

UWM Resources

Services at Norris Health Center

If students are experiencing on-going stress, they can get free short-term **individual counseling** from the Norris Counseling and Consultation Services staff. To make an appointment, call 229-4716.

Peer Health Advocates or professional health educators can come to your dorm, student group, class or event to provide **educational programs** about stress management. Contact Laura Anne Stuart, health educator and advisor to the Peer Health Advocates, at stuartl@uwm.edu or 229-2919 *at least two weeks in advance* to schedule.

Students can make a free 30-minute appointment with a **health educator** to develop an individualized plan for managing stress by calling 229-4716.

Other Resources on Campus

First Year Center

[www4.uwm.edu/access_success/
first_year_center.cfm](http://www4.uwm.edu/access_success/first_year_center.cfm)

Peer & professional help adjusting to life as a college student.

LINKS Peer Outreach & Mentoring Center

www.links.uwm.edu

Students helping other students in areas of personal growth, social experience & college life.

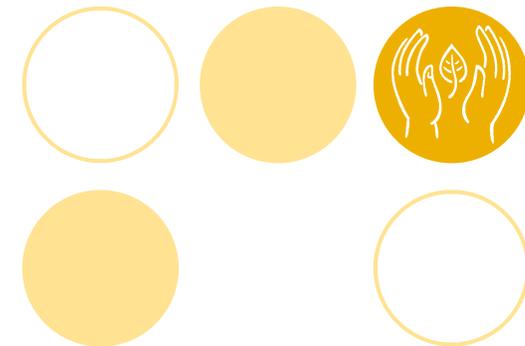


Norris Health Center

3351 N. Downer Avenue
(between Enderis Hall and
the Klotsche Center)
Milwaukee, WI 53211
Phone: 414-229-4716
Fax: 414-229-6608
Email: nhc-help@uwm.edu
www.norris.uwm.edu

Hours:

Monday—Thursday
8:00 am—4:45 pm
Friday 9:00 am—4:45 pm



Assess Your Stress: A Guide for UWM Students

Norris Health Center

UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN





What Is Stress?

34% of UWM students say that stress affects their academic performance. It's impossible to get rid of all stress in our lives, but learning how to manage stress effectively can decrease its negative impact.

Stress is the body's response to a perceived threat — increased heart rate, breathing rate, muscle tension and blood pressure. These changes in the body are designed to give us additional energy in a crisis, but in response to long-term stressors, they can cause health problems and decrease our ability to cope effectively. When you're feeling stressed, it's important to take time to relax and allow your body's heart, muscle and lung function to return to normal.

Not all stress is bad. Positive stress — for example, taking a difficult new class — allows us to engage with meaningful challenges and offset boredom. It can involve using the energy produced by stress to be productive and grow as a person. Negative stress is the chronic feeling of being overwhelmed, oppressed, and behind in your tasks, with little opening for relief. Your perception is key to determining which category a stressful situation falls under. What is perceived as negative stress for one person may be perceived as positive stress for another.

Relaxation techniques can help relieve symptoms of stress. Some to try include:

- Progressive relaxation (alternately tensing and relaxing major muscle groups of the body)
- Deep breathing
- Meditation or guided visualization
- Yoga or other gentle exercise

Written instructions and audio files to guide you through these techniques can be downloaded from the Norris website at www.norris.uwm.edu.

Symptoms of Stress

There are several signs and symptoms that you may notice when you are experiencing stress. These signs and symptoms fall into four categories: thoughts, feelings, behavior, and physiology. When you are under stress, you may experience one or more of the following:

Thoughts

Low self-esteem
Fear of failure
Forgetfulness
Preoccupation
Worries about the future

Feelings

Anxious
Scared
Irritable
Moody

Behavior

Crying for no reason
Acting impulsively
Increased smoking
Change in appetite
Startling easily
Grinding your teeth
Stuttering
Being prone to accidents
Drinking or drug use

Physiology

Perspiration / sweaty hands
Increased heart rate
Trembling
Nervous tics
Dry throat or mouth
Fatigue
Changes in sleep patterns
Indigestion
Headaches
Neck or back pain

These symptoms are signs that you should get help or practice techniques to manage your stress.



Managing Stress

Recognizing that stress has a lifelong influence on you, what can you do about it? Researchers have come up with a few suggestions on how to live with stress.

Work off stress. If you're upset, blow off steam through activities like walking, running, or exercising. Physical activity allows an outlet for mental stress.

Avoid self-medication. Although there are many chemicals, including alcohol, that can mask stress, they don't help you adjust to the stress itself. Many are habit-forming and can cause more stress than they solve.

Sleep and eat well. Lack of sleep can lessen your ability to deal with stress. Most people need at least 7—8 hours of sleep every 24 hours. If stress repeatedly prevents you from sleeping, talk to your health care provider. Similarly, unhealthy or irregular eating habits interfere with your ability to cope with stress.

Balance work and recreation. All work and no play can make you a nervous wreck. Schedule time for recreation to relax your mind and body.

Take one thing at a time. Don't try to tackle all your tasks at once. Set priorities; work on the most urgent.

Learn to accept what you can't change. If a problem is beyond your control, try your best to accept it. Focus on things that you can do something about.

Talk about your worries. It helps to share problems with someone you trust — a friend, family member, chaplain, teacher, or counselor. Sometimes another person can help you see a new side to the problem and thus, a new solution. This is not admitting defeat. It's admitting that you are an intelligent person who knows when to ask for help.