

MILLS

WELLNESS

Finding Balance in College

It's natural to feel a bit overwhelmed at times in college. Each of us has a different formula for what works to achieve that perfect balance. The first stop on the road to balance is to let go of finding "perfect" balance. Once you are in the land of "good enough" balance, that's something to celebrate. Because that is something you can really stick with for life. Good self-care routines that are practiced throughout your life will help you prevent injuries and illness and improve your health and resilience. Here are a few basic self-care tips that can help most of us with optimal balance and wellness:

Take care of yourself. Eat regular, healthy, balanced meals and avoid junk food and processed food. Drink plenty of water. Be physically active to the point of sweating for 45 minutes at least three to four days per week. Walking, yoga or swimming are good choices for those who are starting or re-starting physical activity. Get enough sleep - seven or eight hours per night - and go to bed and wake at the same time every day. Have social time every day - sharing meals is a good way to do this. Be kind to yourself and others. Take time to nourish your spirit and soul. Spiritual and Religious Life at Mills: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Mills-College-Spiritual-Religious-Life/253509144662467>

Avoid risky behaviors and relationships. Don't smoke tobacco or quit if you do smoke. If you drink alcohol, drink less than one drink per hour. Don't drink more than three drinks in a day and don't drink more than several days in a week. Don't develop unhealthy dependence or abusive habits with prescription or recreational drugs. Avoid toxic relationships where you feel bullied, controlled, demeaned, used or abused. Get help if you are in an abusive relationship. Be safe: Know your surroundings, trust your gut (your instincts), have a buddy when going out walking or to a party or bar.

Actively "unplug" each day. Do not spend all your time glued to your phone or computer. If you watch television, limit the time you spend on the couch or in bed viewing TV. Watch with others or do something active while watching TV, such as stationary bike, cooking, sit-ups, stretching, yoga or pilates. Every day, get outside. Join the Mills Botanic Garden Club and drop in to garden http://www.mills.edu/academics/undergraduate/bio/botanic_garden_students.php, visit a friend, have a break with coffee, tea or ice cream. Play music, hear a speaker or attend a concert. Go to a movie with friends and discuss it afterwards. Do something active such as a hike, bike ride, run, swim or yoga class. Check out the many options for physical activity at Athletics, Physical Education and Recreation (APER): <http://www.mills.edu/athletics>.

Right-size your work and commitments. College is a time to try new things in order to discover your talents, gifts and career direction. But you need to also know yourself and how much you can handle. Taking on too much can be exciting but exhausting for the long haul. Learn what nourishes and stretches you and say "no" to things that do not matter. When you work towards

the things you are obligated to do, break each project into smaller tasks or goals and celebrate each accomplishment.

Ask for and give help. If you feel isolated, homesick, sad, stressed, anxious or depressed, call a friend or family member. Schedule a visit with Counseling and Psychological Services at 510-430-2130. Don't dwell too much or ruminate on any one thing- whether an academic challenge, financial or personal problem. Hang in there and know that most things are not as bad as they might seem. Get a fresh perspective by asking for advice or help from a friend, family member, advisor, RA, staff member or faculty member. When you have some experience finding your balance, helping others is a great way to maintain perspective, which is great juice for your long-term balance.

Remember the power of gratitude and put it into practice daily. Do you know why volunteering is good for you? Because when you help others less fortunate than yourself, you realize we are not alone. You feel needed and you feel the gratitude of others. You can more easily recognize gratitude for all life has given you. You don't need to volunteer if it's one more activity that will stress you out. But do this: Find something to be grateful for each day. It might be the splash of sun on your nose on a cold grey day, the kind words of a stranger or a hard lesson you learned and came out the wiser. It could be gratitude for a family member or friend, a pet, a companion, a teacher or leader. Be grateful for your unique self in this world. Find gratitude in all your unique gifts and the opportunities, lessons and joy that this life offers you. Gratitude will help you to better manage stress, conflict or disappointment. Gratitude will help you to show up and live your best life each day. Don't waste the opportunity – start being grateful today.

Learn ways to better manage your health: Attend a wellness class or activity to learn more about your health and wellness. Find out more about Health and Wellness at Mills here: http://www.mills.edu/student_services/health_and_counseling/ and find out more tips, resources, classes and events here: <https://www.facebook.com/MillsHealth>.

Online resources for when you feel out of balance or stressed-out:

<http://www.helpguide.org/>
<http://us.reachout.com/>
<http://www.jedfoundation.org/>

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