Time Management and Stress
by Maria Pascucci
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As your fall semester kicks into high gear and your schedule fills up, you college students may find your stress levels rising. You're probably counting the days until your next vacation when time is - once again - on your side. But did you ever stop to realize that the old "time is on your side" cliché holds true 24/7, whether you're in college student stress hell or living it up on summer break?

If you want to calm college student stress, master time management and get out of overwhelm, even when school's in session, keep reading ...

1. Time is your GREATEST asset in life. You get to CHOOSE how you spend it.
I know - it's a hard concept to embrace because that means we all have to stop making excuses for college student stress. Instead of saying, "I can't exercise because I don't have time," we have to admit, "I choose not to exercise because I'm not prioritizing it into my schedule." We are all personally responsible for our lives and how we spend our time is a direct reflection of how well we embrace time management.

When I experienced college student stress, I blamed others for my lack of time management. I believed that the only way I could lower my stress levels was if my professors stopped dishing out so much homework. Instead of learning better time management strategies and easing up on my own perfectionism, I made excuses. Every semester, I feel deeper into overwhelm until I let anxiety, depression, insomnia, and chronic college student stress usurp my life. Bottom line: Take control over your time right now and be calmer and happier for the rest of your life. You deserve it!

2. Time management means learning to say N-O.
"You can determine how you use your time or by default, let others plan it for you," says Beverly Coggins, professional organizer and author of the e-book, Three Steps to Time Management for the College Student.

Coggins believes that in order to calm college student stress we need to have a grasp on our own passions and priorities so that we're in a stronger position to not be led around by the whims of others. "By determining your own passions and priorities, it gives you confidence to stay focused on where you want to go in life," she adds. Bottom line: College students are supposed to be self-focused! You're not a selfish person if you choose to be empowered by your own goals. Plus, when you take care of yourself first, you'll have more energy to be there for your friends.

3. Skipping class = MORE stress.
Sorry to be the downer but skipping class really does screw with time management. It increases college student stress in the long run. Think about it: You miss class notes, class discussion, repetition of materials, interacting with your classmates and you're wasting money. If you calculate how much money you're spending per college class and then divide it by how many classes there are in a semester, you may be surprised to realize that you skipped out on a class that could very easily have exceeded one-to-several hundred dollars. Ugh! That's a week's worth of putting up with obnoxious customers at the mall or waiting tables at The Olive Garden.
I've skipped my fair share of classes in high school and college and playing catch up sucks! Be honest: how much time do you spend trying to decipher your friend’s shorthand when you borrow her class notes or tracking down your professor during office hours?

**Bottom line:** Unless it’s a true emergency, go to class and hit the snooze button on the weekends.

**4. Sleep SAVES time.**
According to Coggins, sleep should be the first thing that goes on our master schedules to calm college student stress. Why? "Sleep deprivation has the same affect on you as alcohol," says Coggins. "Your reaction time is slow, you can’t think clearly, you gain weight, and you can get depressed."

Think about how much time we waste napping during the day because we don't sleep enough at night. C’mon, how many of us have fallen asleep when we’re sitting quietly ... like in class! Coggins advises that college students figure out ways to reduce interruptions to sleep like investing in earplugs, a fan, a sleeping mask, or a note on your door. **Bottom line:** Don’t sacrifice sleep because sleep deprivation is the true time waster and it definitely makes us more susceptible to college student stress.

**5. Procrastinators CAN master time management.**
Nearly two-thirds of students say they’ve procrastinated so much that it affected their performance on an exam, paper, or course grade, according to a February 2007 College Health Services survey. Coggins suggests that college students take advantage of those first few weeks of the semester when there is little pressure, to keep up with assignments to calm college student stress.

Use the following tips to escape procrastination mode and lessen college student stress:

- Break large tasks up into bite-sized pieces and estimate how much time each piece will take. Working backwards from your deadline, schedule in each piece of your task.

- Plan in breaks. Every 45 minutes take a 15-minute break. Do something totally different that relaxes you or invigorates you - take a walk, listen to music, whatever refreshes you and reduces your college student stress.

- Know when your peak energy time is. If you are a morning person, don’t attempt overwhelming tasks at night and vice versa.

- Study with a friend. Just make sure you choose friends that won’t help you procrastinate!

**Bottom line:** Stay away from procrastination temptations when you have a deadline looming. Cell phone, PS3, HDTV ... need I say more? ;-)

**About the author:**
* Maria Pascucci is the President of Campus Calm – the award-winning online-community for today’s stressed-out students, and their parents and educators. Download your Stress-Out Less Kit with 4 FREE gifts at www.campuscalm.com. A college student stress survivor, Maria is also the founder of the International Campus Calm University Student Association at CampusCalmU.com.

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