



It's spring time! The flowers are blooming, the birds are singing and stress is in the air. That's what spring looks like on campus! With just a couple more weeks until the end of the semester students are starting to feel nervous!

Some stress is good, that nervousness you feel before a big event can actually help you to do your best. On the other hand reacting to every event in an anxious way can cause chronic stress where your body adapts to reacting continuously in a "Fight or Flight" mode. When this happens it might feel like even the little annoyances of daily life are overwhelmingly stressful. So where ever you are on the stress spectrum here are some key tips to manage the stress in a healthy way.

**First**, recognize the signs and symptoms of stress. Everyone reacts to stress differently so it helps to be aware of how stress looks and feels to you and then intervene with healthy stress management tips.

Common Signs and Symptoms:

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|-----------------|--------------------|
| Muscle tension  | Sleep problems     |
| Headaches       | Fatigue            |
| Fast heart rate | Cold sweat         |
| Short temper    | Anxiety            |
| Apathy          | Poor concentration |
| Clenched jaw    | Stomach issues     |

**Second**, be aware of situations that add to stressful feelings. Not eating or sleeping on a schedule can increase stress levels. Other situations could involve relationship conflicts, unsatisfactory living conditions, demanding schedule and health issues. After analyzing situations that aggravate stress see if you can change some of these stressors. If there is nothing

you can do to change the situation can you change your attitude? Reframing or accepting the situation in a more positive light can help with your perceptions of stress.

**Third**, intentionally manage the stressful feelings in a healthy way. The stress might not go away but doing something productive and healthy can help you feel less overwhelmed.

### Tips to Healthy Management of Stress

**Breathe** - Inhale slowly through your nose and exhale slowly and quietly through your mouth. Creating a rhythmic breathing pattern for just a couple of minutes can affect how you feel for hours to come. Self-guided biofeedback techniques, such as Relaxation Station located in the lobby of WHPS, can teach you how to master slow, coherent breathing. Come in and try this free service.

**Stretch** – Get up! Breathe in and reach your hands up into the air. Exhale slowly and bend over touching your fingers to your toes. Repeat three times. Taking time to loosen up the body will help with mental tension as well as physical.

**Exercise** – Whether it's doing a spin class at the RWC or going on a nature walk in the Arboretum, any form of exercise will release the buildup of stress and anxiety.

**Eat clean** – You are what you eat. Eating fresh, organic food is going to give you the energy you need to do well through finals! If you haven't checked out WHPS garden at the Arboretum now is a great time to stop by. Any volunteers that help out during the spring harvest are welcome to take home some of the produce they picked!

**Sleep** – Try and stay on a sleep schedule that works for you. This is hard to do because most college students don't have a set schedule with class, work and social activities constantly changing. Getting enough sleep is going to help you to be more productive and ultimately feel less stressed. Sleep is especially hard during finals week so take advantage of the Nap stations that the 24 hour Study Union will have available.

**Laugh** – Have some fun! Nothing beats stress like a good old belly laugh. Finals feels like crunch time but making space to laugh with friends or watch a funny video on You Tube can relieve pressure and help you stay focused.

**Good luck and have a safe, healthy summer break!**