The Stress Continuum

- Performance
- Healthy tension
- Peak performance
- Imbalance
- Breakdown

The continuum shows the relationship between stress level and performance, ranging from low to high stress.

- Low stress level: High performance and healthy tension.
- High stress level: Breakdown and imbalance.

The diagram highlights the importance of maintaining a balance to achieve optimal performance.
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Healthy Tension— Consider it a daily goal to find the right amount of “stimulating challenges” and balance these with a healthy diet, regular exercise, a consistent sleep schedule and a variety of stress management strategies. (See www.gannett.cornell.edu.)

Peak Performance— In order to reach your peak performance when you need it most (e.g., the day of a prelim, presentation, or personal challenge) you need to be well-prepared physically, emotionally, and mentally.

Imbalance— When stress builds, the protective functions of your body and mind become compromised. You may experience irritability, aches and pains, sleep problems, or a decline in academic performance.

Breakdown— If stress is left unchecked, symptoms will worsen, causing exhaustion, inability to function, illness; anxiety, panic or depression. In order to restore balance, it is critical that you seek help.