

How Acupressure Can Help College Students Deal with Stress and Anxiety

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Received: 22/06/2025 ; Accepted: 01/09/2025 ; Published: 13/01/2026

Abstract

Academic demands, social obstacles, financial obligations, and lifestyle changes all contribute to the prevalence of anxiety and stress among college students. Students' physical health, mental health, academic performance, and quality of life can all take a hit when they deal with chronic stress and anxiety. Because of this, complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) approaches that do not include pharmaceuticals are gaining popularity as a means for students to deal with these issues. Electronic databases such as PubMed, Scopus, Google Scholar, and others were used to perform a literature review. This review systematically reviewed research on the benefits of acupressure on stress, anxiety, and related psychological consequences in young adults and college students. Review and synthesis of data was carried out with respect to study design, intervention methods, treatment duration, and outcome measures. University students may find relief from anxiety and stress through the use of acupressure. Relaxation, less psychological distress, increased mood, and better sleep quality were all linked to the stimulation of particular acupoints. Several research found that stress-related physiological markers, such as heart rate and perceived stress ratings, improved. The intervention was a viable choice for student populations because it was typically safe, did not involve any invasive procedures, was inexpensive, and was easy to administer. University students who suffer from anxiety and stress may find relief with acupressure, a supplemental therapy that shows promise. Because of its accessibility, safety, and capacity to promote relaxation and psychological well-being, it is an effective non-pharmacological solution. There has to be more high-quality research with bigger samples and consistent treatment regimens to prove its efficacy and advantages in the long run.

Keywords: Acupressure, Anxiety, Stress, University Students, Mental Health, Complementary Therapy

Introduction

University students are not alone in experiencing rising rates of anxiety and stress, which are acknowledged as major global public health concerns. As they adjust to college life, many students face emotional, social, financial, and academic difficulties, all of which can take a toll on their mental health. Common sources of stress for students include heavy course loads, exams, tight deadlines, intense competition, job insecurity, and adjusting to a new place. A decline in quality of life, anxiety, emotional discomfort, and academic performance can result from chronic or excessive stress. A mental illness known as anxiety manifests itself in a variety of ways, including persistent and intrusive thoughts and feelings of unease and dread. Students' ability to focus, remember, make decisions, sleep well, and interact with others can all take a hit from long-term worry and stress, in contrast to the positive effects of mild stress on academic performance. The stress of college life, along with the normal developmental hurdles

of adolescence, makes college students more susceptible to mental health issues, according to studies. Counseling, cognitive-behavioral therapy, relaxation methods, mindfulness practices, exercise, and pharmaceutical interventions are some of the ways that students have been found to handle stress and anxiety. Cost, lack of accessibility, stigma, and worries about medication-related adverse effects are some of the obstacles that some students may encounter, despite the effectiveness of these strategies. That is why people are looking for safe, inexpensive, and easy-to-implement alternative and complementary therapies more and more. Applying pressure to certain areas on the body, called acupoints, is a traditional healing treatment that originates from Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). Stimulating these spots, according to TCM principles, helps bring the body's essential energy, or Qi, back into balance and restores its flow. Current scientific thinking suggests that acupressure may have effects on the neurological system, including relaxation, improved blood circulation, and the release of endorphins and other neurotransmitters linked to emotional and stress relief. Pain, exhaustion, anxiety, and stress are just some of the physical and mental problems that have found relief with acupressure, a non-invasive and self-administered technique. A number of studies have shown that acupressure can help everyone, including students, feel better emotionally, sleep better, and relax more. It is a great alternative for university environments that require accessible mental health interventions because it is simple, safe, and inexpensive.

Prevalence of Anxiety and Stress in University Students

Stress and anxiety are two of the most prevalent mental health issues among college students around the world. Because of the many emotional, social, financial, and intellectual changes that occur throughout the transition from high school to college, many students experience psychological distress during this time. This demographic experiences elevated stress and anxiety due to the demanding nature of higher education and other factors such as worries about personal relationships, academic achievement, and career prospects.

College students suffer from high rates of stress and anxiety, according to studies done in several nations. According to studies, a large percentage of students deal with moderate to high levels of stress while they are in school. Students often report that the most stressful times of their academic careers are right before exams, when they have a lot of work to do, and when they are competing with their classmates. Anxiety levels might rise even more when dealing with issues like money problems, homesickness, family expectations, and job insecurity.

College and university students' anxiety rates have been on the rise recently. Mental health issues have been on the rise due to a number of factors, including rising levels of academic pressure, the impact of social media, the rate of technological progress, and world events. Excessive worry, uneasiness, inability to concentrate, impatience, exhaustion, sleep disruptions, and sensations of being overwhelmed are symptoms that many students report. Academic performance, physical health, and general well-being can all take a hit if these indicators are ignored.

Anxiety and stress have a negative effect on students' mental health, which in turn affects their ability to learn and interact with others. Distraction, lack of drive, diminished output, and inability to make sound decisions are all symptoms of severe psychological anguish. More severe mental health issues, such as depression and burnout, are associated with persistent stress.

Anxiety and stress may manifest more frequently among some student populations than others. Anxieties over tests, projects, and future careers are common among seniors, whereas difficulties with adaption and independence are common among first-years. Some studies have found that female students, international students, and students without strong social networks are more likely to suffer from psychological distress.

