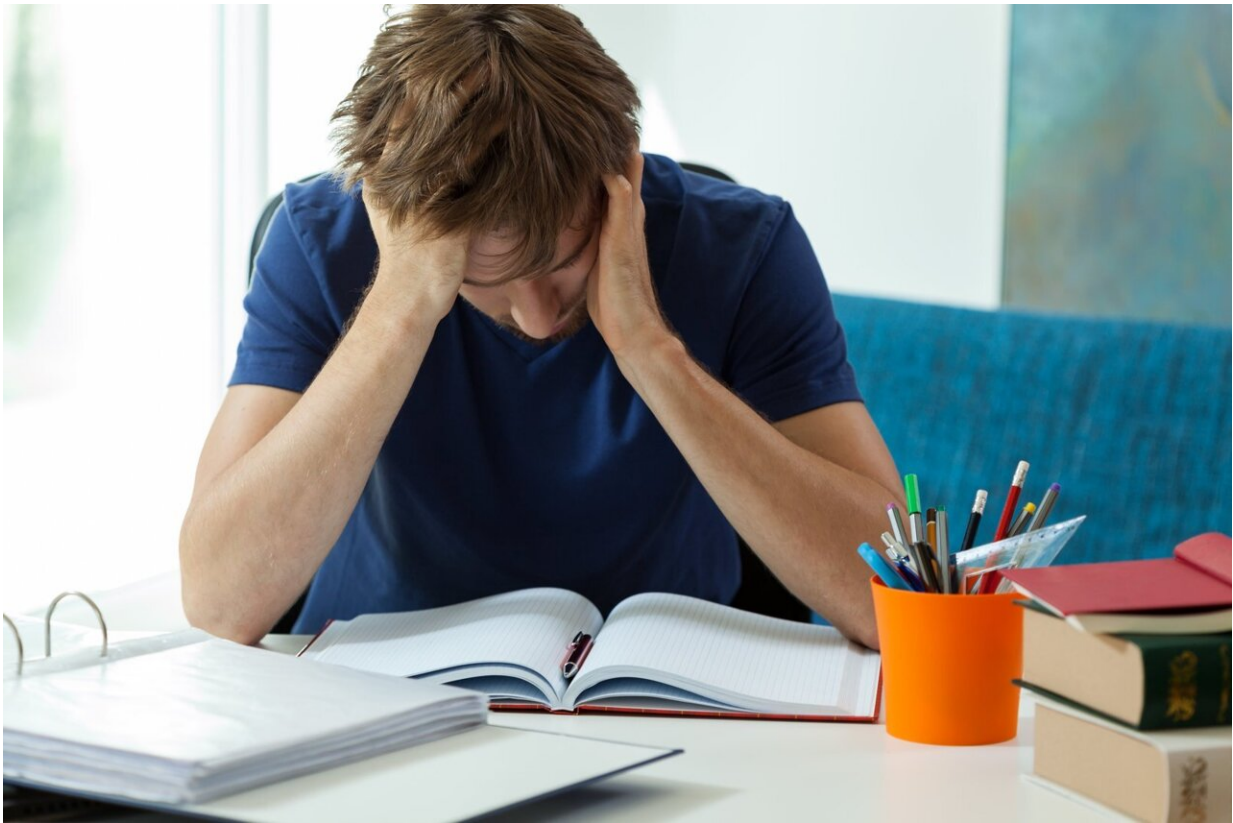


Parents can ease their teens' stress around standardized tests

April 12 2024, by Dennis Thompson



Standardized tests put a lot of pressure on teenagers who want to secure their future and make their parents and teachers proud.

This [stress](#) can lead to symptoms like stomach aches, [sleep problems](#), irritability and heightened emotionality, experts say.

But there are concrete steps [students](#) can take to prepare for a standardized test while also keeping their cool.

Live healthy. Getting enough sleep, eating healthy without skipping meals and engaging in some [physical activity](#) are all healthy lifestyle habits that help reduce stress, said Eric Storch, vice chair of psychology at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

"A lot of people end up thinking they need to spend more time studying or don't have time for exercise or [meals](#), but it ends up turning into a [vicious cycle](#) of not taking care of yourself, which contributes to worse future performance," Storch said in a Baylor news release.

Schedule breaks. Make sure breaks to relax and unwind are included in a study schedule.

Manage expectations. A sense of perspective about these tests is important. Students shouldn't think about them in black-and-white terms of total success or utter failure.

"Reflect on if the world will end if you don't get a perfect score. Maybe you didn't do as well as you wanted on that test, but you didn't fail," Storch said. Talking with a friend or parent about it can help.

Don't procrastinate. Make a plan for studying, then promptly start following it. Procrastination causes more stress while pinching off study time.

"When you procrastinate, you take all the time you could have been working and ruin it by having this gray cloud hanging above you," Storch

said.

Take a social media break. Social media can interfere with schoolwork and can increase stress. Put the phone or tablet down for a while, to either study or engage in fun activities as part of a study break.

"Engage in tests to see what happens if you put the phone down and don't engage in social media for an hour. Does the world end? Does your [social standing](#) plummet? Let's start challenging the degree in which you're engaging in social media," Storch said.

Students who absolutely can't stay away from social media might need to see a mental health specialist, to better understand why they're hooked on tracking the latest posts, Storch added.

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