

# Managing Stress



# Managing Stress

**Models for Understanding Stress**

**Ideas for Coping with Stress**

**Effects of Stress**

**Life Event Stress Inventory**

**The Effects of Stress on Performance**

**The Chemistry of Stress**

**What is Stress?**

**Work Stress**

**Staying Healthy: Regular Exercise & a Balanced Diet**

**Work Stress Inventory 1: Sources of Work Stress**

**Work Stress Inventory 2: Ways of Coping**

**Work Stress Inventory 3: Effects of Stress**

**Work Stress Inventory Scoring Grid**

**Goal Planning**

**Seven Steps in Goal Planning**

**Goal Planning Exercise 1**

**Goal Planning Sheet**

**Time Management**

**Delegation**

**Understanding Procrastination**

**Seven Ways of Overcoming Procrastination**

**Hurry Sickness: Understanding Type A Behaviour**

**Managing Your Hurry Sickness & Type A Behaviour**

**Type A**

**Behaviour**

**Questionnaire**

**The Five Stages of Problem**

**Solving**

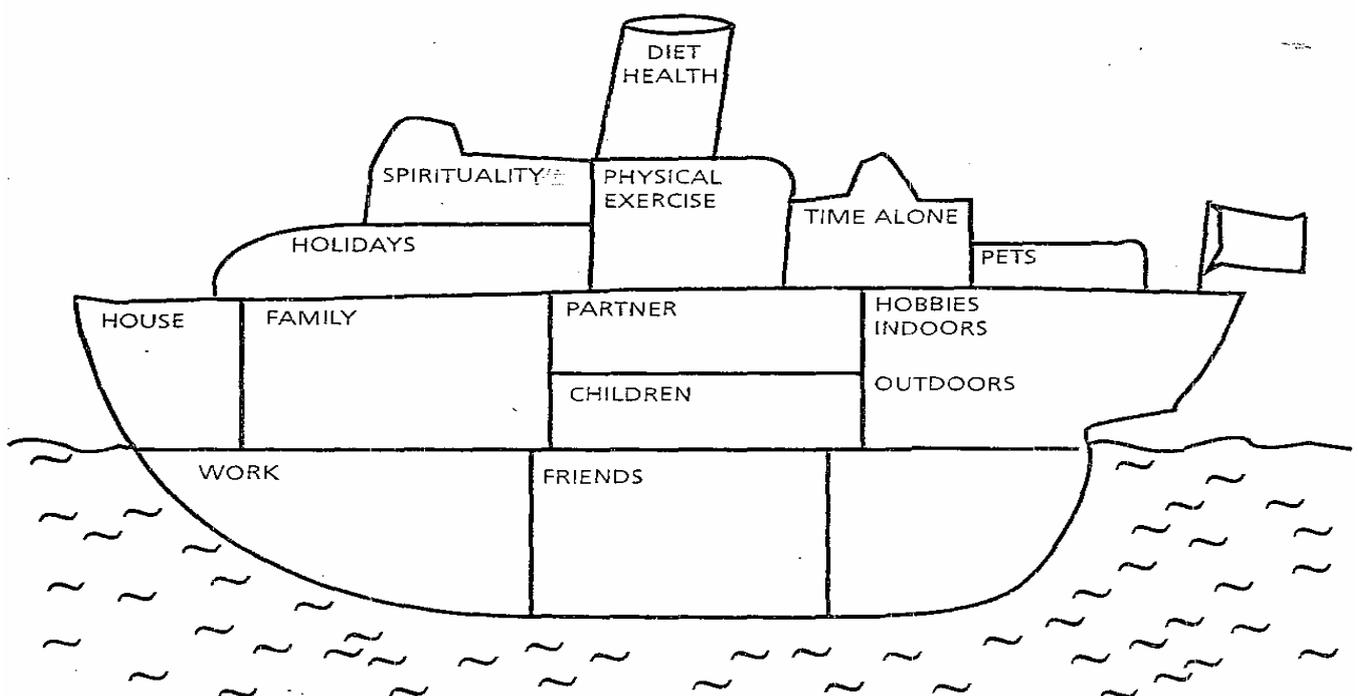
## Life as an ocean liner

Imagine that your life is like an ocean going liner and you are the captain. For that liner to be seaworthy and stay afloat in stormy weather, various part of the ship are separated into compartments. If the ship is damaged and one area starts taking on water that damage is restricted to that one compartment. This is quite a good way of looking at your own life. Most of us have different areas in our lives such as family, friends, hobbies or work. Some people have more overlap than others; some people live very compartmentalised lives. One definite advantage of a compartmentalised life is that if one area or compartment of your life goes wrong, it doesn't mean your whole life has to. So if something goes wrong at work and you have an all-consuming hobby, such as sailing, music, playing golf or painting, for example, you can get away from the areas of stress and be absorbed by another area.

It is a great thing to be able to think about something completely different when worried by a particular stress. If you have difficulties in your relationship with your partner, but can turn to your family or a friend this again reduces the stress. It does however take a deliberate consistent effort, time and energy to develop and maintain these separate compartments.

### **Exercise**

Review each area of your life in the diagram below. Write in the names of people, whether they are friends or family and specific activities or hobbies. Ask yourself how much time and energy you put into each area. Do you have separate areas in your life? Add any special area that you have in the empty box or draw your own ocean liner, with the different size compartments to reflect your own life.



## ***Understand more about stress***

Recognise your major sources of stress at present.

Understand how stress affects you. Anticipate and plan for periods of stress.

Find your optimal level — not too much or too little.

### ***Adopt a systematic problem — solving approach***

Define your problem specifically— try to be objective.

Break it down into manageable components.

Approach projects one stage at a time.

Develop, evaluate and execute a course of action.

### ***Recognise and accept your own feelings***

Express the way you are feeling openly with others.

Accept your feelings.

Be aware of past experiences which effect your feelings.

### ***Develop new effective behavioural skills***

Be assertive — learn to say No'.

Avoid procrastination. 'Do it today!'

Manage your time effectively.

Avoid being a perfectionist.

Practice rational thinking

Delegate effectively.

Practice goal planning.

### ***Establish and make use of a good social support network***

Ask for help and accept it when offered.

Deliberately cultivate good relationships.

Talk to people: family, old friends, new friends.

### ***Maintain a healthy lifestyle***

Take regular physical exercise.

Maintain a healthy balanced diet.

Deliberately seek out change of pace, and new activities in your life.

### ***Make time to relax and enjoy yourself***

Set aside time each day to do something you enjoy.

Plan breaks: lunch breaks, weekends, holidays.

Develop engaging hobbies and recreational activities.

### ***Set aside time for reflection and spiritual development***

Set aside time for reflection and meditation.

Reassess your values. What is really important in your life?

Review your goals in life. What are you working towards?

## Effects of stress

### **Emotional**

Anxiety (Nervousness, tension, phobias, panics)

Depression (Sadness, lowered self-esteem, apathy and fatigue)

Guilt and shame, Moodiness, Loneliness, Jealously, Over-reacting, Crying

### **Mental**

Difficulty in concentrating,

Difficulty in making decisions Difficulty 'turning off, Frequent forgetfulness

Increased sensitivity to criticism, Negative self-critical thoughts, Distorted ideas, More rigid attitudes, Obsessional intrusive thoughts.

