

Healthy You - Spring 2017

mind, body, spirit

Spring 2017 Vol. 17 Issue 2

Dean of Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics: Diane Lyden Murphy

Senior Vice President and Dean of Student Affairs: Rebecca Reed Kantrowitz

Associate Provost for Academic Programs: Jeff Stanton

Editorial Director: Luvenia W. Cowart, Ed.D., R.N.

Student Copy Editor: Kate Kini

Graphic Designer: Amy McVey, Syracuse University Office of Publications

Student Editorial Board: Sheridan Duff, Renata Husted, Emma Jacoby, Angela Kim, Cynthia Leung, Meaghan Linhart, Alexandra Ruiz

Contributing Writer: Janet Pease, Head of Collections and Research Services Syracuse University Libraries

Editing Support: Michele Barrett, Director of Communications, Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics and George S. Bain

Contact Us: Healthy You Newsmagazine, Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics, White Hall, Syracuse New York 13244, 315.443.9808, healthyyou@syr.edu

Healthy You welcomes letters to the editor and story ideas

Healthy You is the student-run health magazine of the Department of Public Health, Food Studies and Nutrition. It is a jointly funded publication of the Syracuse University Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics and the Divisions of Undergraduate Studies, and Enrollment and the Student Experience. This publication enhances, broadens, and supports the academic and social experience of students.

The Student Editorial Board is responsible for providing work structure for the magazine's production, which includes the content, design, production, and distribution. The information contained in this publication is not to be construed as medical advice. Readers should consult a medical professional before engaging in any activity described. The contents of this magazine may not be reprinted without the expressed consent of the editorial director.

Contents

[In The Know](#)
[Messy Room, Messy Mind](#)
[Coping with Decision Fatigue](#)
[What Can You Do About It?](#)
[A Glimpse into Buddha's Brain: The Science Behind Happiness and Lifelong Peace](#)
[Keep Smiling... Even If You Don't Feel Like It](#)
[Perspective 101](#)
[Your Skin is Your Home](#)
[The Whole Truth about Whole Grains](#)
[Attention All-Nighters: Circles Under the Eyes Are Not the Only Consequence](#)
[Alternatives to Your Gym Routine](#)
[Fad is Bad](#)
[Natural as a Lifestyle](#)
[Learn to Ride a Horse for Credit](#)
[You're More Beautiful Than the Media Says You Are](#)
[Orange Empowerment](#)
[Expectations After Graduation: The Pressure is Now on](#)

In The Know

Discover new research in health and wellness

By Janet Pease, Head of Collections and Research Services, Syracuse University Libraries

Spice Up Your Diet and Live Longer

According to results of a study published in a recent issue of P.L.O.S. One, people who ate hot red chili peppers at least once a month over the course of the study's six years reduced their risk of dying by 13 percent compared to those who did not eat them. This is thought to be largely due to capsaicin, the chemical that makes food spicy. Capsaicin has a number of health benefits: It helps fight inflammation that can cause a heart attack; causes metabolism to increase, which helps burn calories; and can inhibit certain signals sent from your nerve cells to your brain, deadening the sensation of pain. Capsaicin also helps to regulate blood sugar levels, which is helpful for those with type 2 diabetes. Spicy foods like hot peppers also cause the brain to produce hormones such as serotonin, which help maintain mood balance. Hot chili peppers are also full of good nutrients, such as vitamins A and C, and vital minerals.

Source: P.L.O.S. One

Another Reason to Exercise

A new study in the American Journal of Epidemiology warns that sitting too much makes you age a lot faster. The researchers found that study participants who sat for more than 10 hours a day and got less than 40 minutes of physical activity daily had shorter telomeres. (Telomeres are caps on the end of D.N.A. strands that protect chromosomes from deterioration.) Although telomeres naturally shorten with age, certain factors such as smoking and obesity can accelerate the process. The good news is that participants who sat for more than 10 hours and exercised for at least 30 minutes a day did not experience shorter telomere length.

Source: *MedlinePlus.gov*

The Incredible Shrinking Brain

According to a recent article in the journal *Science*, when we sleep, the brain's connections among neurons (synapses) shrink by nearly 20 percent. While awake, our brains are experiencing constant stimulation and synapses grow bigger and stronger to support new information—that is, learning new things. During sleep there is less traffic to the brain, providing a time for the synapses to reset and prepare for the next day's stimuli. This process also helps the brain consolidate important memories and at the same time destroy irrelevant information. According to researchers, it is critical to have this occur "so that the huge amount of information encoded by temporary synapses during the day won't overwhelm the brain."

Source: *Huffington Post*

Messy Room, Messy Mind

Understanding the impact of a disorganized room on your lifestyle

By Emma Jacoby, Junior, Public Health, Public Relations, David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

At some point in our lives, we all have allowed our rooms to become disorganized, neglecting to keep up our personal standards of room cleanliness. Regardless of how much time you spend in that space, the buildup of physical clutter in your surroundings competes for your attention and can cause mental exhaustion without you even realizing it. Mikael Cho explores the concept of clutter and its effect on the mind in "How Clutter Affects Your Brain (and What You Can Do About It)."

Messy areas leave us feeling anxious, helpless, and overwhelmed; yet clutter is rarely recognized as a significant source of stress. Whether it be your closet or office desk, research has suggested that messy surroundings can have a negative impact on your ability to focus and process information, and also on your social interactions and well-being.

Some things have sentimental value. Maybe you think you'll need to use it at some point in the future, or you spent a great deal of money on it, so it would be a waste to just get rid of it.

Most of the time, we recognize that we made a mistake buying these things, and it hurts the brain to realize that fact, literally. A research study at Yale identified that two areas in your brain associated with physical pain—the anterior cingulate cortex and insula—light up in response to letting go of items with which you feel a connection (Cho, 2013). When you let go of that shirt you've clung onto since eighth grade, the same area of your brain is stimulated as when you accidentally burn yourself on the stovetop.

Untidiness is far more than an eyesore. Thinking about having to clean your room or sorting through your clutter can build up immense pressure in the mind throughout the day and a feeling that the work is never done. Even if the mess is not something you consistently think about, clutter can create feelings of guilt or even embarrassment.

