



UNT System College of Pharmacy

Tips for Stress Management

What is Stress?

Stress is the body's reaction to a challenge. Though stress is often perceived as bad, it can actually be good in some respects. The right kind of stress can sharpen the mind and reflexes. It might be able to help the body perform better, or help you escape a dangerous situation. Stress produces a physiological reaction in your body. Hormones are released, which results in physical manifestations of stress. These can include slowed digestion, shaking, tunnel vision, accelerated breathing and heart rate, dilation of pupils and flushed skin. This process is often referred to as the "fight or flight" response. That is just what it sounds like: Our bodies are poised to either run away from the stressor or stick around and fight against it.

Myths about Stress: TRUE OR FALSE?

- **Stress is the same for everybody: FALSE.** We don't all experience stress the same way. It's different for everybody. You may be stressed out by a high-pressure job, while your coworker thrives on it.
- **Stress is always bad for you: FALSE.** While we might think that no stress would lead to happiness and health, it's not true. Stress itself — especially a little stress — keeps life in balance. What's important is how we manage it.
- **Stress is everywhere and you cannot do anything about it: FALSE.** It's true that stress is all around us, but you can plan your life so you're not overwhelmed by it.
- **The most popular techniques for reducing stress are the best ones: FALSE.** Although popular magazines may claim to have the answers, no universally effective stress reduction techniques exist. We all have different lives, situations and reactions. A comprehensive stress management program tailored to your unique needs will work best.
- **No symptoms, no stress: FALSE.** Just because you don't have symptoms doesn't mean you're not experiencing stress. And if you're masking your symptoms with medication, you may miss the signals you need to reduce the strain on your physiological and psychological systems. Even though stress is a psychological effect, chances are you'll experience it in a physical way.
- **Only major stress symptoms require attention: FALSE.** "Minor" symptoms — like headaches or stomach acid — are early warnings that your life is getting out of hand, and should not be ignored. Don't wait for a major stress symptom, such as a heart attack, or it may be too late.

Source: American Psychological Association; Psych Central

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KNOW YOUR TRIGGERS & RED FLAGS

Symptoms and Signs of Stress

Physical Symptoms

- Irregular bowel movements
- Involuntary twitching or shaking
- Irregular or missed periods
- Getting sick more often than normal
- Reduced libido
- Chest pain with or without tachycardia
- Headaches; Nausea; Muscle aches
- Trouble sleeping
- Heartburn or indigestion
- Fatigue
- Flushed skin
- Clenched teeth
- Unusual changes in weight

Emotional Symptoms

- Less than normal patience
- Feelings of sadness and/or depression
- Feelings of being overwhelmed
- Restlessness
- Reduced or eliminated desire for activities once enjoyed or regularly done
- Irritability
- Sense of isolation
- Trouble coping with life's issues
- More frequent or extreme pessimistic attitude

Cognitive Symptoms

- Impaired concentration
- Trouble with remembering things, such as homework assignments or deadlines
- Chronic worrying
- Anxious thoughts or feelings
- Reduced or impaired judgment
- Impaired speech (mumbling or stuttering)
- Repetitive or unwanted thoughts

Behavioral Symptoms

- Change in eating habits
- Change in sleeping habits
- New or increased use of drugs, tobacco or drugs
- Nail biting
- Pacing
- Abnormal failure or delay to complete everyday responsibilities
- Significant change in school or work performance
- Unusual desire for social isolation
- Frequent lying
- Trouble getting along with peers, such as coworkers, classmates or teachers



Stress Management Tips

PUT FIRST THINGS FIRST. The key is not to prioritize what's on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities. ~ Stephen Covey

SET BOUNDARIES. Keep the weekend work-free. No email, No calls, spend quality time with family. Don't let work be the #1 priority in life. ~ Bridger Harrison

LEARN TO SAY NO. You have to learn to say no without feeling guilty; setting healthy boundaries. Because some people can take advantage of you. ~ Unknown

