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Stress Bucket Exercise



When does stress become a problem?

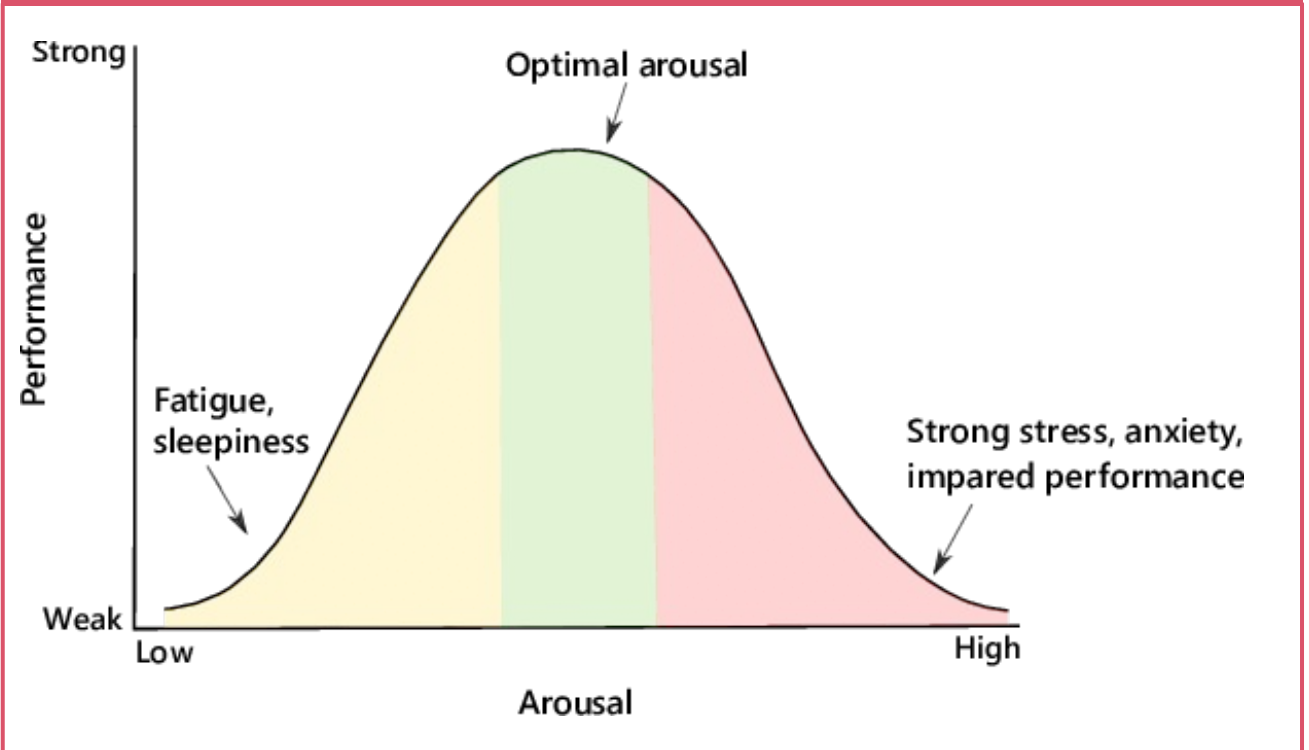
We need the body's stress hormones to rise and fall throughout the day. Stress helps us wake up in the morning, helps us to focus on this activity, and to learn and remember new things.

The Yerkes-Dodson curve shows that performance increases with physiological or mental arousal but only up to a certain point. When the level of stress becomes too high, performance decreases.

High levels of stress can disrupt the natural changes in the body's stress response system and start to affect our physical and mental health.

High levels of stress can cause fatigue and extreme stress can even cause burnout.

Yerkes -Dodson Curve



Stress Bucket Analogy (Brabben et Al, 2002)

The stress bucket analogy was created to help people measure their stress tolerance. Our stress tolerance or size of our bucket is a product of our genes, personality and experience. The size varies person to person. The water in the analogy is a combination of all of the stresses in our lives. We cannot change the size of our budget. However, we can develop coping strategies to keep our bucket from overflowing that are like taps that allow water to drain from the bucket.

What fills up your stress bucket?

The stress bucket will fill up with water, which is a combination of both short and long term stress in your life.