It can be especially awkward when others unexpectedly drop by our homes or work spaces. The mess can make us feel that we can't host people based on the way the room looks, or perhaps there isn't enough room to even sit comfortably. This barrier can impact our social relationships when the mess prevents us from having relaxed or fun experiences in our own spaces.

Keeping the Mess to a Minimum

1. If you don't use it, don't want it, or don't need it—then toss, sell, or donate it.
2. When you clean, have an active mind: Set yourself up for success by thinking about where and why you are putting things in designated spots.
3. Create select spots for important items, like keys or wallets, so you can always know where they are.
4. Design a "Joy Bin" for things you are unsure about keeping. If—after a week, a month, especially a year—the item hasn't brought you joy, say goodbye.

"How Clutter Affects Your Brain (and What You Can Do About It)". (n.d.). [Retrieved from lifehacker.com](#)

Coping with Decision Fatigue

What should I wear today? Should I work out after Class? What do I want to eat for lunch? Should I study or go to that party?

By Janet Pease, Head of Collections and Research Services, Syracuse University Libraries

You probably make a lot more decisions every day than you realize. Research suggests that the average adult makes 35,000 decisions every day. That's a lot of decisions, and with the increasing number of options available, even choices that seem simple may overwhelm you. It's no wonder that by the end of the day all you might want to do is order a pizza and watch Netflix. This mental drain is a modern phenomenon known as decision fatigue.

What is Decision Fatigue?

John Tierney, co-author of *Willpower: Rediscovering the Greatest Human Strength*, wrote that "no matter how rational and high-minded you try to be, you can't make decision after decision without paying a biological price. It's different from ordinary physical fatigue, but you are low on mental energy."

We are conditioned to think that more choice is a good thing, and it can be—but only up to a certain point. Numerous research studies have shown that when subjects are given too many options they begin to experience "analysis paralysis." It gets harder to make a choice, and even when people do make a choice, they often second-guess themselves.

What Can You Do About It?

First, make important decisions early in the day when your mind is clear and you are not worn down and frustrated from the day's activities.

Experts recommend practicing mindfulness. This helps to clear mental clutter and relieve stress so that you can focus on important decisions. According to a study published in *Psychological Science*, 15 minutes of daily focused-breathing meditation can help people reclaim cognitive energy to make smart choices.

Make mundane daily decisions the night before and stick to a routine. Figure out what you are going to wear the following day and set your clothes out. If you want to go to the gym, get your gym bag ready so you only need to grab it on your way out in the morning. Plus, if you have it with you, you are more likely to go to the gym. You can also try a minimalist approach, especially when it comes to clothes. Put a self-imposed limit on your options. For example, do not spend valuable time and brainpower deciding among 20 items on a menu. Narrow your options to three and choose among those. More than that takes valuable mental energy that could be applied to more important things. It helps to aim for getting things done rather than being perfect. For mundane decisions, it doesn't make sense to spend time in analysis paralysis while you weight different options that won't make much difference.

Finally, start small. Find out what kinds of decisions drain your mental energy. Once you do that, you can begin to make incremental changes that will produce huge results in combatting decision fatigue.

Combatting Decision Fatigue

- Make big decisions in the morning
- Practice mindfulness
- Make mundane decisions the night before
- Stick to a routine
- Go minimalist
- Limit your options
- Done is better than perfect
- Start with small changes

Additional Information

Baumeister, R., & Tierney, J. (2011). *Willpower: Rediscovering the Greatest Human Strength*. New York, New York: Penguin Press

Schwartz, B. (2004). *The Paradox of Choice*. New York, New York: Harper Collins Publishers, Inc.

TED Talk by Barry Schwartz: *The Paradox of Choice*: [YouTube](#)

A Glimpse into Buddha's Brain: The Science Behind Happiness and Lifelong Peace

By Emma Jacoby, Junior, Public Health, Public Relations and Nutrition, David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

As young individuals, particularly in College, we tend to lead stressful, arduous lives. It is challenging to instinctively think positively when all of life's demands seem to pile on top of each other.

In the book *Buddha's Brain*, psychologist Rick Hanson and neurologist Richard Mendius discuss effective tools and skills for cultivating happiness, wisdom, and a greater peace of mind by taking care of your brain. They suggest that through studying Buddha and involving the practice of meditation in daily life, we can learn how mental conditioning informed by contemplative traditions increases the capacity for experiencing happiness and peace. As a result, we can boost the capacity to hold onto the good experiences that we don't take enough time to truly appreciate. The brain is designed to think negatively. The true function of emotions is a vital part of the animal kingdom; negative emotions promote survival through triggering the fight-or-flight response. It takes our active effort to internalize positive experiences and heal negative ones.

When practicing meditation, we can cultivate compassion, care, resilience, and mindful awareness that ultimately allow us to release judgments, thus creating an open relationship with awareness of the present. These skills harness a stronger relationship with ourselves and with those around us as we strengthen the social brain circuits to transform how we view the world. Not only do we have the capability to tilt feelings, thoughts, and memories toward positivity using the traditional practices of Buddha, but modern research has shown that it is possible to physically reshape the brain to be more positive, whole, loving, and considerate through consistent meditation practices.

What happens in your mind does change your brain, both in the short term and long term. Because the mind and brain are an integrated system, focusing on thinking differently can alter your cognitive process and in turn cultivate a healthy mindset. Suffering, or even common daily stresses that you may write off as insignificant, can change the way your brain is shaped. Over time, this will change the way your mind functions or evaluates things.

Learning to recognize your stress, acknowledge it, and peacefully let it go is a mindfulness skill that Buddha taught. Implementing meditation every day can cultivate large changes in the brain and mind over time, building new neural structures for personal growth.

Buddha once said: "We are shaped by our thoughts; we become what we think. When the mind is pure, joy follows like a shadow that never leaves."

Focusing on that which is wholesome in our lives is a crucial part of meditation. Leading a happy, peaceful life will follow if you focus on those aspects. If you concentrate on the worries of the world and constantly internalize all the suffering, big or small, the clutter can harm not only the mind, but the brain as well. Through meditation practice and free thinking, a happier and more positive life is possible.

Falk College has a meditation room at 300 MacNaughton Hall.

