

Stress Management

Stress Test!

Stress Warning Signals

College is one of the most stressful times in anyone's life. Anyone who has had three finals in one day is well aware of the negative effects of stress. Listed below are some of the warning signals of stress (see if you have any, or all of these symptoms!):

- **Physical Signs – Check which symptoms apply to you!**

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Headaches | <input type="checkbox"/> Stiff neck/shoulders |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Backaches | <input type="checkbox"/> Eye strain |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Muscle fatigue | <input type="checkbox"/> Pounding heart |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insomnia | <input type="checkbox"/> Rashes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Oversleeping | <input type="checkbox"/> Constipation/diarrhea |

- **Physical Disorders Related to Stress**

Coronary heart disease, heart attack, high blood pressure, diabetes, eczema, asthma, chronic bronchitis, sinusitis, allergies, ulcers, colitis.

What are your symptoms: _____

- **Common Emotional Disorders**

Alcoholism, drug abuse, depression, suicide, marriage/family problems, sexual dysfunction, neurotic behavior, psychosis, compulsive behavior.

What are your symptoms: _____

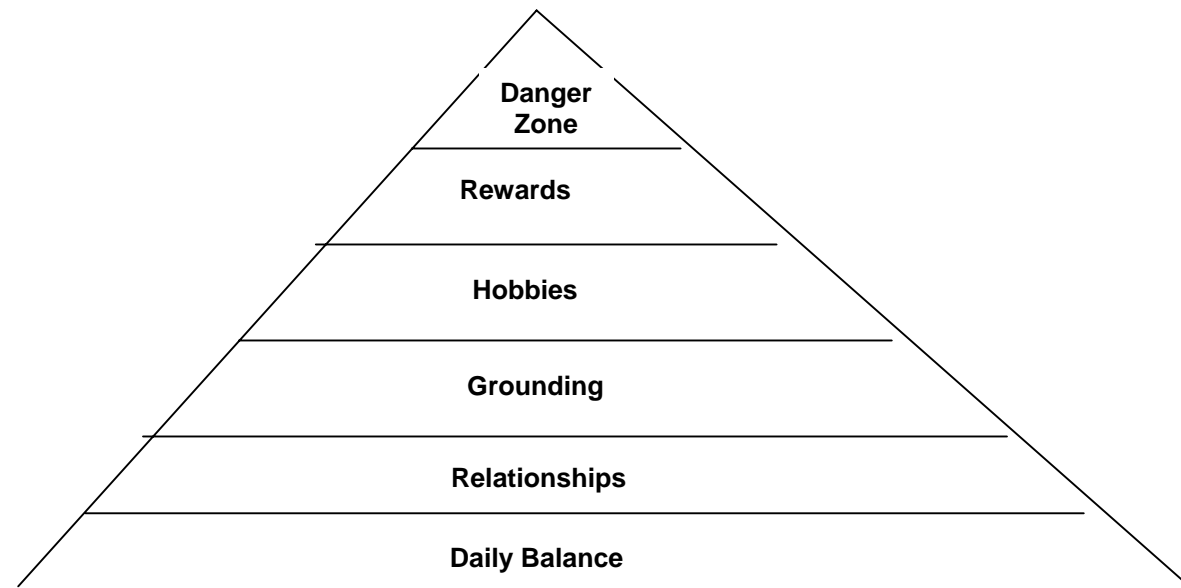
- **Emotional Signs of Stress**

Excessive preoccupation with ideas or people, increased absences, crying episodes, withdrawal, mood swings, nightmares, sudden angry outbursts, impulsive behavior.

What are your symptoms: _____

As you can see, stress can seriously impact both your physical and emotional well being. When the body is under stress our most vulnerable parts begin to malfunction. Consider how many people get sick during finals week because they are very stressed.

Levels of the Stress Pyramid



!!!Danger Zone!!!: Unhealthy behaviors (overeating, alcohol and drug abuse, withdrawing from other, pessimism etc.) provide only temporary and ineffective stress relief and may result in further complications.

Rewards: Treating yourself well includes allowing quiet time, bubble baths, massages, anything that reminds you to take time out for you.

