

Coping with Exam Week Stress

Many students experience the end-of-the-term "crunch time," when it seems like there is a test and paper due for every class. Having a game plan for these times of the year is important.

Below are some tips to help lower your stress level during exam week. (These skills can prove useful at other times of the year as well).

Exercise

Exercising will help you decrease your stress level, making your studying more productive. Even if you feel you don't have the time, dedicate 30 minutes to exercising each day. You will feel much better in the long run.

Eat Smart

You may feel like you don't have time to do this, but eating pizza and wings every night because you feel like you are too busy to eat properly is not a good idea. A well-balanced diet gives you the energy you need to study effectively.

Set Your Priorities

Decide which work needs to get done when. Make sure that you are not doing all of your "easy" work first, neglecting the class that you have been struggling in all semester.

Be Realistic In Establishing Your Goals

Setting goals that are out of reach will only upset you at the end of the day. You are better off setting a realistic goal and working towards that. Once you have reached it, reward yourself by relaxing for a bit before moving on and getting more work done.

Take Breaks

It is important to take a five- to ten-minute break every hour. This will increase the effectiveness of your studying. Going outside for some fresh air is a fine idea, but make sure you do not get involved in something that will take longer, like instant messaging or a television show.

Study Where You Know You Will Be Effective

If you know you cannot study in your room, find a place that works for you, such as the library or the Campus Center.

Listen To Your Body

If you are experiencing headaches and/or stomach aches, you need to change the way you are studying for a while. These are signs of stress. Take a few minutes away from your work...take a short nap, have something to eat, or try some relaxation exercises.

Plan To Do Something Fun When Your Exams Are Over

Set up a time to meet friends for dinner and a movie. You've worked hard....it's time to reward yourself!

For More Information

Caring psychologists are available at Union College Counseling Center for individual help with developing stress-management skills. Appointments can be made by calling (518) 388-6161 or stopping by the front desk at the Wicker Wellness Center.