

# Stress Management for Life

---

A Research-Based Experiential Approach

---

Olpin 🌿 Hesson



Fifth Edition

# Stress Management for Life

A Research-Based, Experiential Approach

**Michael Olpin** Weber State University

**Margie Hesson** South Dakota State University



---

Australia • Brazil • Mexico • Singapore • United Kingdom • United States

Copyright 2021 Cengage Learning. All Rights Reserved. May not be copied, scanned, or duplicated, in whole or in part. WCN 02-200-203

Copyright 2021 Cengage Learning. All Rights Reserved. May not be copied, scanned, or duplicated, in whole or in part. Due to electronic rights, some third party content may be suppressed from the eBook and/or eChapter(s). Editorial review has deemed that any suppressed content does not materially affect the overall learning experience. Cengage Learning reserves the right to remove additional content at any time if subsequent rights restrictions require it.

This is an electronic version of the print textbook. Due to electronic rights restrictions, some third party content may be suppressed. Editorial review has deemed that any suppressed content does not materially affect the overall learning experience. The publisher reserves the right to remove content from this title at any time if subsequent rights restrictions require it. For valuable information on pricing, previous editions, changes to current editions, and alternate formats, please visit [www.cengage.com/highered](http://www.cengage.com/highered) to search by ISBN#, author, title, or keyword for materials in your areas of interest.

Important Notice: Media content referenced within the product description or the product text may not be available in the eBook version.

***Stress Management for Life: A Research-Based,  
Experiential Approach, Fifth Edition***  
**Olpin, Hesson**

VP, Product Management: Thais Alencar

Project Team Manager: Maureen McLaughlin

Product Manager: Courtney Heilman

Product Assistant: Hannah Shin

Marketing Manager: Shannon Hawkins

Content Manager: Samantha Rundle

IP Analyst: Ann Hoffman

IP Project Manager: Kelli Besse

Production Service and Composer: MPS Limited

Art Director: Sarah Cole

Text & Cover Designer: Sarah Cole

Cover Image: Mint Images/Mint Images RF/Getty  
Images

© 2021, 2016, 2013 Cengage Learning, Inc.

WCN: 02-300

Unless otherwise noted, all content is © Cengage.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. No part of this work covered by the copyright herein may be reproduced or distributed in any form or by any means, except as permitted by U.S. copyright law, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

For product information and technology assistance,  
contact us at **Cengage Customer & Sales Support**,  
**1-800-354-9706** or **support.cengage.com**.

For permission to use material from this text or product,  
submit all requests online at **www.cengage.com/permissions**.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2020904568

Student Edition:

ISBN: 978-0-357-36396-6

**Cengage**

200 Pier 4 Boulevard  
Boston, MA 02210  
USA

Cengage is a leading provider of customized learning solutions with employees residing in nearly 40 different countries and sales in more than 125 countries around the world. Find your local representative at **www.cengage.com**.

Cengage products are represented in Canada by Nelson Education, Ltd.

To learn more about Cengage platforms and services, register or access your online learning solution, or purchase materials for your course, visit **www.cengage.com**.

Printed in the United States of America  
Print Number: 01      Print Year: 2020



# Brief Contents

Preface	x	CHAPTER 12 Money Matters	184
<b>PART I</b>		CHAPTER 13 Social Support, Relationships, and Communication	201
<b>Getting Started</b>		CHAPTER 14 Creating a Healing Environment	221
CHAPTER 1 Stress in Today's World	1	CHAPTER 15 Healthy Lifestyles	241
CHAPTER 2 Self-Assessment	15	<b>PART IV</b>	
<b>PART II</b>		<b>Stress-Reduction Techniques</b>	
<b>Understanding Stress</b>		CHAPTER 16 Introduction to Relaxation	259
CHAPTER 3 The Science of Stress	30	CHAPTER 17 Take a Breath	269
CHAPTER 4 The Mind/Body Connection	43	CHAPTER 18 Autogenics	281
<b>PART III</b>		CHAPTER 19 Progressive Relaxation	289
<b>Stress-Prevention Strategies</b>		CHAPTER 20 Guided Imagery: Using Your Imagination	299
CHAPTER 5 The Power of Perception	59	CHAPTER 21 Meditation	311
CHAPTER 6 Thinking and Choosing	74	CHAPTER 22 Yoga	326
CHAPTER 7 Mindfulness	93	CHAPTER 23 Complementary and Alternative Health	344
CHAPTER 8 Managing Emotions	110	CHAPTER 24 What Else Can I Do?	360
CHAPTER 9 The Importance of Values	129	Glossary	376
CHAPTER 10 Spirituality	144	Index	384
CHAPTER 11 Time and Life Management	163		

# Contents

Preface	x	<i>Respiration Rate</i>	17
		<i>Stress-o-Meter</i>	17
		<i>Assess Your Stress Results</i>	18
<b>PART I</b>		<b>2.4</b> Symptoms of Stress: Assessment	18
<b>Getting Started</b>		<b>2.5</b> Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)	19
CHAPTER 1 <b>Stress in Today's World</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2.6</b> Inventory of College Students' Recent Life Experiences	21
1.1 Stress in Today's World	2	<b>2.7</b> Ardell Wellness Stress Test	22
1.2 Stress: What Is It?	3	<b>2.8</b> Student Stress Scale	23
1.3 Yerkes–Dodson Principle	3	<b>2.9</b> Stress Vulnerability Factors	23
1.4 The Terminology of Stress	4	<b>2.10</b> Tombstone Test	25
<i>Challenge (“Good”) and Threat (“Bad”) Stress</i>	4	<b>2.11</b> Daily Stress Diary	25
<i>Acute and Chronic Stress</i>	4	<b>2.12</b> Conclusion	27
1.5 Holistic Health	6		
<i>Understanding Health</i>	6		
1.6 Dimensions of Health	6	<b>PART II</b>	
<i>Physical Health</i>	6	<b>Understanding Stress</b>	
<i>Mental Health</i>	7	CHAPTER 3 <b>The Science of Stress</b>	<b>30</b>
<i>Emotional Health</i>	7	3.1 The Science of Stress	31
<i>Spiritual Health</i>	7	3.2 Stress and the Big Bear	31
<i>Social Health</i>	7	3.3 The Fight-or-Flight Response	32
<i>Holistic Health: Putting It All Together</i>	7	3.4 Physiological Response to Stress	33
1.7 Nature or Nurture	9	<i>Autonomic Nervous System Responses</i>	34
1.8 Sources of Stress	9	3.5 The Stress Response in Today's World	36
<i>Time Management</i>	9	<i>Acute Stress</i>	37
<i>Personal Expectations</i>	9	<i>Chronic Stress</i>	37
<i>Family Expectations and Family Life</i>	10	3.6 The General Adaptation Syndrome	38
<i>Employment Decisions and Finances</i>	10	<i>Stages of the General Adaptation Syndrome</i>	38
<i>Academic Demands</i>	10	<i>Application of the General Adaptation Syndrome</i>	39
<i>Home Environment</i>	10	3.7 The Stress Response and You	40
<i>Relationships</i>	10	3.8 Five Myths About Stress	40
<i>Physical Health Issues</i>	11	<i>Myth 1: In an Ideal World, There Would Be No Stress</i>	40
<i>Environmental Stressors</i>	11	<i>Myth 2: What Is Stressful for Me Is Stressful for You</i>	40
<i>Information Overload</i>	11	<i>Myth 3: Only Unpleasant Situations Are Stressful</i>	40
<i>Choices</i>	11	<i>Myth 4: No Symptoms, No Stress</i>	40
<i>Daily Hassles</i>	11	<i>Myth 5: Stress Is Inevitable, So You Can't do Anything About It</i>	41
1.9 Conclusion	12	3.9 Conclusion	41
CHAPTER 2 <b>Self-Assessment</b>	<b>15</b>	CHAPTER 4 <b>The Mind/Body Connection</b>	<b>43</b>
2.1 Self-Assessment	16	4.1 The Mind/Body Connection	44
2.2 Where Are You Now Stress-Wise?	16	4.2 Psychological Health	44
2.3 Assess Your Stress	17		
<i>Resting Heart Rate</i>	17		
<i>Breathing Pattern</i>	17		



