

STRESS?



OH NO!!!

"OH NO...I have three midterms, two papers, and an oral presentation next week!"

Sound familiar? If you are a full time college student, it probably does. At least once in a person's college career, no doubt, if you haven't already, you will find yourself facing a week such as this. And if you happen to be really lucky, maybe even two or three in a single term.

This scenario may sound fairly common to many at the university who have been through plenty of these, but for a new student it can be incredibly overwhelming in addition to the initial adjustment to school. This not only includes freshmen, but also the many "nontraditional" students that we are so fortunate to have here, such as those who are going back to school after quite a few years, and the foreign students coming to a new country for the first time. For each of these groups, simply being at college itself is difficult, much less having to deal with a week like this. and believe me, if you don't already know, they really do happen!

Since nothing can probably be done to change it, except for the freak snowstorm you've been wishing for suddenly to come up, there are a few things you can do that can head you in the right direction towards getting everything done and surviving!

1. **PLAN AHEAD** — I know, everyone says, "Budget your time," but even just simply realizing that it is coming up is a start.

2. **TAKE THE RESPONSIBILITY ON YOURSELF** — You can lose a lot of valuable time blaming others for your own misfortune. Accepting the responsibilities to begin with heads you in the right direction for coming out on top.

3. **TAKE TIME OUT** — If you force yourself to stay home and power study while there may be something else you want to do, don't feel guilty if you take time to go out for awhile. You'll get nothing done if you are worrying about what everyone else is doing.

4. **EAT HEALTHY** — Don't take in a lot of sugar and caffeine. Believe it or not, they will actually make you more tired in the long run because they cause the blood sugar to quickly rise and fall, leaving you feeling tired and lethargic. Instead, have some fruit and whole grain products, they will keep your energy up longer.

5. **REMEMBER TO BREATHE** — This may sound fairly obvious, but a few minutes of deep breathing can do wonders for clearing your mind and easing the tension in your body.



by Lynn Hedrick

GOING PIBLOKTOQ?!

Shrieking hysterically, the victim would tear off his/her clothes, run off into the frozen tundra or if water was around they'd jump into it even though the temperature was minus forty degrees. The victim might also try to walk on ceilings, imitate animals and hoard strange objects. The Eskimos called this strange behavior Pibloktoq. What would cause a person to do such bizarre acts? In a sense, the cause of this culture specific disorder limited to the people of the polar regions is also cause of many of our ills today—stress. The stressors of the Eskimos that caused this strange behavior ranged from a mixture of calcium deficiencies, a harsh arctic climate to the absolute social interdependence of the traditional Eskimo people. Add all their stressors up, expose them to a prone individual and ta da the outcome might be Pibloktoq. Don't worry, most likely your stressors won't make you go Pibloktoq but your stressors can drive you to do things you wouldn't usually do!

What exactly is stress? As Hans Selye put it stress is the "non-specific response of the body to any demand made upon it." This means the demand for readjustment to a stressor (e.g. a bear chasing you) is the non-specific response like running. Running entails a response increase in the heart rate, blood pressure, adrenalin, respiration, blood sugar, muscle function and so on.

These responses are part of Cannon's fight or flight theory. When an individual encounters something he/she perceives as threatening—say a snake or a lion that individual will either fight or runaway. This response has kept us humans going for the last 3 to 4 million years. But now, most of the time, this fight or flight response is no longer relevant for the times. For example, a student gets his/her corrected test back (the one the student forgot to study for) the student's blood pressure, heart rate, level of sugar in the blood and adrenalin all rise ready to fight or flight. But fight or flight is not the appropriate societal reaction to getting a test back (usually). Instead we calmly and collectedly take our test and look it over like no big deal (us humans are such good actors). Meanwhile we have all this energy built up but no where to go since running away is not really appropriate.

If this stress goes on unresolved for long periods of time it can result in cor-

onary heart disease, lowered immunity to sickness, arthritis, peptic ulcer, migraine headaches, suicide, depression and more. If you live in the harsh arctic as a hunter where there's climatic, nutritional and cultural stressors Pibloktoq may be a possibility too although it is quite remote! Here are some common signs of stress:

- forgetfulness — pounding heart
- nervousness — cold, sweaty hands
- worry — headaches
- sleep problems — shortness of breath
- shaky hands — upset stomach
- back pain — constipation

So why is it that some students seem to have a lot of stress (i.e. taking a test) and others don't? According to Hans Selye it's not the stressor that's important but "how you take it". In other words your perception of taking that test could either be one of fear or one of opportunity to learn something new.

Looking at taking a test as a way of personal growth is what Hans Selye would call eustress or good stress. Bad stress or distress is when we perceive taking that test as scary or negative in some way. Of course all things can't be viewed as a challenge that would be stress inducing itself.

Distress gets us humans in trouble when we accumulate too many stressors that affect our ability to cope over a long period of time. For a student this is about the time finals week comes around and we have caught the flu. Sound familiar?

How can stress be managed? There are a lot of ways to deal with stress but this article will focus on two techniques by Suzanne Kobasa. The first is called focusing. Here the student learns to recognize signals from the body that something is wrong. Being sensitive to those tight shoulders or pounding headaches or whatever your body's pain may be is the first step in focusing. Then the student can review or ask themselves "What's keeping me from feeling good?" Focusing puts you in a better position to change.

Reconstructing stressful situations and then thinking about three ways the situation could have been both worse and better. This will teach you not to catastrophize your situations. This exercise will also help you to realize better ways of coping.

We tend to view stress in a really negative way but stress really is the spice of life; all we need to do is learn how to get the right mixture!

by Melanie Steed

GETTING RID OF SOME OF THAT DISTRESS...

If you need to talk something out, here are a few good resources on campus:

University Counseling Center
13th Street at Agate
346-3227

Crisis Hotline
346-4488
24 hours a day.

Conflict Resolution
U of O Mediation Program
346-4240

How about physical ailments...

Student Health Center
13th Street at Agate
346-4441

The Student Health Center has an array of services available to you at minimal cost if you are a U of O student.

Lifestyle Planning Program
Student Health Center
346-4456

This is an outreach program and information clearing house. The Peer Health

Advisors can advise you on problems in the areas of nutrition, fitness, stress management, sexuality and substance abuse.

Money Problems???

Office of Student Financial Aid
260 Oregon Hall
346-3221

Job Location and Development
1511 Agate Street
346-3214

Academic Concerns???

Office of Academic Advising and Student Services
164 Oregon Hall
346-3211

Career Planning and Placement
244 Hendricks Hall
346-3235

Center for Academic Learning Services
108 Library
346-3226

TAKING IN SOME EUSTRESS...

If you're looking for classes that would help handle your stress load you might try the Department of Physical Education and Human Movement Studies. This department has a variety of Yoga classes offered. If Yoga is not your thing then try some of the other sports classes offered like aquatics, aerobics, outdoor pursuits and martial arts. The Department of School and Community Health also offers classes in Stress Management and Personal Health courses.

The Outdoors Program is actively involved in excursions off the U of O campus to go backpacking, canoeing, rafting, bike touring, winter camping, ocean kayaking, skiing, hiking and more. They are located in room 23 of the EMU behind the arcade.

The RIM office located in Gerlinger offers non-credit classes in aerobics, water aerobics, karate, and women's weight lifting. They also offer sports such as co-ed football, track, volleyball, tennis, badminton and basketball. This is just a beginning of all these Eustresses out there!