

**[MYDIARY PODCAST SERIES]
[STRESS MANAGEMENT]**

[Intro]

Hello and welcome to the wonderful world of Get Positive Audio.

You're listening to the MyDiary Podcast series.

I trust you will enjoy this audio presentation entitled "Stress Management".

In this audio track you'll learn how to handle all the pressures of homework, part-time jobs, friends and family whilst continuing to perform at your best.

[Body]

Firstly, it is important to remember that everyone gets stressed– it's a natural part of being a human being. When you are a busy student and trying to juggle your schoolwork, homework, part-time job, family and social obligations, it is easy to feel stressed. What you don't want is to be stressed all the time as this can be harmful to your mental and physical health.

So what are the mental signs of stress?

Some mental signs of stress are:

- When you have trouble concentrating or thinking straight
- You worry about little things
- You feel anxious all of the time,
- You imagine awful things happening,
- When things seem to be hard, and when you have trouble making up your mind.

Some physical signs of stress are:

- When your heart beats fast
- You feel shaky
- You pace up and down nervously
- Or when you get headaches or stomach pains.

If you don't learn to manage your stress levels you could feel like this all the time and that's just not much fun at all.

Here are the 10 golden rules of reducing stress:

1. Have a clear and organised work area

This is top priority, there is nothing worse than that drowning feeling you get when you look at your workspace and see the mountains of paper piled up, you are stressed because you've got a test tomorrow yet there is no space to even put your study books.

Spend 10 minutes at the end of each day tidying your desk; file away all the papers, even if you think you will use them again tomorrow. Take everything you don't need off your desk, such as too many pens, staplers, photos etc. and tuck them away in a draw. All of these items add to the "clutter" and distract from your work. Your aim is to study as much as you can in the minimal amount of time, so you can spend time doing what you want. Make your work area, clean and clear so you are ready to go.

2. Manage your time wisely

To prevent yourself getting stressed in the very first place it is important to allocate enough time to everything you need to do. Allow yourself plenty of time to prepare for an upcoming test or assignment.

Refer to our podcast on Time Management for more details.

3. Prioritise important tasks

It's human nature to do the easy things first, but these aren't necessarily the most important items or the items that will make you feel confident you are on target towards your goals. Search your tasks to find the crucial and pressing task.

4. Break tasks into achievable small chunks

Nothing is more overwhelming than a mammoth assignment due in a matter of weeks. Don't even attempt trying to do everything at once! Simply look at the question/s and see if you can break them down into subsections. Then look at these subsections and see if you can break them down even further.

Then allocate time into your study agenda to just work on 1 small piece at a time.

5. Visualise yourself achieving

To help change your negative thoughts, try thinking back to something that you did really well. Let yourself feel all the positive thoughts and emotions that you had at that time and try to direct all this positive energy to the problem that you are currently facing.

Another thing you can do is to accentuate the positive things about yourself and what you can do. You could write out a list of positive statements about what you want to happen such as 'I know I can do well' 'I've done well on tests before'. 'All the information I have studied will easily come to me on test day'.

You can look in the mirror and read these things to yourself – or even out loud – and believe that they are true. Then, just to give yourself the edge, re-read them before you go to sleep.

6. Avoid “all or nothing” thinking

Try not to think in extreme ways such as saying things to yourself like ‘I have to pass this test because if I don’t then that proves I’m dumb’ or ‘I have to get the top score or I’ll hate myself if I don’t’. These kinds of thoughts are destructive and they limit your options to only 2 outcomes – which are pass or fail.

Instead, give yourself a wider range of possibilities to feel good about a test or exam such as ‘if I get an above average score I will feel great’, or ‘if I get an average score then I’ve almost achieved what I’m aiming for’ and even ‘if I get a below average score then I’m going to find out why this happened and be motivated to do better next time’.

7. Take time out for yourself

Listening to music, watching a funny movie, reading a book or talking with a friend is a great way to de-stress after a hectic day. Be sure to take some time to yourself so you can get things back into perspective.

8. Get enough sleep

Poor eating and too many late nights causes you to burn the candle at both ends. Look after yourself by ensuring you get at least 8 hours of sleep a night.

9. Eat right

Eating well can also help with your mental health as well as your physical health. So eat plenty of fruit and veg every day to keep you calm. Avoid excessive caffeine, soft drinks and other stimulants as these give you a good buzz initially, but then leave you feeling worse a few hours later.

10. Exercise

It’s been proven that just 30 minutes of exercise 3 to 5 times a week actually increases energy levels and decreases stress. When you’ve hit the wall studying, why not go for a 15 minute power walk I promise that you’ll come back invigorated with a fresh clear head.

So there you have it, 10 steps you can take to minimise the ugly effects of stress. It’s a good idea to contact your school councillor, your parents or a doctor if you continue to feel under pressure.

Remember take a deep breath...slowly & deeply, relax and do the first things first!

[Closing]

Thank you for listening to this podcast.

Feel free to download this audio file to your IPod so that you can replay it at any stage.

I wish you all the best with your studies.

Until next time, Stay Positive!

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