

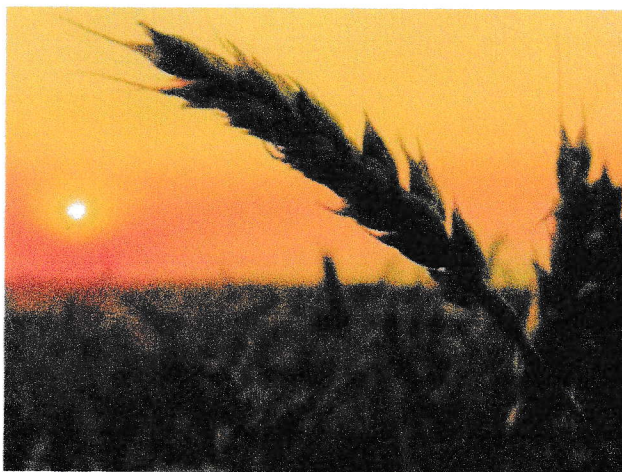
Timothy J. Lowenstein, Ph.D.

BE STRESS WISE

We are the children of survivors. Our parents and ancestors faced tremendous pressures and threats to stay alive. Our ancestors faced death in many forms – Famine, Disease, Terrible Storms, Wars and much more. They lived under the harshest conditions as Slaves, Poor Peasants, Cave Dwellers, Nomads, etc. Yet they survived. Through their struggle for survival they bestowed a great blessing and gift on us – the ability to survive and the hope of new life, a better life.

Today we have the chance to do more than just Live One More Day. We can control many of life's great dangers. We have warm homes to shelter us, we have enough food to eat and to share, we have many ways to heal disease and we can choose not to war. While stress is not really anything new, we now understand that in dealing with all of life's pressure there is a cost. The internal war or struggle in our body and minds can cost us very dearly – even life itself. But we don't have to be a victim. Just as we learned to build homes and sow great fields of grain, we can learn to care for our inner health in a whole new way. That's what this book is all about. Going beyond survival by being Stress Wise.

OUR DEADLIEST HARVEST



IMAGINE THIS: You're hiking high up in the mountains. Giant, fluffy clouds sail lazily across the sky. The wind softly sings through the tall pines. Suddenly, you hear a rumbling noise behind you in the bushes. You turn slowly. A large furry blur is burrowing through the brush straight for you. **IT'S A BEAR!!!** Your muscles tense. Your heart pounds. Your breathing becomes faster as you feel the adrenaline racing through your veins. Your brain considers what to do – quickly run away, or yell at the bear or climb a tree. Your blood flow is restricted to the central portion of your body to help your brain and vital organs. As a result, your hands and feet cool and can become quite cold. This survival reflex is called the. **"FIGHT OR FLIGHT"** response.

This reaction can save us from hungry bears. Unfortunately, we often react to common daily occurrences as if they were hungry bears. Time pressures, deadlines, job/family conflicts, bad

weather, poor market prices, emotional upsets, money hassles and other daily stressors can trigger our stress response to some degree. All stress can be simply defined as the cost of living. Our ability to respond to physical dangers has now become a deadly harvest of mounting pressures. We have abused this life saving response to the point that it threatens our health and very lives.

Since 1979, Stress has been recognized by the US National Center for Disease Control as a major illness. It appears that excessive stress causes or aggravates all illnesses. Our trauma or over reaction can make even a simple injury deadly. It's not that stress is new; it's that we now clearly recognize the cost of the strain of living. Rich or poor, educated or ignorant, young or old, male or female a bumper crop of stress can damage your life forever.

SIGNS OF STRESS



Researchers have linked excessive stress to headaches, ulcers, high blood pressure, migraines, heart attacks, insomnia and numerous physical ailments. It also affects us mentally and emotionally as well. The signs of stress can also be subtle as the pressure mounts – fatigue, irritability, over- or under-eating, nervous habits (smoking, chewing fingernails, foot wiggling, etc.), sleeplessness, eye strain, knotted muscles, cold hands/feet, upset stomach, difficulty concentrating or remembering – the list goes on and on. In essence, we each have our own unique way of responding to stress.

