



Concentration and Your Body

The pressure of deadlines and expectations may make you ignore your body's needs... BUT...if you don't take care of your body, you may lose interest in your studies, and fatigue may cause anxiety, which can limit performance.

THROUGHOUT THE SEMESTER maintain good habits of diet, exercise, sleep and rest.

- Take 10 minutes to relax before meals; eat well-balanced food slowly; make mealtime an opportunity to calm down.
- Choose an exercise you enjoy...jogging, swimming, yoga, etc....and build up gradually until it's a regular part of your week.
- Schedule 7 to 8 hours of sleep each night and plan a regular bedtime.

EACH TIME YOU STUDY plan to use your body to help you concentrate.

- Choose or create a study environment with a straight but comfortable chair (but not too comfortable or too relaxing) that fits you, a desk with all the equipment you need, daylight or indirect light which is bright enough but doesn't glare on your book or in your eyes.
- Study according to your biorhythms: schedule your most difficult subjects when you are at peak mental efficiency (after 10PM? early morning?) and plan to do easier tasks, like compiling a bibliography at the library, when you are mentally at low efficiency.
- Know and respect your own concentration span. When you begin a study session, gather your materials, relax, plan what you want to accomplish and energetically begin. When your mind wanders, call yourself back to the task. But when you find yourself consistently daydreaming or working without comprehension, stop and TAKE A BREAK. For 5 to 10 minutes, talk to someone, take a walk, daydream, relax. Then repeat the cycle and begin studying again.

DURING DEADLINES AND TEST STRESS don't let pressure cause you to ignore your body!

- Make every minute count by turning meals, time spent travelling by bus or car or walking across campus into opportunities for relaxation and exercise.
- During long study sessions, drink lots of fluids, increase caloric intake, and eat frequent small meals. Use only coffee, tea, soft drinks in moderation. Some people cannot tolerate much caffeine, so be careful and don't take in too much.
- Plan breaks to include light exercise to help you stay awake and revitalize.
- Don't oversleep; if you must cut down on sleep, try going to bed at your regular bedtime and getting up early.
- If you are keyed up or anxious, relax yourself periodically. If you can't sleep, exercise during the day and plan to spend 30 minutes relaxing before you go to bed.