### **Health**

Coronary heart disease/essential hypertension/strokes, Stomach ulcers/colitis

Migraine/headaches, Asthma/hay fever, Skin rashes/eczema, Amenorrhoea

Diarrhoea, Irritable bowel syndrome, Back pain, Susceptibility to colds and flu

### **Physical**

Increased heart rate (high blood pressure), Difficulty breathing, Butterflies in the stomach, Muscle contraction (aches, pains), Hot and cold spells (blushing, sweating), Nausea — feeling sick, Numbness and tingling sensations

Increased blood glucose levels

Difficulty swallowing/dry mouth

Dilation of pupils

Frequent urination

Fatigue

Increased blood and urine catecholamine and corticosteroids

Immune system less efficient

### **Behavioural**

Difficult sleeping/early wakening

Emotional outbursts, Irritation/anger/aggression

Excessive eating/loss of appetite

Excessive drinking and smoking

Accident proneness/trembling

Difficulty relaxing, Avoidance of particular situations

Social avoidance/withdrawal, Inactivity, Restlessness, Biting nails

### **Organisational**

Absenteeism, Poor industrial relations, High labour turnover rates, High accident rate, Poor productivity, Job dissatisfaction

The work of Holmes & Rahe (1967) suggests that an accumulation of significant life events in any one year increases your vulnerability to stress related health problems. Total up your score. A score of over 300 points in one year increases your susceptibility to stress-related problems, while a score of below 150 means a relatively low amount of life change and a low susceptibility to stress-related health problems.

LIFE EVENT	LIFE CHANGE UNIT
Death of a spouse/partner	100
Divorce	73
Marital separation	65
Imprisonment	63
Death of a close family member	60
Personal injury or illness	55
Marriage	50
Moving house	49
Dismissal from work	47
Retirement	45
Change in health of, family member	44
Pregnancy	40
Sexual difficulties	39
Gaining a new family member	39
Business/work changes	39
Change in financial state	38
Death of a close friend	37
Changes in amount of arguments with spouse	36
Major mortgage	32
Son or daughter leaving home	29
Outstanding personal achievement	29
Trouble with in-laws	28
Spouse begins or stops work	27
Change in living conditions	27
Change in social activities	26
Change in recreational activities	25
Change in school	24
Holidays	15
Christmas	14
Minor violation of the law	11
TOTAL SCORE	

## The Effects of stress on performance

Stress is a positive force that improves our performance. When we are crossing a busy road we are likely to feel slightly stressed, alert, vigilant and aware of the danger and hence we cross in safety. If we were not stressed by the traffic we might be a danger to ourselves. Stress is rather like an electric current<sup>1</sup> it gives us energy but if the current is turned up too high it can produce unpleasant effects and cause a deterioration in performance.

- The Yerkes Dodso Law states that a certain level of stimulation or stress improves performance, but performance begins to deteriorate if stress is excessive. For example, if you are asked to separate coloured counters into different bottles under the following conditions your performance would vary as indicated on the graph.

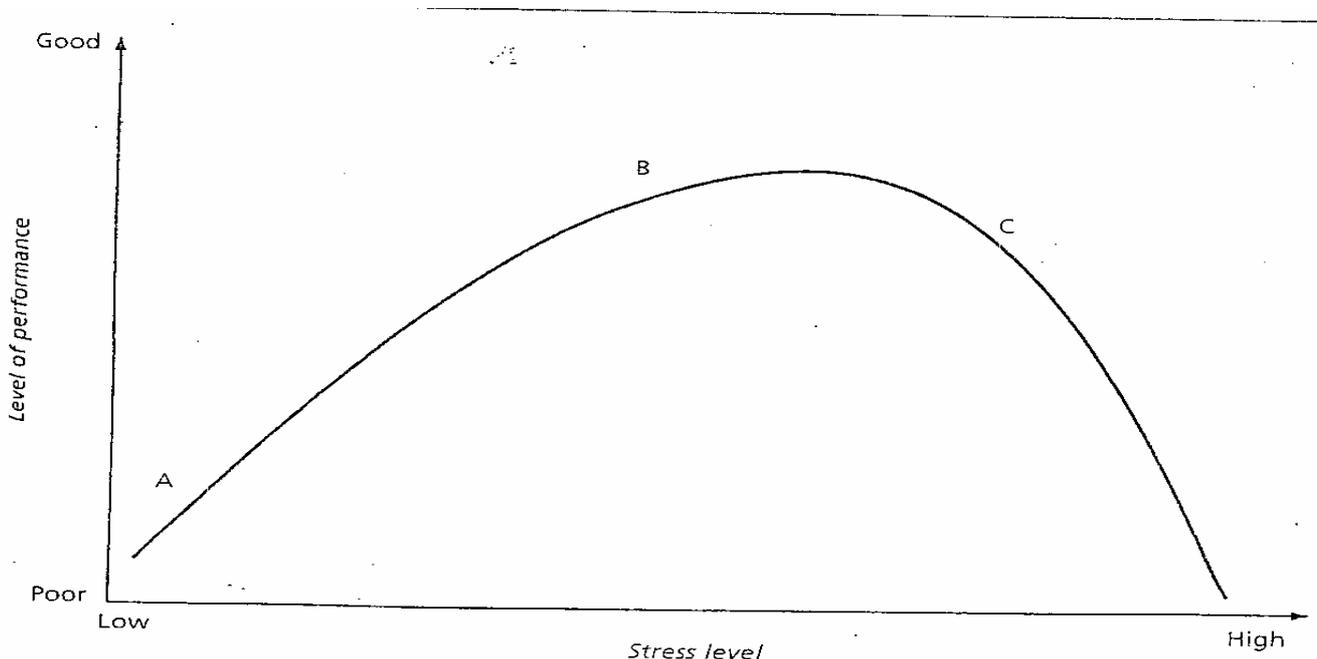
Condition A — with no time limit or incentive.

Condition B — a financial reward related to speed and accuracy.

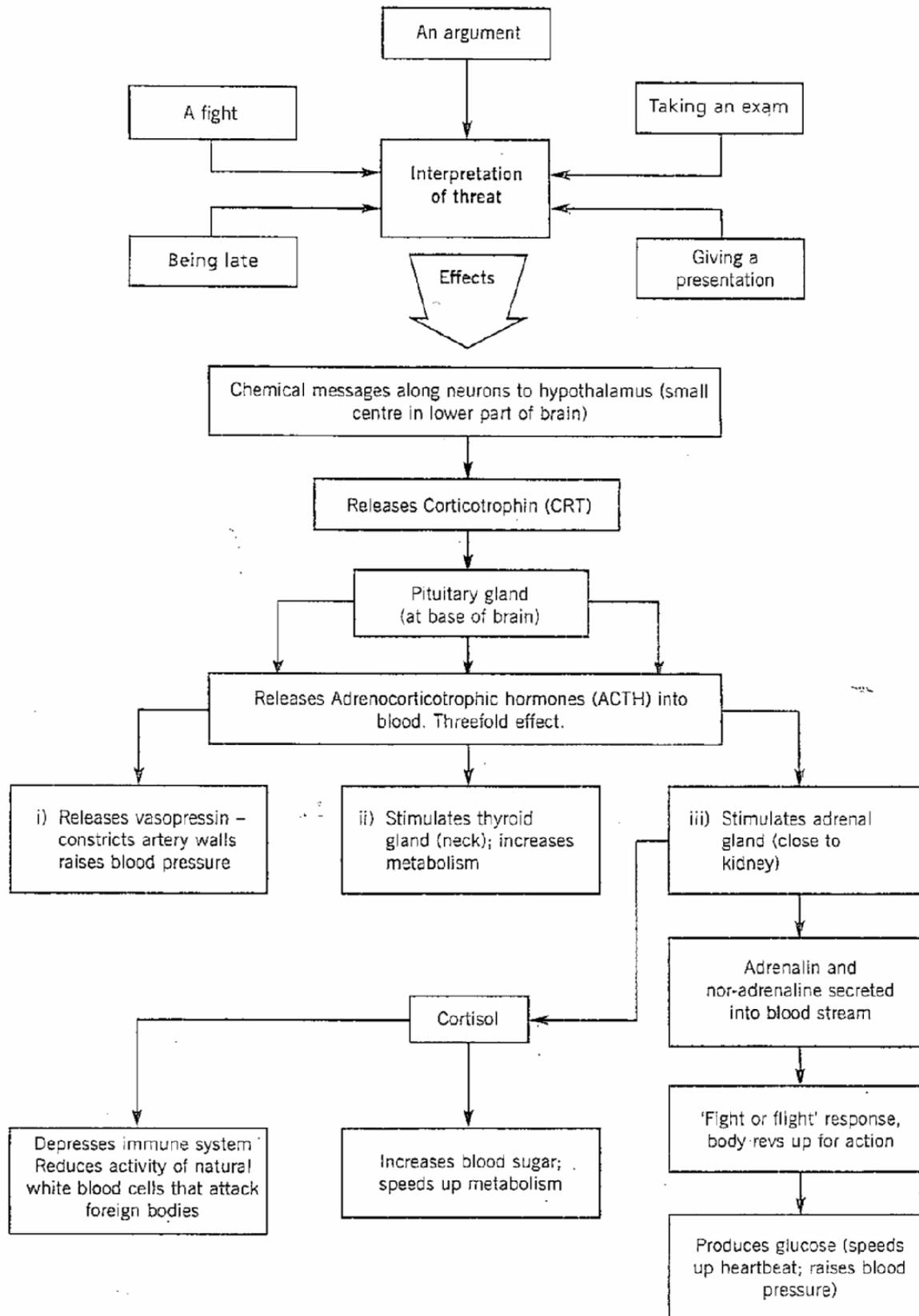
Condition C — a punishment of an electric shock if performance is poor.