4.3	The Role of Chronic Stress in Disease	45	6.6	Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy	88
	<i>Direct and Indirect Effects of Chronic Stress</i>	45		<i>REBT Guidelines</i>	88
	<i>Allostatic Load</i>	45		<i>ABCDE Technique</i>	89
4.4	Medium-Term Chronic Stress	46	6.7	Conclusion	90
	<i>Effects of Medium-Term Chronic Stress</i>	46			
	<i>Medium-Term Stress and the Immune System</i>	47			
4.5	Long-Term Chronic Stress	48			
	<i>Stress and the Heart</i>	48			
	<i>Stress and Cellular Growth and Repair</i>	49			
	<i>Stress and the Immune System</i>	49			
	<i>Stress and Aging</i>	50			
	<i>Stress and Learning</i>	51			
	<i>Stress and Inflammation</i>	51			
	<i>Other Disease Conditions of Stress</i>	51			
4.6	How the Mind and Body Communicate	52			
	<i>Psychosomatic Illness</i>	53			
	<i>The Placebo and Nocebo Effects</i>	54			
	<i>Psychoneuroimmunology</i>	55			
4.7	Conclusion	56			
<b>PART III</b>					
<b>Stress-Prevention Strategies</b>					
CHAPTER 5 The Power of Perception		59	CHAPTER 7 Mindfulness		93
5.1	The Weeds Crowd Out the Flowers	60	7.1	Mindfulness	94
5.2	The Power of Perception	60	7.2	The Nature of Reality	94
5.3	Perception	61	7.3	The Here and Now	95
	<i>Are You in Danger?</i>	61	7.4	Understanding Mindfulness	96
	<i>Stress Comes from Within</i>	62	7.5	Qualities of Mindfulness	97
5.4	The World Is NOT a Stressful Place	63		<i>Beginner's Mind: Thinking Like a Child</i>	97
5.5	Cognitive Restructuring	65		<i>Nonjudging</i>	97
5.6	Hardiness	66		<i>Acceptance of What Is Happening</i>	98
	<i>Commitment—Turning Problems into Opportunities</i>	66		<i>Nonattachment</i>	99
	<i>Challenge—Change as Challenge Rather Than Threat</i>	66		<i>Nonstriving</i>	99
	<i>Control</i>	67	7.6	Mindfulness as a Way of Being	100
5.7	Putting It All Together	70	7.7	Why Be Mindful?	101
5.8	Conclusion	71	7.8	Benefits of Mindfulness	102
CHAPTER 6 Thinking and Choosing		74	7.9	Experiencing Mindfulness: Testing the Principle	103
6.1	Thinking and Choosing	75	7.10	A Simple Mindful Exercise	104
6.2	Cognitive Distortions	75	7.11	Inner Mindfulness Meditation	105
6.3	Thinking Errors	76	7.12	Ways to Practice Being More Mindful	106
6.4	Cognitive Techniques That Help Overcome Distorted Thinking	77	7.13	Planning for the Future	107
	<i>Positive Self-Talk</i>	77	7.14	Putting It All Together	107
	<i>Thought-Stopping</i>	80	7.15	Conclusion	108
	<i>Power Language</i>	80			
	<i>Going with the Flow</i>	80	CHAPTER 8 Managing Emotions		110
6.5	Underlying Theories and Practices	81	8.1	Managing Emotions	111
	<i>Conditioned-Response</i>	81	8.2	The Physiology of Emotion	111
	<i>Choice</i>	82		<i>The Benefits of Positive Emotions</i>	112
	<i>Levels of Responding</i>	83	8.3	Guilt and Worry	112
				<i>Letting Go of Worry</i>	112
				<i>Guidelines to Help You Manage Worry</i>	112
				<i>Reducing Test Anxiety</i>	113
				<i>Letting Go of Guilt</i>	115
			8.4	Fear	116
				<i>Types of Fear</i>	116
				<i>It's about Growing</i>	116
				<i>Comfort and Discomfort Zones</i>	117
			8.5	Putting It Together	118
				<i>Fear Factors</i>	118
				<i>Strategy for Overcoming Fear</i>	120
				<i>The Fear–Faith Connection</i>	120
			8.6	Anger	121
				<i>Effects of Anger</i>	123
				<i>The Only Reason We Get Angry</i>	123
				<i>Expressing Anger</i>	124
				<i>Anger Blocker</i>	125
			8.7	Hostility	126
			8.8	Conclusion	126

<b>CHAPTER 9 The Importance of Values</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>11.5</b> ABC123 Prioritized Planning	167
9.1 The Importance of Values	130	<i>Phase I: Make a List</i>	167
9.2 Understanding Your Values	130	<i>Phase II: Assign a Value to Each Item on the List, Using ABC</i>	168
<i>Discovering Your Values</i>	131	<i>Phase III: Prioritize Again, Using 123</i>	168
<i>Cognitive Dissonance</i>	132	<b>11.6</b> Quadrant Planning	170
9.3 Carried Away in Mediocrity	133	<i>First Things First</i>	170
9.4 Source of Values	133	<i>Urgency versus Importance</i>	170
9.5 Values within Cultures	134	<i>Quadrant Planning in Action</i>	171
<i>Predominant Values in the United States</i>	134	<b>11.7</b> Lifebalance	173
<i>Predominant Alaska Native Values</i>	134	<b>11.8</b> Keys to Creating Balance	174
9.6 The Dynamic Quality of Values	136	<i>Simplifying</i>	174
9.7 Acquiring Values	136	<i>Doing What Really Matters</i>	174
9.8 Beliefs about Values	136	<i>Don't Just Do Something—Sit There!</i>	175
9.9 Types of Values	137	<i>Balancing Attitude—Balancing Structure and Spontaneity</i>	175
<i>Instrumental and Terminal Values</i>	137	<b>11.9</b> Serendipity	176
9.10 Values Clarification	138	<i>The Three Princes of Serendipity</i>	176
9.11 Creating Your Personal Constitution	138	<i>The Keys to Serendipity</i>	176
<i>Step 1: Identify Your Values</i>	138	<i>Applying Serendipity</i>	176
<i>Step 2: Prioritize Your Values</i>	139	<i>Split-Page Scheduling</i>	177
<i>Step 3: Write a Clarifying Paragraph for Your Values</i>	140	<b>11.10</b> Procrastination	177
9.12 Conclusion	142	<i>Styles of Procrastination</i>	177
		<i>Tips for Overcoming the Procrastination Habit</i>	178
<b>CHAPTER 10 Spirituality</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>11.11</b> Digital Time and Life Management	180
10.1 Spirituality	145	<b>11.12</b> Conclusion	181
10.2 The Spiritual Quest	146		
10.3 Spirituality and Religiosity	146	<b>CHAPTER 12 Money Matters</b>	<b>184</b>
10.4 Research on Spirituality	148	12.1 Money Matters	185
<i>Defining Terms</i>	149	12.2 The ABCs of Money Management	186
<i>Placebo Power</i>	149	<i>Assessment</i>	186
<i>Variables in Religious, Health, and Lifestyle Research</i>	149	<i>Budget</i>	187
<i>Bottom Line on Research</i>	150	<i>Control</i>	188
10.5 Five Qualities of Spiritual Health	150	12.3 Doodads and Credit Cards	189
<i>Meaning and Purpose</i>	151	<i>Doodads</i>	189
<i>Belief in a Higher Power</i>	152	<i>Credit Cards</i>	191
<i>Connectedness</i>	153	12.4 Stress on the Job	193
<i>Compassion for Others</i>	153	<i>Preventing Job Stress</i>	193
<i>Spiritual Behaviors and Meaningful Spiritual Rituals</i>	157	12.5 Additional Tips for Managing Your Money	195
10.6 An Action Plan for Stress Management Through Spiritual Wellness	159	12.6 Can Money Make You Happy?	195
10.7 Conclusion	159	<i>Affluenza</i>	196
		<i>Reference Anxiety—Keeping Up with the Joneses</i>	196
<b>CHAPTER 11 Time and Life Management</b>	<b>163</b>	<i>Money and Relationships</i>	197
11.1 Time and Life Management	164	12.7 Putting It All Together—What the Experts Say	198
11.2 What Is Time Management?	164	12.8 Conclusion	198
11.3 Time and Stress	164		
11.4 Planning for Control	165	<b>CHAPTER 13 Social Support, Relationships, and Communication</b>	<b>201</b>
<i>Pareto's Law</i>	165	13.1 Social Support, Relationships, and Communication	202
<i>Methods of Time Management</i>	166		



