

Wellness Challenge Activities

The Activity Menu for the Week. We encourage you to complete at least three wellness activities *in addition* to your usual routine each week. You may choose 3 new activities to try out once each, or choose one activity to try out three times during the week. Once you've reviewed your options, consider writing down the activities you plan to do, printing out this list, or bookmarking this page for easy reference. At the end of the week, we'll send you another email so you can document what you've done and get the list of options for next week's activities. Enjoy!

Week One: Mental and Emotional Wellness

- Relax! Try one of the relaxation strategies outlined on this page www.amherst.edu/campuslife/counseling/be_well/relax
- Self-care: indulge in at least 30 minutes of "you time"
- Write it out: write about a difficult experience (past or present) and what you've learned from it
- Savor the positive: spend 15+ minutes to bring yourself into the moment to fully enjoy a positive experience, spend time reminiscing about a past positive experience, acknowledge what's going well in your life
- Set a limit: turn down a request or say no to taking on an additional project or responsibility
- Get support: tell someone about something you're struggling with – be honest
- Capture your attention: Spend 30+ minutes doing something that completely and actively engages your attention (media doesn't count – think of something that actively engages your mind that you can lose yourself in, rather than something that lets you tune out)
- Turn a stressor or problem into a challenge: pick something that's causing you stress and ask yourself how you can change the way you think about it. How can you approach it as a challenge/opportunity to learn and grow? What would you do differently? Write it down.
- Talk back to yourself: tune in to negative self-talk (criticisms, judgments) and talk back! What would you say if someone trashed your best friend? Start standing up for yourself like you would for him/her.
- Go on a media fast for 2+ hours. See what it's like to unplug from *all electronics* for a couple hours during your down time. Yes, that includes your laptop, phone and "i" anything.

Documenting your Wellness Activities. Please check each activity you completed this week. Your responses are anonymous and data will be used in aggregate form only. To record accurately, **do not** include activities that you were already doing on a regular basis before the challenge, only those that you started or increased as a result of the challenge. Thank you!

Week 2: Spiritual Wellness

- Attend a spiritual or religious service: <https://www.amherst.edu/campuslife/religiouslife/events>
- Meditate: attend a meditation - Amherst has a mindfulness meditation Tuesdays at 4:30 in Chapin Chapel - or practice on your own. You can download apps here <http://www.mindful.org/mindful-magazine/mindfulness-apps>
- Connect with nature: spend 30+ minutes taking a walk in the woods, sitting by a stream, watching wildlife, etc.
- Pray for someone or something: take 10+ minutes to pray for the well-being of another, or the positive outcome of a situation. Focus your hopes, best wishes & positive thoughts on someone/something outside yourself
- Talk to a spiritual advisor or counselor
- Develop a personal mission & values statement: write down what you believe your purpose in life is (don't worry, you can change it anytime, don't strive for perfection here) and write down the values that are most important to you. How can you live in accordance with your values/mission?
- Give: volunteer, do something kind for another person, donate, or otherwise practice kindness and generosity
- Create a ritual or rite of passage for yourself to mark an important process or transition
- Talk with someone about your most deeply held values and beliefs
- Practice forgiveness: if you feel emotionally stuck on something that you have done, or that someone else has done to you, write about what steps you can take to let go and forgive yourself or them.

Week 3: Physical Wellness

- Improve sleep habits:
 - ✓ Make more time for sleep: go to bed little earlier to give yourself at least 8 hours to sleep
 - ✓ Practice good sleep hygiene: turn off all electronic screens at least 30 minutes before bed, use your bed for sleeping only (not work), develop a nighttime routine, practice going to bed and getting up at the same time ... even on the weekend!
 - ✓ Unwind before bed: Practice a breathing, relaxation or meditation exercise before bed. There are lots of great apps out there (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/08/30/best-sleep-apps_n_3691693.html)
 - ✓ Cut out or cut down on substances that interfere with sleep: Cut your caffeine intake in half, or eliminate all caffeine after noon (or 10 hrs before going to bed). Eliminate or cut down alcohol consumption to 1 standard drink. Alcohol has been shown to reduce REM, which is important to memory and learning. Alcohol is also a diuretic and will send you to the bathroom.