Performance is likely to be best, or at its optimal level, under condition B.

Under condition A there is likely not to be enough stimulation to improve performance and under condition . . . the threat of the shock puts a great deal of stress on the person causing them to get nervous and fumble. In our lives we all have to identify our optimal level of stress and be aware of being pushed past it so that our everyday performance does not deteriorate.

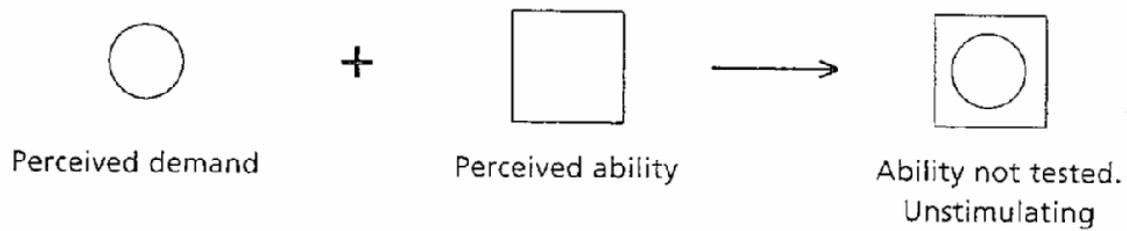


# The chemistry of stress

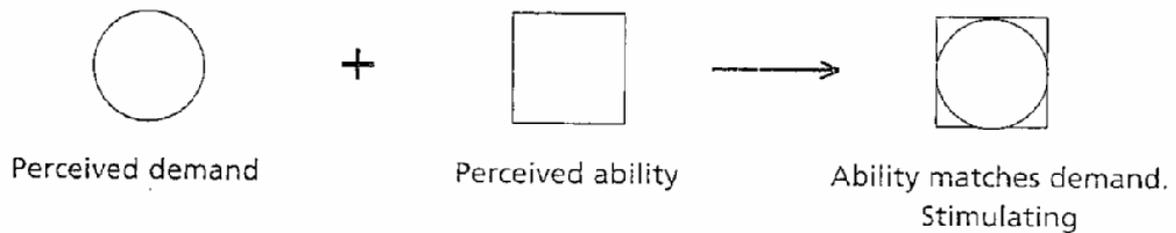


## What is stress

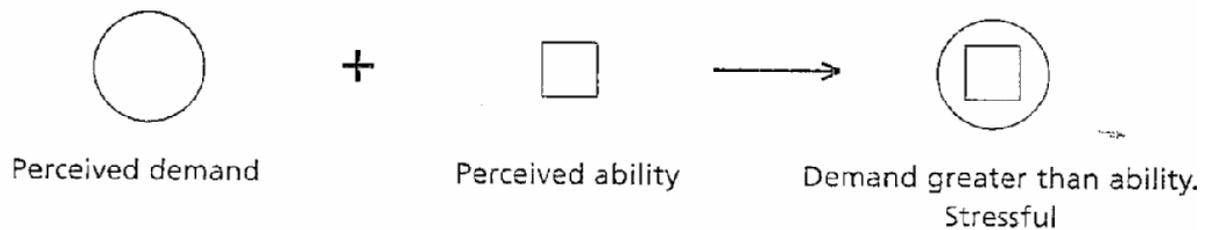
### ■ An unstimulating situation



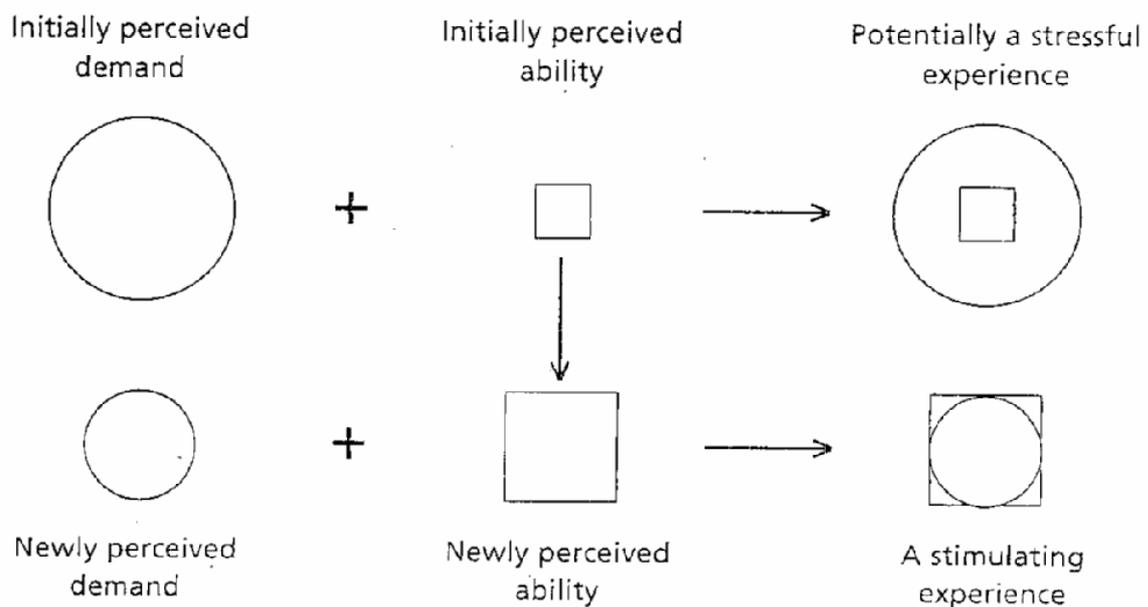
### ■ A stimulating situation



### ■ A stressful situation



### ■ Rethinking capabilities and demands



## Work Stress

**1** Work stress is the single most important source of stress throughout the developed world. In one recent study of over 3,000 people 17 per cent of the sample said that they had experienced 'unpleasant emotional strain for at least half of the previous day'. In another study it is suggested that 60 per cent of absences from work are caused by stress-related disorders –the equivalent of 2—3 per cent of gross national product.

**2** With the introduction of high speed information technology and communication, combined with increased global competitiveness, rising expectations, loss of job security and reduced staff levels, experts suggest that workers have experienced significantly increased job stress over recent years.

**3** One study showed that, a certain type of person could cope with high levels of stress but have low levels of illness. This type of person, labelled as stress resistant personality, had three characteristics all beginning with 'C'. These included, a sense of *control* or purpose or direction in their life; a sense of *commitment* to work, hobbies, social life and family, and a sense of *challenge* –seeing changes in life as normal and positive rather than as a threat.

**4** There are three main ways of dealing with work stress, which correspond to the sections in the following Work Stress

Questionnaire. First, identify the sources of stress in your job and try to make appropriate changes –often people are not exactly sure of what the problems are but just feel demoralised, stressed or fed-up. Second, examine your strategies for coping with stress and see if they can be improved. Third, identify your symptoms of stress and attempt to manage them better.

