



# Self-Care: A Wellness Approach



## Eat Right



The average college student is often pressed for time and usually eats on the go. Keep healthy snacks on hand that are easy to store in your room or backpack (fresh or dried fruit, pretzels, unbuttered popcorn, rice cakes, whole wheat crackers, nuts, veggies, yogurt, string cheese, etc.).

To optimize our brain function, we need to eat a balanced diet of:

- Fresh fruits and vegetables
- Foods high in omega-3 fatty acids, such as fish, nuts, seeds and eggs
- Protein
- Whole grains
- If you are unable to get these nutrients through your diet, you may want to consider taking vitamins.

Be creative in the café: choose leafy greens, proteins, and other healthy fats compared to a burger and fries daily.

**Fun Fact:** Did you know that students who eat breakfast tend to do 30% better on exams compared to students who go without?



## Get Enough Sleep

Establish a routine: wake up and go to sleep at the same time every day, even on weekends. Eliminate napping or limit the duration of naps to 20 to 30 minutes during the day. It is also important to create a comfortable environment by keeping your room at a comfortable, cooler temperature, use comfortable blankets and pillows, and find ways to make your room quiet and dark. If you cannot fall asleep within 20-30 minutes, get out of your bed and do a non-stimulating activity (read, color, write a worry list, eat a snack, take a warm shower). Make sure to avoid using things like your phone, computer, or TV as the light from these devices are stimulating to the brain.



## Exercise



**Stretching:** Regular stretching increases your range of motion and flexibility and can also help us calm down and regroup. Yoga is a great way to stretch.

**Cardiovascular or Aerobic:** This type of steady physical activity strengthens our heart and lungs. Walking, running, biking, swimming, hiking, and other aerobic machines at the gym are all great ways to get your heart pumping!

**Strength Training:** As we increase our muscle mass, we often see an elevation in our metabolism.

**Fun Fact:** Exercise can be anything! Get out there and move your body!



## Social Support



We all need social support! It provides us with the physical and emotional comfort given to us by our family, friends, co-workers, professors, health professionals, and other significant individuals in our lives.



## Stress Management



Stress is a fact of life. No matter how much we might long for a stress-free existence, the fact is, stress is actually necessary. It's how we respond to stress that can negatively affect our lives.

Learning to effectively cope with stress can ease our bodies and our minds. Meditation and other relaxation methods, exercise, visualization are all helpful techniques for reducing the negative impact of stress.

Stress can be beneficial – in moderation. That's because short episodes of stress trigger chemicals that improve memory, increase energy levels and enhance alertness and productivity. But chronic stress has debilitating effects on our overall health. Physically, it can contribute to migraines, ulcers, muscle tension and fatigue.

Set realistic goals – Learning to say no is essential for some people. Assess your schedule and identify tasks or activities that you can or should let go. Don't automatically volunteer to do something until you've considered whether it is feasible and healthy for you to do so.

Enjoy yourself – Taking the time for a favorite hobby is a great way of connecting with and nurturing your creative self.

Mindfulness means to be pay attention in the moment on purpose, non-judgmentally. Practice being in the here-and-now and focusing on one thing at a time.



## Self-Talk



We all engage in automatic negative thinking, but we can learn to control those thoughts and make them more positive. Our thoughts often affect our mood, and when we are able to change our thoughts to be more positive, we are then able to change the way we feel. Notice your patterns of negative self-talk and try to catch yourself by thought-stopping and replacing your negative thoughts with something more positive.



# It's All About Finding A Balance

