

EXECUTIVE STRENGTH STRESS MANAGEMENT

*Tame Your
Fears and Take
on the World*

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Welcome to the Executive Strength Stress Management Workbook

This workbook is meant to accompany the Executive Strength Stress Management course. You can complete all the exercises from the course in this workbook. In the future you can look back on your answers from this workbook to see how far you've progressed in building your stress management IQ.

It's easy NOT to do the exercises but that's like saying "I'm going to a fitness course but I'm just going to sit out the physical stuff." It won't work. The more you do, the more you will get out of it. And as you will see as you progress through the course, there are some serious consequences if you don't learn to manage your stress.

The way our brain likes to learn is through lots of repetition. There are some exercises that should become a habit in your life if you want to be stress-free. Make sure you keep doing them.

You may want to make copies of the stress measures so you can do them in the future to see how well your stress management skills are keeping your stress levels low.

Most of all try to enjoy doing these exercises – you don't want to make stress management training into a stress making chore.

Module 1:

What is Stress?

And How Stressed Are
You?

Perceived Stress Scale

Date _____

These questions ask you about your feelings and thoughts **during the last month**. In each case, you will be asked to indicate by circling *how often* you felt or thought a certain way.

0 = Never 1 = Almost Never 2 = Sometimes 3 = Fairly Often 4 = Very Often

1. In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?..... **0 1 2 3 4**
2. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life? **0 1 2 3 4**
3. In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and “stressed”? **0 1 2 3 4**
4. In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems? **0 1 2 3 4**
5. In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?..... **0 1 2 3 4**
6. In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do? **0 1 2 3 4**
7. In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?..... **0 1 2 3 4**
8. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things?.. **0 1 2 3 4**
9. In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control?..... **0 1 2 3 4**
10. In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them? **0 1 2 3 4**

How to Score Your Stress Test

First of all you need to reverse some of the answers. For questions 4, 5, 7 and 8 change your answers so that:

0 = 4

1 = 3

2 = 2

3 = 1

4 = 0.

Now add them all together to get your total score.

If you're **male** a score of **12 is average**.

If you're **female** a score of **14 is average**.

Try to do this test regularly to see how stressed you are and to measure how much you've changed.

Feel free to make some extra copies to keep track of your stress levels over time.

How Stressful Has the Last 12 months Been?

This has been taken from the Social Readjustment Rating Scale (Holmes, T.H. & Rahe, R.H. (1967). The social readjustment rating scale. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, 11, 213-218).

If you have experienced any of these events in the last **12 months** make a mark or write the score in the column next to the event. Add up all the scores that are relevant to you.

1. Death of a spouse	100
2. Divorce	73
3. Marital Separation	65
4. Jail term	63
5. Death of a close family member	63
6. Personal injury or illness	53
7. Marriage	50
8. Fired at work	47
9. Marital reconciliation	45
10. Retirement	45
11. Change in health of family member	44
12. Pregnancy	40
13. Sex difficulties	39
14. Gain of a new family member	39
15. Business readjustments	39
16. Change in financial state	38
17. Death of a close friend	37
18. Change to different line of work	36
19. Change in no. of arguments with spouse	35
20. Mortgage over \$ 50,000	31
21. Foreclosure of mortgage	30
22. Change in responsibilities at work	29
23. Son or daughter leaving home	29
24. Trouble with in-laws	29
25. Outstanding Personal achievements	28
26. Wife begins or stops work	26
27. Begin or end school	26
28. Change in living conditions	25
29. Revision of personal habits	24
30. Trouble with boss	23

31. Change in work hours or conditions	20
32. Change in residence	20
33. Change in school	20
34. Change in recreation	19
35. Change in religious activities	19
36. Change in social activities	18
37. Loan less than 50,000	17
38. Change in sleeping habits	16
39. Change in no. of family get- together	15
40. Change in eating habits	15
41. Vacation	13
42. Holidays	12
43. Minor violation of laws	11

According to the researchers your scores indicate your susceptibility to a stress related psychological condition.

So if you have a score:

- **Below 149** your susceptibility is **low**.
- **Between 150 and 200** it's **mild**.
- **Between 200 and 299** it's **moderate**.

If you have a score **above 300** you have a **very strong chance of developing a stress-related psychological condition** and you need to see me



Module 2:

Your Brain & Stress

Turning Stress into Hope

Start by choosing your 10 biggest stressors. Write them in the left hand column. To start with write one statement of hope for each stressor. Then go back and add another two. Don't forget the 3:1 rule.

1.	1.
	2.
	3.
2.	1.
	2.
	3.
3.	1.
	2.
	3.
4.	1.
	2.
	3.
5.	1.
	2.
	3.
6.	1.
	2.
	3.
7.	1.
	2.
	3.
8.	1.
	2.
	3.
9.	1.
	2.
	3.
10.	1.
	2.
	3.

