



STRESS MANAGEMENT &gt; SITUATIONAL STRESS

# Top 10 Stress Management Techniques for Students

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Most students experience significant amounts of stress, and this stress can take a significant toll on health, happiness, and grades. For example, a study by the American Psychological Association (APA) found that teens report stress levels similar to that of adults.

That means teens are experiencing significant levels of chronic stress, and that they feel their levels of stress generally exceed their ability to [cope effectively](#). Roughly 30% report feeling overwhelmed, depressed, or sad because of it. <sup>[1]</sup>

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 Causes of Student Stress

Another study found that much of high school students' stress originates from school and activities, and that this chronic stress can persist into college years and lead to academic disengagement and mental health problems. <sup>[2]</sup> Common sources of student stress include:

School

Homework

Extracurricular activities

Social challenges

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## 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.

If college is part of a teen's plans, once they are accepted, the stress continues as they need to make new friends, handle a more challenging workload, be without parental support in many instances, and navigate the stresses that come with more independent living. Romantic relationships always add an extra layer of potential stress.

Many students feel a sense of needing to [relieve stress](#), but with all of the activities and responsibilities that fill a student's schedule, it's sometimes difficult to find the time to try new stress relievers to help dissipate that stress. These options are relatively easy, quick, and relevant to a student's life and [types of stress](#).

### **<sup>1</sup> Get Enough Sleep**



Blend Images - Hill Street Studios / Brand X Pictures / Getty Images

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.

**Related:** [How Stress Contributes to Sleep Problems](#)

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## **<sup>2</sup> Practice Visualization**



David Malan / Getty Images

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.

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### **<sup>3</sup> Exercise Regularly**



FatCamera / Getty Images

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.

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#### **<sup>4</sup> Take Calming Breaths**





AntonioGuillem / Getty Images

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.

**Related:** [Evaporate Stress Fast With Breathing Exercises](#)

## **<sup>5</sup> Practice Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)**



Daisy-Daisy / Getty Images

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.

## **<sup>6</sup> Listen to Music**



g-stockstudio / Getty Images

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.

**Related:** [7 Ways to Use Music for Stress Relief](#)

## <sup>7</sup> **Get Organized**


 Happy female student learning at home

Westend61 / Getty Images

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.

## **<sup>8</sup> Eat a Healthy Diet**

 University student studying in canteen and having lunch School, Bavaria, Germany

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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.

**Related:** [Try a Healthy Eating Plan to Reduce Stress](#)

## <sup>9</sup> Try Self-Hypnosis

 Teenage girl lying on couch practicing self-hypnosis

fizkes / Getty Images

Students often find themselves "getting very sleepy" (like when they pull all-nighters), but—all kidding aside—self-hypnosis can be an effective stress management tool and a powerful productivity tool as well.

With it, you can help yourself release tension from your body and stress from your mind, and plant the seeds of success in your subconscious mind with the power of autosuggestion.

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## 10 Use Positive Thinking and Affirmations

 Happy teenage girl laying on the grass



CoffeeAndMilk / Getty Images

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.

**Related:** [How to Use Positive Self Talk for Stress Reduction](#)