

Sources of Academic Stress

- Course load
- Commuting to school
- Living situation
- Time management
- Not enough time for everything
- Meeting expectations of others
- Multiple priorities
- Not having good study skills
- Procrastination
- Advocating for yourself

Ways to Reduce Academic Stress

Take a look at your course load. For every hour you are in class you should be studying 2-3 hours outside of class. This is a lot of time studying if you are taking 18 credit hours a semester. This kind of course load can overwhelm you very quickly if you have other challenges throughout the semester. Work your way up to more credits when you become more comfortable with studying techniques.

Make sure you always go to class. Class time can provide you with lecture notes to fill in the gaps in what you read, some extra ideas of what may be on the exam, class discussions to give you deeper information on what you are learning, and time to speak with your professor – the best source for information.

Learn how to study more effectively. Even if you are studying 24/7, if you are not doing it effectively then you may be causing yourself more stress. Find out what your learning preference is and use some tips to get started on some study techniques that could work for you.

Reduce your non-academic commitments. It is easy to lose focus on academics when you have so many other commitments that may seem more fun than studying. If you aren't successful in your classes, you won't be able to do any of the extra activities anyway. Prioritize what is the most important to you in times when stress is high and learn how to say "No".

Use your resources! The best way to reduce academic stress is by getting the help you need when you need it. There are peer tutors, professors, study groups, and professional staff on campus that can help you when you are challenged with academic stress.

Practice the “Three Cs” Of Stress Relief

Consequences: every decision you make has consequences. Think them through before making life-altering changes or decisions.

Change: things change every day. Before making life-altering choices, step back and think about the thing that is causing you stress. Will it still be a cause of stress tomorrow?

Cooperation: you don't have to do it alone! Ask for help!

Short Term Coping Strategies

- ✓ Take a break when you need one
- ✓ Take some deep breaths and slow down
- ✓ Relax your body by stretching your muscles
- ✓ Take a mental break by using visual imagery
- ✓ Keep your sense of perspective by asking yourself: Is this really worth getting upset about?

Long Term Coping Strategies

- ✓ Learning time management skills and using a daily planner
- ✓ Learning how to get organized
- ✓ Learning good study skills
- ✓ Balancing life with exercising, getting enough rest, and eating well so your body has the energy it needs
- ✓ Having a good support network
- ✓ Finding your motivation and setting your own goals
- ✓ Not trying to please others and live up to their expectations
- ✓ Giving up having to be perfect
- ✓ Learning how to think rationally and optimistically
- ✓ Using resources available on campus as soon as you begin to experience academic difficulty

Resources

Academic stress and challenges: Center for Student Learning (Addlestone Library, 953-5635), your major assigned Advisor, or Undergraduate Academic Services (2nd floor of the Lightsey Center, 953-5674)

Personal stress and challenges: Counseling and Substance Abuse Services (RSS Building, 953-5640)