

Stress at college

Stress among college students can negatively affect academic performance, personal relationships, and overall well-being. However, stress can have positive effects if managed properly.

We all encounter the stresses of daily life, and college students in particular struggle with the adjustment to busy schedules and deadlines related to overwhelming courses and exams. The continuous pressure to achieve quick results during our early years of adulthood leads to college student stress, anxiety, and mental health challenges.

Many college students ignore signs of stress and as a result experience a range of physical, emotional, and behavioral symptoms. Increased heart rate or blood pressure, headaches, or fatigue, for example, commonly strain our physical states. The psychological perception of pressure, on the other hand, influences our emotional reactions to unexpected situations.

Significant life events often lead to increased stress levels. However, among college students the causes are often much more subtle. A heavy workload, public speaking, or long work or study hours can lead to hostile behavior and tense reactions to unexpected situations.

By understanding the individual causes of stress, students can better prepare themselves for the academic challenges that lay ahead. College students should consider these tips in effort to reduce stress.

Improve your time management. Instead of focusing on your to-do list each day, focus on the free hour you have before your next class, or the time you can gain from completing a task ahead of schedule. We often push things off until the last minute under the perception that our busy schedules don't leave us enough time. However, what you can do to counter this procrastination is to make things bite size, break up tasks into more manageable sections. Make a designated space for work that isn't your bed. Use a planner to block sections of time throughout your day, but make sure to leave time for yourself to socialize and relax.

Try to think positively. What if you actually scored an A on the exam you thought you failed? Just as easily as your mind imagines the worst-case scenario, it can be trained to imagine the positive. When we experience stress, we tend to interpret situations negatively. Pay attention to these reactions and avoid the unexpected by getting an early start to your day. If you still notice yourself thinking negatively, pause for a second, and try not to engage in those thoughts.

Daily or weekly exercise routines will help balance your mental and physical reactions to life's stresses. According to one study, 85% of college students reported feeling overwhelmed at some point in the previous year by everything they had to do; and 41.6% stated anxiety as the most pressing concern among sleep, improving your mood, and boosting your energy. Try 60 minutes of light walking, or 30 minutes of high intensity exercise. Sign up for yoga, join a gym, go climbing. Keep the routines interesting by combining different variations of cardio with muscle-building throughout the week. Take good care of your body each day. Eating right, exercising and getting enough sleep help your body handle stress much better.

By understanding the symptoms of stress we can learn to detect when the stress is a positive boost and when it is weighing us down. Managing your stress and your health will prepare you for the unknown situations and reward you with an exciting and engaging college experience.

The author thinks that students suffer from stress physically because they...

1. ...have heart problems.
2. ...are often too emotional.

3. ...fail to pay attention to stress signs.
4. ...come across unexpected situations.