<b>13.2</b>	<b>Social Support</b>	<b>202</b>		<i>Which Exercise Is Best?</i>	<b>244</b>
	<i>Types of Social Support</i>	<b>203</b>		<i>Sticking with Exercise</i>	<b>245</b>
	<i>Social Support and Stress</i>	<b>203</b>	<b>15.3</b>	<b>Nutrition</b>	<b>246</b>
	<i>Social Support and Health</i>	<b>204</b>		<i>A Healthy Diet</i>	<b>246</b>
<b>13.3</b>	<b>Relationships</b>	<b>205</b>		<i>Nutrition and Stress</i>	<b>247</b>
	<i>Relationships with Pets</i>	<b>206</b>		<i>Drinking Water</i>	<b>248</b>
	<i>Relationships in Marriage</i>	<b>207</b>		<i>What to Limit or Avoid in Your Diet</i>	<b>248</b>
	<i>Love and Relationships</i>	<b>208</b>		<i>Overeating</i>	<b>248</b>
<b>13.4</b>	<b>Communication</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>15.4</b>	<b>Stress and Healthy Weight</b>	<b>249</b>
	<i>Listening</i>	<b>211</b>		<i>Eating to Cope—The Food/Mood Connection</i>	<b>249</b>
	<i>Touch</i>	<b>214</b>		<i>Unused Glucose</i>	<b>249</b>
	<i>Men and Women—Different Can Be Good</i>	<b>214</b>		<i>The Cortisol Connection</i>	<b>249</b>
<b>13.5</b>	<b>Managing Conflict</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>15.5</b>	<b>Eating Disorders</b>	<b>250</b>
	<i>Styles of Conflict Resolution</i>	<b>215</b>		<i>Types of Eating Disorders</i>	<b>250</b>
<b>13.6</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>218</b>		<i>Causes of Eating Disorders</i>	<b>251</b>
				<i>Factors That Can Contribute to Eating Disorders</i>	<b>251</b>
<b>CHAPTER 14 Creating a Healing Environment</b>		<b>221</b>	<b>15.6</b>	<b>Sleep</b>	<b>252</b>
<b>14.1</b>	<b>Creating a Healing Environment</b>	<b>222</b>		<i>Sleepy Connected Americans</i>	<b>252</b>
<b>14.2</b>	<b>Stress and the Environment</b>	<b>222</b>		<i>How Much Sleep Do You Need?</i>	<b>253</b>
	<i>Types of Environmental Stressors</i>	<b>222</b>		<i>Healthy Sleep Advice</i>	<b>253</b>
	<i>Individual Perceptions</i>	<b>223</b>	<b>15.7</b>	<b>Lifestyle Behaviors to Avoid</b>	<b>254</b>
	<i>Learned Response and the Environment</i>	<b>223</b>		<i>Tobacco</i>	<b>254</b>
	<i>Managing Environmental Stressors</i>	<b>223</b>		<i>Alcohol</i>	<b>254</b>
<b>14.3</b>	<b>A Healing Environment</b>	<b>224</b>		<i>Drugs</i>	<b>256</b>
<b>14.4</b>	<b>Color</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>15.8</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>256</b>
<b>14.5</b>	<b>Light</b>	<b>225</b>			
<b>14.6</b>	<b>Odors and Air</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>PART IV</b>		
	<i>Aromatherapy</i>	<b>226</b>	<b>Stress-Reduction Techniques</b>		
	<i>Air Quality</i>	<b>227</b>	<b>CHAPTER 16 Introduction to Relaxation</b>		
<b>14.7</b>	<b>Noise</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>16.1</b>	<b>Introduction to Relaxation</b>	<b>260</b>
	<i>Perceived Noisiness</i>	<b>228</b>	<b>16.2</b>	<b>Understanding Relaxation</b>	<b>261</b>
	<i>Effects of Noise</i>	<b>228</b>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>Benefits of Relaxation</b>	<b>262</b>
	<i>Relaxing Sound</i>	<b>229</b>	<b>16.4</b>	<b>Getting Started</b>	<b>262</b>
<b>14.8</b>	<b>Temperature</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>16.5</b>	<b>Relaxation Sensations</b>	<b>264</b>
<b>14.9</b>	<b>Taking Control of Your Surroundings</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>16.6</b>	<b>Use Good Judgment</b>	<b>264</b>
	<i>Nature</i>	<b>230</b>	<b>16.7</b>	<b>Time for a Nap—A Power Nap</b>	<b>265</b>
	<i>Organizing and Simplifying</i>	<b>231</b>		<i>Benefits and Background</i>	<b>265</b>
<b>14.10</b>	<b>Ergonomics</b>	<b>233</b>		<i>How the Power Nap Works for Relaxation</i>	<b>265</b>
<b>14.11</b>	<b>Technology and the Environment</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>16.8</b>	<b>Doing the Power Nap</b>	<b>265</b>
	<i>Technostress</i>	<b>234</b>		<i>Adding the Power Nap to Your Daily Routine</i>	<b>266</b>
	<i>Technology and Stress</i>	<b>235</b>	<b>16.9</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>267</b>
	<i>Managing Technology Stress</i>	<b>237</b>			
<b>14.12</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>CHAPTER 17 Take a Breath</b>		
<b>CHAPTER 15 Healthy Lifestyles</b>		<b>241</b>	<b>17.1</b>	<b>Take a Breath</b>	<b>270</b>
<b>15.1</b>	<b>Healthy Lifestyles</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>17.2</b>	<b>Background</b>	<b>270</b>
<b>15.2</b>	<b>Exercise</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>17.3</b>	<b>How Breathing Works</b>	<b>270</b>
	<i>Exercise as a Stress Buffer</i>	<b>242</b>	<b>17.4</b>	<b>Benefits of Relaxing Breathing</b>	<b>272</b>
	<i>Other Benefits of Exercise</i>	<b>243</b>	<b>17.5</b>	<b>Breathing and Relaxation</b>	<b>273</b>
	<i>Components of Physical Fitness</i>	<b>244</b>			



<b>CHAPTER 23 Complementary and Alternative Health</b>	<b>344</b>		
<b>23.1</b> Complementary and Alternative Health	345		
<b>23.2</b> Understanding Complementary and Alternative Health	345		
<i>Complementary Versus Alternative</i>	345		
<i>Most Common CAM Therapies</i>	346		
<b>23.3</b> Categories of Complementary and Alternative Medicine	347		
<b>23.4</b> Applications of the 5 Categories of CAM to Stress Management	347		
<i>Alternative Medical Systems</i>	347		
<i>Mind/Body Interventions</i>	349		
<i>Biologically Based Therapies</i>	350		
<i>Energy Therapies</i>	350		
<i>Manipulative and Body-Based Methods</i>	353		
<b>23.5</b> Types of Massage	355		
<i>Swedish Massage</i>	355		
<i>Self-Massage</i>	356		
<b>23.6</b> Conclusion	357		
<b>CHAPTER 24 What Else Can I Do?</b>	<b>360</b>		
<b>24.1</b> More Stress-Reduction Strategies	361		
		<b>24.2</b> Laughter and Humor	362
		<i>Benefits of Laughter</i>	362
		<i>How Laughter Works</i>	363
		<i>Subjective Nature of Humor</i>	363
		<i>Laughter/Humor Strategies for Stress Prevention</i>	363
		<b>24.3</b> Music	364
		<i>Music and Mood</i>	364
		<i>History of Music</i>	364
		<i>The Effects of Music on the Body and Mind</i>	364
		<i>How Music Works</i>	365
		<i>Which Music Is Best for Stress Management?</i>	366
		<b>24.4</b> What Else Can I Do?	367
		<b>24.5</b> “Solutions” to Avoid	371
		<i>Don't:</i>	372
		<b>24.6</b> Stress Management for Life—Planning for the Future	373
		<b>24.7</b> Conclusion	373
		<b>Glossary</b>	<b>376</b>
		<b>Index</b>	<b>384</b>

# Preface

A little knowledge that acts is worth infinitely more than much knowledge that is idle.