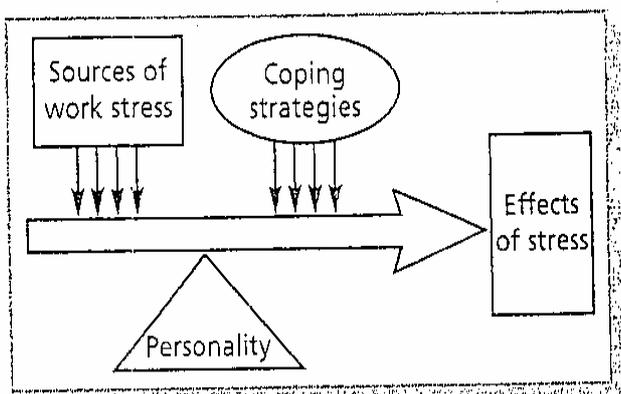
### Relevant factors involved in stress

**Sources of work stress** , Quantity/quality of work , Role issues Level of responsibility/authority, Social/relationships , Job satisfaction , Organisational issues Domestic effects

**Coping strategies** ,Assertiveness ,Social support ,Self-organisation ,Rationality Hobbies/leisure ,Self-care ,Maladaptive

**Effects of stress on the individual** ,Behavioural , Mental, Physical, Emotional

#### A model of work stress



#### Ten unhelpful coping strategies

1. Bottle up feelings
2. Work longer hours
3. Don't delegate
4. Don't say no
5. Take work home
6. Be a perfectionist
7. Procrastinate and avoid
8. Don't take breaks
9. Don't talk about it
10. Squeeze out hobbies

## The benefits of regular exercise

### *'Walking is the best medicine'*

1 Exercise provides a way of releasing a great deal of muscle tension and accumulated adrenaline which is the result of high levels of stress. Exercise is a relaxant. Exercise maintains good circulation, lowers blood pressure and improves the body's immune system in its constant fight to ward off diseases.

2 Exercise improves the mood, self-image, appearance and control of weight. Exercise can be used to clear the mind of the clutter of worrying thoughts and anxiety. Hormones are released during exercise, such as endorphins, which act as a natural anti-depressant and raise mood.

3 Ideally you should aim to do twenty to thirty minutes of exercise, two or three times a week, starting slowly and building up intensity. The best form of exercise combine the three distinct elements of stamina, suppleness and strength. Easy rhythmic movements, such as swimming, cycling and walking, are the best all-round types of exercise.

4 Your pulse rate, or heartbeat, is a good measure of your fitness. Many of the world's top athletes have a resting pulse of only forty beats per minute. In contrast a person who is out of shape may have a resting pulse of ninety to hundred beats per minute. Another indicator of a healthy heart is the speed at which your pulse rate returns to normal after vigorous exercise.

### A well balanced diet - *'Let food be your medicine, let medicine be your food'*

1 You would not run a classic car on low octane fuel and expect a good performance. Similarly, we cannot perform to our best on a poor diet. Healthy eating can increase our performance, strengthen our immune system and enable us to cope better with stress. Eating should be pleasurable and relaxing. Always allow time to sit down and enjoy your food. Aim to eat three main meals a day.

2 Eat more high fibre foods. Healthy eating does not mean eating less of everything. There is something that you can eat more of and that is fibre. The term refers to a special group of carbohydrates that you get from foods that grow in the ground. Fibre reduces the amount of cholesterol in your blood. Foods rich in fibre include: cereals, beans, vegetables, fruit, bran, wholemeal bread, pasta.

3 Eat less fat. Saturated fats that you find in meat, dairy products, cakes and crisps are unhealthy because they are loaded in calories which lead to weight gain. They also increase your cholesterol levels in your blood, clogging up your arteries. However, unsaturated fats do not raise cholesterol levels in the same way. These include vegetable oil and oily fish. Grill, bake or boil rather than fry.

4 Cut down on mood foods. Certain substances such as salt, sugar, alcohol and caffeine can affect your mood. Eaten in excess these can influence your stress levels. Caffeine is a stimulant which can activate your adrenal gland and mimic the stress response. If you do drink too much caffeine your body becomes agitated and the side-effects may well be panic attacks, palpitations and headaches. Similarly, a high intake of sugar gives you a short-term surge of energy but this can lead to overworking the adrenal glands, depleting the body's strength and causing irritability and mood swings.

5 Try not to exceed the recommended weekly alcohol intake levels: 21 units for men and 14 units for women. One unit is the equivalent to one pub measure of spirits, or a glass of wine, or half a pint of beer.

6 Bear in mind the age-old adage 'Everything in moderation'.

## Sources of work stress

Please place a circle around the number which best describes your work stress over the last two months.

		NO STRESS		STRESS		MUCH STRESS	
1	Working long or unsociable hours.	0	1	2	3	4	5
2	Having too many different parts or roles to play.	0	1	2	3	4	5
3	Managing and supervising the work of others.	0	1	2	3	4	5
4	Clashes and conflicts with others at work.	0	1	2	3	4	5
5	Current career and promotion prospects.	0	1	2	3	4	5
6	Poor training and guidance.	0	1	2	3	4	5
7	My partner's attitude towards my work.	0	1	2	3	4	5
8	Having far too great a quantity of work to do.	0	1	2	3	4	5
9	Being unclear about what is expected of me.	0	1	2	3	4	5
10	Being responsible for managing other people.	0	1	2	3	4	5
11	My relationship with my superior/manager.	0	1	2	3	4	5
12	The job demands, skills which I do not possess.	0	1	2	3	4	5
13	Poor communication and consultation in the organisation.	0	1	2	3	4	5
14	Continuing working when at home.	0	1	2	3	4	5
15	Changes and innovations in working practice.	0	1	2	3	4	5
16	Work situations creating ethical problems.	0	1	2	3	4	5
17	Having to make decisions.	0	1	2	3	4	5
18	Little encouragement and support from management.	0	1	2	3	4	5
19	Job insecurity or threat of redundancy or retirement.	0	1	2	3	4	5
20	Restricted resources and finances to work with	0	1	2	3	4	5
21	Difficulty switching off at home	0	1	2	3	4	5
22	Having too little work to do.	0	1	2	3	4	5
23	Inadequate information about my work role.	0	1	2	3	4	5
24	Dealing with conflict and negative situations.	0	1	2	3	4	5
25	Lack of social contact with other people.	0	1	2	3	4	5
26	Wages/salary.	0	1	2	3	4	5
27	The general morale of the workforce.	0	1	2	3	4	5
28	The demands work makes on my home/personal life.	0	1	2	3	4	5
29	Amount of time spent travelling	0	1	2	3	4	5
30	Having few clear objectives and goals to work towards	0	1	2	3	4	5

## Sources of work stress continued

	No stress		stress		Much stress	
31. Going to meetings/giving presentations	0	1	2	3	4	5
32. My relationship with others at work	0	1	2	3	4	5
33. Doing a job that does not stretch me	0	1	2	3	4	5
34. Instability and high staff turnover	0	1	2	3	4	5
35. Changes outside work- moving house illness, financial, family etc.	0	1	2	3	4	5
36. Time pressures and deadlines	0	1	2	3	4	5
37. Lack of variety and stimulation at work	0	1	2	3	4	5
38. Being responsible for managing property/money	0	1	2	3	4	5
39. Lack of people to talk to and share with	0	1	2	3	4	5
40. Feeling undervalued	0	1	2	3	4	5
41. Not having sufficient control, influence and power	0	1	2	3	4	5
42. Prioritising between work and family/home life	0	1	2	3	4	5
43. Fear of making a mistake	0	1	2	3	4	5
44. Changes in the way I have been asked to work	0	1	2	3	4	5
45. Work politics	0	1	2	3	4	5
46. Rivalry and competition from colleagues	0	1	2	3	4	5
47. Lack of job satisfaction and feeling of achievement	0	1	2	3	4	5
48. An unpleasant physical environment to work in	0	1	2	3	4	5
49. Changes in my personal relationships outside work	0	1	2	3	4	5
50. Doing work that is potentially dangerous or distressing	0	1	2	3	4	5
51. Little feedback about my performance	0	1	2	3	4	5
52. Too many different demands on my time	0	1	2	3	4	5
53. Socialising at informal work settings	0	1	2	3	4	5
54. Lack of feelings of personal development and growth	0	1	2	3	4	5
55. Rules and restrictions on my behaviour	0	1	2	3	4	5
56. Little encouragement and support from others outside work	0	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Add any other sources of your job stress that are not covered</b>						
	0	1	2	3	4	5
	0	1	2	3	4	5
	0	1	2	3	4	5

## Ways of coping

Please circle the number which best describes your way of coping over the last 2 months.

