

Stress!

What happens when I am stressed?

We all have experienced stress in our lives in one way or another. Certain times, factors in your life may seem out of control and you may feel “*stressed out*” or you may *break down*. The first thing you need to consider in these times is that a certain level of stress is normal. You may just need to take some time to *chill out* or overcome a stressful situation.

When you are stressed, your body responds as though you are in danger. It makes hormones that speed up your heart, make you breathe faster, and give you a burst of energy. This is called the “fight-or-flight” stress response.

Some stress is normal and even useful. It can help if you need to work hard or react quickly. For example, it can help you win a race or finish an important job on time.

But if stress happens too often or lasts too long, it can have bad effects. It can give you headaches, an upset stomach, back pain, or trouble sleeping. It can weaken your immune system, making it harder to fight off disease. If you already have a health problem, stress may make it worse. It can make you moody, tense, or depressed. Your relationships may suffer, and you may not do well at work or school.

The good news and bad news.

The bad news is, for the rest of your life, situations will arise that will cause stress. The good news is, you can learn to cope, manage and control your reactions to stressful situations.

- The first thing you need to do is figure out what is causing your stress. This answer may be simple, such as the number of classes you are taking or the loss of a loved one. If you are overwhelmed, however, it may not be clear what is causing your stress.
- Prioritize your stressors. Make a list (even if it is only in your head) of what is bothering you. Can you change the situation? If you can’t, acknowledge that some things are out of your control. While some things are really troubling, such as death and illness, remind yourself that these things happen and people react in different ways. Remember it is ok to cry and seek professional help if you need it.
- Try to get some things you can control out of the way. Write that paper or do homework ahead of time so you aren’t waiting until the last minute.

How can I reduce my stress?

Stress is a fact of life for most people. While you may not be able to get rid of stress, you can look for ways to lower it.

Try some of these ideas:

- Learn better ways to manage your time. You may get more done with less stress if you make a schedule. Think about which things are most important, and do those first. Even if you only keep a loose schedule, it is better than no schedule at all, make sure to keep track of your commitments without trying to do too much.
- Find better ways to cope. Look at how you have been dealing with stress. Be honest about what works and what does not. Think about other things that might work better.
- Take good care of yourself. Get plenty of rest. Eat a balanced diet and exercise moderately. Limit nicotine and alcohol consumption.
- Try out new ways of thinking. When you find yourself starting to worry, try to stop the thoughts. Work on letting go of things you cannot change. Learn to say “no.”



- Ask for help. People who have a strong network of family and friends manage stress better. Sometimes stress is just too much to handle alone. It can help to talk to a friend or family member, but you may also want to see a counselor.

How can I relieve stress?

You will feel better if you can find ways to get stress out of your system. The best ways to relieve stress are different for each person. Try some of these ideas to see which ones work for you:

- Exercise. Regular exercise is one of the best ways to manage stress. Walking is a great way to get started.
- Write. It can really help to write about the things that are bothering you.
- Let your feelings out. Talk, laugh, cry, and express anger when you need to.
- Take time for yourself. You don't need to be around other people all the time. Set aside some time to relax.
- Do something you enjoy. A hobby can help you relax. Volunteer work or work that helps others can be a great stress reliever.
- Learn ways to relax your body. This can include breathing exercises, muscle relaxation exercises, massage, aromatherapy, yoga, or relaxing exercises like tai chi and qi gong.
- Try to look for the humor in life. Laughter really can be the best medicine.

Some fun activities that you may not have thought of...

- Play. Kids seem to never have stress. Get outside and play a game of kickball or Frisbee. Or break out your favorite board game or even pick up some crayons and color.
- Pamper yourself. Have a couple of friends over for facials or pedicures.
- Play a pick-up game of basketball or get a group together and play football.
- Have *SEX*. Safe sex can be a great stress reliever. If you don't have anyone to help you out... remember you can do it yourself!
- Be goofy. Put on some music and dance around. Have people over and play dress up.
- Indulge every once in a while without feeling guilty. Eat your favorite food or buy something new for yourself.

Stress Resources on Campus.

Counseling Center

Find someone who will listen to you. But remember to call first to set up an appointment.

312-996-3490
2010 SSB 1200 W. Harrison

Campus Recreation

Here you can work-out, get a massage (for really cheap) or just chill out in the huge hot tub.

312-413-5150
737 S. Halsted

Academic Center for Excellence

You can find academic support here. Also remember you can go to your college advisor to help schedule the best classes for you.

312-413-0031
2981 SSB 1200 W. Harrison

And of Course... The Wellness Center.

Grab a brochure or ask some questions. Get some condoms.

312-413-2120 237 SCE 750 S. Halsted



Student Center East 750 S. Halsted St, Rm 237, phone: 312-413-2120