Hobbies: Regular, meaningful involvement in activities for enjoyment provides recreation, an outlet for stress, and a sense of stimulation

Grounding: A sense of connection and purpose in life – this can be multidimensional and may include meditation, spending time outside with nature, participating in religious activities, or journaling.

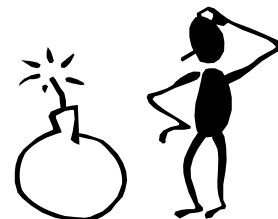
Relationships: Relationships with family, friends, and colleagues, provide support and allow for opportunities for socializing and communication. It's important to have at least a couple of people in your life with which you can openly communicate your feelings and frustrations.

Daily Balance: Healthy eating habits, adequate sleep, and sufficient physical activity promote a strong body and a healthy outlook – both valuable tools in combating stress.

Tips for Dealing With Stress

1. **Recognize your symptoms of stress.**
2. **Look at your lifestyle and see what can be changed** -- in your work situation, your family situation, or your schedule.
3. **Use relaxation techniques** - yoga, mediation, deep breathing, or massage
4. **Exercise** - Physical activity is one of the most effective stress remedies around!
5. **Time management** - Do essential tasks and prioritize the others. Consider those who may be affected by your decisions, such as family and friends. Use a checklist so you will receive satisfaction as you check off each job as it is done.
6. **Watch your diet** - Alcohol, caffeine, sugar, fats and tobacco all put a strain on your body's ability to cope with stress. A diet with a balance of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and foods high in protein but low in fat will help create optimum health. Contact your local branch of the Heart and Stroke Foundation for further information about healthy eating.
7. **Get enough rest and sleep.**
 1. **Talk with others** - Talk with friends, professional counselors, support groups or relatives about what is bothering you.
9. **Help Others**-Volunteer work can be an effective and satisfying stress reducer.
10. **Get away for awhile** - Read a book, watch a movie, play a game, listen to music or go on vacation. Leave yourself some time that's just for you.
11. **Work off your anger** - Get physically active, dig in the garden, start a project, get your spring-cleaning done.
12. **Give in occasionally** - Avoid quarrels whenever possible.
13. **Tackle one thing at a time** - Don't try to do too much at once.
14. **Don't try to be perfect.**
15. **Ease up on criticism of others.**
16. **Don't be too competitive.**
17. **Make the first move to be friendly.**

**Don't be a time bomb
waiting to go off!!**



Alleviating Stress

“Re-Lax” Breathing

Breathe slowly and steadily. As you inhale, silently say "re" and as you exhale, silently say "lax". This exercise should be done for five to ten minutes.

Isometric Arm Reliever

Pull or push for a few seconds with each hand against a desk, a doorway, or another immovable object. Relax for a few seconds. Repeat several times. Notice the release of muscle tension during each rest interval.

Self-Massage

Use your fingertips or cupped hands to massage your facial muscles. This can also be done to your neck, shoulders, arm, and hands.

Dot of Light

Take an imaginary white dot of light and place it on various parts of your body, one at a time. Focus on each part as the "light" touches it. Let it relax as you focus on it.

Six Second Quieting Response

Draw a long, deep breath. Hold for two to three seconds. Exhale long, slowly, and completely. As you exhale, let your jaw and shoulders drop. Feel the relaxation flow into your arms and hands. Can be done with eyes open or closed, alone or with others.

Mountain Breathing

Take a slow, deep breath in through your nose while counting to four. Hold the breath in for two to three counts, and then exhale through your mouth for four counts. When you exhale, really push the air out, making a "whooshing" sound. The counting of breaths forms a sort of mountain (four counts up the mountain, three counts resting at the top and four counts down).

Walking Meditation

The combination of counting, breathing, and walking focuses your attention on the present, relaxing your body and clearing your mind. Start walking until you hit your normal, comfortable stride. Notice about how many steps you are taking between breaths. Establish a pattern of always taking a certain number of steps

and then breathing in. The same number of steps, then breathing out. For example: 1-2-3 – inhale – 5-6-7 – exhale.