



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA

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POST GRAD SUCCESS: MANAGE STRESS BETTER

Post grad work can be demanding. It's helpful to develop a frame for thinking about how to manage yourself and your study. Be clear about career goals and think realistically about what you'd like to achieve. Discuss your goals with your supervisor. Identify personal obstacles, pressures and potential difficulties. With planning it's possible to prevent problems from occurring. Find out about support mechanisms early and use the full resources of the University.

There are many possible ways to reduce stress

Stress can happen when we adjust to demands of our environment and can be positive and negative. Positive stress energizes us to act, negative stress influences negative thinking and emotions. By identifying the sources of stress and effects on your well being, work and relationships you can look at ways to reduce it. You can change your source of stress or your reaction to it.

A PLACE OF OPPORTUNITY



Build your emotional resilience. Go through a process of clarifying emotions. Identify your feelings, observe how they relate to your behaviours and explore the context in which they occur. Reduce the intensity of emotions by talking to your family, friends, colleagues or supervisors.

Some tips to reduce stress

- Look at your stressors and your emotional and physical reactions.
- Try to see the stress as something you can cope with rather than something that overwhelms.
- Examine underlying attitudes and beliefs that lead to unproductive behaviours.
- Mindfulness meditation can help to moderate emotional and physical reactions.
- Take regular breaks when you can.
- Develop some mutually supportive relationships.
- Mix work and leisure. Maintain a network of colleagues and social connections in the University and community.
- Enjoy your achievements.
- Learn to change your physical reactions to stress. Practice slow, deep breathing to bring your heart rate and respiration back to normal. Muscle tension can be reduced by relaxation techniques or yoga.
- Exercise for cardiovascular fitness a few times a week e.g. walking, swimming, cycling, or jogging.
- Eat well.
- Get enough sleep.
- Avoid nicotine, too much caffeine or alcohol.
- Recognize any faulty thinking. What are you telling yourself about what's happened? What you tell yourself can trigger a stress reaction. Become aware of automatic negative thoughts when attributing meaning e.g. seeing your stressors in exaggerated negative ways can make events look disastrous. Put the situation in perspective. Avoid focusing on negative aspects and scenarios.

Where can I get help from others?

NUPSA offers support for post grads <http://www.nupsa.org.au>

You can make an appointment with the University Counselling Service - it is free and confidential.

Phone: 02 492 15801

Email: counselling@newcastle.edu.au

Visit: Find us in the Hunter Building foyer near the Griffith Duncan Theatre

What other resources are available?

University Counselling Service: <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/service/counselling/index.html>

Office of Graduate Studies: <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/unit/office-of-graduate-studies>