



## Dealing with School Pressure

College can be a very demanding time for students. Professors, class projects, and extracurricular activities can all contribute to a stressed-out college student. From schoolwork to social problems, students can sometimes become so overwhelmed that they do not know how to efficiently manage their stressful situations. These tips can help keep college stress at a minimum before it becomes too hard to handle.

**Get organized.** By becoming more organized, you can reduce your stress level drastically. Make a daily schedule of all your activities. Do you have a paper due on Tuesday? When do you have to meet with your advisor? Were you supposed to volunteer at the student center today? Write these things down in a personal organizer to help you commit them to memory. Having to remember when to do something or what to do can increase your stress. Another way to become more organized is by getting your supplies and desk in order. Label folders for each class and arrange your notes and assignments by topic or date so you can easily find information.

**Prioritize your schoolwork.** Identify what is most important. When are your assignments due? If you have a presentation to give this Monday, don't write a one-page review that's due in a couple of weeks; prepare for the presentation first. Likewise, if you have an assignment that requires a lot of work, put it at the top of your list. When you prioritize your work, you will be more efficient in finishing your assignments and thus be less stressed.

**Don't procrastinate.** Putting off doing your schoolwork will only make you more stressed. If you get an assignment that is due in a month, and you don't have any other assignments to finish, go ahead and begin working on it. If you wait until right before it is due, you will be stressed about finishing it in time

**Exercise.** Exercise increases your energy level and helps relieve tension. Performing some sort of physical activity for thirty minutes three times a week will considerably lower your stress level. Throw a Frisbee with your friends, walk your dog, or just go for a jog and enjoy your alone time. Yoga is also a good stress reliever. It doesn't matter what you decide to do as long as you just do something. Taking the time to exercise will help get your mind off the chaos and stress in your life.

**Get plenty of sleep.** You need between seven to eight hours of sleep per night in order to rest your mind and body so they can perform well during the day. If you're like most college students, you only wish you could get that much sleep. Realize, however, that sleeping the suggested amount of time will make you more alert, less irritable, and able to manage stress more effectively. Also, keep in mind that sleeping too much is just as unhealthy as not getting enough sleep.

**Eat healthy.** Eating well-balanced meals will provide you with enough energy to accomplish your daily activities. Avoid foods with lots of sugar because they only provide a small burst of energy. Instead, stick with healthy foods such as vegetables and fruit. Also, in order to maintain your stress level, it is crucial for you to eat regularly. Don't skip meals.

**Talk about your problems.** Talking about your problems will help ease your tension and anxiety. Seek a trusted friend or see if your school has a counseling center. Talking to others will not only help you feel better, but it will also help you find more ways to deal with those problems that are causing you stress.

**Adopt a positive attitude.** If you are always negative, then stress will overwhelm you. By looking at things in a positive light, you will not only reduce your stress, but you will also feel better about yourself. Teach yourself to view a stressful situation as a small obstacle that can be easily overcome. Give yourself pep talks: "I can do this. I will not stress over this."

**Take time to relax.** To maintain peak performance and reduce your amount of stress, you should take time to relax. Don't just go, go, go; take a break. Enjoy hanging out with your friends or watch your favorite TV show. Taking

the time to relax will help rejuvenate you so you can face your stressors head on.

**Realize that it's okay to say "no".** If you already have a full schedule, don't attempt to add anything else to it. If your friends want you to go out at the last minute but doing so would conflict with your schedule, don't feel bad about turning them down. They will understand. They have been stressed before too.

While you will undoubtedly experience stress as a college student, following these tips may help reduce the capacity to which it occurs.