—Kahlil Gibran

*Stress Management for Life* is more than just another book about stress. It is an experience. This book will teach you what you need to know about stress—and it doesn't stop there. You will find a toolbox of skills you can apply immediately to prevent and manage stress in your life. You will learn about stress; you will learn and practice specific techniques, and you will be inspired to continue a life-long program of stress management. *Stress Management for Life* provides information, inspiration, and application—a powerful approach to a healthy, balanced life.

Listen to what this student says about *Stress Management for Life*:

This book helped me to get in touch with myself and the way I view a variety of things in my life. What I learned will help me well into my future. This book should be required reading for every student. The book was very inspirational in motivating me to take action to live a better, stress-free life. The materials and activities were beyond good. With all the perceived stress we experience in our daily lives, on top of the rigorous academic studies, it is easy to let things get to us. This book would help everyone put things into perspective. The book opened my eyes to the variety of stress-relieving exercises I can use throughout my daily life. The things I learned will last a lifetime.

You, too, can learn to replace unhealthy stress with life-enhancing energy. The best news is that it's up to you! You are in charge of the choices you make every day. Through reading, thinking, learning, and actually practicing the strategies presented in *Stress Management for Life*, you will be on your way to a healthier, more balanced, and more productive life. The real power of this book will be found in the action you take. You will learn to experience the benefits of energizing relaxation immediately. And you will be prepared to develop a lifetime plan to assure that these benefits will continue long after your class is over.

*Stress Management for Life* is:

- A practical guide for incorporating stress management into your daily life.
- A holistic-approach to prevent, reduce, and manage unhealthy stress.
- A “how to” book with clear instructions on stress management techniques that work.
- A book that will change your life, enhance your health, and improve your quality of life.

## Overview of *Stress Management for Life*

**Part I: Getting Started** In the introduction to stress management, you will begin thinking about the most common sources of stress facing college students in today's world. *Stress Management for Life* is written to provide you with a holistic approach to stress management. You will learn how each dimension of health—physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and social—can be managed for a more balanced approach to stress management. You will personalize the information by completing a variety of stress self-assessments that will help you understand your stressors and how you handle them. Students often report that this assessment of their stress captures their attention and sets the stage for their motivation to learn and change.

You have complete control over three things in your life: what you think, what you say, and how you behave. To make a change in your life, you must recognize that these gifts are the most powerful tools you possess in shaping the form of your life.

—Sonya Friedman

**Part II: Understanding Stress** Part II explores the physical and psychological implications of stress—how the body and mind communicate. Learn about psychoneuroimmunology and other exciting research on the connection between mind and body. You might be surprised by the comprehensive list of physical symptoms and diseases caused by stress. Could stress be contributing to your chronic headaches, frequent colds, or difficulty sleeping? Find out in Part II.

**Part III: Stress-Prevention Strategies** Part III offers some concrete and practical tools that you can incorporate into your life with immediate results to *prevent* stress in the first place. By applying the POPP formula or living “A Day Above the Line,” you will learn how changing how you think about things can prevent stress and dramatically improve how you feel. You will receive some tips for eliminating stress by managing time and organizing your schedule. You will read about how to control emotions including anger, fear, and worry. Values clarification, spirituality and stress, financial management, and a healing environment are just a few of the exciting topics covered here.

**Part IV: Stress-Reduction Techniques** Despite our best efforts to prevent stress, we know that stress happens. In Part IV you will learn a variety of techniques designed specifically to help you reduce stress. You will be amazed to find that simple techniques like the Power Nap, breathing exercises, meditation, autogenics, and yoga can leave you feeling relaxed and energized. You will learn about massage, guided imagery, the latest in complementary and alternative approaches, and other powerful stress-reduction techniques. You will be able to incorporate the methods that work best for you, and that fit your lifestyle, values, and goals, into a plan from which you will reap benefits for a lifetime.

## New in the Fifth Edition

Each chapter has been revised and updated to keep you current on the latest in stress-management advancements and to help you stay abreast on current stress-related issues.

### New to this edition:

- Sentence-by-sentence revision designed to improve readability. This edition is even more enjoyable to read.
- Updates to the current extent that stress is affecting adult college students.
- New focus on the relaxing effect of soft, slow breathing.
- Additional information on sleep—updated information to help you get better sleep and fall asleep faster.
- New information on how stress affects learning and memory.
- New information on the ways a stressful prenatal environment may increase a person’s reactivity to stressful situations as an adult.

## Features

*Stress Management for Life* is written in a *clear and easy-to-understand* style. The reading level and content are geared for university students like you. This book doesn’t try to cover everything about stress. Instead, it covers everything that matters to successfully prevent and manage stress in your life.

Who said a textbook has to be boring? The authors of *Stress Management for Life* teach stress-management courses to university students every semester. They have taught stress management to thousands of students. They know from experience that the best learning happens in an *interesting, engaging, challenging, and positive* environment. This book has many features to make this a positive and engaging experience for you including:

- **Chapter quotations** for inspiration and insight.
- **Learning Objectives** to clearly guide you in your learning.
- **Keywords**, bolded in the chapter and tied to definitions in the Glossary.



- **Frequently Asked Questions** to capture your interest about things on your mind to which you want answers.
- **Real People, Real Stories**, beginning each chapter with true stories that bring the information to life.
- **Stress Stories** scattered throughout the chapters, which describe the authors' own experiences to help you better understand and relate to the content.
- **Stress Studies** throughout the book to keep you informed on the latest and most relevant research on topics involving stress and stress management.
- **FYI** (For Your Information) tidbits of motivational and interesting information scattered throughout the chapters.
- **Stress-Busting Behavior** checklists for quick, interactive application of content.
- **Culture Connections** that will open your mind and increase your awareness of stress topics from cultures around the world.
- **Time Tips** with specific, proven suggestions from students just like you to help prevent stress by managing time.
- **Key points and a list of key terms** at the end of each chapter to reinforce the chapter's most important content and terminology.
- **Stress-Management Labs** at the end of each chapter to provide you with an opportunity to review and apply important learning.

## To the Instructor

The authors of *Stress Management for Life* are full-time professors who teach stress-management courses every semester, both face-to-face and online, to hundreds of students each year. During their many years of teaching stress management to students across the country, they searched high and low for just the right book for their students. They wanted a book that would:

- Emphasize experiential learning by clearly explaining the “how to” of stress management and prevention.
- Cover the important aspects of stress management without going into so much depth that students get lost and lose interest.
- Capture students' interest by presenting the information in a clear, interesting style with a variety of attention-grabbing features throughout the book.
- Include topics that are sources of stress for college students today—finances, time management, relationships, spiritual stress, and many others.
- Provide motivation and inspiration along with facts.
- Build on a strong foundation of well-researched information.
- Provide opportunities for students to practice relaxation techniques while they are learning the content.
- Be teacher-friendly and include a comprehensive *Instructor's Manual* and test bank.
- Include easy-to-use ancillaries and supplements, including guided relaxation exercises.

The authors wrote *Stress Management for Life* to meet these needs.

*Stress Management for Life* is written so that the chapters can be assigned in the order that works best for you and your students. Combining an activity chapter from Part IV with a chapter from Parts I, II, or III is an especially effective teaching strategy. Students get to start practicing relaxation techniques immediately.

**Ancillaries** A deliberate goal of *Stress Management for Life* and the accompanying ancillaries is to provide you with a ready-to-go package to make your job easier. The authors are teachers, just like you, who know what makes the job easier.

