

STRESS & YOU



(Over)

Introduction

Stress is a part of day to day living. As college students, you may experience it while adjusting to a more challenging environment, social pressures, juggling a full schedule, lack of finances, and changes in eating or sleeping habits, to name a few.

The stress you experience isn't necessarily harmful. Mild forms of stress can actually act as a motivator. However, managing high stress is important to good health and sanity!

What is Stress?

Although we tend to think of stress as caused by external events, events in themselves are not stressful. The way in which we interpret and react to events creates the actual stress.

People differ dramatically in the type of events they interpret as stressful. For example, speaking in public can be stressful for some people and relaxing for others.

Symptoms of Stress

There are numerous signs and symptoms that you may notice when you are experiencing stress.

Emotional/Mental

Low self-esteem - Fear of failure - Inability to concentrate - Embarrassing easily -Worrying - Preoccupation - Forgetfulness - Anxious - Depressed - Irritable - Impatient

Behavioral

Stuttering - Crying for no apparent reason - Acting impulsively - Grinding teeth - Increased smoking, drinking or drugging - Accident prone - Nervous laughter - Withdrawal

Physical

Increased sweating - Increased heart beat - Trembling - Dryness of throat and mouth - Tiring easily - Urinating frequently - Sleeping problems - Vomiting - Headaches - Pain in the neck and or lower back - Loss of appetite or overeating - Susceptibility to illness

Causes of Stress

Both positive and negative situations can create stress (a wedding and a funeral). Major life changes are the greatest contributors because they place the greatest demands on resources for coping.

Evaluate your Stressors

- Things that are important & controllable -- Take charge of these ASAP
- Things that are important & uncontrollable -- **Practice coping strategies**
- Things that are unimportant & controllable -- Prioritize and complete these
- Things that are unimportant & uncontrollable -- Develop serenity and acceptance

40 Stress Busters

Many stresses can be changed, eliminated, or minimized. Here are some things you can do to reduce your level of stress. Pick and practice a few that work for you!

- □ Become aware of your own reactions to stress
- □ Recognize and accept your limits
- □ Focus on positive self-statements and attitude
- □ Exercise regularly a walk around the block is just fine
- □ Eat a balanced diet and take a vitamin supplement (esp. C and B complexes)
- □ Watch your intake of caffeine, alcohol, nicotine, and sugar
- \Box Talk with friends or someone you can trust about your worries
- □ Make a daily "to do" list and/or plan ahead with a weekly master schedule
- □ Schedule "realistic" days don't be superman or superwoman
- □ Set SMART goals (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-oriented)
- Determine priorities (urgent and important takes priority)
- □ Practice relaxation techniques-deep breathing using the diaphragm
- □ Let go and delegate tasks to capable others
- □ Organize your living and work spaces AND don't let paperwork pile up
- □ Say "no" to extra commitments and obligations
- □ Read an uplifting article or listen to a relaxing piece of music
- □ Schedule in time to de-stress hot bath, lunch with a friend, etc.
- □ Relax your standards when appropriate
- □ Use your peak energy time for the tough-to-tackle issues
- □ Remind yourself of your strengths, talents, and accomplishments
- □ Avoid unnecessary competition
- □ Try a new hobby for relaxation and fun
- Don't hit the snooze button and/or get up 15 minutes earlier
- □ Prepare for the morning the evening prior lunch made, workout bag packed, etc.
- □ Write things down ~ appointments, special events, when library books are due, etc.
- □ Take stretch breaks or a quick walk
- □ Make friends with non-worriers for a balanced perspective
- □ Journal your thoughts and feelings as a release
- Do something for someone else/volunteer walking a dog is great
- \Box Find joy in at least one activity each day
- □ Take a lunch break, if even for just 15 minutes
- □ Have a forgiving view of events and people
- □ Visualize success when approaching a stressful activity or event
- □ Try to get 15 minutes of sun exposure each day
- □ Take a mini-vacation in your mind
- □ Try aromatherapy/light a scented candle especially lavender
- \Box Give a hug, get a hug
- \Box Tense then relax the major muscle groups one set at a time
- □ Break it up ~ Make daily mini tasks for a large and looming project
- \Box Shake it up ~ don't do the same activity for more than 2 consecutive hours

FOR MORE SUCCESS STRATEGIES, VISIT THE CONNECT TO SUCCESS OFFICE

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