



Stress in America

Mind/Body Health: For a Healthy Mind and Body, Talk to a Psychologist

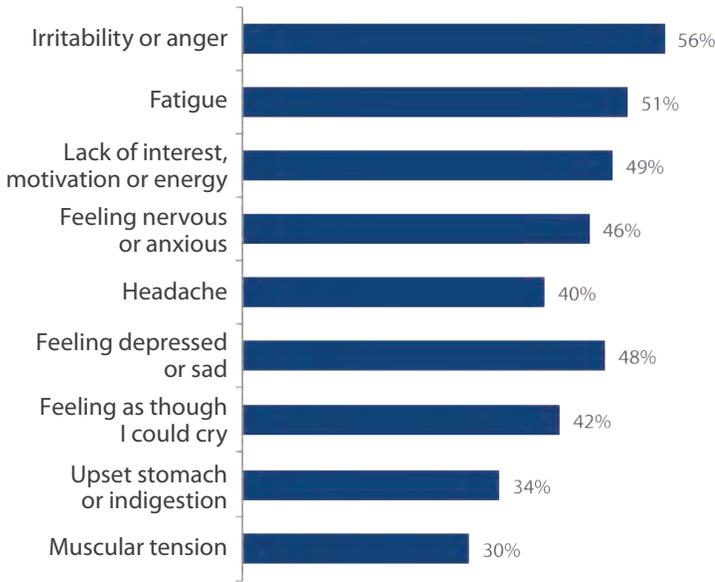
STRESS AND HEALTH

One in five American adults* (22 percent) believe themselves to be in fair or poor health, and those adults who rate their health as fair or poor also report higher levels of stress and are more likely to report physical symptoms of stress than those who rate their health as excellent or very good. Similarly, those who rate their health as excellent/very good are more likely to report that healthy behaviors are extremely/very important to them and that they engage in healthy behaviors than those who rate their health as fair or poor. Those who are obese report similar outcomes as those who perceive their health to be fair or poor. Both groups report high levels of stress and high incidences of emotional symptoms of stress.

- On average, those who rate their health as fair/poor have more stress (an average stress rating of 6.2 on a 10-point scale) than those who rate their health as excellent or very good (an average stress rating of 4.9 on a 10-point scale).
- Twenty-nine percent of obese adults report experiencing a great deal of stress (a stress level of 8, 9 or 10 on a 10-point scale) in the past month compared with 20 percent of normal weight adults.
- Adults who rate their health as fair/poor are nearly twice as likely as those who report their health as excellent/very good to cite their personal health as a cause of stress (70 percent vs. 38 percent). Obese adults are also far more likely to cite personal health as a cause of stress (65 percent vs. 38 percent for those of normal weight).
- Adults who rate their health as fair/poor are far more likely than those who rate their health as excellent/very good to report emotional and physical symptoms of stress, such as irritability or anger (56 percent vs. 39 percent); fatigue (51 percent vs. 31 percent); lack of interest, motivation or energy (49 percent vs. 27 percent); headaches (40 percent vs. 29 percent); and feelings of depression or sadness (48 percent vs. 24 percent).
- Those who are obese are more likely than those of normal weight to report emotional symptoms of stress, such as irritability or anger (50 percent vs. 43 percent); fatigue (44 percent vs. 37 percent); lack of interest, motivation or energy (48 percent vs. 34 percent); and feelings of depression or sadness (39 percent vs. 34 percent).

