

Stress Reduction Strategies at Crunch Time

Being a student can be stressful, but there are always a few weeks in the semester that are especially crazy. Below are some suggestions of how you can cope with those short but really stressful periods.

Lifestyle

- Get enough sleep.
- Eat properly.
- Exercise regularly.
- Get some time to yourself when you are not studying.
- Don't resort to a lot of coffee, alcohol or drugs to either stay awake or unwind.

Figuring out how to get things done.

Get organized.

- Put all assignment due dates in a day planner.
- Make a to-do list. The things on the to-do list should not be huge. For example, don't put your 15-page research paper on your to-do list. Instead, put pieces of the job you can accomplish in a few hours on the list. For example, you might put find three sources or develop thesis statement or write introduction on the list. Check off the completed tasks as they are completed. Check off the assignments in your day planner when you get them done.
- Make a time management plan. When will you work on what?
- Organize your stuff so you can find what you need when you need it.

Prioritize.

- Your school tasks. For example, you might not have time to re-read Chapter 4; you might just have to skim it or go with your class notes or read the summary. Prioritize course work. Are you doing really well in one course and not so well in the others? Should you withdraw from the poor one? Should you put more time into the poor one? Are there courses you can coast in for a while without too much negative impact?
- Social stuff. Consider how you can best balance family, friends, school and work to meet your own goals. You might have to put off seeing that movie or visiting your grandma. The thing to remember is that you're not putting these things off for life, just for a few weeks. Explain to family and friends who might feel abandoned what's going on with you and why you're not available.
- Home responsibilities. Does it matter if you vacuum this week?

Use your support network.

Are there people willing to help you out? Maybe this is the time to get them to look after your child, pick up your laundry, give you feedback on a troublesome paper or give you a ride to school.