

The Smith Stress Symptoms Inventory (SSSI)

Jonathan C. Smith, PhD

The SSSI was designed to measure frequently-reported stress symptoms. It was based on the Stress Costs Inventory (Smith (1992) and the Smith Somatic Stress Symptoms Scale (SSSSI; Smith, 1990) and taps 6 symptom categories developed through factor analysis: Worry/Negative Emotion (which can be scored as separate a-priori worry and Negative Emotional Subscales), Attentional Deficits, Striated Muscle Tension, Autonomic Arousal / Anxiety, Depression, Interpersonal Conflict / Anger. Thirty-five items ask one to indicate how one feels "right now" (state version) or "typically" (disposition version) on a 4- point likert scale in which 1 = "Doesn't fit me at all" and 4 = "Fits me very well." Alpha reliabilities range from .89 to .76. For validity studies see Piiparinen and Smith (2003 and 2004)

Piiparinen, R.; Smith, J. C. (2004) Stress Symptoms One Year After 9/11/01: A Follow-up. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*. 99(2), Oct 2004, 577-580.

Smith, J. C. And Piiparinen, R. A. (2003). Stress symptoms of two groups before and after the terrorist attacks of 9/11/01. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 97, 360-364

Smith, J. C. (1990). *Cognitive-behavioral relaxation training: A new system of strategies for treatment and assessment*. New York: Springer Publications.

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The Smith Inventory Series

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Jonathan C. Smith, PhD

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www.lulu.com/stress

**TO WHAT EXTENT DO THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS
GENERALLY OR TYPICALLY FIT YOU?
PLEASE CHECK ALL THE ITEMS USING THIS KEY.**

① = Doesn't fit me at all ② = Fits me a little ③ = Fits me moderately well ④ = Fits me very well.

- ① ② ③ ④ 1. I have nervous stomach.
- ① ② ③ ④ 2. I become easily distracted.
- ① ② ③ ④ 3. I lose my memory and forget things.
- ① ② ③ ④ 4. I lose sleep.
- ① ② ③ ④ 5. I worry too much about things that do not really matter.
- ① ② ③ ④ 6. My breathing is hurried, shallow, or uneven.
- ① ② ③ ④ 7. I have conflicts with others.
- ① ② ③ ④ 8. I find myself thinking in narrow, rigid ways.
- ① ② ③ ④ 9. My heart beats fast, hard, or irregularly.
- ① ② ③ ④ 10. I have difficulty controlling negative thoughts.
- ① ② ③ ④ 11. I feel distressed (discouraged or sad).
- ① ② ③ ④ 12. I lose my appetite.
- ① ② ③ ④ 13. I am depressed.
- ① ② ③ ④ 14. I am anxious.
- ① ② ③ ④ 15. I feel distaste or disgust.
- ① ② ③ ④ 16. I become cynical or hostile.
- ① ② ③ ④ 17. My shoulders, neck, or back are tense.
- ① ② ③ ④ 18. I have difficulty keeping troublesome thoughts out of mind.
- ① ② ③ ④ 19. I feel confused.
- ① ② ③ ④ 20. My muscles feel tight, tense, or clenched up (furrowed brow, tightened fist, clenched jaws).
- ① ② ③ ④ 21. I feel less sensitive or caring to others.
- ① ② ③ ④ 22. I feel fatigued.
- ① ② ③ ④ 23. I have backaches.
- ① ② ③ ④ 24. I lose my concentration.
- ① ② ③ ④ 25. I am afraid.
- ① ② ③ ④ 26. My mouth feels dry.
- ① ② ③ ④ 27. I make mistakes.
- ① ② ③ ④ 28. I perspire or feel too warm.
- ① ② ③ ④ 29. I feel disorganized.
- ① ② ③ ④ 30. I feel the need to go to the rest room unnecessarily.
- ① ② ③ ④ 31. I find myself thinking unimportant, bothersome thoughts.
- ① ② ③ ④ 32. I have headaches.
- ① ② ③ ④ 33. I feel less cooperative with others.
- ① ② ③ ④ 34. I feel restless and fidgety.
- ① ② ③ ④ 35. I feel irritated or angry.

