

STRESS MANAGEMENT



THE BIRKMAN METHOD® AND STRESS MANAGEMENT

We know that the ability to manage stress has vital consequences in our professional and personal lives. The Stress Management report specifically targets better self-management.

This seven-page report addresses three areas where stress can easily occur. Since few of us take the time to acknowledge or articulate our own needs, we may especially react to unmet needs in these situations:

- Interpersonal relationships
- Schedules and details
- Decision making

This Stress Management report offers information to help you manage your own individual Needs (as described by the Birkman behavioral Components) and to more easily avoid areas of potential Stress.

In each of these areas, the first page identifies some symptoms of Stress that you may express, feel or exhibit in this situation. The report then provides suggestions as to what you can do to prevent or at least minimize those behaviors that might further increase the Stress that you may be feeling. When asterisks also appear next to the title for a particular page, they indicate a greater intensity or priority of the information.

The second page of each section provides information that relates to your motivational Needs. When your Needs are generally met, you can more easily use your Usual Behaviors. This report also helps you understand what may be happening (which Need is not being met) when you do experience symptoms of Stress.

Finally, the report provides suggestions as to how you can proactively manage Stress by taking specific actions to meet your own Needs on an ongoing basis.

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STRESS OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS **

The number of asterisks associated with the Stress scores indicates the intensity of the Stress Behaviors when they occur.

The Stress Behaviors surrounding the area of interpersonal relations relate to the *Self-Consciousness* and *Social Energy* Components. Your Stress scores in these areas are 14 (*Self-Consciousness*) and 17 (*Social Energy*).

Based upon these scores, when you are feeling stress in this area, we expect you may begin to:

- Turn a cold shoulder to persons who seem to need your approval.
- Feel impatient when others try to address a problem in an indirect or diplomatic way.
- Feel uncomfortable when others try to praise you in front of others.
- Ignore casual conversation and greetings from others, or not speak until spoken to.
- Feel real impatience with group meetings, committee activities or work that involves several persons at once.
- Feel pressure when social obligations or situations require you to mix with strangers or casual acquaintances.

When these behaviors occur:

- Seek more opportunities to build bridges to individuals and groups and to deal with them in a caring and friendly manner.
- Smile, joke and pass the time of day with other people more often.
- Practice interacting with others in casual situations in a non-judgmental manner.
- Take the time to be an "old softy" on occasion.



MANAGING NEEDS FOR SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS AND SOCIAL ENERGY

The Stress Behaviors surrounding the area of interpersonal relations relate to the *Self-Consciousness* and *Social Energy* Components. Your Stress scores in these areas are 14 (*Self-Consciousness*) and 17 (*Social Energy*).

Based upon these scores, it is likely that you need:

- Straightforward instructions
- Freedom from group pressures
- Praise that is free of sentiment
- Special time to be alone;
- Associates who speak up easily
- time to be quiet and think
- People who get to the point
- Individualized benefits
- Direct questions or corrections
- A few, close, one-on-one friends

In order to build resistance to or avoid stress in this area, we recommend that you:

- Identify a person or group that interacts with you in an objective manner and spend more time with that person or group.
- Build a hit list of things you know have gone well, and use it to help you gauge your success.
- Find opportunities to assess real signs of success and identify areas that you need to improve upon.
- Build a relationship with a "coach" who, without being shy about it, can help you evaluate how well you have done in a situation.
- Set aside quiet time for yourself every day; you need solitude to recharge.
- Take active steps to protect yourself from interruptions when you are working on an important or stressful task.
- Allocate at least one weekend a month just to be alone with that one person who is most important to you. The more difficult this is to do, the more important it is.
- Prepare yourself for big holidays or hectic social periods by spending more time being quiet and alone.

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STRESS OF DEALING WITH SCHEDULES OR DETAIL

The Stress Behaviors surrounding issues dealing with details and schedules relate to the *Insistence* and *Restlessness* Components. Your Stress scores in these areas are 42 (*Insistence*) and 75 (*Restlessness*).