Never   Sometimes   Frequent

1. Request help and support from others.	0	1	2	3	4	5
2. Talk to friends and colleagues about my worries.	0	1	2	3	4	5
3. Manage my time so that I am not rushed.	0	1	2	3	4	5
4. Remain objective, not taking things personally.	0	1	2	3	4	5
5. Enjoy hobbies and leisure activities.	0	1	2	3	4	5
6. Stay physically fit with exercise and healthy diet.	0	1	2	3	4	5
7. Avoid difficult things — put things off.	0	1	2	3	4	5
8. Delegate work when necessary.	0	1	2	3	4	5
9. Look for advice and information from superiors.	0	1	2	3	4	5
10. Work towards set goals and objectives.	0	1	2	3	4	5
11. Stand back and think things through	0	1	2	3	4	5
12. Keep home and work separate.	0	1	2	3	4	5
13. Treat myself to something pleasurable (gifts, clothes, food).	0	1	2	3	4	5
14. Withdraw from people — bottle things up.	0	1	2	3	4	5
15. Say 'No' to extra work — refuse requests.	0	1	2	3	4	5
16. Spend time with supportive family and friends.	0	1	2	3	4	5
17. Plan ahead (days, weeks, months, years).	0	1	2	3	4	5
18. Have realistic expectations about myself, accepting my limitations.	0	1	2	3	4	5
19. Become absorbed in a rewarding or creative activity outside work.	0	1	2	3	4	5
20. Make time for periods of planned deliberate relaxation (lunchtime, evenings, weekends, holidays)	0	1	2	3	4	5
21. Work longer hours.	0	1	2	3	4	5
22. Express emotion openly and directly.	0	1	2	3	4	5
23. Confide work problems to partner.	0	1	2	3	4	5
24. Set priorities and make lists of things to do.	0	1	2	3	4	5
25. Accept situations which cannot be altered.	0	1	2	3	4	5
26. Relax and 'turn off' at home.	0	1	2	3	4	5
27. Find comfort in spiritual activity and contemplation.	0	1	2	3	4	5
28. Increase intake of alcohol, cigarettes, drugs or food.	0	1	2	3	4	5
Add any other coping strategies that you use that are not covered.						
29	0	1	2	3	4	5
30	0	1	2	3	4	5
31	0	1	2	3	4	5

## Effects of stress

Phase circle the number which best describes how true the statements below have been, at work or home, over the last 12 months.

	Not true		Sometimes true		Very true
1. I am easily irritated and lose my temper.	0	1	2	3	4 5
2. I feel generally tired and exhausted.	0	1	2	3	4 5
3. I tend to drink, smoke, take medication or drugs more.	0	1	2	3	4 5
4. I have difficulty concentrating for any length of time.	0	1	2	3	4 5
5 I feel tense and unable to relax.	0	1	2	3	4 5
6 I have lots of aches and pains.	0	1	2	3	4 5
7 I have difficulty sleeping, or wake early.	0	1	2	3	4 5
8 I have difficulty making decisions.	0	1	2	3	4 5
9 I am generally more moody than usual.	0	1	2	3	4 5
10 I suffer from indigestion or nausea.	0	1	2	3	4 5
11 I tend to avoid difficult situations.	0	1	2	3	4 5
12 I have difficulty absorbing new information.	0	1	2	3	4 5
13 I sometimes feel panicky.	0	1	2	3	4 5
14. I suffer from frequent headaches.	0	1	2	3	4 5
15 I have noticed a definite increase/decrease in my appetite.	0	1	2	3	4 5
16 I tend to worry about many things.	0	1	2	3	4 5
17 I sometimes feel very pessimistic.	0	1	2	3	4 5
18 I sometimes feel my heart racing and feel breathless.	0	1	2	3	4 5
19 I avoid social situations and feel more withdrawn.	0	1	2	3	4 5
20 I tend to question my ability and have negative thoughts. .	0	1	2	3	4 5
21 I feel generally more anxious.	0	1	2	3	4 5
22 I tend to go to the toilet quite often.	0	1	2	3	4 5
23 I have stopped doing some of the things I used to enjoy.	0	1	2	3	4 5
24 I feel less confident in doing things I used to do.	0	1	2	3	4 5
Add any other significant effects of stress you may have experienced.					
	0	1	2	3	4 5
	0	1	2	3	4 5
	0	1	2	3	4 5
	0	1	2	3	4 5

## ■ Sources of stress

(Enter scores for each question in appropriate boxes and add up factor scores)

1	<input type="text"/>	2	<input type="text"/>	3	<input type="text"/>	4	<input type="text"/>	5	<input type="text"/>	6	<input type="text"/>	7	<input type="text"/>
8	<input type="text"/>	9	<input type="text"/>	10	<input type="text"/>	11	<input type="text"/>	12	<input type="text"/>	13	<input type="text"/>	14	<input type="text"/>
15	<input type="text"/>	16	<input type="text"/>	17	<input type="text"/>	18	<input type="text"/>	19	<input type="text"/>	20	<input type="text"/>	21	<input type="text"/>
22	<input type="text"/>	23	<input type="text"/>	24	<input type="text"/>	25	<input type="text"/>	26	<input type="text"/>	27	<input type="text"/>	28	<input type="text"/>
29	<input type="text"/>	30	<input type="text"/>	31	<input type="text"/>	32	<input type="text"/>	33	<input type="text"/>	34	<input type="text"/>	35	<input type="text"/>
36	<input type="text"/>	37	<input type="text"/>	38	<input type="text"/>	39	<input type="text"/>	40	<input type="text"/>	41	<input type="text"/>	42	<input type="text"/>
43	<input type="text"/>	44	<input type="text"/>	45	<input type="text"/>	46	<input type="text"/>	47	<input type="text"/>	48	<input type="text"/>	49	<input type="text"/>
50	<input type="text"/>	51	<input type="text"/>	52	<input type="text"/>	53	<input type="text"/>	54	<input type="text"/>	55	<input type="text"/>	56	<input type="text"/>

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Quantity/ Quality	Role Issues	Responsibility Authority	Social Relationships	Job Satisfaction	Organisational Issues	Domestic Effects

## ■ Ways of coping

1	<input type="text"/>	2	<input type="text"/>	3	<input type="text"/>	4	<input type="text"/>	5	<input type="text"/>	6	<input type="text"/>	7	<input type="text"/>
8	<input type="text"/>	9	<input type="text"/>	10	<input type="text"/>	11	<input type="text"/>	12	<input type="text"/>	13	<input type="text"/>	14	<input type="text"/>
15	<input type="text"/>	16	<input type="text"/>	17	<input type="text"/>	18	<input type="text"/>	19	<input type="text"/>	20	<input type="text"/>	21	<input type="text"/>
22	<input type="text"/>	23	<input type="text"/>	24	<input type="text"/>	25	<input type="text"/>	26	<input type="text"/>	27	<input type="text"/>	28	<input type="text"/>

<input type="text"/>						
Assertiveness	Social Support	Self Organisation	Rationality	Hobbies/ Leisure	Self-Care	Maladaptive

