Stress Management

Two parts to address:
1 – immediate relief from stress so that you can do the daily things you need to do
2 – long term by addressing the causes of the stress and reducing their impact on your life

How to Reduce Stress
☞ Know how you react in stressful situations so you can do something to control the process.
☞ Focus on your good qualities and accomplishments.
☞ Recognize and accept your limits.

Practice Preventative Stress Management.
☞ Take care of yourself by getting enough sleep, eating well, and exercising.
☞ Give yourself regular pep talks.
☞ Don’t stress out over what you can’t change (5 year rule).
☞ Balance your life. Have a hobby.
☞ Talk to your friends and family.
☞ Avoid unnecessary competition. Not everything has to be a win/lose situation.
☞ Use your time wisely. Don’t wait until the last minute to do things.
☞ Set priorities and realistic goals.
☞ Be a positive member of whatever group you are in.

Anticipate Stressful Situations and Prepare for Them
☞ Practice through a stressful event such as an interview or speech in advance.
☞ Analyze the situation and look for ways to alleviate stress in a formal, planned way. Just don’t worry about it - prepare yourself for it.
☞ Put stressful events in perspective in the “Big Picture.”
☞ Gather all the information you need to prepare for an event.

Thought Awareness / Rational Thinking / Positive Thinking

Thought awareness. Becoming aware of what is going through your head is the first step in changing your thought patterns. Are there are lot of negative thoughts such as worrying about how you appear to other people, preoccupied with events, dwelling on past performances, self criticism, feelings of inadequacy? Start paying attention to what you are telling yourself.
Rational Thinking. Once you are aware of your thoughts, start critiquing them. Are these thoughts all based in reality or are you overreacting? Many times, when you examine some negative thought, you find out that it’s simply not true.

Positive Thinking. Then, start consciously saying positive things to yourself. Use these thoughts to build confidence and change negative patterns into positive ones.  I can do this. I can achieve my goals. I am in control of my life. I am a good person. Use this with common sense. Obviously all the positive thinking in the world is not going to make most of us a top athlete. But, in combination with hard work and realistic goals, positive thinking can be a very good tool.

Meditate
Meditation focuses your thoughts on one relaxing thing for a period of time (20 - 30 minutes is ideal). This rests your mind by giving it a rest from the problems that are causing you stress and gives your body some time to relax and recuperate.

Exercise
Everybody knows exercise is supposed to reduce stress. But do you know why? It improves blood flow to your brain bringing additional sugars and oxygen, releases endorphins into your blood stream to help you feel happier, and reduces your blood pressure. Find an exercise you enjoy, such as swimming, walking, aerobics that fits into your lifestyle. Tennis anyone?

Progressive Muscular Relaxation
This is a physical technique to relax your muscles when you are feeling tense.

1. Tense up a group of muscles so that they are as tight as possible.
2. Hold for a few seconds.
3. Relax.
4. Relax more.
5. Repeat the whole thing.

Practice with your hand. Form a fist, clench your hand as tight as you can for a few seconds. Relax. Relax again.

Deep Breathing - Very effective. You know it is essential to every exercise and mediation.

☞ Close your mouth and relax your upper body. Inhale through your nose slowly and deeply to a count of eight.
☞ Hold that breath for a count of four.
☞ Breathe out slowly through your mouth to the count of eight.
☞ Repeat four times.

Pick 3 of the above Stress Management tips that sound like something that would help you. Write them down below along with how and when you will incorporate them into your Becoming a More Successful Student Plan.

1. 
2. 
3.
I work to enjoy great health. I am energetic and enthusiastic. I am alert, healthy, and strong. I keep my body in good condition and exercise regularly. I think only thoughts of health, energy, and life. I get plenty of rest, drink lots of water, breathe deeply, and eat healthy food. I don’t let the little things get to me. I solve problems. I enjoy positive thoughts. I look for the good in others and practice the Golden Rule. I feel comfortable with others and find compliments easy to give. I try to be the kind of person other people want to be around.