Pinpointing Hidden Stress

Each section in this workbook contains vital questions to ask yourself that are meant to shake you up and get you thinking about whether you are suffering ongoing stress in any critical areas of your life.

Begin with Section 1: My Physical Body. After that, you are welcome to skip to any section you like, but only after completing section one. Your body is where you live, and because over 50% of all stress is physically related, it's essential to begin there.

Take steps to reduce stress in any areas that could use improvement, and you will see a more confident, rested, and peaceful version of yourself. Keep in mind that it can be helpful to make small changes over time, rather than trying to make too many changes at once.

Section 1: My Physical Body

**My Nutrition**

Honestly, how healthy is my diet? What do I eat most (grains, vegetables, fruit, milk or dairy, fats, meats)?

Eating whole foods daily, such as fruit, vegetables (including seaweed and other sea vegetables), healthy grains, nuts and seeds, organic dairy, fowl, and fish, is essential.

What foods or beverages do I partake of that I know or suspect might harm my body (processed food, fast food, sugar, salt, caffeine, alcohol, and sodas)?

Food sensitivities can cause fatigue, irritability, sadness, and hypersensitivity (FISH). Often, it's the foods we are sensitive to that cause cravings.

* What do I weigh? \_\_\_\_\_How many pounds, if any, would I like to lose? \_\_\_\_\_
* What is a healthy goal weight for me? \_\_\_\_\_
* What is my BMI (Body Mass Index)? \_\_\_\_\_
* How many calories should I be consuming daily for a healthy weight? \_\_\_\_\_

*How to Calculate Your Body Mass Index*

 First things first, let's see what your body mass index is. Your body mass index judges your weight relative to your height and your risk for weight-related health problems. A BMI between 25 and 29.9 is considered approximately 20% overweight with moderate health risks but not obese. However, if you're female with a waist measurement over 35" (or a male with a waist measurement over 40"), a BMI between 25 and 34.9 is considered high risk. A BMI of 30 or higher is considered obese, and additional health problems may arise, such as heart disease, diabetes, or high blood pressure.

You don't have to look overweight to be obese. How's that, you ask? You can have far too much fat on your frame for your height and bone size. Normal Weight Obesity is a growing concern among Americans, a condition where you have far too much fat compared to muscle. Your body mass index won't mean much if you're small but overfat. However, you still risk heart disease, diabetes, and other obesity-related diseases.

* Multiply your weight (in pounds) times 703.
* Multiply your height (in inches) times itself.
* Take the number you got in Step 1 and divide it by the number you got in Step 2. The result is your BMI.

*How to Determine a Healthy Goal Weight*

Women: Calculate 100 pounds for your first five feet and 5 pounds for every inch after

Men: Calculate 106 pounds for your first five feet and 6 pounds for every inch after

Add 10% to this weight to find your highest range of weight.

**NOTE:** This does not take into account your frame size.

*The Formula for Determining Your BMR & Daily Caloric Needs*

Here's how to calculate your Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR) based on a healthy goal weight. Notice that I said based on a healthy goal, not your current weight.

Let's say you want to weigh 170 pounds. You would multiply the healthy weight of 170 lbs x 10 = 1,700 Calories (your BMR). Next, you will multiply your BMR x your Activity Level (see below):

* Sedentary x 20%
* Lightly Active x 30%
* Moderately Active x 40%
* Very Active x 50%

1700 x 30% (lightly active) = 510 Calories for Physical Activity. Add 1700 (BMR) + 510 = 2210 Calories. Next, multiply 2210 x 10% (for digestion) = 221 Calories for Digestion

Add your BMR, Physical Activity, and Digestion requirements together: 1700 + 510 + 221 = 2431, the Total Daily Caloric Need to achieve and maintain your healthy goal weight.

What supplements do I take, and why?

What are the combined dosages of all of the supplements I take? Discovering these totals may be tedious, but knowing them is extremely important. You may be taking too much or not enough. So, grab your supplement jars and add up all your daily dosages. Please take a peek at any added ingredients to ensure you are not sensitive to them (soy, milk).

**My Sleeping Pattern**

* How well do I sleep? Very Well \_\_\_ No Complaints \_\_\_ Just OK \_\_\_

Not Well \_\_\_ Poorly \_\_\_

* What hours do I usually sleep? \_\_\_\_\_
* Do I wake up often, have a hard time falling to sleep or back to sleep, go to bed late, or have insomnia or racing thoughts? What sleep problems do I have?

