

College 101: Ways of Reducing and Managing Stress For the College Student

Challenge Negative Thoughts

Recognize the role your own thoughts can play in causing you distress. Challenge beliefs you may hold about yourself and your situation that may not be accurate. For example, do you continuously fall short of what you think you “should” accomplish? When our minds continually feed us messages about what we “*should*” achieve, “*ought*” to be, or “*mustn’t*” do, we are setting ourselves up to fall short of goals that may be unrealistic.

Sleep

Try to go to sleep and wake up around the same time every day. Between the ages of 18 and 21, it is recommended that you sleep 7-9 hours per night. *Sleep deprivation* can cause many physical and mental problems and can increase stress.

Limit Caffeine

Limit the use of stimulants which can elevate the stress response in your body.

Start a Journal

Many people find journaling to be helpful for managing stress, understanding emotions, and making decisions and changes in their lives.

Avoid Procrastination

Putting off assignments until the last minute can create more mental and physical stress than staying on top of them. Procrastination can affect many aspects of daily life, such as quality of your work, the quality of your sleep, and your mood.

Exercise Regularly

Physical activity can help you burn off the energy generated by stress

Goal Setting

Pick specific and *attainable goals* for yourself. We would all like to say that we will study every day for 5 hours. However, this goal may not be realistic. Instead, set a goal that you will study 2 hours, taking a 10 minute break in between. When you are able to accomplish this goal, reward yourself with your favorite treat, like frozen yogurt, to congratulate yourself for a job-well-done.

Time Management

Balancing your schedule is an important part of managing stress.

Plan Leisure Activities

Plan leisure activities to break up your schedule.

Pace Yourself

Pace yourself throughout the day, taking regular breaks from studying. During breaks from class, studying or work, spend time walking outdoors, listen to music or just sit quietly, to clear and calm your mind.

Seek Support

Seek the support of friends, family, tutors and professors. Challenge negative cognitions that seeking help is a form of weakness.