

# PHYSICAL SIGNS OF STRESS

This tool has been adapted from 'The Anxiety and Phobias Workbook' by Edmund J Bourne, and is very simple and straightforward. It provides you with a snapshot of the approximate levels of stress you are experiencing at the time you use it.

One of the easiest ways to spot the ebb and flow of stress in your life is to monitor the physical effects it can have. Take a few minutes to consider each of the physical symptoms listed below, and tick each one that you have experienced to any significant degree in the last month. By 'significant', we mean beyond what you may usually experience. Once you've ticked all the relevant 'symptoms', add up the number of boxes you ticked and write that figure in the 'Total' box at the bottom of the page.

Headaches (Migraine or Tension)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Digestive Upsets (Cramps/Bloating)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Backaches	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rapid heart rate (even at rest)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tight Muscles	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stomach Pain or Ulcer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neck and/or Shoulder Pain	<input type="checkbox"/>	Constipation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jaw Tension	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hypoglycemia	<input type="checkbox"/>
Muscle Cramps/Spasms	<input type="checkbox"/>	Appetite Change	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nervous Stomach	<input type="checkbox"/>	Colds	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Pain	<input type="checkbox"/>	Profuse Perspiration	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nausea	<input type="checkbox"/>	Overeating	<input type="checkbox"/>
Insomnia (Sleeping Poorly)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Weight Change	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fatigue/Lack of Energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Use of Alcohol/Tobacco/Drugs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cold Hands and/or Feet	<input type="checkbox"/>	Skin Conditions (e.g. Rash)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tightness or Pressure in the Head	<input type="checkbox"/>	Allergies	<input type="checkbox"/>
High Blood Pressure	<input type="checkbox"/>	Teeth Grinding	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diarrhoea	<input type="checkbox"/>	TOTAL NUMBER OF 'SYMPTOMS' TICKED:	<input type="text"/>



# PSYCHOLOGICAL SIGNS OF STRESS

Once you've assessed the impact stress is having on your physical well-being, it's time to turn your attention to the effect it's having on your psychological well-being.

So, just as you did for the physical symptoms, consider each of the psychological effects of stress listed below, and tick each one that you have experienced to a significant extent in the last month. Use the same criteria for defining 'significant' as you did for physical symptoms. Then, just as you did before, total up the number of ticks and write that figure in the 'Total' box at the bottom of the page.

Anxiety	<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty Concentrating	<input type="checkbox"/>
Depression	<input type="checkbox"/>	Frequent Irritability	<input type="checkbox"/>
Confusion or 'Spaciness'	<input type="checkbox"/>	Restlessness	<input type="checkbox"/>
Irrational Fears	<input type="checkbox"/>	Frequent Boredom	<input type="checkbox"/>
Compulsive Behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/>	Frequent Worrying or Obsessing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Forgetfulness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Frequent Guilt	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feeling Overwhelmed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Temper Flare-Ups	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hyperactivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Crying Spells	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mood Swings	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nightmares	<input type="checkbox"/>
Loneliness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Apathy	<input type="checkbox"/>
Problems with Relationships	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual Problems	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dissatisfied at Work	<input type="checkbox"/>		

TOTAL NUMBER OF 'SYMPTOMS' TICKED:



# WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

So, what are your scores telling you? Well, remember the important point we mentioned right at the beginning - your scores are only a guide - an indication of where you are at with stress right now. If you run through this tool again in a few weeks' time, you may find your scores are very different. And, whatever your score - low or high - remember to use it to your advantage. If you scored low, what is helping you stay on top of stress right now - what do you need to keep hold of? And, if you scored high, what do you need to change, maybe even offload or avoid altogether?

OK, so with all that in mind, what are your scores telling you? In Box A, write the score from your physical symptoms checklist. And, in Box B, write your score from the psychological symptoms checklist. Then, add boxes A and B together and write the total in the 'Overall Total' box. Finally, compare that overall total figure with the score ranges listed below to get a feel for where your stress levels are at right now.

And, of course, like we said a moment ago, knowing where your stress levels are at is only of any real value if you do something with that knowledge. So, before you put this tool aside and move onto something else, follow through. Depending where you are on that score range, identify some things you need to hold onto to keep your stress levels down, and/or some things you need to reduce or remove to bring those levels back down to more manageable levels.

A. TOTAL NUMBER OF 'SYMPTOMS' TICKED (PHYSICAL):

B. TOTAL NUMBER OF 'SYMPTOMS' TICKED (PSYCHOLOGICAL):

**OVERALL TOTAL NUMBER OF 'SYMPTOMS' TICKED (A + B)**

## WHAT DOES YOUR SCORE INDICATE?

A Score of 0 - 7 suggests your stress levels are: LOW

A Score of 8 - 14 suggests your stress levels are: MODERATE

A Score of 15 - 21 suggests your stress levels are: HIGH

A Score of 22+ suggests your stress levels are: VERY HIGH