The goal of Stress Management training is how to get the most out of life with the least amount of strain. Let's use waiting in line as an example. You can be too tense when waiting in line. Your stomach is tight, your shoulders are knotted, your breathing is short and rapid, you are silently cursing the slower people ahead of you and mentally you are wondering if you can make it on time. Your fists clench and jaw tightens as someone slips in the line ahead of you. Tension like this can ruin an entire meal, an evening at the movies or a whole day. Such strain results in headaches, ulcers, heart attacks, high blood pressure, insomnia and much more.

BEWARE THE WORK ETHIC



Unfortunately, we have become so accustomed to high stress levels that it has become a part of our national personality or culture. We are MASTER DOERS. We live, eat and breathe the Work Ethic.

"ALWAYS ACTIVE" is the Master Doer motto. Doing more than one thing at once becomes a habit – meeting and eating or working on several projects simultaneously. If we do take a break, we merely change to a leisure activity – running, fishing, hiking, etc. Heaven forbid that we do try to sit quietly and relax. Our silent partner, the Work Ethic, haunts us as the Worry Ethic. We worry and fret over all the things we should be doing rather than sitting here and resting.

FRIENDS DON'T HELP. Imagine sitting quietly with your eyes closed in the middle of the day. How would your friends respond to you? The caring ones would ask, "Are you all right?" Many would poke, "Hey, you bum, there's work to do!" Both reactions say that there is something wrong with resting – illness, emotional upset or laziness.

As a Master Doer we become so accustomed to chronically high levels of stress that even while sleeping we wrestle with the problems of the day. Our dreams are disturbing and we awaken tired and need rest. Rest and deep sleep are vital. So we face a slow death as body parts gradually wear out.

WHO'S IN CONTROL



It seems natural that people often feel that their body or their environment (other people, places and events) actually control them. For example, when you find bugs crawling all over your house or the sun is burning up your garden or your money is running low, it only makes things worse to give yourself a headache. And it won't solve the situation by losing night after night of sleep over it. Through Stress Management Training you learn that you don't have to be a victim of your body and your environment.

MY MIND AND BODY ARE FRIENDS

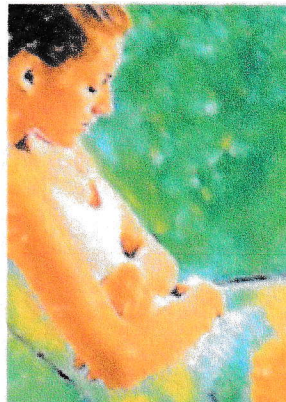


It may seem amazing, but we can control many of our body's systems. Biofeedback training is one method to learn such control. Electronic biofeedback instruments are like mirrors that enable people to "see" subtle changes inside the body. Through Biofeedback many people have learned to relax their muscles, warm their hands/feet, slow their heart rate, reduce the stomach's acidity level and even lower the electrical activity of the brain itself. With such skills many stress related illnesses can be reduced and entirely eliminated. Think of it... life without headaches, normal blood pressure, normal digestion, peaceful sleep and more. It's not a miracle but merely a skill that requires training and practice.

Perhaps the most important outcome of Biofeedback is that it demonstrates the Psychophysiological Principle. This is a fancy way of saying that the mind and body work together. Simply stated, "For every change that takes place inside your body there is a corresponding mental/emotional change. It's also true that for every mental/emotional change there is a corresponding physical change." So when you feel angry there are changes in your body. Muscles are tense, blood flow is restricted, acidity levels increase and more. The healthy

part of this Principle means that if you can regulate changes inside your body then you will correspondingly think and feel better.

PRESSURE POINTS



Before you can change your stress level you must first be aware of the varying levels of tension throughout your whole body. Our first exercise is to help you pay more attention to the changes inside your body. Pressure Points are the areas of your body that show strain under mounting stress such as muscles that hold on to excessive tension.

Sit comfortably with your eyes closed. Become aware of your breathing and allow yourself to relax deeply. Once deeply relaxed, go through each part of your body and mentally note any feelings or sensations you are aware of – cold/warmth, tension/relaxation, clothing, muscles, bones, etc. Try not to move as you check the feelings in your feet – then ankles to knees, knees to hips, hips to shoulders, shoulders to hands and finally neck and head. Take a few moments to slowly check your body for excessive tension. Draw a Body Outline, mark an X on areas of the body that were tense and tight. Shade in the areas that feel relaxed. Page 13.

