

# The Stress Management Mambo

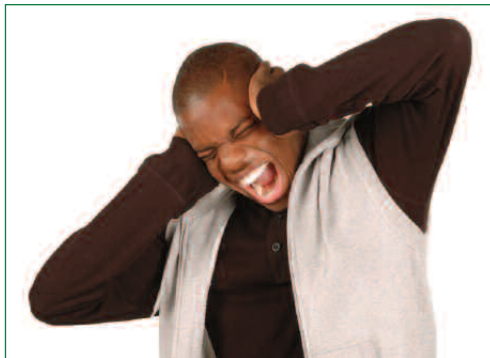
Not all types of stress are bad. Positive stress can add anticipation and excitement to our lives – and humans tend to thrive under an appropriate amount of stress.

So, as deadlines, programs, presentations, and papers pile up, the goal isn't necessarily to eliminate stress. It's more about learning to manage your stress in order to keep things balanced. Here's how...

## Keep Your Physical Health in Check

- Exercise for fitness three to four times a week. You'll sleep better and work more efficiently.
- Eat well-balanced, nutritious meals. Don't skip meals; it's not good for your mind or body.
- Avoid nicotine, excessive caffeine, and other stimulants. The high only results in a low feeling later.

■ Mix leisure with work. Take breaks when you can. Make sure you aren't working for five hours straight—you need a break for food and fun. But make sure you don't break for five hours either!



- Get enough sleep. Be as consistent with your schedule as you can. Sleep is like food for the brain – it impacts your alertness and mood.

## Keep Your Emotional Side Healthy

- Take time to speak to and spend time with friends. Don't neglect your social needs.
- Don't bottle things up inside—talk with a friend, a counselor, or someone else you trust.
- Do things that you enjoy, not just the things you feel you "should" do!

## Keep Yourself Relaxed

- Take deep breaths and try to relax your muscles. The calming rhythm of your breathing automatically lowers blood pressure and soothes sore muscles.
- Before you go to bed clear your head, by either making a list on paper or just sorting things in your mind.
- If you are typing on a computer a lot, give your eyes a rest every 30 minutes. Look around the room or out the window to stretch the muscles and then close your eyes for a few minutes just to relax them.
- Get up and walk around, stretch your arms and back when you start to feel a little weary.

## Take Breaks and Let Yourself Have Fun

- Allow yourself some time to joke around. Laugh with friends, read a funny story, or turn on the Comedy Channel now and then.
- Get together with friends to work on a project. It can be fun to work together and you'll get things done in the process!
- Is there a comedian in the Student Center? You don't have to stay the whole time. But go have a laugh. Laughter and smiling calm muscles and release positive endorphins into the brain.

## Other Keys to Stress Management

- ▲ If you're overwhelmed by something at night, tell yourself, "It'll be better in the morning." It often is.
- ▲ Do tasks in between things—always have a textbook with you when you have 45 minutes between classes or are waiting at the doctor's office.
- ▲ Say "no" when you're unable to squeeze another task into your day. You can't do it all—and that is perfectly okay!