

Tapping into your Creativity to Reduce Stress

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You are having negative thoughts. You are feeling overwhelmed with deadlines or responsibilities. You are stressed. Maybe you even feel sad or lonely. Anxiety is creeping in and it's hard to keep calm. Whether it's exams or assignments you are worried about, or other concerns such as work, family or health, we all face stressful moments and search for peace. You deserve to take a break and relax your mind. Your brain and body will thank you for it.

Utilizing your creative energy is a great way to clear your head, distract yourself for a little while, take a break and change the energy around you. Art projects allow you to immerse yourself in something other than your normal routine and can actually help you think better when you return to your work. A few minutes working on a craft, painting, doodling, singing or dancing, will give you a much deserved escape, help you release serotonin and make you feel better about yourself. In fact, focusing [on a craft project can have an effect similar to meditation, which research suggests can help in the management of anxiety](#). With our key chain kit we are handing out during StressLess Week, you can do just that. If you missed it, don't stress – the items are easily found at a craft or dollar store.

Making a keychain is a simple task that will have [your creative juices flowing through your body and help you relax](#). Have fun with it! Play around with the beads' colors and shapes. Create patterns that inspire you. Use your finished product however you please - put it on your wallet, backpack or pencil case, or you could even use it as a fidget toy to help you focus when you feel jittery. Whatever you choose to do with it, the task will help calm you, while having fun.

Aside from craft projects, there are other ways to manage your stress and anxiety during this time. You can exercise, engage in your favourite hobbies, or vent to someone you trust or a mental health professional. Check out [UCalgary Student Wellness Services](#) for more information. Do what is best for you. You will be okay. Remember, you are not alone and taking time for yourself is important!