TAKE BREAKS. Take a short break and focus your attention away from whatever is causing you stress. ~ Glen Halterman

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF. When people like their lives, and that includes work life, they'll do a better job of taking care of themselves. ~ Jeffery Pfeffer

TAKE RESPONSIBILITY. I take all the stress on myself so everyone else can work without stress. ~ Chanda Kochhar

PRACTICE GOOD COMMUNICATION. Communication is what makes a team strong. ~ Brian McClennan

STOP OVERTHINKING. Stop worrying about what can go wrong and get excited about what can go right. ~ Unknown

DON'T REACT. Don't react when you are upset because at that time your reaction will be based on your negative emotions, but intuitive and positive thoughts flow when you are calm. ~ Hina Hashmi

LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND. Do not listen with the intent to reply. But listen with the intent to understand. ~ Stephen R. Covey

LEARN TO LET GO. You must learn to let go. Release the stress. You're never in control anyway. ~ Steve Maraboli

HUMOR AT WORK. Humor a great stress reliever! Laugh, be happy and have less stress! ~ Catherine Pulsifer

PLAN AHEAD. Plan ahead when you know a situation will arise that causes you stress. Recognize the triggers.

WATCH YOUR DIET. Eat well and eat properly. For example, too much caffeine can exacerbate the physical symptoms of anxiety.

GET ENOUGH SLEEP. Research is clear that not getting enough sleep can impair one's memory and reasoning abilities.

EXERCISE REGULARLY. Exercise can release tension and the better off you might be.

THINK POSITIVE. Research has shown that positive thinking may improve physical wellbeing, produce lower feelings of depression and produce lower levels of distress.

HAVE A STRESS “OUTLET.” This could be a social activity like going outside or finding a hobby or joining a social club online.

ENGAGE IN RELAXATION TECHNIQUES. This can include things like slowly counting to ten, meditation, thinking positive thoughts, visualization or playing with a stress ball.

TALK TO SOMEONE. Sometimes just talking about what’s stressful or having someone listen to your problems can drastically reduce stress.

KNOW YOUR LIMITATIONS. Jumping into something you can’t handle can often leave you with stress and worry. When embarking on something new, know what your limitations are, and never bite off more than you can chew.

HAVE A GOOD SUPPORT SYSTEM. When life gets tough, having someone to turn to can help. Your support system should include family, friends, and professionals if necessary.

UNDERSTAND YOUR TRIGGERS. What stresses you out? Learning to avoid things that make you anxious, nervous or worried can be enough to help you live a life filled with less stress.

MANAGE YOUR TIME. Plan out your time wisely. This includes any situation, including school, career, or everyday life. Make sure to plan in plenty of downtime, too.

FIND WAYS TO CALM DOWN. What cools you down? Squeezing a stress ball? Taking deep breaths?

REMEMBER THE SIX S’s

- 1. Seek help when you need it.** If you are experiencing overwhelming anxiety, lingering sadness, or other prolonged reactions that are impairing your daily functioning, please consult with a trained mental health professional. Whatever you are feeling right now, allow yourself time to notice and express what you’re feeling. This could be through journaling, talking with others, or channeling your emotions into something creative (e.g., drawing, painting, poetry, music).
- 2. Stick to the facts.** Finding credible sources you can trust is important to avoid the fear and panic that can be caused by misinformation. For the most accurate information about coronavirus, look to official government or health authorities and mainstream news outlets — don’t depend on social media.
- 3. Shift your attention to other meaningful activities.** Replace the time you usually spend on social media with other meaningful activities in life — focus on your academics or self-care activities such as reading an enjoyable book or watching a movie. Mindfulness activities such as meditation are proven to be helpful in stressful situations.
- 4. Strength-based perspective.** Reflect on ways you dealt with previous challenges and think about how you can apply those same skills now. In a situation that’s uncertain, it’s natural to have many ‘what if?’ questions in our minds. In the absence of information, our anxious mind will often fill in the

blanks with worst case scenarios, which can leave us feeling overwhelmed, helpless, or vulnerable. Shift your thinking from catastrophizing to a more helpful mindset by asking: What are the things within my control? Am I overestimating the likelihood of the worst-case scenario? What strategies have helped me cope with challenging situations in the past that will serve me well during this time? What is a small helpful or positive action that I can take now?