## ■ Effects of stress

1	<input type="text"/>	2	<input type="text"/>	3	<input type="text"/>	4	<input type="text"/>
5	<input type="text"/>	6	<input type="text"/>	7	<input type="text"/>	8	<input type="text"/>
9	<input type="text"/>	10	<input type="text"/>	11	<input type="text"/>	12	<input type="text"/>
13	<input type="text"/>	14	<input type="text"/>	15	<input type="text"/>	16	<input type="text"/>
17	<input type="text"/>	18	<input type="text"/>	19	<input type="text"/>	20	<input type="text"/>
21	<input type="text"/>	22	<input type="text"/>	23	<input type="text"/>	24	<input type="text"/>

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Emotional	Physical	Behavioural	Mental

# The importance of goal planning

**‘When a man does not know what harbour he is making for, no wind is the right wind’**

*– Seneca –*

- 1** Human beings are goal-directed creatures constantly striving for meaning, significance and purpose. A lack of achievable goals results in stress and tension. We all need a role, something to work towards, to give us a sense of value and control,
- 2.** Stress can be either the result of not having goals, having too many goals, having conflicting goals, or working towards somebody else’s goals.
- 3** Your goals should help you to centre your life. You need to be clear about your values, what you believe in, what is important to you, before you set goals. What kind of person do you want to be?
- 4** In the study of the psychology of achievement, almost all successful people have one thing in common: they work towards set goals.
- 5** Setting and working towards goals increases motivation and releases an enormous store of energy.
- 6** In studies of survivors of stressful environments, such as concentration camps and prisons, those best equipped to survive were those who had or could create goals to work towards.

## Why don’t people set goals?

- 1.** Because they don’t realise the importance of setting goals. It is amazing that given the importance of the *skill* of goal planning, it is a subject rarely taught in schools.
- 2.** People might not set goals because they don’t know how to.
- 3.** People often don’t set goals because of a deep seated ‘fear of failure’. Once a goal is set, you either Succeed or fail to achieve it.

## Why goals should be written down and made specific

- 1** Writing a goal down makes it visible, obvious, concrete and specific. There it is in front of you. This has the effect of waking up the unconscious and releasing energy.
- 2** Writing a goal down entails a commitment. If you don’t write it down, you can always say to yourself ‘I never really meant to do that anyway’ and you leave your options open. Writing goals down challenges procrastination

# Plan for your future

**1 Brainstorm** — be creative, decide what you really want. Brainstorm yourself by asking *the* question, ‘What do I want out of life in the next five years?’

Answer that question by writing down everything that comes into your head in terms of:

a Home / family

b Work

c Leisure and personal development

**2. Re-examine:** Once you have generated these three lists go back and examine them for goals which are:

**a** Incompatible, for example, ‘I want to be the best salesman in the company’, and ‘I want to spend every weekend and evening with my family’. Eliminate one or modify both goals.

**b** Unattainable, for example, ‘I want to beat Pete Sampras at tennis’. Change this to, ‘I want to Win 90 per cent of my club tournament matches this summer’.

**3. Rewrite in terms of outcome:** Write out your modified goals in clear specific language in terms of an outcome, for example, ‘By next Christmas I will have written and had typed up a five-thousand word short story.’

**4 Create action plans:** Write an action plan or a series of specific activities for the accomplishment of that goal. These are the steps that need to be taken to achieve that goal; again they should be specific. Try to aim for at least six activities for each goal. For example, *for* writing the short story, activities might be:

a Buy a word processor

b Enrolling on a course for creative writing

c Buying a book on creative writing

d Setting aside Tuesday evening for writing e Arrange to meet Jim and show him the

first draft on Sunday 6 September f Set up a desk in the spare room

**5. Identify obstacles:** There will be obstacles to overcome. Identify and plan for these and take the view that obstacles come to instruct. For example, obstacle: ‘I might have to work late on a Tuesday’; Solution: ‘Alter the sales meeting to Wednesday so it will be easier to get away earlier on Tuesday.’

**6. Build in rewards:** Work out a reward system, for example, ‘If I’ve completed the story by Christmas I will buy myself a compact disc player.’

**7. Visualise the end result:** Have a clear mental image of what things will be like **when you achieve your** goal. This acts as a motivator and helps you release energy.

## **Goal Planning Exercise 1**

The following exercise is a useful way to loosen up your thinking, help you identify core values and put you in a positive frame of mind for goal planning. Each question should be answered quickly in the allotted time

What are the five basic values in life that are most important to you (eg, friendship, health, etc)  
( take 60 seconds),

What would you do if you had six months to live?  
(30 seconds)

What activities give you the greatest feeling of importance and satisfaction?  
(60 seconds)

What are your 3 most important long term life goals  
(30 seconds)

How would you change your life if you became an instant millionaire?  
(30 seconds)

What would you like people to say about you at your funeral?  
(30 seconds)

What have you always wanted to do but been afraid to attempt  
(30 seconds)

# Goal planning sheet

<b>1 BRAINSTORM</b> (Write down as many goals as come to mind, perhaps separating the areas of home, work, leisure, relationships)				
Home	Work	Leisure	Relationships	
◆ ◆ ◆	◆ ◆ ◆	◆ ◆ ◆	◆ ◆ ◆	<b>4 POTENTIAL OBSTACLES</b>
<b>3 IDENTIFY STEPS NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE GOALS</b>				
i	◆ ◆ ◆	◆ ◆ ◆	◆ ◆ ◆	
ii	◆ ◆ ◆	◆ ◆ ◆	◆ ◆ ◆	
iii	◆ ◆ ◆	◆ ◆ ◆	◆ ◆ ◆	

**2 REWRITE THREE GOALS WITH SPECIFIC, TIMED OUTCOME**  
(eliminate or modify unrealistic goals)

## Time Management

Time is the most scarce and valuable resource we have. If we do not manage our time successfully we can feel frustrated, dissatisfied and stressed. The central principle of time management is that it is important for all of us to spend our time doing those things that we value.

1. **Know your goals in life:** identify the values, activities and goals that are most important in your life. These goals are the map by which you give direction to your life and schedule your time. These large overall goals can be broken down into smaller manageable tasks to accomplish (the salami principle).
2. **Rank priorities:** Activities can be ranked in terms of what is important and what is less important. 20% of your efforts will bring 80% of your rewards, while the other 80% of your effort will bring only 20% of your rewards. Pareto suggested we recognise and prioritise the 20%. Ask yourself, How important is this to me?
3. **Plan and write it down:** There is a misconception that planning adds time to a task. Minutes spent in planning will be saved many times over. Use a calendar, diary, and 'to do' lists. 'When you are feeling listless make a list'. A written plan gives us the ability to stand back and develop 'helicopter vision'.
4. **Delegate tasks:** One of the biggest causes of stress is the notion that we have to do everything by ourselves, Take a look at your schedule and decide what can be handed on to somebody else.
5. **Work out a system:** Muddle makes unnecessary work, wastes time and creates frustration. Spend time organising your environment so that you have 'a place for everything and everything in its place'. Establish a regular routine, carving out protected time for high priority activities.
6. **Don't procrastinate:** By puffing off today's tasks until tomorrow you are simply storing up work for yourself. Set yourself deadlines, use them to increase motivation, and maybe add inbuilt rewards.
7. **Leave slack in your timetable:** Never fill up your timetable completely, always allow a little slack or leeway. Then if something crops up, you are not overwhelmed.
8. **Learn to say 'no':** If we cannot 'turn off the tap' of demands and requests of others we simply have no control over our lives. We will end up being the servant to the priorities of others, constantly deflected from what we really want to do.
9. **One thing at a time:** We may have many things to do but we cannot do them all at the same time. Important tasks usually require our whole concentration and energy. This is not to say that you cannot double up at times, by for example doing the ironing and watching television.
10. **Identify prime time:** Identify when you work best and plan that time for your most demanding tasks. For most people it is early in the morning, with performance tailing off by lunchtime, Similarly allocate undemanding tasks to times when your energy levels may be low.
11. **Overcome perfectionism:** If you have to get everything absolutely right you will find it difficult to vary your speed according to priorities. The perfectionist often becomes bogged down in small details, missing out on the broader picture. Dare to be average societies!
12. **Keep a balance:** and vary and contrast activities in different areas of your life, spending time in a balance between work, home, leisure, physical activity and mental activity. Plan natural breaks during the day relax at weekends and take holidays.