Hendricks Chapel holds meditation services Mondays through Fridays in the Small Chapel, lower level.

Keep Smiling... Even If You Don't Feel Like It

By Janet Pease, Head of Collections and Research Services, Syracuse University Libraries

The average person doesn't think about smiling. It's just something that happens when you are happy, right? What if it worked in reverse? What if the act of smiling could make you happy? Research shows this may well be the case.

Scientists have been studying facial expressions and smiles, in particular, for hundreds of years. Charles Darwin was one of the first to suggest that facial expressions might intensify feelings. Facial expressions not only communicate your mood—they can also influence your mood.

What Happens When You Smile – A mind-body connection

Smiling triggers activity in the brain, specially in the left frontal cortex. The physical act of smiling sends a message to your brain that you are happy. When you are happy, your body releases hormones called endorphins that trigger positive feelings and can even reduce pain. Recent studies have also suggested that the act of smiling reduces levels of cortisol, a stress related hormone.

Smiling can also retrain your brain. Our brains are naturally inclined to be alert for danger, but smiling helps the brain move to a more positive space and remain there longer. Shawn Achor, author of *The Happiness Advantage*, writes that making smiling a part of our everyday practice can help create "happiness loops" that encourage more positive-thinking patterns.

How Your Smile Affects Others

Going on a job interview? In a 2009 study it was shown that subjects looking at photographs of people with neutral or smiling expressions were much more likely to think that the smiling people were likable, confident, conscientious, and stable. Recent studies have also shown that smiling makes a person more approachable and perceived to be a better leader and more trustworthy.

Smiles are also contagious. We all have mirror neurons in our brains that are activated not just when we smile, but also when we witness someone else smiling. We tend to imitate the facial expressions of others. So a smile can spread the positivity and health benefits.

Can You "Fake it 'Til You Make It"?

Apparently, yes! According to a recent study published in *Psychological Science*, even faking or forcing a smile reduces stress and makes you happier. In this study, research subjects put chopsticks in their mouths to produce one of three facial expressions: neutral, a standard smile, or a big smile. Half of the participants were instructed to smile, and the other half received no instructions related to smiling. After performing a series of "stressful, multitasking activities" while researchers monitored heart rates, the subjects who were instructed to smile had lower heart rate levels and less stress after the activities. Surprisingly, even those who were not instructed to smile, but had their mouths forced into a smile by the chopsticks felt more content and less stressed than the neutral expression subjects.

So turn that frown upside down and share a smile.

Smiles Can:

- Improve your mood
- Reduce stress
- Retrain your brain to be more positive
- Help you get a job
- Make you more approachable and seem more trustworthy
- Help others feel happier, too

For More Information

Achor, S. (2010). *The Happiness Advantage: The Seven Principles of Positive Psychology That Fuel Success and Performance at Work*. New York, New York: Crown Business.

TED Talk by Ron Gutman: ted.com

Perspective 101

By Angela Kim, 5th year, Industrial and Interaction Design, College of Visual and Performing Arts: School of Design

During my first year at Syracuse University, I took S.O.C. 101 Introduction to Sociology, taught by Professor Gokhan Savas. In this class, we were introduced to the term perspective through a piece of paper—one side marked in writing facing him while the other side was blank facing the class. Professor Savas held up the piece of paper and asked us what we saw. When we told him that it was white and blank, he said that he believed it was not blank, but instead marked up with writing. Professor Savas then explained that we all have different perspectives in life and that we must understand that what we personally see and comprehend is not always the same as what others see. Like that piece of paper, there are multiple ways of looking at and understanding a situation.

The Figure-Ground Effect

Is it a vase or two faces? Most of us are familiar with this image and the psychological perception of either a vase or two faces, depending on how you look at it. Psychologists describe this as the figure-ground effect, and to fully understand this image, we try to look at it from different viewpoints. When we apply this theory to the real world, asking questions and forcing ourselves to look at the world in different ways actually help us see the world more clearly. However, when I asked various students on campus whether they take the time to try to understand different perspectives, many admitted that they can be close-minded at times or simply do not have the time.

"In the hectic and busy world that we live in, we tend to miss seeing the bigger picture," said senior Dani Mou.

So What Do We Do?

When opinions and perspectives are not facts and truth, do we typically turn to science, data, or religion? Or do we turn to the media to find out the truth? To understand our own perspective and the biases and judgments that may affect it, it is important to see where our validity comes from. We look at the world and comprehend it with our knowledge gained through past experiences and our outside sources. While being aware of our biases and judgments can help us be more open to understanding other perspectives, it is also important to be aware that our sources may not always be reliable either.

Halfway through my fifth-year fall semester Thesis Research course in my industrial design program, I realized that reading articles and watching documentaries/news were not covering entirely the eld of my thesis on humanitarian design regarding migration and refugee crisis. I decided to visit a refugee hotspot in Samos, Greece, during my winter break through an organization called Startupboat to further my design research. For two weeks, I was immersed in the environment and talking with the people that I was designing for. This trip only confirmed my belief that ultimately no truth is greater than what we see, hear, and feel from firsthand experience.

Your Skin is Your Home

A Guide to Healthier Skin

By Meaghan Linhart Sophomore, Public Health David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

Remember that brutal sunburn you got that one summer? Remember that stinging discomfort you felt every time your shirt brushed up against your raw, flaking skin? Then do you remember that you didn't use sunscreen?

"Many cases of skin cancer can be prevented by using sunscreen to block out harmful ultraviolet rays that can contribute to these cancers," says Maureen Hogan, a nurse practitioner at Long Island Jewish Medical Center.

Keep in mind, skin cancer isn't the only repercussion, according to the American Academy of Dermatology (A.A.D.), which says every time you get a tan, you prematurely age your skin. In other words, in about 10 years, you'll have wrinkles to remind you of all the sunscreen-free fun in the sun you are enjoying now.

Your skin is your home, and you don't want to damage your home. Here are a few tips to consider if you want to preserve the youthfulness of your appearance.

Everyone Needs Sunscreen:

Just because you may have a darker skin tone, you aren't exempt from the damages of the sun. According to the American Skin Association (A.S.A.), darker skin tones contain more of the pigment melanin, but it will only protect to a certain extent. So, no matter what your skin color may be—fair-skinned, dark-skinned, or somewhere in between—you need to wear sunscreen.

