



Steps to Leaps

*Self-Improvement Tools to Bolster Student Fortitude & Success
Created by Students for Students*

WELL-BEING

Stress Management

Description

This module will introduce you to ways to recognize and cope with stress. Throughout this self-guided module, you will work through action steps to create stress management goals, identify stressors and practice some stress coping skills.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this lesson:

1. Create a stress management SMART goal.
2. Recognize personal stressors and how they affect you.
3. Practice stress coping skills related to mindfulness.

Resources and Materials Needed

- *Manage Stress Workbook*

Instructions

This is a self-paced lesson. The outline below does not cover the entire *Manage Stress Workbook*, however you are encouraged to explore the workbook's entire content. You will need to set aside 5-10 minutes for each activity. Activities do not need to be done in a linear order, but, instead, and can be completed separately and in any order that you determine.

This module was created and developed by the Purdue Recreation and Wellness team.

Module Outline

Find a quiet space where you will not be interrupted. Either open the *Manage Stress Workbook* on your computer or print off a copy and write in your answers.

Stress Management Goal (5-10 minutes)

- Start off by reading page two and three in the *Manage Stress Workbook* to get some insight on how to best manage stress. Don't worry about completing the noted activities at this time, we will continue to work through those later in the module.
- Complete the exercise at the bottom of page three. This exercise is designed to help clear your head in order to think of the best possible stress management goals.
- You probably already have an idea of your ideal stress management. Even if you are in a place where you feel overly stressed, try to imagine what your ideal stress management would look like. Stress will always happen, so do not try to eliminate it completely, but think of the most ideal, realistic relationship with stress. Now, write down your goals on page 1 of your workbook.

Tools for Managing Stress

- **Stress Tracker (5-10 minutes)**
 - First, assess your current stress level using the scale on page four of the *Manage Stress Workbook*.
 - Next, work back through your day or week and reflect on any stressful time or event. Log those events in the stress log on page 4. Be sure to practice being truthful with yourself when recording stress levels and what you were thinking during an event.
 - Moving forward, come back to this page during high stress times.
 - Pausing to reflect on how an event is affecting you and your thoughts about what is happening can help lessen the negative impacts of stress.
- **Identifying Your Stressors (5-10 minutes)**
 - Check off any of the stressors that apply to you on page five of the *Manage Stress Workbook*. Write in any stressor that is not listed already.

- Next, assign your selected stressors to the appropriate quadrant on page five.
 - This quadrant chart can help you prioritize your stress by letting you know which stressors may need to be handled sooner (short-term) rather than later (long-term). It can also help you let go of the hold that some uncontrollable stressors may have on you.
 - If it is reasonable to do so, stop worrying about any uncontrollable stressor you may have. Worrying about something one cannot control may cause more harm than good.
- **Stress Symptom Checklist (5-10 minutes)**
 - On page six of the *Manage Stress Workbook*, take some time to check off which of the listed symptoms you experience when you are stressed. List any symptom that is not already listed.
 - Learning how our bodies respond to stress can help us notice when stress is entering our daily lives.
 - Remember that our bodies respond to all stressors in much the same way. Your heart rate will increase whether you meet a bear in the woods or feel nervous taking a test. This is your body's way of helping you rise to the occasion and overcome a stressor. Learning to accept the way the body responds to stress can help us better cope in the moment.
 - If you need to calm your body down, try doing some gentle deep breaths. This can lower your heart rate and relax your breathing.
 - For more info about your body and stress, watch this video.
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RcGyVTAoXEU>
- **Mindfulness (5-10 minutes)**
 - Pick a mindfulness activity that you would like to try on pages 7-12 of the *Manage Stress Workbook*. Find a quiet place to practice the exercise (the Mindfulness Room in the CoRec is a great choice!)
 - Follow the instructions for your selected exercise.
 - After the exercise, reflect on the experience.
 - Was it hard, relaxing, odd, peaceful? The tip at the bottom of page 8 and 9 is useful for those new to meditation and mindfulness.
 - To help in your reflection, work through the RAIN exercise on page 11.

Next Steps in Stress Management

- Explore the rest of the workbook for more helpful exercises and to learn about some Purdue resources.
- If the exercises don't seem to be helping you with your stress management, you may want to explore other campus resources
 - Visit or download the WellTrack Self-Help Therapy Tool: <https://purdue.welltrack.com/>
 - Have an assessment with CAPS (Counseling and Psychological Services): <https://www.purdue.edu/caps/>
 - Visit with a provider at PUSH (Purdue University Student Health Service): <https://www.purdue.edu/push/>
 - Contact Student Support Services if you are not sure how to take the first steps to find a solution: <https://www.purdue.edu/advocacy/index.html>
 - Purdue Recreation and Wellness has a variety of tools and resources available to help you learn more about managing your stress: <https://www.purdue.edu/recwell/programs/wellnessPrograms/index.php>