YOUR AGE: _____ GENDER: ? M ? F

To what extent do the following statements fit
how you feel RIGHT NOW at the PRESENT MOMENT?
Please check all the items using this key.

① = Doesn't fit me at all ② = Fits me a little ③ = Fits me moderately well ④ = Fits me very well.

- ① ② ③ ④ 1. I have a nervous stomach.
- ① ② ③ ④ 2. I am easily distracted.
- ① ② ③ ④ 3. I feel like I am losing my memory and forgetting things.
- ① ② ③ ④ 4. I feel like I am losing sleep.
- ① ② ③ ④ 5. I worry too much about things that do not really matter.
- ① ② ③ ④ 6. My breathing is hurried, shallow, or uneven.
- ① ② ③ ④ 7. I have conflicts with others.
- ① ② ③ ④ 8. I find myself thinking in narrow, rigid ways.
- ① ② ③ ④ 9. My heart is beating fast, hard, or irregularly.
- ① ② ③ ④ 10. I have difficulty controlling negative thoughts.
- ① ② ③ ④ 11. I feel distressed (discouraged or sad).
- ① ② ③ ④ 12. I have lost my appetite.
- ① ② ③ ④ 13. I am depressed.
- ① ② ③ ④ 14. I am anxious.
- ① ② ③ ④ 15. I feel distaste or disgust.
- ① ② ③ ④ 16. I feel cynical or hostile.
- ① ② ③ ④ 17. My shoulders, neck, or back are tense.
- ① ② ③ ④ 18. I have difficulty keeping troublesome thoughts out of mind.
- ① ② ③ ④v 19. I feel confused.
- ① ② ③ ④ 20. My muscles feel tight, tense, or clenched up (furrowed brow, tightened fist, clenched jaws).
- ① ② ③ ④ 21. I feel less sensitive or caring to others.
- ① ② ③ ④ 22. I feel fatigued.
- ① ② ③ ④ 23. I have a backache.
- ① ② ③ ④ 24. I feel like I am losing my concentration.
- ① ② ③ ④ 25. I am afraid.
- ① ② ③ ④ 26. My mouth feels dry.
- ① ② ③ ④ 27. I feel like I might make mistakes.
- ① ② ③ ④ 28. I perspire or feel too warm.
- ① ② ③ ④ 29. I feel disorganized.
- ① ② ③ ④ 30. I feel the need to go to the rest room unnecessarily.
- ① ② ③ ④ 31. I find myself thinking unimportant, bothersome thoughts.
- ① ② ③ ④ 32. I have a headache.
- ① ② ③ ④ 33. I feel less cooperative with others.
- ① ② ③ ④ 34. I feel restless and fidgety.
- ① ② ③ ④ 35. I feel irritated or angry.

YOUR AGE: _____ GENDER: ☐ M ☐ F

The SSSI was designed to measure frequently-reported stress symptoms. It was based on the Stress Costs Inventory (Smith (1992) and the Smith Stress Symptoms Scale (Smith, 1990) and taps 6 symptom categories. Scales were developed through factor analysis Alpha reliabilities for symptom categories range from .89 to .76.

KEY

Sample description: 952 college students. 281 M, 615 F, 56 Unstated. Age = 26.27 sd = 8.57.

GLOBAL STRESS SYMPTOM CATEGORIES (To score, add items for each scale, divide by number of items in scale)

1. Worry/Negative Emotion (alpha = .89)

- 5 I worry too much about things that do not really matter.
- 10 I have difficulty controlling negative thoughts.
- 11 I feel distressed (discouraged or sad).
- 13 I am depressed.
- 14 I am anxious.
- 18 I have difficulty keeping troublesome thoughts out of mind.
- 19 I feel confused.
- 25 I am afraid.
- 31 I find myself thinking unimportant, bothersome thoughts.
- 35 I feel irritated or angry.

