

Stress Management

As a student, you know how difficult it is to balance all of your classes and assignments with co-curricular activities, jobs, family, and friends. But it is not difficult to realize how stressful all of these activities can become. In this balancing act that we all practice, we need to incorporate practices of stress management in order to continue to be successful. Stress management is especially important for student leaders like you because you are setting an example for others.

Ways to Relax While Under Stress

Exercise— Exercising is a great way to get rid of tension. Walking the loop, or walking around your house are quick exercises that you can do at any time, not only when the Sports and Recreation Center is open.

Breathing— Breathing is more beneficial than you might think. A deep breath can help relax your muscles which in turn will allow for better blood flow, making you feel physically relaxed.

Meditation— Take a short break from whatever is making you stressed. Use that time to mentally ‘decompress.’ Focusing on something else can actually help you to return to your activity with a renewed concentration and fresh ideas.

How Can I Prevent Stress?

Make Lists— Make a list of all your priorities, including family and friend obligations. Begin to make decisions about how much time you are willing to dedicate to those priorities. Once you have clarified your priorities and your time, you can make a rough schedule of your time and alleviate stress brought on by multitasking and last minute papers/tests.

Sleep— As college students, it’s not out of the ordinary to get four hours of sleep or to pull all-nighters to work on a paper or study for a test. But as much as we need the time to study, we would be much more productive if we were to get a more full night’s sleep (seven to eight hours). When you are well rested, you have the ability to be more productive, motivated, and less stressed.

What is Stress?

Stress is our body’s way of responding to demands placed upon us. Believe it or not, there are positive and negative effects of stress. Think of the end of the semester when you have mountains of work to do and all of the sudden you have an extra burst of energy. This extra energy (adrenaline) is positive stress. When you have finished working on that allnighter paper, you feel relieved and your body is

able to relax. If, however, your body is not able to return to a relaxed state, negative stress will result. Signs of negative stress are:

- Increased heart rate
- Muscle tension
- High blood pressure
- Illness
- Mental and physical exhaustion

These symptoms are more commonly referred to as 'burnout.' Unfortunately, negative stress also leads to:

- Lower productivity
- Lack of motivation
- Low self-esteem

Members of the Office of Student Engagement (OSE) staff are available to assist you with any questions you have regarding leadership issues. The OSE is open Monday through Friday 9 a.m.—5 p.m. For more information, please contact the office at 410.337.6124.