**Stress-Relief Activities** The unique collection of Audio Relaxation Exercises included on the Instructor Companion Site provides clear demonstrations of many stress-management techniques



presented in Part IV of the book. Techniques available on the website include the Power Nap, autogenics, progressive relaxation, relaxing breathing, a mindful relaxation, and three guided imageries. This collection of Relaxation Activities was developed specifically to supplement the content in *Stress Management for Life*. The students will be able to read about the methods and also will have the opportunity to practice the techniques for optimal results.

Guided practice creates powerful experiential learning for effective relaxation. Students who have practiced the relaxation exercises often comment that the exercises became one of the most helpful and useful tools in their stress-management course, enabling them to achieve effective relaxation at home. Many instructors use the Stress-Relief Activities in the classroom to assist them in teaching these methods for relieving stress.

**Cengage Testing Powered by Cognero** Cengage Testing Powered by Cognero is a flexible, online system that allows you to:

- author, edit, and manage test bank content from multiple Cengage solutions
- create multiple test versions in an instant
- deliver tests from your LMS, your classroom, or wherever you want

**PowerPoint Lecture Slides** Spark class discussion with these slides, which are filled with active-learning activities to get students engaged.

## About the Authors

**Michael Olpin** is a professor in the Department of Health Physical Education and Recreation at Weber State University in Ogden, Utah, where he teaches courses in stress management, mind/body wellness, and wellness coaching. His background includes instruction in stress management at four institutions of higher education and more than 30 years of studying the subject. He has published other books on stress management including, *The World is NOT a Stressful Place*, and *Unwind: 7 Paradigms of a Stress-Free Life*. He has presented many workshops and papers on stress management and mind/body wellness both in his own state and around the country. He consults privately for individuals and corporations in stress management, along with other areas of health and high-level wellness.

**Margie Hesson** is a Registered Nurse and retired College of Nursing faculty at South Dakota State University. She is endorsed by the American Holistic Nurses Association as a Certified Holistic Stress Management Instructor. She is the author of the *Journal for Stress Management for Life*, two general-audience books on stress and healthy living, and is a contributing author to numerous textbooks. In addition to more than 30 years' experience as a nurse and a teacher, she has travelled around the world exploring health care in other countries and is a frequent presenter on health-promotion topics at the state, national, and international levels. Professor Hesson developed the Stress Management for Life course for students at South Dakota State University.

## Acknowledgments

This fifth edition couldn't have happened without the help and support of many. Thanks to all the professionals at Cengage for their valuable contributions. Many others worked behind the scene and we thank each of them for moving this book through the steps to publication. We also appreciate the guidance from Dr. James Hesson. As an experienced author, his suggestions and insights helped shape the book from the very beginning.

Thanks, too, to those who served as reviewers: Jerome Kotecki, Ball State University; Brenda Moretta Guerrero, Our Lady of the Lake University; Kahlil Kuykendall, George Washington University; Yasmine Harding, Towson University; and Alissa Leavitt, Portland State University. We appreciate their time and energy, which helped us make this fifth edition even better. Their suggestions and wise advice enhanced the quality of this book immeasurably.

**Michael's Acknowledgments** It feels to me like people are more stressed than ever. As I watch the crazy way things unfold around us, and as I work with people who struggle with so many personal challenges, it's no wonder stress levels continue to rise. That being said, I am so happy with the way the information in this book continues to help people with their stress. And even more exciting is the knowledge that people who use this textbook don't sell it back to the bookstores. They keep it and share it with their family and friends. Together, we are working to solve a problem that everybody struggles with and nobody needs or wants. That's good news!

None of this could have happened, however, without the passion and commitment of my wonderful co-author, Margie Hesson, and all the terrific folks at Cengage who helped construct this text. They see the same things that I do. It's clear they are as eager as I am to make an impact. I am deeply appreciative of each person who played a part in putting this book together.

I am also grateful to my wonderful wife, Shanyn, and my four awesome kids, Analise, Erica, Adam, and Ben who continue to be my greatest sources of inspiration, joy, and happiness. I love them, dearly.

I'm also thankful for all the thoughtful students and instructors with whom I have worked over the years. Curiously, our wisest ideas and best information seems to come not when we are pouring through books and articles on stress management, but in the middle of lively classroom discussions. Someone asks a question, we play with it, and an insight hits us with startling clarity. We test it, and it proves to be true. This tells me we are moving in the right direction.

**Margie's Acknowledgments** Thanks to my co-author, Dr. Mike Olpin, for his expertise in stress management, positive attitude, and work ethic. His years of teaching stress management have resulted in a keen understanding of how to help others manage stress. I am grateful for the rich and rewarding professional relationship with Mike.

Photographer Jenny Evans of Eden Blue Photography provided professional pictures and expert consultation on the photos. Thanks to Jenny for always capturing the image we envisioned to help communicate visually what we couldn't always say with words.

Thanks go to my colleagues and students at South Dakota State University College of Nursing. Many of my students contributed personal stress stories and valuable suggestions in an effort to help other students learn about stress management.

My family continues to be a source of inspiration to me, and I feel very blessed to have them in my life. Thanks to our children, David Hesson and Jenny and Rich Evans. Most of all, I am grateful for my #1 stress-reliever—my husband, Jim. He is my greatest supporter, and I can't thank him enough for encouraging me to set goals and embrace new opportunities. I continue to be inspired by Jim's sincere desire to help others through his writing. His textbook, *Weight Training for Life*, is written to help others and I tried to model his commitment in our book.

# Stress in Today's World



Rudi Von Briel/PhotoEdit

Without stress, there would be no life.

—Hans Selye

Is stress always bad?

Stress seems to be everywhere. Can I do anything about it, or is it just an inevitable demand for living in today's world?

Was I born with a specific ability to manage stress? Is successful stress management a result of heredity or the environment?

## Learning Objectives

Study of this chapter will enable you to do the following:

- 1.1 Define the terms *stress* and *stressor*.
- 1.2 Define and explain the similarities and differences between eustress and distress.
- 1.3 Differentiate among acute, acute episodic, and chronic stress.
- 1.4 Relate stress to the five dimensions of holistic health—physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and social.
- 1.5 Discuss some of the most common stressors college students experience today.

**Lian's Story** Lian was about to graduate, but reflecting on her first year of college still brought some painful memories. Here is Lian's story.

\*\*\*

My first year of nursing school proved to be more stressful and more challenging than I had bargained for. It wasn't just the 18 credits and 6 lab hours that had me floundering. I was also working 20 to 30 hours per week at a local grocery store and trying to maintain a social life.

Early in the semester, I began to feel the stress. I started cutting back on my social life because I needed to study or work. Day after day, I kept reminding myself that this situation was "just for this semester" and "I can get through this."

My stress started affecting me physically. By the first week of October, I had lost 5 pounds and was beginning to have stomach cramps nearly every day. My weight loss and stomach cramps were caused mainly by my not eating. I would get stressed out and skip meals. My sleep patterns started changing, too. I needed more sleep to be able to barely function.

Some days I slept 14 to 16 hours but still felt tired. Other days I could not sleep at all. By Thanksgiving break, I had lost 10 pounds and was taking prescribed muscle relaxants and ulcer medications.

My emotions started changing, too. I cried at the drop of a hat, sometimes over nothing. I took long, hot showers so my roommates wouldn't see me crying. I also became angry easily. I couldn't seem to get happy about anything. I quit

caring about my appearance, so I stopped wearing makeup and fixing my hair.

School was the primary stressor, and my grades began to show it. As my grades started slipping, I became even more stressed out. I was worried that I would fail a class and be dropped from the nursing program, so I spent more time studying.

I tried so hard to conceal my problems because I didn't want to admit I couldn't handle things. I didn't want people to think I was stressed out and such a mess. How could I ever be a good nurse and help other people if I couldn't even help myself?

