

UNDERSTAND YOUR STRESS TYPE

Acute vs Chronic Stress - Which Do You Have?

Situational Stress - Acute Stress

Acute stress often arises with difficult, acute events in your life. Acute events are those that last for a specific period of time rather than lasting for decades or a lifetime.

The stress associated with these events tends to diminish or vanish when the situation ends. Extreme examples are events like the death of a loved one, a divorce/relationship breakup, or loss of wealth.

Acute conditions tend to appear suddenly and last for a relatively short time.

Underlying Stress - Chronic Stress

Chronic stress is long-term or underlying stress. It can arise in several ways including:

- Dissatisfaction with aspects of your life such as work, money, health or relationships
- Internal Incongruence - a mismatch between your thoughts and your current circumstances. What you want vs what you have and where you're at
- Fears, which can be overcome. Not all fears are obvious. We all have fears
- Limiting beliefs, which can be overcome.

Are you carrying long-term stress that undermines and even sabotages your happiness, satisfaction and joy, and keeps you from living your best life?

Chronic conditions develop slowly and tend to worsen over time. These can last years.

What kind of stress are you experiencing?

- Acute Stress from an external event like a divorce or the death of a loved one?
- Chronic, ongoing stress eg because you are unhappy with aspects of your current conditions. Internal incongruence?

Stress keeps you from living your best life and can have serious health consequences.

Your work: Write down the kind of stress that you are experiencing, acute or chronic or maybe both, and where you think it is coming from.

THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF STRESS

**When it comes to stress, can you “tough it out”
and ignore the stress?**



Should you?



**What are the
ramifications?**



**What are the
alternatives?**

Ongoing stress takes its toll on your body, mind and spirit.

At best it holds you back from living your best life and at worst, it is very destructive.

Stress can impact your happiness, creativity, productivity, sleep, weight and overall health. It increases the likelihood that you'll develop serious health issues. Chronic health conditions can develop slowly and tend to worsen over time. These can last years. But it doesn't have to be this way, which is why this guide was created.

A truly happy, stress-free life is rewarding, satisfying, full of fun. It is based on balance - the integration of the body, mind and spirit.

THE STRESS-BUSTING PATHWAY

1: The Bento Box of Emotions

We often have mixed emotions about an event, even when one emotion is totally dominant. We call this the Bento Box of Emotions.

Within every stressful event is a “bento box of emotions,” a mixture of both positive and negative emotions, even if you cannot see that at the time.

If you experience the death of a loved one who was battling a lingering disease, you might experience grief, relief, regret, resentment, insecurity, but possibly also joy at their release.

Imagine that your best friend gets a big promotion, signs a major deal, wins a substantial amount of money, falls in love, or some other wonderful life-changing event occurs for them. Of course you feel good for them, but there are also some uncomfortable feelings going on within you. You are happy they are doing well, but you might feel that life is not going as well for you. If you think about the negative emotion contained within this positive event, you might find the emotion of resentment. This is why you can't feel 100% completely happy for your friend. There's nothing at all wrong with you, it's simply a limiting belief that's coming up through this positive event.

Now imagine the same friend does not get the promotion, loses the major deal, loses a substantial amount of money, gets dumped, or some other unhappy event occurs. Of course you console them, but there's also some positive emotion lingering within you. You might even feel guilty that your life is going so well compared to theirs. You might believe that if they were a little wiser, like you, they would understand how this event might turn out to be good for them in the long run.

Your work: Recognise the mixed emotions in your acute stressful events and in your chronic sources of stress, and then work on the positive aspects. See if you can reinterpret a situation as not 100% bad or as having some upside. People can find this difficult in the face of seemingly 100% negative events, but it is do-able, even if all you do is entertain the idea as possible - as that opens the door to new thinking. A small crack lets the light in.

THE STRESS-BUSTING PATHWAY

2: Internal Incongruence - Adaptive Beliefs and Thinking

Consider This: Our thoughts trigger our emotions and our beliefs determine our thoughts. Since we can choose our beliefs, how we feel is up to us - we get to choose how we feel!

While most people might agree that certain kinds of events are inherently stressful, not everyone reacts to the same event in the same way. This indicates an element of choice is possible in how we react to things.

When our beliefs are at odds with the way the world is or at odds with the current status of our relationships, financial situation or career path, we are unlikely to feel happy. We might feel stressed.

The bigger that gap between our beliefs and our current circumstances, the more unhappy we feel, and the more stressed we are.

How do your current circumstances in key areas of your life compare with your beliefs and how you'd like your life to be?

The three main areas where most people feel stress are

1. Money / work
2. Health
3. Relationships.

Your work: Identify your main stress factors and imagine ways to describe them in completely different terms, based on a different set of beliefs.

Re-frame the situations and events that currently cause you stress and make up a set of completely different beliefs so that the situation seems to be less negative or even neutral. If that's difficult, imagine someone who is not stressed by these events / situations and describe their beliefs.

Write down a stress situation that you face and then deconstruct it, using the example and info on the next page.

THE STRESS-BUSTING PATHWAY

2: Internal Incongruence - Adaptive Beliefs and Thinking Example

I have to drive through terrible traffic every day, and other drivers are lousy. I sit in traffic 5 days a week, morning and night. That's 15 or 20 hours a week, totally wasted. I hate it, I'm sick of it. No wonder I'm angry and stressed when I arrive!