- 5. Start a daily routine.** Having unstructured time may increase feelings of restlessness or anxiety, so consider sticking to a daily routine that helps maintain the mindset of your school schedule. Adjust your sleep to regular hours and spend some time each day reading or engaging in academic subjects that interest you. Don't forget to schedule time for exercise, eating, relaxing, and talking to friends — these are all part of your routine during the semester. Go back to basics: eating healthy meals, physical exercise (e.g., walking, stretching, running), getting enough sleep, and doing things you enjoy.
- 6. Stay connected with others.** Seek out ways to have fun with friends or family around you and make time to call or chat with friends in other places. Share information and feelings with the ones you trust. If you are worried about the health of your friends or classmates, be sure to reach out to them — this will help both of you feel positive and comforted.

Please list 3 things that you can do daily that will help you to de-stress and post it somewhere that you will see it every day! 😊

- 1.**
- 2.**
- 3.**

'Everything will be all right'

Words of Encouragement amid the COVID-19 Pandemic

Dear Students, it has been quite a week. The whole world is facing an unprecedented time. We greatly appreciate your understanding and flexibility as the situation continually changes. We know your plans have been altered and this may have come with difficulty and unforeseen challenges. We recognize that many of you are dealing with the stress associated with unplanned travel changes, health care considerations, housing changes and the care and concern for your loved ones. We hope that our regular communication has helped ease some of that stress. Please know that faculty are receiving support and guidance to help you complete the semester remotely.

As we all prepare to navigate the days ahead, we want to take a moment to make sure that, in this extraordinarily demanding and stressful time, you are taking care of yourself, specifically as it relates to your well-being. It can be overwhelming to tend to the needs of others while managing the daily communication and recommendations from the University and others relating to COVID-19. To help our community handle this uneasiness, we have developed a list of mental health tips and self-care resources.

Tips for Self-Care & Making the Best Use of this Time in Studying/Working from Home

- **Create a three-tiered plan for projects.** Being stuck at home is an opportunity that none of us wished for, but it's an opportunity nevertheless. Look for ways to use the time to get things done you otherwise wouldn't be able to do by labeling tasks as: 1) Ambitious projects, 2) Medium projects and 3) Fun projects.
- **Exercise.** Physical activity is so important for health, immunity, and mood. For most of us, our habits are disrupted. So it's important to have a plan for what you're going to do. Your daily 20-minute walk around the house, work building or down the street is a good time to call someone! Social contact is so important, so by walking and talking, you achieve two important aims.
- **Beware of information overload.** We all want to stay up-to-date with the latest news, but it's easy to get overwhelmed. Learn what you need to learn, but don't get sucked into the three-hour scroll. Monitor your screen time so you have a solid sense of your habits.
- **Separate what is in your control from what is not.** There are things you can do, and it's helpful to focus on those. Wash your hands. Remind others to wash theirs. Take your vitamins. Limit your consumption of news (Do you really need to know what is happening on a cruise ship you aren't on?).
- **Do what helps you feel a sense of safety.** This will be different for everyone, and it's important not to compare yourself to others. It's ok if you've decided what makes you feel safe is to limit attendance of large social events, but make sure you

separate when you are isolating based on potential for sickness versus isolating because it's part of depression.

