



## **Understanding Your Stress Score**

If your score adds to less than 150, you are likely experiencing light stress. It can be managed by physical and breathing exercises and by getting extra rest. Refer to the *Relaxation Tips* below for more information.

If your score is between 151 and 300, you are likely experiencing moderate stress. In addition to using breathing and physical exercises and by getting extra rest, your stress may be managed by developing a support system and taking mental breaks. Refer to the *Relaxation Tips* below for more information.

If your score was 301 or higher, you are likely experiencing high stress. In addition to using breathing and physical exercises, and getting extra rest, your stress may be managed by developing a support system, taking mental breaks, and seeking help through personal counseling or other means. Refer to the *Relaxation Tips* below for more information.

## **Relaxation Tips**

### ***Get in Touch with You—Breathing Exercise***

An easy way to relax is to take 2 minutes to “check in” with your body. To do this, find a quiet place to sit up straight (find a chair with a firm back or sit on the floor with your back against a wall). Next, shut your eyes, take a deep breath, hold it for a count of five, and then release it slowly. Notice your forehead, ears, eyes, nose, mouth, cheeks, and chin as you breathe in. As you exhale, feel the weight of your body shift downward to your shoulders and neck. Inhale slowly again and this time notice your neck, shoulders, chest, stomach, arms, fingers, and back as you breathe. As you exhale this time, feel the weight of your body shift to your hips, knees and feet. Inhale deeply one more time and notice your hips, buttocks, thighs, knees, ankles, feet and toes. As you exhale this time, notice how light you feel as the stress leaves your body. If you still feel stressed, repeat this exercise.

### ***Eat, Drink and Stay Healthy—Physical Exercise and Nutrition***

Stress tends to build up when we don't take care of ourselves. Schedule time into your day to exercise for twenty to thirty minutes and eat healthy meals. Exercises that elevate your heart rate release endorphins (chemicals that make your body feel better). Eating healthily and regularly helps the body to do its job better. As a rule, a hungry and/or thirsty body is a stressed body. Be sure to carry some healthy snacks with you and drink a lot of water.

### ***The Other Three R's—Getting Extra Rest***

You will help your stress level by remembering the “three R's”—rest, relaxation, renewal. Even when your schedule is hectic, still take a few minutes to regain your composure. Taking a short “catnap,” splashing your face with cool water, and doing something that you enjoy (whether it is school-related or not) are all good ways of taking care of yourself.

### ***The Human Touch—Building Your Support System and Seeking Counseling***

Interactions with people you enjoy can often take the edge off a crazy day. Having one, two or twenty people that you can call when you are having a bad day is an excellent way to manage your stress. Whether you get the much needed back rub or someone who will just listen—you will benefit by keeping your friends close by.

If you are feeling stressed because you expect yourself to be able to handle difficult situations, or because you expected to do well in a course in which you are not doing well, talking to someone else may help you let go of your expectations. If you are dealing with problems that are overwhelming you, see a personal counselor or psychologist on campus. Friends can help you with many problems, but when it comes to the ones that won't go away, use a professional. If your fears are real, you may have to give yourself permission to fail. If your fears are exaggerated, just facing them may help you to feel less stressed.