Fowler & Tidwell
COUNSELING

A FREE GUIDE FROM
FOWLER & TIDWELL COUNSELING

Your Stress Style Guide

How stress shows up for you, and small, steady steps to feel more like yourself.

Stress isn't a flaw or a failure. It's a signal that something in your life is asking for more than you have to give right now. Everyone feels it, but it shows up differently for each of us. Knowing your pattern is the first step toward working with it instead of against it.

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The Driven Doer

Stress shows up as never being finished.

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The Caretaker

Stress shows up as giving more than you take back in.

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The Thinker

Stress shows up as a busy mind that's hard to switch off.

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Running on Empty

Stress shows up as tiredness more than worry.

How to use this guide

- Start with the page for your quiz result.
- Skim the others. Most people see a bit of themselves in more than one style.
- Choose one or two steps to try this week, not all five.
- Come back to it. Stress styles can shift with the seasons of life.

YOUR STRESS STYLE · 1 OF 4

The Driven Doer

You get things done. The work is letting "enough" count.

HOW STRESS SHOWS UP FOR YOU

You're the one who gets it done. When stress builds, your instinct is to do more: add to the list, push a little harder, stay a little later. That drive has carried you far, and it often grew from being the reliable one or from places that rewarded results. The catch is that when everything feels urgent, rest starts to feel like something you earn only after the list is finished. And the list is never quite finished.

YOUR STRENGTH

Follow-through, focus and competence. People trust you to deliver.

WHAT IT CAN COST YOU

Rest keeps getting postponed, work spills into evenings, and small slips can feel bigger than they are.

SIGNS YOU MIGHT NOTICE

- Checking email in bed
- Restless on days off
- Irritated when plans change
- Rest feels unearned

Five steps to try this week

Pick one or two to start. Small and steady beats all at once.

1. **Draw the finish line first**
   Before you start a task, write down what "done enough" looks like. When you reach it, stop.
2. **Pick your top three**
   Each morning, choose three priorities. Anything else you finish is a bonus, not a requirement.
3. **Set a hard stop**
   Choose an end time for work. Spend the last 10 minutes writing tomorrow's top three, then close the laptop.
4. **Schedule rest like a meeting**
   Put one 30-minute block on your calendar this week with nothing to produce, and protect it.
5. **Buy yourself time**
   Swap one automatic "yes" for "Let me check and get back to you."

Rest is part of the work, not a reward for finishing it.

YOUR STRESS STYLE · 2 OF 4

The Caretaker

You're the one people lean on. You deserve the same care you give.

HOW STRESS SHOWS UP FOR YOU

People lean on you: family, friends, coworkers, maybe your whole community. You notice what others need, often before they say it. Many caretakers learned early to be the strong one, or carry family and cultural expectations of showing up for everyone. When stress builds, it shows up as being stretched thin. Your needs slide to the bottom of the list, saying no brings guilt, and you feel a tiredness that a good night's sleep doesn't quite fix.

YOUR STRENGTH

Empathy, loyalty and generosity. You make people feel cared for.

WHAT IT CAN COST YOU

Your own needs go unmet, resentment can creep in quietly, and it gets hard to know what you want.

SIGNS YOU MIGHT NOTICE

- Saying yes before thinking
- Guilt when you rest
- Drained after helping
- Hard to name what you want

Five steps to try this week

Pick one or two to start. Small and steady beats all at once.

1. **Check in with yourself first**
   Each morning, finish the sentence "Today I need…" before you check on anyone else.
2. **Practice a kind no**
   Try: "I care about you, and I can't take this on right now." Use it once this week.
3. **Ask for one specific thing**
   A ride, a meal, an hour of quiet. Specific asks are easier for people to say yes to.
4. **Guard 15 minutes a day**
   Time that belongs only to you. Put it on the calendar so it doesn't get given away.
5. **Let guilt pass without obeying it**
   Guilt after setting a boundary often means you're doing something new, not something wrong.

Caring for yourself is how you keep caring for others.

YOUR STRESS STYLE · 3 OF 4

The Thinker

You see every angle. Your mind deserves a chance to rest, too.

