

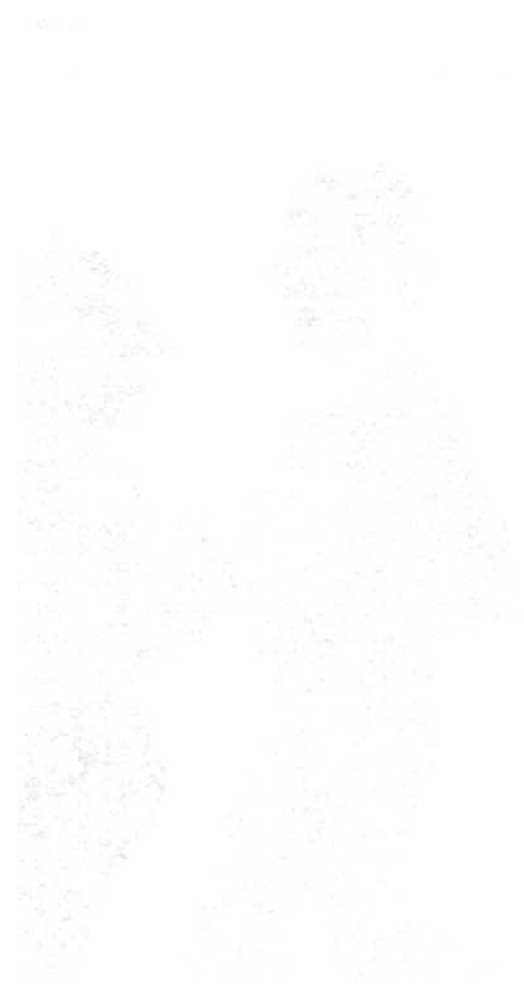
Exercise

AN ACTIVE PARTNERSHIP
for the Health of Your Heart™



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Exercise

A regular exercise program is very important to your early recovery and your future good health. This section of the workbook describes:

- The health benefits of regular exercise
- The best types of exercises for your heart
- How much exercise is safe for your heart
- How often you should exercise
- The amount of time you should spend on your exercise program
- Early warning signs that will alert you to stop your exercise program and contact your doctor

Getting started on your exercise program probably won't be difficult, but keeping it up over a long period of time can be. You'll find helpful hints in this section on how to keep up the good work and maintain your exercise program for weeks, months and years!

Following a regular exercise program will provide important benefits to your heart and overall physical and emotional health.

- You'll feel stronger and healthier
- You'll be better able to control your weight
- Your heart will become a more efficient pump
- You'll be better able to cope with stress

How This Section Is Organized

- Part 1: What Types of Exercise?
- Part 2: Your Personal Exercise Prescription
- Part 3: Making Plans
- Part 4: Getting Started
- Part 5: Enjoying Yourself:
Exercising Comfortably
- Part 6: Increasing Your Exercise
- Part 7: Making Exercise a Lifelong Habit

Note to Spouse, Relatives and Friends

Many people who have heart problems are highly motivated to begin an exercise program. However, in some cases they have trouble keeping it up.

You can encourage them in the following ways:

- If possible, exercise with your spouse, relative or friend. (Check with your doctor if you are over 40, unless you are used to regular exercise.)
- Ask if he or she would like to be reminded about exercising.
- Ask what time of day he or she plans to exercise, so you can coordinate your schedules.
- Use encouragement, praise, or special rewards to help motivate your spouse, relative or friend to continue his or her exercise program.

Part 1

What Types of Exercise?

There are several considerations in choosing the type of exercise that will help speed your recovery.

- You should enjoy the exercise that you choose (because if you don't, you won't do it).
- The exercise should be "aerobic." That's the type of exercise that gets the large muscles of your legs and arms moving—for instance, walking, swimming, bicycling or jogging.
- You should be able to do it continuously, for ten minutes or longer, without discomfort.
- You should be able to exercise at a pace that is low enough to be safe for your heart, but high enough to benefit your heart.
- You should be able to do the exercise on a regular basis—not just every other Saturday!

The type of exercise that meets these requirements for most people is walking. It's easy. It's enjoyable. You can do it any time. You can regulate your speed. What's more, walking is an exercise that most people can keep up over a long period of time.

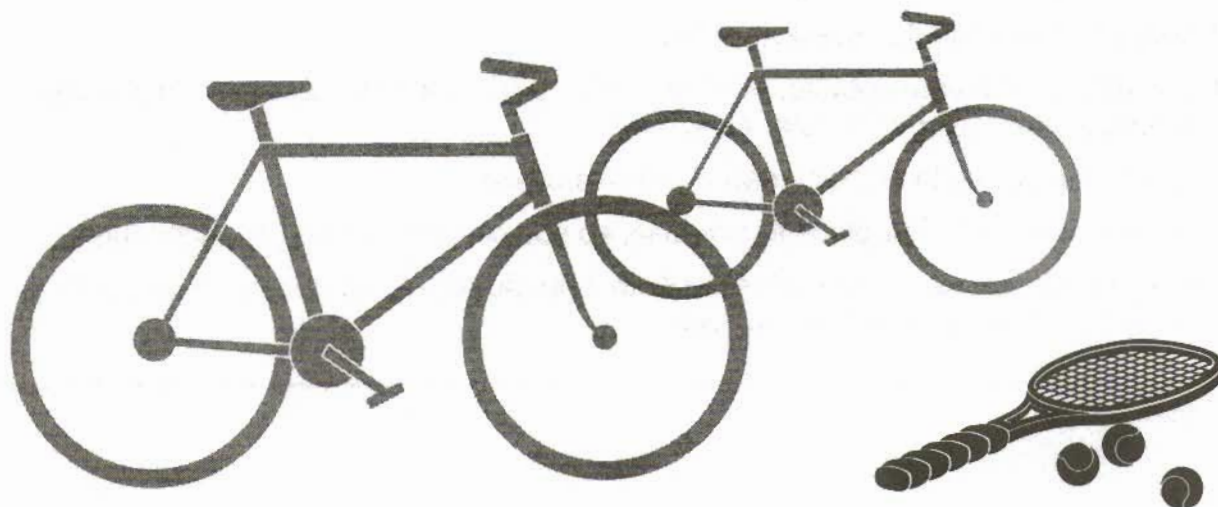
If you don't want to walk...

There are other options:

- If there is a medically supervised rehabilitation exercise program available, use it. These programs are excellent; they'll get you moving safely, provide companionship, and help you monitor your progress.
- If you were already a swimmer, bicyclist, or jogger before your heart trouble, talk to your doctor about easing yourself back into that form of activity.

