



# Stress Less

Stress can cause everything from pimples on your face to a heart attack. That's why learning how to manage your stress is so important. College is stressful, and so is life; if you learn to manage your stress during college, you will carry those skills over into the rest of your life as well.

- ☺ **Be aware** of the things that tend to make you feel stressed: money, tests, health, deadlines.
- ☺ **Pay attention** to how stress tends to affect you: headaches, nausea, depression, muscle tension.
- ☺ Once you've become aware of your stressors and how they affect you, work on recognizing those things when they come on. As soon as you start to feel stress, remind yourself of things that help you **relax**, then do them.
- ☺ Often when we are stressed, the thoughts that run through our minds are negative and tend to increase our stress. Instead of allowing these thoughts, **transform negative thoughts into positive thoughts**.
- ☺ **Practice deep breathing** exercises. Make your breath slow and steady and focus on making your inhale as long as your exhale. Count to 8 (or as close as you can get to it) on your inhale, then make your exhale equally as long. Repeat this as many times as necessary to slow your heart rate and become more relaxed.
- ☺ Get up and **stretch your muscles** to increase the blood flow to the parts of your body that feel tense.
- ☺ Take a walk. Go work out. **Exercise** is a great tension releaser.
- ☺ **Develop supportive relationships**. When you're stressed and need to talk to someone about it, find someone you feel comfortable with and let it out. Don't hold in your feelings; doing so can allow negativity and emotions to build up, making them seem worse.
- ☺ Sometimes in order to feel accomplished, you have to **lower your expectations**. Success is a journey, not a destination.
- ☺ Try to **find a balance** between work, school, family, personal time, and socializing.
- ☺ **Eat well!**
- ☺ Make sure you **get plenty of rest**. Remember that it's best to keep your body on a regular sleep schedule. Go to bed at the same time every day and get up at the same time every day.
- ☺ **Learn to laugh**, especially at yourself.
- ☺ Reduce "either/or" thinking. Remember that there are always **alternatives** to explore. Write them down, talk them over with a trusted friend.
- ☺ Keep in mind that **some stress is inevitable**. Some stress is good. But also keep in mind that one of the keys to being successful is knowing how to manage your stress on a daily basis. Learn how stress typically affects you and develop a stress management plan.