Based upon these scores, when you are feeling stress in this area, we expect you may begin to:

- Get bored with essential detail, and not follow through on schedule.
- Feel restless and impatient, and become distracted by little things.
- Have trouble exercising self-discipline or concentrating on the task at hand.
- Become annoyed by anything that delays action.
- Disrupt orderly processes in your impatience to get on to something new.

When these behaviors occur:

- Set up procedures to handle distractions during the most tedious or routine parts of a project.
- Check the progress of each task on a regular basis; avoid adding new priorities to the top of the list until old priorities are finished or formally abandoned.
- Remember that existing priorities must be attended to when accepting the challenge of a new project.
- Work to compartmentalize projects and stay focused on the task at hand.
- Develop a careful list of your tasks and responsibilities, and establish their relative priorities.



MANAGING NEEDS FOR INSISTENCE AND RESTLESSNESS

The Stress Behaviors surrounding issues dealing with details and schedules relate to the *Insistence* and *Restlessness* Components. Your Stress scores in these areas are 42 (*Insistence*) and 75 (*Restlessness*).

Based upon these scores, it is likely that you need:

- Freedom from close controls
- A minimum of structured routine
- Direct access to everyone
- Unusual and stimulating tasks
- Flexible rules and policies
- A minimum of abrupt changes in routine
- Consistently applied policies or rules
- Only one or two tasks at a time
- Protection from interruptions
- Predictable schedules and tasks

In order to build resistance to or avoid stress in this area, we recommend that you:

- Set aside times every week to follow some new interest or satisfy a new curiosity.
- Indulge your sense of adventure whenever possible; use vacations or hobbies to try new activities.
- Create frequent opportunities to discuss future goals, plans and activities with your family and/or co-workers.
- Make schedules that allow you flexibility in executing tasks and plans.
- Develop work schedules that allow you to spend significant periods of time on one project without interruption.
- Use time management skills, gatekeepers (official or otherwise) or any other means to protect yourself from distractions and disruptions when working on tedious tasks.
- Arrange major work schedules in such a manner that you can fit in a few interruptions without getting behind.
- Establish routines for the beginning or end of the day, however simple; they will provide background structure when life gets busy.

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STRESS OF MAKING DECISIONS

The Stress Behaviors surrounding decision-making issues relate to the *Physical Energy* and *Thought* Components. Your Stress scores in these areas are 41 (*Physical Energy*) and 62 (*Thought*).

Your Stress scores do not suggest that this is an area of significant concern for you.



MANAGING NEEDS FOR PHYSICAL ENERGY AND THOUGHT

The Stress Behaviors surrounding decision-making issues relate to the *Physical Energy* and *Thought* Components. Your Stress scores in these areas are 41 (*Physical Energy*) and 62 (*Thought*).

Based upon these scores, it is likely that you need:

- A minimum of prolonged activity
- Stimulation of new ideas
- Friendly, low-key surroundings
- Time for reflection
- Unhurried work conditions
- Time to think decisions through
- Support from others on decisions
- Opportunities to talk out worries
- Offers of assistance and help
- Cautious decision-making by others

In order to build resistance to or avoid stress in this area, we recommend that you:

- Plan schedules and projects so you can stop and think about where you have been and where you are going.
- Give more time to abstract or philosophical thought and activities.
- Avoid taking on too many projects or social obligations when things are getting hectic at work.
- Develop a relaxing, low-key hobby or recreation, and make use of the curative powers of this activity often.
- Build life goals and important plans carefully using thorough discussion with those close to you and advice from knowledgeable advisors.
- Develop close relations with patient and effective advisors who will reflect on your ideas with you and will help you think carefully about important issues.
- Keep abreast of major developments in your work area, so that you are ready to deal with issues when they arise and have a good idea of where to go for assistance or information.
- Remind those close to you that you need careful preparation before making a decision, and elicit their support in developing several options to consider.