Worry a-priori Subscale

- 5
- 10
- 18
- 19
- 31

Negative Emotion a-priori Subscale

- 11
- 13
- 14
- 25
- 35

(Note, although Worry and Negative Emotion may appear to be conceptually distinct, we have yet to find separate factors for them)

2. Attentional Deficits (.79)

- 2 I become easily distracted.

- 3 I lose my memory and forget things.
- 19 I feel confused.
- 24 I lose my concentration.
- 29 I feel disorganized.
- 34 I feel restless and fidgety.

3. Autonomic Arousal / Anxiety (.80)

- 1 I have nervous stomach.
- 4 I lose sleep.
- 6 My breathing is hurried, shallow, or uneven.
- 9 My heart beats fast, hard, or irregularly.
- 12 I lose my appetite.
- 14 I am anxious.
- 20 My muscles feel tight, tense, or clenched up (furrowed brow, tightened fist, clenched jaws).
- 22 I feel fatigued.
- 26 My mouth feels dry.
- 28 I perspire or feel too warm.
- 30 I feel the need to go to the rest room unnecessarily.

4. Striated Muscle Tension (.76)

- 17 My shoulders, neck, or back are tense.
- 20 My muscles feel tight, tense, or clenched up (furrowed brow, tightened fist, clenched jaws).
- 23 I have backaches.
- 32 I have headaches.

5. Depression (.79)

- 11 I feel distressed (discouraged or sad).
- 13 I am depressed.

6. Interpersonal Conflict / Anger (.77)

- 7 I have conflicts with others.
- 8 I find myself thinking in narrow, rigid ways.
- 16 I become cynical or hostile.
- 21 I feel less sensitive or caring to others.
- 33 I feel less cooperative with others.
- 35 I feel irritated or angry.

NOTES: Items 15 and 27 do not appear on any scale. However, they are included in the inventory so future research can confirm the wisdom of their omission. Also, some items appear in more than one scale. That is simply because they contribute to more than one scale, reflecting a degree of intrinsic scale overlap.

W/NE Worry/Negative Emotion
 SMT Striated Muscle Tension
 AD Attentional Deficits
 AA/A Autonomic Arousal / Anxiety
 D Depression
 IC/A Interpersonal Conflict / Anger

	W/NE	SMT	O	AD	AA/A	D
Percentiles						
10	12.00	4.00	2.00	7.00	12.00	2.00
20	13.00	5.00	2.00	8.00	14.00	2.00
30	15.00	6.00	3.00	9.00	15.00	2.00
40	16.40	7.00	3.00	10.00	17.00	3.00
50	18.00	8.00	4.00	11.00	18.00	3.00
60	20.00	9.00	4.00	12.00	19.00	4.00
70	22.00	10.00	5.00	13.00	21.00	4.00
80	25.00	11.00	6.00	15.00	23.00	5.00
90	29.00	13.00	7.00	17.00	27.00	6.00

REFERENCES

Smith, J. C. (1992). *Creative Stress Management*. New York: Prentice-Hall

Backward Scoring of the Smith Somatic Stress Symptoms Scale - State (SSSSS-S)
and the Smith Somatic Stress Symptoms Scale - Trait (SSSSS-T; Smith, 1990)

Researchers using the SSSSS-S or SSSSS-T(Smith, 1990) can score items for Autonomic Arousal / Anxiety and Striated Muscle Tension using the following key:

Autonomic Arousal / Anxiety: SSSSS-S / SSSSS-T Items

- Item 1: Heartbeat fasts, irregular
- Item 2. Breathing stressed
- Item 6. Perspiration / warmth
- Item 7. Need for restroom
- Item 9. Dry mouth
- Item 17. Nervous stomach
- Item 18. Loss of appetite

Striated muscle tension: SSSSS-S / SSSSS-T Items

- Item 3. Muscles tight
- Item 11. Headache
- Item 13. Back aches
- Item 14. Shoulders, neck, back tense

Smith, J . C. (1990). *Cognitive-behavioral relaxation training: A new system of strategies for treatment and assessment*. New York: Springer Publications.