

# How Much Stress Can You Take?

Understanding your personal breaking point is the first line of defense against losing your cool.

For each of the seven levels in the meter below, choose one word that describes your stress in increasing degrees of intensity (if you get stuck, look in the word bank for suggestions). With zero representing complete calm, plot your words in order of rising stress.

Next, think of an event from your past that sparked each emotion—a fight with your mother that left you frustrated, a passive-aggressive e-mail from a coworker that made you anxious, an argument with your partner that pushed you over the edge. What was your physical response in these situations? Were you pacing, sweating, clenching your jaw, biting your nails, muttering to yourself? Jot the details on your scale next to the word that describes how you felt.

Take a minute to think back on all seven of your stress scenarios and identify the point at which you felt yourself losing control. Now go two levels below that: This is your new action point. When a stressful situation escalates to this level, you'll know you need to find a release.

WRITE YOUR EMOTIONS HERE	WRITE YOUR FEELINGS HERE
7	_____
6	_____
5	_____
4	_____
3	_____
2	_____
1	_____
0	_____

## The Language of Stress

### High

- |               |             |
|---------------|-------------|
| Frazzled      | Jumpy       |
| Distraught    | Outraged    |
| Infuriated    | Attacked    |
| Overwrought   | Overwhelmed |
| Shell-shocked | Furious     |
| Betrayed      | Steaming    |
| Seething      | Enraged     |

### Medium

- |             |            |
|-------------|------------|
| Tense       | Jittery    |
| Worked up   | Frustrated |
| Aggravated  | Strained   |
| Exasperated | Dismayed   |
| Bullied     | Perturbed  |
| Ticked      | Anxious    |
| Unnerved    | Distressed |

### Low

- |              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| Worried      | Irked        |
| Upset        | Flustered    |
| Displeased   | Disheartened |
| Disappointed | Troubled     |
| Confused     | Irritated    |
| Bothered     | Antsy        |
| Disturbed    | Annoyed      |