RELAX
Campuses can be stressful environments. Whether you are a student, faculty, or staff ... stress affects us all. The next time you find yourself stressed out -- take a break and try one of our recipes for stress relief from our healthy stress cookbook.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is stress?</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you Stressed?</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mind Techniques</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body Techniques</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommended Books</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Locations to relieve stress</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General, Everyday Ideas for Stress Relief</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support on Campus</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice from AUC Class of 2017</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“It is not stress that kills us. It is effective adaptation to stress that allows us to live.”

*George Vaillant*
WHAT IS STRESS?

Stress is often described as a feeling of being overwhelmed, worried, or run-down.

We experience stress when “a negative emotional experience” accompanies “predictable biochemical, physiological, cognitive and behavioral changes... directed towards altering the stressful event or accommodating its effects”.

Stress can arise from a lack of time management skills, poor boundaries, an inadequate social support system, study/work-related worries, financial concerns, an inability to communicate effectively, and many other factors.

However, stress doesn’t have to be a negative experience. Stress can sometimes be positive when it is experienced in the short term, and within a reasonable amount. It can motivate individuals towards achieving goals or overcoming obstacles. Of course, the difference between good stress (eustress) and bad stress (distress) - and what constitutes a reasonable amount - differs from one person to another (for instance, because of differences in perceptions or resources).

ARE YOU STRESSED?

The first step to controlling stress is to know the symptoms of stress. When we are stressed, our bodies may show physical signs of tension. In the short term, stress can contribute to problems such as headaches, stomachaches, sleep disturbances, short temper and difficulty concentrating.

When stress persists, it can take a toll on your health and well-being. Chronic stress can result in anxiety, insomnia, high blood pressure and a weakened immune system. It can also contribute to health conditions such as depression, obesity and heart disease. Compounding the problem, people who experience excessive stress often deal with it in unhealthy ways such as overeating, eating unhealthy foods, smoking cigarettes or abusing drugs and alcohol.

Questions to ask yourself to figure out if you are stressed:

» Did I feel anxious, frustrated or angry at anytime today?
» Did I have a positive interaction with another person today?
» Did I have a negative interaction with another person today?
» Is there a decision I’m trying to make today?
» Was there something or someone that made me laugh today?
» Did I experience any symptoms of depression today?
» Did I experience any side effects from medication today?
» What was the biggest challenge I faced today?
» Did I use any of the strategies recommended to me in therapy today? If so, were they helpful?
Mind Techniques

Journaling:

Journaling can be a great stress reducer. It can help you organize your thoughts, clear your mind, and facilitate problem solving.

These are some journaling strategies to help you:
- Gratitude Journal: Count and record your blessings, every day.
- Emotional Release: Vent, vent and vent.
- Planning Journal: Track goals, memories, and plans.

The page shows an example of daily planning tool that may help you get more organized.

Scan this QR code to print this daily planning template that you can print and use in your daily life.

Challenge Your Brain:

You want to challenge your brain and keep it energized as it will be able to handle more and more difficult issues which come up. Also, diverting your attention away from your stress to something else can be just as effective as meditating or medicating.

Remember: The more you engage your brain in a puzzle to solve, the less stressed you will feel.

A fun way to engage your brain is to indulge in brain games like Sudoku. This game causes you to use mathematics as well as logic in order to finish the square.

You can find more Sudoku challenges at: https://thesudoku.com/ and you can also download different mobile applications for Sudoku and other brain games.
Body Techniques:

Breathing Exercise:

Controlled breathing not only keeps your mind and body functioning at their best, it can also lower blood pressure, promote feelings of calm and relaxation, and help you relax.

Here are 6 breathing techniques that you can practice in different settings:

1. Sama Vritti or "Equal Breathing" (Beginner level):
   To start, inhale for a count of four, then exhale for a count of four (all through the nose, which adds a natural resistance to the breath). Best Practiced: Before bed.

2. Abdominal Breathing Technique (Beginner level):
   With one hand on the chest and the other on the belly, take a deep breath in through the nose, ensuring the diaphragm (not the chest) inflates with enough air to create a stretch in the lungs. The goal: Six to 10 deep, slow breaths per minute for 10 minutes each day to experience immediate reductions to heart rate and blood pressure. Best Practiced: Before an exam or stressful event.

3. Progressive Relaxation (Beginner level):
   Close the eyes and focus on tensing and relaxing each muscle group for two to three seconds each. Start with the feet and toes, then move up to the knees, thighs, glutes, chest, arms, hands, neck, jaw, and eyes—all while maintaining deep, slow breaths. Best Practiced: At home, at a desk, or even on the road.

