

# Effect of general exercise as a coping strategy on the psychological and emotional well-being of non-athlete college students



Jackson Casteel and Justin Ocheltree  
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Linda Francis

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## INTRODUCTION

Stress has a major role in the lives of college students as they are dealing with many new stressors that are present in this stage of life. For instance, college students must deal with stressors such as transportation, living arrangements, financial burden, relationship stress, and a large volume of course work. "These stressors are conditions of threat, challenge, demands, or structural constraints that, by the very fact of their occurrence or existence, call into question the operating integrity of the organism (Aneshensel et Al. 300)." With all of these stressors present in life, college students must find an effective way to cope. So, we decided to study how effective exercise is as a coping strategy for college students. This is a literature study, where we plan on doing research directly on Cleveland State campus next semester.

## METHODS

This was a literature search where we used the key terms "college", "stress", and "exercise" on search engines such as the CSU Library Database and Google Scholar.

## OBJECTIVES

- Determine whether exercise is an effective strategy for coping with stress
- Promote exercise to college students as a way to help better handle stress

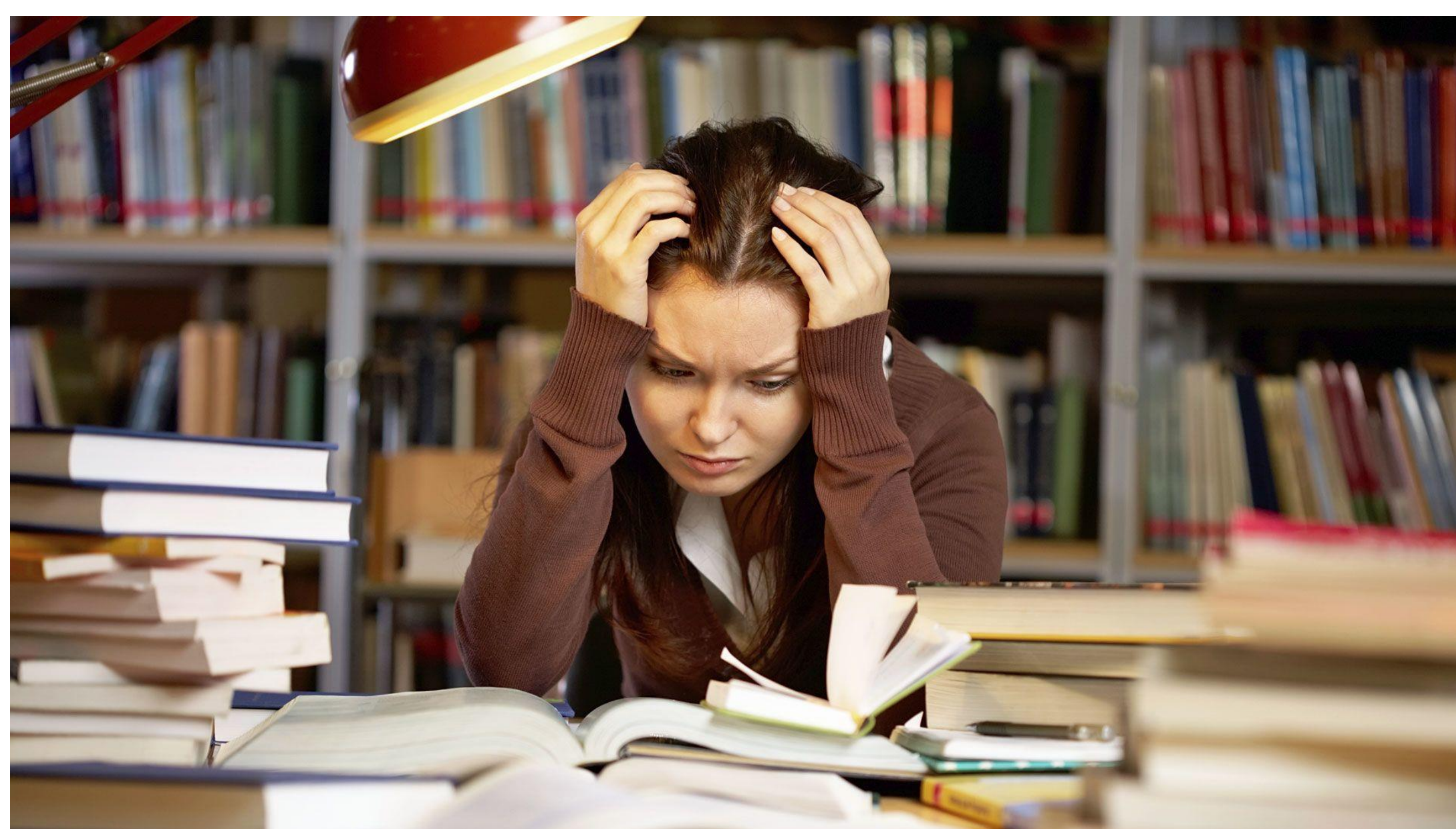


Figure 1. Stressed college student  
<https://i.pinimg.com/originals/99/1a/9a/991a9ae7e0b1a44f263e06493b857372.jpg>

## MAIN POINTS OF RESEARCH

Title	Author/ Year Published	Conclusions
Emotional States and Physical Health	Salovey, Peter (2000)	Even though there are benefits of daily exercise, college students do not spend enough time working out to use exercise as a coping mechanism.
Physical Activity Is Associated With Better Health and Psychological Well-Being During Transition to University Life	Bray, Steven R., and Matthew Y. W. Kwan (2006)	Students with more physically active lifestyles were often less ill and needed less medical help than non-exercising students.
Effect of Aerobic Exercises, Yoga and Mental Imagery on Stress in College Students-A Comparative Study	Kumar, Sanjiv (2016)	Aerobic exercise and yoga help reduce stress in college students.
Effects of Doing Physical Exercises on Stress-Coping Strategies and the Intensity of the Stress Experienced by University Students in Zabol, Southeastern Iran	Azizi, Masume (2011)	Athletic students reported lower stress levels compared to non athletic students.
Regular Exercise Is Associated with Emotional Resilience to Acute Stress in Healthy Adults	Childs, Emma, and Harriet De Wit (2014)	Regular exercisers are more resistant to emotional effects of acute stress.

## CONCLUSION

College students have to direct a lot of commitment towards achieving their goals, and this results in a heavy strain on their lives. All of the research articles studied show a direct, positive effect on stress when using exercise to cope. According to Childs et Al., when students exercise regularly, it seems they develop a higher resilience towards everyday stressors. Finding a method to cope like exercise is a good way to release pent up stress, however, there are several difficulties in making a student actually exercise. With this research, we hope that it promotes exercise as a way for students to release stress in a healthy manner.

## FUTURE WORK

We intend to perform a research study on the Cleveland State campus where we create a pre- and post-exercise survey for students to take as they enter and leave the rec center. This would allow us to determine the immediate effects of exercise on stress levels.

## References

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