

Health Mentors Program Newsletter

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Greetings Health Mentors,

We hope you are staying healthy and doing well!

We are not including applications or return envelopes with this mailing since we are currently working from home. You can use the below survey link to let us know if you are still available to volunteer as a Health Mentor.

We will also be reaching out through email and phone to confirm your interest and availability for continuing to volunteer. Thank you!

Contact Us

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Volunteer survey: <https://bit.ly/HMPJCIPE>

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Our Health Mentors have an impact!



Cohort 13's Team # 44: Earl Bampo (medical student), Mr. Lanza (Health Mentor), Lauren Banner (medical student), Julie DiStasi (physical therapy student)

Team #44 enjoyed their second visit in January 2020. Julie DiStasi shared this reflection:

"My experience with the Health Mentors Program, and specifically Mr. Lanza, has been truly enjoyable. Getting to know Mr. Lanza has definitely been the highlight and I always look forward to our get togethers. His drive and want to give back is truly inspirational and getting to participate in a program that allows students to meet and learn from individuals such as Mr. Lanza is priceless. It is easy to get caught up in the difficulties of school but he is a constant reminder of why we do what we do. I have gotten so much out of meeting Mr. Lanza; I look forward to our next get together and I am equally excited to take what he has taught me into my career!"

A Student's Perspective from Home: Cultivating a Culture of Productivity and Enjoyment

By Arden Gewirtz, pharmacy student

As someone who is scheduled to hold my wedding on June 6th, I am no stranger to having to rethink plans due to the COVID-19 crisis. A day once replete with my dream venue, faraway guests, and international travel has transitioned to our immediate families in my fiancé's backyard for a barbeque. While the day I planned will no longer take place - the most valuable things abide - the joining of two families, reciting our marriage vows before God, and the excitement of beginning our lives together. It is from this renewed perspective that I believe we can cultivate an atmosphere of productivity, enjoyment, and fellowship from home, as the most important things in life continue on uninterrupted.

Psychology Today defines self-care as, "any activity that we do deliberately in order to take care of our mental, emotional, and physical health". While self-care may look different to each individual, it should be something that refreshes us after its completion. Some examples include running, spending time with loved ones, petting dogs, prioritizing sleep, and baking chocolate chip cookies. It is recommended that an approach to deliberate self-care include five components that address one's physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, and social self. In this time of physical isolation, it is of paramount importance not to let that impede interpersonal socialization. Many options exist including FaceTime, Zoom, and HouseParty (an interactive gaming app). During the coronavirus pandemic, my family has joined HouseParty, continued to tune into church broadcasted live on Sundays, and developed an interest in yoga. We have found many YouTube yoga instructors are offering full courses online for free during this time. It has been both a stress reliever and a wonderful new exercise habit. Additionally, we have found increased time to write and read, activities often forgone in our fast-paced society.

Most importantly, laying aside newfound productiveness and hobbies, we have found augmented togetherness. And in this, we have found gratitude unabated.

Some suggestions for the five categories of self-care can be found below:

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|--|
| <u>Physical:</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Try a new exercise○ Go for a walk in nice weather | <u>Spiritual:</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Attend a religious service remotely○ Sign up for an online Bible study |
| <u>Emotional:</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Share only positive things on your social media○ Create an inspirational collage | <u>Social:</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Join HouseParty for a family game night○ Consider holding dinner over FaceTime with friends |
| <u>Mental:</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Keep a "Gratitude Journal"○ Listen to an upbeat podcast | | |

Citations: Scott, E. (2020, March 21). 5 Self-Care Practices for Every Area of Your Life. Retrieved May 15, 2020, from <https://www.verywellmind.com/self-care-strategies-overall-stress-reduction-3144729>

Two Minute Tune-Up

By Irene Kalbian with illustrations by Danielle Bellavance, medical students

Stretching is an easy and free way to help your body manage life's stressors. Our bodies absorb most of the tension we experience during the day, which often manifests as tightness, aches and pains. Even the act of sitting for a prolonged period of time puts a significant physical strain on your muscles and joints. Stretching is the ultimate low maintenance self-care activity to combat the effects of daily stress. You can make it part of your routine with just two minutes a day.

4 stretches, held for 30 seconds each, 1 time per day. That's it!

For each of the stretches below, start seated at the edge of your chair with your feet on the ground.

1. Foldover

Bend forward at your waist as far as you can without pain. Allow your head to hang down so you're looking at the floor. Your arms should extend down towards the floor in front of you. You should feel this in your hips, back and shoulders.

2. Arch

Raise your heels up so that only the balls of your feet are touching the ground. Place your hands on both sides of your back on your pelvic bones, and gradually push your lower back forward until you feel a comfortable stretch. Lift your chest towards the ceiling and look up. You should feel this stretch all the way from your neck down to your calves.



3. Split

Spread your legs as far apart as you can without any pain. Flex your feet so that only your heels touch the ground, and keep a slight bend in your knees. You may choose to stay in this position if you feel a big stretch, or you bend at your waist and rest your hands on your shins, ankles, or floor (whichever feels best). You should feel this in your lower back, and groin.



4. Pillar

Start with your ankles crossed. Relax your knees so they fall open. Interlace your fingers and then lift your arms over your head, palms facing down. Reach for the ceiling, keeping your spine straight without arching your back. You should feel this in your back, shoulders and arms.

Please note, the "no pain, no gain" saying does not apply to stretching! Your stretch should not hurt, and if it does you should ease up on the stretch until you are feeling a more gentle sensation.

Stretching Frequently Asked Questions

Here's a brief FAQ to remind you that stretching can easily become part of your day:

Do I need to stretch at particular time of day? No, choose whatever time is most convenient for you.

Does the order of the stretches matter? No, the key is just to do them.

Do I need any gear? Only something to sit on - any chair, couch, stool, etc. will do!

Is past experience with stretching or sports needed? Definitely not, these stretches are designed to be accessible for everyone.

Dancing Your Way to a Healthier You

By Preeyal Patel, medical student

During these months of quarantine, you may have made several unexpected compromises. One thing you shouldn't sacrifice is your personal wellness. From connecting virtually with loved ones to practicing a hobby, there are many strategies for self-care to preserve your sense of well-being. As a dancer, I have turned to music and movement, and you can, too!

If social distancing put a dent in your exercise or physical therapy routine, dance can get you active in your own home or outdoors and serves as a total-body workout. Aerobic movements, involving jogging in place, jumping, swaying side to side, or twirling around, increase your heart rate and support cardiovascular fitness. An aerobic movements, like striking a pose, isolating different muscle groups, or squatting, boost muscle tone. The beauty of dance is in its versatility. You can tailor your session to your comfort level—no professional training or choreography required! Consider slow-dancing with your partner, doing the Cotton-Eyed Joe with your children, or sitting in a chair while bobbing your head and moving your arms.

Dance is a creative outlet to release any feelings you may experience. Your body and music can convey your thoughts in ways that words can't. Whether you play a song that expresses your mood or one that embodies a mindset you hope to achieve, music is deeply therapeutic. Sound is also strongly tied to memory. You may transport back to your favorite memories, from the first song at your wedding to long summer drives. If your travel plans were cancelled, try exploring different cultures through their forms of dance.

For beginners who need inspiration or prefer a guided regimen, find free videos online to follow along. For the more spontaneous, freestyle and surprise yourself. Regardless of what you choose, your physical and emotional health can flourish—yes, even amidst a pandemic.