

LIFE IN THE FAST LANE: EATING FOR ENERGY

Anna Dudey

So . . . you say you've got classes straight through from eight-thirty a.m. to three-thirty p.m.? And a midterm in two of them? Feeling a little stressed because you only have five minutes for lunch? Grabbing an extra-large coffee, two donuts and maybe a Pepsi, too, just for "good measure" to fuel you up for the hectic day? If so, STOP! Let's back up two sentences. Not only are the donuts high in fat and sugar, and the coffee and pop high in caffeine, this food fix will also sap your energy rather than fuel you up, leaving you even worse off than before you ate. First let me explain how this works. When you eat a sugary donut, it causes your blood glucose to rise very fast as the body starts to utilize the sugar for energy. Unfortunately, in this case, since you might not get another chance to eat with this busy schedule, once the donut sugar is absorbed, your blood glucose will continue to plummet until you feel tired, sluggish and drained. Donuts are not only sweet but a fat as well. Many donuts contain 5-8 teaspoons of fat! The caffeinated drinks produce a stimulating effect by increasing respiration rate, heart rate, blood pressure and the secretion of stress hormones. This effect peaks after only about an hour. Although a cup or two of coffee per day is most likely harmless, there are better

and healthier ways to keep yourself going on a hectic day. Ideally, coffee should be consumed for its taste rather than its stimulating effects.

Now, let's start the busy day over, this time with some healthy food which will keep you going. First, instead of a donut, have a whole-wheat bagel. This way, in addition to getting complex carbohydrates for quick energy, your body will also receive some fiber and vitamins. At about only 165 calories, it's not a bad deal. Instead of coffee, let's throw in some low fat milk or yogurt. Along with a good dose of calcium, the small amount of fat in these dairy products will slow down the digestion of carbohydrates from the bagel, so glucose trickles gradually into the blood, giving a steady supply rather than a big rush. A bagel with a splash of milk or yogurt is also a good source of protein and dietary protein is linked to an alert disposition. While we're here, let's also add in an apple or a banana for some more complex carbohydrates, fiber and vitamins. If you think you might not get another chance for a snack during the day, it might be wise to toss an extra bagel or an apple into your bag to nibble on during a class later in the day. Now you're all set for tomorrow . . . THREE MIDTERMS!

- ◀Learn to relax. Deep breathing is a natural relaxant. Try to take several deep breaths each hour.
- ◀Smile. You'll be surprised at how good it will make you and others feel.
- ◀At the end of the day, take a brisk walk, do a few minutes of fast dancing, or body shaking. This stimulating exercise will loosen you up and get your blood flowing.
- ◀Practice unwinding everyday, don't wait for your annual vacation. Your body is the only one you get—be good to it!
- ◀Take control of your own life. Live up to your expectations, not someone else's.

Dana Hiatt



Tackle or Dresser Drawer It

Lynette Low

With so much to do and so little time, mid-terms, projects and finals become "crunch-time" on campus. Aside from these projects, grocery shopping, laundry, house cleaning, car tune-ups, meetings, relationships . . . all add to the "to do" or "to deal with list". Result? Stress, anxiety and "hurry sickness".

Before stress can be relieved, it needs to be identified—the stressors—what are they? A million things to do is more a matter of time management than marathoning. Not everything needs to be done now, right away, pronto. As the case load grows, do some sorting and allow the nonessentials to be filed away for a while.

Imagine your week as a 3 drawer bureau. The top drawer contains things which must be done immediately. The middle drawer contains priorities which can wait until the top drawer is emptied. The bottom drawer contains "put off" until the other two are gone through tasks.

The key to this mental time manager is to create a list of the things you need and want to do. Get **everything** on the list that's biting at you. Organize these "everythings" and let go. It's easy to lose perspective and spend 5 hours worrying for every hour working. For today, do what can feasibly be done and put off tomorrow's list until tomorrow. As a great philosopher once said: "One day at a time. . . ."

Is The Little Voice In Your Head Stressing You Out?

Beth Gaiser

Stress. The word hisses in my mind—"stresssss." It feels like a headache in my temples; it feels like dry eyes that itch and burn; it feels like a nondescript knot in my gut. I hate this feeling, but largely, I choose it.

When I enter arena scheduling, I unconsciously resign myself to stress. We expect it as we fill in bubble-cards with number two pencils and sign up for the inevitable. And we can endure it because school always ends; this is a temporary thing—but someone forgot to tell stress that.

Stress reaches outside of this mecca into everyday life, demands, deadlines, losses and changes. But only when we chose to pack it up in our memoirs and carry it out with us.

Stress isn't so much an event as it is the interpretation of an event. To a certain degree, then, we can choose how much stress we'll be exposed to. What is stressful to one person will leave another nonplused which has much to say about how each processes the stressor.