On page 55 you'll find suggestions for moving into more vigorous forms of activity, if you are interested and your doctor feels you are ready for it. But if you want to remain a walker for life, that's an excellent choice.

Note: Weight-lifting and similar types of muscle-building exercises do not condition your heart. If you want to lift weights at a health club or at home, talk to your doctor first.



Part 2

Your Personal Exercise Prescription

We want you to enjoy your exercise program. For many people, exercise is the best part of the recovery process. You will feel more confident about your exercise program if you know that it is safe for your heart—which is why you need a personal “exercise prescription.” This prescription will cover four important aspects of your exercise program:

- The type of exercise that you will do
- The intensity (how hard you should exercise)
- The frequency (how often you should exercise)
- The duration (how long you should exercise)

The best types of exercise were described on the previous page. You and your doctor will decide which one is best for you.

What about the intensity, frequency and duration of exercise?

Intensity

Your goal is to exercise hard enough to benefit your heart, but not so hard that you strain it. Your best guide to the proper intensity is your heart rate. When you exercise, your heart beats faster to supply your muscles with the oxygen-rich blood they need. The harder you exercise, the more rapidly your heart beats.

Your exercise prescription will tell you your target heart rate, so you'll be able to judge your intensity of exercise. On the next page, you will learn how to measure your heart rate during exercise.

Frequency

Exercise won't do your heart much good unless you do it regularly, at least 3 or 4 times per week. Many people choose to exercise 5 or 6 times per week. Just be sure to allow your muscles at least one day a week to rest.

Duration

You might start by exercising only a few minutes at a time. As you get stronger you will build up to a half hour or more of continuous exercise. We encourage you to increase your exercise duration to at least 20 minutes per session before you increase your intensity.

Medication

Some medications will affect your heart rate and blood pressure in response to exercise. Beta blockers, for instance, will lower your usual heart rate, both during exercise and at rest. Any time you change your medication, or the amount you take, ask the doctor if this will affect your exercise prescription.

Here are just a few of the medications that can change your response to exercise:

Beta blockers
Quinidine
Calcium channel blockers
Digoxin
Nitrates
Medicines for pulmonary problems
Amniodarone



Your Exercise Prescription

You can't "borrow" a target heart rate from your friends or neighbors, even if their age, shape and state of health seem identical to yours. Your doctor or rehabilitation specialist will give you a target heart rate range and exercise prescription that is designed for you, and you alone.

- If your doctor or member of the rehabilitation staff has given you an exercise prescription already, copy the information on to the blank form on the opposite page.
- If the doctor hasn't given you an exercise prescription yet, ask him or her to fill in the one provided here.
- As you get stronger, you may need a new prescription. Ask your doctor when your prescription should be changed.

Notice that the prescription gives you a "target heart rate range" with an upper and lower limit. You'll need to check your heart rate while you are exercising. If it is in your target range, you're doing a good job. If your heart rate is too low, you may want to speed up. If your heart rate is too high, you should slow down or take a short rest from exercise.

How To Check Your Heart Rate

While you exercise, you should check your heart rate every five minutes at first, and less often as you become more comfortable with your exercise program. If your target heart rate range is 100 to 120 beats per minute, this means that your pulse should stay between 100 and 120 beats per minute while you exercise.

Most people find it easier and quicker to take a 10-second pulse count (rather than one-minute). You can divide your one-minute target heart rate by six to determine your 10-second heart rate. If your one-minute target heart rate range is 100 to 120 beats, your 10-second heart rate range will be 17 to 20 beats.

Getting To Know Your Pulse

Once you start exercising, you'll be checking your pulse regularly. It's a good idea to practice counting your pulse now, before you start your exercise program.

- Make sure you can see a watch or clock which has a second-hand.
- Using your first two fingers, find your pulse, either on the thumb side of your wrist, or on your neck, at one side only, one inch to either side of your windpipe.

- Count your pulse for ten seconds, and write the number here:

- Multiply by six to get your heart rate per minute, and write it here:

This is your "resting" heart rate. During exercise, your pulse will probably be stronger and easier to find.



Exercise Prescription

(Your name)

should begin the following exercise program on : _____ (Date)

Recommended types of exercise: _____

Duration per session: _____ minutes No. of sessions per week: 2 3 4 5 6 7

Target heart rate: _____ to _____ for 10 seconds

_____ to _____ for 1 minute

Special precautions, if any: _____



Part 3

Making Plans

The hardest thing in any exercise program is putting your foot out of the door for your first walk, or bike ride, or trip to an exercise class. The second hardest thing is doing it the second time.

That's why we don't want you to leave your exercise to chance. Joining a rehabilitation program (if one is available) is one good way of getting on a regular exercise schedule.

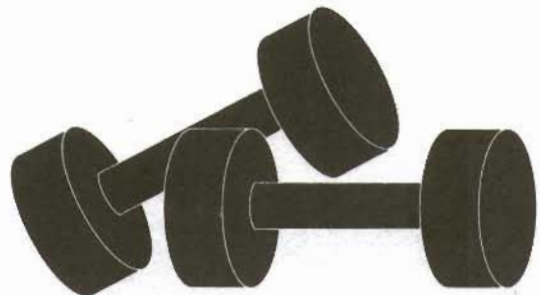
If you exercise on your own, you can set up a schedule for yourself. Even if you only walk for five or ten minutes a day in the beginning, it's important to plan for those walks, and to keep track of them.

Right now...

- Write on a calendar which days you plan to exercise this week. (There is a blank calendar sheet at the end of this section to get you started.)
- Mark off the days that you exercise as the week goes by.
- At the end of the week, count up the number of times you exercised, and check off the number on your Progress Chart.
- Be sure you have a calendar that you can use for exercise plans after this one is used up.

Here Are Some Tips for Planning Your Exercise:

- In the beginning, you may want to schedule short exercise sessions every day. As you get stronger, you should plan for at least three or four long sessions each week, of 20 to 40 minutes each. Then on the other days, keep up the habit of short walks (or other types of activity).
- As you plan walks, think about people you would like to walk with. Making arrangements with friends ahead of time will keep you from changing your plans at the last minute.
- Do you have comfortable shoes and clothing? (For more information on what to wear, see page 52.)
- Don't plan to walk just after a meal. Wait at least two hours after meals, or better still, walk before meals.
- If you live in an area where you have very hot or cold weather, find an indoor mall that is climate-controlled where you can walk.



Part 4

Getting Started

The most important thing for you to do now is to get started. If you are not in a medically supervised program, follow the instructions below on how to start your exercise program safely.

We're assuming that in the beginning of your program, you will be walking. If your doctor has told you you can swim or bike (or gives you a prescription for some other activity), it's still a good idea to read through this section. Most of the advice applies to all types of activity.

