

How to Help Teenagers Embrace Stress

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Now that the school year is in full swing, many young people are feeling the weight of academic demands. But how *much* strain students experience may depend less on their workloads and more on how they think about the very nature of stress.

Stress doesn't deserve its bad rap. Psychologists agree that while chronic or traumatic stress can be toxic, garden-variety stress — such as the kind that comes with taking a big test — is typically a normal and healthy part of life. In a 2013 article in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* on stress mind-sets, the researchers Alia J. Crum, Peter Salovey and Shawn Achor noted that the human stress response, in and of itself, can put [“the brain and body in an optimal position to perform.”](#)