4. Nadi Shodhana or "Alternate Nostril Breathing" (Intermediate level):
   Starting in a comfortable meditative pose, hold the right thumb over the right nostril and inhale deeply through the left nostril. At the peak of inhalation, close off the left nostril with the ring finger, then exhale through the right nostril and continue the pattern. Best Practiced: Whenever it’s time to focus or be energized; avoid this activity before bed.

5. Guided Visualization (Intermediate level):
   Head straight for your happy place, no questions asked. With a coach, therapist, or helpful recording as your guide, breathe deeply while focusing on pleasant, positive images to replace any negative thoughts. Best Practiced: Any place you can safely close your eyes and let go (e.g. not at the wheel of a car).

6. Kapalabhati or "Skull Shining Breath" (Advanced level)
   Begin with a long slow inhale, followed by a quick, powerful exhale generated from the lower belly. Once comfortable with the contraction, up the pace to one inhale/exhale (all through the nose) every one-to-two seconds, for a total of 10 breaths. Best Practiced: When it’s time to wake up or start looking on the bright side.
Recommended **BOOKS**

1. Replacing Stress With Peace by Dr. Wallace Goddard
2. Rethinking Family Stress by Dr. Wesley Burr
3. The Relaxation Response by Dr. Herbert Benson
5. Seven Habits of Highly Effective People by Dr. Stephen Covey

**Campus Locations to RELIEVE STRESS**

The following places around campus might be nice to visit if you’re feeling overwhelmed and stressed

» Campus Garden
» SU lounge (currently stands in place of Auntie Anne’s old outlet beneath the Administration Building).
» GSA lounge (beneath the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies, around Bassily Auditorium and opposite to Moataz Al Alfi Hall )
» Faculty Lounge (Campus Center, room 1001)
» AUC Sports Complex
» Cafes and food outlets
General, Everyday Ideas for Stress Relief

And best of all, they're contagious!
Spread your stress-free vibes to others!

Laughter and Smiling

Spirituality

Get out processed foods, reduce caffeine & sugar, choose organic foods, etc.

This way your friends and family can reap some benefits of your stress relief, too!

Creative Activities

Cooking and Baking

Spend Time in Nature

Whether it's an exercise class, gym session, yoga, or simply just taking a walk... just make sure it's something you enjoy doing.

Physical Activities

Cut out processed foods, reduce caffeine & sugar, choose organic foods, etc.

Get Some Vitamin D

Getting 5 to 20 minutes, 3 times a week, of sunlight on your arms, face and hands is enough to provide you many physical and mental health benefits.

On campus we are blessed with the AUC garden, so take advantage of it! You can picnic, just chill, or even do some bird watching!

Recipes for Stress Relief

Spend Time in Nature
Find some nice incense or essential oils and a diffuser.

**Inhale Scents**

You can even find free resources online about how you can give yourself one.

**Get a Massage**

Invest time in cultivating the relationships already in your life, or speak to a professional who can emotionally support you or help with social skills.

**Get Social**

Lose those extra things in your life you just don’t need. Managing a vast number of possessions has been found to elevate stress hormones.

**Decluttering**

Pet owners have been shown to be less stressed out. If you don’t have an animal of your own, visit an animal shelter or volunteer to walk a friend’s dog.

**Power Napping**

Napping just 10 to 20 minutes can effectively recharge the mind and body.

**Spend time with a pet**

For example, make it a rule not to check email from home in the evening, or not answering the phone during dinner.

**Set boundaries**

Be your own best advocate by effectively disclosing yourself and your needs, while still respecting the needs of others.

**Be Assertive**

You can even find free resources online about how you can give yourself one.

**Set boundaries**

For example, make it a rule not to check email from home in the evening, or not answering the phone during dinner.

**Get Social**

Lose those extra things in your life you just don’t need. Managing a vast number of possessions has been found to elevate stress hormones.

**Decluttering**

Pet owners have been shown to be less stressed out. If you don’t have an animal of your own, visit an animal shelter or volunteer to walk a friend’s dog.

**Power Napping**

Napping just 10 to 20 minutes can effectively recharge the mind and body.

**Spend time with a pet**

For example, make it a rule not to check email from home in the evening, or not answering the phone during dinner.

