

Stress Reduction Tips for College Students (Advice from College Students)

USE LISTS : "When the pressure and stress of the semester begins to build and you can't imagine how you can possibly accomplish everything you need to do, make a list. Include everything that needs to be done on the list, including homework, class assignments, grocery shopping, laundry and even hanging out with friends. Then make a weekly schedule. Fit all of your tasks within the weekly schedule. This will help you to be more organized; less overwhelmed and remember everything you need to do. You will find that there is indeed time to fit everything in. When you have completed one of the tasks on your list, cross it off. Crossing everything off the list is a good feeling of accomplishment. This is also a great way to see how much you actually do during the day and pat yourself on the back for a job well done." -
By Sue Amendolara

FIGHTING DEPRESSION: "You know that academic success depends on achieving satisfactory grades. Sometimes, however, students who are typically successful find their academic performance begins to slide for personal reasons. Prolonged unhappiness or dissatisfaction with one's self or one's relationships with others can drain a student's energy and become a hindrance to academic effectiveness. Yes, students can get depressed or anxious and find themselves having a hard time shaking it off. It's not an unusual occurrence; but if it goes on for weeks, you should be concerned. When social or emotional issues get in the way in your life, do something about it. The first step is to find someone with whom you can talk about it. This usually makes a world of difference. Don't continue to hold it in. Take care of yourself by eating and sleeping regularly, and get exercise. Make yourself go to class. Fight back and work to regain control of your life. Your emotional health and academic success go hand in hand. Keep a handle on both." - By Michael Bucell

OVERCOMING ANXIETY: "I find that many students have already acquired pretty good study habits. So, unless they have basic skill problems in areas like reading and math, they actually possess the ability to take notes effectively, manage their time, and so on. So, what gets in the way of effective performance in the classroom? I believe that "anxiety" is the culprit. Many students put themselves down by believing that they are "stupid" and "ineffective," especially in comparison with their peers. These feelings of inadequacy can lead to the paralyzing anxiety that "blocks" successful performance in the classroom -- especially on tests. I have personally experienced this gut-wrenching feeling and kicked myself later for making those dumb mistakes that result when anxiety gets in the way. In order to overcome anxiety, I recommend the following:

Gain temporary control of your anxiety by practicing relaxation techniques during especially anxious times. Deep breathing combined with muscular tensing and relaxing can be helpful. Massage and meditation can help too. Work on feeling better about yourself. Try replacing negative thinking with positive thoughts. Praise yourself once in a while and forgive yourself for mistakes. Read books that

suggest ways to improve your feelings of self-worth. In general, try being your own best friend!" - By Dr. Salene Cowher

GENERAL STRESS REDUCTION TIPS: "As classes become more demanding, you need to consider ways to reduce stress. There are certainly a few things not to do, such as procrastinate. If you have a project or paper assigned early in the semester, get started on it right away. In order to do your best job, you need to spend a lot of time on it. Remember, Rome wasn't built in a day. Also, don't work long hours without rest. Ideally, you should sleep seven to eight hours daily to function properly. One activity that reduces stress is exercise. Whether it be jogging, bicycling, basketball, racquetball, swimming, or a daily walk, make sure you make time to exercise. Remember, to help reduce stress, don't procrastinate, get plenty of rest, and exercise regularly." - By Gary Grant

VISUALIZATION and Relaxation: "When the pressure seems to be getting to you, don't panic. Try one of these instant stress relievers. Take six deep breaths. Slowly breathe through your nose and out your mouth. Visit the Bahamas or any other pleasant place through your imagination. Visualize the scene in detail. Hug someone. Four hugs every day will do a lot to calm you down. Change your scene. Walk to the window, watch the birds, take a stroll down the hall. Go outside and breathe deeply for two minutes. Exercise and stretching will improve your mind. Jog up the staircase. Find something or someone who will make you laugh. Stress can often come from taking yourself or your task too seriously. Ask yourself what is the worst possible thing that could happen if you made a mistake or missed the deadline. Lastly, change your focus. Think about your out of class life and focus on what you'll do this weekend or this evening." - By Barbara Kantz

PERSONAL MAINTENANCE: "We all know the importance of maintaining a car. We can push it to the limit, but sooner or later it starts to run poorly. By setting aside some time for a little maintenance, we can keep it running smoothly and efficiently. Unfortunately, we tend to forget these simple truths when they're applied to college life. We push ourselves to keep up with demands and ignore warning signs such as decreased productivity and a negative attitude. We fail to recognize that some time spent on rest and relaxation may actually save time in the long run. People often notice that their mood improves and they work more effectively after taking a break. Personal maintenance may include very simple and inexpensive activities such as taking a walk in the snow, having dinner with a friend, or listening to some favorite music. So take a little time out today to do something fun and relaxing -- your system just might run a little smoother tomorrow." - By Gary LaBine

SELF-IMPOSED BARRIERS: "Have you ever thought about the influence of the person you see in the mirror? It takes a mature person to honestly evaluate themselves. It takes a strong person to recognize self-imposed barriers and to do something about them. Some of us have told ourselves or were told by others that we didn't possess the qualities of a good student. It then becomes easy to quit trying and to stay in groups that mock things like good study habits, regular reading in the library, and shooting for the best you can do. This is an understandable coping response, but we have to be willing to reassess ourselves. These are things that influence who we will be in the future, how we feel about ourselves, and the opportunities we will have. Cast aside those behaviors that make school unnecessarily harder and limit your potential. Start today." - By Roy Shinn

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