

Stress Management



What is Managing Stress?

Managing stress means learning how to handle pressure or big emotions in healthy ways—like staying calm, problem-solving, and taking care of yourself.

Manage Stress
High School

✓ Not all stress is harmful. Check each stressor as either eustress (positive/motivating) or distress (negative/harmful):

Stressor	Eustress	Distress	Why?
College application deadlines			
Learning an advanced skill			
Sleep deprivation			
Athletic competition			
Toxic relationship			
Public performance			

Personal Stress Assessment



Rate your current vulnerability to stress in each domain (1-10):

1 = low vulnerability

10= high vulnerability


Stress Domains	Rating
Academic pressure (course load, grades, college preparation)	
Future uncertainty (career, college, life path decisions)	
Time management (balancing responsibilities, deadlines)	
Social stressors (peer relationships, social media, belonging)	
Family dynamics (expectations, responsibilities, conflicts)	
Health factors (sleep, nutrition, physical activity)	
Financial concerns (college costs, current expenses)	
Identity development (values clarification, self-concept)	
Perfectionism tendencies (self-criticism, high standards)	

Analyzing your ratings. Which domains represent your greatest stress vulnerability?

Why do you think you're more vulnerable to these kind of stressors?

✓ Everyone experiences and responds to stress differently. Check what applies to you:

Physiological Responses	Emotional Responses	Cognitive Patterns	Behavioral Patterns
<div><input type="checkbox"/> Sleep disturbances</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Fatigue/energy changes</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Muscle tension/pain</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Digestive issues</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Appetite changes</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Increased illness</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Headaches</div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/> Irritability/anger</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Anxiety</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Emotional numbness</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Decreased motivation</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Overwhelm</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Mood fluctuations</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Decreased patience</div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/> Rumination</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Catastrophizing</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Self-criticism</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty concentrating</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> All-or-nothing thinking</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Memory issues</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Mental fogginess</div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/> Procrastination</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Isolation/withdrawal</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Substance use</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Reduced self-care</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Over-scheduling</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Conflict with others</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Avoidance behaviors</div>

 Different types of interventions work best at different points in the stress cycle:

Prevention Strategies	In-the-Moment Techniques	Recovery Practices
<div>Reduce baseline stress and build resilience</div>	<div>Manage acute stress responses</div>	<div>Process stress aftermath and restore balance</div>
<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sleep hygiene• Regular exercise• Time management• Boundary setting</div>	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Breathing techniques• Cognitive reframing• Grounding exercises• Brief mindfulness</div>	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social connection• Physical movement• Creative expression• Reflective practices</div>

Pick one category and list 1-2 specific strategies that work well for you or that you'd like to develop:

Prevention:

In-the-Moment:

Recovery:

Stress and Performance Optomization



The Yerkes-Dodson Law suggests that moderate stress improves performance, while too little or too much impairs it. Analyze your own stress-performance relationship:

- For academic performance, my optimal stress level is approximately: ____ /10
- For athletic/performance situations, my optimal stress level is: ____ /10
- For social situations, my optimal stress level is: ____ /10

What happens when your stress level exceeds your optimal zone?

What happens when your stress level is below your optimal zone?



Consider an upcoming high-stakes situation (test, performance, competition, presentation, etc.):

Situation:

When will this situation occur?

Preparation strategies (to implement days/weeks before):

Pre-performance routine (to implement hours/minutes before):

In-the-moment techniques (to use during the high-pressure situation):

Recovery practices (to implement after the situation):

Building Stress Resilience



Digital devices and social media can both increase and help manage stress.
Analyze your relationship with digital devices and social media:

How do your digital habits impact your stress levels?

Times when technology increases your stress:

Ways you could use technology more mindfully:

Digital boundaries you could set:



Mindfulness Practice

the practice of present-moment awareness without judgment—has been shown to reduce stress reactivity over time.
Try this brief mindfulness exercise:

- Set a timer for 2 minutes
- Focus your attention on your breathing
- When your mind wanders (which is normal), gently return focus to your breath
- Focus your attention on your breathing

What I noticed during the practice:

Situations where mindfulness could be helpful:

How could you incorporate brief mindfulness practices into your daily routine?

Building Stress Resilience



Based on this worksheet, create a realistic plan to strengthen your stress management:

Key area for improvement:

Why this matters to me:

Daily practices I'll implement:

Weekly check-in method:

How I'll measure progress:

Potential obstacles and how I'll handle them:

Support resources I'll use:
