



Increase Your Resilience in Stressful Times

Resilience is defined here as the ongoing deep capacity to bounce back from failure or setbacks. People who survive and thrive despite times of high stress and intense challenge have *resilience*.

Build Academic Resilience by:

Checking **Goals and Priorities** - set SMART goals (Specific, Manageable, Acceptable, Realistic, Time frame).

Increasing **Sustainability** - make provisions for relaxation, sleep, exercise, nutrition, family, and social life. This is essential!

Breaking down **Large Tasks** - divide large tasks into small, manageable chunks that progress toward achievement:



Tip: When **stressed or anxious**, work at daily task goals in 20-25 minute chunks of focussed work. Work by time, not by content! (Hint: google “*pomodoro technique*” for more info)

Corrected Practice - Use correction and feedback to complete assignments and to prepare for examinations.

Breaks - Plan and take periodic breaks to allow things to sink in, to refresh yourself, and to reward progress.



Rewards – You need them! Plan and reward yourself each week with a special activity or occasion. Hint: Avoid alcohol as a reward during times of peak stress.

Maximize Time Management by:

Self-monitoring - Monitor your time use by tracking your own rhythm of mental and physical energy.

Scheduling – Wherever possible, schedule tasks to take advantage of your personal rhythm and circumstances (e.g., early riser, time chunks between classes, noisy times and quiet times, etc.).

Breaks - Build breaks into your schedule. Try 25 minutes of focussed work with a 5-min break; after four of these, take a longer break.



Reduce Distractions! – Turn off your cell phone & internet for those 25 minute work periods. If you have intrusive thoughts, keep a pad and write them down, then go back to work until 25 minutes is up.

Manage Anxiety by:

Practicing Self-assertion - Do a realistic review of your situation, decide on a course of action (right or wrong), assert yourself and take charge of your life. Be in charge of you!

Improving your **Sleep Habits** - Cultivate a sleep pattern that conforms to nature's way by working on a 24-hour sleep cycle and getting sufficient sleep (i.e., 9 hours of sleep and a consistent wake-up time). Consistency rules!

Exercise - Get regular, vigorous exercise, use exercise to drain off tension. Link up with a friend to increase your likelihood of starting.



Relaxation - Learn physical and mental relaxation (tension-release, diaphragmatic breathing, yoga)

Check out these sites:

<http://www.psychologytools.org/mindfulness.html>

<http://marc.ucla.edu/body.cfm?id=22>

<http://health.ucsd.edu/specialties/mindfulness/mbsr/Pages/audio.aspx>

Friends - Talk to one or two friends each day, for support and encouragement, avoid friends that "bring you down or wind up your anxiety!"

Consultation - Help yourself by seeking consultation with peers, Amicus tutors, instructors, or the Amicus Program staff.

Increase Your Personal Resilience:

Research shows that positive people have better moods, try harder, succeed more often and have better physical health:

Learn to recognize moods and thoughts that cause you distress; learn what helps you relax/reconnect with well-being and access it regularly.

Practice shifting your thinking; move through negative thoughts more quickly

Lean into Anxiety - Acknowledge and accept anxiety rather than hiding it or choking it back. Anxiety is normal. Anxiety is motivating. Anxiety is inevitable. (**see section above for tips on managing anxiety**)

Make a list of what you like in your life; remember it often (practice gratitude!)

Learn about and practice mindfulness (see relaxation above)



Develop your humour muscles – Laughter releases endorphins, laughing with friends releases oxytocin, both are great stress busters!