

The Impact of Stress and the Basics of Heart Coherence



What is stress?

Stress is a term used to describe the wear and tear the body experiences in reaction to everyday tensions and pressures. Change, illness, injury or career and lifestyle changes are common causes of stress. It's how we respond, however, to the emotional pressure and tension we feel from the little everyday hassles—rush-hour traffic, waiting in line and too many e-mails—that do the most damage.

How does stress affect health?

Stress affects people physically, mentally and emotionally. According to the American Institute of Stress, up to 90% of all health problems are related to stress. Too much stress can contribute to and agitate many health problems, including heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, depression and sleep disorders.

How stressed are you?

Everyone responds to stress differently. Take this quick test to see if you are experiencing stress. The items you check will reveal how much stress is affecting your life.

- I feel overly tired or fatigued.
- I often am nervous, anxious or depressed.
- I have sleep problems.
- I have repeated headaches or minor aches and pains.
- I worry about my job, finances, relationships.

What can I do about it?

The first step is to understand how stress works. It's not the events or situations that do the harm, but rather how you respond to those events. More precisely, it's how you feel about them that determines whether you are stressed.

Emotions, or feelings have a powerful impact on the human body. Positive emotions like appreciation, care and love not only feel good, they are good for you. They help your body's systems synchronize and work better, as a well-tuned car. Research at the Institute of HeartMath has shown that when you intentionally shift to a positive emotion, heart rhythms immediately change. This shift in heart rhythms creates a favorable cascade of neural, hormonal and biochemical events that benefit the entire body. The effects are both immediate and long lasting.

HeartMath is a registered trademark of Quantum Intech, Inc.