# S.T.A.H.L. NEWS

STUDENTS TALKING ABOUT HEALTHY LIFESTYLES...WORDS OF WHIZ-DOM

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# COPING WITH STRESS

Stress is a combination of physiological and emotional responses to an event. It can be caused by expectations we place on ourselves, expectations others place on us, our physical environment (noise, movement or weather changes) or our internal environment (academic pressure, social life, or hard decisions).

**Some of the responses to stress may include:**

- Increased heart rate and blood pressure
- Sweating
- Dry mouth
- Tight muscles
- Headaches
- Negative self-talk
- Restlessness
- Inability to concentrate

http://www.dartmouth.edu/~acskills/success/stress.html

## The 4 A's of Dealing with Stress

- **Avoid** the stressor

Avoid hot button issues, people and situations that can stress you out, analyze your schedule and eliminate unnecessary tasks.

- **Alter** the situation

Express your feelings instead of bottling them up, manage your time better, be willing to compromise, and be more assertive.

- **Adapt** to the stressor

Focus on the positive things about your life. Adjust your standards; perfection is impossible. Set reasonable standards for yourself and others.

- **Accept** the things you cannot change

Instead of stressing over these situations, try and change the things you can control, such as the way you respond. Learn to forgive; people make mistakes. Let go of negative feelings and move on.

http://helpguide.org/mental/stress_management_relief_coping.htm

**Too much stress, or a strong response to stress is harmful. It can set you up for poor general health, as well as physical and psychological illnesses like infection, heart disease, and depression.**

## WHAT TO DO:

- Add balance to life: don't overdo school or social life
- Take "time outs", especially during study
- Study each subject regularly for moderate periods of time
- Know and accept your strengths and weaknesses
- Expand your support network and reinforce friendships
- Get an adequate amount of sleep
- Exercise regularly
- Watch your breathing
- Learn and practice relaxation skills
- Discuss problems with friends, family or a counselor

http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/003211.htm

## WHAT NOT TO DO:

Avoid unhealthy methods of handling stress.

- Smoking
- Drinking too much alcohol
- Overeating or under eating
- Zoning out in front of the TV or computer for hours
- Procrastinating
- Withdrawing from family or friends
- Sleeping too much
- Using drugs or pills to relax
- Taking stress out on others by lashing out
- Filling up every minute of the day to avoid facing problems

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For services, contact the Counseling Center at IUP.
Suites on Maple East, G31
724-357-2621
http://www.iup.edu/counselingcenter/


**The Center for Health and Well-Being**
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