## Don't do. Delegate

Delegation means getting things done, or achieving goals, through the efforts of other people. It is the major skill of management, whether you are managing an office, a business or a home. It means giving people authority to do interesting things, not just passing on all the unpleasant jobs to somebody else. The underlying principle is that any advancement or progress depends on producing results beyond our own capabilities — we will never make progress if we have to do everything ourselves. Lack of the ability to delegate means holding on to the idea, 'I'll do it all myself'. This often leads to the person feeling under pressure, working longer hours, lacking time and feeling isolated. Poor delegation often means that others do not develop skills and there is poor team spirit.

### **Benefits of delegation**

*Delegation gives YOU:*

1. more time,
2. increases your productivity,
3. frees you from the web of petty detail,
4. forces you to plan and organise,
5. increases your job satisfaction, and promotes variety,
6. helps others take on responsibility, develop initiative and learn new skills,
7. promotes team spirit.

### **Fears or obstacles stop people delegating**

There are a number of reasons why people find it difficult to delegate. Most of these are underlying, often unrecognised, fears and insecurities.

Delegation

**Guilt:** 'I can't ask Jane to do it she, she already has her hands full', 'I don't want to appear idle', 'I don't want to appear idle'.

**Fear of failure:** 'What if Pete really blows it — that will look bad for me.'

**Fear of success or envy:** 'What if he succeeds too well? They might think he is better at this job than me. I will feel redundant.'

**Fear of Letting Go;** The martyr syndrome. 'I'll do it myself and feel virtuous — nobody ever helps me', 'I can do it better myself', 'I want credit for the result.'

### **How to delegate effectively**

1. Give clear instructions and information. This does not mean telling the person exactly how to do something, but it does mean outlining what needs to be done, explaining why it needs doing, and setting standards and deadlines.
2. Pass on responsibility and authority. Delegate the entire task to one person, not half a task. Provide the person with the resources to do the job and stay in contact and provide back up.
- 3 Check if the person understands what is required. Make sure that the person has adequate skills to carry out the task. Check also how they feel about doing the task.
4. Monitor progress, arrange for regular updates. Provide supervision and support, but do not keep looking over the person's shoulder. Praise in public; if you have to criticise, do so in private.
5. Allow for as much autonomy or creativity as you can. Give the person latitude to make decisions. **Give feedback and praise. When the task is completed go over it with the person, giving specific comments and praise, so that the person can learn from it.**

## Delegation Possible causes and solutions of poor delegation

Possible causes	Is it me ?	Possible solutions
What if she does it better than me? I will then be dispensable		Be grateful. Nobody can be equally good at everything
She already has too much to do. I do not want to overload her		Have overview of what are her priorities.
What if she fails? It will make me look bad.		Train her pass on skills. Learn from mistakes
I could do the job better myself.		Don't try to be a perfectionist, Let things go.
I do not want to appear either as a tyrant or lazy.		Explain the reasons why you are delegating.
The other person might refuse		You can ask and she can refuse.
I like doing the task. I prefer 'doing things' than 'managing'		That's fine but what are the effects on your limited time.
It would be quicker to do it myself		It might be in the short term- But consider the long term
I'll do it myself as usual, I can feel good, virtuous, martyrish.		Resentment can build up, You instill guilt in others

<b>IDENTIFY CAUSES FOR YOUR POOR DELEGATION</b>	<b>IDENTIFY POSSIBLE CHALLENGES OR SOLUTIONS</b>
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

## Understanding Procrastination

*‘Procrastination is the thief of time*

Procrastination means putting off something that we know we need to do. Most of us procrastinate to some extent. We have all said, ‘I’ll do it later’, or ‘I must get around to doing that’, But some people habitually procrastinate to such an extent that tasks build up and their lives become very stressful. Procrastination often amounts to deliberately avoiding having to confront our fears. Procrastination flourishes in two optimal conditions. First, when the task is not urgent — we do not have to do it right now — there is time to do it in the future. Second, when there is something more pleasurable to do now. Procrastination is usually about putting pleasure before pain.

### **Seven reasons why people procrastinate**

- 1. Lacking a sense of mastery.** You may hold the attitude that successful people achieve their goals without frustration and self doubt. When the going gets tough you think — ‘this is not how it should be, this is wrong’ and give up. Whereas people who are consistently successful have a ‘sense of mastery’ and assume that life will be a tough frustrating struggle, to be mastered. So, when they encounter obstacles they just carry on because that’s what they expect.
- 2. Assume you have to be in the mood.** Procrastinators often think, ‘I don’t feel like it, I’ll wait until I’m in the mood’. But with some tasks that are boring or too demanding you will never feel in the mood. Successful people will often put action before motivation. Once you get started and begin to feel a sense of accomplishment it spurs you on to do more.
- 3. Fear of failure.** You may leave the task until the last minute and then say, ‘I didn’t have enough time to do it properly’. By doing so you give yourself an excuse and protect yourself from the reality that your best effort might not have been good enough. Alternatively, if you are something of a perfectionist, you may think, ‘I do not want to start unless I can do it properly (perfectly) — otherwise I will feel like a failure’
- 4. Fear of rejection or intimacy.** You may avoid inviting friends around, or making that telephone call, in case you get rejected. Alternatively you may not feel comfortable with the other person getting to know you. Procrastination helps you maintain a safe emotional distance, allowing you to avoid revealing yourself to others. -
- 5. Fear of success.** If you do it really well you may draw attention to yourself or create more work for yourself.
- 6. Getting back at somebody.** You may put something off as a way of getting back at somebody. If you are feeling bossed around or coerced into doing something, your procrastination may be an indirect way of expressing anger or rebelling.
- 7. Lack of commitment.** You may simply not consider the task important enough to put in the effort. Alternatively, you may think, ‘{it’s an unpleasant task and I would prefer to do something else’.

## Seven Ways of Overcoming Procrastination

1. List the advantages and disadvantages of procrastinating from the task. Draw up two columns on a sheet of paper and list the advantages and disadvantages. Remember, procrastination has many advantages: it's easy, you don't have to face the possibility of failure, you can do something else more pleasurable. It is important to recognise the advantages, as they may be too good to give up. Weigh the advantages against the disadvantages. You may earn that the task is just not right for you (see Exercise).
2. Just do it. Your expectations are usually worse than reality. Like getting into the cold swimming pool, it is better to just jump in.
3. Plan it. Put it in your diary, or on your 'to do' list. Make it part of your routine rather than having to think about it. Start the day with your least pleasant task, then the day gets better. Decide on a specific time to get started.
4. Break the task up into smaller parts. If the task is overwhelming, do it a piece at a time. For example, just plan to do 15 minutes worth of work, often the sense of achievement will motivate you to do more. Mix the task up with more pleasurable activities and carry it out little and often.
5. Think differently. Challenge distorted thinking such as 'awfulising', 'black and white thinking', and 'jumping to conclusions'. Concentrate on how good you will feel when you have done it. Lower your expectations. Aim to do an adequate; rather than a brilliant, job.
6. Plan rewards and reinforcements. Reward yourself something once you have done the dreaded deed. If it doesn't work out as well as you hoped, view the experience as valuable learning.
7. Set deadlines and work towards them. Say to yourself, 'I will have this done before the end of the week, or the end of the year'.

### Exercise

What do you procrastinate over? Write out a list of the tasks that you put off, from your home, work, and personal life. Select one of those tasks and write down a list of the things you say to yourself when you are putting it off. See how your reasons correspond to the list above. Using the strategies above try to carry that task out now.

Write down what you're putting off _____ _____	
Write down the advantages and disadvantages of putting it off	
Advantages	Disadvantages
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6

## Hurry Sickness: Understanding Type A behaviour

### **Introduction**

Modern society has changed dramatically over the last two decades. The speed of life has increased, with more rapid transport, instant communications and even fast food. As the pace of life has increased there has also been an increase in certain stress related illnesses such as coronary heart disease and strokes.

