Stress Assignment

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 The physical activity I completed to reduce stress was running. I went for a 30 minute jog, not a scheduled practice jog, to see how it would affect my mood and stress levels. During the jog, I felt a little bit out of breath because I was running but also happy. After the run I definitely felt better about myself because I completed exercise and I always am happier after I exercise because it burns calories, but I never before have paid attention to my stress levels. I actually do run to reduce stress. Anytime that I am super stressed or overwhelmed or even just really mad, I go for a jog. It does not always have to be a long jog, and sometimes it is fast and short, but running in general helps me calm down. I think the reason is because I can either choose to think about whatever my stressors are, or I can just enjoy the scenery and run. Also, if I complete a hard run, my ability to think is limited because I have to focus on breathing and that causes me to forget about whatever made me upset. It is funny that I have always ran to reduce stress but never realized that the reason was so simple. I continued to feel happy for the next hour or so until I had to rush around and pack which became a new stressor. The only type of running that does not make me feel better about myself is required running by the coach. When it is required, it is no longer an effective stress reliever because I am no longer going for my goals, I am going for someone else’s. Its strange to see how much different that makes a task, whether it is easy or not and whether it seems as worthwhile.

 The second stress reliever I completed was painting. Painting, or coloring, is very stress relieving for most people. This is why so many adult coloring books are popular now. Painting is something I used to do a lot but have not been able to in a while because of time constraints. This week I do not have softball practice so I have more free time to do relaxing endeavors such as paint. It does not matter what I paint, but it always seems to make me happier when I am in a bad mood or stressed. This time when I painted, I was not overly stressed so it was hard to see if it relieved any more stress than usual but it did make me feel serene almost. Painting has a calming affect on me and definitely makes me happy to see my work in-progress and completed. Even if the art work does not turn out exactly right, it still gives me a sense of accomplishment. Art in general usually has a calming affect on me because it gives me something else to focus on besides whatever is stressing me out. Because I tend to have a lot of stress, having these different ways to relieve stress is very beneficial.

 The main difference between art and running is that no one ever forces me to run, so any stress that could be associated with it, is not. That being said, I do believe that more stress was alleviated using the physical techniques as opposed to the non-active technique. This is because I feel more accomplished after completing a run than I do after completing a painting. This might be because I have always associated running or other physical activities as something necessary and therefore, am used to completing them. Plus, I tend to have issues pertaining to my weight so any time I run extra or do something that others may not do I feel a sense of pride after doing it. Painting, however, may be better for me because it does not require any physical activity and it also leaves me in a more relaxed state rather than an amped up state. Running is not nearly as calming after the fact because I am usually tired and because of the surge of adrenaline exercise gives you. This is why I think maybe I should stay away from physical activity some when trying to relax. Also, running can be associated with many stressors in my head because the softball team has running tests we have to pass for us to play and usually I am running to train instead of running to relax.