Wear an SPF of at Least 30:

According to the A.A.D., everyone should wear a water-resistant sunscreen with at least S.P.F. 30 and apply at least 30 minutes before going out. Sunscreen absorbs or reflects the sun's rays, and the S.P.F. number indicates how long you will be protected before you should re-apply it. To know when to reapply, consider how long you can bask in the sun until you start to burn. For example, people with fair skin may burn in as little as 20 minutes of sun exposure. If they apply S.P.F. 30, they will be protected for approximately 450 minutes (7.5 hours).

Stay away from Tanning:

According to the A.S.A., 63 percent of teens think they look better when they have a tan. Tanning beds, tanning oils—even spraying cooking spray on the body while sunbathing—are some of the insane measures people take to bronze their skin. The A.S.A. says, "There is no such thing as a healthy tan, according to dermatologists, who look at a tan and see it as a sign of injury." Tanning is essentially cooking your body's largest organ: the skin. So, every time you let your skin bake under the sun, think about the wrinkles you'll face later.

Go to the Dermatologist:

Nurse practitioner Maureen Hogan says, "It is important to inspect the skin for any abnormalities that need further evaluation." These abnormalities include freckles, moles, and other marks, and they should get checked out every few months. Skin cancer can pollute the body and remain unnoticed, so it is important to check for marks in the skin. If anything looks out of sorts, it can be removed by your doctor to ensure your protection.

For More Information Visit:

[American Skin Association Healthy Skin resources page](#)

[American Academy of Dermatology - What causes our skin to age?](#)

The Whole Truth about Whole Grains

Understanding the value of eating whole grains

By Janet Pease, Head of Collections and Research Services, Syracuse University Libraries

Some of the key ingredients in a healthy diet are whole grains. Experts recommend that adults have three servings (48 grams) of whole grains a day, but currently only about eight percent of U.S. adults are getting that much. And some consumers who think they are meeting that requirement might not be, at least in part because of misleading ingredient labeling on packaging. We need to become super-sleuths.

Why are they important?

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (U.S.D.A.), grains are an important source of many nutrients. These include fiber, protein, several B vitamins (thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, and folate), and minerals (iron, magnesium, and selenium). Research studies have shown that whole grains as part of a healthy diet may help reduce blood cholesterol levels and lower the risk of heart disease, obesity, and type 2 diabetes.

What does whole grain mean?

Every grain starts as a whole grain and has three parts: the bran (outer skin that contains antioxidants, B vitamins, and fiber), the germ (the part that grows into a new plant when pollinated; contains numerous vitamins, protein, minerals, and healthy fats), and the endosperm (contains carbohydrates and smaller amounts of protein, vitamins, and minerals).

According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (F.D.A.), to be called a whole-grain food, the food must contain all three of these components in the same proportion as in nature, even if the grain has been processed or refined (e.g., cracked, crushed, rolled, and/or cooked).

When grains are processed and refined—the most common practice for making breads, cereals, pastas, and ours—the bran and germ are removed. As a result, grains become less nutritious, losing up to 25 percent of their original protein content, as well as other essential nutrients. Manufacturers may later fortify the product by adding vitamins, minerals, and fiber during processing, but a naturally whole grain is a healthier choice.

So what's the problem?

Food labels provide a lot of misleading information that consumers need to wade through to find the real deal.

As consumers have become more health-conscious, "made with whole grains" has become a huge draw in grocery stores, and the market is expected to grow to an estimated \$46.2 billion by 2022. Unfortunately, being made with whole grains does not mean that the product is made only with whole grains. In reality, there could be few whole grains in the product. And words such as stoneground, cracked wheat, multigrain, or seven-grain are also misleading. These terms indicate nothing about whether the grains are whole or refined.

Check labels carefully

The Center for Science in the Public Interest is trying to get the F.D.A. to address the misleading information, but what can you do to make sure you are getting the real thing?

Read the labels on products carefully. You cannot go by just the name or the big print touting health benefits on the package of processed foods.

The ingredient list is what you need to look at. Ingredients are listed in descending order by weight. Make sure that whole grain, whole wheat, whole wheat flour, or whole oats is listed first.

Be aware, though, that just because a product contains whole grains, it does not guarantee that it's a health food. Granola bars, for example may be made with whole grains but may also include a lot of added sugar or salt.

Partial List of Whole Grain Types

- Barley
- Buckwheat
- Farro
- Millet
- Oats (including oatmeal)
- Popcorn
- Quinoa
- Wild and Brown Rice
- Whole Rye
- Whole Wheat

For Additional Information, visit:

Oldways Whole Grain Council: wholegrainscouncil.org

U.S. Department of Agriculture: usda.gov

U.S. Food and Drug Administration: fda.gov

Attention All-Nighters: Circles Under the Eyes Are Not the Only Consequence

By Meaghan Linhart, Sophomore, Public Health, David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

Effects of Excessive Sleep Deprivation

With all the homework, projects, and exams that pile on in college, pulling all-nighters has become a habit among students. While students may think circles under the eyes are the only damage done, all-nighters can wreak havoc on the body, revealing how unwholesome and ineffective this study method is. Still not convinced? Read what happens during the likely process leading up to an all-nighter...

It's getting late and you still have so much work— considering an all-nighter?

It's already 10 o'clock at night and you haven't even begun studying for that big exam you have in the morning. You ask yourself if you should stay up all night and cram...What's the harm? A tired look on my face? Yawning throughout the day? Nothing coffee and concealer can't fix!

According to the Harvard Medical School, less than six hours of sleep can impair motor and cognitive function. But busy college schedules are often inflexible when it comes to squeezing in six hours of sleep, leaving students to assess sleep as an option rather than a priority.

It's past midnight and you go for a snack break.

You may not realize that the bag of chips you are munching on is going to get stored away. Weight gain is one of the many symptoms of an all-nighter. According to Webmd.com, insufficient sleep impacts your hunger and fullness hormones. Leptin is the hormone that tells your brain when your body is full so that it can burn calories to create energy for the body to use. During sleep, leptin levels increase, making the brain aware there is no need to tell the body to burn calories. This is why you may not feel hungry sometimes when you wake up in the morning. But a lack of sleep causes a reduced amount of leptin, which catalyzes the production of more ghrelin, which makes your body think you're hungry. Sleep deprivation causes hiccups in your body's hormone production, leading the body to store the calories you are eating as fat so it can be used as energy at another time.

