

# Stressed Out?

College students are always stressed for some reason or another. Though for many it can be used as an excuse to not finish tasks or fulfill obligations, for others it is a legitimate problem that needs to be acknowledged and treated.

Take a look at the following questions. If you answer “yes” to more than a few of them, reevaluate your priorities and how you manage your time.

1. Do you feel tired all the time or have trouble sleeping? Do you find yourself worrying about small, insignificant details while trying to fall asleep?
2. Do you have a hard time relaxing or feel unable to relax?
3. Do you forget things all the time, like assignments or appointments?
4. Are you frequently angry and tired at the end of the day? Do you feel you have to take a nap as soon as you come home from class?
5. Do you always feel under pressure or that you're not working hard enough?
6. Do you argue all the time, even about minor things? Have your friends or peers noticed that you are moody?
7. Can you never find time for yourself?
8. Do you no longer want to socialize with others?
9. Do you lack patience and feel others are always wrong?
10. Do people often tell you that you seem tense or upset?

## Quick Fixes to Physical Effects of Stress

*4 things in 5 minutes...  
Four Quick Tips for Relaxing on the Spot*

1. **Breathe deeply** - take several deep breaths to slow down your heart rate and reduce anxiety.
2. **Relax your muscles** - stretch your neck, stand or sit up straight, get some of the tension out of your body.
3. **Make a change** - step back from what you're doing and/or what's stressing you; a few seconds can bring a lot of perspective.
4. **Laugh** - nothing relieves the tension in your body, or your mind, like a little humor.

## Strategies for Stress Management:

1. Stick with people whom you enjoy and who support you.
2. Learn and practice relaxation or meditation skills.
3. Exercise! Vigorous physical exercise relieves stress.
4. Don't let one aspect of your life dominate others, for example, sports, schoolwork, relationships, or a job.
5. Take responsibility for your life and your feelings.
6. Regulate your diet and sleep habits. Practice healthy eating habits and get enough sleep. (See the *Sleep* flyer.)
7. If/when you decide to drink or smoke, be in control of it and DO NOT let those activities become controlling habits.
8. Avoid the use of sleeping pills, tranquilizers, caffeine pills, and other drugs to control stress.
9. Protect your personal freedoms and space. Do you what you want and feel, but respect the rights of others. Don't tell others what to do, but if they intrude into your life, let them know.
10. Find a time and place each day where you can have complete privacy. Take time off from others and pressures. Short time-outs during the day can help improve efficient functioning the rest of the day.
11. Don't drift along in troublesome and stressful situations or relationships. Take action to change rather than trying to avoid the problem. Taking chances is the key to emotional wellbeing.
12. Surround yourself with positive people and influences. Don't let negativity or criticism influence you.
13. Review your obligations from time to time and make sure they are still good for you. If they're not, let them go.
14. Open yourself to new experiences. Try new things, new foods, and new places.
15. When worries start to build up, talk to someone. Your academic advisor, faculty advisor, or the counseling center would be happy to help.

## Helpful Resources:

- Your academic advisor is always available for advice on time management (410-516-8216, [www.jhu.edu/~advising](http://www.jhu.edu/~advising))
- The Counseling Center is available to help or just listen (410-516-8278, [www.jhu.edu/counselingcenter](http://www.jhu.edu/counselingcenter))
- Helpful websites:
  - <http://mtstcil.org/skills/stress-intro.html>
  - <http://www.uhs.uga.edu/stress/>
  - <http://www-psych.stanford.edu/%7Epinto/stress.html>