

MY student newsletter

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International Quality of Life Month

There's always something you can do to improve the quality of your life. Welcome to International Quality of Life Month. It's a simple observance and reminder that encourages people to evaluate and enhance their physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being. How busy is your life? In the hustle, it's easy to overlook areas of our lives that require improvement. As humans, we tend to merely cope with life's challenges rather than actively seek change to make things better. So, engaging in self-reflection during International Quality of Life Month helps remind us that being intentional in the pursuit of happiness and being proactive—taking action—rather than taking life as it comes will actually make life qualitatively better. What tweak or correction in your life might be the one that could make it more fulfilling? And how can your SAP help?

Learn more: nationaltoday.com/international-quality-of-life-month/

Investing in Experiences over Material Possessions

Research shows that investing in experiences leads to greater and more enduring happiness compared with purchasing material items. The belief is that experiences create lasting memories and foster social connections that contribute to longer-term happiness and personal growth. For example, you're more likely to frequently and fondly recall a camping trip experience as a child than a toy, both of which brought happiness. While possessions seem to lose novelty over time, experiences stick around and become part of our identity, and the stories we tell about them add to our sense of fulfillment. This year, try embracing new experiences and reflect on whether they truly enhance your overall happiness. If the discovery turns true, create a new habit that will enrich your life.

Learn more: <https://integrative-med.org/investing-in-experiences-over-possessions-boosts-happiness/>

Embrace Frugality for Big Rewards

Frugality often gets a bad rap and misunderstood as meaning "cheap," but it really means being sparing, thrifty, prudent, or economical in the consumption of resources. Frugality can promote financial stability and reduce anxiety when practiced with awareness. Could frugality be a good thing for you? When you're frugal, you avoid waste and extravagance. Finding a balance between prudent financial management and enjoying life is also crucial for maintaining mental well-being. Get started on your frugal journey by checking out the resources in "Frugal Living for Dummies" by Deborah Taylor-Hough and turn to your Student Assistance Program for any sort of assistance to support your financial goals and overall wellness. (Trivia: Warren Buffett's net worth is \$142 billion, yet he only lives in a five-bedroom house with two and a half bathrooms.)

Learn more: "Frugal Living for Dummies" by Deborah Taylor-Hough

What You Should Know about Mini-Stroke

A mini-stroke, clinically known as a transient ischemic attack (TIA), is a temporary disruption of blood flow to the brain that results in stroke-like symptoms. Although TIAs do not cause permanent damage, they serve as critical warning signs for potential future strokes. About one in three people will have a larger, more serious stroke within a year following a TIA. Symptoms of a TIA last only a few minutes, but they are similar to a larger stroke and include weakness, numbness or paralysis in the face, slurred speech, trouble understanding others, temporary blindness, dizziness, and loss of balance or coordination. See a doctor without delay if you experience a TIA.

Learn more: www.yalemedicine.org/conditions/transient-ischemic-attack

Learn to Love Exercise

Even if engaging in exercise can elevate one's mood and promises a longer life, this may not spur enough enthusiasm on your part to make it a priority. To create real motivation, rather than to "just do it," be programmatic about it. You'll stand a better chance of making exercise a more permanent part of your routine. Here are some ideas: 1) Decide where you will insert 30 minutes of exercise into your day four or five times per week. 2) What form of exercise is most gratifying? Can you combine exercise with another pleasurable activity like listening to music, reading a book, or other learning? Don't rush this step. Googling "fun exercises to stay in shape" will lead to many options. 3) Test the exercise for 5–10 minutes. Stop short of the normal discomfort from any muscle resistance exercise entails; for now, you are only gauging your personal satisfaction with your choice of exercise. 4) You've set aside 30 minutes per day, but when you first begin, shorten this time period and work your way up to the allotted time. 5) After a week, examine how you are feeling. Do you feel proud of your achievements so far? What about your energy level? Any gains there? Has this motivated you to sit less frequently? Any improvements to your diet choices? Has exercise helped you switch your focus or detach from stress or worries, at least temporarily? Think of all the small and large benefits gained. Don't overlook the less obvious ones. They all add up to the motivation necessary to reinforce your decision to keep an exercise program going.

New Resource: The Ultimate Guide to Becoming Your Own Workout Motivation: Discipline, Desire, and Getting It Done; September 2021; James Kelly

Early Birds Might Be More Productive

I'm a morning person." "Not me. I work better at night." Which is better? The jury is back: Research seems to point to early birds being more productive. With over 100 peer-reviewed neuroscience articles, Robert Carter, Ph.D., author of "Morning Mind," argues that flipping your routine to become a "morning person" will have a profound impact on your life. Research has shown that only an extremely small percentage of people are actually night owls who are more productive at night than during the day—about 1 percent. Among other reasons, research shows that your brain, which has received more body fluid being level all night, is actually prepped for more productivity upon waking!

Make Your New Year's Resolution a Magnificent Obsession

Make your New Year's resolution a "magnificent obsession" (MO) so it drives you forward with continuous action and gives you a consuming passion for achievement. On the other hand, a goal is also important, but achieving it may require encouragement, rewards, or accountability as keys to success. An MO is fueled by intense passion—you don't need reminders to stay on course or have to revisit the "why" to re-inspire and motivate you. That's because the MO itself is compelling, energizing, and nonnegotiable. To transform your goal into an MO, ignite massive passion, reexamine your "why," expand the goal's importance, link to something bigger than yourself, and tie it to a purpose that has impact for others you care about. When you feel your goal is fueled by inspiration and not self-discipline then you've got it!

Learn more: www.game-changer.net/2017/02/28/obsession-the-difference-between-good-and-great/

Stress Tips from the Field: Journey through Forest Bathing

Forest bathing is a practice that involves immersing oneself in the sights, sounds, and smells of a forest. Originating in Japan during the 1980s (called "shinrin-yoku"), forest bathing encourages individuals to slow down, be present, and connect with nature through mindful sensory engagement rather than merely hiking or exercising. To practice forest bathing, make use of all your senses—sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste. (Regarding taste, if the forest doesn't offer a safe means of tasting something, just substitute a carried snack to savor.) Forest bathing can reduce stress levels by lowering cortisol (the stress hormone), improve mood, enhance immune function, and lead to improved cardiovascular health by lowering blood pressure and heart rate.

Learn more: www.psychiatry.org/news-room/apa-blogs/forest-bathing-benefits-mental-physical