



# Stress Management

STRESS. As a college student, you probably face stressful situations on a daily basis. The lives of college students can be full of stress— a heavy course load, involvement in campus activities, new and changing personal relationships, pressure to get good grades and find a great job can all be sources of stress!

Many times stress is actually positive and motivates you to work hard and achieve your goals. However, when stress is experienced in excess, it can have many negative effects on your life, your body, and your mind. Learning to recognize and manage stress can play a major role in allowing you to have a well-balanced life— and prevent major burnout!

## Take a minute and relax...

Here are some simple exercises that can help you relax and reduce stress in just a few minutes. Once you have the hang of them, you will be able to use them to diminish stress anytime, anywhere!

### DEEP BREATHING

*One of the simplest ways to relieve tension is deep breathing.*

1. Lie on your back with a pillow under your head. Bend your knees (or put a pillow under them) to relax your stomach.
2. Put one hand on your stomach, just below your rib cage.
3. Slowly breathe in through your nose. Your stomach should feel like it's rising.
4. Exhale slowly through your mouth, emptying your lungs completely and letting your stomach fall.
5. Repeat several times until you feel calm and relaxed. Practice daily.

### PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

*This easy technique can help you relax the major muscle groups in your body.*

1. Wear loose, comfortable clothing. Sit in a favorite chair or lie down on a flat surface.
2. Begin with your facial muscles. Frown hard for 5-10 seconds and then relax all your muscles.
3. Work other facial muscles by scrunching your face up or tensing your eyebrows for 5-10 seconds. Release. You should feel a noticeable difference between the tense and relaxed muscles.
4. Move on to your jaw. Then, move on to other muscle groups – shoulders, arms, chest, legs, etc. – until you've tensed and relaxed individual muscle groups throughout your whole body.

### MEDITATION

*This is the process of focusing on a single word or object to clear your mind. As a result, you feel calm and refreshed.*

1. Wear loose, comfortable clothing. Sit or lie in a relaxing position.
2. Close your eyes and concentrate on a calming thought, word or object.
3. You may find that other thoughts pop into your mind. Don't worry, this is normal. Try not to dwell on them. Just keep focusing on your image or sound.
4. If you're having trouble, try repeating a word or sound over and over. (Some people find it helpful to play soothing music while meditating.)
5. Gradually, you'll begin to feel more and more relaxed.

## Questions to Ponder....

Chronic stress can wear down the body's natural defenses, leading to a variety of physical symptoms.

### Am I experiencing any of the following?

- Dizziness or a general feeling of "being out of it"?
- General aches and pains?
- Grinding teeth, clenched jaw?
- Headaches?
- Indigestion?
- Increase in or loss of appetite?
- Muscle tension in neck, face or shoulders?
- Problems sleeping?
- Racing heart?
- Cold and sweaty palms?
- Fatigue or exhaustion?
- Trembling or shaking?
- Weight gain or loss?
- Upset stomach?
- Sexual difficulties?

### How are these symptoms affecting my daily life?

How would my quality of life improve if I could reduce or eliminate these symptoms?

What changes can I make in my lifestyle in order to reduce these symptoms?

Who can help me make these changes?

"Stress is not what happens to us. It's our response TO what happens. And RESPONSE is something we can choose."  
-Maureen Killoran



# Quick Tips

Stressed out already?

Here are strategies that you can use to reduce stress in your daily life!

- **Take a deep breath!** Regain your focus by inhaling deeply through your nose and exhaling slowly out through your mouth.
- **Manage your time well.** Keep your life running smoothly by prioritizing your daily tasks, making a schedule and sticking to it.
- **Get physical!** Physical activity is a great way to clear the mind and blow off steam while building energy at the same time. Plan time into your schedule to go for a walk, run around campus, stretch, or go to the gym.
- **Take care of your body.** Eating well and getting enough sleep fuel your mind as well as your body, so be sure to eat a well-balanced diet and catch your zzzzz's!
- **Laugh!** Maintain your sense of humor— it's good for you!
- **Know your limits.** Recognize when you have little to no power over a situation. Ask yourself "Is this my problem?" Don't agonize over decisions. Try to accept situations that you can't change.
- **Must you always be right?** Try cooperation and compromise instead of confrontation— this may help reduce anxiety in certain situations and provide a more comfortable working or living environment.
- **Avoid self-medication.** Alcohol and other drugs offer only a temporary reprieve from a stressful situation. Relying on them will distract you from your work and ultimately slow your productivity.

*Pieces of Leadership* brochures are available on the following topics:

Budgeting  
Communication  
Conflict Resolution  
Delegation  
Facilitation  
Goal Setting  
Group Dynamics  
Ice Breakers/Team Builders  
Mission Statements  
Motivation  
Officer Transition  
Peer Supervision  
Program Planning  
Qualities of a Good Leader  
Running a Good Meeting  
Stress Management  
Time Management  
Wellness

---

*The information provided in this brochure was adapted from:*

University of Texas  
Stress Management Brochure,  
University Health Center at the  
University of Georgia,  
[www.campusblues.com](http://www.campusblues.com) & [www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com)

---

For more information on the topics listed above or to access the resources in our Leadership Library, please visit the

**Office of Student Activities and Leadership Development**

Located on the  
First Floor of the  
Usdan University Center  
860-685-2460

or check out our website at

<http://www.wesleyan.edu/stuact/>

**WESLEYAN**  
UNIVERSITY



*Tips for the Wesleyan Leader*

**S  
t  
r  
e  
s  
s  
  
M  
a  
n  
a  
g  
e  
m  
e  
n  
t**

*Building your Leadership  
one piece at a time...*