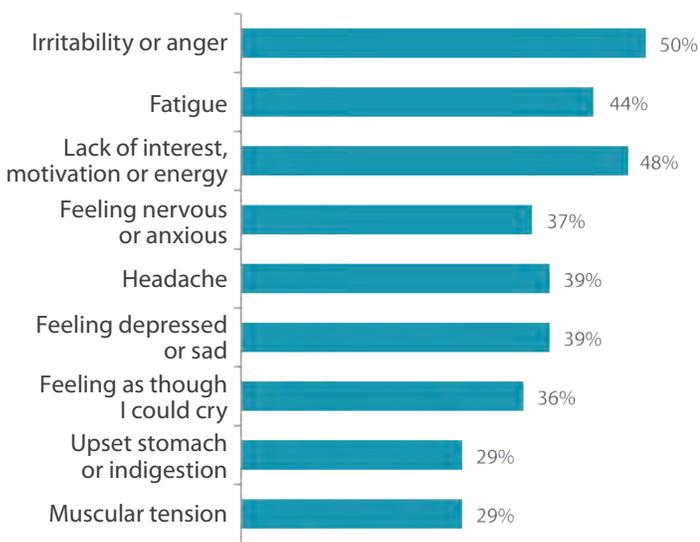


Physical Symptoms of Stress for Adults with a Fair/Poor Health Rating



BASE: Fair/Poor (n=280)
Q810 Which of the following, if any, have you experienced in the last month as a result of stress?

Physical Symptoms of Stress for Obese Adults



BASE: Obese (n=374)
Q810 Which of the following, if any, have you experienced in the last month as a result of stress?

- Adults who rate their health as very good/excellent are significantly more likely than those who rate their health as fair/poor to report that getting enough sleep (77 percent vs. 57 percent), eating healthy (70 percent vs. 48 percent), being physically fit or active (74 percent vs. 35 percent), and managing stress (70 percent vs. 56 percent) are extremely/very important to them.
- In all areas, adults who rate their health as very good/excellent are significantly more likely than those who rate their health as fair/poor to report being successful in their efforts to get enough sleep (43 percent vs. 15 percent), eat healthy (51 percent vs. 16 percent), be physically fit or active (50 percent vs. 7 percent), and manage stress (49 percent vs. 17 percent).
- Findings suggest there may be a connection between an individual's perceived health rating and how successful they feel they are at having good relationships with family and friends. Only 44 percent of those who report being in fair/poor health say they are successful in having good relationships with their family (compared with 79 percent of those who report being in excellent/good health), and only 38 percent say they are successful in having good relationships with their friends (compared with 69 percent). Similarly, perceived health appears to be related to a person's ability to succeed in his or her career or studies. Twenty-five percent of those who report being in fair/poor health say they are successful in this area compared with 62 percent of those who report being in excellent/very good health.
- Obese adults are highly likely to report poor eating habits as a result of their stress. More than half (51 percent) say they have eaten too much or have eaten

unhealthy foods because of stress, and one-third (33 percent) say they eat to manage stress.

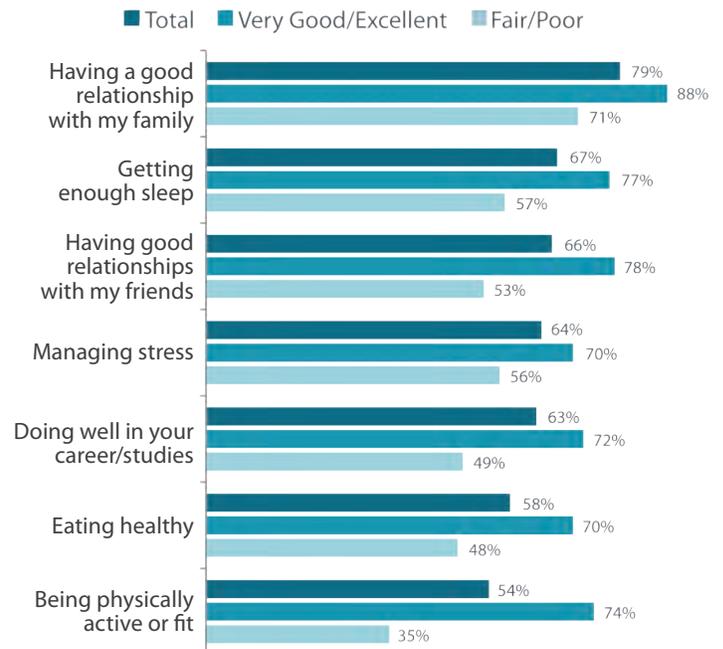
- Adults who rate their health as fair/poor are more likely than those who rate their health as excellent/good to have been told by a health care provider to reduce their stress levels (35 percent vs. 12 percent of those who said they were in excellent/very good health). Similarly, obese adults are twice as likely as normal-weight adults to have been told by a health care provider to reduce their stress levels (26 percent vs. 13 percent).
- Those who report that they are in excellent/very good health are nearly twice as likely to exercise or walk to relieve their stress than those who report that they are in fair/poor health (60 percent vs. 31 percent).
- Those who report that they are in fair/poor health are more likely to choose sedentary activities such as playing video games (47 percent vs. 29 percent) or napping (46 percent vs. 29 percent) to relieve stress than those who report they are in excellent/good health.