We all have different temperaments, but for certain people life is a constant rush, a hurry from one activity or achievement to another. This style of behaviour often has its roots in early childhood where the need to 'achieve' and be successful is instilled from an early age. The combination of this type of temperament and the increased pace of modern life can often lead to major stress problems or 'hurry sickness.

### **• What is Type A behaviour?**

Two American cardiologists, Friedman and Rosenman, noticed that a great many of the people they saw with coronary heart disease and strokes tended to be of a similar nature, and were likely to be rather difficult to rehabilitate, as they did not find it easy to adjust their lifestyles. They initiated research into what has come to be known as Type A behaviour.

Type A behaviour is characterised by a cluster of traits:

1. Competitiveness: An overriding need to achieve;
2. Hurry sickness: An intense sense of time urgency;
3. Hostility: Inappropriate aggression if progress is impeded;
4. Joyless striving: always on the go, with many projects at once;
5. Inability to 'relax: difficulty turning off.

Type B behaviour is, on the other hand, the exact opposite, the individual being characterised by being more relaxed, less hurried and less inclined to compete.

### **Type A behaviour and your health**

A number of research studies have indicated that individuals who score highly on Type A behaviour have double the risk of heart disease compared with those who are classified as having low Type A scores or Type B behaviour. This is independent of other traditional risk factors such as blood pressure, serum cholesterol, smoking and age. Type A behaviour is also associated with other stress-related conditions such as stomach ulcers, allergies, the exaggerated response of the sympathetic nervous system to stress ('fight or flight' response) and poor levels of mental health (anxiety and depression). Type A behaviour also seems to be linked with high levels of success in career and financial terms.

### **Physiology of Type A behaviour**

The underlying physiology of Type A behaviour seems to be that such behaviour leads to excessive discharge of the stress hormones — adrenaline, noradrenaline and cortisol — and one result is an excess of insulin in the bloodstream. This can mean that it can take three or four times longer than normal to get rid of dietary cholesterol after meals. A potential result is a narrowing of blood vessels, together with increased deposits of clotting elements in the blood.

Research indicates that, with the right intervention, people can manage their Type A behaviour effectively, reducing the risks of physical and mental ill-health without impairing their performance.

## Managing Hurry Sickness & Type A Behaviour

Identify your Type A behaviour on a check list and then make deliberate attempts to 'go against the grain' and after that behaviour by the following methods:

- 1. Slow down:** Be aware of your obsessional time-directed lifestyle and try to slow down. Deliberately walk or eat slowly, setting aside a specific time period where you have to stay at the dinner table. Try to schedule fewer activities each day
- 2. Take breaks:** Build into your daily and weekly timetable stress-free 'breathing spaces' where you deliberately try to relax. This might be a five-minute period when you carry out a muscle relaxation exercise or breathing exercise, a walk in the park at lunchtime, or a break where you read the newspaper. Plan regular holidays and if possible get away to a different environment.
- 3. Commit yourself to hobbies:** As part of an effort to broaden yourself and reduce obsessional time-directed behaviour, deliberately develop leisure activities and hobbies, for example, sailing, gardening, walking or sewing. Commit yourself fully to these activities. Try to engage in uncompetitive trivial activities just for fun.
- 4. Express feelings:** Try to adopt a more positive approach to expressing yourself and how you feel. Take time to thank others and show appreciation when somebody has done something for you. Talk to others about how you are feeling — ventilate feelings rather than bottling them up.
- 5. Practice listening:** Search out somebody who talks slowly and deliberately. Have a slow conversation. Try to hold back from making yourself the centre of attention. Ask yourself 'Do I really have anything important to say?'
- 6. Forget time:** Give yourself occasional breaks where you remove your watch and try to lose your sense of time. Break the habit of always being punctual deliberately miss a few deadlines or turn up for a meeting five minutes late.
- 7. Manage your hostility:** Identify the triggers — keep a diary. Challenge your rigid thinking, particularly the tendency to use the words 'should', 'must' and 'ought'. Loosen up those thoughts, replace 'should' with 'it would be nice if'. Try occasionally to say to yourself 'it doesn't matter'.
- 8. Learn to relax:** Learn a relaxation technique and try to practice once a day.
- 9. Have a chat:** Make a point of chatting or engaging in small talk or a conversation that has no specific purpose. Slow down. Idle the time away. Try to laugh or make somebody laugh.
- 10. Understand the reasons:** Take time out to assess the cause of your Type A behaviour. Did your parents' approval depend on how successful and achieving you were as a child. Ask yourself, 'What am I trying to prove?' Does your idealism and striving improve or diminish the quality of your life?

### **Type A Behaviour Questionnaire**

*Circle the number that you feel most closely represents your own behaviour in your everyday life. Then add up your score. Try to reduce your score by deliberately changing your behaviour*

Casual about appointments	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Never late
Not competitive	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Very competitive
Impatient while waiting	10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0	Can wait patiently
Never feel rushed	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Always rushed
Emphatic in speech (fast, forceful)	10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0	Slow deliberate talker
Care about satisfying self Irrespective of what others think	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Want good job Recognised by others
Slow doing things (eating, walking, etc)	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Fast doing things (eating, walking, etc)
Hard driving (pushing Yourself and others)	10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0	Easy going
Express feelings	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Hide feelings
Many outside interests	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Few interests outside Home/work
Ambitious	10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0	Un ambitious
Take things one at a time	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Try to do many things At once :think about what you will do next
Eager to get things done	10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0	Casual
Good listener	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Anticipate what others are going to say-

**Scoring: Below 70, Tending towards Type B  
Over 100, High scoring Type A**

**0-100 Moderate Type A**

## The Five strategies of Problem Solving

*'Problems are opportunities in work clothes*

### **Introduction**

Problem solving is a simple but effective technique. We may do it naturally but it is often useful to deliberately go through the stages of finding a solution in a methodical fashion.

Don't be put off by its simplicity.

a Take one problem at a time

b Don't waste time on problems that cannot be solved.

### **1. Identify and define clearly what the problem is**

The problem could appear in any area of your life and could range from deciding where to go on holiday, how to get up earlier in the morning, or how to get a new job. The important part of this stage is working out exactly what the problem is, moving from very general feelings to specific, concrete problems and questions.

Example: Where to go on holiday in the summer.

### **2. Brainstorm**

This means spending time generating a list of as many possible options as you can. Don't think about whether they are realistic or not. In brainstorming sessions everything goes; the only rule is that you cannot criticise or laugh at a suggested option — be as creative and imaginative as possible.

a Package holiday to Spain.

b Caravan in Lake District.

c Friends' cottage in Wales.

d Visit sister in Australia.

e Camping in the New Forest.

f Chalet at seaside (Britain).

### **3. Decide which options are realistic and unrealistic**

Consider the consequences of each course of action and decide which options are realistic and unrealistic eliminate unrealistic options.

a Too expensive.

b Caravan too small with baby.

c Possible.

d Too expensive.

e Possible but difficult with baby.

f Possible.

### **4. Choose the option that is both most rewarding and feasible**

Look at the pros and cons of the remaining options and decide which is the most viable. A useful strategy at this stage is the two column technique. Write down the advantages and disadvantages of each option.

# Friends' cottage in Wales: Pros — not too expensive, plenty of room, only one hour's drive from coastal beaches, best of both worlds, baby would be fine. Cons — weather might be foul, area is not as interesting as the Lake District or New Forest.

### **5. Prepare and plan strategies for the accomplishment of chosen option**

Once the option has been chosen, it then becomes a matter of planning how to achieve that goal. Objectives or stepping stones on the way to achieving it must be identified. Obstacles also need to be considered. a Contact friends to see it is vacant., b Arrange to have time off work, c Find out school summer holidays. d Get information and map of the area.

Then try it out and evaluate what happens.