Starting Out

First do some easy stretching exercises (see pages 53-54). Then start slowly. This allows your muscles and joints to warm up before you put any strain on them. After five to ten minutes of warming up, you can slowly increase the intensity of your exercise.

There are three main ways to regulate your exercise intensity:

1. Heart Rate

Stop every five minutes and check your heart rate for 10 seconds. After a while you will get to know your body better, and won't have to check so often. In the beginning, it's important to know that you are staying in your target heart rate range.

If your heart rate is below the target your doctor gave you, it's safe to speed up slowly.

Note: After a few weeks or more of regular exercise, you may have to exercise more vigorously to get your heart rate up to your target range. That shows you're getting stronger and your heart is benefitting from the exercise.

2. The Talk Test

Exercise should make you breathe more deeply than usual—but it shouldn't make you breathless. Make sure you can hold a normal conversation while you are exercising.

3. Body Awareness

Pay attention to your body for signs of strain. If you feel you are going too fast, slow down!

At the end of each walk or exercise session, slow down gradually and walk casually for a few minutes as you cool down. Then do some more stretching exercises.

Warnings

Your doctor has probably told you about the signs or symptoms of too much exercise. These may include:

- * Pain, tightness or discomfort in the chest, jaw, arms, neck or back
- * Unusual shortness of breath
- * Lightheadedness, dizziness, confusion
- * Irregular heart beats
- * Excessive tiredness after exercise
- * Unusual pain or discomfort in your muscles or joints

If you have any of these symptoms (or any others that concern you), stop your exercise program until you can talk to your doctor or rehabilitation program staff.

Part 5

Enjoying Yourself: Exercising Comfortably

Exercise is not only good for your body—it's great for your mind, and your sense of well-being.

- It helps you cope with the stress and strain of everyday life.
- It helps you sleep.
- It gives you a pleasant "time out" in the course of the day.
- It helps you feel good about your body.

But this isn't likely to happen if your exercise sessions are painful, strenuous or boring. In fact, if you do not enjoy your exercise program, you may find excuses to skip exercise altogether. So we'll give you tips to help you exercise in a way that makes you comfortable, in body and mind. We'll be talking mostly about walking, but you can apply much of this advice to other forms of activity.

When To Exercise

- The best time is before meals, or at least two hours after a meal.
- In summer, avoid the hottest times of the day; don't do anything strenuous if the temperature is over 85 degrees. Be extra careful if it is both hot and humid.
- Don't exercise if you have a cold or flu, or if you are not feeling well. Give yourself time to recover from your illness and then resume your exercise program.

In Hot Weather

- Wait for the coolest part of the day, and avoid exercising in direct sun.
- Drink plenty of fluids before and during the exercise session.
- Do not take salt tablets, even if you sweat a lot. Most of us get more than enough salt from our food. (If you are on a low-salt diet, talk to your doctor.)

In Cold Weather

- Dress warmly if you exercise outside. (See tips below for "What To Wear.")
- If you have angina, you may want to exercise indoors during the cold season. (Many people who have angina find that cold weather increases the number of angina episodes they have.)

What To Wear

- For walking, wear clothes that are comfortable and loose-fitting.
- In cold weather, bundle up if you exercise outside. Wear gloves and a hat, to keep in your body heat.
- Wear layers of clothing so that you can remove some of it as you warm up. (Don't wear heavy or rubberized garments that make you sweat heavily. They don't help you lose weight, and they could make you severely dehydrated.)
- If you don't have comfortable walking shoes, invest in some. Take the advice of the salespeople at a good shoe store or sporting goods store. More and more shoe companies now make specialized, high-quality walking shoes.
- Wear soft, absorbent socks.

Stretches

Stretching is an important part of your exercise program. It can reduce muscle soreness, make you more flexible, and help prevent injuries.

To help keep all your moving parts in good shape, spend 5–10 minutes a day on the stretches below.

- Try to do each stretch at least once a day, preferably just before or after your exercise session.
- Always stretch with a slow, steady motion. Never bounce!
- For best results, spend at least 20–30 seconds on each stretch.
- Don't push your body until it hurts. Stretching should feel good, and never be painful. If it hurts—stop!

Shoulder stretch

Purpose:

Stretch arms, shoulders and upper back.

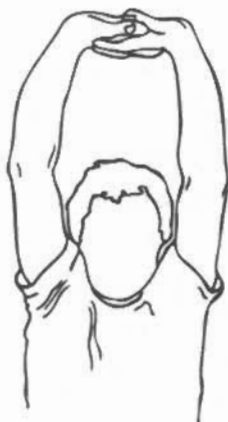
Starting position:

Interlace your fingers, and extend arms above your head, with palms facing upward.

Action:

Push arms upward and slightly backwards. Hold for the count of seven, then relax.

Repeat: 4–6 times



Quadriceps stretch

Purpose:

Stretch quadriceps on front of thigh.

Starting position:

Stand against the wall with the left hand against the wall for stability.

Action:

With the right hand, hold the right foot, and bring the heel towards the buttocks. Repeat with left hand and left foot. Keep the standing leg slightly bent at the knee.

Repeat:

2–3 times with each foot



Hamstring stretch

Purpose:

Stretch the back of the thighs.

Starting position:

Standing.

Action:

With your hands, bring one knee up to your chest. Then repeat with other knee.

Repeat:

4–6 times with each leg



Calf stretch No. 1

Purpose:

Stretch the calf.

Starting position:

Lean against a wall or tree. Bend one leg, and place the foot on the ground in front of you. The other leg should be placed behind you.

Action:

Slowly move your hips forward, keeping your lower back flat. Be sure that the heel of the back foot is flat on the floor, and the toes are pointed straight ahead. Repeat with other leg forward.

Repeat: 3–5 times each side



Calf stretch No. 2

Purpose:

Stretch the calf and Achilles tendon.

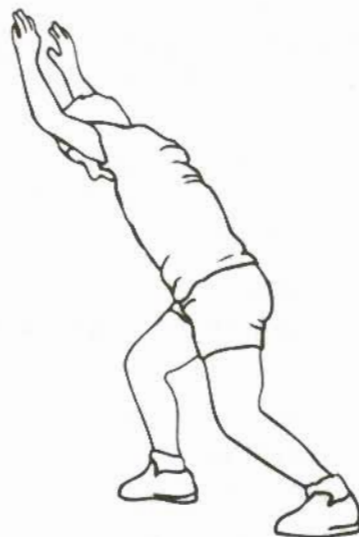
Starting position:

Place hands on a wall, and lean forward, with heels on ground and toes pointed straight ahead. The back leg should have a slight bend.

