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Stress Management: Life Stress Scale

Michigan State University Extension Service

Fitness 7

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Stress Management

Life Stress Scale

This widely reprinted index lists 43 stressful life events and the value of each in "stress units." Use the blank lines between items to add your own life-stress events, and assign each an appropriate stress unit value by comparing it to the events ranked in the chart.

To use the Life Stress Scale, check the events which have happened to you within the last year. Then add up your total number of stress units.

Holmes and Rahe, who developed this scale, found that a score of 150 gives you a 50-50 chance of developing an illness. A score of more than 300 gives you a 90-percent chance.

Life Event	Stress Unit Value	Your Score	Life Event	Stress Unit Value	Your Score
Death of spouse	100	_____	Death of close friend	37	_____
Divorce	73	_____	Change to different line of work	36	_____
Marital separation	65	_____	Change in number of arguments with spouse	35	_____
Jail term	63	_____	Mortgage over \$10,000	31	_____
Death of close family member	63	_____	Foreclosure of mortgage or loan	30	_____
Personal injury or illness	53	_____	Change in responsibilities at work	29	_____
Marriage	50	_____	Son or daughter leaving home	29	_____
Fired from work	47	_____	Trouble with in-laws	29	_____
Marital reconciliation	45	_____	Outstanding personal achievement	28	_____
Retirement	45	_____	Spouse begins or stops work	26	_____
Change in health of family member	44	_____	Begin or end school	26	_____
Pregnancy	40	_____	Change in living conditions	25	_____
Sex difficulties	39	_____	Revision of personal habits	24	_____
Addition to family	39	_____	Trouble with boss	23	_____
Business readjustment	39	_____			
Change in financial state	39	_____			

Life Event	Stress Unit Value	Your Score
Change in work hours or conditions	20	_____
Change in residence	20	_____
Change in schools	20	_____
Change in recreation	19	_____
Change in church activities	19	_____
Change in social activities	18	_____
Mortgage or loan less than \$10,000	17	_____
Change in sleeping habits	15	_____
Change in number of family get-togethers	15	_____
Change in eating habits	15	_____
Vacation	13	_____
Christmas	12	_____
Minor violations of the law	11	_____
Your Total		_____

For more information on the Life Stress Scale, see Holmes and Rahe, "The Social Readjustment Rating Scale," Journal of Psychosomatic Research 2(1967):213-18. Printed in Medical Self-Care, Number 5, 1978.

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