Stress is part of everyday life. Stressful situations for Uni students may include; meeting high academic demands, being in new social settings, being away from home for the first time, returning to study after a break, sitting examinations, financial restraints, finding a study/life balance, speaking in public. While mild stress can be beneficial as a motivator, higher levels of ongoing stress may lead to medical, psychological and/or social problems.

What is stress?
Stress refers to the demands, pressures or forces applied to us. Stress can involve our perceptions of threat about internal or external events. This threat stimulates the release of stress hormones which produce the ‘fight-flight’ response. The fight-flight response prepares us for a physical, emotional and/or mental action and is essential for survival.

Positive management of stress results in positive emotions such as enjoyment, satisfaction, enthusiasm and excitement. However, too much stress can be debilitating when it causes detrimental changes in how we think, feel and behave.

The following are symptoms you might experience when stressed:

**Behaviour**
- Sleep disturbance
- Emotional outbursts or irritability
- Withdrawal
- Crying easily
- Excessive eating or appetite loss
- Increased smoking/drinking
- Changes in activity level

**Physical**
- Increased heart rate
- Sweating
- Muscle tension or soreness
- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Dry mouth
- Nausea
- Diarrhoea, constipation or frequent urination. Note: physical symptoms might be caused by things other than stress, if in doubt always check with your GP.

**Feelings**
- Anxiety or nervousness
- Fear or feeling frightened
- Moodiness or rapid changes in mood
- Depressed mood or sadness and apathy
- Fatigue
- Guilt and shame
- Low self-esteem
- Low self-confidence

**Thoughts**
- Difficulty concentrating, forgetfulness and distractibility
- Worry
- Negative self-talk
Practical ways to cope with stress
The key to stress management is to reduce the intensity of the fight-flight response. Many stressors can be changed, eliminated or minimised.

Here are some things you can do to reduce your level of stress:

- Practice rational thinking – use positive self-talk: “I’m ok, I just need to pace myself”
- Develop assertive behaviours – learn to say “no”
- Get a hobby or two – relax and have fun
- Exercise regularly – burn off excess stress hormones
- Eat a balanced diet daily and avoid excess caffeine and alcohol
- Learn and practice relaxation techniques
- Use breathing techniques, to calm you down
- Establish and make use of a good social network – talk with someone you can trust
- When studying for an exam: study in short blocks; take breaks
- Remember to keep a balance between study and leisure
- Attend exam skills workshops

For a full list visit utas.edu.au/students/resources

Help! Where can I find it??

Beyond Blue: beyondblue.org.au
Free information and support around mental health and wellbeing. Includes online chat service.
Phone: 1300 22 46 36

Headspace: headspace.org.au
Information, resources and support for people 25 years and under. Includes online and phone support through eheadspace, as well as face-to-face service at a centre near you.

University Counselling Service:
utas.edu.au/counselling
Appointments (face-to-face, video, phone, instant chat and email) are available with experienced mental health clinicians between 8.30am and 5.00pm weekdays.
Online bookings: utas.edu.au/appointments
Phone: 1800 817 675
After Hours Crisis counselling support phone 1300 511 709 or text 0488 884 168.

Useful mobile apps

Calm. This app has been designed for sleep, meditation and relaxation. This is a great mindfulness app for beginners through to advanced users.

Headspace. Sleep by Headspace can be found within the Headspace app. It includes everything from meditation, to nature sounds and even music for sleep.

Smiling Mind. Designed by psychologists and educators to bring mindfulness into your life.

Other helpful resources

The Desk: thedesk.org.au
The desk is an online resource aimed at improving wellbeing, designed specifically for University students. It includes online modules and resources to help you manage stress.

Information sheets
Check out our range of information sheets that can help you better manage stress such as Breathing and Relaxation, Time Management, Improving your Sleep and Controlling Procrastination.