

TECHBBQ x today

# PERCEIVED STRESS SCALE



# The Perceived Stress Scale

- The Perceived Stress Scale is one of the most widely used psychological instruments for measuring an individual's perception of their own stress levels.
- The questions are designed to reveal how unpredictable, uncontrollable, and overloaded respondents find their lives.

**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 |

Write down  
your answers  
on a sheet of  
paper.

# Calculating your score

- **Add up** the responses of the six **negatively stated** items (questions 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, & 10).
- **Reverse** the scores given (e.g., 0 = 4, 1 = 3, 2 = 2, 3 = 1 & 4 = 0) you gave to **the four positively stated items** (questions 4, 5, 7, & 8)
- **Sum up** the numbers across all 10 questions from Steps 2 and 3 to get your final score.

# Understanding your score

- Higher scores correspond to higher levels of perceived stress.
- Based on research conducted using the PSS, scores around 13 are considered average, and indicate a proper level of attention and interest, thereby fostering optimal levels of arousal and performance.
- Scores much higher or lower than the average could indicate you are experiencing a stress level that is negatively impacting your performance and productivity. In particular, scores of 20 or more are generally considered to indicate an unproductive level of stress.

# Sources Cited

---

Cohen, Sheldon & Janicki-Deverts, Denise. (2012). Who's Stressed? Distributions of Psychological Stress in the United States in Probability Samples from 1983, 2006, and 20091. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*. 42. 10.1111/j.1559-1816.2012.00900.x.

Cohen, S. and Williamson, G. Perceived Stress in a Probability Sample of the United States. Spacapan, S. and Oskamp, S. (Eds.) *The Social Psychology of Health*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1988.

Gino, Francesca. (2016). Are You Too Stressed to Be Productive? Or Not Stressed Enough? *Harvard Business Review*. [online] <https://hbr.org/2016/04/are-you-too-stressed-to-be-productive-or-not-stressed-enough>

Willer, C. (2021) *Startup Founder Wellbeing: A report for entrepreneurs covering stress, mental wellbeing, and tools for building healthy habits*. [Online]