

SELF-CARE

TIPS & TRICKS

There are many roads to self-care and PantherWELL Peer Health Educators have compiled tips, tricks and resources to share!

Based on the 8 dimensions of wellness, check out some ways to support a healthier YOU!



EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

Stress happens to everyone. We all feel overwhelmed, anxious or stressed from time to time, but by using stress management and coping skills, we can help manage these feelings and experiences in positive ways.

PantherWELL TIPS:

Stress Management: Take time to review your syllabus and work out due dates in your planner. Schedule out your time to work on projects or study ahead of big exams. Be mindful of your other obligations, and how to balance your responsibilities into your week.

Take breaks: Although it can seem like a good idea to work long periods of time, it is important to take breaks periodically while studying or doing homework. Be sure to also allow some "you time" to do activities or relax during the week, too.

Check out the Stress Free Zone: This hidden gem on Pitt's campus is a great resource to support well-being. Although they are currently operating remotely at this time, they still have a ton of virtual classes and services!

Ask for help: Everyone has a breaking point. If you feel like you are overwhelmed or need some help, check out the Counseling Center-- they have a number of workshops and services available to support students.

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PHYSICAL WELLNESS:

PHYSICAL HEALTH & ACTIVITY

Physical activity is a great way to help promote physical wellness!

PantherWELL TIPS:

Exercise! There are a ton of free virtual resources: from 5 minute workout videos... workouts just using body weight... and yoga and meditation. Youtube is a great resource to find a variety of free workouts and activities. There are also some great apps out there, too. Some of our favorites include the Nike Training App, Workouts Fitness Trainer, Aaptive and Daily Yoga (to name a few).

Be Fit Pitt: Did you know Pitt has some great virtual workout options, too? Be Fit Pitt is a great resource that has live stream workouts and on-demand-Youtube videos. Many require little or no equipment!

Check out Pitt's Rec Centers: There are some great facilities Pitt offers with a ton of different workout equipment, and they have classes, too! Visit their webpage for more info on how to access facilities and any policies/procedures associated with Covid.

Want to exercise, but not sure where to start? Never Fear! Campus Rec has you covered! They have FREE wellness consultations with personal trainers! How sweet is that?!?

Not ready to exercise? No problem! ANY increase in physical activity can be beneficial to not only your physical wellness, but also your emotional and mental well-being too. It's not always running marathons or pumping iron in a weight room-- walking instead of driving, using the stairs instead of an elevator, or even taking breaks to stretch and move around can be beneficial!

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PHYSICAL WELLNESS:

NUTRITION

There's more than exercise when it comes to physical wellness. Nutrition is also an important part!

PantherWELL TIPS:

Eat Well! We totally get it. It is so easy to skip meals or grab something that is quick and easy. But when it comes to wellness, nutrition is an important because it fuels both our bodies and our minds! Try to choose foods that are nutritious, and try to limit highly processed foods.

Eat breakfast: It may seem like skipping breakfast to get a couple extra minutes to snooze is a good idea, but skipping breakfast can have a negative impact on concentration, memory and attention. Eating something small-- like a bowl of cereal, yogurt or some fruit-- can make a huge difference in how you feel and think!

Be mindful: Whether making something yourself or grabbing a bite-to-go from the Eatery, be aware of what you are eating and be mindful of nutritional content. It can be really easy to grab a soda or processed snack for a quick pick me up, but sticking to snacks packed with nutrition can help fuel your brain better. Try a handful of almonds, or a piece of fruit, or some veggies!

Water, water everywhere... Hydrate! Water is a crucial part of our body's functions and well-being. Be sure you are drinking enough water throughout the day. Add some lemon juice to change it up! Some of us love to heat water with lemon, even with a touch of honey, for a refreshing drink to start the day!

Looking for guidance? Check out Pitt's Registered Dietician! SHS offers a FREE registered dietician who can offer one-on-one counseling. Nutritional needs and goals can vary from person to person, so this is a great resource to explore and support your nutritional goals. Whether you're trying to navigate a food allergy or dietary preferences or needs, or have specific goals around nutrition, this resource can help!