Action:

Slightly bend your back knee to lower your hips downward. Be sure to keep heel flat on ground. Hold for count of seven. Then repeat with other leg forward.

Repeat: 3–5 times each side



Arm circles

Purpose:

Loosen and rotate the shoulder joint.

Starting position:

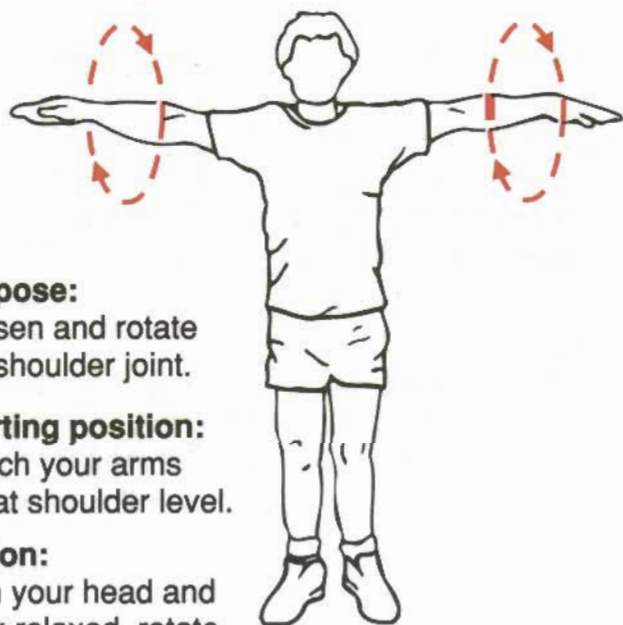
Reach your arms out at shoulder level.

Action:

With your head and neck relaxed, rotate your arms in small circles, first forward and then backward, for 10 to 15 seconds. Rest your arms at your sides briefly, then repeat.

Repeat:

3–5 times



Side bend

Purpose:

Stretch sides of trunk and shoulders.

Starting position:

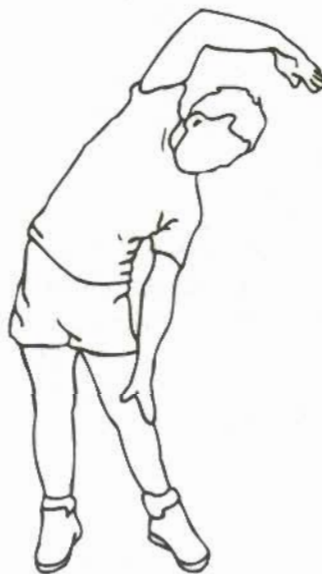
Stand with your feet at shoulder-width apart.

Action:

Stand with right arm over your head, and bend trunk directly to the left, keeping both feet flat and knees slightly bent. Hold for 10 seconds, then repeat on other side.

Repeat:

3–5 times each side



Part 6

Increasing Your Exercise

As the weeks go by and you feel stronger, you can increase the amount of exercise you do. If you've been walking, and you want to stick with that, that's great. As you get stronger, you can build up your walking program:

- By adding more minutes to each session
- By walking faster
- By walking up short rolling hills
- By adding more sessions

After that, if you feel you need more exercise, you can try some more vigorous types of exercise (provided that you stay within your target heart rate range and have none of the warning signs of over-exercising listed on page 51).

Adding More Time

- Start by adding more minutes of exercise each session, until you can exercise for 30-40 minutes non-stop.
- Next, increase the number of days when you take your long walks (or other exercise). Try for at least four or five 30-40 minute sessions a week. (If you can't always spare that much time, do two 10-20 minute sessions during the day.)
- In addition to more minutes of exercise, try to fit in more activity in general, in 2-3 minute chunks. For example, spend more time walking from store to store or to and from the parking lot, or working around your house, yard or office.

Getting More Vigorous

Check with your doctor if you want to move up to a more vigorous form of activity. Here's a list of types of exercise which are all excellent for your heart—provided they are not too strenuous for you, and your doctor approves:

Swimming	Walking up stairs
Dancing	Biking machines
Hiking	Rowing machines
Jogging	Skiing machines
Skating	Stepping machines
Bicycling	Treadmills
Cross-country skiing	

Avoiding Injury

You can't have a long and happy life of exercise if your body lets you down with aches, strains and mystery pains. The stretches on pages 21-22 will help keep your body in good running order, and prevent injury. If you are new to exercise, you are likely to feel some aches and pains. The question is, which are serious? And which are simply healthy signs that your body is coming back to life?

The chart on the next page will help you cope with aches and pains, and recognize danger signs.



Physical Problems

General Health

Problem

Remedy

Irregular or rapid heartbeats

Stop exercising until you can talk to your doctor.

Any signs of angina, including pain, pressure or tightness in the center of your chest, down either arm, in your throat or back, either while you are exercising or afterwards

Don't exercise again until you have talked to your doctor.

Dizziness, lightheadedness, cold sweat, fainting

Lie down with your feet up, or sit down and put your head between your legs. Talk to your doctor before you exercise again.

Your heartbeat has not returned to its normal resting level 10 minutes after you've finished exercising

Next time, don't exercise so hard. Keep your heart rate at the low end of your target range. If your heartbeat is still high 10 minutes after exercising, talk to your doctor.

You're still breathless 10 minutes after you stopped exercising

Next time, don't exercise so hard. Take the talk test; make sure you can talk comfortably while exercising. If you are still breathless after exercising less hard, talk to your doctor.

You're tired, even 24 hours after you exercised

Don't exercise so vigorously and check with your doctor.

You don't sleep well after exercise.

Exercise less vigorously; start at the low end of your target range, and increase the intensity more gradually.



Aches and Pains

Problem

Remedy

Flare-up of arthritis or other discomfort in hips, knees, ankle or shoulders

If you are familiar with these flare-ups, use your usual remedy. Stop your exercise program until the condition improves. Then start again, trying to protect your tender joints. (For instance, use protective footwear, exercise on softer surfaces, or try an exercise that doesn't strain your joints, such as stationary cycling or swimming.) Check with your doctor. You may need to change your exercise prescription.

Shin splints (pain after walking or jogging, on the front or sides of lower leg)

Use shoes with thicker soles. Find a softer surface, such as grass or dirt.

Crampy pain in the calf muscles, which you feel when exercising, but not at rest

This may happen when your muscles aren't used to hard work. It may go away after a few sessions. Use shoes with thicker soles, and be sure to cool down after exercise by walking around slowly. If it persists, try another exercise (i.e. bicycling instead of walking) and check with your doctor.