Willpower Standing in the Way of Good Health

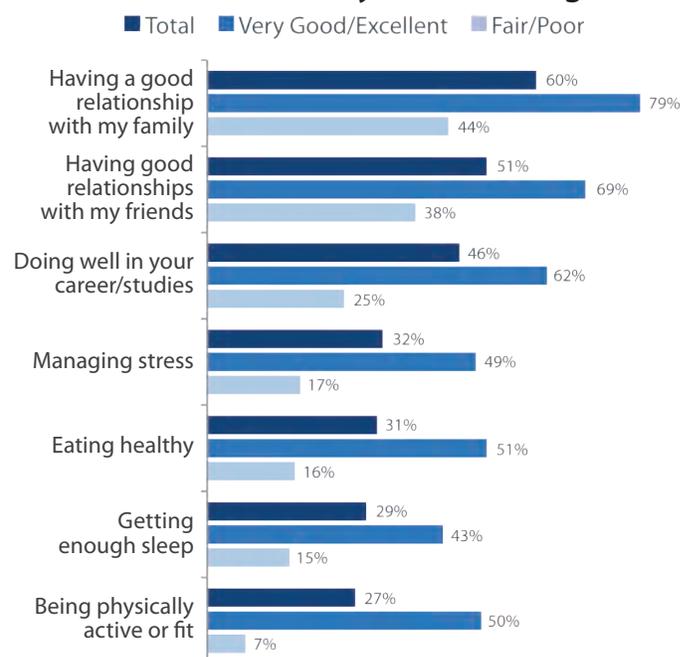
While many Americans cite lack of willpower as a major barrier preventing them from making the lifestyle and behavior changes recommended by a health care provider, many more obese adults cite lack of willpower as a barrier than adults of normal weight.

- Obese adults are much more likely to say that lack of willpower prevents them from making the lifestyle changes recommended by their health care provider. Four in 10 (42 percent) obese adults cite a lack of willpower as the biggest reason they fail to make