Here's another way to find Pressure Points. Close your eyes again. Recall a situation in which you were really angry and tense. Let your body feel just as it did then. Focus on these feelings for 30 seconds. Now pay attention to how your body feelings changed and remember the different areas of tension.

Next, recall a time when you were really busy and pressed to get many things done at once. Again focus on these feelings and note how your body reacts. Draw a body outline, put an X on the areas where you felt tense when recalling anger or time pressure. If your jaws tighten when you are angry, put an X on that jaw area. You might have also discovered parts of your body

that always feel tense like the neck and shoulders, for example. Blank areas or unmarked spots may harbor tension that you are not even aware of. As you study the Pressure Points in your body outline, you can see how you as a person react to stress.

PRESSURE RELEASE VALVE

In order to reduce the tension in specific Pressure Points, you must first release your "whole body pressure valve." Body tension does not occur in isolation in the body. There is a "field effect" of tension in which other parts of the body tense in sympathy. This is particularly evident in cases such as low back pain, where muscles in the legs, arms and jaws show extra tension in an effort to protect or support the hurt area.

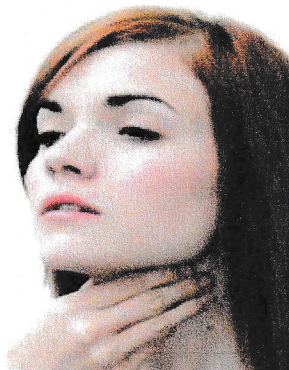
WHEN YOU ARE HOT, YOU'RE....

Hand and foot temperature can vary as much as 60° to 99° degrees Fahrenheit and follows this general rule, "WARM HANDS INDICATE RELAXATION WHILE COLD HANDS REFLECT TENSION". Each of us reacts to stress in our own special way. You may be aware of tensed muscles like your eyes, shoulders, jaw, etc. Or perhaps your stomach is acidic or upset. Hand and Foot temperature is a good general measure of your stress level. There is no one "normal" temperature but a range over which your temperature changes. This is a general description and not a hard and fast rule.

When learning to relax, take your hand temperature before and after. Also record the change – i.e. before 75°, after 89°, change 14°. The lower your beginning temperature, the greater change you can see. Don't be discouraged if you can't increase to 95° or above. A change of 5° to 10° degrees is a very good sign. If your hands are usually rather warm, a change of 1° to 3° degrees can be important. Your TENSE-RELAX range might be only 10 degrees wide – 88° to 98°. You can measure your hand temperature using the Stress Thermometer or Stress Meter. [Both on Page 7.]

Pay attention to how you feel as well as checking your temperature at different times and in different situations throughout the day.

QUICK STRESS TEST



<http://www.cliving.org/10secondstresstest.htm>

A simple way to test your stress level is by comparing your hand temperature to your neck temperature. Neck temperature is typically around the high 80's to low 90's F. Hand temperature can vary from 60 degrees to 99 degrees in a normal room temperature. So you can test your hand temperature by touching your neck with the fingertips of both hands.

Do your fingers feel colder than your neck? How much colder? Allot colder or just slightly chilly?

Do your fingers feel warm like your neck?

If your fingers feel really cold, then you are showing extra tension perhaps too much stress.

If your fingers feel cool, then you are showing some tension.

If your fingers are warm like your neck, then you may be relaxed and comfortable.

If your fingers feel hotter than your neck, then you may be deeply relaxed.

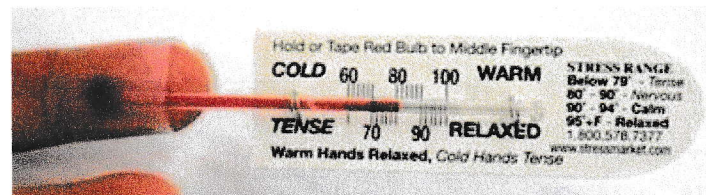
This is a simple test. Some people feel stress in muscle tension, sweaty hands or other ways that may be more apparent than hand temperature.

STRESS METER® – glass tube thermometer

Temperature will vary between hands and individual fingers. For accuracy, tape the red bulb over the fingerprint of the middle finger of your dominant hand (right handed, left handed) using an inch of transparent tape as pictured.

