



 HeartMath®

Reducing Stress and   
Creating Better Health

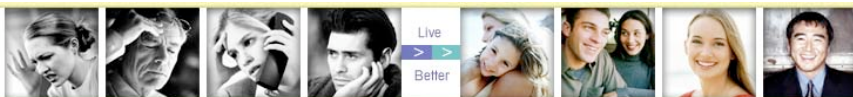




## Stress Management System

### What is stress?

Stress is a term used to describe the wear and tear the body experiences in reaction to everyday tensions and pressures. Change, illness, injury or career and lifestyle changes, are common causes of stress. However, it's the emotional pressure and tension we feel in response to the little everyday hassles—rush hour traffic, waiting in line, and too many emails—that do the most damage.



### How does stress affect health?

Stress affects people physically, mentally and emotionally. According to the American Institute of Stress, up to 90% of all health problems are related to stress. Too much stress can contribute to and agitate many health problems including heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, depression and sleep disorders.

### How stressed are you?

Everyone responds to stress differently. Take this quick test to see the areas you are experiencing stress.

- I feel overly tired or fatigued.
- I often am nervous, anxious or depressed.
- I have sleep problems.
- I have repeated headaches or minor aches and pains.
- I worry about job security, financial obligations or relationships.



### **What can I do about it?**

The first step is to understand how stress works. It's not the events or situations that do the harm; it's how you respond to those events. More precisely, it's how you feel about them that determines whether you are stressed or not.

Emotions, or feelings, have a powerful impact on the human body. Positive emotions like appreciation, care, and love not only feel good, they are good for you. They help your body's systems synchronize and work better, like a well-tuned car.

HeartMath's research has shown when you intentionally shift to a positive emotion, heart rhythms immediately change. This shift in heart rhythms creates a favorable cascade of neural, hormonal and biochemical events that benefit the entire body. The effects are both immediate and long lasting.

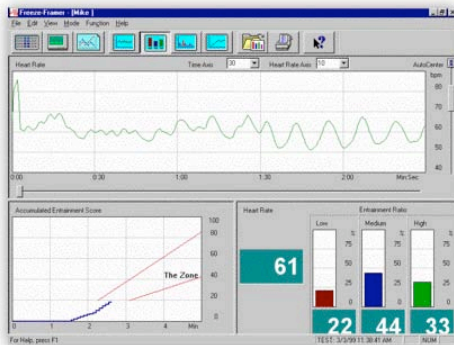
### **How does it work?**

When you're stressed, your body is out of sync. Typical negative emotions we feel when stressed—like anger, frustration, anxiety and worry—lead to increased disorder in the heart's rhythms and in the nervous system. In contrast, positive emotions like joy, appreciation, care and kindness create harmony in the heart's rhythms and the nervous system. Other bodily systems sync up to this rhythm, which scientists call **coherence**. Because coherence leads to more mental clarity, creativity and better problem-solving abilities, it's easier to find solutions and better ways of handling the stressful situation.






Freeze-Framer Technology



Research at the Institute of HeartMath has shown that emotions are reflected in the beat-to-beat changes in the heart's rhythms. This is called heart rate variability, or HRV. The analysis of HRV is recognized as a powerful, non-invasive way to measure nervous system dynamics. New clinical research identifies HRV as a key indicator of preventable stress and shows a relationship to a wide range of health problems.

## How can I create and practice physiological coherence?

The HeartMath Stress Management System introduces you to two tools to help you increase physiological coherence: The Quick Coherence™ technique to use in your daily life to reduce the effects of stress and the Freeze-Framer technology to accelerate your learning and enhance your practice.



Once you have completed the steps, you can ask yourself, "How could I handle this in a better way?" With practice, you'll find you have more intuitive choices or options for what you might do next—even in the middle of a challenging or high-pressure situation.

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## Freeze-Framer® Technology

With this technology you see your heart rhythm patterns in real time on the computer screen. When you apply the Quick Coherence tool you can see the changes in your heart rhythm patterns. The Freeze-Framer heart rhythm coherence trainer has been designed to help people prevent, manage and reverse the effects of too much stress.

By correlating the patterns on the screen with a calm internal feeling, you learn to find and maintain physiological coherence. You learn self-control of emotions, which helps reduce the physiological and psychological symptoms of stress. Your goal is to increase the amount of coherence you are able to sustain in each session and keep track of your progress.





## **The Quick Coherence™ Tool**

The Quick Coherence tool is a simple, easy way to interrupt the stress response and quickly bring your system into coherence. Practice this tool 4 - 5 times a day, every day for a minimum of 3 weeks. Use this tool prior to or during events or situations that provide emotional challenges - a quick stress manager. Good times to practice are first thing in the morning, before going to sleep at night, break time in the middle of the day, or any time you want to rebalance or get an energy boost.

## **The Three Steps of the Quick Coherence Tool**

### **Step 1 - Heart Focus**

The first step is to focus your attention in the area around your heart. You can place your hand over your heart to help.

### **Step 2 - Heart Breathing**

The second step is to pretend you are breathing through your heart area. Breathe slowly and gently (to a count of 5 or 6) until your breathing feels smooth and balanced. Do this for about one minute and notice any changes.

### **Step 3 - Heart Feeling**

The third step involves positive feeling and attitudes. Continue to breathe through the area of your heart and find a positive feeling, like appreciation for someone or something. You can recall a time when you felt appreciation or care and re-experience that feeling. It could be for a pet, a special place in nature, or an activity that was fun. Once you have found a positive feeling—sustain this feeling by continuing heart focus, heart breathing and heart feeling.

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coherence



## **Additional HeartMath Resources**

Books

*The HeartMath Solution*

*Transforming Anger*

*The Inside Story*

*For more information about how you can learn to effectively stop the negative effects stress is having on your life with the Freeze-Framer learning system and other simple-to-use tools and techniques from HeartMath contact:*

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