It was tough for me to do, but I finally told my family and friends what I was going through. With their help, I made several changes in my life. The first meaningful change came with the end of my busy, class-loaded semester. When registering for classes the next semester, I cut back my class load. I also found a new job that paid more per hour, so I could work less. My parents helped me out financially as much as they could. My boyfriend kept a 24/7 "hotline" for me, and he encouraged me to call him whenever I felt stressed. I started riding my bicycle and doing yoga to "destress." I also set aside time each day just for myself, when I could do anything I wanted.

I'm still learning how to manage my stress, but my first year in nursing school taught me a lot about myself and how I handle stress. I learned what my limits are and what can happen if I don't deal with my stress appropriately. I'll graduate in a month, and I know I'll still get anxious, but now I know how to deal with stress in a healthier way.

## **i** FYI

### Got Stress?

In 2016, nearly two-thirds of college students reported "overwhelming anxiety," up from 50% just 5 years earlier, according to the National College Health Assessment. For 7 straight years, it has been the top complaint among college students seeking mental health services, notes the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Nearly a quarter say their anxiety affects their academic performance.

"Honestly, I've had more students this year hospitalized for anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues than ever," said Kathy Reamy, school counselor at La Plata High School in southern Maryland and chair of the NEA School Counselor Caucus.

**Source:** "The Epidemic of Anxiety Among Today's Students." March 2019, *NEA Today*. Retrieved May 17, 2019 from <http://neatoday.org/2018/03/28/the-epidemic-of-student-anxiety/>.

## 1.1 Stress in Today's World

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times," Charles Dickens wrote of 18th-century France in his masterpiece, *A Tale of Two Cities*. Could the same be said for you, today's college student? Never have college students been faced with such vast opportunities, so much freedom of choice, and such an array of information. These opportunities, the many decisions, and the information overload can leave you feeling overwhelmed and stressed.

Will this be the best of times or the worst of times for you? With the proper skills and the right information, you can be in control of your well-being and your destiny. *Stress Management for Life* is packed with information that will help you do more than merely survive your college years and beyond. These can be the best of times for you. Given the right tools, the power to make it so is within you.



## 1.2 Stress: What Is It?

Stress, stressors, eustress, distress, good stress, and bad stress. What is stress all about? Hans Selye, the noted stress researcher, once said, “Stress is a scientific concept which has suffered from the mixed blessing of being too well known and too little understood.”

Producing an accepted definition of stress is not easy. Nurses and physicians, psychologists, biologists, engineers, and students may have different meanings in mind when they talk about stress. Here is one useful definition: **Stress** is a demand made upon the adaptive capacities of the mind and body.<sup>1</sup> This definition helps us understand the following three important aspects of stress:

1. How you experience stress depends on your personal view of the stressor, and it can affect you positively and negatively.
2. Your *reaction* to events in life, rather than the events themselves, is what determines whether your experience is stressful or not.
3. Stress is a demand upon the body’s capacity. When your ability to manage stress is robust and healthy, the outcome is positive. When you can’t seem to meet the demand, the result is adverse.

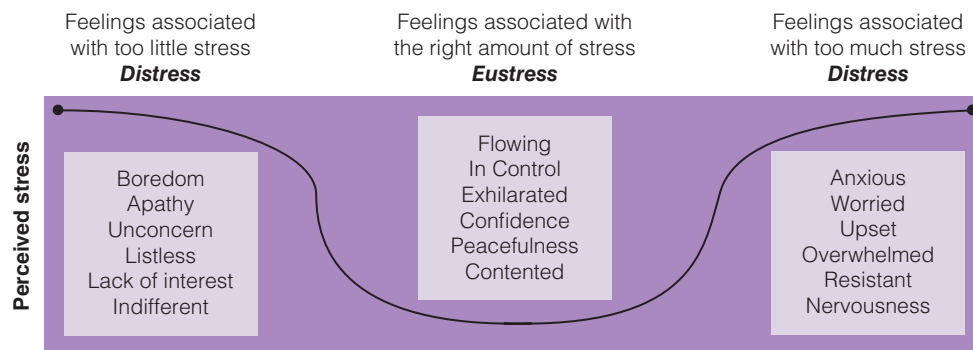
Managing stress is like building muscle. To make bigger biceps, you regularly perform arm curls with gradually increasing weight. Over time, your muscles respond to the overload and become bigger and stronger. The key is to find the proper balance. Too little weight will not produce the desired results, and too much weight may result in fatigue and injury. You need to overload the muscle just enough to make it stronger. It is the same with stress: Too little stress leads to boredom and lethargy, and too much stress leads to physical and emotional problems. The right balance leads to a productive, healthy life.

Although we often think of stress as harmful, keep in mind that stress can be stimulating and helpful. Think of how boring life would be without some changes and challenges to push you along, to provide opportunities to gain experience and grow, and to provide the impetus for accomplishing your goals in life! (See Figure 1.1.)

## 1.3 Yerkes–Dodson Principle

Harvard physicians Robert Yerkes and John Dodson first described the relationship between stress and performance in 1908.<sup>2</sup> The **Yerkes–Dodson Principle** implies that, to a certain point, a specific amount of stress is healthy, useful, and even beneficial. In addition to enhanced performance, an appropriate amount of stress can translate into one’s health and well-being.

Activation of the stress response is often essential for success. We see this in situations such as sporting events, academic pursuits, and even in creative and social activities. As stress levels increase, so does one’s performance. This relationship between increased stress and increased production, however, does not continue indefinitely. Stress or arousal



**FIGURE 1.1**  
Feelings Associated with Perceived Stress . . . Finding the Balance



Bill Vane/Corbis/Getty Images

can improve performance, but when stress exceeds one's ability to cope, this overload contributes to diminished performance, inefficiency, and even health problems.

An excellent metaphor to remind us that we each have an ideal amount of stress is the tension in the strings of a guitar. When a guitar is strung too tightly (too much tension), the string will sound a note higher than desirable. The guitar string, when tightened to its maximum, is likely to snap. The same string, if not tightened sufficiently, will play a note that is lower than is desirable. If it is strung without any tension, no sound at all will come from it. The proper tension results in the perfect note. The same metaphor can illustrate how healthy we are and how we feel with too much or too little stress.

College students are faced with many stressors. What is your number 1 stressor?

## 1.4 The Terminology of Stress

Stress can be good—a challenge, or bad—a threat. Stress can be acute or chronic. These and other variances of stress are defined below.

### Challenge (“Good”) and Threat (“Bad”) Stress

A **stressor** is any event or situation that an individual perceives as a challenge or a threat that causes him or her to either adapt or start the stress response. In both cases, the physiology turns on resources to prepare to handle a demand. When the demand is perceived as dangerous, the body prepares for imminent danger and does what it needs to do to prevent harm from the threat. When the demand is viewed as a challenge, the body musters its resources to perform optimally. (The stress response will be explained fully in Chapter 3.)

Hans Selye, one of the first people to study the effects of stress, coined the term **eustress** to describe the positive, desirable stress that keeps life exciting and helps to motivate and inspire. Events such as going off to college, getting married, starting a new job, or having a baby can be happy, joyous, *and* stress-producing. Eustress also involves managing stress successfully, even when dealing with a negative stressor. Notice in Figure 1.2 that eustress is represented on the curve where stress level, health, and performance increase simultaneously. Eustress implies that a certain amount of stress is useful, beneficial, and even good for our health, much like the perfectly strung guitar string.

**Distress** refers to the adverse effects of stress that drain us of energy and surpass our capacity to cope. Often when we talk about stress, we are referring to distress. Notice the point in Figure 1.2 where stress continues to increase, yet performance and health begin to decline. This downward curve represents distress. For best performance and well-being, you want to stay on top of the curve.

