

# **ASU<sup>®</sup> Sun Devil Fitness Complex**

**Arizona State University**

## **Practicing Mindful Relaxation**

Even though we've made it past midterms, ASU hasn't been able to have spring break due to COVID-19. Chances are, without the dedicated time to rest that we're all used to, you're feeling burnt out—by school, work, or your personal life. If you want to free yourself from the feelings of depression,

exhaustion, and stress that may stem with this, it's important to approach relaxation with intentionality. Although it may seem like more work to relax, carving out the space and time to clear your mind is vital to your success, and doing so will ensure that you remain balanced even in this difficult semester. Here are some tips that work to reduce stress!

### **Clean your room and workspace!**

Yes, our first tip is, technically, a form of work. However, this practice is beneficial in both the short- and long-term. First of all, cleaning can be a surprisingly relaxing task, as long as you've got your favorite tunes going and some organizational implements. Not only does clearing the clutter help you blow off some steam, it allows you to create a better environment for working and relaxing, making you a healthier person.

### **Cleanse your social media!**

There's nothing like clearing out your social media feed, and if you don't know what we're talking about, you've got to give it a try. Are you still following your project partner from PSY101, even though you never talk now and hardly talked then, even though tapping through their Instagram story takes a lifetime? Then feel free to unfollow! If you have more of a social obligation to keep following someone, try out mute features on different platforms to make sure you don't have to spend an hour scrolling to reach the end of your feed. By cleaning out your social media, you are cultivating a more positive online community for yourself where you spend less time comparing, judging, or attempting to emulate other people.

### **Find an activity to do during your in-between times!**

Let's say you have a lot of coursework and don't have much time to relax. This is where a small hobby or other interest comes into play. When you can make the time, try to frequently turn to an activity that doesn't require a lot of dedication. Handicrafts, like knitting, crochet, or embroidery are great for picking up and putting down, or watching an episode of TV can take your mind off of your struggles for a little while. If you want to experience the great outdoors, go for a quick run or a short picnic. All of these activities are a great way to make a mini vacation for yourself—you don't have to travel or spend tons of money or time to relax, so make the best out of what you can do at home.

### **Set boundaries for yourself!**

Sometimes when we experience overwhelming amounts of stress, we lose control of our schedules and spiral, ending up in an even worse situation than what kicked the whole thing off. However, if you take the time to set and stick to boundaries you make for yourself, you'll have a way to combat feeling swamped by your to-do list. One of the best ways to make a plan and stick to it is to use a planner to schedule out your time—make sure you pencil in both your responsibilities and some free time so that you stay balanced.

### **Give meditation a try—or even a nap!**

In order to relax successfully, it's important to learn strategies that help you wind down and calm your mind. You can keep an eye out for special mindfulness and meditation programs here at the Sun Devil Fitness Complex, or try out some yoga with SDFC instructors. Otherwise, if you have a spare half hour, we recommend taking a nap rather than placing undue stress on your brain. Since you'll want to take a successful nap that doesn't give you a headache or make you more tired, stick to the 25 minutes we recommend, which gives you enough time to nod off without going into hibernation mode.

# Nurturing Your Emotional Wellness

Emotional health plays a key role in overall health. Being emotionally healthy means being in control of your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. But emotional wellness doesn't mean you have to be happy all the time or never feel anxious or sad. It simply means you are equipped to deal with and manage your emotions, whatever they may be that day. But how do we achieve a state of emotional wellbeing? It's actually something that we can practice and be mindful of. Here are a few ways to improve or maintain emotional health.

## Address Your Emotions

It's important to be aware of your emotions and recognize why you are feeling a certain way. If you can figure out what triggered a certain emotion and get to the root of it, then you can better understand what factors lead to certain feelings and, as a result, learn how to better manage them.

## Express Your Feelings

While you should be addressing your emotions internally to better understand and process them, you should also be expressing how you feel to the people in your life. It's important not to keep negative feelings bottled up inside as they will only fester. Plus, if a friend or family member is making you feel a certain way, he/she needs to know in order to fix the situation and build healthier habits.

## Find a Healthy Balance

Try to find balance in your life. Whether you're struggling with school, work, physical activity, or your social life, it's important to remember that everything is good in moderation. While it can be hard to find a balance in your life, carving out structured times to do the things you want to do is a good place to start.

## Be Aware of Self-judgements

Most people are incredibly hard on themselves, and this self-criticism easily develops into an unhealthy habit. Be aware of the judgements you're imposing upon yourself, and instead, treat yourself with compassion.

### For example, ask yourself:

Would I talk to a friend this way?

Why can't I treat myself the way I treat others?

How would I respond if someone else talked to me this way?