Ultradian Downtime: the Chill Pill for Your Brain

What can you do in your Ultradian down-time to save your brain and keep your stress to a minimum? Here are some examples to get you started. Fill in as many as you can. You can add to the list as you come up with more ideas.

<i>Focus on my breathing</i>
<i>Stare out the window and daydream</i>
<i>Stare at a picture of a restful scene or something that makes me feel good</i>
<i>Get up and move or stretch</i>
<i>Go for a walk outside in the fresh air</i>

Module 3:

Your Body & Stress

Progressive Relaxation Script

Find a comfortable position. Lie on your back or sit in a chair with your back supported. Place your hands at your sides, palms up. Close your eyes if you wish.

Now begin to become aware of your breathing..... Focus on slowing down the rhythm of your breathing..... Your chest and abdomen will expand outward with each breath, like a balloon gently filling with air....Continue breathing slowly and gently....

Now turn your attention to the top of your head. Feel the passive progressive relaxation beginning at the top of your scalp, and spreading slowly downwards....

Even your ears are becoming relaxed and heavy.... Feel your eyebrows resting, gently resting downward.... Your forehead is becoming relaxed and smooth....

Allow your temples to relax... let your jaw relax.... Allow your tongue to relax...

Feel your throat relaxing.... relax your cheeks, nose, and eyes.... Feel your eyelids becoming very heavy.... and very relaxed.

Now turn your attention to your neck.... allow a feeling of relaxation to begin at the top of your neck, and flow downward...

Feel the relaxation as your shoulders become relaxed and loose.... Let your shoulders gently sink downward.... as they become relaxed.... Feel your collar bones becoming relaxed as your shoulders move gently back, and your chest widens slightly....

Now turn your attention to your right arm..... Feel the relaxation flowing down from your right shoulder.... allow your upper arm to relax... your elbow.... lower arm... and wrist become loose and relaxed....

Feel the relaxation flowing into your hand... Let all the tension drain out each finger tip and flow away.... the relaxation spreads to your thumb... index finger.... middle finger... ring finger... and little finger....

Feel the relaxation flowing down your left arm... Let the muscles of the left upper arm relax.... Relax your elbow.... lower arm.... and wrist.... Feel the relaxation flowing down your left arm....

Let the tension melt away.... imagine the tension flowing right out your finger tips... Allow your left hand to relax completely.... relax your thumb... index finger.... middle finger... ring finger... and little finger....

Allow the feeling of relaxation to continue to your chest and stomach.... feel the relaxation there... becoming deeper with each breath....

Now turn your attention to your upper back... Feel the relaxation flow down your spine... Let all the muscles give up their hold.... relax your upper back... middle and lower back.... allow your back to relax completely..... Feel the relaxation in your whole upper body

Let your hip muscles relax.... Relax all the way from your buttocks, down the back of your thighs... relax the muscles on the front of your thighs... Feel the relaxation in your upper legs moving down to your knees... your calves and shins.... your ankles.... and your feet.... allow all the muscles to relax and go limp....

Allow any last bits of tension to flow right out the soles of your feet.... Feel the relaxation flowing through your body... From the top of your head... down to the bottoms of your feet.... become more relaxed with each breath.... enjoy the feeling of total relaxation.....

When you are ready to return to your day, reawaken your body slowly... gently move your muscles... roll your shoulders slowly forward.... then slowly backward.... lean your head gently to the left... return to centre.... lean your head gently to the right... turn your head...

Wiggle your fingers and toes....then gently open your eyes....

Exercise Without the Stress

Here's your opportunity to brainstorm some ways to get your body moving for 20 – 30 minutes without it being torture. Exercise without the torture is the best stress relief there is. I've put some examples to get you started.

Dance around the living room to your favourite music
Go to the park and play on the swings
Have a game of catch and kiss (this is one of my favourites)
Walk on the beach and be really present to the sounds and sights

My Waist-Hip Ratio

- a) Measure the circumference of your waist _____
- b) Measure the circumference of your hip _____

My WHR _____

Divide the circumference of your waist by the circumference of your hip

e.g. If your waist measurement is 71cm you would divide it by your hip measurement of 87cm