Birds are chirping. Do we power through or go to bed?

Fatigue and lethargy begin to develop, and you consider giving into the weight of your eyelids by resting for an hour or powering through the weariness with caffeine. While seven to eight hours are ideal, some sleep is always better than none, especially when preparing for an exam. According to the Harvard Medical School, sleep contributes to the consolidation of memory, which is critical for learning new information. The learning parts of the brain are stimulated during REM sleep, a stage of deep sleep. One REM cycle is 20 minutes, so it would be advantageous to utilize a small amount of time during an all-nighter for some shut-eye. Turning to coffee instead will leave you with increased feelings of anxiety, making it more difficult to concentrate. A small nap and water will benefit the body and your grades far more than coffee and some last-minute ash cards ever will.

Exam time!

At Amen Clinics, special brain scans called SPECT scans have revealed the blood flow patterns among sleep-deprived brains. A lack of sleep lowers blood flow in the body, leading to reduced blood flow in regions of the brain and causing impairments in cognitive abilities and behavior. According to a study from the University of California at Berkeley, the prefrontal cortex becomes impaired with a lack of sleep because blood flow to that area is significantly reduced. You find yourself reading questions over and over again; you may even write your name wrong. This is because of the decreased blood flow.

Post-exam feelings—nap time?

You're done with the exam and ready to take a nap, but for some reason you can't fall asleep. The restless night has disrupted your body's circadian rhythm and now your body is screaming, "What time is it?" This leaves you continuing on a cycle of more sleepless nights.

A few days later—feeling sick

During sleep, the body's immune system produces protective cytokines and infection-fighting antibodies, but constantly pulling all-nighters will decrease the body's ability to fight off bacteria, leading to colds and infections. Why do you think you sleep so much while you're sick?

The results are in

You may feel confident, but after looking at your exam score, that confidence is shattered. What happened was that the lack of sleep impaired your abilities to function. Brown Medical School has discovered a positive correlation between the amount of sleep you get and your grades. You may not realize, but your focus and decision-making abilities decline without sleep. So is the all-nighter even worth it?

Alternatives to Your Gym Routine

By Sheridan Casey Duff, Freshman, Undecided, The College of Arts and Sciences

If you have grown tired of your routine workouts at the gym, fear not. Plenty of alternative workouts for both men and women are just as effective and fun, with no gym needed.

Many people feel a great amount of societal pressure to be in shape and enjoy going to the gym, but the truth is that the gym isn't for everyone. Some people find it repetitive and boring. If this describes you, going to the gym isn't your best option because you may be completing your exercises incorrectly and/or with low intensity. Some people don't have the time to go to the gym, and others don't want to spend money on a gym membership. If you're one of these people or just looking for more ways to work out, here are five great alternatives.

Classes

Many fitness classes are fun and offer great ways to get or stay in shape. Classes provide workouts for cardiovascular endurance, strength, and flexibility, or a combination of these— such as Zumba, spin, Ariel, kickboxing, karate, yoga, and hot yoga. Studios in and around Syracuse University offer these classes and others.

Workout Videos

Something that has been around for a long time and is still popular is the workout video. P90X, Insanity, Rockin' Body, and Beachbody are all intense workouts that are fun and show results. You can watch these videos on your phone, computer, or any device with access to the Internet. Some cost money, but you can find most for free on YouTube. On some videos the instructor will lead you through exercises and show you how to complete them; others have more of a dance factor. Videos cover all levels so that you can continuously improve.

Club Sports

The University has many club sports, and playing on a sports team will lead to exercise in a fun way. Club teams include women's and men's lacrosse, women's and men's soccer, rugby, ski team, and even Quidditch. Many of the teams have a Facebook page or utilize other social media platforms. Contacting the captain or one of the players is a good place to start if you are interested in joining. Check out the list at [Recreation Services](#).

Video Games

Gaming consoles such as Wii and Xbox 360 Kinect have games with workouts and exercises to follow along while tracking your weight, body mass index, and body fat. C.B.S. News names its top 10 fitness video games at [cbsnews.com](#). Wii Fit Plus is a sequel to the bestseller Wii Fit; this one comes with a game controller called the Wii Balance Board. Besides controlling the activities onscreen, it helps to keep track of weight and body mass index. Players can customize their routines, ranging from relaxed to extreme intense workout. The Plus has added the option to include strength training exercises, yoga activities, and balance mini games. Another game is Your Shape: Fitness Evolved for the Xbox 360 Kinect. This game instructs you through intense exercises and workouts to improve cardiovascular endurance, flexibility, and strength. The Kinect device measures body size depending on age, weight, and exercise habits. Both video games can help you lose weight or get in shape and are great alternatives to the gym.

Social Media Challenges

With the influence of social media, challenges have circulated across the Internet, inspiring various people to partake. Popular platforms include Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, and websites such as Popsugar. They usually do not require any equipment, just an open space big enough for some movement. Usually, each challenge lasts about a month and focuses on one muscle group. You can extend the challenge and do multiple challenges at one time. The 21-Day Arm Challenge or the 30-Day Butt challenge are some of many. Each day of the challenge presents the participant with a new set of exercises to complete. At the end of the challenge, one should see improvement in the targeted muscles.

Fad is Bad

Understanding Why Fad Diets Should Be Left In The Dust

By Sheridan Casey Duff, Freshman, Undecided, The College of Arts and Sciences

People these days often turn to fad diets for quick weight loss. These dieting techniques are misleading and unhealthy. According to *UPMC.com*, a fad diet is a diet that promises quick weight loss using unhealthy and unbalanced dieting tactics. Fad diets are targeted at people who want to lose weight quickly without exercise. They are hard to follow on a long-term basis, and the weight loss is only temporary. Some common fad diets are The Juice Cleanse, 21 Day Challenge, Werewolf Diet, and even a Cookie Diet.

