

Dealing With Stress

Homework. Exams. Sports. Work. Friends. Family. There's lots to get a student stressed these days! Even good things can be stressful. Balancing all of these parts of your life can be difficult at times. Use these tips to help manage your stressful times.

Stress Gets to Everyone!

- You feel it. So do your friends. Even your teachers and parents have stress.
- A little stress is okay. It keeps us alert and energized. Too much stress can ruin your mood, your health and your ability to achieve the things you want to.

You Know You're Stressed If—

- You're not sleeping.
- You feel nervous much of the time.
- You get sick a lot.
- You don't want to participate in anything.
- You're irritable and moody.
- There's a change in the quality of your school work.

If stress has taken over, it's time to take action. There are lots of things to try to manage stress. See which of the following work for you.

When Stress Hits Big, Take a Time-Out

- Walk around the block. Clear your head. Breathe deeply and slowly in and out.
- Close your eyes and picture a favorite place. Breathe deeply as you think of the favorite place and feel your stress level lower.
- Remember a time when you handled stress well and try those techniques again.

Taking a few minutes to regroup can help you get a handle on stress.

Take Time for You

- Eat well. You'll be able to handle stress better when you have eaten nourishing food that avoids too much sugar and caffeine. Try for regular meals and take time to enjoy them.
- Exercise. It's one of the best ways to help with

stress. Get a friend to go for a walk, cycle, romp with the dog or workout.

- No time to exercise? Walk to the library. Stretch at your desk. Take the stairs.
- Listen to music. Draw.
- Don't use drugs, alcohol or tobacco. They actually create more stress.

Sleep at Night, Not in Class

- Try to get at least 7 or 8 hours of sleep at night.
- Without sleep you can't think straight or make good decisions. Things seem much worse than they are when you are overtired.
- A all-nighter may seem like a good way to catch up on studying. Wrong. You'll crash the next day—right in the middle of the exam!

You Can't Do It All! You're Only Human!

- Learn to say no to extra activities. You'll have more time to focus on what really matters.
- Listen to your self-talk for signs of perfectionism. Be realistic with yourself.
- Remember, being too busy is a big source of stress.

Plan Ahead to Avoid Being Too Busy

- Take a few minutes each night to organize the next day.
- Always keep your glasses, keys and class supplies in one place to avoid last-minute panics.
- Make a weekly planning calendar. Include time for study, exercise, friends, family and work.

Take One Day at a Time

- You may feel extra stress during an illness, exams or a big break-up.
- Take a deep breath. Feel your stomach fill with air rather than puffing out your chest. Slowly let it out. Repeat. Then use some of the tips above to get through it.
- Plan a reward for yourself when the crunch is over.

Talk to Someone You Can Trust

- When you talk to someone about feelings of stress, those feelings often lessen.
- Counselors and teachers care about you and can help you make sense of things and find ways to reduce stress.
- A friend who cares about you can be another helpful person to talk to.

Remember Your Strengths

- It's important to take pride in the things you do well. It's easy to lose sight of your strengths when stress starts to get you down. Stop and tell yourself the things you handle well.
- Remember some stressful times in the past that you handled well. Remind yourself that you can do it. Reflect on the things you did before that may work in this situation.
- Brag on yourself once you have managed the situation by realizing that you accomplished a difficult thing.

