



# STRESS BY CITY ATLANTA



## Stress in Atlanta

Atlanta residents\* report similar stress levels as adults nationally, with work and finances being the biggest sources of stress. But the latest *Stress in America*™ survey shows that although Atlanta residents' average stress level is the lowest since 2008, their stress levels continue to exceed their definition of what is healthy. What's more, the number of Atlantans who consider family responsibilities a somewhat or very significant source of stress is at its highest level since the survey began.



### Perceptions of Stress and Its Sources

Fewer Atlantans 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") than last year, but their reported stress level still exceeds what they believe is a healthy level of stress.

Atlantans report an average stress level of 5.0. Average stress levels have reached the lowest point since 2008 among Atlanta residents (6.1 in 2008, 5.9 in 2009, 5.8 in 2010 and 5.3 in 2011). Comparatively, Atlantans define a healthy level of stress as 3.6. Likewise, fewer people in Atlanta (20 percent) report experiencing extreme stress than last year (25 percent).

In general, people living in Atlanta report that money, work and the economy are the most common sources of stress. In fact, more Atlantans report these as very or somewhat significant sources of stress compared to adults nationwide (73 percent vs. 69 percent, 73 percent vs. 65 percent and 64 percent vs. 61 percent, respectively).

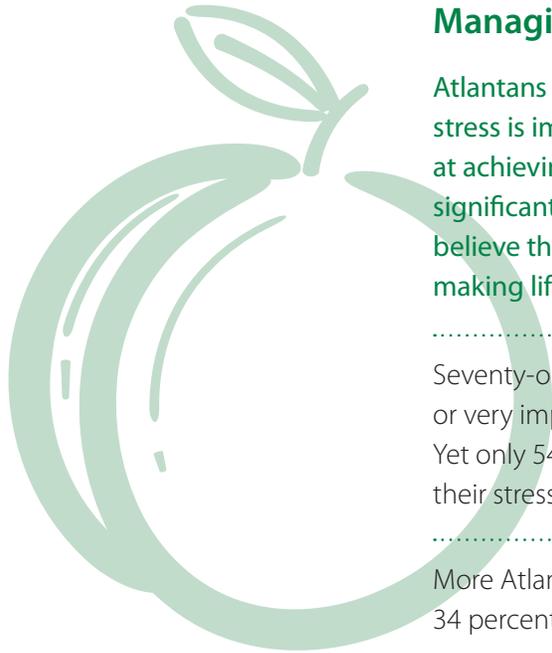
The percentage of Atlantans reporting that family responsibilities are a somewhat or very significant stressor is at its highest level since 2008 and has risen steadily since 2009 (64 percent in 2012, compared to 58 percent in 2011, 56 percent in 2010 and 51 percent in 2009).

\*This report focuses only on the views of residents within the Atlanta Metropolitan Statistical Area (2008 n=243; 2009 n=201; 2010 n=213; 2011 n=279; 2012 n=212) and the general population (2008 n=1791; 2009 n=1568; 2010 n=1134; 2011 n=1226; 2012 n=2020).

For the full methodology, visit [stressinamerica.org](http://stressinamerica.org).



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## Managing Stress

Atlantans are more likely than Americans overall to say that managing stress is important to them, but they are not necessarily doing better at achieving stress management goals. People in Atlanta are also significantly more likely than adults nationally to report that they believe that psychologists can help with stress management and making lifestyle or behavior changes.

Seventy-one percent of Atlanta residents say managing stress is extremely or very important to them, compared to only 64 percent of all Americans. Yet only 54 percent of Atlantans say they are doing enough to manage their stress compared with 61 percent of adults nationally.

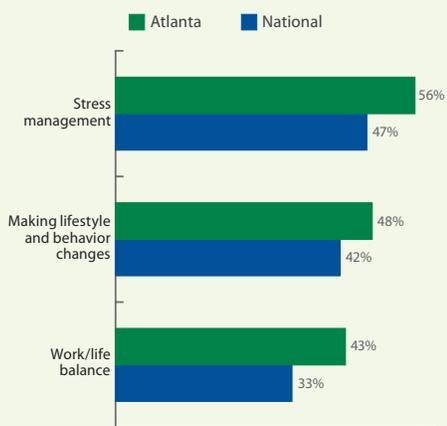
More Atlantans say their stress increased over the past year (38 percent vs. 34 percent in 2011).

Top stress management techniques for Atlanta residents in 2012 include listening to music (55 percent) and exercising or walking (54 percent).

More Atlantans than Americans overall believe that psychologists can be helpful in managing stress (56 percent vs. 47 percent say they can help a great deal or a lot), making lifestyle and behavior changes (48 percent vs. 42 percent say they can help a great deal or a lot) and with issues related to work/life balance (43 percent vs. 33 percent say they can help a great deal or a lot).

**MANY ATLANTA RESIDENTS BELIEVE THAT PSYCHOLOGISTS CAN HELP WITH STRESS AND BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT.**

Percentage Who Think Psychologists Can Help A Great Deal/A Lot



BASE: Atlanta (n=212); All respondents (n=2020)  
Q7165 How much do you think a psychologist can help with the following?

