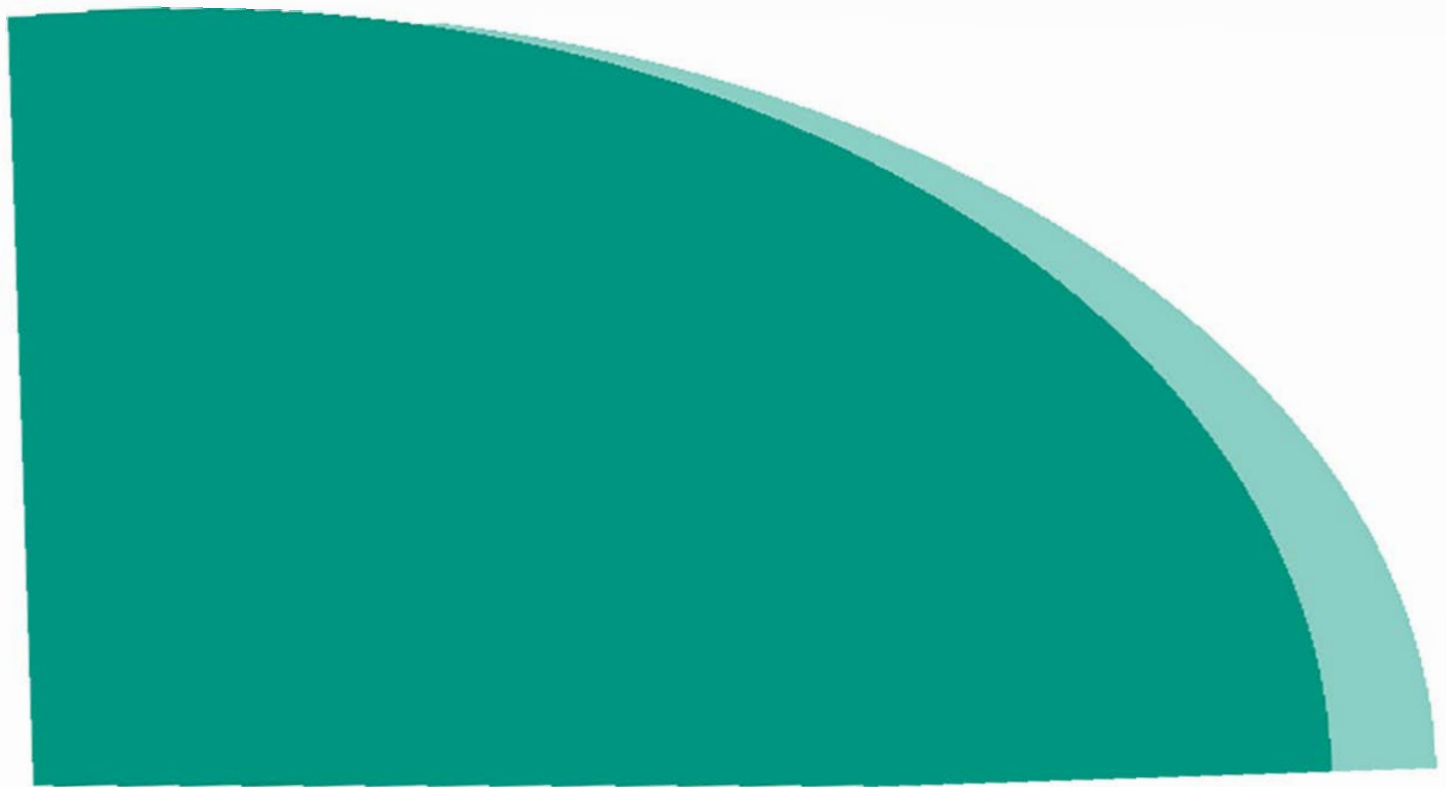




SO *fit*

SPECIAL OLYMPICS MINNESOTA
UNIFIED WELLNESS



WELCOME!

