



STRESS BY CITY DENVER

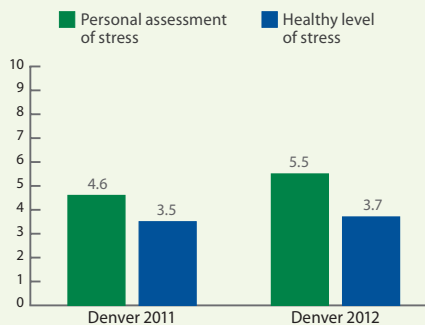


Stress in Denver

The most recent *Stress in America*™ survey paints a troubling picture for Denver residents.* While stress levels nationwide appear to be declining, the opposite seems to be happening in Denver. In addition to increasing stress levels, people in Denver are more likely than adults nationwide to engage in unhealthy behaviors due to stress and are more likely to experience physical and non-physical symptoms of stress.

STRESS LEVELS JUMPED IN DENVER THIS YEAR AND FAR EXCEED WHAT RESIDENTS BELIEVE IS HEALTHY.

Average Stress Level vs. Healthy Stress Level



BASE: Denver 2011 (n=249); Denver 2012 (n=207)

Q605 On a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 means you have little or no stress and 10 means you have a great deal of stress, how would you rate your average level of stress during the past month?

Q610 On a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 means little or no stress and 10 means a great deal of stress, what would you consider a healthy level of stress?

43%

OF ADULTS IN DENVER SAY THEIR **stress increased** IN THE PAST YEAR



Perceptions of Stress and Its Sources

Stress levels are up in Denver and more residents report experiencing extreme stress (an 8, 9 or 10 on a 10-point scale, where 1 is “little or no stress” and 10 is “a great deal of stress”) this year. They are also far more likely to say that money is a significant source of stress than Americans overall.

Stress levels in Denver jumped this year, unlike in other places in the country where stress appears to be on the decline. Denver residents report their average stress level is 5.5 on a 10-point scale, compared to 4.6 in 2011. What’s more, their average stress level is far higher than what they believe to be a healthy level of stress: 3.7.

Not surprisingly, 43 percent of Denver residents say their stress increased over the past year, and more people in Denver this year report experiencing extreme stress (28 percent in 2012 vs. 18 percent in 2011).

Like elsewhere in the country, top sources of stress for Denver residents are money (69 percent for Denver and nationally), work (77 percent vs. 65 percent) and the economy (59 percent vs. 61 percent).

*This report focuses only on the views of residents within the Denver Metropolitan Statistical Area (2009 n=202; 2010 n=206; 2011 n=279; 2012 n=207) and the general population (2009 n=1568; 2010 n=1134; 2011 n=1226; 2012 n=2020).

For the full methodology, visit stressinamerica.org.





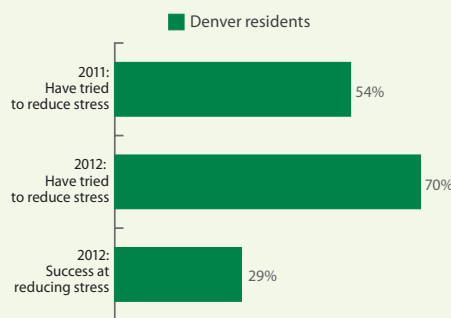
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35%

OF ADULTS IN DENVER SAY THEY ARE DOING AN **excellent or very good job** OF MANAGING STRESS

MORE PEOPLE IN DENVER ARE TRYING TO REDUCE THEIR STRESS, BUT THEY ARE NOT NECESSARILY SUCCEEDING.

Behavior Changes vs. Status of Change



BASE: Denver 2011 (n=249); Denver 2012 (n=207)
Q7135 In the last 5 years, have you tried to make any of the following changes?
Q7150 You mentioned you decided to make a lifestyle change. Did you successfully make the change?

Managing Stress

Denver residents are slightly more likely than adults nationwide to say that stress management is important to them, but slightly less likely to say they are doing a very good or good job managing their stress. At the same time, Denver residents are less likely than others to believe that a psychologist can help with stress management.

Sixty-seven percent of Denver residents say managing stress is extremely or very important to them compared with 64 percent of Americans overall.

However, far fewer Denver residents say they are doing enough to manage stress (54 percent) or that they are doing an excellent or very good job of managing stress (35 percent).

The percentage of people living in Denver who were advised to reduce stress in the past year doubled (34 percent vs. 17 percent). It also exceeds the number of people who received the same recommendation nationally (28 percent).

Similarly, the percentage of people in Denver who report that they have tried to reduce their stress over the past five years has increased dramatically (70 percent vs. 54 percent in 2011), but they are not necessarily having success — of those who have tried, only 29 percent report being successful at reducing stress.

The most common stress management techniques for residents of Denver include exercising or walking (57 percent), listening to music (56 percent) and reading (40 percent).

People living in Denver are more likely to say that they have been referred to a mental health provider (16 percent vs. 12 percent).





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Stress and Well-Being

While people in Denver rate their health similarly to adults nationwide, they are more likely to report physical and non-physical symptoms of stress.

Though slightly more people living in Denver rate their health as excellent or very good compared to Americans overall (43 percent vs. 40 percent), this number is down from 49 percent in 2011.

Despite the importance Denver residents place on aspects of well-being, they appear to struggle, like others across the country, to meet healthy living goals:

- Seventy-three percent say getting enough sleep is extremely or very important, yet just 38 percent say they are doing an excellent or very good job at it.
- Sixty-four percent say being physically active or fit is extremely or very important, yet just 36 percent say they are doing an excellent or very good job.
- Fifty-four percent say that eating healthy is extremely or very important, yet just 39 percent say they are doing an excellent or very good job.

Denver residents are more likely than Americans overall to report various physical and non-physical symptoms of stress, including feeling nervous or anxious (45 percent vs. 35 percent), having negative thoughts (36 percent vs. 27 percent) or feeling overwhelmed (41 percent vs. 35 percent).

More people living in Denver than adults nationwide report engaging in unhealthy behaviors because of stress, such as overeating or eating unhealthy foods (50 percent vs. 36 percent) or lying awake at night (49 percent vs. 42 percent). At the same time, more Denver residents are engaging in these behaviors than in 2011, when only 32 percent said they overate or ate unhealthy foods, and 35 percent said they had lain awake due to stress.



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Health, Lifestyle and Behavior Change

While Denver residents who have been recommended to or have tried to make a lifestyle or behavior change are more likely to say a lack of willpower is the most common barrier they face, the number reporting stress as a barrier has tripled since 2011.

Twenty-five percent of Denver residents say that a lack of willpower is a barrier preventing them from making healthy lifestyle changes.

While not as commonly reported as a lack of willpower, three times as many Denver residents say they are too stressed to make changes this year (18 percent in 2012 vs. 6 percent in 2011).

Despite reporting higher stress levels and discrepancies between the importance they place on certain aspects of health care and the rate at which those things occur, people in Denver are more likely than Americans overall to give their health care high marks.

Forty percent of people in Denver give the health care they receive an “A” grade compared with 31 percent nationwide.

Almost half of people living in Denver say it is important to discuss lifestyle or behavior changes that improve health with health care providers (48 percent say it is extremely or very important), but just 34 percent of them say they discuss it often or always.

Thirty-five percent of Denver residents think discussing stress management with health care providers is extremely or very important, yet only 21 percent say they have this discussion often or always. A similar number (34 percent) want to discuss their mental health, yet only 19 percent say such conversations happen often or always.

