

WAYS TO STAY HEALTHY

Maslow theorized that we as humans must have our basic needs addressed before we can move into higher levels of functioning. Therefore, it makes sense that if our bodies are not taken care of, our minds will react accordingly. In the following information you will find tips on how to best care for yourself through sleep, exercise, and nutrition while a college student. Remember, if you do not take care of your physical self, your cognitive and emotional selves will crash at some point soon!

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Sleep? Why sleep? Isn't being a college student supposed to involve nights up until morning? That's why naps were invented, right? Yes, there is something to enjoying your freedom and sleeping whenever you want. However, we are all creatures of habit to some degree and after a while, our bodies crave sleep and usually around the same time. So, give your body what it needs and catch some Z's.

## **Sweet Dreams: Sleep Etiquette for College Students**

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College students today often see themselves as pushed to the max. Long days with too much to do and not enough time to do it is often the norm. Many college students suffer from excessive stress, anxiety, and worry. These kinds of difficulties can interfere with normal sleep patterns. Research shows that normal sleep patterns enhance learning and retention of studied material. In addition regular sleep patterns seem to be a factor in enhancing overall mental and physical health. Listed below are some simple tips that may help you with your sleep etiquette. See if these ideas are helpful for you.

1. Sunday through Thursday evenings, as often as possible, try to get to bed on the same day you got up. This means: be in bed around midnight. Research indicates that if you sleep on a schedule that allows you to be awake by early morning, you will perform better.
2. On Friday and Saturday nights, try to extend your wake hours by no more than a couple of hours. The more off cycle you get, the harder it is to get back on cycle and stay rested and alert.
3. Cease meaningful activity at least 30-60 minutes before sleeping and do no major exercise any less than 2 hours before going to bed.
4. If you are someone who experiences a large number of invasive thoughts when you are trying to sleep, try setting up a thinking time during your daytime hours. Pick one hour when you can focus on the types of random thoughts that come to you during times when you are trying to fall asleep. When these thoughts come to mind as you are trying to fall asleep, dismiss them and remind yourself that you

- will deal with them during thinking time. After a good night's rest, you will think and resolve those concerns better.
5. Most research shows that when individuals are tired, they should be able to fall asleep within five minutes or less. Falling asleep is something you allow yourself to do, not make yourself do. Let it happen, don't make it happen. Simply tell yourself that you are letting yourself fall asleep, and also remind yourself the time at which you wish to awake. Many individuals can learn to wake themselves up within minutes of the designated time, if they are getting regular sleep.
  6. Sometimes eating something prior to going to bed in small quantities can help. A cup of hot cocoa with a cookie can help you relax. A bottle of milk puts a baby to sleep; it is the same principle that can work for adults. While a glass of wine or a beer may be helpful for some individuals, excessive alcohol has a tendency to get you to sleep, but then create irregular sleep patterns throughout the evening. Avoid alcohol.
  7. Some individuals find that light stretching, a warm shower, or any other activity that you find relaxing, may be helpful. Relaxation is the main idea.
  8. If you are dealing with a severe crisis or you are under extreme pressures, there are some non-addicting sleep medications that can be provided for short periods of time by a university physician. Consider a consultation with a physician. If you are having difficulty managing sleep patterns by yourself, you may want to consider discussing behavioral components with a counselor.

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## **EXERCISE: it's not just for your brain...**

While you are a student at St. Edward's University, you will find your time filled with many things, from class to studying to work to doing laundry. It is important that you give yourself time to exercise your body, as well as your mind and social life. Some students find it helpful to schedule time for exercise either in their planner or by taking a class (see DANC and KINE offerings on the online course schedule). If you find that you do not have time for longer workouts, try these quick exercises described below. Any activity is better than none and you will find that your energy and concentration are helped tremendously by exercise.

### **Workout For The Busy Student**

*by Maria Stefanova*

You've been working very hard on your education and as a result your body has suffered. Every time you look in the mirror, you see your lack of physical activity and you cannot fit into your pre-college clothes. You keep promising yourself that you will work out more often, and you keep your guilt feeling at bay with random and rare bursts of physical activity that feel like they are killing you.

Don't be hard on yourself. You cannot squeeze five one-hour workouts into your busy schedule. Instead of trying to compress twenty hours of workouts into a one-hour workout, follow this advice that will allow you to stay fit while still doing your best in college.

#### **The Basics**

Although you will probably not be able to visit the gym regularly, you can fit some physical activity even into the

tightest schedule. Study your daily routine. When do you get up? When do you study and for how long? And when do you go to bed? Note the times when you can fit in 5, 15 or 30 minutes of physical activity. If you shower in the morning, try to squeeze 15-30 minutes of vigorous activities right before getting your shower (even if it means getting up 15 minutes earlier). If you shower before going to bed, then you should consider doing your most strenuous workout in the evening.

Consider the time you spend studying. If some of your study sessions (this includes time spent in front of the computer) are longer than an hour, then consider making a 5-10 minute workout after every 50-55 minutes of studying. Not only will you help your body, but you will also help your mind concentrate better.

### **Your Workout Schedule**

Ideally, you should be able to squeeze one 15-30 minutes aerobic workout and several shorter, stretching exercises everyday. You can easily make up for the time you would have spent in the gym if you had a schedule that was less busy.