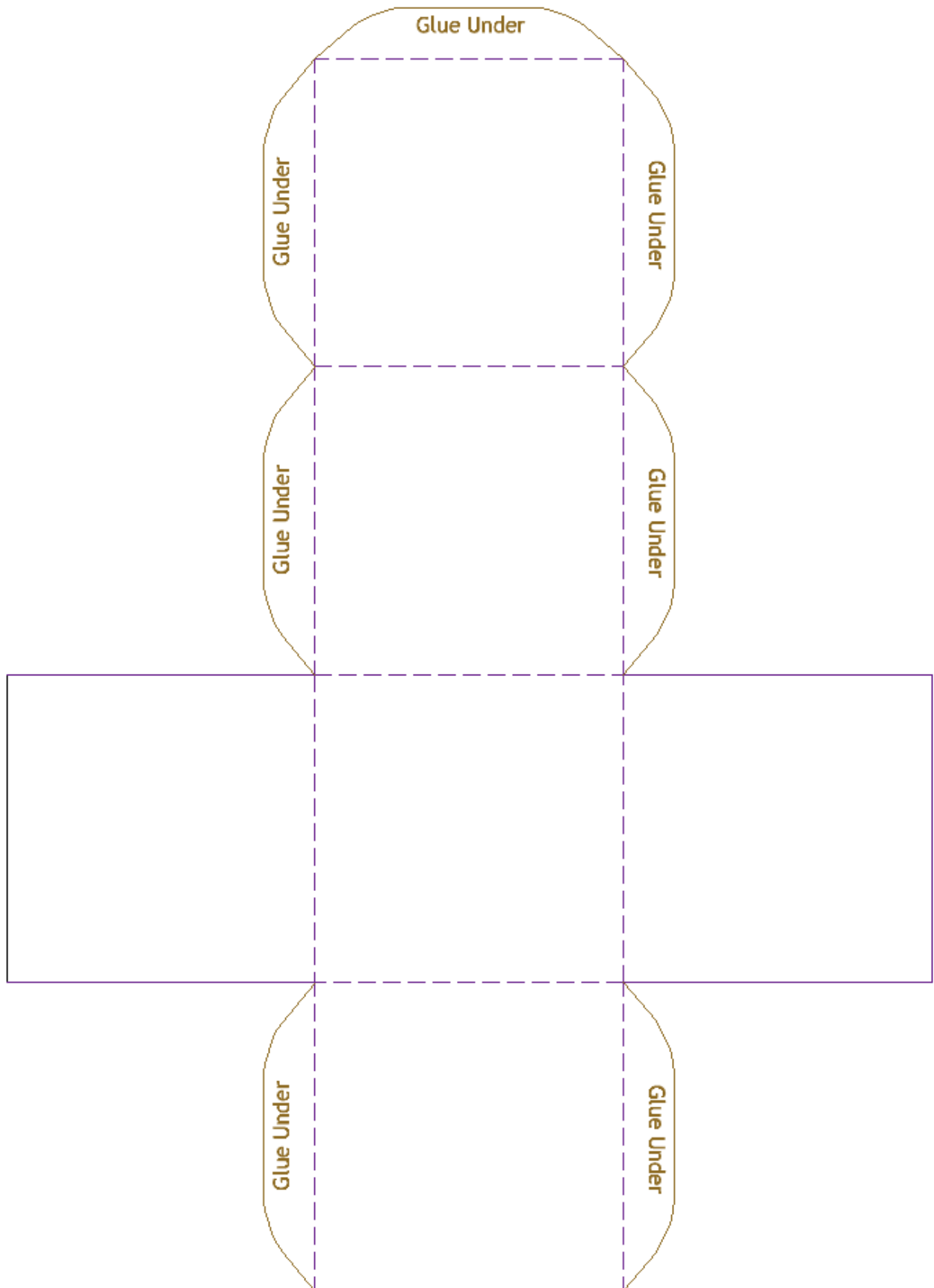
$$71 \div 87 = 0.82$$

For females a WHR of .80 is considered healthy

For males a WHR of 1.0 is considered healthy

If your WHR is higher than that there's a good chance stress is affecting where you're storing weight and affecting your health.

Some good news for some of us: if you have butt fat it protects you against some of the harm of belly fat.



Suggested Movements and Sounds for Your Muse Cubes

You make one cube with sounds and one cube with movements. Roll the dice and do what they tell you. You might get wiggle and whoop or stretch and laugh. It doesn't matter what the combination is – this is a great way to get your body moving during the day and adding some fun and laughter to your work environment. Plus it might protect against cancer and it will definitely help you function better at work or in whatever task you're doing.

I gave some examples but left some room to fill in some of your ideas for sounds and movements.

Bend	Yell
Wiggle	Laugh
Stretch	Whistle
Skip	Whoop
Dance	Sigh
Shake	Yawn

Module 4:

More Stuff
that Works

Today. Tomorrow. Later Dude!

	Today
	Tomorrow
	Later Dude!

Exhausting the Control Freak

Choose a problem that feels like it's out of your control. Go through and list all the things that might give you a sense of control over some of it. Remember that some control is better than none – even if the only thing you can get control over is yourself and your reactions.

My problem:

Activating and exhausting the Control Freak:

Module 5:

Prevention is Better than Cure

Social Support

Choose some of the beliefs that you might need to change so you can reap the full benefit of social support. There are a few listed to get you started. Add your own to the list then brainstorm some ideas on how you could start to build more social support in your life.

My beliefs:
<i>My friends are too busy</i>
<i>Other people's problems are more important/worse than mine</i>
<i>I'm the one people turn to for advice - not the other way around</i>
<i>I don't want to be seen as weak</i>

Ways to Build Social Support
<i>Join a stress management group ;)</i>
<i>Choose one person you can trust and let them know what your stressors are</i>
<i>Invite someone you like out for coffee - take your mind off your problems</i>