

Stress Less, Harvard.

Actions to reduce the amount of stress experienced by Harvard students.

1

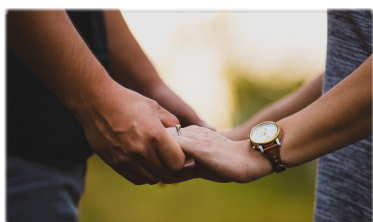
CARING FOR OTHERS

WHO: Students

WHAT: The option to send a care package to a friend as a way to offer social support during finals period.

WHY:

- Social support buffers against the negative consequences of stress exposure, including depression (Cohen et al., 1985) and immune functioning (Cohen et al., 1992).
- Greater social support is associated with a reduced stress response at multiple levels: the brain (Coan et al., 2006), the sympathetic nervous system (Lepore et al., 1993), and the HPA axis (Eisenberger et al., 2007).



2

PRE-FINAL POSITIVITY

WHO: Faculty

WHAT: Each final exam must feature a paragraph informing students about stress arousal in testing situations, encouraging them to view it as beneficial rather than destructive.

WHY:

- An informative paragraph on stress arousal can lead to the reappraisal of test-related stress and improved academic performance (Jamieson et al., 2016)



3

EATING FOR SUCCESS

WHO: Administration

WHAT: Ensure HUDS and Brain Break facilitate a healthy lifestyle by mitigating poor diet decisions regarding unhealthy snacking.

WHY:

- Snack quality is associated with academic performance (Kanarek and Swinney, 1990)
- Common barriers to a balanced diet include the convenience of high-calorie foods, exposure to stress, high prices of healthy food, and unhealthy snacking (Sogari et al., 2018).
- A lack of sleep leads to increased sensitivity towards highly-palatable sugary foods (Yau & Potenza, 2013).

