

Top 10 Stress Management Techniques for Students

By Elizabeth Scott

Most students experience significant amounts of stress, and this stress can take a significant toll on health, happiness, and grades.

Stress can affect health-related behaviors like sleep patterns, diet, and exercise as well, taking a larger toll. Given that nearly half of APA survey respondents reported completing three hours of homework per night in addition to their full day of school work and extracurriculars, this is understandable.

Common sources of student stress include:

- School
- Homework
- Extracurricular activities
- Social challenges
- Transitions (e.g., graduating, moving out, living independently)
- Relationships
- Work

High school students face the intense competitiveness of taking challenging courses, amassing impressive extracurriculars, studying and acing college placement tests, and deciding important and life-changing plans for their future. At the same time, they have to navigate the social challenges inherent to the high school experience.

1- Get Enough Sleep

Students, with their packed schedules, are notorious for missing sleep. Unfortunately, operating in a sleep-deprived state puts you at a distinct disadvantage. You're less productive, you may find it more difficult to learn, and you may even be a hazard behind the wheel.

Don't neglect your sleep schedule. Aim to get at least 8 hours a night and take power naps when you need them.

2 - Practice Visualization

Using guided imagery to reduce stress is easy and effective. Visualizations can help you calm down, detach from what's stressing you, and turn off your body's stress response. You can also use visualizations to prepare for presentations and score higher on tests by vividly seeing yourself performing just as you'd like to.

3. Exercise Regularly

One of the healthiest ways to blow off steam is to get regular exercise. Students can work exercise into their schedules by doing yoga in the morning, walking or biking to campus, or reviewing for tests with a friend while walking on a treadmill at the gym. Starting now and keeping a regular exercise practice throughout your lifetime can help you live longer and enjoy your life more.

4. Take Calming Breaths

When your body is experiencing a stress response, you're often not thinking as clearly as you could be. A quick way to calm down is to practice breathing exercises. These can be done virtually anywhere to relieve stress in minutes, and are especially effective for reducing anxiety before or even during tests, as well as during other times when stress feels overwhelming.

5. Practice Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)

Another great stress reliever that can be used during tests, before bed, or at other times when stress has you physically wound up is progressive muscle relaxation (PMR). This technique involves tensing and relaxing all muscles until the body is completely relaxed.

With practice, you can learn to release stress from your body in seconds. This can be particularly helpful for students because it can be adapted to help relaxation efforts before sleep for deeper sleep, something students can always use, or even to relax and reverse test-induced panic before or during a test.

6. Listen to Music

A convenient stress reliever that has also shown many cognitive benefits, music can help you to relieve stress and either calm yourself down or stimulate your mind as your situation warrants. Students can harness the benefits of music by playing classical music while studying, playing upbeat music to "wake up" mentally, or relaxing with the help of their favorite slow melodies.

7. Get Organized

Clutter can cause stress, decrease productivity, and even cost you money. Many students live in a cluttered place, and this can have negative effects on grades. One way to reduce the amount of stress that you experience is to keep a minimalist, soothing study area that's free of distractions and clutter.

This can help lower stress levels, save time in finding lost items, and keep roommate relationships more positive. It can also help students gain a positive feeling about their study area, which helps with test prep and encourages more studying. It's worth the effort.

8. Eat a Healthy Diet

You may not realize it, but your diet can either boost your brainpower or sap you of mental energy. A healthy diet can function as both a stress management technique and a study aid. Improving your diet can keep you from experiencing diet-related mood swings, light-headedness, and more.

9. Use Positive Thinking and Affirmations

Did you know that optimists actually experience better circumstances, in part, because their way of thinking helps to *create* better circumstances in their lives? It's true! The habit of optimism and positive thinking can bring better health, better relationships, and, yes, better grades.

Learn how to train your brain for more positive self-talk and a brighter future with affirmations and other tools for optimism. You can also learn the limitations to affirmations and the caveats of positive thinking so you aren't working against yourself.

10. Use your Fiver Family and Resources

Don't forget that you have unlimited help and support available to you from Fiver. We are here to help you in many different ways and love to catch up with you all! We have resources that can help with school work or other concerns you may be having so don't forget to reach out when you need.