## **Suggested Basic Exercises**

- **Dancing**  
Yep, that is a workout, too, and it is quite easy to implement. Start the music and start moving around dancing or jumping.
- **Jumping**  
This is for people with a tighter schedule that would like to pay special attention to their legs.
- **Rainbow jumping**  
Crouch on the floor with your hands close to your feet. Jump up and try to stretch your hands and legs as far back as possible. When you land try to assume your initial position as smoothly as possible.
- **Kangaroo jumping**  
Jump in one place and try to bring your knees as close to your chest as possible.
- **Playground jumping**  
Remember the time you spent on the playground? Alternate spreading your legs forwards and backwards, and sideways while jumping.
- **One leg jumping**  
Set a destination point and try to reach it jumping on one leg. Then use your other leg to get back.
- **Staircase jumping**  
Try to climb up and down a flight using one or both legs. If you are using one leg, remember to alternate your legs halfway to the top/bottom.

## **Stretches**

### **Basic arm stretches**

1. Fold your arms in front of your chest and then stretch them back horizontally as far as possible.
  2. Place your arms alongside your body. Stretch one arm above your shoulder and the other below as far back as possible. Alternate your arms.
- **Windmill**  
Stretch one arm up and one down and rotate them forwards and then backwards.
  - **Neck stretch**  
This is especially beneficial for students and people working in front of the computer. Stand up and tilt your head back as far as possible. Then tilt your head forward and try to relax all your muscles. Then, try to look behind your left shoulder. Resume your initial position with head tilted forwards and all muscles relaxed. Try to look over your right shoulder.

### **Basic leg stretches**

1. Spread your legs forwards and backwards. Lean on your front leg and bend it several times in the knee. Alternate your legs and repeat the exercise.
2. Spread your legs sideways and start bending your knees. Keep your torso straight.

#### **Let's Take It Further**

You probably already know about the exercises that I've mentioned above. Although they seem simple and easy, they have a tremendous effect on your muscle tone. Still, the time will come when you will want to take it further and you will begin your search for exercises that fit your busy schedule. I already have an answer for you-callanetics. The exercises that this program offers are easy, well balanced and, what is more important, are suitable for even the busiest lifestyle. Callanetics Fit Forever is a wonderful book that will show you an extremely efficient way to tone your body with low-impact exercises.

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## **EATING WELL: it's not just for health nuts...**

Just because you are a busy college student does not mean that you have to live on chips, soda and ramen noodles. There are plenty of healthy ways to eat quickly, including choices available to you with the St. Edward's University meal plans. The dining hall and coffee shop both offer quick snacks that will help you get energized without loading you up on sugar. Visit them in the Ragsdale Center to see what is available. And, keep reading to check out some tips to help you make better choices when you are eating on the go or trying to study for finals.

### **10 Healthy Eating Tips for the Busy College Student**

*The average college student is often pressed for time, under a lot of stress, and eating on the go. You may find it difficult to avoid bad habits like skipping meals or frequenting fast food restaurants. But eating a health diet can help you feel better, cope with stress and perform better in the classroom. It really isn't that hard to get started.*

- 1** Eat a good breakfast. Studies show that skipping breakfast detracts from scholastic achievement. When there isn't time to sit down and enjoy your morning meal, grab a bagel, piece of fruit, and some juice. Most of these items can be easily stored in your dorm room.
- 2** If you must eat fast foods, choose wisely. Choose pizza with half the cheese, a regular size roast beef sandwich, baked potato, or green salad with reduced calorie dressing. Limit high fat offering like french fries, fried chicken or fish sandwiches and watch out for salad dressing.
- 3** Keep healthful snacks on hand so if hunger strikes during a late night study session, you won't be tempted by vending machine candy, chips, or ice cream. Possibilities include fresh or dried fruit, pretzels, unbuttered popcorn, rice cakes or whole wheat cracker. If you have a refrigerator, consider raw vegetables with low-fat yogurt or cottage cheese dip.

- 4 Eat plenty of foods that are rich in calcium. People in their early twenties need to build up stores of calcium in their bodies to prevent osteoporosis in later life. If you don't like milk, try to include ample amounts of low-fat yogurt, low-fat cheese, and green leafy vegetables in your diet.
- 5 If you need to lose weight, do it sensibly. Starvation and/or diets that offer a quick fix usually backfire and are harmful. There is no truth to the theories that suggest eating foods in any particular combination will promote weight loss. The only safe way to lose weight, feel good while doing it, and keep it off is to eat a balanced diet.
- 6 Sugar provides calories in your diet but few other nutrients and it contributes significantly to tooth decay. Use it sparingly and consider sweetening coffee, tea, cereal and fruit with diet sweeteners instead.
- 7 The dining hall salad bar can be either an asset or a detriment to your diet depending on how you choose from it. Of course, leafy greens, raw vegetable and fresh fruit are beneficial. But if you choose a lot of creamy dressing, bacon bits, and mayonnaise based salads, the calories and fat may equal or even exceed those of a burger and fries.
- 8 If you drink alcohol, keep in mind that it supplies calories but no nutritional value. A light beer, a glass of wine, or an ounce of liquor each has about 100 calories. There are also many health problems associated with drinking alcohol.
- 9 Drink lots of water. Your body needs at least eight glasses a day, and if you exercise vigorously, you may need more. To remind yourself, carry a water bottle along to class and keep it handy during late night study sessions.
- 10 Remember, food is a lot more than nourishment for our bodies. Enjoy and savor it.