**Set boundaries**

Be your own best advocate by effectively disclosing yourself and your needs, while still respecting the needs of others.
1. **Office of Student Well-being:**
   - **Description:** Offers services to undergraduate and graduate students, including counseling, academic coaching, and disability services. The office also organizes regular workshops and activities.
   - **Located in:** Campus center, room P001, across Americana Food court.
   - **More information:**
     - [http://in.aucegypt.edu/student-counseling-center](http://in.aucegypt.edu/student-counseling-center)
   - **Contact details:**
     - Counseling services: scc@aucegypt.edu
     - Coaching for learning and success (CLAS): clas@aucegypt.edu

2. **Human Resources Department:**
   - **Description (from a stress management lens):** The HR provides support to AUC staff and a yearly (or more than once a year if demand is high) two-day workshop about stress relief that is open to all staff.
   - **More information:**
     - [http://in.aucegypt.edu/student-life/student-well-being/contact-us](http://in.aucegypt.edu/student-life/student-well-being/contact-us)
   - **Contact details:**
     - [http://in.aucegypt.edu/offices/human-resources/contact-us](http://in.aucegypt.edu/offices/human-resources/contact-us)

3. **Graduate Students Association:**
   - **Description:** A body of volunteer graduate students that aims at promoting the sense of community among graduates; it facilitates different opportunities and organizes activities for graduate students.
   - **More information:**
     - [https://www.facebook.com/AUCGrads/](https://www.facebook.com/AUCGrads/)
   - **Contact details:**
     - gsa@aucegypt.edu

4. **Athletics Department:**
   - **Description:** Offers athletic activities, programs and opportunities to AUC community.
   - **More information:**
     - [http://in.aucegypt.edu/student-life/office-athletics](http://in.aucegypt.edu/student-life/office-athletics)
   - **Contact details:**
     - [http://in.aucegypt.edu/student-life/office-athletics/contact-us](http://in.aucegypt.edu/student-life/office-athletics/contact-us)

5. **Counseling Psychology Training Center:**
   - **Description:** Offers counseling services to AUC community.
   - **More information and contact details:**
     - [http://schools.aucegypt.edu/huss/Psychology/Pages/Counseling%20Psychology%20Training%20Center.aspx](http://schools.aucegypt.edu/huss/Psychology/Pages/Counseling%20Psychology%20Training%20Center.aspx)

6. **Student Union:**
   - **Description:** The student government at AUC; it organizes many projects, activities and events.
   - **More information:**
     - [https://www.facebook.com/AUC.SU/](https://www.facebook.com/AUC.SU/)
   - **Contact details:**
     - su@aucegypt.edu

7. **Student Union:**
   - **Description:** The student government at AUC; it organizes many projects, activities and events.
   - **More information:**
     - [https://www.facebook.com/AUC.SU/](https://www.facebook.com/AUC.SU/)
   - **Contact details:**
     - su@aucegypt.edu
If you are stressed about graduating, here is some advice from the graduating class of 2017:

» Travel with your friends when you get the chance. No one is going to be as available as you are now.
» Don’t graduate, or if you do, do graduate studies. Don’t worry too much about grades this semester, just enjoy it!
» There is every semester. Then there is the last semester! Never ever underestimate the power of the last semester.
   I met the closest people to me in my last semester. I got my highest grades ever in my last semester. I did my biggest extracurricular activity in my last semester. And it all happened at the same time! Oh the tales you’ll make of that semester.
» Enjoy doing everything. These are days to remember.
» Stay and enjoy university, don’t stress about studying too much cause it’s not worth it at all in the end. Enjoy your gaps, hang out with everyone you know and don’t skip days at university.
» Take courses for the sake of widening your knowledge rather than scoring an A!
» I see a lot of people saying that you shouldn’t graduate, but if you stayed longer than you should you get this mixed feeling of feeling home/need to run! So do whatever you want to do, spend more time doing fun things, sleep at the dorms for one day, take a course for fun or for the sake of learning something new and different.
» Spend more time with your university friends and spend more time at AUC <3 I already miss it very much.
» Understand that school isn’t everything. Don’t work 24/7... This is coming from a girl who just graduated and was an architecture major too. Enjoy every day.
   Go out
   Dance
   Sing
   Or even study
   But the point is do what makes you happy with the ones you love and don’t care about anything else!! I swear these are the best days in your life.
» Have fun!! you’re gonna miss campus, campus life and all the ups and downs that come with. Even if its hard and tough try to relax and chill with your friends anytime you can. Honestly I miss university a lot and wish I could go back sometimes. When you graduate you feel lost you’re not sure what you wanna do and where you’re gonna end up it’s exciting yet pretty scary. I regret wishing to finish as soon as possible so my advice enjoy every one of these days and make them days you’ll remember for life and good luck!!
» Have fun and enjoy it. University years r the happiest days ever.
» Make sure to keep the good people you’ve met in your life after graduation. This is the real asset you leave AUC with.
» Spend more time with your parents enjoy them while they are healthy and alive.

Advice from AUC CLASS OF 2017