This simple, reusable Glass Tube thermometer shows 1 degree F. changes in the bright red, Non-Toxic, Oil Based Liquid. Simply tape or hold the exposed red bulb of the thermometer to your fingertip. Each person reads Stress Number Value, e.g. – 72°, 83 ° or 92°. The stress meter is deal for class or training group. Hold or tape red bulb to fingertip – Caution Glass with Non-toxic oil based liquid. Measures full range of temperature from 60° F to 98° F.

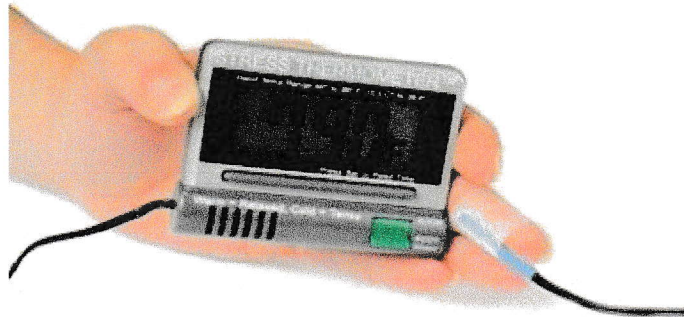
VIEW OF STRESS METER® PLACEMENT



<http://www.cliving.org/stressmeter.htm>

Avoid touching the Stress Meter® to your clothing, the chair or table since it will throw off your reading. Holding the Stress Meter® between your fingers can be a quick measure but is not as accurate as using tape since your two fingers insulate and the tension varies. There may be as much as 2 degrees difference between different Stress Meters®.

SC911 STRESS THERMOMETER



<http://www.cliving.org/stressthermometer.htm>

Watch your hand temperature plummet 10 degrees by just thinking about your bossy mother. Be amazed as it surges upwards by 6 degrees when you talk about your great vacation in Bali. Marvel as your temperature rockets up 22 degrees warmer in just 30 minutes when you listen to one of our relaxation audio CDs. It is great fun to use it to test friends and co-workers. This is a super tool for therapists to use to see client's true feelings and thoughts. You'll wonder if it can read your mind and sense your emotions. Hand temperature is one of the measures used in lie detector tests.

The Stress Thermometer has the advantage of giving you a specific number value for stress levels that can be compared over time to check improvement and for degrees of reactions to different stressful events. Your temperature started at 75° 10 weeks ago but now your starting temperature is 88°. When you talked about work your temperature dropped 22°. Now it barely drops by 2 degrees because you are so much calmer. It is a great way to view your stress and learn to control it. Fast digital temperature feedback that updates your temperature reading every 2 seconds. Your blood pressure can lower as you relax. Release stress before it builds into a Migraine Headache or you dump excessive acid in your stomach. Temperature Biofeedback has been researched tested for Migraine Headache relief, returning blood pressure to normal, reducing test and performance anxiety and so much more.



Custom Printed Front and Back – Stress Key Chains



GUIDELINES FOR DEEP REST

1. Practice this exercise where you're not likely to be disturbed. (At least for the first two weeks of training.)
2. Loosen binding clothing; remove contact lenses, glasses or other things that will distract you.
3. Wait an hour after eating so as not to interfere with your digestion.

To begin, sit comfortably in a chair with your spine rather straight. Sitting will help you remain awake and aware of the changes inside your body. Close your eyes so that you can easily focus on these body changes. Let your hands rest in your lap. Place your feet flat on the floor or comfortably cross them at the ankles. **WRITE DOWN YOUR HAND TEMPERATURE.** If you don't have a thermometer, touch your hands together and to your neck in order to check their temperature.

After each phrase, repeat the phrase mentally to yourself. Allow yourself to feel the sensation that phrase reminds you of. Pause 20 to 30 seconds between each phrase.



Relaxation and Stress Temperature Test

Occasionally check yourself (perhaps weekly) by having a friend softly read each phrase below aloud to you while she writes down your hand temperature on the line in front of each phrase. You remain sitting and relaxing with eyes closed during all the phrases.