All of these diets encompass similar qualities that make them unhealthy. First, in many fad diets the promise of quick weight loss is met with the loss of water weight, which many mistake to be a fat loss. This leads to dehydration, a second law in the fad dieting system. This weight is gained back upon rehydrating and can have harmful effects on your digestive system and other parts of your body. Some of these harmful effects include a nutritional deficiency, which leads to loss of muscle and hair, and an altered metabolism, or slowing of metabolism, which leads to weight gain.

Stefanie Schwartz, a nutritionist at Nutritionally Yours, a self-owned company in Chappaqua, New York, was asked if she would suggest a fad diet to one of her clients. Schwartz said, "Most fad diets have no redeemable value, as one will eventually go off and probably gain all the weight back and more...or simply not even lose what they think they have. Some fad diets are dangerous if they are based on herbal supplement and should never be used."

Schwartz emphasizes that when you try to lose weight, make sure it is in a balanced, timely manner so that you don't cut out all your favorite foods. Don't see it as a diet; see it as a lifestyle change. This is the most effective long-term way to stick to eating healthy while also feeling and seeing the results.

The proper way to lose weight is to eat a balanced diet and increase amount of exercise. This means eating all food groups and not excluding any, although one shouldn't eat the same amount of each food group. To lose weight, one should increase vegetable and protein intake while decreasing fat and carbohydrate intake. It is also important to exercise when attempting to lose weight. Intense cardio workouts are the best way to lose weight and burn fat. Weight training will help to gain muscle, if this is also desired. Before losing weight, one should do research, make a plan, and possibly see a nutritionist. Losing weight is a great thing as long as it is done right!

Natural as a Lifestyle

Natural Ingredients Versus Synthetic Products

By Renata Husted, Senior, Public Health, David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

Most people are aware of the negative effects of synthetic dyes, flavors, and preservatives. Perhaps that bag of sh-shaped gummy candy with red dye #40 listed as the third ingredient is not the best snack for you. But what many people may not know is that harmful ingredients creep beyond the food realm, moving into the world of beauty and health products. Just as we don't want formaldehyde in our maraschino cherries, we also don't want it in our body washes or eye shadows. And although it may not be that easy to skip out on colorful candy, steering clear of unhealthy personal products can be much simpler.

Some of the most common harmful chemicals found in personal care items are called parabens. These chemicals, while approved by the Food and Drug Administration, have long been subject to studies linking them to cancer, reproductive system issues, endocrine disruption, and developmental issues. These studies raise valid concerns over the use of harsh chemicals, despite the F.D.A. dismissing the findings because of the small sample sizes used. And beauty and personal care products that do not contain parabens or artificial colorings/dyes are produced in more sustainable methods that are often vegan and cruelty-free. In other words, all-natural products are better for all living creatures and the world we live in.

Here are some common all-natural items that can be whipped up with ingredients you probably already have at home.

Apple Cider Vinegar Sore Throat Solution

Skip the menthol-laden cough drops; they only soothe a scratchy throat. Instead, let this honey apple solution fight the source of that sore throat while also preventing new ones.

Mix 1/4 cup of apple cider vinegar, one cup of warm water, and two tablespoons of honey. Drink slowly while still warm. Repeat up to 4 times a day while symptoms persist.

Chamomile Face Cleanser

Chamomile is a natural soothing agent that is great for sensitive skin. The olive oil adds a touch of moisture without being too heavy.

1/4 cup castile soap

1/4 cup brewed chamomile tea

3/4 teaspoon olive oil

8 drops essential oil (lavender works well for dry skin; tea tree for oily skin)

Coconut Oil Body/Lip Scrub

Scrub away dead skin while simultaneously moisturizing it with this simple mix. In addition, you can skip manufactured lipsticks that often contain lead, a neurotoxin that has been linked to several fertility and developmental difficulties, according to Safecosmetics.org.

Mix one part sugar, two parts coconut oil, and a few drops of your favorite essential oil.

Add beet root powder, all-natural food coloring, or cinnamon for a soft pigment lip color.

Natural Mint Toothpaste

For about 63 cents a batch, this toothpaste efficiently cleans teeth and freshens breath without the addition of triclosan, a common antibacterial chemical found in dental products that has been linked to cancer and disruption of the endocrine system.

2/3 cups of baking soda

1 teaspoon fine sea salt

10 to 15 drops of peppermint essential oil

Water to desired consistency

Shea Butter Deodorant

Deodorants are one of the most common personal items that contain parabens and other harmful ingredients. Aluminum especially warrants concern because it has been linked to long-term problems such as Alzheimer's disease.

3 tablespoons of coconut oil

3 tablespoons of baking soda

2 tablespoons of shea butter

2 tablespoons of organic cornstarch

Favorite essential oils for scent

Melt coconut oil and shea butter until liquid, add baking soda and cornstarch. Mix and add essential oils. Store in glass jar or old deodorant stick for easier application.

Make-Your-Own-Scent Room Freshener

Scents such as Island Breeze and Springtime Blossom come with more than just a cool name. These commercialized air fresheners often contain damaging chemicals, such as various forms of phthalates. The Natural Resources Defense Council says phthalates are known to cause hormonal abnormalities, birth defects, and reproductive problems.

Fill up a spray bottle with water and add a few drops of essential oil. Which oil you choose depends on the mood you want to set. Use these for an invigorating mood: peppermint, lemon, tea tree oil, jasmine, or rosemary. For a more relaxing environment: lavender, rose, ylang ylang, or bergamot. Try mixing scents for a twist.

Sources

livescience.com

safecosmetics.org Parabens

safecosmetics.org Lead in Lipstick

Learn to Ride a Horse for Credit

Broadening Your College Learning Experience Beyond Academics

By Alexandra Ruiz, Senior, Writing and Rhetoric, The College of Arts and Sciences

Growing up in New York City means my experience with nature in general was next to none. Outside of pets, squirrels, lots of pigeons, and radioactive sewer rats, New York City has very few animals. I really wanted to go outside of my comfort zone to learn about something I could never get back home, so I signed up for a horseback riding class offered at a nearby stable through the University. College is meant for first experiences, and even those of us who hail from big cities are faced with our fair share of them.

