

**A Dateline Special**  
**“Stress Out”**  
**2002**

*Dateline's National Stress Test*

**Dateline's National Stress Test was designed in cooperation with a stress researcher at North Carolina State University. Answer the questions below to see how much stress you have and how you scored. In the past 12 months have you:**

	<b>Points</b>
1. Suffered a big investment setback? <b>55 points</b>	_____
2. Had too little sleep on a regular basis? <b>45 points</b>	_____
3. Started a serious relationship, or started dating again after a break-up? <b>45 points</b>	_____
4. Dated several people? <b>35 points</b>	_____
5. Are you the one doing the asking out? <b>5 points</b>	_____
6. Are you a single parent? <b>70 points</b>	_____
7. Had constant frustrations over paying bills? <b>60 points</b>	_____
8. Not enough time for family and friends? <b>40 points</b>	_____
9. Not enough time for yourself? <b>45 points</b>	_____
10. Experienced the death of a child? <b>100 points</b>	_____
11. Made frequent short trips from home? <b>30 points</b>	_____
12. Traveled for long periods of time? <b>10 points</b>	_____
13. Had travel-related problems, such as delays and cancellations? <b>35 points</b>	_____
14. Faced frequent performance evaluations in your job? <b>45 points</b>	_____
15. Frequently had a difficult commute to work? <b>35 points</b>	_____
16. Had to give frequent public speeches? <b>40 points</b>	_____
17. Started a new job or had major changes in your job? <b>45 points</b>	_____

18. Had a major salary loss for you or your spouse? **60 points** \_\_\_\_\_
19. Suffered the death of a parent, sibling, spouse or close friend? **90 points** \_\_\_\_\_
20. Been responsible for a sick or elderly loved one? **75 points** \_\_\_\_\_
21. Frequently had trouble with your boss or co-workers? **50 points** \_\_\_\_\_
22. Quit or retired from your job? **40 points** \_\_\_\_\_
23. Frequently worked too many hours on the job? **45 points** \_\_\_\_\_
24. Frequently had too many assignments or deadlines? **45 points** \_\_\_\_\_
25. Constantly competed to maintain your position? **50 points** \_\_\_\_\_
26. Had a chronic illness or long-term hospitalization of you,  
a family member or close friend? **80 points** \_\_\_\_\_
27. Had too many errands and not enough time? **40 points** \_\_\_\_\_
28. Frequently rushed your children to and from too many activities? **35 points** \_\_\_\_\_
29. Often contended with a difficult or misbehaving child or teen? **45 points** \_\_\_\_\_
30. Had frequent problems with computers, cell phones or pagers? **30 points** \_\_\_\_\_
31. Had a significant new expense, a major purchase or renovation? **45 points** \_\_\_\_\_
32. Frequently had to wait in lines or on the phone? **30 points** \_\_\_\_\_
33. Often contended with rude and/or poor service? **30 points** \_\_\_\_\_
34. Engaged in frequent dieting or felt major guilt about your weight? **35 points** \_\_\_\_\_
35. Had a pregnancy, miscarriage or abortion within the household? **60 points** \_\_\_\_\_
36. Experienced increased tension in a close relationship? **55 points** \_\_\_\_\_
37. Suffered impotence, other sexual problems or constant friction  
with your partner about sex? **55 points** \_\_\_\_\_
38. Had a marital separation or major relationship breakup? **70 points** \_\_\_\_\_

**Total:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Total Your Points:**

**280 or less** – Stress is not a problem for you  
*You run a low risk of getting a stress-related illness*

**281-780** – You are at risk of getting sick  
*Stress can lower immunity*

**781 and above** – Get a check-up

## **Ways To Combat Stress:**

YOU DON'T HAVE to get hit by an earthquake or lose your job to suffer real stress. Life's everyday bumps and bruises can be tough enough. And no matter how severe your stress, there are healthy ways to combat it. Our experts have come up with 10 of the best coping tips:

1) Listen to music, read, write in a journal

*"In writing, try to get in touch with your feelings and try to make sense of what's happening to you," says North Carolina State psychology professor Kitty Klein, who teaches about stress and coping, and is the architect of Dattelmeier's National Stress Test. "And it's more effective than a lot of talk therapies."*

2) Do yoga and meditation

3) Exercise

4) Spend time with family and friends

5) Play with pets

*"It's a really nice feeling to have a very affectionate social relationship, even if it's not with another person," says Dr. Liz Biondo, a psychology professor and blood pressure expert at New York's St. John's University.*

6) Think positively and have some laughs

7) Take time off

8) Enjoy nature

*"Pay attention to things that are beautiful," says Biondo. "The way a child's face looks, the sunlight on the water looks."*

9) Eat and drink, but in moderation

10) And, last but not least – sex

*"Just feeling loved is a huge stress reducer," says Pepper Schwartz, a sociology professor at the University of Washington, who has written numerous books on sexuality. "It's not a mystery when someone's in love, that it's good for them."*

*But no matter what you do, there is no such thing as a life without stress. So it's how we avoid, plan for, and cope with our inevitable pressures and problems that will make our hectic and beleaguered 21st Century lives a little more manageable.*