

Be a Smart Stress Avoider

Date / Time

So far today, have you brought kind awareness to your:

☐ Thoughts? ☐ Heart? ☐ Body? ☐ None of the Above

Right now, think about one thing that gets you stressed out. Is it the traffic in the morning going to work? The chores you face at home? The stack of messy mail and bills that you haven't yet gotten cleaned up and paid? It's normal that there seem to be things we just can't control that drive up our stress levels. Or, can we control them—even a little? While it's a great idea to use relaxation methods to de-stress, it also makes a lot of sense to manage and avoid stress when and where we can.

1. Take a look at what stress in your life is manageable or preventable. Here is a list of 60 potential stressors. To begin, mark the ones that are significant sources of stress
2. Write the stresses that you marked in the table below, in the left column, "Sources of Stress."

SOURCES OF STRESS

<input type="checkbox"/> driving	<input type="checkbox"/> rush hour traffic	<input type="checkbox"/> health
<input type="checkbox"/> deadlines	<input type="checkbox"/> unopened mail	<input type="checkbox"/> chores
<input type="checkbox"/> clutter	<input type="checkbox"/> relationships	<input type="checkbox"/> loud noises
<input type="checkbox"/> bright lights	<input type="checkbox"/> weather	<input type="checkbox"/> other drivers
<input type="checkbox"/> animals/wild animals	<input type="checkbox"/> repairs/car repairs	<input type="checkbox"/> bad smells
<input type="checkbox"/> air pollution/congestion	<input type="checkbox"/> fears	<input type="checkbox"/> credit card bills
<input type="checkbox"/> politics	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	<input type="checkbox"/> retirement (saving for)
<input type="checkbox"/> unemployment	<input type="checkbox"/> divorce/going to court	<input type="checkbox"/> underemployment
<input type="checkbox"/> crying children	<input type="checkbox"/> children's safety	<input type="checkbox"/> bosses
<input type="checkbox"/> running late	<input type="checkbox"/> running behind at work	<input type="checkbox"/> co-workers
<input type="checkbox"/> crime	<input type="checkbox"/> personal safety	<input type="checkbox"/> finances
<input type="checkbox"/> health insurance	<input type="checkbox"/> aging	<input type="checkbox"/> medical/dental expenses
<input type="checkbox"/> diet/weight	<input type="checkbox"/> studying/homework	<input type="checkbox"/> staying up w/technology
<input type="checkbox"/> tech overload (email/texting)	<input type="checkbox"/> planning/making meals	<input type="checkbox"/> school exams
<input type="checkbox"/> homework	<input type="checkbox"/> entertaining/visitors	<input type="checkbox"/> holidays
<input type="checkbox"/> goals	<input type="checkbox"/> procrastination	<input type="checkbox"/> parenting
<input type="checkbox"/> natural disasters	<input type="checkbox"/> death/grief	<input type="checkbox"/> moving/packing
<input type="checkbox"/> starting a new job	<input type="checkbox"/> planning a wedding	<input type="checkbox"/> changing schools
<input type="checkbox"/> missing work	<input type="checkbox"/> work trainings	<input type="checkbox"/> work reviews
<input type="checkbox"/> grocery shopping	<input type="checkbox"/> an addiction	<input type="checkbox"/> public speaking

3. In the middle column, rate your significant stressors on a 1-10 scale, where 1 is low and 10 is the highest level of stress.

Be a Smart Stress Avoider

4. In the right column, select “M” if the stress is manageable, and “A” if it is avoidable. An avoidable stress might be rush hour traffic, which could be avoided by taking a new route or scheduling appointments before or after the rush hour, if possible. Rush hour traffic might also be manageable by leaving for work a few minutes earlier.

Get as creative as you can about managing or avoiding stress. For example, if you have too many papers and bills cluttering up your dining room table, you might manage this stress by getting a new chest of drawers or a file cabinet to hold and organize these items. Write your management or avoidance strategy in the right hand column.

SOURCES OF STRESS	STRESS LEVEL 1-10	MANAGEABLE/AVOIDABLE
	5	M
	5	M
	5	M
	5	M
	5	M
	5	M
	5	M
	5	M
	5	M
	5	M
	5	M

Reflections: How do you think your methods for avoiding or managing stress will affect your ratings? Write your predictions below, and then you can see how accurate they are when you implement your ideas.

Be a Smart Stress Avoider

What will be the biggest challenge you will face in implementing any of your stress reduction plans? Which plan(s) will be the easiest to apply?

Since it may not always be possible to completely avoid stress, what stress relaxation practices could you employ? Which stressors can you use these with?

Consider problem-solving with others to see if there are other ways to work with the stressors you are facing. Write down the names of those who can help you problem-solve. Also, is there someone in your life who is willing to lessen your stress load by handling one of your stresses? As you work to dwindle the sources of stress in your life, you may find a greater sense of ease and a brighter, lighter attitude!