

# Boost Your School Performance by Taking Care of You

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 [mentalhealthamerica.net/boost-your-school-performance-taking-care-you](https://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/boost-your-school-performance-taking-care-you)

It can be hard to maintain a healthy lifestyle in college. If you are running to classes, studying, commuting to school and working or taking care of your family, time can seem to evaporate. If you are just starting college, the changes can feel overwhelming-and you may neglect your health.

Taking good care of your body and mind can make a difference in how well you do in school and how well you manage change. Exercising, eating right, getting enough rest and relaxing will help you do better, enjoy school more and improve how you deal with life's challenges. Caring for yourself may take a little extra time, but you will feel better and be more successful. Here's what you need and why it helps:

## **Regular exercise:**

- Elevates mood, reduces stress, increases energy level, improves appearance, and stimulates the release of endorphins and serotonin, which makes you happier.
- Increases alertness and creativity.
- Improves your overall mental and physical well-being. Even taking a 15-minute walk, 3 times a week, can help.
- Like playing intramural sports, keeps you active and also creates more opportunities to meet new friends!
- Decreases stress. On days when you are feeling overwhelmed, hit the gym.

## **A healthy diet:**

- Improves your ability to learn.
- Means eating a nutritious breakfast everyday. Skipping meals leads to a lack of energy.
- Includes eating something nutritious every time you are in the cafeteria. Try vegetables from the salad bar or an apple from the fruit stands.
- Means limiting your alcohol intake.
- Avoids excessive amounts of caffeine. Caffeine dehydrates you. Drink at least 8 glasses of water a day to prevent dehydration.

## **Plenty of rest:**

- Means getting at least 7-9 hours of sleep. This is essential and will make you more attentive and active. Inadequate sleep can lead to mood changes and lowered resistance to illness.
- Means you have more physical and psychological resources to cope with everyday life. Without it you have to work harder to get school assignments done and you have less energy.
- Is half the battle, the other half is cutting back on your alcohol consumption because it can disturb your sleep. Though you might fall asleep faster, you're body will not be as rested.

## **Relaxation:**

- Means taking short study breaks, especially when you feel stuck.
- Means taking time each day to unwind, especially before sleeping. Listen to music, read or do whatever you enjoy. Alcohol or drugs are not the way to go.

- Offers a distraction from problems, a sense of competence and many other benefits.
- Means getting a good laugh. Laughing decreases pain, may help your heart and lungs, promotes muscle relaxation and can reduce anxiety.

Take care of your mind as well as your body. If you find that you are struggling emotionally or you are unable to cope, reach out to others for help. Seeking help is a sign of strength. Talk with someone you trust, and go to your college counseling service or doctor. Your local Mental Health America (MHA) affiliate can refer you to services as well.

To find the nearest MHA affiliate, call 800-969-6642 or go to [Find an Affiliate](#). Go to [Live Your Life Well](#) for more wellness tips.

**In crisis? If you or someone you know is in crisis now, seek help immediately. Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) to reach a 24-hour crisis center or dial 911 for immediate assistance.**

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