"Self talk" is one way an event is transformed into a cold-sweat producing, heart pounding calamity. This is the dialogue of our thoughts, tip toeing across our consciousness, taking in events and thinking them through. Self talk develops habits in its work style which can be supportive or debilitating. Self talk can play tapes that say: "I can't do this; this'll take me forever; I'm not capable of this task—I'm not smart enough . . ." or it can play "I'll do my best at this and that's all I can do; I know I'm good at this but simply don't have enough time to demonstrate it." Given constraints, we can do our best and feel satisfied or mentally flog ourselves

with "shoulds" and "what ifs."

Self talk develops standards which are supportive and challenging or defeating and unrelenting. Sometimes it gets caught up in perfectionism. Perfectionistic self talk features: "I'm never good enough . . . I can't live up to these standards. . . . I'll fail if I don't get an A . . ." Perfectionism draws a distinction between failing and succeeding; black and white. There is no progress or improvement; only making the mark or missing it. Supportive self talk acknowledges improvement. It notices extenuating circumstances such as a cold, a flu, and exceptionally busy week and other things which may overshadow optimal performance. Outcome is relative to what is going on in an individual's life. Some days are better than others.

Self talk is the corridor between event and perception; it codes events as terrible, awful or as okay, and acceptable. Self talk becomes our self-fulfilling prophecy and that prophecy can be a cheering section or a "boo-hiss." A choice exists to endure self talk throughout the term or to learn to listen to it, guide it and direct it. Our self talk goes with us when we leave college life and hence, our stress—or lack of it.

College stress can be a training ground for how to manage and reframe stressors in everyday life. A starting point is to note self talk. Is it realistic? Does it take on a defeatist, fatalistic tone? Is it supportive or unrelenting? From there, consciously create—or restructure negative messages. This takes practice, insight and faith in your abilities to cope and come out fine, extenuating circumstances and all.

The Stress Diet

Daneel Hennagin

Are you wasting time while studying for finals? Is your productivity so poor that it takes you hours to accomplish what should only take 45 minutes? The answers to these problems may be as simple as what you are feeding your body. As finals approach, it's typical for students to feel like their health is going down the tubes. Alertness, clear-mindedness and energy seem to evaporate. Many even become ill during this period. Much of this is the consequence of the nutritional habits we develop during this grueling time. According to Regina Sara Ryan and John W. Travis, authors of *Wellness Workbook*, "Preparing for a crucial exam will alter the body's chemistry and motivate a change in eating habits." How this change in chemistry is responded to effects how we feel and perform on exams. All nighters with hourly junk food samplings is an example of a prescription of lethargy, indigestion and impaired concentration.

Are you abusing your body? It's common to procrastinate and burn the midnight oil in a marathon of assignments. In order to accomplish this, caffeine and sugar are guzzled. Our nutritional habits are a primary factor in our well being, however; food is fuel and food is composed of organic chemicals—and food has much to do with performance outcomes. When a schedule takes a turn toward command performances, it's best to alter one's meal schedules accordingly. When jamming meals into tiny time slots, one eats fast generating stress throughout the body. When we eat fast the body becomes stressed; there is an increase in heart rate, respiratory rate, hormonal secretions and acid indigestion. So, plan time out for meals and a chance to breath deeply. This

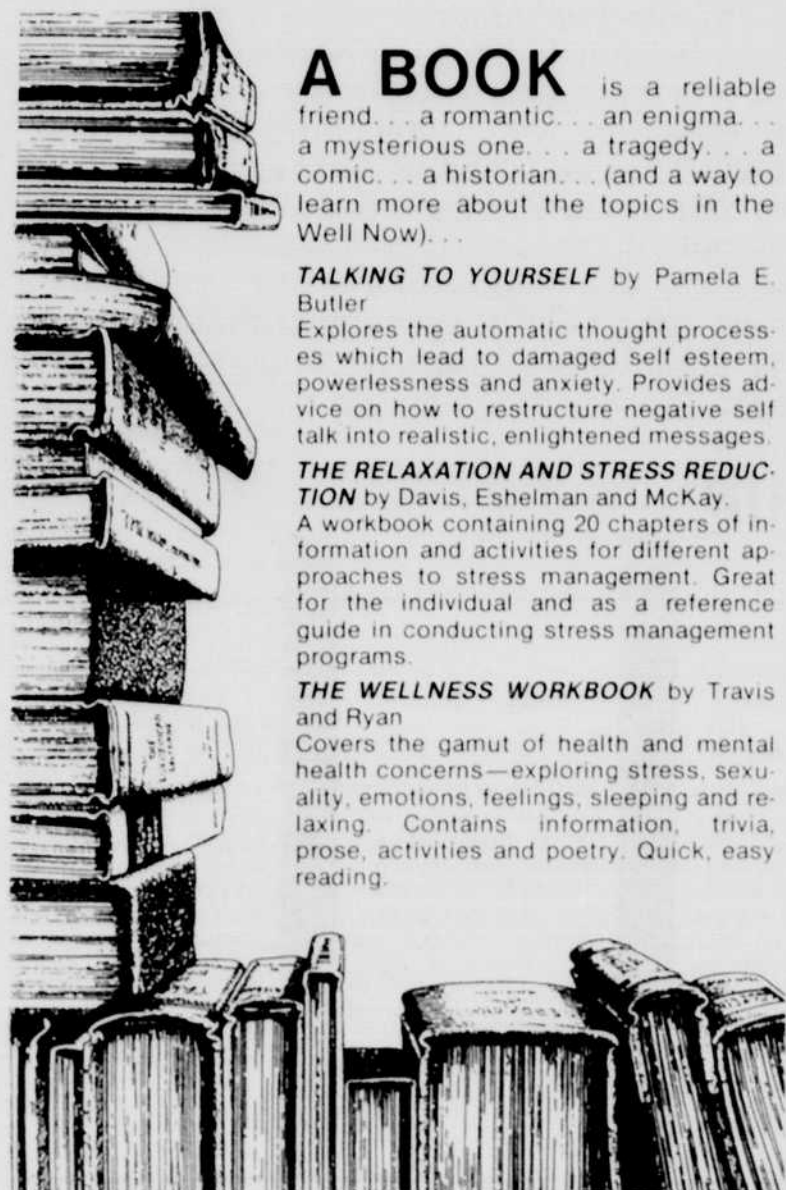
is as much a factor in examination preparation as is the studying.

