

## How can I cope with and prevent stress?

***“Between school, work, and everything else I’m doing, I’m feeling stressed – how can I cope?”***

Balancing priorities and responsibilities is never an easy task. Here are a few suggestions to help you cope with stress:

**Take a deep breath.** Deep breathing can calm your body and soothe your mind. Close your eyes and take in a deep breath, focusing your attention on your diaphragm moving down and out. Breathe in for four counts, hold for two, and exhale for five counts. Repeat until you feel calmness and energy.

**Relaxation is just a stretch away.** Stretching can help relax your muscles, a first step to relaxing your mind. You can use just about any stretching technique you know or try this quick neck stretch: Reach your left arm over your head until your fingers are just touching the top of your right ear. Gently pull your head towards your left shoulder, feeling a subtle stretch through the right side of your neck. Hold for a few seconds and feel the muscle lengthen. Then do the same on the other side. Be careful, stretching should never cause pain, but if you do it gently and in the right spots, this can be a powerful technique.

**Catch a few Zzzzz’s.** While it’s important to avoid disrupting your body’s natural sleep cycle, a 20 minute nap in the afternoon to unwind can be a great way to recharge yourself for the rest of the day.

**Get some nutrients in your system.** Feeding your active body and mind with wholesome food can help you charge ahead and maintain energy. Maybe a banana, apple or grapes are your type of snack. If not, try nuts, veggies or cereal bars.

**Move on up to greater relaxation.** Exercise can get your heart pumping and endorphins flowing, re-energizing your body and mind. Take a brisk walk or jog around the block to get your mind ticking along smoothly.

**Reach out to people who can help.** Whether it’s a friend or a professional, getting support can do wonders to help you through a stressful time.

Online & Off-Campus Resources	On-Campus Resources
Columbia Health – <a href="http://www.health.columbia.edu">www.health.columbia.edu</a>	Columbia Health – 212-854-2284
Go Ask Alice! – <a href="http://www.goaskalice.columbia.edu">www.goaskalice.columbia.edu</a>	Counseling & Psychological Services – 212-854-2878
Stressbusters - <a href="http://health.columbia.edu/services/alice/stressbusters">http://health.columbia.edu/services/alice/stressbusters</a>	Alice! Health Promotion – 212-854-5453

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