



Let's Think About This

After analyzing the four situations, answer the following questions:

1. What bothered the character in each situation?

2. How did this affect the person involved in each situation?

Compare your answers with those in the *Answer Key* on page 32.



Let's Learn

Every day, there may be something that makes you feel uneasy, right? Don't think that it's a sign that you are not well. It's normal. This is a sign of stress. **Stress** is a mentally or emotionally upsetting condition that occurs in response to unpleasant situations. It is capable of affecting one's physical health. What happens when you are tense? Your body's normal condition is disturbed or upset. You don't feel relaxed and in control. When there is too much pressure, you lose some control over yourself.

Think of some situations in your life when you got tense. You were probably worried, upset or disappointed at some time in your life?



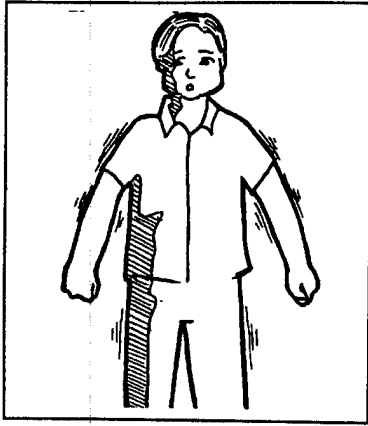
Let's Learn

Do you ever wonder what causes stress? A **stressor** is anything that causes stress. It may be a condition, a situation or a thing. It can be the very loud music that your neighbor plays or the interest that you have to pay on a loan. It can even be the meowing of cats at night, a tight budget, a noisy workplace or a messy room.

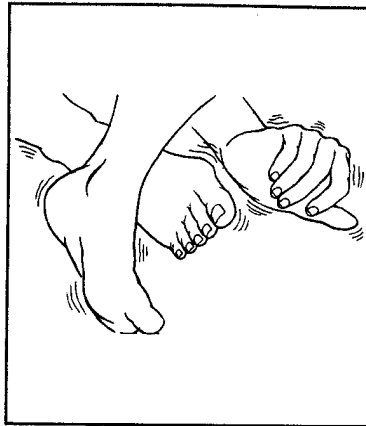


Do you know where stressors come from? A stressor comes from within your body or outside of it. Stressors from within your body are thoughts, beliefs and decisions that cause tension. For example, you suspect that your husband is cheating on you. You are also afraid that your friend will reveal your secrets or that you are going to fail a job interview. These disturb you and cause you tension.

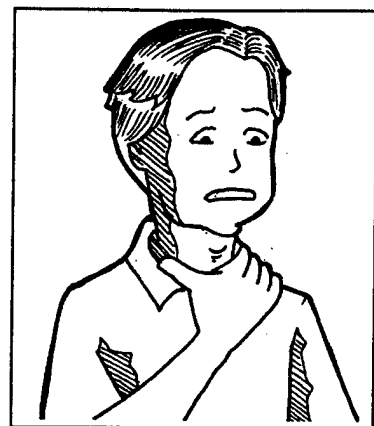




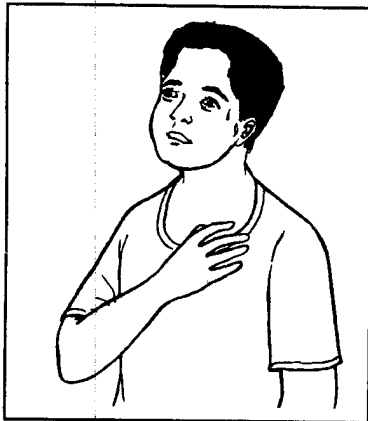
Tense muscles



Cold and sticky skin, hands, feet



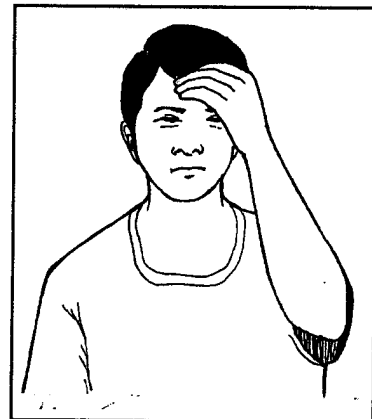
Dry mouth



Shallow or rapid breathing



A frequent desire to go to the toilet



Dizziness



Let's Think About This

After learning about the different symptoms of stress, reflect on your past stressful experiences. What were these situations? And what symptoms did you experience?

Compare your answers with those in the *Answer Key* on page 33.