Welcome to SOfit, and thank you for taking steps to invest in your own wellness. Wellness is a personal, intimate process and should be approached with patience, resolve and understanding. The decision to put time into wellness is for ourselves and for our loved ones. Truly it is a responsibility to take care of our health, but that doesn't mean it has to be done alone.

A few key things to keep in mind:

Remember, change doesn't happen overnight. Habits take time to create, and therefore take time to recreate and replace. Wellness should be approached as a journey, and we take small steps along that path every day. Goals must be attainable to be met.

Every day is different. What is easy one day may be challenging the next. Experiencing stress about wellness can be counterproductive and can negatively affect progress. Results will vary so keep long-term goals in mind, and don't become discouraged.

Wellness is a holistic view of health, encompassing all four of the identified pillars of wellness in SOfit – Physical, Emotional, Social and Nutritional. These pillars, or sections, of wellness work together; there's more to being healthy than exercise and eating well. When one aspect is lacking in daily life, the others will be impacted.

Wellness is a massive, broad topic, but it can be simple to make positive changes within our lives. One part should be worked on at a time. When an individual feels in control of that part of his or her wellness, having made good progress, repeat with another part. This is how healthy habits are formed for individuals, and quality of life improves.

Thank you for striving to learn more about health and wellness through the SOfit program.

EMOTIONAL
WELLNESS

In this pillar, **EMOTIONAL WELLNESS** will be discussed in combination with mental wellness. Emotional wellness has to do with our feelings and emotions. Emotions are reactions we have to things that happen around us, and we use “feeling” words to describe them. Because the events we react to are constantly changing, it’s natural that our emotions change too.

Mental wellness has to do with our thoughts and choices. Examples of mental wellness include being able to see new ways of doing things, facing challenges in a positive way, being patient with yourself, taking action to reach goals, keeping promises, making healthful choices, and taking responsibility for actions.

When we’re emotionally and mentally stable, we’re able to think more clearly and manage our stress in a healthy way.

In the Emotional Wellness pillar, we’ll learn about stress management and explore different relaxation and breathing techniques.

LESSONS IN EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

**Stress Management
Relaxation and Breathing Techniques**

STRESS MANAGEMENT

Key Messages

- Stress is my body's response to events happening around me and is an everyday experience felt by all people at all ages.
- I can find positive ways to manage my stress.

Background

Stress is the body's reaction to emotional, physical and environmental pressures. These pressures can be caused by events, feelings, or situations that make a person feel tense, nervous, anxious, angry or frustrated. Even minor frustrations can turn into stress if not handled in a healthy way. Additionally, stress compounds upon stress and builds up to create long-lasting impacts on the brain and the body if not controlled or resolved in a healthy way.

Effects of Stress

Stress creates an imbalance of the chemicals in the brain. As a response, the brain releases or prohibits certain hormones and different chemicals that cause people to think, act, and feel differently. Stress can cause us to have mental stresses (brain fog, fatigue, moodiness, easily angered or saddened, difficulty interacting with others, anxiety) and physical stresses (difficulty sleeping, weight gain, lowered immune function, tense muscles or aches, upset stomach), as well as many other problems. Stressors are the sources of stress. They are common events such as being late for an activity, competing in a sporting event, or losing a friend. Stress and stressors are a normal part of life and, unfortunately, unavoidable. The way people deal with stress is what determines the effect the stress has on the body and the mind.

Combating Stress

Because stress is part of everyday life, combating it sounds challenging to most people, but there are ways to combat stress that appeal to everyone.

Be active. Stressors happen every day. A great way to combat both the physical and emotional effects of stress is through exercise. Exercise can release endorphins, which are chemicals in our brains that make us feel good about ourselves. Exercise increases mood and gets the body moving, which both counteract the negative effects of stress. Running, bike riding, hiking and yoga are particularly good exercises when trying to relieve stress.