I remember that the whole time leading up to the first day of class I just couldn't wait for the moment I would ride a horse for the first time. I was not at all concerned about having signed up for something so foreign to me. I kept researching everything so that I would be familiar with some of the terms and know what to expect. When the first day of class finally arrived and we went into the stables, I got really nervous. What if I was really bad? What if the horse didn't like me? But before I could panic too much, our teacher, Ellen, explained to us that the horses were all familiar with new and inexperienced riders, so we had nothing to worry about.

When I met Jet, I finally realized just how big horses are. Every part of him at any point was taller than me. I wasn't even sure how I was going to be able to get on him! Truthfully, I was afraid because he was so large, but it turns out that I had nothing to fear. He looked at me in what can only be described as an inquisitive way. His ears flicked forward as I approached slowly and let him see the brush in my hand. He moved forward and smelled my hand and the brush together and, as anticlimactically as possible, went back to eating his hay as I brushed him.

I tried to be as confident and firm as possible. Our instructor told us to be try to be calm and self-assured because horses have a good sense of what you are feeling. Even though I was really nervous on the inside, I walked around him calmly and always let him know where I was so as not to startle him.

I learned quickly that Jet is a fussy horse. If I brushed too hard, he let me know by fidgeting his hind legs. If he was uncomfortable, he would neigh at me and shake his head. Most horses really love getting a good brush down, but not Jet. He prefers a soft, worn-out curry comb and a gentle touch. I learned to listen to him, pay attention, and make sure that taking care of him and helping him trust me were the top priorities every day.

The relationship between horse and rider is not simply physical. It is more than just getting on the horse and riding—it is a meeting of the minds. You must be as aware of your horse's feelings as he or she is of yours. The relationship is beautiful. Horses bond emotionally with their rider; they are playful and they always know how you are feeling. Sometimes they pay more attention to you than you pay attention to yourself. I could be having a terrible day and as soon as I was with Jet, my day significantly improved.

Riding taught me a great many lessons. Apart from empathy, it taught me determination because I failed a lot before I succeeded. It took me a long time to even get Jet to canter (a three-beat gait between a slow trot and a fast gallop) with me after I learned how to trot with him, and I still have much room for improvement with my canter.

When we ride together, I am sharing my goals with him and we work well as a team. I lead with my whole body because he can sense how much effort I am putting in. It's more than just my hands and legs leading him. He can tell where I want to go because he can feel where my shoulders move above him, even though my shoulders aren't touching him. I look to where I want to go, and he feels it.

It's a team effort. At the end of a lesson, the best feeling is dismounting and knowing that both of us worked hard. Jet and I both are breathing hard. He'll nuzzle my pocket and ask for his mint by trying to eat my jacket. I know he worked hard to help me because he is my partner, and it always brings a smile to my face to see him enjoy his reward.

These are all lessons we can use in our everyday lives. Other people can tell how much effort, or lack thereof, we put into everything because that is exactly how much we will get out. How much attention, care, and empathy we put into other people—and horses—is how much they will put into us. We should all strive to work together and see each other succeed. Be happy about that success, because we all understand the effort it takes to get the reward.

For more information, visit [Tanglewood Riding Center](#)

You're More Beautiful Than the Media Says You Are

How the Media Has Distorted Our Perceptions of Beauty

By Meaghan Linhart, Sophomore, Public Health, David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

Physical appearance unfortunately tends to be a priority for young adults, especially college students. Come time for the annual Victoria's Secret Fashion Show, millions watch the tall, thin models strut in diamond-encrusted lingerie, and many young women experience unwarranted feelings of self-deprecation.

Many times, girls will consider themselves overweight when, from a medical perspective, most of these girls are a normal healthy weight. Society has distorted our perception of beauty into something that is unattainable and imprecise. Drastic measures to achieve these perfect bodies, such as cinching your waist, are the opposite of true beauty and health. Despite what the media and celebrities such as the Kardashians may be enforcing, attaining a Victoria's Secret angel appearance is nearly impossible if you aren't genetically eligible for such a body type.

What the media portrays isn't always true or healthy.

Celebrities and models everywhere are being Photoshopped to alter our perception of a healthy body. Henry Field, a professor of computer science at Dartmouth, told A.B.C. News that the Photoshopped images presented in the media are evolving into the "Barbie doll model" of what a woman should look like—enhanced breast size, diminished waistline, and elongated legs.

Photo manipulation has reached measures so unrealistic that celebrities have been expressing anger at their own modified photos. Singer and actress Zendaya recently tweeted a before-and-after photo of herself, appalled that her image was heavily modified.

"I was shocked when I found my 19-year-old hips and torso were quite manipulated," the star tweeted. Photoshopping has reached an all-time high, and plastic surgeries are being performed to achieve this idea of beauty which the media has presented us. However, what we see in the media should not be perceived as normal or beautiful, because most times it is just the opposite.

It's no surprise that the media is the culprit of another unhealthy trend—waist trainers. Corsets worn for a few hours a day to narrow the waist are incredibly damaging to the body. All the Kardashians use waist trainers. Even the fitness accounts on Instagram feature waist trainers, leaving impressionable youth in the dark about the detrimental effects of this product.

"I never actually imagined that these corsets would do that," said Dr. Mehmet Oz after seeing an X-ray revealing the ribs pushing on the body's liver.

The celebrity-driven trend is not just a harmless accessory; it actually comes with a plethora of internal problems. And the effects of these corsets are not permanent, according to Dr. Andrew Miller, a plastic surgeon. Miller told Yahoo Health, "Eventually you're just going to return to the way you were."

Waist trainers are a trend that needs to be thrown in the trash because decreased breathing, strained organs, and acid reflux are simply not worth a temporarily slim waist. Next time you see an Instagram post about a waist trainer, ask yourself: do you think crushed ribs, squished organs, or constricted breathing are healthy? Do yourself a favor, and unfollow that account.

While the media may declare that weighing less than 110 pounds is attractive, medicine will tell you otherwise. A healthy body weight isn't solely represented by the number on the scale. It is something that is healthy for your body type and height and is "based on your body mass index (B.M.I.) and the size of your waist," according to webmd.com.

While stepping on a scale can inform you of your weight, determining how much you should weigh isn't that simple. Your body's bone mass, muscle and fat composition, height, and other factors influence that number on the scale we all dread looking at. Stop being afraid of this number, because your B.M.I. is a much more valid indicator of health.

