

# STRESS

## Stress Facts

Stress is a natural and inevitable part of life. Depending on how we deal with stress, it can help or hinder us. Our goal is to learn how to manage and harness stress.

### Your body doesn't care if a stressor is big or small.

Extended stress can cause premature aging, impaired cognitive functioning, and drained energy.

### We can be unaware of our stress.

Our bodies can adjust to high levels of stress and not notice its impact, however this can lead to health issues, poor decisions, and overreactions.

### We can control our response to stress.

Notice your physical and emotional reactions to stress before they become exaggerated. What do the sensations develop in response to? Are their stressors in your life you can change?

### The best strategy is to manage stress in the moment.

Rather than taking a binge-purge approach to stress or waiting until the weekend, notice the stress you're feeling in the moment and take steps to decrease it. The longer you wait, the more time stress has to negatively affect your body.



**RECONNECT.  
BE PROACTIVE.  
REFOCUS.**

**TAKE A DEEP BREATH**

## What are you already doing for self-care?

### Physical

- Eat regular, healthy meals
- Exercise
- Sleep
- Stretch
- Practice breathing exercises
- Seek regular medical care
- Take time off when you need it
- Find fun physical activities

### Emotional

- Make time for self-reflection
- Journal
- Read something for fun
- Identify and spend time with comforting people and activities
- Allow yourself to feel emotions as they come
- Laugh!

### Spiritual

- Meditate
- Be in nature
- Practice gratitude
- Make time away from technology
- Create
- Find meaning
- Volunteer
- Nurture fulfilling relationships
- Try being optimistic

### Student Life

- Set limits
- Prioritize your needs
- Make time to complete tasks
- Say no to extra commitments
- Strive for work-life integration
- Identify tasks that are exciting and rewarding
- Find peer support

## What's missing from your self-care routine?

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## Building Resilience to Stress

### Keep Perspective

To regain perspective and activate problem-solving abilities, try viewing the situation in a new way:

- **Reverse view:** What would I tell a friend in the same situation?
- **Long view:** Will this matter in the grand scheme of my life? How did I make it through a similar time?
- **Wide view:** How can I learn and grow from this situation?

### Practice Gratitude

You can't worry and be in a state of active appreciation at the same time. Next time you find yourself ruminating try the following:

- **3 good things:** Once or twice a week, take a moment to write down 3 things that you appreciate. Ask yourself, "Why did this good thing happen?"
- **Express yourself:** Thank someone else - verbally, in a letter, handwritten note, or over email. Grateful people are some of the happiest people in the world!

### Stay Positive

Focus on what you can reasonably accomplish, given your current situation. Research shows that positive mood states are associated with better problem-solving and persistence.

### Simplify Your Life

Less is more. Make a firm commitment to reduce the "busy-ness" of your life. To actively destress, ask yourself the following:

- Where can I simplify?
- Do I spend too much time on my phone/computer?
- What can I give up?
- Do I say "yes" to activities to which I could say "no"?

*Keep what brings you joy.*

## Campus Resources

### Habif Health and Wellness Center

Medical Services: 314-935-6666

Mental Health Services: 314-935-6695

Health Promotion Services: 314-935-7139

### Visiting Us

Habif is in the lower level of Dardick House on the South 40 on Shepley Drive.

The Zenker Wellness Suite is in the Summers Recreation Center (room 303).

[habif.wustl.edu](http://habif.wustl.edu)



Habif Health and  
Wellness Center

STUDENT AFFAIRS AT WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY