

# THE WELL STUDENT





# A WELL STUDENT

Your overall sense of well-being involves balancing various facets of your health. It's not just what you eat and how you exercise, although those are definitely important. It's also how you handle emotions, process things, manage stress, find meaning and much more. Within these pages, you'll find tips to help you be a well student.

## PHYSICAL WELL-BEING

Caring for your body is the foundation to overall health.

**SLEEP:** Our bodies and brains restore themselves during sleep. That's why lack of good sleep can cause a loss of concentration, depression and other troubles.

- **SLEEP 7-9 HOURS.** No all-nighters! Your body can't really "catch up" on lost sleep.
- **DON'T USE ELECTRONICS AN HOUR BEFORE BED.** Light from the screens can disrupt sleep patterns.
- **AVOID EATING/DRINKING WITHIN 2 HOURS OF SLEEP.** And watch caffeine — its stimulating effects can last 10 hours.

**NUTRITION:** It's been said that diet makes up 80% of health.

- **STAY HYDRATED.** Water's best. Sweet drinks leave you thirstier and cause weight gain.
- **EAT NATURAL, WHOLE FOODS.** Picture the unprocessed items along a supermarket's perimeter, like fresh eggs and raw vegetables. These items are more nutritious than canned foods and prepared mixes with a lot of sodium

and additives. *Examples:* In the dining hall? An omelet's better for breakfast than sugary cereal. In a restaurant? A baked potato's better than instant-mix mashed potatoes.

## EXERCISE

Do calorie-burning, mood-boosting cardio *and* strength-training, which builds muscle and improves bone density. Campus fitness facilities are great for both. Also, incorporate activity into everyday routines, like taking stairs instead of elevators.

**HYGIENE:** These habits make a big difference.

- **WASH YOUR HANDS.** Otherwise, you can get sick — and infect others with various illnesses. Wash for 20 seconds with soap and warm water, getting in-between fingers, under your nails, and both the backs and fronts.
- **WIPE YOUR PHONE.** Studies show our phones build up bacteria since they're used everywhere from bathrooms to public transit, all day long. Wiping them with a safe cloth reduces many surface germs.

Make sure to abide by campus regulations regarding wearing face masks, hand-washing and social distancing to keep everyone safe. And sanitize frequently-touched surfaces like doorknobs and light switches, too.

# SOCIAL TIES



By nature, humans are social beings. That's why fulfilling relationships are crucial to thriving in college, and in life overall. Do your best to...

- **GET INVOLVED.** By participating in social events, community service trips and campus programs, you can have fun, learn new things, meet like-minded people and help others — all of which are beneficial lifelong habits to create now.
- **MAINTAIN RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS OUTSIDE OF COLLEGE.** While it's great to make connections on campus, don't forget the people who love you at home, who were in your life before college — and will be after.
- **BE FULLY PRESENT AND ENGAGED.** Try not to multi-task; it may seem efficient, but it's been shown to cause us to perform poorly in *all* the things we're doing at once! Plus, it can be rude. *Example:* Stop texting when talking with someone.
- **BEWARE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ISOLATION.** Social media is wonderful, yet it can't replace direct interactions. Over-relying on it to stay in touch can leave you feeling distant from people you care about.

## SOCIAL MEDIA COMPARISONS

It's easy to feel that everyone else appears to have a fuller, more exciting life than you based on what you see online. Don't let your acquaintances' pictures of exotic vacations and fun nights out fool you! People typically only post about good things and special occasions; don't assume they're problem-free. Instead, focus on what's good in *your* life, and spend quality time cultivating strong connections in all the ways you can.

## LEARNING TO SAY "NO" OR "NOT NOW"

There will be instances when you'll have to turn down an opportunity or someone's offer to hang out so that you can honor other commitments you've made and do what really matters to you. Don't feel guilty. It's okay — even necessary sometimes — to decline or postpone requests in order to focus on priorities.

When social distance is required to keep everyone healthy and safe, determine other ways to stay connected. People need people to stay balanced and well!





# PURPOSE

Leading a meaningful, healthy life involves self-reflection and discovering your purpose.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Asking yourself questions, such as the ones below, can help you clarify who you are, what you're about and who you want to continue becoming.

- **WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO ME?** If you're stumped, think about recent news stories that got you fired up.
- **WHAT AM I PROUD OF?** Accomplishments, personality traits...
- **WHO DO I ADMIRE, FAMOUS OR NOT?** Your answer can reflect the kind of person you'd like to be.
- **WHAT DO I THINK I'M GOOD AT AND WHAT DO OTHERS SAY?** While assessing your own strengths is important, sometimes others see things we don't. Ask around.
- **WHEN DO I LOSE TRACK OF TIME?** Time flies when you're doing something you enjoy. Whatever comes to mind can be clues about your best career choices or passion projects.
- **WHAT AM I CURIOUS ABOUT?** The world's a big place. Besides what you're studying in class, what would you like to learn more about?
- **WHAT ARE MY GOALS, AND WHY?** Are you doing something for yourself or to please someone else? *Example:* Are you running for president of a student organization only because it'll "look good" on grad school applications? Could you find a way to accomplish this goal with something you'd be more interested in?

- **DO I GIVE BACK TO LOVED ONES AND PEOPLE IN NEED?** A major part of a satisfying life involves making a difference in others' lives. Make time for the people and causes you care about.
- **WHAT ARE MY CONVICTIONS?** This may be a religion, belief system or your own self-defined core values. Identifying these convictions can help guide your actions and plans in life.

## LEARNING IS A LIFELONG PROCESS

It's completely expected to find your personal beliefs evolving during this phase of your life. In fact, discovering more about yourself and the world around you will be an ongoing, lifelong process. So, get curious!

During the pandemic, your priorities may have shifted as you embraced the pause. Consider what's truly important to you and how to make it a key part of your life now.



# MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH



Emotional and mental health is as important as physical health. There are caring people on campus who can help you with issues in this area, such as the following conditions — and others — which definitely deserve attention...

**DEPRESSION.** Characterized by a lack of interest in things you once enjoyed and ongoing emptiness or sadness, depression interferes with day-to-day life. More than a temporary down feeling, it can lead to thoughts of death or suicide.

**ANXIETY DISORDERS.** Occasional anxiety affects many of us, but if it becomes consistent and excessive, it's considered a disorder. Examples include social anxiety and phobias.

**PANIC ATTACKS.** As physical reactions stemming from anxiety, panic attacks can be frightening since their symptoms mimic those of a heart attack, including breathlessness, fast heartbeat and sweating.

Mental/emotional health issues can be caused by imbalances in hormones or brain chemistry, or in response to personal crises, grief and trauma. Regardless of their cause, these are serious, legitimate conditions that a doctor/counselor can address. **And getting help is a true sign of strength, not weakness!**

Plus, you don't have to wait until something's "wrong" to see a counselor. Many people see therapists to address everyday emotions and challenges. Remember, you're never "bothering" counselors with your concerns — that's what they're there for!

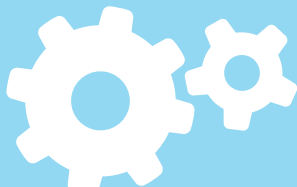
## MEDICATION ALTERATIONS

If you're on medication for a mental health condition but want to discontinue it or change your dosage, a doctor/therapist *must* oversee this delicate process. Making adjustments on your own can be dangerous to you, and others.

## "WHAT IF?"

When we're anxious, we tend to avoid "what if" questions, yet facing them can help. Let's say there are rumors of layoffs at your off-campus job and you're worrying, "What if I'm fired? How will I afford tuition?" Think about what you'd do if you *were* let go. Coming up with specific strategies now can help you see that you'd survive, even if "the worst" happens.

Worried about a "gang of feelings" coming out if you face an issue, especially one that may have arisen during the pandemic? Don't stuff your worries inside; that does more harm than good. Instead, talk with a trusted other and seek help so your quality of life can improve.





# STRESS MANAGEMENT

Stress can impact your physical, mental and emotional well-being. Manage it by...

**DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN GOOD AND BAD STRESS.** Good stress challenges and motivates you while bad stress involves responsibility overload or unfulfilling circumstances. *Examples:* Love Spanish but get nervous speaking it? Volunteering in a primarily Spanish-speaking community could be good stress. Have a heavy course load and part-time job? Staying on the debate team you don't enjoy could be bad stress.

**SCHEDULING TIME FOR FUN, RELAXATION AND EXERCISE.** These important outlets help you function your best.

**SPENDING TIME IN NATURE.** Studies show stress hormones decrease in green spaces outdoors. Plus, just 15 minutes in sunlight provides the vitamin D needed for many biological functions, including mood stabilization.

**TAKING TECH BREAKS.** "Get away" by muting your phone occasionally. (Worried about emergencies? On most phones you can designate contacts who can still reach you in "do not disturb" mode.) Go for a period of time without using your laptop or tablet. Step away from social media. The break can do wonders for your stress levels.

## CREATING EFFECTIVE WORK/STUDY SETUPS:

- Sit up straight at a desk, both feet on the floor.
- Use an ergonomically-correct chair, or modify a basic chair for better support by placing your pillow in the gap between the chair and your back. Consider an exercise-ball chair; it strengthens core muscles, improving posture and comfort.
- Avoid "tech neck" by holding your phone up instead of looking down. With a computer/laptop, sit arm's length away and center the screen, with your line of sight hitting 2-3" down from the top of the monitor.

**Source:** [www.healthycomputing.com/office/setup/monitor/](http://www.healthycomputing.com/office/setup/monitor/)

## OUTDOOR SAFETY

- Choose well-populated areas
- Invite friends or tell them where you'll be
- Make sure your phone is charged
- Know your way without technology in case your phone dies, gets lost or damaged, or misdirects you

## SITTING TOO MUCH

Studies show that sitting 8 hours per day or 2 hours in a row causes cardiovascular issues. Take 5-minute breaks per hour to stretch/walk, or fashion a standing desk.

Residual stress from your pandemic experience may sneak up on you. Let it in so you can face it head on. Help is available, always.

# ALCOHOL AND OTHER SUBSTANCES



## THE CHOICE IS YOURS

Many students don't drink much — or at all. That's a perfectly valid choice. If you *do* choose to use alcohol, be responsible: Eat. Drink water. Don't binge drink. Be of age. And don't provide alcohol to those who are underage.

Using alcohol and other substances can impact your well-being in several ways...

- **SAFETY:** When you're under the influence, your inhibitions are lowered. This can increase the odds that you'll compromise your safety, make risky sexual choices, and lose valuable items like your wallet and phone (or have them stolen). You can also become a victim — or aggressor — in a sexual assault situation.
- **HEALTH:** A woman having more than 4 drinks or a man having more than 5 in one night constitutes binge drinking, which can lead to falls and other injuries, vomiting, passing out and even death from alcohol poisoning. Your body reacts this way because alcohol and other drugs are essentially toxins it is trying to eliminate.

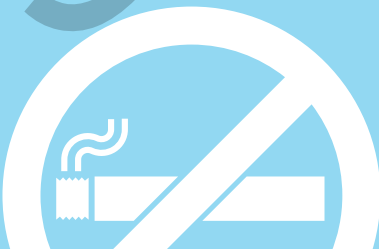
- **MEDICATION INTERACTIONS:** Certain medications (antibiotics, allergy treatments, attention deficit drugs, antidepressants and more) can't be mixed with alcohol or other substances. Doing so can make them ineffective or cause side effects like dizziness, heart problems, trouble breathing, internal bleeding and death. Check your prescription's label; when in doubt, definitely ask your doctor or pharmacist.

## CONSENT

Before — and during — sexual activity, the person initiating *must* gain consent. If either person is incapacitated, though, consent *can't* legally be given. A person must be of sound mind to give consent, and alcohol and other substances interfere with that ability.

It doesn't matter if you and your partner have a sexual history. A person is incapable of consent if they are unable to understand the facts, nature, extent or implications of the situation due to drugs, alcohol, a mental disability, being asleep or unconscious, or based on their age (pursuant to state law). And consent does not exist when the individual initiating sexual activity knew or should have known of the other person's incapacitation.

Feeling safe has become more important to most of us these days. Identify what actions, people and circumstances make you feel safe — and honor those feelings.





# BEING A WELL STUDENT

**“There’s a myth that time is money. In fact, time is more precious than money. It’s a nonrenewable resource. Once you’ve spent it, and if you’ve spent it badly, it’s gone forever.”**

– Dr. Neil A. Fiore

- What’s important to me?
- Why do I do what I do?

**“Many people spend more time planning a two-week vacation than they do planning their life.”**

– Zig Ziglar

- What are my convictions?
- What’s my purpose?

**“Worry is like a rocking chair; it gives you something to do but it never gets you anywhere.”**

– Erma Bombeck

- Spend time with friends — and nature — to reduce stress!
- Address “what ifs” to squelch anxiety

**“A good laugh and a long sleep are the best cures.”**

– Irish Proverb

- Watch a funny YouTube video!
- Avoid all-nighters

**“Change the way you look at things and the things you look at change.”**

– Dr. Wayne Dyer

- Beware of “tech neck”
- Steer clear of social media comparisons

**“If you don’t know where you’re going, how will you know when you get there?”**

– Unknown

- What are my goals?
- Who do I admire?