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PHYSICAL WELLNESS:

SLEEP HYGIENE

We've all done it. Maybe we've stayed up a little later to try to get a little more work done. Or, maybe we have even pulled an all nighter here or there.

Although sacrificing sleep seems like a good idea at times, it can actually do more harm than good! Sleep hygiene is an important part of our overall wellbeing and health.

PantherWELL TIPS:

Try to Limit Screen Time (Especially Before Bed): Did you know that blue light from computers, phones and other devices can effect our circadian rhythm? Limiting screen time, especially in the hours leading up to bed, can be helpful.

Routine. Routine. Routine: It sounds simple, but can make a big difference! Having a bed time routine can help signal your brain that you are preparing for sleep. We also recommend keeping regular bed and wake-up times each day. Irregular sleep habits can disrupt your sleep!

Quiet time. Some of us have found that having an hour of quiet time before bed can help wind us down and fall asleep more quickly. Some of our favorites include listening to relaxing music, reading a couple of chapters in a good book, journaling, coloring and meditation. Tons of options to try!

Limit things like caffeine and alcohol before bed. Caffeine and alcohol can contribute to insomnia and disruptions in your sleep. This can lead to poor sleep quality which can contribute to fatigue and lack of mental focus. Remember caffeine is not just in coffee-- energy drinks, sodas, tea and even chocolate contain caffeine!

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SOCIAL WELLNESS

This dimension encompasses things like relationships and social interactions. In the age of virtual-everything and social distancing, this can be a tricky dimension to balance. We've come up with some ideas and tips to help you navigate this area.

PantherWELL TIPS:

Prevent Zoom Fatigue, Take Screen Breaks: Virtual conferencing programs, like Zoom, have become a central part of our day-to-day life due to the pandemic. Although the ability to connect virtually from nearly anywhere is a great tool it can be exhausting, too! Remember to set boundaries by trying to limit long lengths of screen time, and take screen breaks throughout the day. Blue-light filtering glasses can help with eye strain, too.

Keep engaged! Although breaks from the computer are needed, remember that it is a valuable tool to keep connected in a time of social distancing. Some of our favorites are using Google Hangout and Scener. We watch TV or movies together, or even have virtual dinner dates and game nights! If you'd like to give your eyes a break, pick up the phone and give a friend or family member a call. Remember that there's also more than 700 orgs and clubs at Pitt through SORC, so there's many ways to get connected with others.

Get together (socially distanced, of course!) Keeping connected is an important part of our well-being. There are some ways to socialize in person and in safe ways. Some of our favorites include hikes or walks at Schenley Park, or having outdoor picnics at Schenley Plaza. Remember to maintain distance, wear masks and abide by Pitt's policies and guidelines.

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INTELLECTUAL WELLNESS

Creativity, an active mind, and life-long learning are concepts behind this dimension. Intellectual wellness is more than academics or good grades-- it's about recognizing our abilities and also finding ways to grow and develop knowledge and skills.

PantherWELL TIPS:

Get your creativity flowing! Take some time to draw a picture or play an instrument! Looking for some resources to help? Pitt's Center for Creativity offers different workshops and events-- from visual arts to open mic nights! Or, if you're looking for events to watch, check out Pitt Arts! We LOVE Artful Wednesdays!

Think Beyond the Classroom: There are many programs and events at Pitt and in the surrounding community. Pitt's Outside of the Classroom Curriculum (OCC) is one of our favorite resources to explore and connect to opportunities.

There's also Pitt Global Hub which encompasses many programs, information on clubs and events, service-learning and experiential learning!

We also recommend checking out programs available in different departments. Pitt Honor's College, for example, has some awesome events listed on their event calendar. Be sure to check out the **Pitt Events Calendar** to see other events and programs offered to students (<https://calendar.pitt.edu/>). From civic action to research and everything in between, Pitt has a lot to offer students every day!

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SPIRITUAL WELLNESS

Spiritual health relates to creating balance in our life through aspects including physical, psychological and social elements. We think of it as having a purposeful life that allows us to actualize different dimensions and capacities of being human.