Charley horse, or feeling of tightness in the muscles

Take a warm bath. Back off: don't exercise so hard next time.

Sore ankles or knees

Try "R.I.C.E.": Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation. Apply an ice-pack; wrap in an elastic bandage; and rest the limb, in a raised position. If it still hurts in two days, see your doctor.

Part 7

Making Exercise a Lifelong Habit

Again and again, we hear the same story:

- You start your exercise program with great enthusiasm.
- You enjoy it while you are out there.
- You are starting to feel the benefits.
- But you accidentally quit.

And if you do let the exercise habit slip (perhaps because of a cold, or a vacation, or bad weather) it can be hard to get going again.

In this section, you can decide whether there's any danger you might quit, and find ways of heading off that danger.

What Are Your Personal Barriers?

Maybe you don't have any barriers—in which case, congratulations. However, most people run into roadblocks from time to time. Here are some common barriers, and possible solutions. If you think of others, you can add them to the list.

Barrier	Solution
"Exercise is boring"	<p>Participate in a rehabilitation program, if one is available.</p> <p>Make appointments to exercise with friends or family. It's more fun, and you won't put off planned sessions at the last moment.</p> <p>If you can't exercise with someone, entertain yourself some other way. Get a headset and listen to the radio, or play tapes.</p> <p>If you're really bored by walking, try a new form of exercise. Check into other types of activity that let you go at your own speed, such as rowing, skating, cross-country skiing and swimming. You can try alternating between the two activities.</p>
"It's hard to find time"	<p>You may feel it's stupid to plan ahead for a whole week, but it's effective, so do it.</p> <p>Try to adjust your schedule—even if it means waking up a little earlier each day. Or do two things at once: watch the news while you are on the exercise bike, or arrange "walking meetings" to discuss business matters.</p> <p>Divide your exercise session into two 15-minute periods. Then you might squeeze them in more easily.</p> <p>Use part of your lunch hour for exercise once or twice in the week.</p>

Barrier	Solution
"I just don't seem to get around to it"	<p>Plan to exercise first thing in the morning, before you get busy with other things.</p> <p>Put your exercise clothes on your nightstand where you'll see them.</p> <p>Carry some exercise clothes and shoes in your car in case you find you have some extra time while you're out.</p> <p>Ask family members to remind you to exercise when they notice you aren't busy.</p>
"I'm tired"	<p>Once you get back into shape, exercise should make you much less tired. Your whole body, including your heart, will be able to do its work more efficiently. If exercise is making you completely exhausted, slow down a bit; but keep it up, and you will feel the benefits.</p>
"I'm worried about straining my heart"	<p>Follow all the safety instructions in the exercise videotape and in this workbook. Check with your doctor if you have any questions. In most cases, it's safer to exercise than not to exercise!</p>
"I'm not seeing any improvement"	<p>Don't expect miracles overnight. If you are new to exercise, it's going to take several weeks to build up your stamina and start to feel (and look) better. But it will happen!</p>
"It's hard to exercise when I travel"	<p>Plan ahead. Set aside some time to walk. If it's too cold or too hot, get directions to an indoor mall. Select hotels with exercise facilities.</p>
"The weather is bad"	<p>Keep an indoor activity in mind for the days when it's too hot or cold to exercise outside.</p>

For Further Help....

Ask your local American Heart Association for suggestions about cardiac rehabilitation programs in your area.

Exercise Calendar

Instructions: At the beginning of each week, write in your exercise plans for the week. For Instance: "walk 30 minutes" on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, "walk 1 hour" on Sunday. Check off each day that you carry out your plans. At the end of the week, count up the number of exercise sessions from the week and record it on your Progress Chart.

Month of _____

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Week 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Stress

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for the Health of Your Heart™



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American Heart Association 

Part 1

What Is Stress?

Stress can affect people of all ages and all levels of income. For instance, picture a busy restaurant at lunchtime. Put a check mark next to all the people who are under stress:

- The owner is worrying about the big payment that's due on her loan.
- The cook is furious at one of his assistants, who has just put garlic powder in the chocolate mousse.
- The assistant is wondering whether to quit, or wait to be fired.
- A waitress who is looking after three extra tables feels unable to keep up, no matter how fast she works.
- A customer whose fish is undercooked is unhappy, but doesn't want to draw attention to himself by complaining.
- A customer has just proposed to his girlfriend, and been accepted.
- Three executives at the corner table are putting the finishing touches to a three-million dollar deal.
- A man who is ten minutes late for his reservation is still circling the block, looking for a parking space.

Which of these people are under stress? Probably **all** of them. Stress takes many different forms; it's been defined as **any** change that you must adapt to. It can be brought on by emotions, thoughts, relationships, or outside events. You can feel it as anger, anxiety,

excitement, or as vague tense feelings that you can't pin down. Sometimes your conscious brain may not be aware of stress at all, even though your body is suffering from its effects.

Not All Stress Is Bad

You are under stress when you are getting ready to give a brilliant performance, or when you are watching your favorite team win the Super Bowl. A wonderful event in your life (like a new baby) can be just as stressful as a tragic event, like a death in the family.

Life without any stress at all would be very dull indeed, so we won't suggest that you try to cut it all out. You probably couldn't do that anyway. But you can learn to cope with or avoid stress, which will help you because:

- Certain types of chronic stress can increase the risk of heart disease.
- Too much stress can make it harder for you to adopt a healthy lifestyle.
- Many types of stress are no fun.



You have been through a very stressful experience. Even though the worst should now be behind you, you may be feeling quite fragile. This section will help you cope with everyday stress, as you get back to normal life. If you feel you need more help than we give you here, don't hesitate to ask your physician for suggestions. He or she may suggest that you follow a more structured stress management program.

This section will help you learn to understand and modify your stress in six parts:

- Part 1: What Is Stress?
- Part 2: What Stress Does—and Why
- Part 3: Keeping Track of Your Stress
- Part 4: Four Basic Ways To Cope with Stress
- Part 5: Stress Management Skills
- Part 6: Making Your Change Plans

Note to Spouse, Relatives and Friends

You can help your spouse, friend or relative learn to cope with stress. Here are some guidelines:

- Don't be over-protective. You can't keep people away from stress completely—and you don't need to. Instead, you can help them cope with it.
- Listen! Encourage your friend or relative to talk about any worries or concerns.
- Read through the section on "Speaking Up" on pages 40-41. It may help the two of you reduce stress by communicating with each other better.
- Encourage your friend or relative to listen to the relaxation audiotape regularly. In fact, listen to it yourself, so you can relax together. (It can help you too!)
- If your friend or relative is very tense, hostile or depressed, encourage him or her to face up to those feelings. If the feelings are very strong, this program may not be enough. If necessary, encourage your friend or relative to talk to a doctor about extra help or medication.

