

## Are you overloaded?

Take this simple quiz and find out. Circle the number for how often each question is true for you. Find out your overload score. Add up all the numbers you circled.

	Never	Not Often	Very Often	Almost Always
Do I find myself without enough time to finish my work?	1	2	3	4
Do I find myself unable to think clearly because too many things are happening at once?	1	2	3	4
Do I wish I had help to get everything done?	1	2	3	4
Do the people around me expect too much from me?	1	2	3	4
Do I feel overwhelmed by what people want from me?	1	2	3	4
Do I have a hard time finding time to have fun?	1	2	3	4
Do I get depressed about all the work I have to do?	1	2	3	4
Do I see no end to all the things I need to get done?	1	2	3	4
Do I have to skip a meal to get work done?	1	2	3	4
Do I feel I have too much to do?	1	2	3	4

Your total score = \_\_\_\_\_

## Here is what your score means

10-19 = Low stress    20-25 = Moderate stress    26-40 = High stress

## Most of us have more stress in our life than is healthy for us

While stress before a race helps us win, this type of stress every day can lead to health problems. Too much stress makes blood sugar levels go up. Too much stress can raise blood pressure. Too much stress can lead to overeating. We do not have to be victims of nonstop stress in our lives. Regardless of our current situation we have choices.



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Part # 1643Rev0308

## Stress: What Can I Do?



Your Extended Family.

## Let us look at some real examples

Ask yourself, “Can I change or avoid this stress?” If the answer is yes you have more control than you may have first thought.

### Put into action the three **A**s

**A**void (remove) the stress

**A**lter (change) the stress

**A**ccept the stress (accept it, but keep yourself strong to handle it better)

## What if getting the children off to school each morning is a major stress for you

This is not something you can simply decide not to do. But you can get things ready the night before so everyone is not rushed in the morning. This is an example of changing or altering the situation that is causing your extra stress.

## What about something you can avoid

Your family has asked you to drive to a get together that is far away. Your car is not working and your children are sick. You can choose not to go. You do not need to feel guilty about saying “no” sometimes.

## If you cannot change or avoid the stressful situation, then you must accept it

How do you accept it without feeling stressed out? You must build the strength to handle it. Have you ever noticed how some people seem to handle the difficult challenges of life better than others do? One of the best ways to help us deal better with stress is to eat well and move more. By eating balanced meals you give your body all the vitamins and nutrients it needs.

To move more choose an activity that you enjoy and get your heart rate up. You will release endorphins.

Endorphins are chemicals the body produces naturally that produce happy feelings. Reach out to others. Join support groups for parents. You can face the challenges of life without feeling totally exhausted and stressed. You do this by taking care of yourself.

## Lastly, you can change how you look at things that happen in your life

As a famous scientist once wrote, “It is not so much what happens to us in life that matters most, but how we take it.” Do not say bad things to yourself. Do not say things such as, “I deserved this. Why does this always happen to me?” Give yourself a pep talk instead. Tell yourself, “I can get through this. What can this possibly teach me? How can I grow from it?”

## You cannot have the energy and well being to care for everyone else who depends on you without first doing good things for yourself

Far too often we all try to keep going on empty. This is like trying to pour water out

of an empty pitcher. Fill yourself up. Pamper yourself. Make the time for activities that relax the body. Listen to music. Play with your children. Swing on a swing. Feed the ducks. Enjoy a nap. Sing a song. Watch a sunset. Take in a movie. Read a comic strip. Enjoy sitting in a warm bath. Take a long walk. Read poetry. Write in a journal. Call a friend. Do something spiritual. Sit, close your eyes and take some deep breaths in and out for several minutes. Recognize your stress and take action. Do not let it build up and eat away at you.

## You do not need to be stressed out

Alter, avoid or accept the stressful situation. Build strength. Eat well and get plenty of sleep. Change the way you look at difficult situations. You are the person to make this possible!

