



**Feeling under pressure?
Here are 4 ways to measure stress,
plus 2 ways to feel laughter and joy.**

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Learning to accept stress in our lives

Hello. If you are reading this, perhaps you are struggling with the stress in your life and could do with more love and laughter to better help you cope.

Every one is unique, precious and special and it is marvellous how we all live on the same planet in our own way, going through our own difficulties. However, sometimes we can make things harder for ourselves than they need to be!

This is probably because even as babies we learn through our behaviour how to "get on" and "get what we want", developing our own personalities. I believe that we are all doing our best, with the tools that we have and that we all have a purpose.

I have lived much of my life wanting to be like a true little yogi, calm and balanced, avoiding things or situations that create more chaos and stress in my life. More and more I am beginning to accept every moment and situation with strong awareness. To this end, stress is positive. If we do not experience stress we can become complacent, even in our emotions, mind and spirit, losing our drive to succeed in life.

Stress can be positive if we use it wisely and are involved living, loving and enjoying our life.

Identifying and addressing your stress levels

What is your level of stress? Do you know it? When we are in a situation we can be blind to how we are feeling. Alternatively you may be in a situation which feels impossible to escape from and can be intense all the time.

Whatever we are experiencing, we can do something about it from within that will change our perception. We have more power than we realise. It can be as simple as changing our intention or focus and choosing another way of being. This may require consistent effort coupled with a belief that the situation can and will improve when we change our own attitude.

Our body produces adrenalin which helps us arise to the occasion and gives us endurance and the ability to stretch when we find ourselves in both familiar and new stressful situations.

Now we can understand that stress can come in many forms and is not all bad. In fact on rare occasions, stress gives one short term "superpowers". There are several remarkable instances and related stories of people who have, for example, lifted a car off a child who was trapped underneath.

Let us agree then, that stress and pressure can be positive and in actual fact can be the catalyst for change. Stress can be managed differently, whereby we can grow through

situations that we are led into. Some people believe that we create everything that happens to us in order to have personal growth.

Let us get an idea of our level of stress and acknowledge that life can be very stressful. Do you think that stress is always bad? As already stated, it can be a positive thing and when we recognise it, we can acknowledge it and do something about it. We may not be able to change anything else causing the stress and can therefore, use the situation to grow and incorporate change within ourself.

You might like to carry a small notebook and do this for at least a day, preferably a week or longer. I will give you here four easy ways of monitoring your stress level. After that, two ways to release stress, add laughter and joy to your life.

Once you have that, you can then plan ways of combating this and instead of being stressed all or some of the time, do something about it, raising your levels of happiness and joy. With practice these can actually be experienced simultaneously while at the same time being stressed or in pain.

Four Ways to Measure Stress

Below are four ways you can identify and measure your stress levels so that you can plan ways to reduce stress and increase levels of happiness and joy.

1. Scan Body Muscles and Parts

Scan your body, checking different muscles as if you could X-Ray each part, finding tension. Begin at the top of your head, working your way down, checking individual areas including your forehead, eyes, tension in the jaw, neck and shoulders, arms, chest, stomach and so on, right over the entire body.

2. Check for Nervous Sweating

It is common for certain hormones to be released as an involuntary as a simple indicator that your body is suffering from stress. You may not be actually sweating, rather become aware of a flush of energy and feel hot.

3. Check Your Pulse Rate

Check when your pulse is at rest when you first wake or after sitting quietly for a long period and then monitor how high it becomes when you feel stressed.

4. Check Your Breathing

This is the most common and easy way to get in touch with your body's response to stressful situations. When you are relaxed, you will breathe slowly and deeply with relaxed stomach muscles. When tense, the breathing becomes shallow.

Here are 4 ways to measure stress, plus 2 ways to feel laughter and joy.

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2 Simple Ways To Release Stress, Add Laughter And Feel Joy.

Here we will talk about two simple ways to release stress and add laughter and joy into your life through using a simple breathing technique and choosing to laugh daily.

1. Release Stress Using Breathing

Focusing on correct breathing will help your body to relax, which leads you to be able to laugh more often, which in itself is commonly known as 'the best medicine'. Monitoring your breathing will also help you to feel joyful which enables you to feel love in your life.

There are many breathing exercises, but I like to keep it simple and use one, which is called 'circular breathing'.

About Circular Breathing

The breath is a bridge between the conscious and unconscious mind, which helps clear blockages between the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual bodies. Circular Breathing is a simple method to help you relax and be more in tune with your surroundings. Using this method, your mind and emotions become calm, steady and you will feel at peace.