Part 2

What Stress Does—And Why

Under stress, the body reacts in predictable (and somewhat uncomfortable) ways:

- Adrenaline flows
- Breathing speeds up
- Heart rate speeds up
- Blood vessels to the digestive organs clamp down so that more blood gets to other muscles
- Blood pressure rises

These reactions were built into us as a sort of extra gear, giving us the added strength we need in emergencies. Imagine you are a cave-man (or cavewoman), coming face to face with a bear. Your body's reaction to stress helps you get ready to fight for your life, or make a rapid exit. Then, everything clicks back to normal.

Today, most of our emergencies are much less tidy. There may be no quick solution to the bear problem when the "bear" is a boss, a slow commute, a rebellious teenager, a job that feels out of control, a feeling of being permanently late, a bank overdraft, a funny noise in the car, a child's wedding, a transfer, or fears of global pollution.

In many of us, stress ends up taking the form of:

- Tense muscles that lead to headache, neck ache, jaw ache, backache
- Feelings of anxiety, nervousness, tension, helplessness
- A build-up of anger, or irritability
- Bad habits, as we try to soothe ourselves by drinking, smoking, overeating, or taking tranquilizers

How Does Stress Affect You?

Stress can affect everyone differently; you may have no physical symptoms, but still be uncomfortably anxious. You may not be aware of great anxiety, but may suffer from aches and pains as a result of tensed-up muscles.

Here are some of the common responses to stress. Check the ones that you experience:

How you feel physically:

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Headache | <input type="checkbox"/> Backache |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clenched jaw | <input type="checkbox"/> Neck ache |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tight muscles | <input type="checkbox"/> Stomach ache |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Choked feeling | <input type="checkbox"/> Sweaty hands |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tired for no reason | |

How you feel emotionally:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anxious | <input type="checkbox"/> Irritated |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Angry | <input type="checkbox"/> Impatient |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feel short of time | <input type="checkbox"/> Feel things are out of control |

How you act:

- Always in a hurry Speak and eat fast
 Can't sit for long

How you react:

- Hate losing Can't forget work
 Eat to calm down Drink to calm down*
 Smoke to calm down*

*Check these if you *used* to drink or smoke at times of stress, even if you've given up those habits since your heart trouble began.

You'll refer to this list when you start keeping your "Stress Diary," which will be the first step in learning to cope with—or change—the stress in your life.

You should also refer to this list after you finish this 12-week program, and see which symptoms have improved. If you are still seriously bothered by any symptoms of stress two or three months from now, then talk to your doctor. There's a limit to what can be done with a self-help program of this type!

What About "Type A"?

You have probably heard that certain people have "Type A" behavior, which increases their risk of heart disease. These people are fiercely competitive, often in a hurry, expecting a lot of themselves and others. They talk fast, eat fast, and can't always wait for you to finish your sentence before they interrupt.

Should you worry if you are "Type A"? Yes and no.

Working hard, speaking fast and being competitive are probably not the harmful aspects of "Type A" behavior. What is harmful is chronic (continual) anger, hostility and cynicism.

Do you often:

- Lose your temper?
- Feel rage at those who are in your way, whether at work or in a traffic jam?
- Always assume that other people are acting from selfish motives?

If you are unsure about your answers, ask someone who knows you well since they may have a different perspective. (Many people don't know that they're angrier than average, or they may know it deep down, but deny it to themselves.)

What To Do?

If you suffer from high levels of anger and cynicism, you can make life much more pleasant, and reduce your risk of heart attack at the same time. Practicing deep relaxation with the audiotape will help ease the physical tensions that come with "Type A" behavior, and give you a calmer outlook. You can also ask your doctor about programs or other resources in your community, such as those listed on page 43.

Part 3 Keeping Track of Your Stress

The first thing to learn about stress is that it's not only the **outside** circumstances (the stressors) that count. It's your reaction to them. All of us are different in our reactions, and one man's stressor may be another man's day at the beach. For instance:

- You may enjoy giving speeches, but your spouse may be miserable at the prospect of talking to more than three or four people.
- You may lose sleep for months at the prospect of moving to a new house, while to the person down the street, such a move might provide enough entertainment to last a year.
- You may feel paralyzed when you have deadlines to meet, while others find it hard to function without them.



Your Stress Diary

Keeping a stress diary will help you understand what elements in your life are causing you stress. The diary will be of great help when it's time to work through the stress plans at the end of this section.

You'll find blank forms on the next page. We've given you a sample entry below to get you started; your job is to write down your own stressors (the things causing you stress), and what effect they have on your mind and body.

Keep a record for at least a week. If you've filled up the form before that time, keep going! Use a regular notebook to keep track of your stress for the rest of the week.

At the end of a week, you'll be able to see the pattern of stress in your life. Then you'll be able to make plans to cope with the most stressful situations.

While you are keeping your diary for the next week, work through Part 4 of this section: "Four Basic Ways To Cope with Stress." That should keep your stress under control until you are ready to deal with your problems in depth.

Here's a sample, to help you get started:

Date	Stressor	My response to it
3/24	Deadline at work	Stomach feels tight. Heart speeds up. Feel mad at Julie because she is slow.
3/25	Traffic	Get mad at slow drivers, headache.

Stress Diary

Date	Stressor	My response to it

Part 4

Four Basic Ways To Cope with Stress

While you are keeping your stress diary, work through the next two pages. They will help to “stress-proof” you, no matter what the cause of your stress.

1. Relax!

Relaxation does more than give you a pleasant “time out.” Studies have shown that regular relaxation can have a powerful effect on your body, balancing out the bad effects of stress. It’s not complicated: usually, it involves sitting comfortably in a quiet room; taking a few minutes to systematically relax the muscles in your limbs, body, neck and head; then imagining a soothing scene while you relax your brain.

The important thing about deep relaxation is that you need to do it regularly, even on days when you do not feel stressed. Don’t leave it up to chance, but set aside 15-20 minutes a day for your relaxation therapy. Right now, find a calendar, and write down the times you will relax today, tomorrow, the next day, and every other day this week.

How To Relax

- Listen to your relaxation audiotape, and follow the instructions.
- If you don’t have the tape that was packaged with this workbook, buy another. There are many excellent tapes on the market that will lead you into the relaxation process.

2. Emergency Stress Stoppers

Don’t let a small stressful episode build into a big one! Here are some tried and true techniques which will help you survive (or cut short) the stressful moments in your life.

