

Academic De-Stress, not Distress

Attending university can be a rewarding experience, and it comes with a fair amount of responsibility. This responsibility can become burdensome when you start to worry about how much school work you have to do. With patience and discipline, you can carry the weight of academic pressure with more ease.



Lighten the load

Your level of stress tends to rise when your workload increases; therefore, it is important to get started early on major assignments so that they are less worrisome as smaller assignments begin to accumulate. More importantly, reward yourself for lightening your load by doing activities that relax you, and by taking some time to reflect on the work you've accomplished.

Be kind to yourself when you feel overwhelmed. Everyone faces a certain amount of adversity from the demands of academia, so some positive reinforcement to stay focused can help. If you encourage yourself instead of berating yourself or your circumstances, you may be pleasantly surprised by the ease with which you can handle pressure.

Be conscientious about your time commitments. Many students over commit themselves without realizing what kind of stress they are setting themselves up for. It is good to be active and involved, but allow yourself to gradually increase responsibilities instead of taking everything on at once.

Soak in the scenery

Sometimes the sun is too bright to study, or your body demands exercise before you write an essay. Be sure to keep your personal health a priority; learning should heighten, not hinder, your quality of life. **Beware of procrastination**, but realize how taking a break can help.

With the amount of information given in classes, it can be tough to step back and put what you have learned into a broader context. Yet, by doing this, we often retain the information more comprehensively and meaningfully. Try to learn course content in a way that you find genuinely interesting, not just something to be recalled for an exam.

Some of the greatest opportunities at a university arise from the simple fact that it is a vast social network. Some of the most insightful and educational experiences will come through your interactions with others, whether academic or not. Take advantage of the broader university community of which you are a part. Learn from and with others.

Soak in the scenery

School cannot grade you on the life you lead or what kind of person you are. In the long term, the way that you're personally affected by your academic experiences will influence you more than any assessment of your academic capabilities. **Don't let grades tell you what you can and cannot accomplish.**

Not all stress is negative. Certain kinds of excitement like the thrill of playing your favourite sport or connecting with new people, can help to alleviate the effects of negative stress. It is important to not only know, but also feel the difference between these kinds of stress.

Anxiety comes with everyone's transition into independence. School can add to this anxiety, but it can also foster the confidence to cope and succeed when you apply yourself. Believe in your capabilities, even when things don't turn out the way you expect.

When the stress in your life becomes overwhelming, **it is okay to seek support**, either from those closest to you or from a professional. This may involve visiting support centers on campus such as Student Mental Health Services, Student Accessibility Services, and Career Centre Services. Also, you don't need to be having a crisis to benefit from talking to someone. Sometimes all it takes is a little bit of time around like-minded, empathetic people to help you feel better.

Five ways to de-stress now

Sometimes we struggle in funny ways, so laugh about it. Approaching adversity with a sense of humour deflates the burden of anxiety.

Take a break when you need it. If you are stressed out, you will not be productive.

Make a concerted effort to **think positively**, especially when facing adversity. This simple step can be surprisingly challenging, but it saves a lot of unnecessary hardship.

It is futile to expect perfection, so let some of the little things slide. Attention to detail is valuable, but becomes a detriment when it makes you lose sight of the bigger picture.

When you feel your body build up tension, take care to relax and do activities that make you feel at peace.

If you're overwhelmed with stress and need to talk to someone, book an appointment with Student Mental Health Services.

905.721.3392
studentlifeline@ontariotechu.ca
or visit **ontariotechu.ca/mentalhealth**

Live, Learn, and Let Loose!

Student Learning Centre

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