

Serenity Now: Ways to De-Stress Your Life

by Stacy Lipson

Stress is inevitable in the college setting. But if you're constantly feeling frazzled or stressed, it may be time to evaluate your daily habits. Over time, chronic stress can have a negative impact on your physical and emotional health. Read these tips to learn more about reducing your stress level.

Health, Fitness, and Emotional Wellness

1. **Do cardio.** According to the American College of Medicine guidelines, healthy adults under the age of 65 should do moderately intense cardio five days a week.
2. **Yoga, anyone?** "Yoga helps you work your whole body and focus on breathing," says Jessica Rose Cohn, graduate student at Rowan University.
3. **Scale to new heights.** Sophomore Tony Wang at the University of Pennsylvania loves to rock climb. "When I start climbing, everything else melts away," says Wang.
4. **Work out.** "Exercise increases serotonin and endorphin production," says Beth Shaw, author of *Yoga Fit*. "This can help students reduce their stress level."
5. **Go to the gym on a regular basis.** According to the American College of Sports Medicine, 30 minutes of exercise a day can prevent weight gain and offer maximum health benefits.
6. **Moderate your alcohol use.** That one's easy!
7. **Visualize achieving your goal.** "Visualizing helps slow you down," says [Jeff Davidson, author of *Simpler Living*](#).
8. **Maintain good posture.** "Sit up in your chair with a tall spine," says Gavin McKay, fitness instructor at Philadelphia-based Fusion Cross Training. "No lying down or slumping back in your chair."
9. **Go for a walk.** "Clear your mind by using walking meditation," says Todd Scott, fitness instructor at Platoon Fitness, Bryn Mawr, Pa. "As you find yourself drifting back toward little details, let it pass," says Scott.
10. **Talk out your feelings.** Venting your concerns can do wonders for the stressed-out soul.
11. **Ask for help.** Take advantage of your college or employee health center, which normally offers a number of free or low-cost sessions with a therapist.
12. **Don't multitask.** "If you find yourself feeling overwhelmed or stressed, allow yourself to concentrate on the task at hand," says Davidson.
13. **Take a mental vacation.** Elizabeth Lombardo, Ph.D. who practices in Wexford, Penn. recommends taking a break by allowing your mind to drift towards a place you'd like to visit.
14. **Attempt pilates.** "I love doing Pilates videos in the privacy of my own room, or at a studio," says Ariela Rose, a Pilates Group Fitness Leader at Vigor Works in Philadelphia.
15. **Hang out with friends.** "I like to de-stress by hanging out with my friends in their dorms," says Ali Greenman, a senior studying human communications at Shippensburg University, Shippensburg, PA.
16. **Pet an animal.** A study by the *Journal of American College Health* found that a pet therapy program could temporarily fill the absence of previous support systems.
17. **Volunteer.** Doing something for someone else can improve your self-esteem and impact someone else's life.
18. **Take frequent breaks.** "You work better when you're refreshed," says Jeannette Samanen, Ph.D. who practices in Philadelphia
19. **Eliminate background distractions.** Davidson recommends turning off electronic devices when you're working to help reduce distractions.
20. **Slow down.** Take time out for yourself. The work will still be there when you get back.



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