

STRETCH 7-Step Plan to Manage Stress for Student-Athletes

1. Speak positively. Maintaining a positive perspective boosts confidence. Athletes need this daily – sometimes after every point! Speak positively with yourself, especially when you don't feel like it.

2. Tell a support system. Go hang out with a friend. Text or call someone. Talk to a counselor or coach. Just don't let things stay bottled up.

3. Reorganize your schedule. If the to-do list is making the day too overwhelming, it's time for some prioritizing of your time. Planning your schedule around practices and homework, but include time for personal self-care – eating and sleeping well, and even setting some self-imposed time boundaries on social media if needed.

4. Expect adversity. None of us are perfect. No one has a life where nothing ever goes wrong. At practice, continue working to hone your physical abilities and skills, but know that you will have days where your resilience will be tested.

5. Take things one step at a time. Put your energy into the next play (coaches say that all the time for a reason). Do the next thing well, instead of all the things with mediocrity. Know that it's highly unlikely to do a multitude of things simultaneously *with perfection*. And be OK with that.

6. Chill. Learn what helps you decompress – and then to carve out some time to do it. It might be a hobby outside of volleyball, laughing with friends, listening to music, prayer time, reading, or riding your bike to the mall. Whatever works!

7. Have a growth mindset. Guess what? Failure is an experiment! Reframe a "failure" (which is usually associated with a punishment) into an "I tried that and it didn't work, so now I'll try this" mindset. Don't be afraid to take life as you play your games – one point at a time.