



Indiana State
University

STUDENT COUNSELING CENTER

Gillum Hall, 2nd Floor

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www.indstate.edu/cns

WELLNESS TIPS

GRADUATE STUDENT SURVIVAL TIPS

- 1. Start studying now.** Don't procrastinate, you will feel more stressed and out of control if you put off your work. The same holds true for papers, begin them as soon as you can.
- 2. Be prepared for class.** Do your reading and assignments before class so that you can participate in discussion and follow the lecture more easily. Class sizes are smaller in grad school and when you are not prepared it is more obvious to your professors.
- 3. Attend every class.** Do not miss class unless absolutely necessary. A lot of material is covered in one class period. If you are sick or there are other circumstances that cause you to miss class be sure to send your professor an e-mail to let them know. It would also benefit you to see if you can get a copy of a classmate's notes for the day.
- 4. Get organized.** Use a planner or calendar to keep yourself organized. Record all assignments and deadlines and review what you have coming up on a daily basis. Break up big or difficult tasks into smaller ones. Use reminders and alerts if you are worried about forgetting something important. Create a to-do list for the day or week if you find that more helpful. Organize your space, have a place to study that is without distractions and which contains the things necessary for you to get work done. Remember that organization and planning are important for your dissertations and final major projects. Less structure requires more planning on your part.
- 5. Prioritize.** Once you have everything you need to do organized you need to prioritize your list. This will help you to plan out your study time.
- 6. Be okay with making mistakes.** We all make mistakes and sometimes that is the best way to learn. Do not beat yourself up over a mistake, rather move forward and learn something from the mistake. You have enough stress and pressure as it is without adding more over something that you can't change.
- 7. Talk to your professors.** If you are struggling with something or need assistance with finding resources on campus your professors are a valuable source of information and support.
- 8. Get to know the other students in your cohort.** Your cohort can be a great support and help over the next few years. You are all in this together. Helping each other through study groups, sharing notes, editing papers, and consulting about assignments will be mutually beneficial in most cases. Your cohort can also be a good social outlet when you have time for a break, need a friend to talk to, or need company at the grocery store.

- 9. Network.** Go to conferences and workshops and get to know other in your field of study. You may meet a potential employer.
- 10. Ask for help.** If you feel like you are in over your head remember that you are not alone. There are many people and places on and off campus that can help. The Student Counseling Center is one of those places and even if you are not in need of counseling, it is a good place to call if you are looking for other resources or assistance.
- 11. Know when to relax.** In grad school, stress is inevitable. So it's important for you to know when to take a step back from your studies and relax. If you are exhausted, you can't focus on your homework, you are reading and rereading the same paragraph over and over without any of it sinking in, you need a break. Choose an enjoyable activity that helps you to unwind and relax and give yourself a set amount of time to just chill out. If you can, schedule some time for yourself each day.
- 12. Sleep.** Though it might seem like a good idea to pull an all-nighter to get that paper finished, you're better off getting some sleep and returning to it fresh in the morning. Research shows that our brain functions better when we get adequate sleep. For young adults seven to nine hours a night is recommended.
- 13. Exercise.** Exercise is one of the best stress-relievers around. When we are stressed we experience elevated levels of stress hormones that keep us wound up. We might experience tight muscles, headaches, and irritability. Exercise allows us to release that pent-up energy and will improve focus, mood, anxiety, as well as sleep.
- 14. Eat Healthy.** Make healthy food choices and don't skip meals. If you know you will not have time to stop and get something to eat, carry something with you like granola bars or some fruit.
- 15. Budget.** Just as you need to budget your time, you will need to budget your money. Be mindful of the expenses that you have and the money that you have available to cover them. Plan for hidden and surprise expenses. Keep track of your spending.