

Health, Lifestyle and Mindset

Prioritising your health and wellbeing is a crucial factor in achieving academic success. A balanced lifestyle which incorporates wellness-oriented practices will assist you in maintaining the focus, endurance and mental clarity needed for study. Refer to the tips below for further information.

1. Nutrition

A healthy diet is one that focusses on whole grains, fruit, vegetables, lean proteins and healthy fats. As a general rule, it is better to choose foods close to their natural state and avoid heavily processed or convenience foods as these are usually high in salt, sugar and saturated fats. Plan ahead by bringing your lunch to campus – not only are you likely to choose healthier options, it's a great way to save money as well.

2. Sleep

Though often overlooked and undervalued, sleep is one of the pillars of optimum health and is imperative to cognitive functioning. Whilst some students might feel tempted to 'pull an all-nighter' to complete an assignment or stay up late 'cramming' the night before an exam – the research about sleep hygiene tells us that these practices are not only unhealthy, but quite counterproductive. Whilst it might appear that your brain isn't working hard whilst you are asleep, it is actually highly active, carrying out a number of essential processes. One of these, which is particularly relevant to students, is the converting of information into memories – highly important in being able to retrieve information under assessment conditions. Sleep deprivation can lead to poor concentration, trouble absorbing and retaining information, slower reaction times and a reduction in willpower. Prioritising sleep will have a positive effect on your energy levels, concentration and productivity.

3. Exercise

The benefits of regular exercise are vast and cannot be underestimated. Exercise promotes the production of mood-boosting endorphins and can lead to a reduction in cortisol, which is the hormone associated with stress. Furthermore, exercise increases the flow of oxygen to the brain and stimulates the production of neurotransmitters, which leads to improved concentration, focus, mental clarity and capacity to manage stress.

4. Relaxation

Incorporating relaxation time into your schedule is paramount in maintaining your stamina and avoiding burnout. Many students work, study, work out and go out but don't allow time to simply rest. Choose a relaxation practice that brings you a sense of calm and make it a part of your weekly routine.

5. Mindset

The mindset with which you approach your course will have a profound impact upon your overall wellbeing. The work of [Carol Dweck](#) describes the benefits of adopting a growth mindset, as opposed to a fixed mindset, in your approach to learning. A fixed mindset is based on the notion that our capabilities are 'fixed', that is, people are either 'smart' or not and this is not changeable. The fixed mindset is focussed on achievement, successful

outcomes and avoiding failure at all costs. Naturally, the fixed mindset therefore tends to encompass perfectionism which can lead to burnout and/or the avoidance of challenging tasks. The fixed mindset sees mistakes as catastrophic, rather than an essential part of the learning process. By contrast, a growth mindset understands that we all have the capacity to change and that any knowledge or skill can be acquired through effort, persistence and an openness to learning. The growth mindset thrives on challenges and sees setbacks as a natural part of learning. Research has found that a growth mindset allows people to manage stress and challenges more effectively and lead to a higher level of personal wellbeing as well as improved academic outcomes.