

Stress styles

You can complete the highlighted fields on this form online and then print the form for easy reference. Only text that is visible on the form is printed; scrolled text will not print. Any text you enter into these fields will be cleared when you close the form; you cannot save it.

Although the basic symptoms of stress are nearly the same in everyone, you also have an individual stress style. You may tend to store stress mostly in your body, for example, through muscle tension, stomach pains, and headaches, or you may tend to feel the strain of stress mostly through your thoughts and actions.

Do you store stress more in your body, your mind, or a mixture of both? Complete the exercise below to find out about how you store stress (adapted from *Wellness: Concepts and Applications**). If you have trouble with this exercise, you may want to keep a stress journal for a few days and then try this exercise again.

Imagine yourself in a stressful situation. When you are feeling anxious, what sensations do you typically feel?	Rarely or not at all	Often
My heart beats faster.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find it hard to concentrate because of distracting thoughts.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I worry too much about things that don't really matter.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel jittery or have headaches.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I get diarrhea.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I imagine terrifying scenes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel irritated or frustrated with the people around me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My stomach or my neck and shoulders get tense.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I pace up and down nervously.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am bothered by unimportant thoughts running through my mind.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel unable to do anything (become immobilized).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel I am missing opportunities because I cannot make decisions fast enough.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I perspire.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I cannot stop thinking worrisome thoughts.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* Anspaugh DJ, et al. (1994). *Wellness: Concepts and Applications*, 2nd ed. St. Louis: Mosby.

Look at your responses to see how you are storing stress. If you store stress mainly in your body, you may want to try some ways of relaxing physically, such as exercise, massage, or yoga. If you store your stress in your mind more, you may want to focus on ways to relax your mind, such as meditation, guided imagery, or self-hypnosis. Because each person responds differently to stress, you will need to find what works best for you. Often a combination of stress-relieving strategies is most effective.