- Improve Fitness
 - ✓ Walk for 30+ minutes – think about investing in a pedometer or fitbit to help track your daily steps
 - ✓ Get your heart rate up for 30+ minutes – dance, run, play a sport, work out
 - ✓ Take a class that makes you move – yoga, Zumba, West African Dance, etc.
 - ✓ Join a student group that focuses on physical activity

- Improve Nutrition
 - ✓ Eat breakfast! Eating breakfast gives you energy for the day & helps manage food cravings and maintain a healthy weight
 - ✓ Eat more of the good stuff - get more servings of fruits and vegetables: add at least 2 more servings of fruits and vegetables to your daily intake. Ideally, at least half of what you consume at any meal should be fruits and vegetables. Fresh is best!
 - ✓ Eat less of the bad stuff – reduce your intake of “junk food” – sugary foods, highly processed foods, foods with artificial ingredients and little nutritional value
 - ✓ Complete an Eating Disorder Screening: The Counseling Center and To Write Love on Her Arms will be holding an Eating Disorder Screening on Feb 25 from 10am-4pm in the Keefe Campus Center

- Practice Breathing Technique
 - ✓ Practice slow, deep “belly breaths” a few times a day. Count how many breaths you average per minute and aim to get it under 10. This will help reduce stress and anxiety and help you get the oxygen you need. You can use a breathing app, find breathing exercises online, or ask a yoga or meditation instruction to coach you on technique.

Week 4: Social Wellness

- Express gratitude: tell someone important to you how grateful you are for them and the impact they've had on your life
- Intervene/speak up: say something when you hear an offensive joke or remark, gossip, or backbiting
- Smile: make an effort for at least one day to smile and said hi to everyone you encounter
- Be inclusive: make an effort to include someone who looks left out into the conversation or activity
- Power up your body language: watch the Amy Cuddy youtube video http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y6o-OZ_s9F4 on body language and practice positive body language for a day
- Express appreciation: tell someone how much you appreciate them and why
- Give your attention: offer someone who needs it, your full, undivided attention and support
- Be affirming: research has shown that successful relationships have a positive to negative interaction ratio of 5:1. Make sure your relationships have a solid foundation of positive interactions and choose your critical feedback carefully!
- Celebrate a friend's success: make a big deal of their accomplishments
- Make a memory: carve out some time to do something fun, new or different together

The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS)

Below are some statements about feelings and thoughts. Please select a number on a scale from 1 – 5 (1=None of the Time and 5=All of the Time) that best describes your experience of each over the last 2 weeks

STATEMENTS	1 (none of the time)	2	3	4	5 (all of the time)
I've been feeling optimistic about the future	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling useful	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling relaxed	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling interested in other people	1	2	3	4	5
I've had energy to spare	1	2	3	4	5
I've been dealing with problems well	1	2	3	4	5
I've been thinking clearly	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling good about myself	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling close to other people	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling confident	1	2	3	4	5
I've been able to make up my own mind about things	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling loved	1	2	3	4	5
I've been interested in new things	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling cheerful	1	2	3	4	5

Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS)

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Additional Questions

STATEMENTS	1 (none of the time)	2	3	4	5 (all of the time)
I've been feeling satisfied with my social life	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling trusting of other people	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling that most of the things I do in my life are worthwhile	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling a sense of community at Amherst	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling satisfied with my life	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling content with my experience as a student/staff/faculty at Amherst	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling healthy	1	2	3	4	5

WEMWBS	Wellness Challenge Participants <u>n=55</u>			Wellness Control Group Participants <u>n=31</u>		
	Pre-Survey Mean	Post-Survey Mean	Sig. Level	Pre-Survey Mean	Post-Survey Mean	Sig. Level
Experience Over the Last 2 Weeks On a Scale From 1 – 5 (1=None of the Time and 5=All of the Time)						
I've had energy to spare.	2.9	3.3	.019	3.3	2.7	.009
I've been feeling good about myself.	3.3	3.9	.002	3.8	3.7	.572
I've been feeling close to other people.	3.5	4.0	.000	3.9	3.7	.351
I've been feeling confident.	3.4	3.8	.009	3.8	3.6	.335
I've been feeling cheerful.	3.5	3.7	.046	3.6	3.6	.865
Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale TOTAL	50.6	53.6	.020	53.0	50.8	.201

Note: These measures showed a statistically significant improvement of $p \leq .05$.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS	Wellness Challenge Participants <u>n=55</u>			Wellness Control Group Participants <u>n=31</u>		
	Pre-Survey Mean	Post-Survey Mean	Sig. Level	Pre-Survey Mean	Post-Survey Mean	Sig. Level
Experience Over the Last 2 Weeks On a Scale From 1 – 5 (1=None of the Time and 5=All of the Time)						
I've been feeling satisfied with my social life.	3.2	3.8	.000	3.6	3.6	1.000
I've been feeling trusting of other people.	3.6	4.0	.053	3.9	3.4	.011
I've been feeling that most of the things I do in my life are worthwhile.	3.7	4.1	.009	4.0	3.9	.432
I've been feeling a sense of community at Amherst.	2.7	3.5	.000	3.6	3.4	.432
I've been feeling satisfied with my life.	3.6	3.9	.031	3.9	3.9	.869
I've been feeling content with my experience as a student/staff/faculty at Amherst.	3.3	3.7	.023	3.6	3.5	.455
Other Indicators of Well-being TOTAL	23.5	26.7	.000	26.3	25.5	

Note: These measures showed a statistically significant improvement of $p \leq .05$.