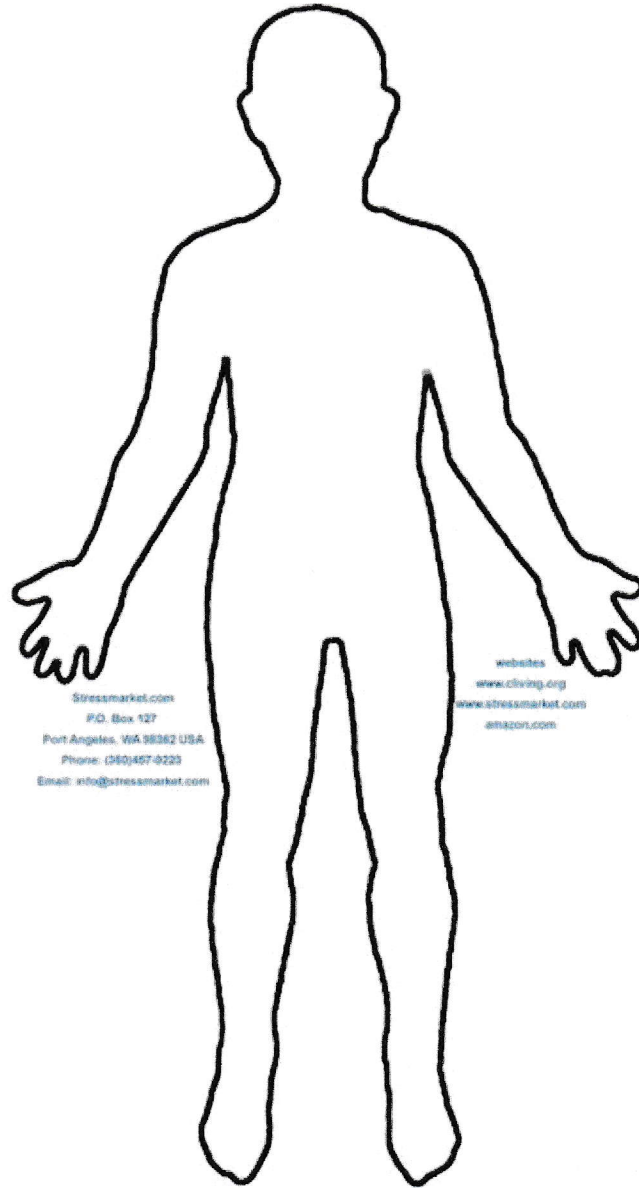
- _____ 1. I feel quiet and easily relaxed.
- _____ 2. I am beginning to feel my relaxation deepening.
- _____ 3. My feet feel heavy and relaxed.
- _____ 4. My ankles, my knees and my hips feel heavy, relaxed and comfortable.
- _____ 5. My stomach and the whole central portion of my body feels relaxed and comfortable.
- _____ 6. My hands, my arms and my shoulders feel heavy, relaxed and comfortable.
- _____ 7. My neck, my jaws and my forehead feel relaxed.
- _____ 8. My whole body feels quiet, heavy and relaxed.
- _____ 9. Pause for a moment and allow yourself to relax even further.
- _____ 10. I am more and more deeply relaxed.
- _____ 11. I feel very quiet and easily relaxed.
- _____ 12. My whole body is relaxed and my hands are warm, relaxed and warm.
- _____ 13. My hands are warm.
- _____ 14. Warmth is flowing into my hands; they are warm, warm.
- _____ 15. I can feel the warmth flowing down my arms into my hands
- _____ 16. My hands are warm, relaxed and warm.
- _____ 17. Pause for a moment and allow yourself to relax even deeper.
- _____ 18. My whole body feels heavy, warm and relaxed.
- _____ 19. My legs and feet are heavy and warm
- _____ 20. I can feel the warmth flowing down my legs into my feet.
- _____ 21. My whole body is relaxed and my feet are warm, relaxed and warm.
- _____ 22. My feet are warm.
- _____ 23. Warmth is flowing into my feet; they are warm, warm.
- _____ 24. Pause as you allow yourself to relax deeper and deeper.
- _____ 25. My whole body feels quiet, comfortable and relaxed.
- _____ 26. My mind is peaceful and relaxed.

- _____ 27. I withdraw my thoughts from the surroundings and I feel serene and still.
- _____ 28. My thoughts are turned inward and I am at ease.
- _____ 29. Deep within my mind I experience and see myself being relaxed, comfortable and still.
- _____ 30. I am aware, but in an easy, quiet, inward-turned way.
- _____ 31. My mind is clear and refreshed.
- _____ 32. I feel an inward quietness.
- _____ 33. Pause and enjoy your feelings of deep, peaceful rest.