- **Challenge yourself to stay in the present.** Perhaps your worry is compounding—you are not only thinking about what is currently happening, but also projecting into the future. When you find yourself worrying about something that hasn't happened, gently bring yourself back to the present moment. Notice the sights, sounds, tastes and other sensory experiences in your immediate moment and name them. Engaging in mindfulness activities is one way to help stay grounded when things feel beyond your control.
- **Stay connected and reach out if you need more support.** Talk to trusted friends about what you are feeling. If you are feeling particularly anxious or if you are struggling with your mental health, it's ok to reach out to a mental health professional for support. You don't have to be alone with your worry and it can be comforting to share what you are experiencing with those trained to help.
- **Keep a COVID-19 journal of some kind.** It's an extraordinary time in the history of the world, so think about documenting your experience in some way. Keeping a journal will help you process this experience as it unfolds. Also, later in life, you'll probably want to look back at this journal.
- **Try Scrapbooking:** Look for big moments (the email from the school announcing the closing), journalistic moments (empty shelves at the grocery store), and moments of humor or sweetness or absurdity.
- **Catch up on books, podcasts, movies, or TV shows.** These activities will give you a sense of accomplishment, and keep your mind engaged and active, and they'll also distract you from anxiety. Give yourself mental breaks.
- **Continue or create comforting rituals.** You may already have rituals that help you feel grounded throughout the day. Find ways to have pleasant patterns through your day that make you feel grounded and calm. It might be meditation, it might be a cup of your favorite tea, it might be a bedtime story with your children.
- **Take time to appreciate your home and those who are with you:** Write a daily list of three or more things in and around your home for which you are grateful and share your gratitude with others.
- **Reach out with love.** Meaning many things...and it applies in this situation. The whole world is reeling under the weight of events. This is an event that reminds us all that we're united in our common human hope for good health and peaceful prosperity. "Be patient and tough; one day this pain will be useful to you."-Ovid. None of us wants to experience this lesson, but we can learn from it, if we will.

Strategies when Talking to Children

- Create and maintain routines. Schedule activities such as schoolwork, physical movement, crafts, and housework throughout the day.
- Be mindful of what children are being exposed to through the internet, television, and personal conversations with others. Too much news coverage feeds anxiety and fear in children. It is recommended that children limit their television viewing, and instead encourage them to play games (e.g., board games), draw, journal, and read books.
- Provide support by being present, remaining calm, and assuring them. Let children know it is okay to be nervous, and that you are there to care for and support them.
- Give children factual, age-appropriate information about the potential risks and appropriate preventive measures that are being undertaken.
- Reassure your children that both school and government officials are working

- Article - Talking to Children About COVID-19 (Coronavirus): A Parent Resource: [https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-\(coronavirus\)-a-parent-resource](https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-(coronavirus)-a-parent-resource)
- Article - How You and Your Kids Can De-Stress: <https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/how-you-and-your-kids-can-de-stress-during-coronavirus>
- Article - Just For Kids: A Comic Exploring The New Coronavirus: <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/02/28/809580453/just-for-kids-a-comic-exploring-the-new-coronavirus>
- Article - by the National Association of School Psychologists: [https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-\(coronavirus\)-a-parent-resource](https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-(coronavirus)-a-parent-resource)
- Article - How to talk to your kids about the coronavirus (and ease their fears): <https://www.nbcnews.com/better/lifestyle/how-talk-your-kids-about-coronavirus-ease-their-fears-ncna1129851>
- Article - After just half a day of home-schooling, I am officially in awe of all teachers: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/mar/20/home-schooling-teachers-child-coronavirus>
- Additional Links:
 - [How Teachers Are Talking to Students About the Coronavirus](#) (Schwartz, S., *EdWeek*, 3/3/20)

- [How to Talk to Children About the Coronavirus](#) (Sperling, J., Harvard Health Publishing, 3/7/20)
- [SEL Resources for Parents, Educators & School Communities Related to COVID-19](#) (Woolf, N., InsideSEL, 3/12/20)
- [Preparing for Infectious Disease Epidemics: Brief Tips for School Mental Health Professionals](#) (National Association of School Psychologists, 2020)
- [Teaching Remotely for Grades K-12 | Free Resources and Strategies](#) (Scholastic, 2020)
- [Making the Most of “Going Virtual” in Response to COVID-19](#) (Diaz-Torres, C., Vranek, J., Kothari, N., Nakamura, R., Education First, 3/13/20)
- [So They’ve Closed the Schools-Now What?](#) (Corrow, C., Center for Collaborative Education, 3/16/20)
- [How to Keep the Greater Good in Mind During the Coronavirus Outbreak](#) (Suttie, J., Greater Good Magazine, 3/10/20)

