

NOVEMBER 2021

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Happy first Wednesday of November!

Today's newsletter is a bumper edition with great articles and information, including:

- make time for 'me time'
- managing the return to the workplace
- afternoon temptations – try this healthy treat
- moving your body to move your mind
- run for a cause – calling all heroes
- walking and podcasting with Jo
- how to help a stressed team member
- keeping safe from slips, trips and falls

We encourage you to continue accessing the [Health and wellbeing web page](#) for resources and the [Mental health and wellbeing information guide](#) for supportive strategies to allow you to thrive.

Stay well and have a great Wednesday.

Make time for 'me time'

Self-care is necessary for our physical and mental health, yet it is often the first thing we drop when we find ourselves stretched for time. Without adequate self-care, we are less likely to be the best possible version of ourselves, and our relationships, work, and experience of the world suffers as a result.

Although it might feel like the opposite, the times when we feel least able to pay attention to our self-care are the times when we most need it.

If you're feeling stretched for time, it can be difficult to know how to start fitting new activities into your week. Here is a five-step guide to self-care for busy people:

- **Start with your needs first.** Self-care is conventionally portrayed as pampering yourself, however, it is really about meeting your human needs. This could be a

need for relaxation, a need for quiet, a need for connection, a need for stability, and much more.

Past Issues

- **Schedule it.** This sounds easier said than done, but one certain way to create time for your self-care is to schedule it. Find a gap in your calendar during the next week and schedule in an appointment called 'self-care time'. Then, most importantly, stick to it.
- **Prioritise.** You can fit self-care into your schedule, no matter how busy you are, by deciding it is a priority. Whether this means making it the first thing you do each morning, forgoing TV or Facebook time, saying 'no' to certain commitments, you can fit it into your routine if you prioritise.
- **Be assertive about setting your boundaries.** Remember, you can take half an hour for yourself, and the world will still be there when you return. And when you do return, you'll be in a much better, healthier position to deal with the world around you.
- **Focus on little and often.** Like exercise, meditation, learning, and other beneficial activities, self-care is far more effective when you engage with it little and often, as opposed to big chunks every now and again. Practising some kind of activity that takes 10-15 minutes a day is far more helpful than one that takes two hours once a month.

Self-care doesn't have to involve money, nor does it require a lot of time. If you're struggling to fit self-care into your routine, start small, prioritise, and listen to what you need.

[Read the full article 'The 5-step guide to self-care for busy people' for more details.](#)



Managing the return to the workplace

For many of us who have spent the recent months working from home and physically distancing ourselves from others, we may have a range of feelings, from excitement and relief to stress and worry, as we transition back to the workplace.

While it may seem counter-intuitive to feel anxious about returning to past freedoms and ways of life, it's natural for such major change to be stressful.

For some, especially those with an existing mental health issue, returning to your workplace can bring up a range of feelings including fear and anxiety. These feelings can occur for many reasons including being surrounded by others after extended periods of time alone, having to commute in peak times, and spending less time at home with the family, even if you were doing this prior to COVID-19.

There are numerous strategies you can use to help you successfully cope with anxiety and worry as you leave lockdown behind. Consider these four tips to help in your transition:

- **Expect a re-adjustment phase.** It can be helpful simply to remind yourself a period of readjustment is normal, given the unusual and stressful situation the world is facing, and any distress is generally temporary.
- **Talk to supportive friends.** Seeking support from others you feel comfortable with and talking about how you are feeling is also important for many people, particularly as others may be struggling with the same feelings and challenges.
- **Re-engage with fun.** You can also make an effort to do activities you generally find enjoyable and/or meaningful – particularly those you haven't been able to do during lockdown and were looking forward to (like a coffee catch up with your colleagues), even if you have mixed feelings now about doing them.
- **Stay in the moment.** Deep breathing or mindfulness practice can help people get through difficult emotions or situations following lockdown.

This is an important transition period, and everyone will have different feelings about the easing of restrictions and opening up. This is a unique experience for many people and it is natural that it may take some time to adjust.