When you are ready to become active again, WRITE DOWN YOUR HAND TEMPERATURE. You can touch your hands together and to your neck to see if your temperature has changed. Stretch your arms and legs, head and neck. Take a long, slow, deep breath. At your own pace, go ahead and open your eyes.

SHADES OF REST

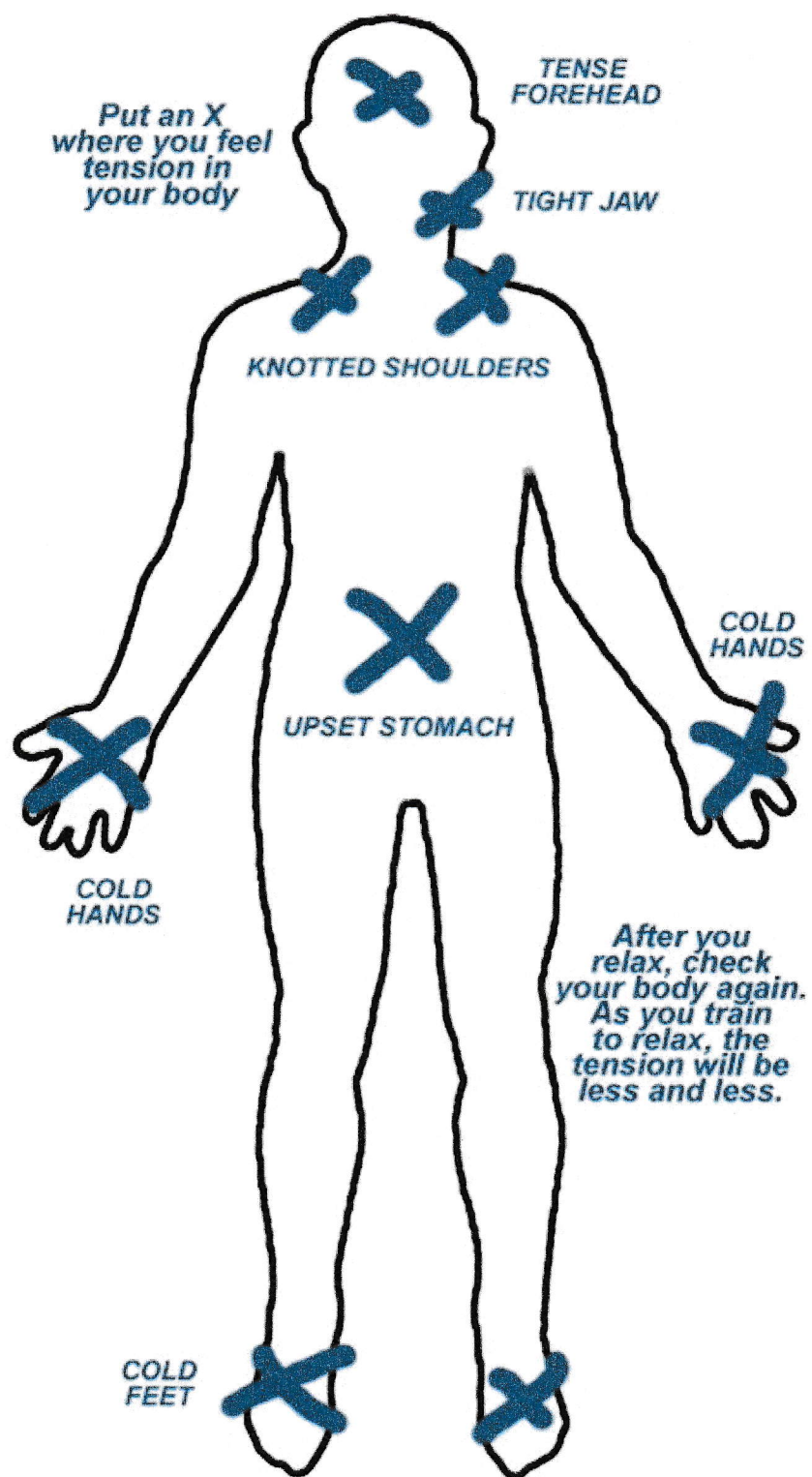
On the Body Outline shade in the areas of your body that felt relaxed. With an X mark those areas that still felt tense. Compare this to the Body Outline in the section titled Pressure Points. Do the areas marked with an X identify chronic areas of stress? Were you able to relax areas of your body that are usually tense? (A PRESSURE POINT X is now shaded on the REST POINTS Body Outline.) Were you more aware of the changes in your body as you relaxed? Don't be frustrated if some areas are still tense. Beginning level Stress Management training usually takes daily practice for 2 months to 1 year.