Factors that Put Students at Risk for Stress and Anxiety

University students encounter a variety of challenges that can contribute to the development of stress and anxiety. These challenges arise from academic, social, financial, and personal factors that often occur simultaneously during the transition to higher education. When students are unable to cope effectively with these demands, they may experience significant psychological distress that affects their mental health and overall well-being.

One of the primary causes of stress and anxiety among university students is **academic pressure**. Students are expected to manage demanding coursework, examinations, assignments, presentations, and deadlines while maintaining satisfactory academic performance. Fear of failure, competition with peers, and high expectations from family members and educators can further increase stress levels and contribute to anxiety.

Financial difficulties are another important risk factor. Many students face concerns related to tuition fees, educational expenses, accommodation costs, and daily living expenses. Financial insecurity can create persistent worry and emotional strain, particularly among students who rely on scholarships, loans, or part-time employment to support their education. The **transition to university life** can also be stressful. Students often experience significant lifestyle changes, including living away from home, adapting to a new environment, and developing independence. Feelings of homesickness, loneliness, and difficulty adjusting to new social and academic settings may increase vulnerability to anxiety and stress.

Social and interpersonal factors play a crucial role in student mental health. Difficulties in forming friendships, relationship problems, peer pressure, social isolation, and lack of social support can contribute to emotional distress. Students who feel disconnected from their peers or community may experience greater levels of anxiety and reduced psychological well-being.

Career-related concerns are another common source of stress. Uncertainty about future employment opportunities, career planning, and achieving professional goals can create significant anxiety, particularly among students nearing graduation. Concerns about job market competition and economic instability may further intensify these worries.

Several **individual factors** can increase susceptibility to stress and anxiety. These include poor time-management skills, low self-esteem, perfectionism, lack of coping strategies, previous mental health problems, and inadequate sleep. Students who struggle to balance academic responsibilities with personal and social commitments are often at greater risk of experiencing psychological distress.

Additionally, **health-related and lifestyle factors** such as physical inactivity, unhealthy dietary habits, excessive use of social media, substance use, and poor sleep quality can negatively affect mental health. These factors may reduce resilience and make it more difficult for students to cope with everyday stressors.

How Stress and Anxiety Affect Academic Achievement

College and university students are particularly vulnerable to the negative effects of anxiety and stress on their academic performance. Excessive or sustained stress has negative effects on

cognitive functioning, learning capacity, and overall academic accomplishment; yet, a reasonable amount of stress may encourage students to study and meet academic deadlines. When students experience high levels of anxiety, it can impact their ability to focus, absorb new information, and do well in class.

Loss of focus and concentration is a typical symptom of stress and anxiety. It is common for students to have trouble concentrating in class, on homework, and exams when they are emotionally or mentally distressed. Academic performance and learning efficiency might take a hit when disruptive thoughts and persistent anxiety take one's mind off of the job at hand.

Worry and stress can wreak havoc on one's memory as well. The capacity to encode, store, and retrieve information is crucial for efficient learning. Students' ability to retain material and apply it on tests may be impaired if they are under a great deal of stress, which can interfere with key cognitive processes. Students could end up not reaching their full academic potential because of this.

Lower levels of motivation and output are another significant effect. Feelings of being overwhelmed, weary, and uninterested in academic pursuits are common among students who endure persistent stress. A lack of engagement in class discussions and extracurricular activities, as well as missed deadlines and incomplete work, may result from this. Academic performance and graduation rates can take a hit if students are not actively involved in their coursework.

A lot of students get nervous before exams and other forms of evaluation, and this is called test anxiety. Test performance can be negatively impacted by symptoms including anxiety, fear of failing, racing heart, perspiration, and clouded thinking. High levels of anxiety about exams can make even the most well-prepared pupils fail to display their knowledge effectively.

A lack of quality sleep is another symptom of anxiety and stress, which in turn can impair academic performance. Exhaustion, drowsiness, impaired judgment, and lack of focus in the classroom and on homework are all symptoms of sleep disorders, which include trouble falling asleep and getting enough sleep. If you are already having trouble sleeping due to stress from school, you can find yourself in a vicious cycle.

Conclusion

Concerns about mental health, such as anxiety and stress, are prevalent among college students and can have a major impact on their happiness, health, and ability to succeed academically. This demographic experiences higher rates of psychological discomfort due to academic demands, financial constraints, social difficulties, and worries about future employment. Problems with focus, memory, motivation, sleep, and performance in the classroom can result from untreated anxiety and persistent stress. Among college students, acupressure has shown promise as an auxiliary treatment for stress and anxiety. By applying pressure to certain acupoints, acupressure has the potential to alleviate stress, lift spirits, and improve mental health. For students looking for non-traditional ways to deal with stress, this intervention is ideal because it is cost-effective, easy to apply, and has a low chance of side effects. According to the research that was looked at, acupressure can help students deal with stress and anxiety and the difficulties of college life. Stronger evidence of its efficacy and long-term benefits is required, however, due to differences in study designs and intervention methods. Promoting mental wellness among university students can be achieved through the practical and valuable

practice of acupressure. Students' mental health, academic achievement, and overall well-being could all benefit from acupressure's incorporation into existing wellness programs and efforts.

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