Eat well. It's important to eat nutritionally dense foods when stressed. It's easy to emotionally eat and eat "comfort foods" when stressed, but eating nutritionally dense foods can combat stress. Some good foods to eat when feeling stressed are: asparagus, avocados, berries, cashews and walnuts, garlic, chamomile and green tea, citrus fruits, oatmeal, and even chocolate. These foods are rich in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, which have positive impacts on the brain when experiencing stress.

Create self-care time in your day. When feeling stressed about the many different moving pieces in life, it's important to take some time for yourself in the day. Watching a movie, taking a bath or shower, reading a book, listening to music, cooking a good meal, or simply spending time alone can be rewarding and combat the stress of constantly being with others. In order to do one thing every day to take care of yourself, you might need to schedule the time, but it doesn't need to take more than 5-10 minutes.

STRESS MANAGEMENT

Practice mindfulness and relaxation techniques. Mindfulness itself can reduce the impact of stress and even prevent situations from becoming stressful in the first place. An added technique to mindfulness is relaxation. Useful relaxation techniques are different for everyone and may include simple stretches, visualization, walking, yoga or meditation. Additionally, practicing deep breathing techniques during a stressful situation can immediately counteract the effects in the moment. Get organized. Organization can help combat stress by adding predictability to the day. When people feel stress they are more likely to forget or lose things, which can add even more stress. Keeping a calendar, planner, and folders with important information or documents can help to decrease stress by creating predictability. Planning ahead and mentally preparing for what comes next in the day, week, or month is much easier when organized.

Spend time in nature. The natural world is extremely healing, and the benefits of spending time in nature have been proven. Even if you simply sit in a park or open green space for a few minutes, time in nature (without a cellphone or other electronics) can be therapeutic and healing. The brain and body respond very positively to nature, and spending time in nature can release similar chemicals to exercising or deep-breathing. Scheduling your self-care time in nature is a great way to make sure it happens from time to time.

STRESS MANAGEMENT

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: SELF-CARE CALENDAR

TIME

15-10 minutes

MATERIALS

- Copies of self-care calendar for all participants
- Pen/pencil
- White board or poster paper
- Markers

Activity Description

- Being stressed out can make us really moody. No matter what is causing the stress, it's important that we take care of ourselves.
- Use the self-care calendar below and choose one self-care activity every day for yourself. You can keep track of what you do each day on the calendar.
- Self-care examples may include: Stop and breathe for a few minutes, listen to music, drink a cup of tea, go for a walk, stretch, talk to a friend, dance, write in a journal, draw or color.

Notes

Share with friends and family what you have been doing to take care of yourself or write about your self-care in a journal.

RELAXATION AND BREATHING TECHNIQUES

Key Messages

- Taking deep breaths can help me to focus and experience less stress.
- I can find many different ways to experience relaxation.

Background

There are many benefits to relaxation techniques, but sometimes it's difficult to remember why it's so important to take time to just relax. Some of the benefits of relaxation and breathing techniques include:

- Reduced anger and frustration.
- Less fatigue.
- Slowed heart rate.
- Lowered blood pressure.
- Slowed breathing rate.
- Reduced activity of stress hormones.
- Reduced muscle tension or pain.
- Improved concentration and mood.
- Improved sleep quality.
- Improved digestion.
- Increased blood flow to muscles.
- Maintained blood sugar.

There are many breathing and relaxation techniques. You can try them all to find one that works for you. Here are some great techniques that anyone can do:

- **Massage.** Through massage, we can gain a host of medical and emotional benefits by releasing the chemicals from stress that muscles hold onto.
- **Music and Art Therapy.** Music and art both help a person release emotions and stress and can be deeply relaxing. Certain music can be played to trigger "good" hormones in the brain that replace the negative hormones.
- **Aromatherapy.** Certain scents can bring about positive memories, and some scents can even trigger a hormone shift in the brain. Lavender, sage, patchouli, and frankincense, as well as many other scents, have positive impacts on the chemicals in the brain.
- **Yoga or Tai Chi.** As mentioned previously, being active can help to calm stress. These two types of exercise are centuries old and have been used by many different cultures specifically to relax the mind.
- **Meditation and Guided Relaxation.** Meditation or guided relaxations can help to restore peaceful and positive images to the imagination and mind, giving a sense of peace, comfort and security. They require intentional and positive thoughts, as a way of rewiring the chemicals that come through stress.
- **Visualization.** Visualization is making a picture in your mind of positive places, hopes, and dreams. In visualization, we might envision ourselves on a beach, in our dream home, or succeeding at something really challenging. Sending positive images to the imagination can alter our future line of thought and block stress from becoming overwhelming in the first place.

