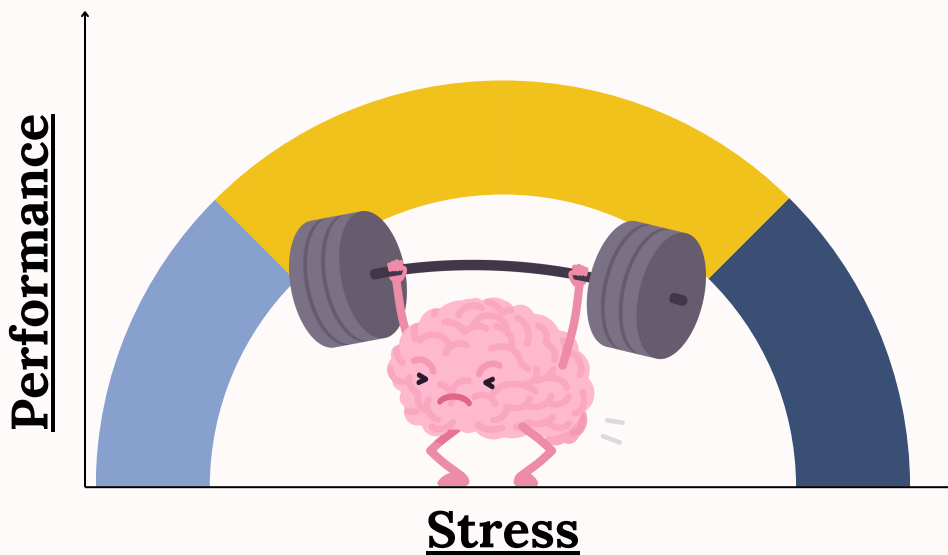


How to Manage Stress in the Peak of the Semester

What is stress?

- Stress is normal!
- Stress is our body's response to challenging circumstances.
- Stress impacts nearly every system in the body. It can cause physical, mental, and emotional strain.
- Stress can be positive. **Eustress**, or good stress, helps keep us alert, motivated, and prepared.
- Too much stress can negatively affect our physical and mental health. This is called **distress**.



Optimal Stress

Eustress refers to an optimal level of stress. Eustress is derived from stressful but manageable, rewarding, or enjoyable stimulation.

Signs of Under-stimulation

- Boredom
- Fatigue
- Frustration
- Dissatisfaction

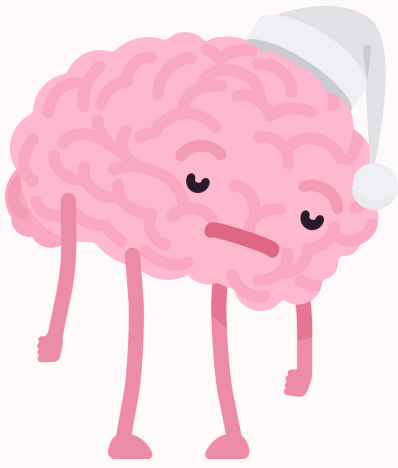
Signs of Eustress

- Increased creativity
- Increased rational problem solving ability
- Progress in projects/assignments
- Improved performance
- Feelings of satisfaction

Signs of Distress

- Decreased problem solving ability
- Feelings of exhaustion
- Feelings of anger or irritability
- Decreased engagement
- Decreased self esteem
- Illness

What Does Stress Look Like?

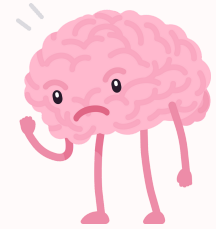


Physical Symptoms

- Headaches
- Upset stomach
- Muscle tension or pain
- Skin irritation
- Difficulty sleeping
- Fatigue
- Increased heart rate
- Reduced ability to recover from illness/infection

Mental Symptoms

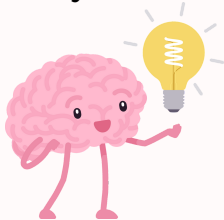
- Anxiety
- Sadness or depression
- Irritability
- Restlessness
- Lack of motivation
- Feelings of overwhelm



Stress Management Strategies

Social and Practical Strategies

- Connect with others
- Ask for support from friends, family members, and/or campus resources
- When possible, eliminate unnecessary stressors
- Reorganize and strategize



Physical Strategies

- Engage in a physical activity
- Practice sleep hygiene
- Stay hydrated
- Eat healthy and filling meals and snacks throughout the day
- Spend time in nature

Mental Strategies

- Practice mindfulness
 - (e.g., meditation, breathwork, guided imagery, body scans etc.)
- Engage in enjoyable activities
- Practice gratitude

Resources

- Utilize mindfulness and breath work apps to manage stress and lessen acute symptoms of overstimulation.
 - [Smiling Mind](#) and [Insight Timer](#) are available for free for IOS and Android users.
- Check out the [success guides and worksheets](#) available on the SSRC site. You'll find tools designed to help you organize your semester and work through the various academic stressors you may encounter as a UNC student (e.g., time management, writer's block, etc.).
- UNC's [Office of Health Promotion \(OHP\)](#) is committed to providing students with wellness education and mental health resources. Head over to their page to learn about different on-campus services and events related to student health and wellness.
- The [mental health and well-being resources](#) curated by the UNC Counseling Center will provide you with additional information and resources related to stress and other mental health topics.
- [Connect with a success coach](#) here at the SSRC to discuss targeted academic success strategies.
- Reach out to the [UNC Counseling Center](#) or [UNC Psychological Services Clinic](#) to access confidential one on one and/or group counseling services.