Not getting enough sleep or quality sleep can cause stress syndromes, such as Chronic Fatigue, Chronic Pain, and Fibromyalgia.

**Health/Wellness Concerns**

What about my state of emotional or physical health concerns me?

What diseases do I have or fear to have?

How often does my stomach get upset (gas, acid reflux, indigestion, pain, constipation, diarrhea)?

Where does my body ache or feel pain the most?

What prescription or over-the-counter medications am I taking or supposed to take? Why? Do I need to follow up with my doctor on making any changes to my medication?

Schedule a physical exam if you haven’t had one in a while. Write down your concerns, worries, and complaints ahead of time so you won’t forget them when you get to the doctor’s office.

Sometimes, procrastinating on scheduling a doctor’s visit or refusing to take a medication can cause more stress than necessary. If you experience adverse side effects from medication, inform your doctor immediately. Some medicines can be quite dangerous if you quit cold turkey.

Speak with your doctor about any natural remedies you are interested in trying. Just because they are natural doesn’t mean they won’t interfere with your medications or cause side effects due to an overlapping condition you may have. If your doctor approves but has no training in natural medicine, you might consider requesting a referral to a naturopath. Most insurance companies cover seeing a doctor trained in natural health.

**My Exercise**

When I exercise I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, which I do it for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (length of time) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (how often).

*Example: When I exercise, I walk for 30 minutes 3 times each week.*

What do I like or dislike about exercising?

If I’m not exercising, why not? Is there anything that keeps me from exercising?

The absolute best exercise for relaxation is stretching. Aerobic exercises, such as walking and swimming, and *Isometrics*, a form of exercise where you resist muscle against muscle, are also healthy options.

Section 2: My Home Environment

What do I like about my home environment?

What don’t I like, or what makes me uncomfortable about my home environment?

Is there anything I would like to change? What, where, and why?

* **Living Room \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**
* **Dining Room \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**
* **Kitchen \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**
* **Hallway/Entryway \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**
* **Bathroom \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**
* **Bedroom \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**
* **Home Office \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Whenever you find yourself fatigued, irritable, sad, or hypersensitive, you may find your home or office areas getting messy or cluttered. It’s hard to get organized or care about your spaces when you are feeling under the weather, but getting things cleaned up and organized can have the opposite effect and offer you a wonderful sense of accomplishment. Cleaning and organizing also get you physically moving, which improves blood flow and thought processes which provides an emotional lift.

Section 3: My Spirit & Small Joys

**Spirituality**

I don’t presume to know or to tell others what they should believe spiritually or religiously. Whatever your beliefs, I would only suggest asking yourself if you live those beliefs daily. Does your life reflect who you are, or are you trying to live up to what others expect of you? If so, why? What is the benefit? What is the price?

If you've been fatigued, irritable, sad, or hypersensitive (FISH) for some time now and have visited your doctor or minister to discuss the problem and still feel like a fish out of water, you may not be using your senses enough. We experience aliveness and joy through our senses. Perhaps it is time to engage your senses of sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and spirit.

How often do I leave the house each week to do enjoyable things (library, movies, gardening, or fun shopping)?

Think of one thing you have been putting off doing that you would enjoy. *Just do it!*

Section 4: My Relationships, Affection & Social Activities

How often do I accept or extend invitations to get together with friends, family, or coworkers? What kinds of things do I like to do or would I want to do with others?

When we feel overwhelmed, the last thing we want to do is extend or accept an invitation. The very idea can seem to drain the energy right out of us. But guess what? Unless you are sick or tired, getting out there is one of the best things you can do to re-energize, get your perspective back, and feel good about yourself again.

**My Relationships**

Am I satisfied with the relationships in my life? If not, why not?

Your close, personal relationships must contain unconditional love, the ability to be emotionally intimate, and the ability to share simple pleasures.

On a piece of paper, list the relationships you are happy with and write down why they make you happy. This list will help you to remember those who care about you, admire you, and who you can turn to for emotional support.

Now, do the same for the relationships that make you unhappy. Write down how they make you feel, why they make you miserable, what your responsibility for this unhappiness is (if at all), and what, if anything, you can do to make things better.

Sometimes, others can make you feel like you are somehow "less" when they don't understand you. And, sometimes, it's your thoughts and feelings about misunderstandings that can bring you down. Low self-esteem, yours or theirs, can negatively affect and sabotage an otherwise healthy relationship.