According to webmd.com, a B.M.I. between 18.5 and 24.8 is considered normal. Rush University Medical Center provides a B.M.I. calculator that can help you see if you are healthy.

What the media portrays as beauty oftentimes isn't even real, and the measures taken to get to this falsified goal are often extremely unhealthy. It may be hard to feel satisfied with your image with all these unrealistic portrayals of what it means to be thin, but consider your B.M.I., height-to-weight ratio, and lifestyle habits next time you feel guilty about your body image.

For More Information Visit:

[doctoroz.com](#)

[webmd.com](#)

[rush.edu](#)

Orange Empowerment

S.U. Provides Numerous Opportunities to Help Empower Students

By Angela Kim, 5th year, Industrial and Interaction Design, College of Visual and Performing Arts: School of Design

With the education that we receive at Syracuse University, we have a responsibility as students: a duty to take our knowledge and skills that are gained during our time here and apply them to our current and future lives. We will all end up on different paths. However, we all share and hold the accountability for achieving greatness with the degrees we will receive. As S.U. students, we are privileged to enjoy rights, freedoms, and resources that a lot of students in this world do not have. It is up to us to figure out how we use them.

Defining Empowerment

What does empowerment mean to you? The online Oxford Dictionaries defines empowerment as:

1. Authority or power given to someone to do something
2. The process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one's life and claiming one's rights

This meaning is two-fold—enabling empowerment and becoming empowered. Diana Tracy— speaker, trainer, and author of *Ten Steps to Empowerment*— claimed that “empowerment basically is a good sound relationship. What we have seen so far is the autocratic form of power and the employee is powerless. But real power to an organization comes from empowering people.”

Empowerment at S.U.

The education and the degree that we receive as S.U. students cover the first part of the definition of empowerment: enablement. The second definition touches upon the actions of oneself: “controlling one's life and claiming one's rights,” as the Oxford Dictionaries define it. How many times have you ignored the countless number of emails, newsletters, and listservs we all receive every week? A lot of these emails contain valuable information that could help us grow and enhance our future careers.

The opportunities are sitting right in front of us at S.U.; all we need to do is just go out and catch them. As a fifth-year student who has traveled to conflict areas like Jordan and Greece, I feel extremely blessed to have so many support systems that helped me get out of my extreme depression and anxiety and helped me grow to become a stronger and independent human, such as Emma Dovi (my case manager at Office of Student Assistance) and Kizzy Walker (my therapist at S.U. Counseling Center).

Empathetic people like Patricia Hennigan (senior assistant director at Financial Aid) helped enable me to pursue my dreams and goals by assisting me with my finances. Brilliant creative minds like Linda Dickerson Hartstock (executive director of S.U.'s Blackstone Launchpad and Whitman School of Management professor), James Fathers (director of The School of Design), and Bekir Kelceoglu (my industrial design thesis professor) shared with me their tools, skills, and knowledge to help me grow as an industrial designer, entrepreneur, and a better human being.

We can't make change immediately. However, if we all come together and collaborate and help each other grow mentally, physically, and spiritually, then maybe this change can be accomplished sooner than if we work individually

Here Are Some Resources on Campus that are available to help empower students:

- Office of Student Assistance
- Office of Student Engagement
- Counseling Center
- Career Services
- Blackstone Launchpad
- L.G.B.T. Resource Center
- Slutzker Center for International Services
- Division of Student Affairs
- Intramural sports

For more, check out [Syracuse University's Services and Support page](#).

Expectations After Graduation: The Pressure is Now on

The Challenges of Paving Your Way to Success

By Renata Husted, Senior, Public Health, David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

As soon as the tassels move from right to left and the caps are thrown in the air, it seems the newest college graduates are expected to enter the real world with their whole lives figured out.

This could mean having a job lined up, knowing their true passions, and understanding what a 401(k) is. As if the term *real world* wasn't daunting enough.

We were groomed for these expectations since we first set foot on campus. Think of the daily emails from Career Services and Orange Link, advisors pushing us to find summer internships, and the emphasis on networking, networking, networking. We were told this is what it takes to be successful in the real world. But these immense expectations restrict our view of success. Surely life presents other fulfilling opportunities.

“I feel like I should already have a job lined up for after graduation,” says Aaliyah Gatlin, a Falk College senior majoring in social work. “I always feel the pressure to be reaping the financial benefit that is expected of a college graduate, especially from a university with the prestigious reputation that Syracuse University has. It honestly makes me feel anxious and suffocated.”

This pressure distracts us from understanding that success does not always equate with wealth. Success should be denied at the individual level. For many students that takes time to figure out.

Angela Duckworth understands how long it takes to find your passion. She wrote about this in *The New York Times* under the headline “Graduating and Looking for Your Passion? Just Be Patient.” She says, “As a psychologist who studies world-class achievers, I can say the reality of following your passion is not very romantic. It takes time to develop a direction that feels so in-the-bones right that you never want to veer from it.”

What is important after graduation?

"There are many things that I want to do after I graduate that aren't career-based," says Gatlin. "So, the assumption that I am just going to jump into the workforce makes me feel like I am in the wrong for not wanting to do that just yet."

Gatlin, headed back to her hometown of Los Angeles after graduation, is excited to be a director of a summer camp instead of pursuing a career in social work right away. She says that this gap in her career path is an opportunity to explore and have fun.

Gatlin summarized the advice S.U. professor Tracey Marchese gave her about the lack of a model path after college:

"Be careful of the 'shoulds' in your life—meaning that whenever you find yourself thinking about what you 'should' be doing or what you 'should' want, sometimes the voice saying these things is not your own. Do what you want to do and don't compare your journey to anyone else's, because it is unique."

Duckworth knows each graduate has a personal path to follow. She writes, "It took a fair bit of job swapping before I knew that psychological research would become my long-term career."

She has three suggestions for developing passion: move toward what interests you, seek purpose, and finish strong.

Syracuse University

David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

The Division of Undergraduate Studies, and Enrollment and the Student Experience

White Hall, Syracuse New York 13244

p: 315.443.9808 | f:315.443.98-7