See Sample of Stress Body Outline – marked with X

Hand temperature is just one way of measuring stress. Your hands can range from 60° to 99° degrees F. As you are able to deeply relax, your hands will become quite warm. Check your temperature throughout the day. You may also notice that your palms get sweaty. This, too, is a reflection of increased stress and strain. Some of you may feel very little change in hand temperature. Noticing muscle tension in your forehead, jaws or other chronic areas of stress may be more revealing.

This is just one of several basic exercises used to teach people relaxation. Electronic Biofeedback temperature equipment like the SC911 Stress Thermometer, show earlier, displays temperature changes to a 0.1°.



Stress Body Outline – Mark X on stressed or tense areas of your body

RELAXATION JOURNAL

Keep written records of your temperature checks along with your thoughts, feelings and body tensions at the time. Record your temperature before and after relaxing as well as how much it changed. Review your records and compare notes with friends. Use this Rest Journal to record your experiences as you learn to rest deeply. Use the Stress Thermometer or Stress Meter or one of the other devices we offer to test temperature.

DATE	TIME	Temperature Reading	YOUR EXPERIENCE	<small>Stressmeter.com P.O. Box 127 Port Angeles, WA 98282 USA Phone: (360)457-8023 Email: info@stressmeter.com</small>
9/12/12	10 am	75.3 – 77.4	Really hard time relaxing. Too much pressure at work and family. I felt the tension in my back and my jaws. I did deep breathing and Deep Muscle Relax 101H exercise. I was surprised my temp went up a little. I was really struggling to let go	
9/13/12	5 pm	76.4 – 82.4 85.3 – when I shut off my phone!	It was a long hard day. It sure felt good to take some time to unwind although it took me 15 min. to feel a sense of relaxation. My stomach was pretty tense and so were my shoulders. I am still clenching my teeth grrr. Oh well. I had my stupid phone on vibrate. When I shut it off, my temp shot up several degrees – no one can call me = relaxation	
9/15/12	7 pm	80.1 – 89.3	I missed relaxing yesterday. I was waiting all day to heat up my hands and relax. I started deep breathing before I even got the sensor on my finger. Autogenic Phrases 102H to heat up my hands really helped. I kind of forgot about my sore muscles. At one point, I felt like I was in the sun as it was beating down. My hands warmed up the highest to date.	
9/16/12	3 pm	74.3 – 81.9	Feel like I am getting a cold. My energy is at a low ebb. As I relaxed, I could feel myself getting a little better. My breathing improved and my chest and nose were feeling good. I am learning how to open up my muscles and let the warm blood flow to my hands. My feet were cold and I did not feel them heating up very much.	
9/17/12	1 pm	82.9 – 74.8	It is Saturday. It is pouring rain. All my weekend plans are down the tube. I feel stuck here in the house. I am worrying about my job – I may get laid off again. I am afraid my dad is really sick and I will need to go back for a visit. I just could not shut off my worries and it really showed in my temperature.	
9/18/12	5 pm	83.8 – 92.5	I survived the weekend watching old movies. Work was pleasant. I sat in the sun for a few minutes after work. I just quite trying to heat up my hands and relax – Presto, my temp shot up. I could really feel the blood flowing into my fingers. Even my toes felt warmer. I should measure them sometime. My vision is so much clearer. My lower back pain is pretty well gone now. Yeah!!	

DATE	TIME	Temperature Reading	YOUR EXPERIENCE	<small> stressmarket.com P.O. Box 127 Port Angeles, WA 98362 USA Phone: (360)467-9203 Email: info@stressmarket.com </small>

SPOT STRESS CHECKS

There are also a number of ways to incorporate relaxation into your daily schedule without feeling additional time pressure. One way is to perform Spot Pressure Checks. When you look at your watch, go to the "restroom" or use the phone, take a couple of seconds to briefly check your body mentally for unnecessary tension. Then tell your body to relax. With time you'll find that you catch tension before it builds into a headache, burning stomach or knotted muscles. Have the whole family rest together. This will relieve the day's pressures so that they don't