# Analyze THIS

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### **Physical Symptoms Include:**

- 1. Sleep Disturbance
- 2. Back pain or muscle tension
- 3. High blood pressure
- 4. Breathlessness
- 5. Chest pain or racing heart beat
- 6. Clammy hands
- 7. A cold or change in bowel habits
- 8. Restlessness & fatigue
- 9. Migraine headaches
- 10. Teeth grinding/clenched jaw.

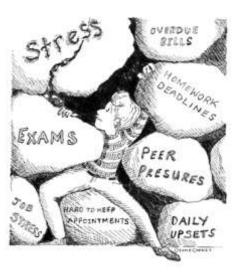
#### **Emotional Symptoms Include:**

- 1. Anger or easily upset
- 2. Anxiety or frequent worry
- 3. Denial that a problem exists
- 4. Depression
- 5. Feelings of worthlessness
- 6. Inability or difficulty making decisions
- 7. Forgetfulness
- 8. Feeling powerless
- 9. Rejected or unhappy for no apparent reason

#### **Behavioral Symptoms Include:**

- 1. Frequent arguments with friends or roommates
- 2. Snapping at people
- 3. Task avoidance
- 4. Crying easily
- 5. Decreased job performance
- 6. Difficulty concentrating
- 7. Increased use of alcohol, tobacco or drugs
- 8. Over or under-eating
- 9. Neglect of Hygiene or physical appearance
- 10. Isolating from family/friends

## Feeling Stressed?



At this time of year, does that question even need to be asked? As the semester draws to a close, and the holidays approach, it is likely that many of you reading this are feeling a little keyed up. Learning to effectively manage your stress levels is a life skill that should not be undervalued.

Increasingly, research on health and wellness has linked stress to a number of problems ranging from allergies, to heart disease and stroke. Furthermore, stress often has a cyclical effect on health as prolonged stress conditions can lead to poor health, which in turn can increase levels of stress. It is not surprising then, that once the pressure of the semester relents, many students, faculty and staff find themselves with a cold or even getting sick. It's as if the body's defenses let down and our vulnerabilities are exposed. Considering this, the more adept one becomes at recognizing the many forms and symptoms of stress, the more manageable they will be when encountered.

So what is stress? Stress is commonly referred to as the "pressure" or "tension" a person experiences when faced with a situation that is new, unpleasant, or threatening. Stress is a universal phenomenon and can be quite purposeful in facing life's challenges. No doubt students across the nation are utilizing this heightened state to complete papers and study for exams.

On a physiological level, stress interrupts the natural balance of the body as it triggers an automatic response whereby muscles tense, breathing and heart rate quicken and the adrenal glands provide the body with the energy to face a situation or flee. This is commonly understood as the flight or fight response.

So what can you do? Proper self-care can go a long way in helping to mitigate the effects of stress on the body. Balanced nutrition alongside an exercise regime and adequate rest will help your body endure stressful situations. Additionally, regularly practicing deep breathing will help your body to relax and can assist in decision making.

Another strategy that many people find helpful is to keep a journal. This can have many benefits ranging from the expression of feelings to sorting through decisions. This can also serve as a monitor on one's thinking; noticing when thinking becomes distorted or becomes s particularly negative. During such times it is good tell the truth and remember your accomplishments.

Lastly, a little organization can go a long way. This includes getting up on time and giving yourself plenty of time to get where you need to go. Look for ways to be efficient such as writing down and prioritizing tasks, designating a time and place to accomplish said tasks. It is good to try and break things down into their simplest components so as not to be overwhelmed. Build accountability into your life as a routine, and alternate between mental and physical tasks. It is important to remember to give yourself breaks and frequent rewards. This helps to insure good habits for contending with stress. Merry Christmas!

Source: Feeling Stressed, 2007 Edition, Channing Bete Company Incorporated, South Deerfield, MA