

Managing Stress During Busy Assessment Periods

Stress is a common response to pressure and the need to perform. Stress can be channelled into positive energy and motivation, although it will more often lead to anxiousness, worry, and a sense of being overwhelmed. If it's exam season or you have several assessments that have piled up, a key to success is ensuring you have strategies to manage stress.

Have a plan & set goals

Use a calendar application or physical diary to plan your days. Breaking your exam study or assignment into smaller daily tasks can help ensure you feel a sense of accomplishment and progress. Do what works best for you – whether it is planning and goal-setting a week in advance or writing a list day-to-day is up to you!



Take breaks

Scheduling regular breaks will help maximise the productivity of your focus time. For example, you may choose to do 45 minutes focus/15 minute break for a few hours each day. After all, it's not a matter of how long you sit in front of your work, but rather how much you are able to get done.



Leave time for you

When planning your week or day of study, ensure you leave time for the things you enjoy and build your study time around these activities. These could include going to a concert, seeing friends, watching a movie, going out for dinner etc.



Move around

It's important that you take time to exercise, even if it's a short walk. This is especially important if you plan to study following an idle workday.



Look after yourself

Listen to your body and make sure you are maintaining a healthy diet. Pushing through tiredness could potentially lead to burnout, which can negatively impact your motivation and overall wellbeing.



Speak up

If you are in contact with friends, family, or peers, let them know how you are feeling. Sometimes the process of articulating your stress, whether verbal or written, can help improve your overall mood and outlook.



Burnout

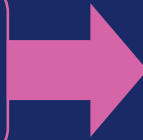
Balancing work, study, social activities, and other areas of our life can prove challenging. Keep an eye out for symptoms of burnout, especially in the most demanding periods of your busy life.

Identifying that you are 'burnt out' is the first step to making positive changes.

3 Symptoms of Burnout and Potential impacts

Overwhelming Exhaustion

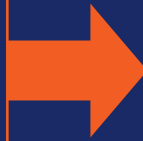
Feelings of being overworked, inducing a build-up of stress.



Increases anxiety, lack of motivation, other mental and physical health implications.

Cynicism

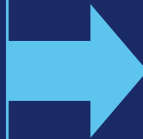
Missing a sense of purpose, acting cold, and feeling detached from your work, sometimes to mitigate the feelings of exhaustion.



Negatively affects relationships and interactions with others.

Diminished Personal Efficacy

Missing a sense of purpose, acting cold, and feeling detached from your work, sometimes to mitigate the feelings of exhaustion.



Reduces motivation and overall job satisfaction.

4 Steps To Prevent and Mitigate Burnout

Relaxation techniques

Mindfulness, breathing exercises, stretching, yoga, exercise, going for regular walks.

To give some relaxation exercises a go, visit [Beyond Blue](#).

Maintain an effective sleep schedule

Getting enough sleep is an effective strategy to minimise the sense of overwhelming exhaustion.

Attend to your needs first:

Remember that rescheduling one meeting to take a break, or prioritising self-care above study for one night will not have dramatic consequences.

Build healthy habits into your routine:

Block-out time in your day to implement a relaxation technique, call somebody you love, or work on a hobby or new skill you have been trying to pick up.

Identifying Your Support Network

Study can be a lonely and frightening experience! As you go through your learning, it is important to build an awareness of where you can access support – both socially and professionally.

Your study institution

Sometimes it feels like you are all alone, especially if you are studying remotely.

Your tutor/lecturer/facilitator/course coordinator is always accessible should you have any questions about the course or specific content.

Tip: Do some research on your academic institution's website, as they may have some career services available for you to leverage. These types of resources are invaluable for bridging the gap between study and working in the industry!

The IPA

The IPA is here for our student members.

We offer discounted CPD and events for students to complement what you are learning through your formal study, as well as a range of other benefits.

Furthermore, we want to be accessible and approachable to our members. Reach out and stay connected, so we can do our best to support you.

Mentors and networks

While it can initially seem intimidating, take the time to begin marketing yourself and building your personal brand.

- Attend an IPA event and take the opportunity to have conversations and build connections.
- Develop a LinkedIn profile that is kept up to date.
- Seek advice and explore opportunities from these networks.

Friends and family

Your circle of family and friends inevitably contains a diverse range of life experiences, lessons, and advice ready for you to absorb.

Maintain contact and do your best to initiate productive conversations with the people you trust the most.

Professional support

Mental health

Lifeline: 13 11 14

Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636

Career support

Your Career