PantherWELL TIPS:

Create a personal sanctuary. Find a space that makes you feel calm and relaxed. Use this space as a place to reflect and think. It could be making a comfortable corner in your apartment or dorm room, or it may be finding a location outside, like at Schenley Park. Try to surround yourself with things that you enjoy or that bring you tranquility.

Reflect. Taking time to reflect can be valuable in supporting not only your spiritual wellness, but also other dimensions, too. You may also find exercises like journaling or art help you reflect your emotions and experiences, allowing you to reflect and grow.

Mindfulness exercises. Try different exercises to help you work through challenges and stressors. Deep breathing, guided meditation, or even some yoga moves are some of our favorites. Check out Pitt's Stress Free Zone for some great mindfulness resources! One of our favorites is the weekly virtual meditation sessions with the Center for Mindfulness and Consciousness Studies!

Use resources. There are many resources out there that can help support your spiritual journey-- from religious centers to meditation groups to yoga studios. Check out Pitt's Office of Interfaith Dialogue and Engagement for additional events and programs!

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ENVIRONMENTAL WELLNESS

This dimension focuses on how we connect to the world around us and interact with our natural surroundings and community.

PantherWELL TIPS:

Balance your space. Be aware of how your external environment affects you and work to redesign your environment so it more effectively supports your needs. For inside spaces: rearrange your room so more natural light is available; declutter and clean; add plants; use posters or tapestry or other décor to add splashes of color; have a room lay out that is easy and useful; and create a relaxing space.

Learn more about sustainable practices. Sustainability is the idea of balancing environmental needs with those of the community. Pitt has a ton of resources through Pitt Sustainability and the Student Office of Sustainability, including programs, events and resources.

Clean it up! Take some time to support your community and outside environment by participating in clean up and recycling events.

Be aware! Minimize your carbon foot print and be aware of how the choices you make may impact the environment around you. Try to make choices based on the impact of local, national, and world ecology and climate.

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FINANCIAL WELLNESS

Finances can be a huge stress sometimes, and starting a positive foundation now can help us later on.

PantherWELL TIPS:

Learn to create and manage a budget. Start by tracking your expenses and spending for a month to see where your money is going. Think about some of your financial goals, and consider how things may change in the future so you can plan and prepare. For example: Are you planning to live off campus next year? If so, think about how you may budget rent, groceries and other items.

Start a savings account. Set aside money each month into a savings account to use for emergencies or other needs.

Be thrifty. Try to buy used instead of new. Make your own meals instead of dining out. Use thrift stores. Reuse, repair, or upcycle items. Use the library to loan books instead of purchasing. Every little bit helps-- not to mention it is often more sustainable, too!

Understand financial aid and student debt. Understanding these elements can help you navigate paying for college now and repaying loans later on. Grad Ready is a program offered the the Financial Aid Office that can help you learn more.

Tap into on-campus resources: Pitt Pantry, Thrifftburg and Veterans Services. These resources are helpful to support needs including food, clothing and other supports. Looking for a way to give back? Contact them to see how you can donate to support others!

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OCCUPATIONAL WELLNESS

Achieving occupational wellness can help maintain a positive attitude and support overall wellbeing as it relates to things like your work experience, satisfaction and vocational interests. There are many things we can do now to support this!

PantherWELL TIPS:

Plan your vision for your future, and explore your career options. It is never too early to start preparing for your future. Think about your goals, skills and passions and what careers may be of interest. Take advantage of career fairs and other events to connect with different fields and employers. Talk to your professors and other mentors,

Learn new skills and polish up ones you have. Learning is a life long process. Take time to utilize resources to figure out how to strengthen skills and acquire new ones.

Take steps now to help set up your future. Check out Pitt's Career Center as a great resource to support you. They have mock interviews, can assist with resume and cover letters and even have internship prep programs!

Get involved! Whether your applying to a job or internship, joining a volunteer opportunity or are active in a campus organization, getting involved can help you build networks and skills that can support your occupational wellness now and in the future. Check out Handshake for job opportunities, PittServes for volunteer opportunities and the Student Organization Resource Center (SORC) to check out different orgs!

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