

# “Top Ten” Tips for Managing Stress

WLU Counselling Services

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1. Identify your stressors. Some stress will be from sheer busyness or workload; some stress will be from positive change and new experiences in your life, not just negatives. Give yourself credit for taking on some challenging change!
2. Your body can be a stress barometer. If it acts up on you with headaches, gastrointestinal problems, insomnia or other stress clues, don't see those as simply added problems to stress. They may be your body's pointers to a health, lifestyle or stress factors that you can do something about.
3. Take care of yourself: Balanced eating, exercise and sleep are essential for energy and concentration. You have to feed and rest your body to feed and rest your brain.
4. Practice good time management. Use a “To Do” list if it helps to organize your priorities for your day or week. But if you always get discouraged later by what you didn't do - the glass half empty - then a “To Done” list at the end of the day recording what you **did** do (even partially) will show the glass half full.
5. Reward yourself by taking quality breaks. Balance schoolwork (and other commitments) with the “**3 R's**”: Rest, Relaxation, and Relationships.
6. Find your own stress-coping truths. For example, “I can only do the best I can right now, regardless of what I did or didn't do yesterday.
7. Adjust your perspective of the situation. Remember that you will learn something from any mistakes or disappointments you encounter.
8. When you feel overwhelmed, remember to breathe or to find a truly comfortable *breathing space* in your life. You may have to route all of those “urgent” messages from your brain to voice mail for awhile.
9. Find healthy outlets for debriefing stressful days or experiences: talking to a friend, writing, going for a run or walk, or a counselling appointment.
10. Let stress be a friend. A moderate amount of stress can provide energy and focus. Positive excitement is the flip side of fear; try to shift a negative anticipation (“What if I screw this up...”) to the positive possibility (“But then again, what if this university and travel thing really works?”).

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