Quick meals often entail easy, high fat, refined foods. Fats contain twice as many calories as carbohydrates and proteins per gram. According to Ryan and Travis, a "diet high in fat, sugar, and refined grains, is the prescription for illness." Certainly no one has time for a cold, the flu, or sleep disturbances.

When sweets are consumed alone (candy, candy, candy at midnight to four a.m.), due to sudden absorption of glucose, there is an immediate rise in blood sugar, resulting in an abrupt burst of energy, euphoria and a satisfied feeling. However, these feelings are short-lived and when the blood sugar begins to drop, it leads to letdown, burn out and craving for more sugar, or salty foods, excess calories and bulk and the sequence perpetuates itself.

As far as a "prescription for illness," foods which are high in sugar and fat are usually low in nutrients. Fiber and vitamins per calorie are diluted by fat and sugar and hunger is satisfied while the body may not have the working ingredients it needs. There is no confirmation that sugar will erase the nutritive value of a perfectly adequate diet, only when refined sugar substitutes or hinders a normal diet does it become an insufficient food item.

As the term winds down and demands increase, optimize your returns by taking care of yourself. Feed yourself, rest yourself and enjoy the upcoming vacation with vitality and vigor. It requires a little bit of planning and defuncting the myth that finals must be a marathon of sleeplessness and stress. Your body will reward you if you take care of it.



A BOOK

is a reliable friend. . . a romantic. . . an enigma. . . a mysterious one. . . a tragedy. . . a comic. . . a historian. . . (and a way to learn more about the topics in the Well Now) . . .

TALKING TO YOURSELF by Pamela E. Butler

Explores the automatic thought processes which lead to damaged self esteem, powerlessness and anxiety. Provides advice on how to restructure negative self talk into realistic, enlightened messages.

THE RELAXATION AND STRESS REDUCTION by Davis, Eshelman and McKay.

A workbook containing 20 chapters of information and activities for different approaches to stress management. Great for the individual and as a reference guide in conducting stress management programs.

THE WELLNESS WORKBOOK by Travis and Ryan

Covers the gamut of health and mental health concerns—exploring stress, sexuality, emotions, feelings, sleeping and relaxing. Contains information, trivia, prose, activities and poetry. Quick, easy reading.

As is a tale, so is life; what matters is not how long it is but how good it is.

It is not because things are difficult that we do not dare; it is because we do not dare that they are difficult.

Lucius Annaeus Seneca (1st century A.D.)

Editor: Beth Gaiser

Director of Health Education: Joanne Frank

Health Educators: Beth Gaiser, Raymond Boyle, Laune Sheilds, Carmel Crowe, Chrissy Bloome, Valerie Shannon, Annie Dochnahl.

Layout Design: Melissa Nelson, Beth Gaiser

Peer Health Advisors: Dana Hiatt, Anna Dudey, Heidi Reeder, Melanie Steed, Ronnie Joll, Daneel Hennagin, Ginny Ehrlich, Matt Gripp, Lynette Low, Lori Novich.

Production: Jennifer Archer, Alice Cannon, Sandi Daller, Jim Finch, Jennifer Huey, Wendy Morris, Ingrid White

The Well Now is a newsletter sponsored by the Student Health Center, and produced by the health education staff with the assistance of the Oregon Daily Emerald Advertising. All articles are written by students and GTEs for the health education program. If you have any questions, suggestions or are interested in contributing an article, please call Beth Gaiser at 686-4456 10:30-12:30 MW.