Please reach out to your manager or supervisor to discuss your return to campus plans and any concerns you may have.

Check out the following articles for further information and resources.

- [Read the 'Four F's of returning to the workplace'](#)
- [Read the Conversation article 'Why you might feel anxious returning to 'normal' after lockdown'](#)



Afternoon temptations – try this healthy treat

You might know the feeling. It's been a few hours since lunch, and you are starting to get a bit tired (and hungry). All of a sudden, the craving hits: you NEED something sugary. Chocolate, biscuits, even coffee with sugar all sound like the most delicious thing in the world.

Next time you are having one of those 3:00pm sugar cravings, don't fill your body with empty carbs that will spike your blood sugar. Eating something with protein, fibre and/or healthy fat is what will really satisfy you.

[Check out this Healthista article and try one of the five delicious protein ball recipes](#) below. In minutes, you will have snacks for the whole week (if you can make them last that long!). Their protein ball recipes include:

- Coconut and cashew
- Cinnamon apple
- Matcha chocolate
- Puffed almond
- Date and nut butter



Moving your body to move your mind

We know that exercise has many physical benefits from improved strength, flexibility, cardiorespiratory fitness, intestinal health, and prevention of diabetes, cholesterol and some cancers. But there is more to exercise than just the physical.

Exercise does a whole lot of things to our body and mind and our brain actually needs movement to feel good.

A recent study found that engaging in physical activity could reduce your chances of developing depression by 17%. We also know that exercise has a significant effect on reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety. Exercise has also been found to be a useful tool in stress management and helps with sleep. Some studies have suggested that exercise is as effective as medication or therapy, while others have found it best as an adjunct to treatments helping to reduce medication doses.

Starting an exercise routine

Studies suggest that exercise 3-5 times a week for 30-60 minutes is associated with better mental health. The type of exercise doesn't seem to matter too much – so any aerobic activity that increases your heart rate such as swimming, cycling or walking, will help with mental health.

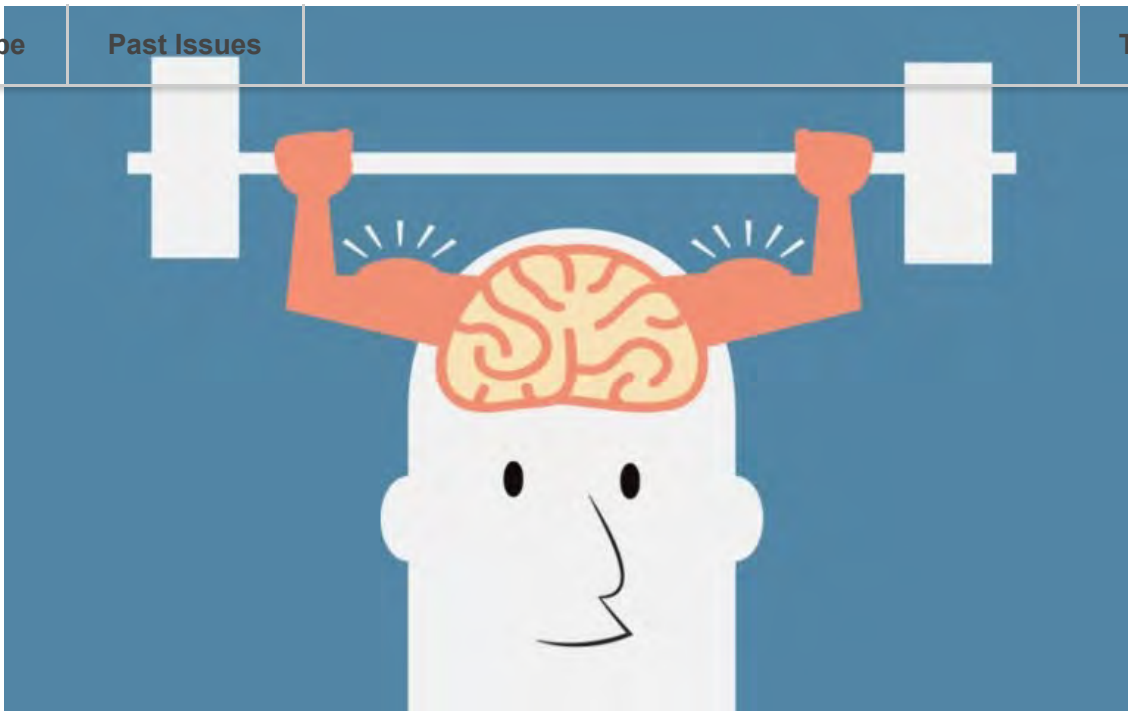
When it comes to setting up an exercise routine, it doesn't have to include activities that feel out of reach or are highly strenuous. The most important thing is to choose an activity you enjoy, so it's easier to stick with it. Try to pick something that suits your interests and motivational style for the best chance at sticking with your new routine. When you start, focus on these key points:

- **A little at a time.** Start off with small amounts of activity and slowly increase what you do so that you don't overwhelm your body and mind.
- **Make it fun.** If you enjoy an activity, you will be more likely to keep it going.
- **Variety.** You don't need to be doing the same thing repetitively every week – mix it up a bit with a walk, yoga or swim, or change the location of where you exercise.
- **Flexibility.** The way you feel physically or mentally will fluctuate from day to day. Allowing some flexibility in your program makes it achievable and will prevent a loss of motivation.
- **Learn a new skill.** By engaging in something totally new you will stimulate and focus your brain and not be so attentive to the physical aspects of your activity.
- **Your brain can help your body move.** Staying positive and helpful in the way you think will help to keep you motivated and get you moving. Remind yourself of how well you have done by getting started, sticking to a plan and how far you have come.

If you haven't done any exercise for a long time, need some advice on how to get started or progress your exercise, perhaps consult with a physiotherapist or exercise physiologist.

Exercise is one great tool that you have in your tool-belt to manage your mental health. Get your body moving to move you mind into a healthier mental space.

[Read the full article 'Moving Your Body to Move Your Mind' for more details.](#)



Run for a cause – calling all heroes

If you haven't already, you can get active this November in the Federation University 'Run for a Cause' virtual challenge and become a local hero!

Whether you run, walk or roll you will be helping us reach our ambitious target of travelling 50,000 kilometres and raising \$50,000 which will allow us to deliver **1,000 Back to School Vouchers**.

The Back to School Vouchers will allow struggling families to provide clothing, resources and equipment to their kids, having a lasting impact not only on their education but on their social and emotional wellbeing.

Every kilometre and dollar counts – so, [be a local hero and REGISTER TODAY!](#)

Find out more on the [Run for a cause web page](#) or [watch this short video for some inspiration](#).



Walking and podcasting with Jo

In this edition, our Wellbeing and Injury Management Consultant, Joanne Fiorenza, provides an update on her daily walking routine and podcasts.

Since sharing my podcast listening habit in the last newsletter, I've been delighted by how many people are also enjoying these, so I have included what I have been listening to over the past fortnight:

Inspiring interviews by Adam Grant

- [Taken for Granted: Indra Nooyi wants us to reimagine the return to work.](#) Indra Nooyi, long-time CEO of PepsiCo, and one of Time magazine's 100 Most Influential People. In this broad-ranging discussion, Indra Nooyi talks about leadership, the importance of mentors in supporting her, her own role as a mentor, and how as CEO, she wrote more than 400 letters to the parents of her executives, very specifically saying what a wonderful job they had done. An inspiring tale by an incredible woman. Indra Nooyi also discusses her experience as a female executive and how she has championed equity in the workplace.
- [Taken for Granted: Allyson Felix on defeating disappointment and savouring success.](#) Allyson Felix, the American track and field athlete who holds the title of most decorated athlete – male or female – in World Athletics Championship history. Included in Time magazine's 100 Most Influential People of 2020 and 2021, she discusses her experiences in five Olympic games, pregnancy, ageing in professional support and how this interplayed in her negotiations with Nike before she then started her own line of sportswear. At the very least, it may make people consider where they spend their money.

