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THE ADVENTURES
OF JOHANNA - AN
INTERNATIONAL
STUDENT LIVING
IN FREIBURG

**10 TIPS ON HOW TO
MANAGE
OVERWHELM**



FEELING LIKE YOU HAVE TOO MUCH TO DO, BUT NO IDEA HOW TO DO IT ALL?!

We know this feeling as a college student all too well, don't we? Between essays, reports, financial stresses, a global pandemic, managing a social life, and remembering to buy toilet paper- the list goes on and on! Overwhelm is something we've ALL been feeling. In this article I hope to give you some practical tips to use in your everyday life to ease the feelings of anxiousness!

1 MOVE YOUR BODY

Not only does this release endorphins, but with the increased time being indoors our bodies could definitely use a little bit of love. If you feel up for it, consider taking a morning/evening stroll, do some yoga, go on a run for some *you-time* as a way to get out of your head and into your body! If you're restricted to being at home, there's tons of youtube videos where you can do either high intensity workouts or even a free 30 day yoga challenge!



2 GET ENOUGH SLEEP

We don't normally think about the importance of sleep, especially in our uni years! Sleep is, however, one of the most important aspects of keeping your health and happiness in balance. A good night of rest can help you concentrate better during the day, aid you in your productivity, helps your immune functions, and lowers the risk of heart disease and stroke. Heck, those who don't get consistent sleep are even more likely to get depression. It's truly one of the top pillars of your health!

3 LIMIT SCREEN TIME

There is a LOT going on in the world right now and many of us are experts at doom-scrolling through all the chaos that shows up on our Facebook and Instagram feeds. It can feel like we're taking responsibility of our own awareness, but our brains weren't meant to take on so much information all at once. Try keeping from scrolling endlessly through your social media platforms first thing you do when you get up and give yourself a limit to how much you're taking in. If we take breaks we can show up in the world with a clearer mind- which ultimately means we can *do* something about the problems we hear about instead of defaulting into an anxious state of mind.

4 DRINK WATER



The brain is mostly made of water, so dehydration plays an intense role in feelings of anxiousness. Although it may not get rid of 100% of your feelings of anxiousness or overwhelm, it will aid the intensity and help you to feel calm and relaxed. There's TONS of studies which highlight the importance of water, just have a look online! Don't forget, humans are just like plants with more complicated emotions. Light, water, and a little bit of love go a long ways!

5 TAKE CONSISTENT BREAKS

I get it. When we're in the middle of studying it can even seem impossible to find the time to go take a shower- how can we take a break when there's so much to get done?! Take a break anyways. It's suggested to take breaks every 1.5 hours or so and try to refresh your brain. Instead of binge-watching Netflix during this time, give your brain what it really needs. Move your body a bit, walk outside and get some fresh air, drink water, and change out of those pjs you've been wearing for the last 3 days! It will help you stay more focused when you get back to your task. Work smarter, not harder!



6 MEDITATION & BREATHING EXERCISES

There's a plethora of information on the positive affects of meditation on the mind and body. Start by taking 5 minutes in the morning, close your eyes, and find a comfortable position to sit. Focus on your breath going in and out of your body. Try being the observer of your thoughts. There are tons of apps you can use as well to help guide you in your meditation!

7 A CHANGE OF PERSPECTIVE

It's easy for our worries to get bigger and more overwhelming when all we're doing is going over all our problems in our head. But when is the last time you've thought about all the things that are going right? Sometimes it's necessary to look at everything we *do* have around us and to be reminded of all the things we can be grateful for. What are 5 to 10 things you're thankful for at this very moment? Practicing gratitude does wonders for our perspective and can help us diminish the intensity of overwhelm.





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BRAIN DUMP

JOURNALING is great because you can just dump out all the little bitty (or ginormous) things that are taking up brain-space. I feel like by writing out my problems, I have a clearer idea of what is actually bothering me, and I'm able to reflect on those issues in a different way than if they were just all in my head.

TO DO LIST

There's a number of ways you could do this, so I suggest researching a little bit and checking out what works best for you. I personally think it's a good idea to take a look at your week and to schedule out all the things you want to accomplish on Sundays before the week gets started. Pick a day where those things need to be done, and get to it! I also refer back to a daily to-list so I can have a clear idea of what I need to focus on each day of the week.

TIDY UP YOUR SPACE


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Don't underestimate the power of a tidy space! They say that your outer-world is a reflection of your inner-world. I think the space you live in plays a massive role in the way you feel, so when that place is dark and messy it's not doing you any favors! Inspire yourself with light, calming smells, and visuals that bring joy to you. Pick up all your clothes from the floor, open the windows, and give yourself an afternoon to do some tidying-up. I am a big advocate for creating a space that truly FEELS like you, so whether that's adding some new plant babies to your room or hanging up some photos of your most beloved travels, it will certainly help!

10 REACH OUT TO A FRIEND

Most of the time things are better when we just have someone to listen to us. If you're still searching for friends or support, the Intercultural Mentoring Program is here for just that. Whether you're searching for someone to talk to, or perhaps you're in a place where you can offer support to someone who may need it- don't hesitate to reach out to us so we can set you up with someone. We're here for you!





That's all for now, folks! I hope these tips can help you a bit with managing overwhelm. I think the important thing to remember is that there is no magic recipe, and that all of us require something a little bit different. However, an unbalanced life never made it easier- so whether you're going to parties every weekend or or studying all day every day, nothing in excess can ever be a good thing! If things feel too out of your control, don't hesitate to contact a professional who can help you work out the struggles you may be facing. If you're Freiburg based, I believe the SWFR has 4 free counseling sessions they offer for students! Take good care of yourself, eat well, sleep enough, drink water, and give yourself a break every once in a while. I'm rooting for you!

xoxo, Johanna