Check the following tips that you think will work for you, so you can find them again quickly if you need them:

- Call a “Time Out.” Stop the activity (or conversation) that was causing you stress, until you feel calmer.
- Count to 10 before you speak.
- Move: go to another room.
- Walk! Exercise is the best natural tranquilizer there is.
- Sit quietly and breathe deeply for one or two minutes. Put your hand on your stomach, and make sure that it goes out every time you breathe in, and in every time you breathe out.
- Remember a favorite scene from your past—such as a happy day on a warm beach. Get all the details straight in your mind (the feeling of the sun on your back, the sound of the waves.) Return to that scene when you feel stressed.
- Don’t let negative thoughts take over. Zap them! When one creeps into your brain, say “Stop!” to yourself (or aloud, if you are alone). Try wearing a rubber band around your wrist, and snap it, to jolt the thought out of your system.
- Break big problems up into manageable sizes. For instance, if you are getting behind in your correspondence, make a start by dealing with one or two letters a day.

- Don't let others lay all their stress on you. Listen to their problems—but don't feel that you have to solve them.
- Get some perspective on life! Imagine you are drifting past the earth in a space ship. What does your problem look like from up there?
- Talk to someone about whatever is troubling you—to a relative, friend, physician, neighbor. The act of talking to someone about your problem is often enough to put it in perspective.
- Do some work that you have been putting off. You'll feel terrific afterwards.

Remember that you are very different from almost everybody else in the world, and what works for someone else may not work for you. So try out several of these tips, and see which are most effective.

3. Exercise

You can strengthen your resistance to stress by getting your body in shape through exercise. Many studies have shown that regular exercise can have an extremely beneficial effect in combatting stress.

So please follow the advice in the *Exercise* section of this workbook.

4. Reducing Chemical Stressors

Chemicals such as alcohol, caffeine and nicotine can all increase stress in the long term—even if at first sip, gulp or drag you may find them soothing.

To reduce chemical stressors:

- Quit smoking (if you haven't already).
- Limit alcohol to an occasional beer or glass of wine. (The latest research shows that it's best for everyone to stick to one drink or less per day.)
- Limit the amount of caffeine you get from coffee, tea or cola drinks, because caffeine is a stimulant and can make it hard to relax. Try switching to decaffeinated or caffeine-free versions. If you've been "hooked" on caffeine, you may feel sleepy for a while, and may even have headaches. These "withdrawal symptoms" should subside within a week or two, leaving you much calmer.

Remember: If you feel that you're under extreme stress, and these measures don't help--or if you are thrown off track by some major stressful event--don't suffer in silence. Talk to your doctor. He or she may suggest a more intensive stress management program, or maybe medication.



Part 5 Stress Management Skills

The Three “A”s, Speaking Up and Time Management

So far, you have learned how to relax, and you have acquired some stress-stopping techniques to use in emergencies. Now we'll start thinking about ways to change (or avoid) the situations in your life which may be a constant source of stress.

In this section, we'll introduce you to three stress-reduction techniques: the Three “A”s, Speaking Up, and Time Management. In the final section, you'll get to make formal plans to apply these techniques to the situations you've been recording in your stress diary.

1. The Three “A”s: Avoid, Adapt, Alter

When you are faced with a stressful situation, there are three different ways you can tackle it: You can avoid it; you can alter it; or you can adapt to it.

For example: suppose the kid next door has a loud stereo which drives you crazy.

- You can *adapt* to the problem with earplugs.
- You can *avoid* the situation by moving to Florida.
- You can *alter* it by sending the kid to Florida.

Okay, it may not be as simple as that. But starting with the three “A”s may help you deal with many of your stressors.

Can You *Avoid* the Stressor?

Avoiding can be a useful approach. You probably can't dodge all the stressors of your life, nor would you want to. If you did, you could end up isolated from everyone and everything that might be interesting. However, you might be able to adjust your life in a way

that lets you avoid some of its more stressful moments. For example:

- You can *avoid* rush-hour traffic by taking the train.
- You can *avoid* someone who irritates you.
- You can *avoid* the tension of entertaining at home by having friends meet you in a restaurant.
- You can *avoid* speaking in public, by getting someone else to take your place.

Can You *Alter* the Stressor?

This can be a useful option in those circumstances where you have some control. The first step is to consider the problem, and decide what aspect of it you may realistically be able to change without causing yourself more stress.

- If your boss is constantly leaning on you, you may be able to *alter* his behavior by talking to him.
- If a neighbor's dog is ruining your yard, you may be able to *alter* the situation by talking to the neighbor, using dog-repellent, building a fence, or buying a doberman.
- If you are panicked by the feeling that you have too much to do, you can *alter* the circumstances by arranging to share responsibility, or shifting your schedule.
- If a child is constantly asking for money, you can *alter* the situation by making a deal—for instance, by getting him or her to earn the money through useful work for you.
- If a job feels out of your control, you can *alter* the way it is set up for you. For instance, if you can control the number of widgets coming down the assembly line, you will feel less stress than if someone else is in control.

Can You Adapt to the Stressor?

Adapting may be your best option, even though it's not always easy. Remember that it's the effect on you that causes you stress—not the outside event itself. So if you can adapt yourself in a way that will help you resist the stressor, so much the better.

- You *adapt* to a situation when you change your attitude to it; for instance, when you change the way you talk to yourself about the problem.
- You *adapt* when you learn to control your anger, and speak up in a constructive way that doesn't ruffle anyone's feathers.
- You *adapt* when you get better at managing time—making plans that will help you avoid the rush.
- You *adapt* when you learn to anticipate stressful moments, and prepare for them—for instance, by rehearsing what you will say.
- You *adapt* when you make yourself less vulnerable to stress by practicing deep relaxation.
- You *adapt* when you reduce your stress level by taking up a regular exercise program.

2. Speaking Up

When you read over your stress diary, you may find that many problems came about because you didn't say what you wanted to say. Perhaps you didn't dare. Perhaps you tried, but the words came out wrong. Perhaps you were relying on the other person to do the communicating. Perhaps you let your anger carry you away.

Here are some examples of poor communication and better alternatives:

1. Your boss criticizes you for something you did wrong.

Bad solution 1:

You get angry and quit, or blame someone else.

Bad solution 2:

You accept the criticism meekly, and spend the rest of the day worrying about your future with the company.

Better solution:

You open a dialog that can lead to solutions: "I could do a better job if we took delivery of the widgets on Thursdays in the future. Then there would be less chance they'd get mixed up with the nubbins."

2. You had a coat altered, but it doesn't look right.

Bad solution 1:

You explode, giving the tailor your opinion of his talents.

Bad solution 2:

You spend the rest of your life in a lopsided coat.