Jean Hailes podcasts

- [Vaccines, safety and women.](#) A very informative podcast conversation with Associate Professor Nigel Crawford, Head of Immunisation Services at the Royal Children's Hospital – discussing the safety of COVID vaccinations for women planning or during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

[Let's talk about s*x](#). Interview with sexuality educator Vanessa Hamilton on the topic of discussions with younger and older children about sex. Highly recommended.

Podcasts

Other podcast suggestions I have received include:

- [Mia Freedman's Mamamia No Filter podcast](#); and
- [Casefile: True crime podcast](#) (if you can get past that narration).

Happy podcasting!



Tips for helping a stressed team member

The pandemic has been a stressful time for all, but some of us are affected more by stress than others. With many people being forced to work from home due to restrictions, the boundaries between work-related and private-life stress have become blurred, increasing stress levels in both areas.

So how can you tell if a team member is stressed out? Stress can manifest itself in many ways, such as increased irritability, withdrawal into seclusion, change in work performance or erratic behaviour.

These 6 tips can help those who are experiencing significant stress:

- **Reduce isolation.** Feeling connected and a sense of belonging can reduce stress levels significantly. Schedule a virtual coffee and offer a listening ear. You don't necessarily need to address the stress but just ask how they're doing and let them talk.
- **Find the root cause of the problem.** If your colleague opens up to you, try to find out the source of stress. They might be embarrassed to ask for help on a certain task or project, so make sure you are pro-active in offering help.

Past Issues

- **Minimising the impact of the stressor.** Help re-prioritise tasks by involving more people, or in the case of high work pressure, provide support by checking in more regularly. Remember to assess your expectations and set reasonable goals. Sometimes, it helps to just communicate that you're on their side.
- **Try to eliminate uncertainty.** Uncertainty is a major factor of stress. In times of uncertainty, be as transparent as you can. Even if you cannot share your organisation's plans, try to find out when you'll be able to, and share that proactively with your team.
- **Workplace recognition.** You'd be surprised what effect a little recognition has. Try giving a shout out for your colleague's latest achievement, however big or small. This will take away the sense of lack of purpose, that many people suffering from stress feel. And the bonus side effect? It motivates others too!
- **Encourage health and wellbeing.** Not a wellbeing expert yourself? Don't worry. The important point here is to show your people you care by pointing them to the tools and resources available.

If you or a colleague is feeling stressed or anxious, there is support available. You can reach out to someone you trust, get in touch with your GP or psychologist, or access the University's Employee Assistance Program directly. For more information about EAP, please visit ['Counselling and other support' on the Health and wellbeing web page](#).



Keeping safe from slips, trips and falls

The recent heavy rain and strong winds are a timely reminder of the issue of slip, trip, fall hazards around some of our campuses. These occasional weather events create widespread hazards that take time for our Facilities Services team to clean up.

Whilst the clean-up continues, please pay careful attention to fallen debris in car parks and on paths. Sometimes it can be smaller nuts, sticks and twigs from trees that can cause people to stumble and/or fall!

In general, the risk of falling exists, which requires vigilance from every one of us. Follow the tips below to prevent falls:

- Past Issues**
- **Preparation.** We should consider what footwear is best suited to walk around campuses where steep gradients, stairs, twigs and leaves are commonly encountered. If wet weather is forecast, we should bring appropriate protection (e.g. umbrella or rain jacket).
 - **Keep to designated walkways and stairs.** Shortcuts are unlikely to be the safest option, especially if the ground is damp and we're rushing to avoid getting wet!
 - **Report maintenance issues.** If you notice damage to steps, pavers or other ground surfaces or any other issue likely to cause a fall, you need to [log a work request on our works and maintenance management system, Pulse](#). A minor issue in ideal conditions can turn into an 'accident waiting to happen' in bad weather.



Quick Links

[Flourish - health and wellbeing e-magazine - October 2021](#)

[Mental health and wellbeing information guide](#)

[Health and wellbeing resources](#)

[COVID-19 support for staff](#)