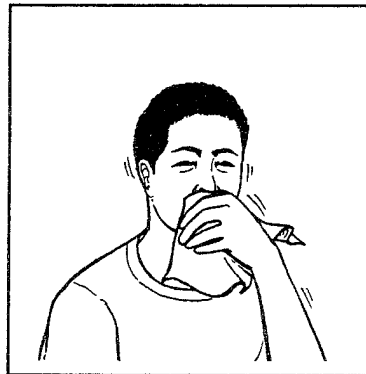
Let's Learn

How would you know if you are suffering from too much stress? There are physical symptoms and behavioral patterns of too much stress. Study the illustrations that follow. Then examine yourself and see if you are experiencing some of these symptoms.

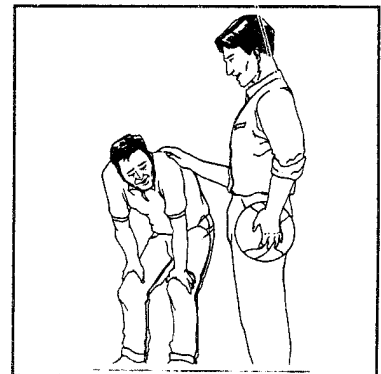
Physical Symptoms of Too Much Stress



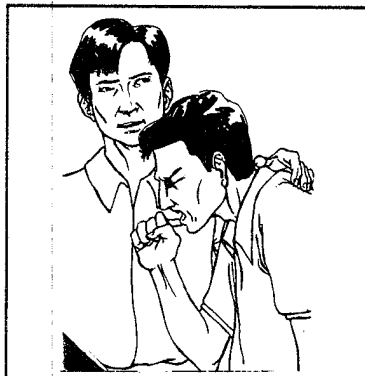
Loss of appetite



Frequent colds



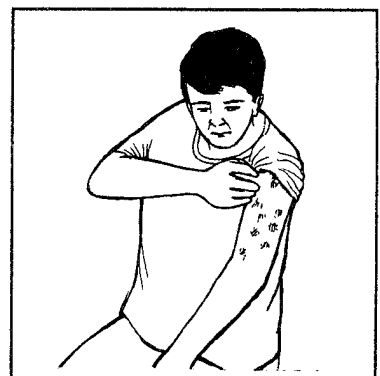
Shallow or labored breathing



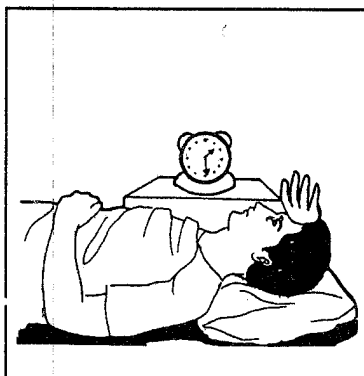
Upset stomach, indigestion and vomiting



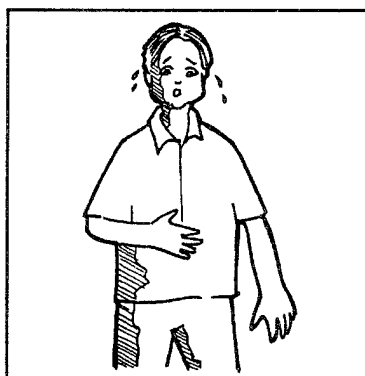
Headache



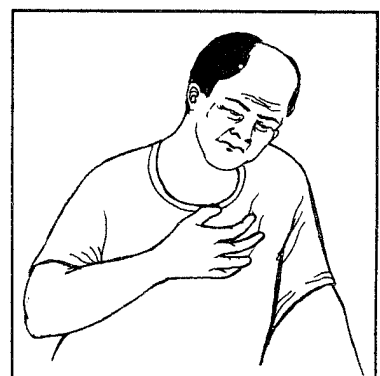
Skin problems



Insomnia



Constipation or diarrhea

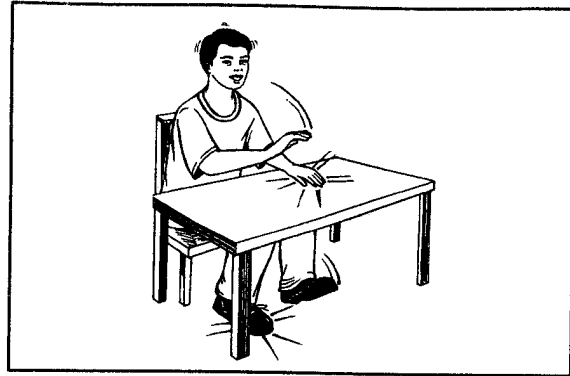


High blood pressure

Do you experience any of the symptoms above? Look at the illustrations of behavioral symptoms of too much stress on the next page. Again, examine yourself and see if you are experiencing them.



