

IS STRESS MAKING YOU SICK?

The Holmes and Rahe Stress Scale measures stress by assigning a number to stressful life changes. To evaluate your stress level, mark down the point value of each of the events that has happened to you in the last year. Keep in mind that some of the things on this list are positive - but that doesn't mean they aren't stressful!

<i>Life event units</i>	<i>Life change units</i>	<i>Life event units</i>	<i>Life change units</i>
Death of a spouse	100	Trouble with in-laws	29
Divorce	73	Outstanding personal achievement	28
Marital separation	65	Spouse starts or stops work	26
Imprisonment	63	Beginning or end school	26
Death of a close family member	63	Change in living conditions	25
Personal injury or illness	53	Revision of personal habits	24
Marriage	50	Trouble with boss	23
Dismissal from work	47	Change in working hours or conditions	20
Marital reconciliation	45	Change in residence	20
Retirement	45	Change in schools	20
Change in health of family member	44	Change in recreation	19
Pregnancy	40	Change in church activities	19
Sexual difficulties	39	Change in social activities	18
Gain a new family member	39	Minor mortgage or loan	17
Business readjustment	39	Change in sleeping habits	16
Change in financial state	38	Change in number of family reunions	15
Death of a close friend	37	Change in eating habits	15
Change to different line of work	36	Holiday	13
Change in frequency of arguments	35	Christmas	12
Major mortgage	32	Minor violation of law	11
Foreclosure of mortgage or loan	30		
Change in responsibilities at work	29	Total =	
Child leaving home	29		

Your Score: =

150 or less: You have a relatively low amount of life change and a low susceptibility to stress-induced health breakdown.

150-300: You may have as much as a 50% chance of a major health breakdown in the next 2 years.

300 or higher: Your odds of stress contributing to a major health breakdown could be as high as 80%.

Where to take it from here

No matter what your score is, there is hope! Stress management can be learned. The more you help your body handle stress, the more energy it can expend on other tasks that life brings your way. The higher your score, the more important it is for you to embrace the stress-reducing suggestions in 'Simple Ways to Manage Stress' (p. 27).