Better solution:

You tell the truth calmly, saying: "I'm not happy with the way this shoulder looks now. I'd really appreciate it if you could work on it some more."

3. Your son is playing music too loudly.

Bad solution 1:

You turn on your own radio at top volume to drown him out.

Bad solution 2:

You can't stand it, so you leave the house.

Better solution:

You talk over the problem and make a deal: your son agrees to limit the loud music to certain times of the day, and to use headphones when you are at home.

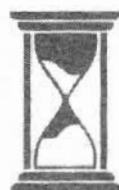
What To Say and When To Say It

It's not easy to find the right words at the right time—words that will resolve the situation without causing more stress. Here are some tips that can help. Check the ones that you think will work well for you.

- If you are really angry, don't try to suppress your anger completely. In other words, admit to yourself how mad you are. Don't feel you have to "release" your anger. People usually feel worse after yelling and screaming—not better. If you are too angry to continue a conversation, don't try. Arrange to discuss what's bugging you later, when you can talk more calmly.
- Listen! All too often, people guess what someone else is saying, without actually listening.
- If you need to discuss an important problem with someone, arrange for a time and place. Then you will both be ready to concentrate on the matter at hand.
- If you find the conversation drifting away from the subject, bring it back ("That's interesting, but let's get back to the question of your dog for a minute...")
- When you are talking about matters of concern to you, avoid blaming others, and use clear "I" messages: "I'm finding it hard to work in this system"; "I'd be much happier if you could put your dirty clothes in the hamper"; or "I'd like you to be back by 10:00."
- When you know you are going to have a conversation that might be stressful, rehearse it. Practice what you are going to say—try it out on a friend or spouse.
- If you are in the wrong, acknowledge the fact, but don't look defeated. Make good eye contact, stand straight, speak clearly, don't sound apologetic.
- Don't always try to "win" an argument (and make the other person lose). Don't let others always win (you lose). Aim for a "win-win" situation: you discuss the matter and come up with a solution that you can both live with, so nobody loses.

- Remember, you have a right to have opinions, to change your opinions, to disagree with others, to ask people to explain what they mean, to protest against unfairness, and to ask for help.
- Watch what you say to yourself. What's going on in your head can have a very definite effect on your emotions. You can change what's in your head, by the way you talk to yourself. For instance:

Instead of	Try
"This is terrible"	"It could be worse"
"I'm so scared"	"This is exciting"
"I'm no good at this"	"I'm going to get better"
- Try to avoid words like "can't", "never", "impossible", "scared". A more positive, hopeful word will bring with it more positive thoughts.



3. Time Management

If you are like most people, many of the stressful situations that crop up in your diary involve time, as in "there's never enough!"

You can't stretch the day—but there is a lot you can do to use time better, and avoid those last minute panics. We'll give you some suggestions for long-term planning, day-by-day planning and time-stretching.

Long-Term Planning

Think of the important decisions you have made in the last few months. How many of them were also urgent? In other words, how many decisions had to be made under the gun, at the last minute? From now on, make a deliberate effort to handle important problems before they become urgent.

Make a list of important decisions that are coming up. For instance:

- Find new tax accountant
- Plan vacation
- Help Grandma choose retirement home
- Get wiring checked
- Help Pete decide about school

Once a week, set aside a time to think hard about these problems, and discuss them with others who are involved.

Day-by-Day Planning

You can organize yourself to make sure you get the important things done each day.

- Every evening, write down the important things that need to be done the next day. Write down how long each will take.
- Make a rough schedule to show when you will get the important tasks done. Allow spare time before and after each main task, so that you won't be rushed.
- Don't set unrealistic deadlines. Instead of promising yourself you will do a big job this weekend, give yourself two weekends—but do it!

Time-Stretching

Do you want to get more time out of your day? For the next few days, try keeping a record of how you spend your time. Make a column for each of the main activities that take

up your time. Make your record as detailed as you like. For instance, you might want one category for telephoning, or two—one for business and one for pleasure.

Here are some suggested categories, in addition to work-related tasks:

- Food preparation and eating
- Shopping
- Personal business (bills, letters, etc.)
- Driving
- House/yard work
- Grooming
- Entertainment (including TV)
- Hobbies
- Reading

When you have kept a record for a few days, you may see where chunks of time can be saved. For instance, perhaps you could combine shopping trips; make all your phone calls at the same time of day; cut down on food-preparation time; hire someone to help out with yard work.



Part 6

Making Your Change Plans

This is it! You have been keeping a stress diary, so you know where your problems lie, and you have studied several techniques for dealing with those problems. Now you can make a plan for change.

Step 1: Study Your Diary

How does your stress diary look? If you have kept it up for a week, you have probably listed a fair number of stressors, maybe too many. So the first step is to shorten the list.

Can you see any patterns for what causes you stress? For instance, do you find that several different stressful episodes can all be traced to your supervisor, your car, your cat, your teenage relative, your neighbor, your bank manager, the president, or your favorite (but stumbling) baseball team?

Step 2: Write Down the Causes of Your Stress

Once you have decided what's really bugging you, write it down on your stress plans on the next page.

Step 3: Write Plans

Don't try to work on all your stressors at once. Think up plans for two or three stressors at a time, and write them on your planning sheet. When you have a satisfactory solution to those, start on two or three more.

Having trouble thinking of solutions? Remember that common sense is your best ally. If you are stuck, read Parts 4 and 5 of this section again, for suggestions.

Step 4: Test Your Plans

Now try out your plans and note on your planning sheet whether or not they worked.

Remember, different solutions work for different people. If your first try doesn't work—try something else! Gradually work through all your stressful situations. When new ones come up, you'll know how to cope.

Getting More Help

The fact that you are starting to take control over the stressors in your life should help to reduce your stress level considerably. Regular relaxation and exercise should help even more.

However, if you are still feeling stressed, don't let yourself think that you've failed. You've been through a lot, and your stress levels may simply be too high for you to cope with on your own.

If you need extra help, talk to your physician. He or she can refer you to places in your community where you can get additional help, such as rehabilitation programs, the YMCA or YWCA, city recreation departments, adult schools and community colleges. Books such as these may also be helpful:

The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook, by M. Davis, M. McKay and E. Eschelman. New Harbinger Publications, Oakland, CA, 1982.

Beyond the Relaxation Response, by H. Benson and W. Proctor. Berkeley Publishing Group, New York, NY, 1985.

Progressive Relaxation, by E. Jacobson. The University of Chicago Press, Midway Reprint, Chicago, IL, 1974.

The Trusting Heart: Great News about Type A Behavior, by R. Williams. Times Books, New York, NY, 1989.

