Performance
(physical & mental)

High — Best (optimum) performance

Laid back

Medium — Anxious

stress zone

Inactive — Panic, anger, or violence

Low

Low (underload) — Medium — High (overload)

Arousal level

QUALITY OF PERFORMANCE

Optimal level

Mild alertness

Stress

Boredom

Anxiety

Sleep

Panic

Low — High

LEVEL OF AROUSAL

Arousal theory is based on the ideas that different individuals perform better at different levels of arousal and that every individual seeks to find its optimum level.

Our levels of arousal can influence our performance. This is commonly referred to as the Yerkes-Dodson Law. The law states that increased levels of arousal will improve performance, but only up until the optimum arousal level is reached. At that point, performance begins to suffer as arousal levels increase. Additionally, if you're doing a complex task, high or low levels of arousal will affect you more than if you're doing something simple.

Examples: