

1. **Get outside.** Go for a walk with a friend. Check out the Speer Pavilion, Lake DeGray, take a Humane Society dog for a walk. Join an intramural team or one of the many great ReLife outdoor activities.



2. **Build strong connections with peers & faculty/staff on-campus**

This is time well-spent if you keep your coursework a priority. Avoid leaning solely on folks back home. Don't hope and wait for others to invite you; take some



initiative. Get involved with some official student group on campus. Ask your RD or RA about the huge number of options!

Good relationships increase resilience.

3. **Watch out for avoidance & escapism.** Don't let yourself begin

avoiding difficult coursework.

Procrastination will increase your anxiety and stress, and decrease self-confidence, though it may bring relief momentarily.

Avoidance and procrastination don't work!

The stress you're trying to escape will just follow you around like a dark cloud, making it tough to really enjoy whatever you're

doing. When avoidance becomes a habit, it'll pull you down deeper into paralysis.

4. **Replace overthinking with action.** Action begets further action and improves motivation, which brings more productivity. To feel better you're likely going to have to do something responsible. Feeling little motivation? Use that "little" motivation you have to produce more. Every time you check something off your to-do list you'll feel better and more motivated. Take one task, one hour at a time. Focus on the here and now, rather than on your huge to-do list for the month!

Consider this advice from Dr. Edward Hollowell¹:

"There is a maxim from baseball which says, 'Play the ground ball; don't let it play you.' This piece of advice



may be lost on people who are not athletically inclined or who have never played baseball or softball, but the proper fielding of a ground ball is a wonderfully

instructive skill all people can learn from. A ground ball is a baseball hit by the batter that bounces very fast along the ground. The fielder's job is to stop the ball so that he can throw it to first base before the batter can reach there. In order to make the throw in time, the fielder needs to field the ball 'cleanly,' that is without bobbling it or letting it bounce off his chest. The novice fielder's first instinct in fielding a ground ball is to back up on the ball and try to predict the bounces as the ball skips toward him. This is called letting the ball play you. You are at the mercy of the unpredictable hops the ball can take. You naturally tense up and worry, *Can I field this ball or is it going to get past me?* This is a disastrous attitude to have in fielding a ground ball. You will likely kick the ball or miss it altogether. Instead, you should charge the ball as it speeds towards you. Then you will not over-think the problem of how to field it; you will simply

act. You will grab the ball before you give your worry-center a chance to think too much and inhibit you from successfully fielding it. You'll do better to attack the problem, rather than letting it attack you."

¹ Worry, by Edward Hollowell, MD, Balantine Books, New York, 1997

5. **Replace self-critical thoughts**

when faced with a disappointing grade or performance. Things like, "Everyone else gets it. What's wrong with me?" "I'm so stupid!" "I'll never understand this stuff. I can't do this."



If that nagging critical voice is in your head, it can be crippling! You can learn to reject these automatic negative thoughts (ANTs), and replace them with more productive, true, and helpful beliefs about yourself, your abilities, and God's purposes for

you. Don't assume that just because you've struggled with or never done something before that it's impossible! Abraham Lincoln was defeated in 8 elections before eventually becoming our 16th President! Of course you can fail, and then grow, mature, and be stretched to accomplish more than before! **Remind yourself that your initial self-criticisms are rarely reliable or helpful.**

6. **Get enough sleep** (8-9 hours as often as possible). Resist the temptation to stay up with friends until who knows when! Sleep deprivation will compromise your memory and overall cognitive functioning, diminishing your ability to handle your emotions and cope with difficulty.



7. **Seek help** when you need it. Contact the Academic Success Center for tutoring, the Speer Writing Center, meet with your instructor, find and join a good study group, seek help from a fellow student in class, or contact the Counseling Center.
8. **Talk** to a supportive friend/fellow student or a mentor. (If you'd like a faculty/staff mentor on campus, contact Dan Jarboe in the Counseling Center.)

Destructive Coping Behaviors Include: Alcohol, porn, and marijuana or other drug use, excessive gaming, binge eating or spending, sexual acting out, excessive sleeping, habitually "giving up"/quitting, social withdrawal - secluding yourself to your room or car and leaving campus and retreating home every time you're lonely or discouraged (you'll manage stress and adjust better to college life with strong connections here on campus).

A **Student Leader's** advice for managing stress in college:

1. **Study first, play later.**
2. **Develop strong relationship connections** with other students, faculty, and staff. A strong sense of community is critical to persevering in college.
3. **Select a major you enjoy**, wherein you have strong interest!
4. **Choose your friends very carefully.** "The friend of the wise will become wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm." Proverbs 13:20



5. **Minimize your electronic entertainment and screen time** (video games, TV & movies), get out and [physically] do stuff!

Stressed-Out?



Here are some helpful tips for coping well when things get tough.



OBU Counseling Center
 (Lower Level, Evans Student Center)
 Call 870-245-5220 for an appointment