Ahhh! I’ve got a test tomorrow, a paper due Wednesday, and a book to finish by Thursday night! When am I supposed to go out and have some fun? And all those meetings! Office hours too! How am I supposed to juggle all of this?

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Does this sound familiar to you? If so, then you are not alone. We all know that being a student in college can be particularly stressful. It is important to remember to take time out of your busy schedule for yourself.

Stress isn’t always such a bad thing. Stress is the body’s natural reaction to danger or threatening conditions. When we are under stress our blood pressure rises, adrenaline is released, and the circulatory system shifts blood away from the extremities, causing your hands and feet to become cold. This “fight or flight” reaction is how the body prepares itself for a dangerous situation. Relaxation reverses these physiological processes and makes you feel a whole lot better!

You cannot do much good to help and take care of others if you don’t take care of yourself

When we are under stress, we lose the ability to concentrate on the task at hand. We waste a lot of energy which could be channeled into more constructive and productive things. But how do we prevent too much stress from building up? Well, Benjamin Franklin definitely knew what he was talking about when he said, “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” Believe it or not, there are ways to reduce the amount of stress in your life. Here are a few tips on how to stop stress before it starts:

- **Time Management.** Need more be said? The biggest source of stress for many people is the inability to manage their time effectively. It’s a skill that’s worthwhile to know. See your workshop handouts on how to manage your time more effectively.
- **Don’t procrastinate!** Easier said than done, right? However, the main source of stress for many people is procrastination. If it needs to get done, as Nike says, just do it.
- **Make a “To Do” list** and keep it in a visible or easily accessible place. Refer to it often, and cross things off as you get them done. It feels good to get things done.
- **Sleep.** Sleep is good. Studies have shown that the average adult needs at least 7 hours of it each night to be fully functional the next day. When we don’t sleep, our body hasn’t had time to rest and recover from the day. It also hasn’t had time to renew itself for the next day. Another source of stress is not being well rested. So, be good to yourself. Sleep.
- **Eat.** Make sure that you eat balanced meals. You cannot exist on caffeine and sugar alone. Make sure you eat a good balance of proteins, carbohydrates, fruits and veggies and all that good fun stuff. Your body will thank you for it later.
- **Exercise.** This doesn’t necessarily mean that you have to go and do an intensive workout. Even brisk walking will do. Not only is exercise good for keeping you in shape, it also lowers your blood pressure, and gives you more energy. You will feel refreshed.
- **Avoid the “Superman/Wonder Woman” syndrome.** You cannot take on every responsibility or obligation that comes your way. You cannot do everything. Realize your limitations. You are only human. Don’t bite off more than you can chew. LEARN TO SAY NO.
Stress Prevention, Management, and Relaxation

But...what if I’ve done all those things? Well, nothing is foolproof, so if you are still suffering the slings and arrows of a stress-filled existence here are some tips on how to keep your sanity and relax:

1. Lie down on a flat surface, with your arms at your sides. Starting with your feet, and moving all the way up to your head, tighten each group of muscles, one at a time, as tight as you can for a count of 20, and then relax them. Let your body go limp. It feels good, trust me.

2. Take a deep breath and hold it for a count of 10. Slowly exhale and let your body go limp.

3. Think about a place you would rather be: a beach, the lake, the woods. Think about what kinds of things you would do there.

4. Talk to a friend you know is a great listener. Talking about what’s causing your stress won’t make it magically disappear, but it will relieve it somewhat.

5. Spontaneity is a good thing. You can’t always schedule fun, because then it’s not fun, is it? Goof off every once in a while.

6. Always have something to look forward to. It’s always nice to know that there is something fun waiting for you.

7. Make sure you have some “me” time every day. Do not schedule work during this time. Do something fun that you enjoy, like reading, going for a walk, going for a drive, talking with friends, whatever. Just take time out for yourself.

8. Exercise. It’s a refreshing, energy-replenishing activity. And it’s good for you too.

9. Help someone else. If you are worried about yourself, often helping someone else relieves that worry.

10. Have a hobby or an activity that you can do which will demand your full attention, so that you can forget about work, school or other sources of stress.

CHECK OUT MORE ACADEMIC RESOURCES ON OUR WEBSITE:

http://studentsuccess.louisiana.edu/tutoringresources