

Reducing end-of-semester stress

By JENNY MCINTYRE



I'm never sure if a stress article needs to be at the beginning of the semester, when there is still time to change, or right before exams, when the stress management techniques are needed the most.

With final projects looming ever closer and exams right around the corner, most of us are experiencing a lot of end-of-the-semester stress. But there are some things to do to keep your cool when stress really starts to burn you out.

Stress is the way your body responds to demands made on it. Stressors come in all shapes and sizes — physical and mental, good and bad — and put various amounts of pressure on you.

Stress actually has three stages: the stressor (a decision, car trouble, exams), how you perceive it (challenge or threat) and your response. You can intervene at any of these stages.

You may be able to find a way to avoid the stressor altogether. You can change the way you think about the stressor. Look upon the situation as an opportunity rather than an obstacle. Or you can learn techniques to help you reduce your stress after the fact.

How many times have you heard someone say, "I have so much to do, I don't know where to start." Many people find "quiet time" helpful. One of my old bosses said he could get more done in one uninterrupted hour than he could all day. Taking time out to get away from the distractions of everyday life may make your life run smoother. (Have you

ever noticed how much more work you get done in the library as opposed to in your room?)

Time management is key in keeping the stressors in your life minimal. If you can plan how to work out all you have to do, you've won half the battle of doing it.

Part of time management is setting goals. You need to know where you're going before you start out. Breaking up large goals (such as a semester-long project) into short-term (or benchmark) goals helps you feel not quite so overwhelmed.

When you set your goals, keep a few tips in mind: Your goals need to be specific, reasonable and balanced. By specific, I mean "Work on paper for History 253" and not "study"; when I say reasonable, I mean don't set goals so high it will take a miracle and a note from your mother to achieve them.

And balanced refers to both your academic and personal goals. Once you have set your goals, prioritize. Decide what you need to do right now (the world will collapse if you don't get this done), tomorrow and never. When you can see what's the most important, it is easier not to get bogged down in the trivial stuff.

Positive thinking is one of the ways to change your perceptions of stressors. This takes no special training, just a commitment to do it. Have you ever noticed that some people always see just the bad things, and have you noticed just how stressful it is to be around them?

Think about someone that you really like being around. What is it about them that makes you like them? It probably has something to do with the way they see things — everything is an opportunity or a challenge, not a problem.

You can try relaxation exercises to

help relieve some of the symptoms of stress (more common ones are headaches, fatigue, irritability, insomnia, stomach disorders). Deep breathing, exercising, progressive muscle relaxation, visualization and biofeedback are some relaxation techniques. Some such as biofeedback take special training; others such as deep breathing don't.

I like visualization as my way to relax. Whenever I start to feel my shoulders inching toward my ears and my back teeth clenching, I take a couple of minutes and imagine I'm at the beach, lying on the sand with the sun dancing off my nose and toes.

I can feel the heat, I can hear the waves, I can feel the way the sand conforms to my body. I think of the way I feel at the beach — relaxed, soothed. In a few minutes, all is right with the world, and I can continue with my work with a new outlook.

For more information about stress management, stop by Open Door and pick up the package "Stress or Success." The Counseling and Human Development Center, in the BA building, offers classes in stress management, assertiveness, self-hypnosis and biofeedback techniques.

The Academic Skills Center, in one of the houses across from the BA building, can help with one-on-one assistance with study skills and time management. And don't forget the P.E. Center and Campus Recreation for your exercise needs.

With the semester drawing to a close, some of the resources may be winding down, also. Be sure to check these out next semester, when your stress management can be proactive instead of reactive.

Jenny McIntyre is a graduate assistant with Health and Wellness Programs.



Ray Liotta and Kevin Dillon star in 'No Escape,' a futuristic action adventure set in the year 2022.

Escape from 'No Escape'

By ANGIE CAMPBELL
Staff Writer

For those of you who missed the preview of "No Escape" Monday night in the Russell House Theater, consider yourself lucky.

In "No Escape," a futuristic movie set in 2022, violent prisoners are sent to Absolom, a secret island where the name of the game is survival of the fittest.

Ray Liotta portrays haunted Marine Capt. John Robbins, who is sent to Absolom, where he encounters a sadistic gang of prisoners called the Outsiders. Barely escaping their fury, Robbins takes refuge with a peaceful camp of pris-

oners called the Insiders. It is there that he becomes even more determined to survive and escape the inescapable island.

Produced by Gale An Hurd ("Aliens," "The Abyss," "Terminator 2: Judgment Day"), "No Escape" promises to be another entertaining and innovative action flick. Quite frankly, it promises a lot more than it delivers.

Although "No Escape" does offer a few laughs, the plot seems to rely too much on violence. It seems that every five minutes someone is being stabbed, sliced or decapitated. While this may be common for action/adventure films, the action is so

fast-paced that it is often hard to follow.

Unlike "The Abyss" and "T2," this movie lacks a certain quality that makes it entertaining to watch. Even the acting leaves much to be desired, with the best performances coming from Ray Liotta and Kevin Dillon, who portrays Liotta's eager yet naive sidekick.

"No Escape" probably will never receive blockbuster status; it simply doesn't have enough potential. Do yourself a favor and wait for this one to hit video. Fast-forward buttons were invented for movies like this.

File Photo



Safety

- Go out with friends and keep track of each other. Don't broadcast your name, address or plans in front of others.
- On a first date, plan to meet in a public place. Let people know where you plan to be and let your date know that others know. Stick to your plans.

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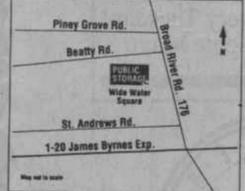
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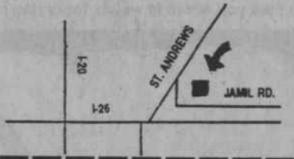
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