Common Stressors include:

- Lack of sleep
- Health worries
- Change
- Finance concerns
- Conflict
- Academic issues
- Deadlines
- Family/Friends

How can you tell when your bucket is overflowing?

When you experience too much stress or have difficulty releasing any stress, the water level rises significantly and the stress bucket subsequently overflows.

It is important to be aware of your 'stress signature'. These are either physical, emotional or behavioural signs that you are experiencing too much stress, hence why your bucket is overflowing.

By monitoring these closely, when you notice any signs, you can immediately work on reducing your stress or releasing stress.

How do you release the water from your bucket?

The tap represents your coping strategies which help you release stress, and in this analogy let water out of the bucket.

Some suggested ways of managing your stress include:

- Manage your school/ life balance
- Exercise regularly
- Resolve personal conflicts
- Sleep for 8+ hours per night
- Get support
- Do the things that you enjoy



Task - Stress Bucket

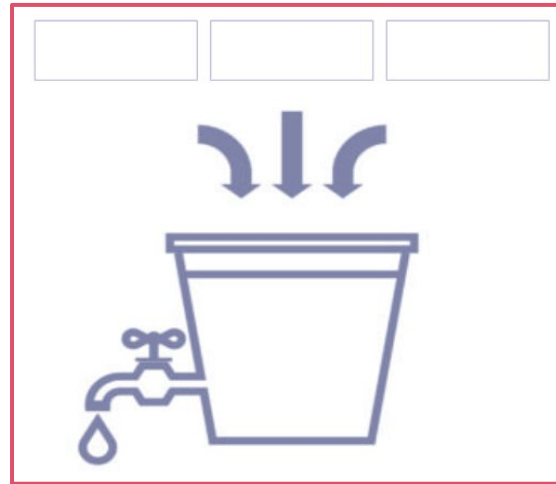
Step 1: Draw your stress bucket



Key Questions to Ask Yourself

1. What does my bucket look like?
2. What is the size of my bucket?
3. How much water is already in my bucket?

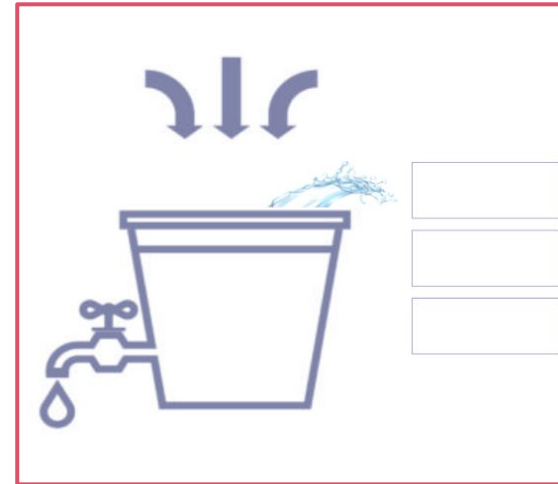
Step 2: Write above your bucket any stressors in your life.



Key Questions to Ask Yourself

1. What are my short and long term stressors?
2. Why do they cause me stress?
3. Are all of these stressors necessary?

Step 3: Write on the right hand side how you can tell when your stress bucket is overflowing.



Key Questions to Ask Yourself

1. What is my stress signature?
2. Am I aware of signs that I am experiencing too much stress?
3. How could I monitor these signs more closely?

Step 4: Write underneath the tap current coping strategies you have to release stress.



Key Questions to Ask Yourself

1. What are my current coping strategies?
2. How healthy are my current coping strategies?
3. Which any coping strategies will I use going forwards?

Some suggested ways of managing your stress

- 01 Manage your school/ life balance**
Ensure that you have relaxation time every day to help you find the right balance.
- 02 Exercise regularly**
Physical exercise can help relieve tension and relax your mind.
- 03 Resolve personal conflicts**
Learn how to communicate honestly with people and address problems or conflicts as they arise.
- 04 Sleep for 8+ hours a night**
Sleep helps the body to repair and be fit and ready for another day.
- 05 Get support**
Don't be afraid to ask for support at home or school. Talk to friends, family members or your school.
- 06 Do the things you enjoy**
Make time to listen to music, read, play sports, or spend time with family and friends.

A decorative graphic consisting of two overlapping red rectangular frames. The first frame is on the left and contains the text 'Thank you'. The second frame is on the right and is empty. The frames overlap in the center.

Thank you