

Stress takes its toll during dead week; students offer tips to combat exhaustion

By Adeana Leftin
Staff Reporter

It's four in the morning. You're surrounded by what's left of a cold pepperoni pizza. You haven't slept all night. Only three hours left until your final and you still have five chapters left to read. You have a headache. Your muscles ache. You can't concentrate. You're stressed.

Dead Week is almost over and finals are just around the corner, so grab your books and No-Doz or ease the pressure with a few tips from the experts.

According to Connie Moore, a sophomore health aide, a well-balanced meal and adequate sleep can help reduce stress.

Mark Stuart, a freshman business administration major, said his sleep usually is affected by stress.

"The night before my finals, I'm sure I'll be up studying," he said.

Stuart said running with his roommates usually helps relieve his stress.

Glenn Gray, Complex Program Director for the Department of Residential Education, said aerobic conditioning is "the most significant form of stress manage-

ment."

Because stress affects the cardiovascular system, if a person is in good physical condition he or she will not suffer as much from stress and will recover from it sooner, he said.

Gray wrote his masters thesis on stress, and has spent years counseling students and doing educational programming about stress.

He recently conducted a survey for which students listed their top stress relievers. Talking problems out with friends, spending time alone and exercise ranked high on the list.

The study also showed that women report a lot more symptoms of stress. Men tend to respond with chemical abuse, like alcohol, to escape stress.

Gray said students should watch for these stress symptoms: insomnia, sleeping too much, over- or under-eating, low concentration, grinding teeth and muscle aches.

If students begin experiencing these symptoms, they should contact their health aide, the University Health Center or their student assistant.

Tina Patterson, a senior sociology and nursing major, is a

student assistant in Pound Residence Hall. In addition to getting herself through finals, she must look out for the 40 women on her floor.

Patterson said the first thing the women complained about was having to keep quiet 24 hours a day.

"But now," she said, "when someone asks 'how are you,' everyone says, 'I'm tired.'"

Patterson said she encourages the students to study during the day instead of waiting until late in the evening, and tells them to take breaks once in a while.

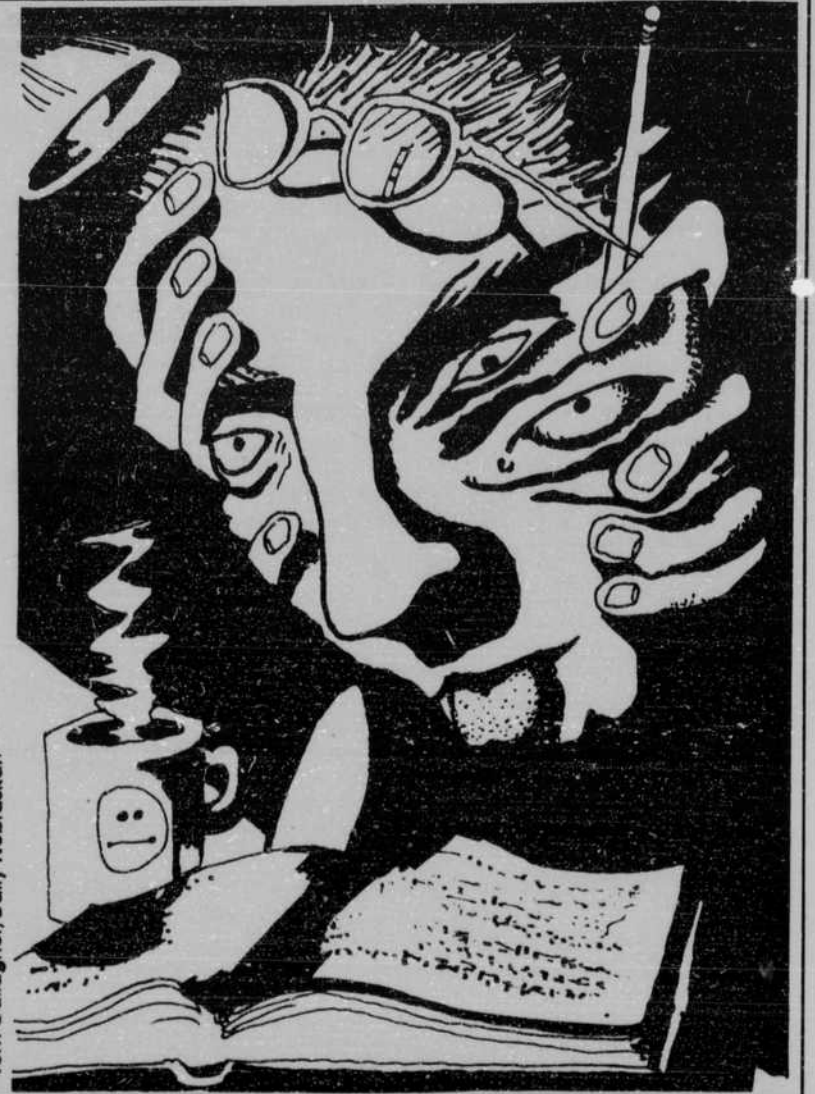
"You just can't study that long," Patterson said. "Sometimes it just helps to let them just tell you what they did. They're venting."