Excessive smoking, drinking, and use of drugs



Foot or finger tapping



Let's Try This

Do you want to know your own stress level? Take the following self-test.

Choose a number for each statement and add up your score.

Behavior	Almost always (2 points)	A few times a week (1 point)	Rarely (0 point)
I feel tense, worried or nervous.			
I seem to be low in energy.			
I eat/drink/smoke in response to tension.			
I have migraine (terrible headache) or pain in the neck and shoulders.			
I seem to have trouble sleeping or have difficulty getting back to sleep if awakened.			
I find it difficult to concentrate on what I'm doing because I keep worrying about other things.			
I take pills, medicine, alcohol or other drugs to relax.			
I have difficulty finding enough time to relax.			
If I finally find the time, it is hard for me to relax.			
I feel pressured during my workday.			
I find it difficult to laugh.			

MY TOTAL SCORE = _____

Score	Stress Level
14-22	Very high
10-13	Above average
6-9	Average
3-5	Below average
0-2	Very low

First, stand in front of a mirror. Look at yourself straight in the eyes. Then, start laughing!

You may be taking yourself far too seriously. By learning to laugh at yourself, you will “lighten up” a little. It makes life much more fun...and a lot more healthy too.

Did you enjoy the activity? Is it something you would want to do again and again? Have you heard the saying “laughter is the best medicine?” Do you agree with it? Why? Is it something you would like to pass on to your friends and family members?



Let's Learn

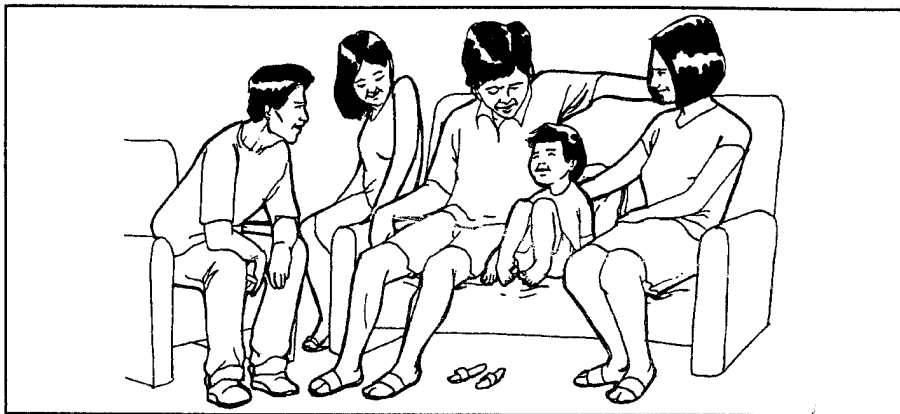
You have learned that stress is a normal part of life. It cannot be avoided. But too much of it can be harmful to your physical, emotional and mental health. You don't have to continue suffering from it. There are healthy ways of reducing stress. Read on to find out what they are.

Healthy Ways of Reducing Stress

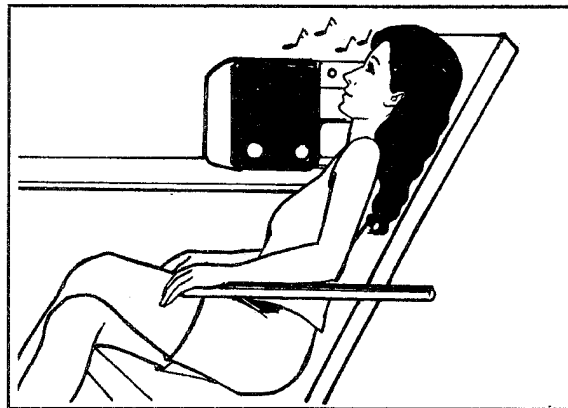
1. **Solve the problem.** Find out what causes your stress. Does it have anything to do with money, your job, your health or your family? If it does, act on it. Don't just think or worry about it. If you are worrying that you will lose your job if you don't stop coming to work late, then come to work early.



2. **Ask help from family members and trusted friends.** Don't keep everything to yourself, especially if it's giving you stress. Talk about the issue. It gives you a better chance of making good judgments. Your friends and family can give you some advice.



3. **Relax.** Listen to your favorite music, read, or do something interesting. Take a long bath. It can reduce your stress. When you feel stressed, take slow, deep breaths.



4. **Exercise.** Do it regularly. It is one of the best ways of reducing stress. Walking, jogging, swimming and climbing the stairs are some simple exercises that you can do to help reduce stress.



5. **Eat a well-balanced diet.** Avoid unhealthy foods, like sweets and junk foods. Also, avoid drinking too much coffee and tea. Instead, drink fruit juices and eat more fruits and vegetables.