### Acute and Chronic Stress

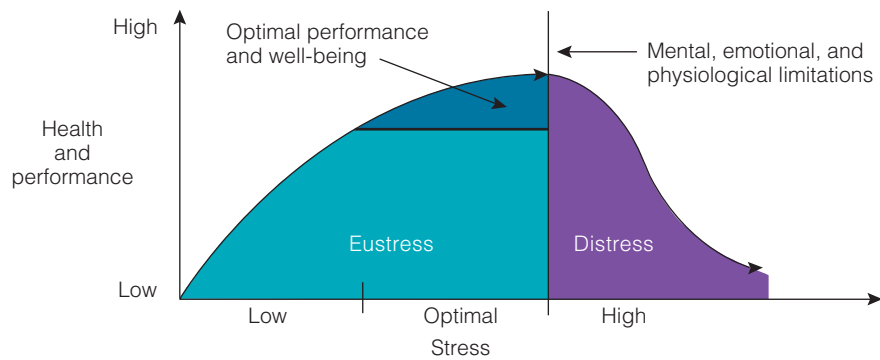
Stress can be acute or chronic. **Acute stress** results from a short-term stressor. It appears suddenly, is usually quite intense, and then disappears quickly. Imagine being out for a leisurely evening stroll when suddenly, from out of nowhere, a massive, angry dog leaps from the bushes, growling, with teeth bared. Your response would fit the definition of acute stress.



Jennifer Evans/Candy Apple Photography

Getting married is an example of a positive stressor, also known as eustress.





**FIGURE 1.2**  
Relationship among Stress, Health, and Performance

**Source:** “Relationship among Stress and Health and Performance,” Figure 12.1 from *Lifetime Physical Fitness and Wellness, 11th ed.*, by W. K. Hoeger and S. A. Hoeger (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Cengage Learning, 2011, p. 385).

Have you ever been cruising down the highway, relaxing to your favorite tunes when you glanced in your rearview mirror to see the flashing lights of a police car bearing down from behind? If so, chances are you experienced acute stress at that time.

If you have ever parachuted or taken part in similar exhilarating activities, you notice that when you manage acute stress well, it can help you think clearly and perform optimally. Acute stress can be exciting and stimulating in small doses—but too much is exhausting.

People experiencing **episodic acute stress** seem to be perpetually in the clutches of acute stress. These are the people who make you say, “What now?!” when you see them racing toward you. They seem to be always in a rush—but usually late. If something can go wrong, it will. They can’t seem to get their act together or organize the many self-inflicted demands and pressures that clamor for their attention. They often blame their problems on other people and external events.

People who have frequent episodes of acute stress tend to be overaroused, short-tempered, irritable, anxious, and tense. They may describe themselves as having “a lot of nervous energy.” “Episodic acute stress can contribute to serious illnesses like heart disease or clinical depression.”<sup>3</sup>

## STRESS STORIES

### High Stress

I looked down from the top of the 300-foot cliff. I could barely see Kelly on the sandy floor below. He yelled to us, assuring us he had made it safely. Now it was my turn to rappel down the side of the cliff, but my eagerness was turning to terror.

My harness was snug and secure. The rope could easily hold someone 20 times my size. The knots were all tied for maximum safety. I was in no more danger than if I would have been standing on the edge of my kitchen table at my home.

But looking at the 300-foot drop, I didn’t feel so safe. My heart raced; I could barely breathe; every muscle clenched. I was more terrified than I could remember being in decades. If anything went wrong, this would be my final day.

With Bob’s help, I inched out over the edge of the cliff. There was no place to put my feet. It was empty air all the way down. I gripped the rope forcefully as my confidence in the safety of the mountain ridge gave way to complete trust in the line supporting my life. There I was, dangling at the top of a 300-foot descent.

As I started moving down the side of the cliff, I realized I wasn’t going to smash and crash at the bottom. I was safe. I had total control over how slow or fast I went down.

My momentum brought my feet to connect with the vertical mountainside. So I pushed off as I let myself slide downward. I reconnected with the face of the cliff and pushed off again.

Down the rope I floated. Terror had turned to exhilaration. The farther I pushed away from the cliff, the more I felt like I was flying.

Soon I reached the bottom, where Kelly made sure my landing was soft. I gave a shout of elation. What a feeling! The short moment of intense stress had transformed into extreme euphoria. I faced the fear and relished the reward.

—MO



PabloBenii/Shutterstock.com

Acute stress can be exhilarating!

**Chronic stress** is long-term stress resulting from those nagging problems that don't seem to go away. This is the grinding stress that can wear you down day after day, year after year. Chronic stress can result from credit card debt that keeps growing, long-term health problems, emotionally draining relationships, or staying in an unfulfilling, energy-draining job. Chronic stress can be a result of unrelenting demands and pressures that seem to never end.

The danger of chronic stress is that some people get used to it, lose hope, and give up searching for solutions. As their physical and mental resources are depleted, they are overcome by feelings of apathy, hopelessness, depression, and fear. Chronic stress can kill—through suicide, heart attacks, and violence. You will learn in later chapters that this constant, long-term stress results in stress-related disease and reduces the quality of life.

## 1.5 Holistic Health

### Understanding Health

To understand how stress affects you, and to learn how to increase your ability to manage the demands of life, it is helpful to recognize the relationship between health and stress. Two important points about health are:

1. *Health is more than just the absence of disease.* The focus of this book is on more than just controlling stress to prevent illness and the other negative consequences of stress. The focus is on increasing your ability to deal with stress so you can enjoy optimal health and well-being, both today and in the years to come.
2. *Health relates to more than just the physical dimension.* **Holistic health** encompasses physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and social dimensions. An imbalance in any of these dimensions will affect your health. Even broader definitions of health include occupational and environmental dimensions. In later chapters, we will discuss these last two dimensions and how they relate to stress. The important message here is that a holistically healthy person functions as a total, balanced person.

Modern man is sick because he is not whole.

—Carl Gustav Jung

## 1.6 Dimensions of Health

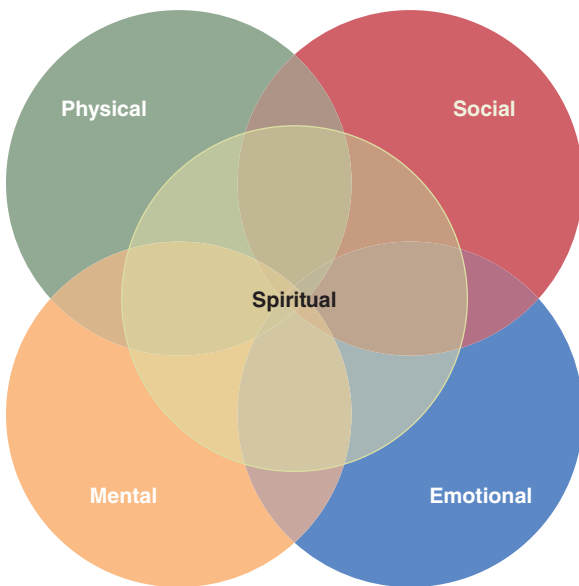
Figure 1.3 depicts the five dimensions of health—physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and social.

Following is a brief description of each dimension of health and an explanation of how stress relates to that dimension. Understanding each of these dimensions will help you plan a more balanced approach to managing stress.

### Physical Health

When the cells, tissues, organs, and systems that function together to form your body are in working order, you can claim to be in good **physical health**. You can minimize disease and injury and function optimally. Physical qualities include body weight, visual acuity, skin integrity, and level of endurance, among others. Examples of promoting health in the physical dimension are taking care of your body by eating healthy foods, exercising, getting adequate sleep, spending limited amounts of time exposed to the sun, avoiding alcohol and drugs, and getting regular health screenings.

Physical health and stress are closely related. Stress is a risk factor for many health problems that plague us today. A healthy body is better able to resist many of the damaging physiological changes that otherwise might result from excessive stress. It works both ways: Stress can cause disease and illness, and disease and illness can cause stress.



**FIGURE 1.3**  
Dimensions of Health

## Mental Health

**Mental health**, also called intellectual health, relates to the ability to think and learn from experiences, the ability to assess and question new information, and an openness to learn new things. Your mind—how and what you think—has a powerful impact on your health and well-being. In this text, you will learn about exciting new research that sheds light on the connection between the body and the mind.

Learning about stress is an essential first step in preventing and managing it. Intellectual understanding of the physical and psychological aspects of stress, along with wise decision-making skills, will allow you to process the information you learn. You will then be able to apply this information to a plan that will improve your health and well-being. In this book, you will learn a variety of stress prevention and reduction techniques. Through critical thinking and informed choice, you will decide on the tools and techniques that work best for you. Your ability to process and act on this information will strengthen the mental dimension of your health.

