



***Enhanced Learning  
Educational Services***  
*"the study skills specialist"*

# MANAGING STRESS



**Stress is a part of modern life. Stress can actually be very motivating. It only becomes a problem when it impacts negatively on your thoughts or actions.**

- You should read each point and **highlight the key phrases** in that point.
- Discuss with a friend or parent as you read through the handout.
- You may like to work through this over a number of sessions.



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## **Enhanced Learning Educational Services Profile**

### Our Organisation:

Enhanced Learning Educational Services (ELES) is the leading provider of study skills resources in Australia. Since 2001 over 500,000 students across Australia have benefited from our study skills worksheets and workbooks. An Australian business based in Sydney, our clients extend throughout Australia and to international schools overseas. We are committed to helping all students improve their ability to learn and study by providing study skills seminars and resources on the topics students need.

### Our Mission:

To provide a worthwhile and effective service to teachers, students and parents, enhancing students' learning skills and abilities through dynamic programs, resources and strategies to unlock the power of the mind and enable greater success at school and in life.

### Our Commitment:

As part of ELES' commitment to education, 5% of all gross income is donated to charities that help and assist children.

## **For further information about ELES or our products or contact details:**

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## 1. WHAT IS STRESS?

Some definitions could be:

- a state of extreme difficulty, pressure or strain
- the feeling of suffering from mental tension
- a physical, chemical or emotional factor that causes worry

Stress begins in your mind when you are worried or frightened about a situation.

You start to imagine everything that could go wrong and think about all the negative worst case scenarios. The disaster pictures are crystal clear in your mind as though you were watching a movie of all the bad things you feared coming true. These thoughts trigger chemical reactions in your brain that then engender physical responses such as elevated heart rate, rising body temperature, increased production of sweat by your pores and a general unpleasant feeling of panic and loss of control. The first step in managing stress is learning to recognise how you (and your body) currently deal with stress.



DISCUSS

*a. How do you define stress? Has this been something you have thought much about? What sorts of things cause you to feel stress?*

## 2. WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF STRESS?

The signs of stress can be grouped into either physical or non-physical. Tick which of these you experience when you feel stressed.

### PHYSICAL SIGNS OF STRESS:



- headaches
- sweaty palms or increased sweating
- shallow breathing
- dry throat
- getting lots of colds
- your skin breaks out in pimples etc
- feeling physically ill in the pit of your stomach
- fluttery feeling in your stomach
- indigestion
- racing heart, increased heart rate
- muscle aches and pains
- feeling tired but not being able to sleep
- clenching your jaw or fists or muscles

- sleeping too much
- difficulty getting to sleep
- interrupted sleep



### NON-PHYSICAL SIGNS OF STRESS:

- feeling worried or tense
- becoming cranky, irritable at friends and family
- becoming moody and easily upset
- feeling like you could cry at any moment
- difficulty concentrating in class and at home
- not being able to sit still
- not being able to work
- feeling unhappy or depressed for no obvious reason
- feeling less confidence about yourself
- feeling indecisive and not able to make decisions
- getting upset or anxious over trivial things
- not feeling hungry
- experiencing bad dreams and nightmares
- overeating
- eating much more junk food than usual
- stopping talking to people about how you are feeling
- doing silly/self-destructive things (alcohol, drugs etc)
- feeling negative about yourself and your abilities
- losing pleasure in the things you normally do
- lots of negative thoughts
- becoming forgetful
- not being able to relax
- feeling no enthusiasm for anything, listlessness, lack of motivation
- feeling like you want to thump someone for no reason at all!



*b. Can you think of any other signs of stress either physical or non-physical? Which do you think are most common?*

## 3. MANAGING STRESS

To deal with stress you can't just ignore it. You need to be proactive and take action. A good process to follow is outlined below.

### FACE YOUR FEARS:

Write down all the things that are troubling you or bothering you. Rank them from the thing that is bugging you the most to the thing that is bothering you the least - both for school and personal.

### SPLIT YOUR LIST IN TWO:


- Look at your list. Some of the things you can change and do something about, others you can't.
- See if you can make any changes to reduce your stress and begin to accept and deal with those things you cannot change.
- Look at the list and divide everything you have written down into 2 columns: Things you might be able to do something about (in which case write down specific actions you can take) and things you can't change but have to accept and deal with.

### TAKE ACTION:

If there are actions you can take to help reduce the stressful situation, make a decision to take them! Take the actions needed to start alleviating any of the stress you can have control over.

**THEN TRY THE MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGIES IN THE NEXT SECTION...**



	<p><i>c. Have you tried this approach before or a version of this approach? Do you react to stress in a completely different way?</i></p>
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## 4. MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGIES

Strong mental health helps us to become more resilient. If we are resilient we are able to cope with the challenges that life throws at us so that when something tries to knock us off the path we want to be on, we simply pick ourselves up, brush the dust off and look around for another way to make things happen or to cope with what is happening.

Technique	What does this technique involve?	Have you tried this? Jot down your thoughts on this technique.
<b>RELAX YOURSELF</b>	Give yourself permission to relax and do things you enjoy. Many students get so caught up in their schoolwork that they neglect giving time to things they care about. Of course, some students do the opposite and spend all their time doing fun things and not studying. If you are working too hard, force yourself to take a bit of time out for yourself. It will make you feel better and the increased productivity will make up for the time away from the books. Allow yourself at least one thing you enjoy each day – whether it is listening to a favourite CD, reading a book, or spending time with a friend. Everyone needs balance in their lives and some quiet time to themselves. Schedule time for yourself and ensure you take time out each week.	<b>YES / NO</b> <i>Your thoughts?</i>
<b>TAKE MINI-BREAKS</b>	Take a few moments throughout the day for a short period of relaxation. Get yourself comfy, close your eyes, take a deep breath in, hold it for a few seconds then let it out really slowly and as you do relax your shoulders, smile to yourself and say as you breathe out 'I feel great'. It is a great idea to have short regular breaks and time-outs.	<b>YES / NO</b> <i>Your thoughts?</i>
<b>DO SOMETHING ACTIVE</b>	If you feel tension building up, do something active. Exercise can not only help get rid of stress but can also help prevent and relieve stress. Go for a walk, go to the gym or play some sport. Even a quick jog around the block can calm you when things seem to be getting too much or when you are unable to get yourself started on your work.	<b>YES / NO</b> <i>Your thoughts?</i>