Broken relationships that never mend can cause considerable ongoing stress, negatively impacting your immune system. If you cannot improve things, write down your feelings and options for leaving your dysfunctional or abusive relationship.

**My Doses of Affection**

How often am I affectionate with others (holding hands, hugs, making love)?

Am I content with the amount of affection I give or receive? Do I need more or less affection in my life? What are my feelings about this?

Am I able to be intimate with anyone in my life? Intimacy means “closeness”. You can be intimate with anyone, as intimacy does not imply anything sexual. It is a natural emotional component of a healthy relationship. It is simply being close, understanding, or a deep bond. You can be intimate with your best friend, parents, children, and even a pet. Sexuality, on the other hand, involves romanticism, love, passion, and lust in physical expression, which is also healthy under the right circumstances. Am I happy with my sexual life or decision to remain celibate? Why or why not?

If you have ever been a victim of sexual abuse, there’s www.rainn.org, an online resource for anyone who has ever been a victim of sexual abuse at any time in their life, whether male or female.

Section 5: My Daily Personal Activities

**My Technological Activities**

How much time do I spend sitting in front of a screen (TV, phone, computer) absorbing EMFs (electromagnetic frequencies) daily? Which of these activities do I involve myself in the most?

What am I achieving or accomplishing by doing so (work, socializing, education, entertainment)?

Is any of this spent time unproductive in any way? \_\_\_\_\_ How so? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

How much unproductive time is spent on any given day? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

How might I better balance my time and energy around these activities? Is there anything I am procrastinating about or trying to avoid?

Be mindful of what you watch on the computer, television, and movies. You may think stimulating dramas, argumentative reality shows, horror flicks, and breaking news are entertaining, but they are draining and life-shortening.

Anything disturbing or feeds your eyes and ears negativity causes a host of adverse chemical reactions in your body. Instead, opt for sense-based activities that engage sight, sound, touch, taste, and hearing that make you feel good about life.

**My Common Daily Personal Activities**

I spend most of my waking hours (doing this):

I wish I had more time to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank).

You will waste enormous energy just thinking about a thing and never taking action. To do so is self-defeating. Avoiding the things that could bring you joy and satisfaction will only lower your opinion about yourself and your self-esteem. Do the things that you keep wishing you had more time to do. Do them now before there is no more time.

Section 6: My Learning & Creative Activities

Over the past few weeks or months, I learned how to:

I have always wanted to learn how to: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I’m good at, used to be good at, or would like to be good at:

It is scientifically proven that your brain cells renew when your mind actively engages in new learning. Learning something new will increase your mental capacity for years to come. Some ideas include crossword puzzles, hobbies, reading, games, learning new languages, and taking classes.

Section 7: My Career & Finances

Am I working in a job I like? \_\_\_\_\_

What do I like about it?

What do I not like about it?

To be able to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank) in a career or as a way to earn money would make me very happy.

Is there anything I have been procrastinating on that would get me closer to being happier about my work? What is it, and why?

If I were rich, what would I do with my money?

In what shape are my finances?

Excellent \_\_\_ Good \_\_\_ OK \_\_\_ Bad \_\_\_ Terrible \_\_\_ OMG! \_\_\_

What can I do to gain better control over my finances?

Tips to Cut Back on Spending

* Balance your checkbook.
* Create a budget and stick to it.
* Stop unnecessary overspending, especially with credit cards.
* If you can afford to, pay half the interest fee on credit cards on top of your credit card payment each month.
* Take a sack lunch to work.
* Save an amount of money each month.
* Rent fewer movies or turn off paid TV.
* Eat out less.
* Trade babysitting with other parents.
* Visit dollar, thrift, consignment, and Amazon stores for great bargains.
* Learn about investing your money, IRAs, and other retirement options.
* Consider earning income for what you know. Write an e-book, create and sell a product, or offer services.
* Think in terms of food, shelter, and clothing. If a purchase is unrelated to one of these, don’t spend, at least for a designated time.

Part 8: My SMART Goal Map

Choose **SMART goals** (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely) for each section above that you feel requires modification or change. Don’t make the mistake of trying to change too much all at once. More minor changes serve to become positive habits in the long term.

**My Body:** (My #1 priority every day.)

**My Environment**

**My Spirit/Joy**

**My Socializing, Relationship/Doses of Affection**

**My Daily Personal Activities**

**My New Learning/Creativity**

**My Career/Finances**

**NOTES:**

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