## Emotional Health

In contrast to mental health, which encompasses thoughts and the mind, **emotional health** relates to feelings. It involves experiencing and appreciating a wide range of feelings and the ability to express feelings and emotions in healthy ways. A sign of emotional wellness is the ability to remain flexible in coping with the difficulties of life.

Stress and emotional health are strongly related. Everyone is affected by feelings such as anger, fear, happiness, worry, love, guilt, and loneliness. Emotionally healthy people use coping skills to keep from becoming overwhelmed by these feelings. Dealing successfully with stress means taking control of your emotions rather than letting your emotions take control of you.

## Spiritual Health

**Spiritual health** relates to the principles and values that guide a person and give meaning, direction, and purpose to life. A conviction that life is meaningful and a belief that your life is supported by a reality greater than yourself are indications of spiritual health. Spiritually healthy people believe that their life has meaning and that they are here for a reason. The spiritual dimension may be the foundation for all other aspects of health.

Stress, especially chronic stress, often arises from a sense of aimlessness or lack of purpose. It can happen when someone feels worthless or has low self-esteem. Much stress today relates to being out of touch with our principles, values, and beliefs. Making choices that are not consistent with your core values can be stressful. For example, if you value family highly and find that the demands of work and school leave little time for family, you likely will experience grief. In later chapters, you will learn how techniques such as values clarification can contribute to spiritual peace.

Nurturing your spiritual dimension through introspection, meditation, prayer, religion, volunteer work, nature, art, or music can reduce stress and promote health. Spirituality as a critical component in stress management will be discussed in Chapter 10.

## Social Health

**Social health** refers to the ability to relate to others and express care and concern for others. The ability to interact effectively with others, develop satisfying interpersonal relationships, and fulfill social roles is vital for social health. Relationships with others, particularly family and friends, affect social well-being. When you are socially healthy, you feel accepted by others and see yourself as an essential part of your world.

A strong social support system increases your ability to manage the demands of life. As you will learn in Chapter 13, many studies show that people who have the support of friends and family are better able to deal with life's difficulties.

## Holistic Health: Putting It All Together

Lian's story in the opening vignette showed that stress affected every dimension of her health. Physically, she had trouble eating and sleeping. She developed ulcers and required medication for muscle tension. Mentally, as she became more overwhelmed by all the

A man too busy to take care of his health is like a mechanic too busy to take care of his tools.

—Spanish Proverb





Syda Productions/Shutterstock.com

The support of family and friends is vital for health in the social dimension.

demands, her grades began to drop. Emotionally, she was overwhelmed by all the pressure, was depressed, and felt like a failure. Spiritually, she began to question her purpose and meaning in life. She doubted her value as a person, saying to herself, “How can I ever be a good nurse and help other people if I can’t even help myself?” Lian initially withdrew from her friends and family, cutting back on her social life so that she could study and work. She had difficulty admitting that she needed help and support from others. Table 1.1 is a summary of how stress negatively affects every dimension of health.

**TABLE 1.1** Negative Effects of Stress on Each Dimension of Holistic Health

Physical	Mental	Emotional	Spiritual	Social
Muscle tension	Forgetfulness	Anxiety	Lack of meaning	Isolation
Headaches	Poor concentration	Frustration	Lack of purpose	Lashing out
Teeth grinding	Low productivity	Nervousness	Loneliness	Clamming up
Fatigue	Negative attitude	Worrying	Depression	Lowered sex drive
Insomnia	Confusion	Tension	Low self-esteem	Nagging
Backaches	No new ideas	Mood swings	Loss of self-worth	Fewer friends
Stomach problems	Lethargy	Easily discouraged	Feeling abandoned	Using people
Colds	Boredom	Crying spells	Inability to love	
Neck aches		Irritability		
Loss of sex drive		Anger		
Nausea		Hostility		
Shoulder pains		Fear		
Drug use		Burnout		

You will find in this book a toolbox of different techniques and strategies for managing stress. As you explore them all, you will figure out what works best for you.

## 1.7 Nature or Nurture

Everyone is unique. Genetic variations may partly explain the differences in how we react to stressors. Some people are naturally laid-back, while others react strongly at the slightest hint of chaos. Life experiences also may increase your sensitivity to stress. Strong stress reactions sometimes can be traced to early environmental factors. People who were exposed to extremely stressful events as children, such as abuse or neglect, tend to be particularly vulnerable to stress as adults.<sup>4</sup> There is even evidence that a mother's stress can spread to her baby while in the womb and have a lasting effect.<sup>5</sup>

Your unique genetic makeup, life experiences, and the environment where you grew up all play a part in your individual reactions to the inevitable stressors of life.

Stress is an individual experience representing a personalized physiological, psychological, and spiritual response to the presence of a demand. Many factors affect our experience with stress. Table 1.2 lists some of the factors influencing the impact of stress. The important point is to remember your uniqueness. Stress affects each person differently.

## 1.8 Sources of Stress

Nobody needs to tell you that the college years can be a time of high stress. Even though the origins and causes of stress are unique for each person, many college students face some common stressors. Each stressor will be looked at adequately in later chapters, but here are some of the most common sources of stress. Do any of these sound familiar?

### Time Management

Do you have too much to do? No matter how hard you work, do you feel like you never get caught up? If you are like many people, the answer is “yes.” You will learn in Chapter 11 (on time management) that we don't so much need to manage our time as we need help to manage ourselves!

### Personal Expectations

Are you your most significant stressor? Do you put demands on yourself that may be unrealistic? Do you have feelings of low

**TABLE 1.2** Factors Influencing the Impact of Stress

Heredity
Environment
Number of stressors
The magnitude of the stressor
The subjective meaning of the stressor
Developmental level of the individual
Availability of social support

### TIME TIP

Students reported that time management is so important to stress management that they want tips in every chapter to help them develop healthy time management habits. We listened. In addition to an entire section on time management (Chapter 11), we asked students to share their proven time tips with you. Watch for these time management tips, from students to students, in every chapter.

**Time Tip:** “Triage ruthlessly! Triage is a term I learned in nursing school to describe the process of determining the priority of patient care based on the severity of their condition. This rations patient treatment efficiently when resources are insufficient for all to be treated at once. How does this relate to time management and you? **Invest your time and energy where it matters most.** You have a limited number of hours in the day. Ration your time so you spend it on your priorities. Apply triage to the things you want to accomplish today.”

—Evan H.

### STRESS STUDIES

#### Stress Can Literally Shrink Your Brain

An article published in the journal *Neurology* describes a study of 2,231 middle-aged participants in the famous Framingham Heart Study. In addition to finding a correlation between high levels of the stress hormone cortisol and memory impairment, the researchers also found via MRI scans that those with heightened cortisol had decreased brain volume.

“In our quest to understand cognitive aging, one of the factors attracting significant interest and concern is the increasing stress of modern life,” says the study's senior author Dr. Sudha Seshadri in a news release. “One of the things we know in animals is that stress can lead to cognitive decline. In this study, higher morning cortisol levels in a large sample of people were associated with worse brain structure and cognition.”

Seshadri, a professor of neurology at UT Health San Antonio and founding director of the university's Glenn Biggs Institute for Alzheimer's and Neurodegenerative Diseases, says the fast pace of modern life frequently triggers our flight-or-fight response. “When we are afraid, when we are threatened in any way, our cortisol levels go up,” she says. “This study adds to the prevailing wisdom that it's never too early to be mindful of reducing stress.”

**Source:** “Stress Can Literally Shrink Your Brain, Study Finds,” by C. McKinney, retrieved November 5, 2019, from <https://www.studyfinds.org/stress-can-literally-shrink-your-brain-study-finds/>.

“Circulating Cortisol and Cognitive and Structural Brain Measures: The Framingham Heart Study,” by J. Echouffo-Tcheugui, S. Conner, & J. Himali et al., *Neurology*, 91(21) (2018): e1961–e1970.