

Articles by Danny Lewis B.Soc.Sc (Psy & HBSoc)

## **Strategies for Study and Stress Management**

### **1. Nutrition**

Eat small meals at regular intervals.

Try to limit the time between meals and snacks to a maximum of 3 hours. This will help maintain blood sugar at an even level.

Fluctuations in blood sugar may lead to mood swings, lack of energy and poor concentration.

Avoid over consumption of stimulants such as coffee, tea, cola drinks and drinks high in caffeine. While these may improve alertness in the short term, overuse may create tension, lower energy levels and interfere with sleep.

### **2. Minimize daily intake of saturated fats and sugar.**

This will help keep metabolism high and also increase energy.

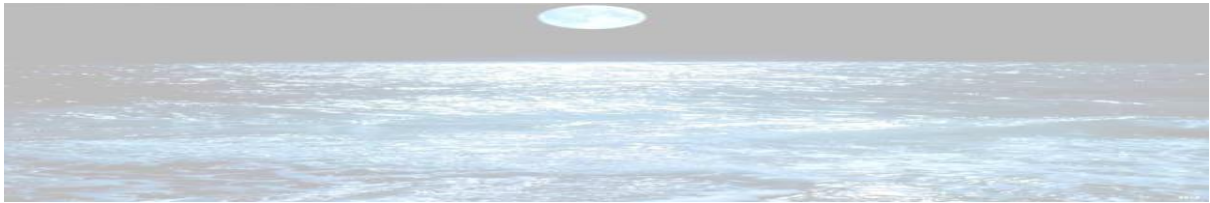
Snacking on junk food, high in fats and sugars will promote fatigue.

Snacks can be fruit, low fat biscuits, yoghurt, or a sandwich preferably made from wholemeal bread for slow release energy.

### **3. Mental Hygiene**

#### ***Meditate regularly.***

Regular relaxation sessions reduce the high arousal level brought on by constant mental activity, while time out allows the mind and body to recharge.



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Optimum mental alertness levels are important in concentration and memory recall. If they are too high, the mind has difficulty retaining and recalling information.

### ***Use your imagination.***

Picturing yourself as you wish to be provides your mind with a goal to move towards. Make sure your thoughts are positive, personal, and in the present not the future. Pessimistic and negative self talk creates a different goal. Imagination is most effective when used during meditation.

## **4. Activity**

### ***Exercise.***

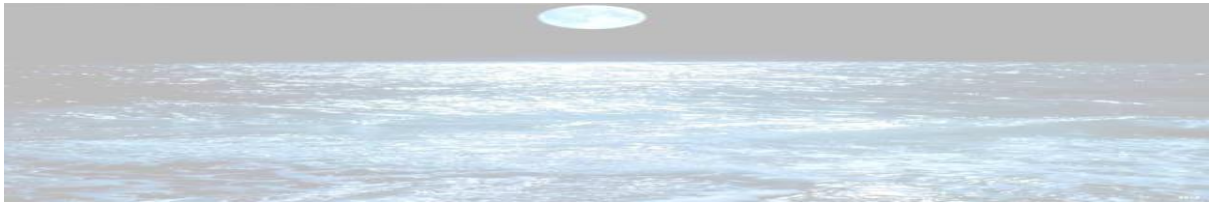
Regular exercise releases tension. During exercise the body releases natural pain killers which also improve mood and reduce the effects of stress.

### ***Physical Activity.***

Long periods of mental concentration lead to physical fatigue. Maintaining a balance of physical and mental activity helps reduce burnout.

### ***Sleep.***

Maintaining regular and predictable sleep patterns allows the body to function more efficiently. Lack of sleep can effect concentration.



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## **5. Time Management**

### ***Organise your work.***

Unpredictable demands on your mind and body are the greatest source of stress. Giving tasks a priority rating according to their importance will ensure that the most important things are done first. Uncompleted tasks will be those less important.

### ***Set goals.***

Knowing where you are going and being able to tell when you are there allows you to feel in control of situations. Lack of control is a major factor in stress. Clear goals prevent wasting of time and energy.

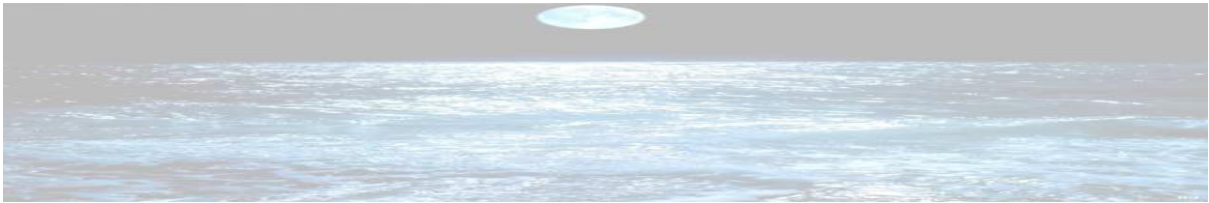
## **6. Massage**

Therapeutic or relaxation massage is one of the best ways of relieving symptoms of stress. Relaxation of muscle reduces mental tension and improves energy.

Regular massage rids the body of toxins, improves overall health and wellbeing, and counters the effects of long term stress.

## **7. New Habits**

Remember that these methods need to be used regularly so they can become a natural antidote to the effects of stress.



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## **8. Reducing Stress Now**

It is not necessary to use all of these strategies to reduce stress.

Some will produce effects in the long term while others such as massage and meditation, can produce quick change.

As for help and advice if you need it. Don't wait until things are out of control.

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