Patterson said she also encourages students to call home.

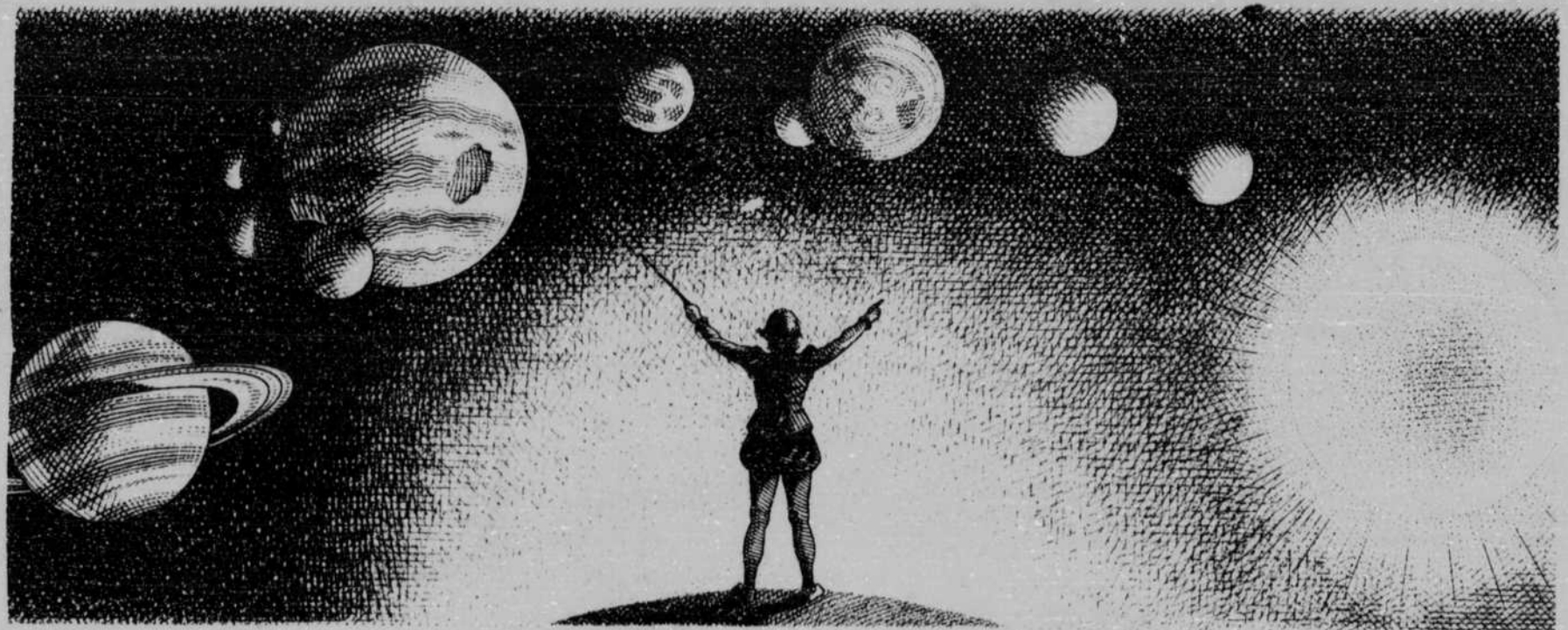
"A support system is important," she said.

Anne-Marie Smutny, a general studies freshman who lives on Patterson's floor, said her best stress reliever is planning ahead.

"I've learned to take things gradually," she said. "Try and get things done ahead of time, don't wait till the last minute. Then things don't seem as bad as if you'd waited."



Tom Gallagher/Daily Nebraskan



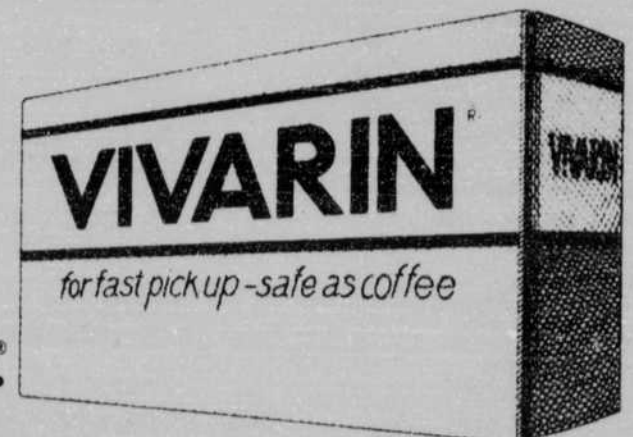
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