Circular Breathing is also called Conscious Connected Breathing and is done as often as possible to increase awareness and ideally, you will become conscious of your breathing state all the time.

How to do Circular Breathing

Sitting down with the body erect, arms relaxed and either hanging down or hands in your lap, breathe in gently. At the same time for a few moments focus your attention on the path taken by the air, through the nostrils, the back of the nose, the back of the throat, the windpipe, the lungs, the falling of the diaphragm and expansion of the chest cavity.

Next continue to be aware that you are breathing, without manipulating the breath and continue this awareness during your waking hours. Breathe fully and slowly, one breath calmly following another, sending a message of serenity to your body even when you are stressed.

The breath flows gently and consistently when we are in harmony and if we are not, we naturally tend to hold our breath and breathe shallow, which is termed upper chest breathing. By raising your consciousness to be aware and in the moment through breathing, you will find yourself to be present, grounded and clear with a quiet mind and calm emotions.

2. Increase Your Joy Using Laughter

Scientifically Proven Benefits

There is considerable proven research on the benefits of laughing. Children laugh 300 - 400 times a day, whereas adults laugh only 15 times a day. Simply put, the majority of adults do not laugh enough. We can change this, make it a habit and return to being more playful.

Basic Laughter Exercises Done In Group

Here are some foundational laughter yoga exercises which are done with a trained Laughter Yoga Leader. The leader will facilitate and as it is interactive, there is room for participant's involvement and creation. After each laughter exercise we then clap our hands together, which activates the energetic meridians of the hands and is beneficial to the body. Clapping three times we chant "Ho Ho, Ha Ha Ha" or say "Very good, very good, Yay!".

Greeting Laughter: Begin the session by shaking each person's hand, with a hearty laugh.

High 5 Laughter: Give each person a 'high five' and laugh. You can then change hands and also do two 'high fives'.

Cell Phone Laughter: Pretend to hold a mobile phone up to your ear and laugh.

The Lion Laughter: Fully extend tongue with wide open mouth and eyes, make like paws and like a lion roar and laugh in any direction. It is very good for the thyroid gland.

Angelic Laughter: Smile like an angel or a baby, the most beautiful smile that you have ever seen. This gives you an angelic feeling and helps access your first memory of laughter stored in the deeper parts of your consciousness.

This hopefully gives you some idea of how a laughter session goes and much of it is also about the social aspect of coming together as a group or team. It is about having fun, losing inhibitions and being light hearted for both social benefits as well as the scientifically proven health benefits of Laughter Yoga.

Some Other Quick Laughter Fixes

Because our subconscious mind does not recognise the difference between fake laughter and real belly laughter, laughter can be developed and used as a practical daily exercise in order to improve our health and well-being. If you wish to practice it alone, look for opportunities that tickle your fancy and quietly laugh to yourself, or inwardly giggle. Sometimes I laugh for one minute without stopping or when sitting at the traffic lights, because of the therapeutic benefit to the body of laughing.

Here are suggestions to assist you to benefit with laughter. Firstly, smiling has a similar effect on the subconscious mind and body, so when you see yourself in a mirror, smile and wave. You can break into a laugh and give yourself positive affirmations or compliments. This also helps with self love and self esteem.

Dr Kataria, the Indian doctor who started Laughter Yoga, developed one that you can do when people are around and you do not wish to look silly laughing to yourself. Pretend to be talking to someone on your mobile phone, laughing as if you are listening to something hilarious. Another one is to cover your mouth with your hand and do the silent laughter, laugh silently into your hand.

I trust that this article has inspired you to look at your stress levels and consciously be active in doing something about it using Circular Breathing and choosing to laugh every day. You will definitely feel more joy and love in your life and less stress if you proactively apply yourself. There is considerable information both on the Laughter For Living website and my blogs, regarding benefits and other interesting sharings related to laughter.

If you would like more laughter and joy in your life, I am at your service, either professionally or at the free community [Ferntree Gully Laughter Club](#). Please email or phone and we can you say hello and find out about each other and how I may be able to help.

You are welcome to distribute this e-paper to anyone you like. You may give it away, or offer it as a gift to friends, clients, customers and colleagues or subscribers. Or, you may post it on your website and allow people to download it.

If people would like more information about me, please direct to the [Laughter For Living website](#). From there you can see how I help people, testimonials and they can sign up for the Newsletter to receive regular news about laughter. Thank you.

Love and laughter blessings to you.

Lynette Mitchell x o

