

The *Academia Made Easier* Life Load Calculator

Suggestion: Allow for 20+ minutes for this exercise. This can be done individually, with a partner, or with a group.

Instructions:

- (1) Make a copy (found under File) of the worksheet and/or print a copy of the worksheet.
- (2) Scan the categories and statements. Alter any statements as you feel necessary to adapt to your particular circumstances, but be sure to maintain the total number of statements in each category (or adjust the math totals at the end – you do you!).
- (3) Score yourself across the statements in each category. Calculate your subtotals for each category.
- (4) Use the reflection questions on the final page to reflect upon your current life load. Optional: discuss with others.

Definitions: *Caregiving* includes child rearing, supporting loved ones (including pets) with health concerns, elder care, etc. *Emotional labour* includes the management of your feelings in work, community, and relationships (see my [Skills Agenda series](#) with Dr. Christie Schultz for more information). *Chronic or acute health challenges* include disease, injury, mental health, etc.

Attribution: This tool was inspired by the “assessing the weight you are carrying” exercise in Amy Rupert’s [Personal Groundwork for Coaching](#) (International Coaching Group Inc., 2006). I have made significant changes but acknowledge Rupert’s conceptualization.

Feedback? Do you have suggestions for improving the *Academia Made Easier* Life Load Calculator? I welcome your feedback for *Academia Made Easier* Life Calculator 2.0 at AcademiaMadeEasier@gmail.com . Note: I only respond to polite emails.

Want more? Contact me at AcademiaMadeEasier@gmail.com to inquire about *Academia Made Easier* workshops.

Disclaimer: This tool is provided as a personal reflective resource only and is not to be used or relied on for any diagnostic or treatment purposes. Loleen Berdahl is not responsible in any way for your use of the tool.

Personal Finances

I have no job security.	4	3	2	1	0	I have full job security.
I live well above my financial means.	4	3	2	1	0	I live well below my financial means.
My debt (loans, mortgages, other) situation is a source of considerable stress.	4	3	2	1	0	My debt (loans, mortgages, other) situation causes me no stress.
I lack systems to manage my bills, savings, and finances.	4	3	2	1	0	I have effective systems for managing my bills, savings, and finances.
None of my legal matters (e.g., will, personal directive, child support) are up-to-date.	4	3	2	1	0	All of my legal matters (e.g., will, personal directive, child support) are up-to-date.

Caregiving and Emotional Labour

My caregiving responsibilities are overwhelming.	4	3	2	1	0	My caregiving responsibilities are entirely manageable./I have no caregiving responsibilities.
My household responsibilities are overwhelming.	4	3	2	1	0	My household responsibilities are entirely manageable./I have no household responsibilities.
I am struggling with personal crises, grief, trauma, and/or major life changes.	4	3	2	1	0	I am not managing any personal crises, grief, trauma, and/or major life changes.
I have no boundaries with the people in my personal life.	4	3	2	1	0	I have strong boundaries with the people in my personal life.
I have no support for my responsibilities or my mental well-being.	4	3	2	1	0	I have ample support for both my responsibilities and my mental well-being.

Wellbeing

I never get enough sleep.	4	3	2	1	0	I get plenty of sleep each night.
I am worried about my relationship with alcohol, drugs, and/or tobacco.	4	3	2	1	0	I feel good about my relationship with alcohol, drugs, and/or tobacco.
My eating habits fail to support my energy needs and are inconsistent with my personal goals.	4	3	2	1	0	My eating habits fully support my energy needs and are consistent with my personal goals.
My fitness/activity routine fails to support my energy needs and is inconsistent with my personal goals.	4	3	2	1	0	My fitness/activity routine fully supports my energy needs and is consistent with my personal goals.
I have chronic and/or acute health issues that are not being addressed.	4	3	2	1	0	My chronic and/or acute health issues are being managed appropriately./I do not have chronic or acute health issues.

Relationships and Society

I am very unhappy with my current relationships and/or relationship status.	4	3	2	1	0	I am very happy with my current relationships and/or relationship status.
I never spend quality time with people who matter to me.	4	3	2	1	0	I regularly spend quality time with people who matter to me.
I feel very lonely regularly.	4	3	2	1	0	I rarely or never feel lonely.
The people and pets in my life bring me great pain and/or stress.	4	3	2	1	0	The people and pets in my life bring me great joy and/or comfort.
I regularly experience discrimination, harassment, and/or systemic biases in my personal life.	4	3	2	1	0	My personal life is free from discrimination, harassment, and/or systemic biases.

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Time and Space

I have housing insecurity.	4	3	2	1	0	I have full housing security.
My home environment displeases and upsets me.	4	3	2	1	0	My home environment pleases and comforts me.
I have no autonomy over my personal time.	4	3	2	1	0	I have full autonomy over my personal time.
My personal scheduling system (or lack thereof) creates confusion and chaos.	4	3	2	1	0	I have a highly effective personal scheduling system.
I have no time to enjoy my personal interests and hobbies.	4	3	2	1	0	I have plenty of time to enjoy my personal interests and hobbies.

Total Life Load

Life Category	Total	Particular areas of heavier load (higher score items)	Areas in which I have agency to lighten the load
Personal Finances	/20		
Caregiving and Emotional Labour	/20		
Wellbeing	/20		
Relationships	/20		
Time and Space	/20		
Total Life Load	/100		

Reflection Questions *(Write out your answers!)*

How do I feel about my overall life load? About the loads in each life category?

For higher load areas in which I believe I have no agency to reduce the load:

- Is this lack of agency true? Am I sure?
- If change is truly impossible, what mindset(s) are necessary to best manage this reality? What are my next steps?

For higher load areas in which I have agency to reduce the load:

- What can be shared with others? Who can help? What are my next steps?
- What can be outsourced to professionals/hired out? What are my next steps?
- How could changing my behaviour or choices reduce the load? What are my next steps?
- How could systems, automation, AI tools, or other strategies reduce the load? What are my next steps?
- What behaviours or choices can I adopt to avoid creating heavy loads in the future? What are my next steps?