HOW STRESS SHOWS UP FOR YOU

You think things through, plan ahead and notice what others miss. When stress builds, that same careful mind can get busy: replaying a conversation, rehearsing what could go wrong, weighing a decision long after it's been weighed enough. The noise often gets loudest at night, when the day finally goes quiet. You're not doing anything wrong. Your mind is trying to keep you prepared; it just doesn't always know when to stand down.

YOUR STRENGTH

Thoughtfulness, preparation and insight. You rarely get caught off guard.

WHAT IT CAN COST YOU

Decision fatigue, restless nights, and feeling worn out without having done much.

SIGNS YOU MIGHT NOTICE

- Replaying conversations
- Stuck on small decisions
- Mind busiest at night
- Planning for worst cases

Five steps to try this week

Pick one or two to start. Small and steady beats all at once.

1. **Empty your mind onto paper**
   Five minutes before bed, write down everything on your mind. Then close the notebook.
2. **Give worry a time slot**
   Set aside 15 minutes at the same time each day. When a worry pops up outside it, jot it down and save it for later.
3. **Sort what you can control**
   Split your list into two columns: in my control, and not. Take one small step from the first column.
4. **Set a "good enough" deadline**
   For small decisions, give yourself a time limit, like choosing by 5 p.m., then move on.
5. **Move from your head to your body**
   When thoughts loop, take a 10-minute walk, stretch, or do something with your hands.

You don't have to solve everything tonight.

YOUR STRESS STYLE · 4 OF 4

Running on Empty

You've been carrying a lot for a long time. Refueling comes first.

HOW STRESS SHOWS UP FOR YOU

Maybe it's a demanding job, caring for someone, a hard season that didn't let up, or all of the above. For you, stress shows up less as worry and more as depletion: lower energy, shorter patience, and things you used to enjoy feeling like one more task. You've kept going through it, and that endurance is real. But running on empty for too long makes everything harder than it needs to be.

YOUR STRENGTH

Endurance and resilience. You keep showing up, even when it's hard.

WHAT IT CAN COST YOU

Less joy, less patience, and the sense that you're getting through days instead of living them.

SIGNS YOU MIGHT NOTICE

- Tired even after rest
- Less patience than usual
- Fun feels like effort
- Going through the motions

Five steps to try this week

Pick one or two to start. Small and steady beats all at once.

1. **Subtract before you add**
   Remove, hand off or postpone one obligation this week before taking on anything new.
2. **Start with the basics**
   A steady bedtime, water and a real meal, and a few minutes outside in daylight. Small things, done consistently.
3. **Lower the bar on purpose**
   Decide which tasks can be "good enough" this week, and let them be.
4. **Find one small good thing a day**
   Ten minutes of something you used to enjoy. You don't have to love it yet.
5. **Tell one person**
   Try: "I've been running low lately." Connection is one of the steadiest ways to refuel.

Resting is not falling behind.

If low energy or low mood lasts more than two weeks, please reach out to a professional.

FOR EVERY STYLE

When you want more support

Therapy that meets you—where you are, how you need.

ANY STYLE, ANYWHERE

A 2-minute reset

1. Plant your feet and let your shoulders drop.
2. Breathe in for 4, out for 6. Repeat five times.
3. Name three things you can see.
4. Ask: what's one kind next step?

When to talk with someone

- Stress has lasted several weeks.
- Sleep, appetite or energy has changed.
- Daily life is getting harder to manage.
- Relationships feel strained.
- You're coping in ways that worry you.
- You want support. That's reason enough.

How Fowler & Tidwell can help

A team that reflects you

Clinicians diverse in ethnicity, background, age, gender and LGBTQ+ identity, in an inclusive space for all.

Care where you are

In person in Houston's Galleria area, or by telehealth anywhere in Texas, for all ages.

Care for every budget

Insurance, EAPs and Medicare, plus tiered rates: $40 graduate students and $70 associate-level clinicians (both supervised), $150 licensed with sliding scale.

Ready for a next step?

Take our 2-minute Find Your Fit quiz at fowlerandtidwell.com, or call us.

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General wellness ideas only, not a diagnosis or a substitute for care. In crisis, call or text 988, or call 911.