Helpful Apps & Financial Tips

1. Article - 13 Fun Apps:
<https://www.scoopwhoop.com/Apps-To-Kill-Time/>
2. Article - Apps, Games and Websites:
<https://www.wsj.com/articles/family-going-stir-crazy-these-apps-websites-and-games-could-help-11584702001>
3. Article - 7 at-Home Workouts for Free:
<https://www.usatoday.com/story/life/health-wellness/2020/03/19/workouts-while-quarantined-free-for-now/5075650002/>
4. Smiling Mind - Free Mindfulness Meditation App:
<https://www.smilingmind.com.au/>
5. Headspace - Free "Weathering the Storm" App:
<https://www.headspace.com/covid-19>
6. Your Financial Pharmacist:
<https://yourfinancialpharmacist.com/>
7. Manage your money with UNTHSC’s free support services via [SmartDollar](#)
8. Article - Tips for Filing for Unemployment:
<https://www.fool.com/careers/2020/03/20/lost-your-job-during-the-covid-19-outbreak-heres-w.aspx>

Articles and Tools for Stress Management

- Tools and Magazines from the American Institute of Stress: <https://www.stress.org/>
- Article - I Spent a Year in Space, and I Have Tips on Isolation to Share: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/21/opinion/scott-kelly-coronavirus-isolation.html>
- Blog - Pharmacy Work Life Matters: <https://pharmacyworklifematters.com/2020/02/10/its-a-choice-you-know/>
- Emergency kit for anxiety, worry, and stress: <https://gretchenrubin.com/podcast-episode/240-very-special-episode-on-anxiety/>
 - Remind yourself - perfectionism is about anxiety, not standards.
 - Calm your breathing using apps or other methods.
 - Reach out to others.
 - Add a distraction by giving yourself a mental break to get temporary relief from anxiety.
 - Plan more - What can I do to make a challenging situation easier or more comfortable?
 - Take action in the world - “Be the change you want to see in the world”
 - Make a list - When thoughts are racing in your mind, put them down on paper.
 - Increase your Energy - Work on your sleep; exercise; don’t inundate yourself with upsetting news.
 - Identify the problem - Don’t just get worked up; try to pinpoint and take action.
 - Schedule time to worry. Surprising but effective!
 - Seek more information on something that’s worrying you. Sometimes, knowledge can be very helpful...not just googling physical symptoms! Ask yourself, “Is there someone who could give me some insight on what I’m worried about?”
 - Start tracking. If you’re worried about a physical symptom, or a pattern of behavior, start keeping a record. Our memories can be very faulty.
 - Beware of catastrophizing. Catastrophizing is when we magnify negative consequences, assume they’re certain to happen.
 - Treat yourself to a healthy treat.
 - Do good deeds for other people. One of the best ways to make ourselves happier is to make other people happier.
 - When you’re super-stressed about a mistake you’ve made, remind yourself, “We’ve all done it.”
- CDC Managed Stress and Anxiety: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fabout%2F coping.html
- COVID-19: How to be Safe and Resilient: <https://rise.articulate.com/share/6fip2RYXQ-YzfNj8d3V5GoX2Jq1Nlo3X#/>

