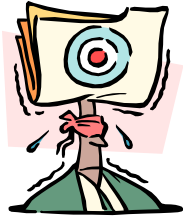


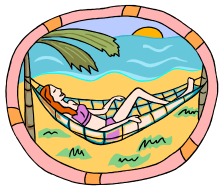
Stress Management for Health Professions Students

WHAT ARE SIGNS OF STRESS?



- Decreased Productivity
- Increased Mistakes
- Poor Concentration
- Increased Use of Alcohol and other Drugs
- Increased Physical Illness
- Elevated Blood Pressure
- Increased Muscle Tension
- Digestive Problems
- Sleep Irregularities
- Feeling Anxious
- Irritability
- Insecurity

WHY IS RELAXATION TRAINING IMPORTANT?



- The programs of study at UTMB and Galveston College are demanding and potentially stressful. Relaxation training can help you to cope with this stress so that you can function more productively.
- Relaxation training can remind you that there is more to life than school and work. It is important to create a balance in your life between your work obligations and your “self” obligations. By focusing on yourself for a few minutes a day you can begin to restore this balance. These skills will help you throughout your career.
- Many of you will be teaching these skills to your future patients. If you have used them yourself, you can better explain them to others.

HOW DO I LEARN RELAXATION TRAINING?

- There are various kinds of relaxation techniques you can do on your own, at the time that is best for you. Recommended techniques include Progressive Muscle Relaxation, Meditation, Visualization, and Self-Hypnosis. See the resources section listed below for more information.
- Most of these techniques use diaphragmatic breathing as a starting point. It is easy to learn and simple to do on a regular basis. Place your hand on your stomach. Breathe in deeply, pushing your hand out. Pretend you have a balloon in your stomach that you are trying to inflate when you breathe in. When you exhale, make the balloon deflate. Feel your stomach area and chest expand with each breath. Continue doing this for a few minutes and you will probably feel more relaxed. Diaphragmatic breathing calms the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems to promote relaxation.
- Try to devote 15 minutes a day to practice this form of breathing. You can also use it whenever you need to- before a test, before a presentation, or after an argument.

WHAT ELSE CAN I DO TO PREVENT STRESS?

take it EASY



- Regular exercise has been shown to reduce stress by affecting the brain chemistry.
- Eating healthy meals will promote your physical health and reduce stress.
- Using your social support system in times of stress can help. Joining student groups can help you feel less isolated and more relaxed.
- Make sure you get enough sleep every night.
- Learn assertiveness skills and how to say “no” when necessary.
- Change your negative self-talk to positive self-talk.
- Work on problems when they are little instead of letting them snowball.
- Develop and use an effective time management system.

WHAT ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO ME TO PROMOTE RELAXATION AND GENERAL WELL-BEING?

- Student Wellness at UTMB has counseling and health services available to students. We can help you work on relaxation skills and develop a healthy body. We are located in Rebecca Sealy 2.814 and our phone number is 747-9508.
- The Field House at UTMB has exercise equipment, aerobics classes, yoga classes, massage therapy, smoking cessation classes, and more! They are located at 215 Holiday Drive and their phone is 772-1304.

- The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook (4th edition) by Martha Davis, et. al. is a great resource to learn more about self-guided relaxation techniques such as progressive muscle relaxation.
- The web site www.contemplativemind.org and the web site www.learningmeditation.com both have helpful information about meditation.