## Stress and Well-Being

People in Atlanta rate their health similarly to adults nationwide, but they are more likely to recognize that stress can greatly impact their physical and mental health. Atlantans are also more likely to place importance on aspects of well-being such as eating healthy and exercising more.

Thirty-eight percent of Atlantans rate their health as excellent or good compared with 40 percent of people nationwide. This represents a decrease from 43 percent in 2011.



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Atlanta residents are more likely than adults overall to report that their stress level has a very strong or strong impact on their mental health (42 percent vs. 37 percent) and their physical health (42 percent vs. 36 percent nationally).

Atlantans are much more likely than adults nationwide to say they have been told by a health care provider that they are overweight (33 percent vs. 22 percent), and are slightly more likely than the rest of the population to report having high blood pressure (34 percent vs. 30 percent).

Despite higher levels of obesity, Atlantans are also more likely to say that eating healthy is extremely or very important (69 percent vs. 60 percent nationally).

The number of Atlantans who say being physically active or fit is important to them has decreased from 67 percent in 2011 to 61 percent, but it is still higher than the national average of 57 percent.

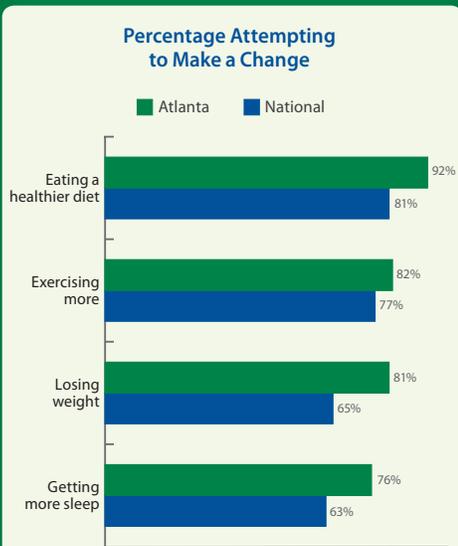
The percentage of Atlantans placing importance on getting enough sleep has consistently increased since 2010 (67 percent in 2010, 68 percent in 2011 and 73 percent in 2012).

Atlantans are more likely than other Americans to have attempted making healthy lifestyle and behavior changes over the past five years such as eating a healthier diet (92 percent vs. 81 percent), exercising more (82 percent vs. 77 percent), losing weight (81 percent vs. 65 percent) and getting more sleep (76 percent vs. 63 percent).

Despite placing a lot of importance on various aspects of well-being, Atlantans struggle to achieve healthy living goals. Wide gaps exist between the importance they place on certain activities and their ability to do an excellent or very good job doing those things:

- Having good family relationships (85 percent say it is important vs. 65 percent say they are doing an excellent or very good job at it)
- Getting enough sleep (73 percent vs. 38 percent)
- Managing stress (71 percent vs. 38 percent)
- Eating healthy (69 percent vs. 36 percent)

## ATLANTA RESIDENTS ARE MORE LIKELY THAN AMERICANS OVERALL TO HAVE TRIED TO MAKE A CHANGE IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS.



BASE: Atlanta (n=212); All respondents (n=2020)  
 Q7135 In the last 5 years, have you tried to make any of the following changes?



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## Health, Lifestyle and Behavior Change

A lack of willpower continues to be the most commonly mentioned barrier to change for Americans who were recommended or attempted to make a lifestyle or behavior change. This is particularly the case in Atlanta.

Lack of willpower is reported as a barrier to change, both among Atlantans (37 percent) and adults nationally (31 percent). Atlantans are just as likely to report lack of time as a barrier to change this year as last year (26 percent in 2012 vs. 27 percent in 2011), but their number is still higher than the national average in 2012, which is 22 percent.

Like others across the country, few Atlanta residents give their health care an "A" grade. Despite this notion, Atlantans are slightly more likely than Americans nationwide to believe their health care providers can help them manage stress. However, people in Atlanta are similar to Americans overall in their assessment of whether their relationship with their provider supports them in making healthy lifestyle changes.

Just 33 percent of Atlanta residents give their health care an "A" grade, consistent with Americans overall (31 percent).

Twenty-eight percent of Atlanta residents believe their health care provider can help them a great deal or a lot in managing their stress, compared with 24 percent of adults nationally.

Thirty-six percent of Atlantans think discussing stress management with health care providers is extremely or very important, yet half as many (18 percent) say they have this discussion often or always.

Thirty-five percent of Atlantans say it is important that they discuss their mental health with their health care provider, yet only 17 percent say it happens often or always.

Similarly, almost half of Atlantans say it is important to discuss lifestyle or behavior changes that improve health (48 percent say it is extremely or very important), but only 33 percent say it happens always or often.

**37%**  
OF ATLANTANS SAY  
**lack of willpower**  
IS A BARRIER TO CHANGE