



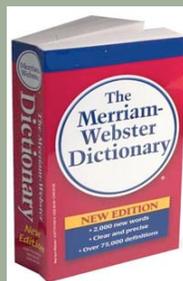
Stress & Resilience

Some people are just born resilient. Nothing bothers them. These are the people who grow up to be astronauts and lion-tamers. But resilience is a skill that can be learned by anyone. Here are seven things you can do to develop your own powers of resilience—check out the list on the right side bar.

Resilience is about facing stress head on and looking at stressful situations as opportunities for growth. Begin to see your stress like a professional athlete sees his or her workout: It's how you get better at what you do. Your stress is like a workout for your mind. It builds character and exercises your problem-solving ability. It's part of being human. When you see stress in this way - and learn to take it in stride - you will begin to appreciate life more, enjoy challenges and overcome obstacles that only temporarily block your way. And that's how you build resilience.

WEBSTER'S DICTIONARY
defines resilience as:

The ability to bounce or spring back into shape after being stretched, bent or compressed.



Develop Your Own Powers Of Resilience

1. Build your coping resources. Exercise, meditate, practice yoga or some other form of relaxation on a regular basis. These activities not only help you relax after a stressful day, they help you handle stress better in the future.

2. Be flexible. Trees and shrubs that don't bend in the wind—break. Learn how to go with the flow or you will break too. Begin by learning how to compromise. The sooner you learn that your way isn't the only way, the sooner you will see how to move through a stressful crisis. It may be inflexible thinking that got you into that stressful crisis in the first place.

3. Seek support. Your closest friends, certain co-workers, family members, spiritual advisors and counselors can help you weather any storm. These are your pillars of strength. Don't be afraid to lean on them in times of trouble. Tell these supportive people exactly what is going on: I'm having trouble financially. I feel really depressed. I am having trouble with co-workers who I thought were my friends.

4. See setbacks as temporary. We all have a tendency to "awfulize" and believe that the worst possible scenario is the only scenario. Try your best to move through times of crisis knowing that eventually you are going to come out OK on the other side.

5. Nurture an attitude of gratitude. Before going to bed at night make a mental list of everything you have to be grateful for. Gratitude is one of the basic underpinnings of contentment and stress resilience.

6. Develop your spiritual resources. Strong spiritual beliefs are a great antidote for stress. When you truly believe that everything happens for a reason, your stress resilience is going to be improved.

7. Take action. Don't let your problems cripple you to the point of inertia, or inaction. Take any action that moves you forward even if it is only a "baby step".

Do You Ever Feel This Way?

1. Frequent headaches, jaw clenching or pain
2. Gritting, grinding teeth
3. Stuttering or stammering
4. Tremors, trembling of lips, hands
5. Neck ache, back pain, muscle spasms
6. Light headedness, faintness, dizziness
7. Ringing, buzzing or "popping sounds"
8. Frequent blushing, sweating
9. Cold or sweaty hands, feet
10. Dry mouth, problems swallowing
11. Frequent colds, infections, herpes sores
12. Rashes, itching, hives, "goose bumps"
13. Unexplained or frequent "allergy" attacks
14. Heartburn, stomach pain, nausea
15. Excess belching, flatulence
16. Constipation, diarrhea
17. Difficulty breathing, sighing
18. Sudden attacks of panic
19. Chest pain, palpitations
20. Frequent urination
21. Poor sexual desire or performance
22. Excess anxiety, worry, guilt, nervousness
23. Increased anger, frustration, hostility
24. Depression, frequent or wild mood swings
25. Increased or decreased appetite
26. Insomnia, nightmares, disturbing dreams
27. Difficulty concentrating, racing thoughts
28. Trouble learning new information
29. Forgetfulness, disorganization, confusion
30. Difficulty in making decisions
31. Feeling overloaded or overwhelmed
32. Frequent crying spells or suicidal thoughts
33. Feelings of loneliness or worthlessness
34. Little interest in appearance, punctuality
35. Nervous habits, fidgeting, feet tapping
36. Increased frustration, irritability, edginess
37. Overreaction to petty annoyances
38. Increased number of minor accidents
39. Obsessive or compulsive behavior
40. Reduced work efficiency or productivity
41. Lies or excuses to cover up poor work
42. Rapid or mumbled speech
43. Excessive defensiveness or suspiciousness
44. Problems in communication, sharing
45. Social withdrawal and isolation
46. Constant tiredness, weakness, fatigue
47. Frequent use of over-the-counter drugs
48. Weight gain or loss without diet
49. Increased smoking, alcohol or drug use
50. Excessive gambling or impulse buying



50 Signs & Symptoms of Stress

Stress is difficult for scientists to define because it is a highly subjective phenomenon that differs for each of us. Things that are distressful for some individuals can be pleasurable for others. We also respond to stress differently. Some people blush, some eat more while others grow pale or eat less. There are numerous physical as well as emotional responses as illustrated by the following list of some 50 common signs and symptoms of stress.



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