychology professor and blood pressure expert at New York's St. John's University.

6) Think positively and have some laughs

7) Take time off

8) Enjoy nature

"Pay attention to things that are beautiful," says Biondo. "The way a child's face looks, the sunlight on the water looks."

9) Eat and drink, but in moderation

10) And, last but not least – sex

"Just feeling loved is a huge stress reducer," says Pepper Schwartz, a sociology professor at the University of Washington, who has written numerous books on sexuality. "It's not a mystery when someone's in love, that it's good for them."

But no matter what you do, there is no such thing as a life without stress. So it's how we avoid, plan for, and cope with our inevitable pressures and problems that will make our hectic and beleaguered 21st Century lives a little more manageable.