Other ways to look at this:

- Time in traffic is My Time. I listen to music, audible, podcasts, whatever takes my fancy (but not the news though!). Who else gets 15 or even 20 hours a week to themselves?
- If I leave for work in time, I won't feel stressed about running late
- Other drivers are doing their best in a difficult situation. Not everyone is a good driver. I think the best of them, I cut them some slack
- I let people into my lane and they smile. It never makes me any later
- I notice the abundance of info around me - billboards and car signage. It's amazing how often I see interesting stuff or a new idea
- I sing, chant, hum, shout - whatever I feel like. Nobody can hear me, I am free!
- I let my thoughts go, I daydream, I have great ideas, I think about positive and helpful things
- My car is my "no worry" zone. I only think constructive thoughts during this "me" time
- I can ring friends, people I want to catch up with, re-establish contacts (using hands-free and obeying the laws of course)
- Ultimately, it's my choice where I live, where I work, how I get there and what time I leave. Nobody did this to me, I chose it, so who and what am I getting angry at? (Typically, traffic anger is anger about something else. It can be about work, money, powerlessness, freedom, life dreams and hopes, etc - a deeper issue. So in that sense, traffic stress and anger is a messenger telling us to look at a real, deeper issue in our life)
- Anger and stress are draining my happiness and slowly killing me, but for what? Why would I let that happen when I can choose to see it differently or make different decisions? I don't want my best years to slip away.

When you analyse your stress situations, especially if they involve other people, answer these questions:

- What is another take on this situation, even if you don't currently believe it?
- How might other people deal with this situation?
- You are unique as is everyone else, so we all have different viewpoints. Everyone's viewpoint seems right to them
- Everyone is living their existence as best they can. Everyone is striving for the best life for them.

THE STRESS-BUSTING PATHWAY

3: Fears and Limiting Beliefs

There are 2 kinds of fear: **Rational** Fear and **Irrational** Fear.

Rational fear is fear of things that could hurt us physically or kill us. Rational fear is part of our survival mechanism. All other fear is irrational and arises from our beliefs.

Fear is a survival mechanism that enables us to avoid physical danger. That's useful. But in our safe, modern world, our innate fear mechanism is triggered by perceived threats to our emotional wellbeing and to our ego. These fears can lead to stress, even though the fears are not rational, ie; not able to kill us. You might currently believe that your main fears are real and you might still prefer that something that you fear does not come to pass. That's ok.

Within those two kinds of fear, there is fear of *doing* something and fear of *not doing* something. People with a fear of flying will avoid it. This is a fear of *doing* something. It is a fear (or phobia) that is very real for some people. Eventually, if a reason to travel is strong enough, some people will push past their fear and fly, even if they find it very difficult. In that case, the fear of *not doing* something outweighs the fear of *doing* something They push past the fear and act.

However, for some people, the fear of flying outweighs the FOMO - missing out on what is at their destination, in which case they will miss out on the event or they might drive, even though driving is far more dangerous than flying.

Example: A person might fear public speaking as many people do. Clearly this is not a rational fear as it cannot physically harm or kill us. Consider this:

1. If the upside becomes big enough, a person might push past their fear of public speaking - their fear of *not doing* something outweighs their fear of *doing* it
2. Taking action and pushing past a fear can sometimes enable a person to overcome that fear.
3. Fear of public speaking is, by our definition, irrational. It cannot physically harm us. Underlying that fear is a limiting belief. If pushing past the fear does not overcome that fear, then the limiting belief is too powerful and must be addressed. It is possible to identify that limiting belief and process it so that the fear dissipates.

Your work: **Can you identify the biggest fears underlying your stress? This applies equally to acute and chronic stress factors. Can you entertain the possibility that these fears are irrational? Next step: can you identify a limiting belief that gives rise to this fear?**

THE STRESS-BUSTING PATHWAY

4: De-Stressing Techniques

If you are suffering from acute or situational stress, examine the cause of it and think about how long it will last for. See it as a process that has an end. We have learned several stress-reduction approaches:

- Reinterpret events by re-framing them as not 100% bad
- Examine your beliefs, adopt new more useful beliefs
- The Bento Box of Emotions - look for the good emotions in negative situations and cultivate the good emotions

Identify your main fears that are associated with your stress. Can you see that these fears are irrational?

Identify your limiting beliefs behind these fears:

- Which of these will you implement?
- How will you cultivate them?

Other things you can do:

- Meditation
- Exercise
- Prayer
- An alcohol free month
- Massage
- Affirmations

Your work: Create your stress-reduction plan.

Mega Tip for a Happy Life

Every day, do something that lights you up, that delights, excites or exhilarates you.

Discover and follow your passions. Whatever you really love doing, no matter how small or big it might be, no matter whether it is popular or not, no matter what others might think of it.

How to start? It's easy, be like a kid! Do things for the pure joy of them, give yourself permission to do things just for fun and no other reason. Not for money, nor to be liked, loved, appreciated or admired. Do it just because you will enjoy it.

For starters it could be taking an afternoon off and going to a movie, or buying an icecream. It might be stopping to walk in a park even if only for 5 minutes. It might be just sitting in the sun for 5 minutes and doing nothing! What about 10 minutes?

“All of humanity's problems stem from man's inability to sit quietly in a room alone.”

Blaise Pascal "Pensées"

WHAT'S NEXT?

Want to go even deeper into the Stress-Busting Mindset, to access higher levels of calm, fulfilment, enjoyment and happiness?

Because you downloaded this guide you also qualify for a FREE 30 minute Stress Busting Session

- Understand the deeper causes of stress and how to leave that behind
- Find out what more you can do to reach consistently elevated levels of calm and happiness, and to live more purposefully
- Discover the #1 Stress Factor, and what to do about it.

Claim Your FREE Stress Busting Session Now

**Discover what's holding you back,
and what's next for You!**