- COVID-19: How to respond constructively – Action for Happiness: <https://www.actionforhappiness.org/news/covid-19-how-to-respond>
- Loving-Kindness Meditation: https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/loving_kindness_meditation
- Resilience: An Essential Component of Today's Pharmacist: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=msD5HQWE5eM&feature=youtu.be>
- The Happiness Project (Revised Edition): https://www.amazon.com/Happiness-Project-Revised-Aristotle-Generally/dp/0062414852/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&linkCode=sl1&tag=thehappproj-20&linkId=42bd8f856187ea60b9a61f861be4d582&language=en_US
- APhA Resources: <https://www.pharmacist.com/well-being>
- Article -Five Ways to View Coverage of the Coronavirus: <https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/pandemics>
- Article - Animal Shelters Seek People To Foster Pets During Coronavirus Pandemic: <https://dfw.cbslocal.com/2020/03/17/animal-shelters-look-for-people-to-foster-pets-during-coronavirus-pandemic/>
- Article - Here are 7 Simple Things You Can Do Right Now to Relax: <http://m.startribune.com/stressed-out-by-coronavirus-try-these-mood-improving-tips/568964822/>
- Article - Free Tech Tools Have Kept Communities Connected During Coronavirus: <https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/free-tech-tools-have-kept-communities-connected-during-coronavirus/2241263/?amp>
- Article - Why You May Need Mental Distancing As Much As Social Distancing And 8 Ways To Get It: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/tracybrower/2020/03/17/stressed-because-of-the-coronavirus-why-you-need-mental-distancing-as-much-as-social-distancing-and-8-ways-to-get-it/#6474e0b4dbbe>
- Article - Working from Home for Years — This is How to Do It Successfully: <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/ive-been-working-from-home-for-years-this-is-how-to-do-it-successfully-2020-03-18>
- Article - 55+ Creative Things to Do When You're Bored to Pass the Time: <https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/life/a26872864/what-to-do-when-bored/>
- Article - Free Workouts to Do at Home: <https://www.nbcnews.com/better/lifestyle/gym-closed-here-are-some-free-or-discounted-workouts-do-ncna1159931>
- Article - 50 Free Online Workouts: <https://makeyourbodywork.com/how-to-exercise-at-home/>
- Free Course from Yale University – The mega-popular "happiness" course available through Coursera: <https://www.coursera.org/learn/the-science-of-well-being?ranMID=40328&ranEAID=EHFxW6yx8Uo&ranSiteID=EHFxW6yx8Uo->

[.uLuPn2MieBhuQZx7IMA2Q&siteID=EHFxW6yx8Uo-.uLuPn2MieBhuQZx7IMA2Q&utm_content=10&utm_medium=partners&utm_source=linkshare&utm_campaign=EHFxW6yx8Uo](https://www.unthsc.edu/newsroom/story/covid-19-making-the-most-of-hunkering-down-right-now/)

- [Mental Health and Coping During COVID-19](#), published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- [Care for Your Coronavirus Anxiety](#), published by Shine
- [Coping with Coronavirus Anxiety](#), published by Harvard Medical School
- [7 Science-Based Strategies to Cope with Coronavirus Anxiety](#), published by a cognitive behavioral psychologist at Georgetown University

UNTHSC Resources

- COVID-19: Making the most of hunkering down right now: <https://www.unthsc.edu/newsroom/story/covid-19-making-the-most-of-hunkering-down-right-now/>
- Managing the Emotional Impact of Isolation in Remote Work: <https://www.unthsc.edu/newsroom/story/managing-the-emotional-impact-of-isolation-in-remote-work/>
- Student food pantry provides a safety net as COVID-19 pandemic continues: <https://www.unthsc.edu/newsroom/story/student-food-pantry-provides-a-safety-net-as-covid-19-pandemic-continues/>
- Students can get help managing **stressful situations** with the [Student Assistance Program](#) or seek assistance from the [Care Team](#). A link to the **food pantry** can be found [here](#).

We send our very best wishes to all of you for what is a markedly different academic experience and end-of-term than any of us anticipated just a few weeks ago—or what few of us have ever experienced. This is an extraordinary moment, and it calls on all of us to support each other with great care and compassion. We continue to be here for you today and in the days ahead. Please know you can reach out to us as it relates directly to the System College of Pharmacy or University’s plans and responses around COVID-19.