Importance, by Health Rating



Achievement, by Health Rating



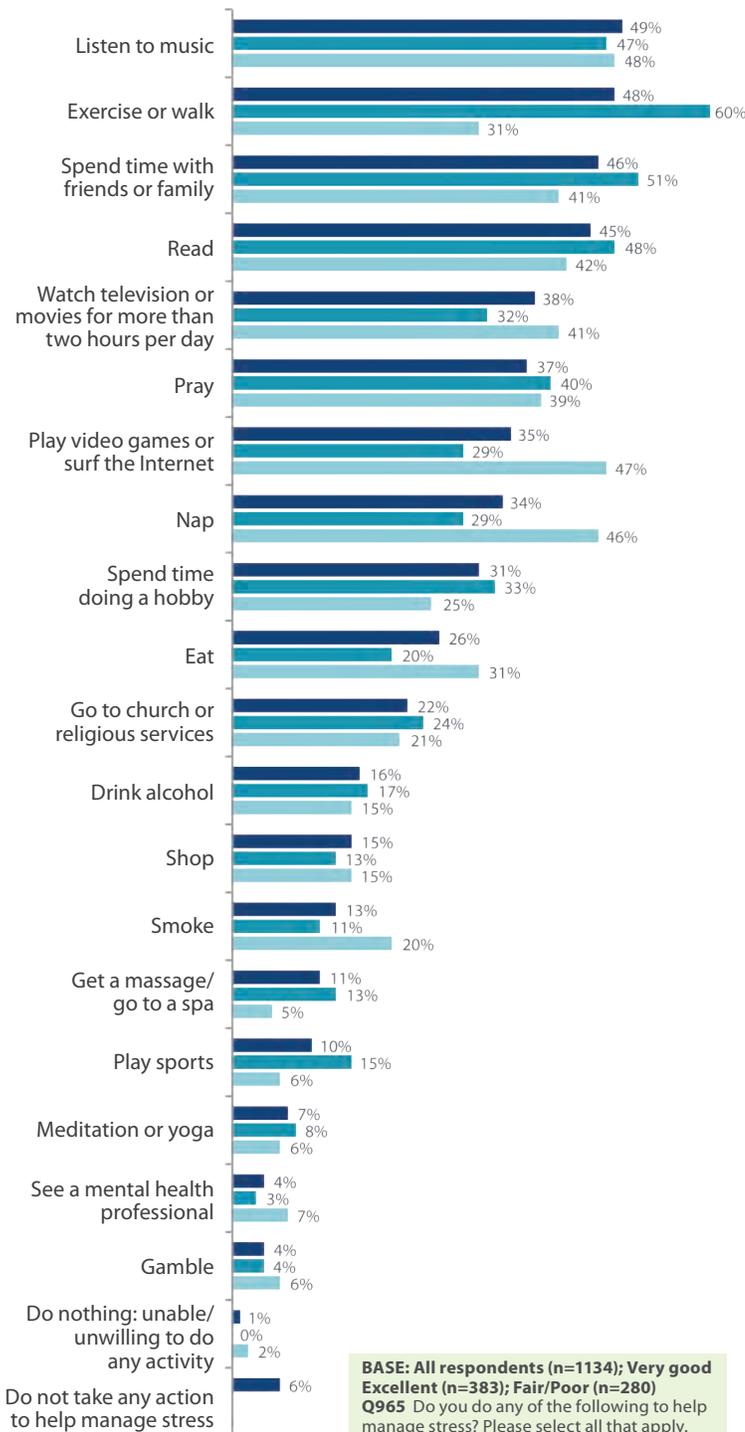
BASE: All respondents (n=1134); Very good Excellent (n=383); Fair/Poor (n=280)
Q7005 How important are each of the following to you?



STRESS AND HEALTH

Stress Management, by Health Rating

■ Total ■ Very Good/Excellent ■ Fair/Poor



changes recommended by a health care provider (compared to 18 percent of people with normal weight).

- Those who rate their health as fair/poor are more than twice as likely (43 percent vs. 20 percent) than those who rate their health as excellent/very good to cite a lack of willpower for not making lifestyle changes recommended by a health care provider.
- When those who reported that they exercise about once a week or less were asked what prevents them from being more physically active, those who also reported being in fair/poor health were significantly more likely than those who reported being in excellent/very good health to say it is because they are too tired (46 percent vs. 17 percent), they are too self conscious or embarrassed (13 percent vs. 5 percent), or they don't know how to get started (10 percent vs. 2 percent).
- When those who indicated that a lack of willpower prevented them from making changes their health care provider recommended were asked what would need to change for their willpower to improve, obese adults were most likely to say feeling better about themselves (56 percent) or caring more for their health (54 percent). Having more energy (51 percent) and more confidence (51 percent) were the top responses for the general population.
- Those who are obese were also more likely than those of normal weight to say they lacked the confidence to make lifestyle changes their health care provider recommended (25 percent vs. 6 percent) or were too embarrassed to exercise in a public place (14 percent vs. 1 percent).