

# Preventing and Managing Stress

Stress is a common issue among both high school and college students. It can be difficult to keep up with more difficult classes, testing, college applications, working, extracurricular activities, and more. **Something to keep in mind is to do your best to take care of yourself and practice healthy habits and behaviors to help you manage your stress.** Stress management techniques can be as simple as watching a funny movie after a study session, taking a walk, taking deep breaths, listening to your favorite music, using a planner to stay organized, spending quality-time with friends, or allowing yourself to read a book on a topic you are interested in outside of your coursework. Take a look at these resources and methods for managing stress, but please note that while helpful for many, the information provided may not be a complete solution for stress management for everyone.

Here are six things you can do to prevent and manage stress:



## #1 Sleep well

14-17 year-olds need to sleep about 8-10 hours daily. 18-25 year-olds need about 7-9 hours daily. Most adults older than 25 still need at least 7 hours of sleep daily. **If you aren't sleeping well, it can be helpful to monitor your sleep with an app!** If you are feeling stressed during the day, it can be helpful to take a nap!



## #2 Eat well

Try to eat nutrient-rich foods. **Eat things which will keep you satisfied— don't forget your proteins!** Omega-3s from fish and vitamins can help boost focus and memory, and prevent depression. Blueberries, dark chocolate, avocado, and leafy greens can boost brain functioning and reduce stress.



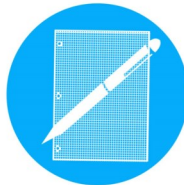
## #3 Stay active

Even just changing a few habits will change your life for the better. Try taking a short walk or the stairs whenever you can! **Exercising a couple times a week for 30 minutes at a time will lead to a better state of mind, and can improve focus!** Meditating, doing yoga, and dancing can also help!



## #4 Build a network

**It might be scary to ask for help, but it's one of the best things you can do for yourself.** Talk to your counselor/advisor/coach. If you can, join a mentorship program! If you aren't comfortable talking to someone, there are online resources which can help.



## #5 Journal

Many people use journaling to think about or gain perspective on things, people, or events that are stressing them. You can also journal about whatever you want! Journaling over time can help you keep track of your goals, understand your mindset at different points in your life, and improve your memory.



## #6 Create something

Creating or making something, whether you do it through painting, writing a song or story, cooking, designing a website, or decorating your home, can be a great way to relieve stress. **Take the pressure off and create something just for fun!**

## Signs or Symptoms of Stress

### Common effects of stress on your body

- Headache
- Muscle tension, stiffness, or pain
- Chest pain
- Fatigue/decreased energy
- Stomachaches or upset stomach
- Sleep problems
- Rapid resting heartbeat

### Common effects of stress on your mood

- Anxiety
- Restlessness
- Lack of motivation or focus
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Irritability or anger
- Sadness or depression
- Lack of self-confidence/Low self-esteem

### Common effects of stress on your behavior

- Overeating or undereating
- Angry outbursts
- Social withdrawal
- Exercising less often
- Putting things off/procrastinating
- Being chronically late

This is a list of common signs and symptoms compiled from resources from the Mayo Clinic, as taken from <https://mayocl.in/2A7UYrK>. If you feel that any of these symptoms apply to you, you may be stressed in your daily life. See the next page for more stress management resources.

The above list of preventative steps are sourced from the American Psychological Association at <https://bit.ly/2PDYI0j> and Prevention Magazine at <https://bit.ly/2RhSUG1>.

## Preventing and Managing Stress (continued)

Organization tips to help prevent or decrease stress:



**#1**

### Create a to-do list

It may seem simple, but creating a to-do list can help you stay motivated! Cross off or check off tasks when you complete them. Break down your big projects into small, bite-sized tasks which seem less intimidating. For example, if you need to write a 5-paragraph essay, your bite-sized task could be to write one paragraph a night for 5 nights.



**#2**

### Use a planner

Get a planner or use a calendar app or website to add in all of your due-dates from the syllabus for each of your classes. Schedule in time to work on specific projects or study for specific tests. Scheduling specific times to do specific tasks can help you be more efficient and keep track of tasks ahead of the due date.



**#3**

### Clean and declutter

Take a break from school work and clean or organize your room, desk, and/or closet! Keeping a clutter-free space can help prevent distraction and creates an environment that makes it easier to focus. Get rid of old knick-knacks, clothing, and documents you no longer need.



**#4**

### Organize your documents

Whether you have physical or digital documents, having an organized filing system helps prevent stress over time. Keep separate folders for your work and school information. Also keep folders for your past resumes and cover letters, college and scholarship application essays, assignments for each class, tax documents and more.



### The value of mindfulness:

The practice of “mindfulness” or “mindfulness meditation” is the action of taking time to be aware of one’s body and surroundings. This is known to help reduce stress. According to Atlantic Magazine, schools and universities, and organizations as widespread as “Google, General Mills, the Seattle Seahawks, and the U.S. military have all embraced mindfulness as a means of boosting performance and productivity” and managing stress. Mindfulness can be as simple as paying attention to what types of things make you feel more or less stressed. Please note that mindfulness might not work for everyone and may simply be a small part of managing stress!

Source: <https://bit.ly/2KleVAL>

### Productivity Apps & Websites:

1. [Evernote](#)
2. [Wunderlist](#)
3. [Google Calendar](#)
4. [MyStudyLife](#)
5. [Habitica](#)
6. [Cold Turkey](#)
7. [SelfControl](#) (Mac)
8. [StayFocused](#)
9. [myHomework](#)

### Stress Management Apps:

1. [Breathr: A Mindfulness App](#)
2. [Stop, Breathe & Think](#)
3. [Calm](#)
4. [InsightTimer](#)
5. [MindShift](#)
6. [Smiling Mind](#)
7. [Headspace](#)
8. [Sleep Better](#)

### Remember:

- It’s okay to be stressed! It’s a normal part of life. Even so, there are techniques you can use to make life a little easier.
- It’s okay to reach out for help!
- You can take control of your situation and learn to cope in a constructive, healthy way.
- Make sure you make time for yourself. Breaks are needed and self-care is important.

### Feeling overwhelmed?

#### Call the Teen Lifeline:

602-248-8336 (for Maricopa County)  
800-248-8336 (Statewide in Arizona)

#### Call the Crisis Response Network:

602-222-9444 (Central Arizona Crisis Line)

#### Talk to your high school or college counselor — or a trusted teacher or professor.

Counselors are your biggest advocate on campus and will help you connect to resources or even help manage your tasks if you’re in over your head. Many colleges have counseling services free of charge — try to take advantage of this while you are in school!

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