Health and Wellbeing at Home

Making lemonade out of lemons | Healthy Routines

There is no doubt that COVID-19 has caused loss, uncertainty, and change within our learning community. It has resulted in the loss or postponement of activities you were looking forward to, with no certainty of when things would return to 'normal'. You have been asked to change where and how you learn, with little information about what will lie ahead. It's normal to feel overwhelmed, worried, and a loss of control. The truth is, your peers, parents, and teachers are likely feeling the same way. With so many factors outside of our control, it is increasingly important to focus on the factors that are within our control (aka make 'lemonade out of lemons'). One example of how you can exercise some control over your everchanging environment and increase your sense of wellbeing, meaning, and achievement is setting up a healthy routine. This will also set you up for success with 'learning at home'. Below, we have listed six simple, but essential components of a healthy routine. Most will be familiar to you, but we challenge you to get creative with how you can achieve these every day in the current climate.

Get some zzz's | When we are tired, we are more likely to feel stressed and worried. With the circumstances we are living through at the moment, most of us are already feeling stressed/worried and don't need sleep deprivation adding to this. You know this, but screen time plus drama with a friend on social media before sleep does not equate to good sleep. Instead, it results in a night of your internal voices keeping you awake. Go to bed and wake up at the same time, aiming for eight to ten hours of sleep. If you have difficulty falling asleep at night, try drinking herbal tea, reading a book, listening to relaxing music, and/or following a mindful meditation (check out the Smiling Mind application) 30 minutes before your bedtime.

Fuel your body and brain | Try to eat a healthy, balanced diet, as it will make you feel calmer. Eating regular meals will give you energy and will regulate your blood sugar levels. Ever heard of being Hangry? Hungry and angry. It's real and unfortunate to those that happen to be around us. Eating plenty of fruit and vegetables will make you feel healthier. Reducing your sugar intake is better for your health. Snacking is common when you are bored. Write a list of things you can do instead of snacking on the fridge. For example, going for a walk, making a cup of tea, and having a chat with your siblings.

Get moving | Netball season postponed? Football cancelled? Unfortunately, many of our previous ways of moving have been cancelled or postponed and there is no way of knowing when these places/activities will be restored to normal. Nonetheless, exercise is one of the quickest and more effective ways to improve our health and wellbeing. There are creative ways to move and get 30 minutes of movement into your daily routine. Whether it is going for a walk, following a Yoga with Adrianne routine on YouTube, completing a 7-minute workout via an app on your phone, chasing your pet up and down the hallway, walking up and down the stairs, or making a TikTok video, it is easy to incorporate exercise into your day.

Get connected | A lack of contact with others can result in feeling lonely and disconnected. Yet it is important to be connected with others at a time where 'social distancing' is encouraged. A huge component of human communication are the things we don't say (e.g., body language, gestures, and tone of voice). Therefore, it is important to maintain communication with others through Facetime, House Party, Snapchat, and other video platforms, as well as being present with the people within our house. You are the experts here, provide advice to the adults around you if they need support.

Do something that sparks joy | For many of us (myself included), school is where we find meaning, enjoyment, and achievement. For you, maybe it was sport, cooking, socialising, academics, or work experience. Now, you are adapting to a new way of learning, with a structure that is changing regularly. This is hard work, and most of us probably aren't feeling 'achievement' with that yet. Therefore, it is more important than ever to look at what you can do outside of school that gives you meaning, achievement, or joy. This could be gaming, making a puzzle, painting, reading a book, or learning something new. This is the perfect opportunity to take a step away from the books and your friends and take a moment to get to know yourself. Make a list of activities and highlight them as you do them.

Set those goals | We are more likely to be successful with our routine if we set specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely (SMART) goals. If your time is limited, you may choose to combine several categories into one activity (e.g., doing a 7-minute workout with your friend on facetime at 3:15 when school finishes). Once you have written down your goals, put them into your daily routine. Click here for a run down on how to schedule a daily routine by viewing this presentation on the website.

As simple as each of these categories are in isolation, we know our lives are a balancing act of priorities. Some days we choose to prioritise distraction over connection, and some days we choose connection over moving. Be flexible with your routine, be kind to yourself, and guide your actions by asking yourself, "Is this activity working towards my health and wellbeing or away from it?".

Each week, we will endeavour to discuss something related to health and wellbeing. This may include balanced thinking, ways to relax, being kind to yourself, and managing expectations. Have you got some healthy activities you've added to your routine or ideas you'd like us to discuss? We'd love to hear them so let us know by sending them through to us.

Entry by Renae Davies, School Psychologist

On behalf of ASHS Student Services Team

For more information, visit https://www.education.wa.edu.au/learning-at-home/support-for-children-and-young-people