

Profiles in stress: How students cope

Stress Guide Index

Students at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln don't have to look hard to find stress among their classmates. The Daily Nebraskan randomly interviewed seven students to find out what stressed them out most and how they cope with the tension.

Here's what they had to say:



Katie Wirth
Junior environmental studies major
Wirth said she feels overwhelmed when stress is piled on piece-by-piece, test-by-test, assignment-by-assignment - all on the same day. The worst was a day with three tests and a quiz, she said.
Drawing and painting abstract art - "playing with textures, colors and shapes" - is Wirth's secret to finding peace, she said. She also takes plenty of study breaks, goes for walks or talks with her friends and boyfriend.



Michael Svoboda
Senior English major
Svoboda said procrastination is his worst stress enemy. He said he tends to put studying and assignments off until they are all due near the same time. Then, after the rush, he'll take a two- or three-week

break from intense school work. "I gotta take a few weeks off," he said. "I don't know if it works well, but those two to three weeks are really relaxing."



Tracy West
Sophomore business administration major
West said her stress heightens during the weeks she has three tests in a week, while also working until 3 or 4 a.m. at Amigo's. Last year, she had her two hardest final exams on the same day, which was the day after another Amigo's late shift, she said.

But she finds solace in the Sheldon Sculpture Garden, where she said she goes to study and meditate.



Lance Gunderson
Sophomore broadcasting and political science major
Gunderson said he doesn't suffer from

stress often anymore - not since he finished his four years of service in the U.S. Navy. While helping the captain on the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Enterprise, Gunderson got accustomed to high level of stress.

Since coming to UNL last year, only French 101 can crack the former seaman's tenacity, he said. "I'm not a foreign language guy."

Gunderson said he relaxes with help from Chinese hand massage balls and through meditation.



Tyler Hall
Sophomore civil engineering major
Hall said he now is starting to feel the tension from his harder, higher-level classes. That, combined with work in Habitat for Humanity, the UNL marching band and church, leaves him with a tight schedule, he said. He feels the worst stress when his friends can't fit into his day.

"It gets to the point I get a little paranoid with my friends," he said. But talking and hanging out with them is the best relief method, he said. Sometimes, he'll do something he enjoys, such as running. He also carries a list of stress management tips in his backpack.

Erika Crick
Sophomore biological sciences major
Crick said her friends can tell when she's stressed by her cranki-



ness. "I'll get mad at them for no apparent reason," she said. "And I want to sleep, even though I'm not tired."
One day this semester, Crick had a physics exam, a review for a biology test, a lab report to turn in and physics problems due.

She said her remedy for days like that is isolation. "I get away from people while I'm stressed so I don't take it out on them." But during the weekends, Crick and her friends get together and for a few hours of fun, no matter how busy they are.

"We just make time to have fun and look out for each other."



Kate Benson
Senior political science major
Benson's schedule consists of 20 hours a week playing basketball for the NU women's team, activities with Kappa Alpha Theta Sorority and her duties with the Student Athlete Advisory Board. By the way, she also has an academic and social life.

Benson said getting back into a routine with school and basketball practice under new coaches has been her most stressful experience this year.

Talking to teammates and parents is the best relief method, she said.

Page 3 - Stress and sickness: Doctors warn students of the negative health effects that stress has on the body.

Stress online: The World Wide Web has the most current news and answers to stress management questions.

Page 4 - Magic fingers: Some students have found massage as one of the best methods to soothe their bodies and chase away tension.

The power of calories: Eating stress away has been a popular method for some students, and a recent study shows it can be a good strategy.

Page 5 - Herbal heaven: Aromatherapy, lotions and essential oils have been used for thousands of years to relax mind and body.

Page 6 - Don't sweat it: Somewhere beneath the hustle and bustle of college lies a fun time. Good luck finding it.

Blonde, bubbly and beaten: Aerobics instructors can be prime targets for catharsis.

Page 7 - At the source: Stress does not discriminate among the ages. Freshmen, seniors and all students in between are not immune.

Life in Hell: Stress is easier to handle with a smile. Cartoonist Matt Groening shows the 24 warning signs.

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All in a handshake: Students can learn to control their stress and get class credit for it, providing they can master a calm, relaxed handshake.



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