- **Deep Breathing.** Much like exercise, deep breathing, or “belly breathing,” has a physiological response that alters the chemicals in our brain. Deep breathing helps to lower the heart rate, which lowers the risk of going into a stress response. The impacts on the heart rate and brain can be felt instantly through deep breathing. It’s important to make sure that the breath is in the diaphragm and not the chest.

RELAXATION AND BREATHING TECHNIQUES

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: VOLCANO BREATH*

TIME

2-5 minutes

MATERIALS

- Optional - quiet music

Activity Description

- Sit in a chair, cross-legged on the floor, or stand with feet hip-width apart.
- Place palms together at the heart.
- Take a slow, deep breath through the nose and pause when the lungs are full.
- Hold the pause and bring the arms up over the head.
- Exhale and slowly breathe out, moving arms out to the side and then back together at the heart.

Notes

It is okay if you are not able to breathe in through your nose. Another option is to think of someone you would like to send your thoughts to. Picture that person in your mind and send out thoughts to them in Volcano Breath. An additional option is to think of something you would like to bring into your life. As you exhale, you can imagine this image around you. Examples include strength, joy, calm, and more.

* Activity adapted from Yoga Calm for Children, www.yogacalm.org and used with permission.

**NUTRITIONAL
WELLNESS**

Nutrition is one of the most important parts of our health. The food and drink we put into our bodies impacts how we think, feel and behave. It's a challenge to eat and drink in a balanced way to get the nutrients our bodies need. We can meet the challenge if we understand what healthy eating is and have access to a healthy variety of foods.

Food doesn't have to be "low fat" or "low calorie" to be balanced. Foods like that may have additives that aren't good for us. It's important to make sure that we eat a variety of nutrient rich foods.

Lessons in the **Nutritional Wellness** pillar will explore what's in our food and on our plate. We'll talk about how to prepare nutritious meals, explain some basic terms and discuss what "balanced means. The lessons also offer tips for making sure we're in balance and getting the essentials our bodies and minds need.

LESSONS IN NUTRITIONAL WELLNESS

Preparing Balanced Meals for the Week
Hunger or Appetite
Understanding Beverage Choices

PREPARING BALANCED MEALS FOR THE WEEK

Key Messages

- I will understand steps to planning a balanced meal.
- Foods of different colors can have different nutrients.
- Planning and preparation guarantee balance.

Background

Meal planning is a good way to start making balanced food choices. It can help you guarantee a balanced plan that includes all the essential nutrients to provide enough energy for your mind and body. Your plan can also help you achieve any special goals, such as the nutrition you need for a sport or other activity. One way to start meal planning is to write a list of your favorite foods and meals. Then create a one-month rotation of your favorite recipes by noting them on a calendar. Remember to include a variety of food groups, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains in your daily plan. Each week, create a grocery list including all the ingredients you'll need to make your meals for the week. Making a grocery list before you go to the store or order online is one way to prevent making impulse decisions and buying foods that are nutrient deficient.

Another consideration is keeping a variety of snacks such as fresh fruits, vegetables, and protein choices like nuts, cheese and yogurt stocked in the kitchen. It's easier to make balanced decisions when you have a variety of nutrient rich options readily available.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Breakfast	Whole grain cereal and milk	Whole grain toast and almond butter	Oatmeal with bananas or raisins and milk	Greek yogurt and fresh fruit	Egg and whole grain toast	Whole grain pancakes and fresh fruit	Greek yogurt and fruit shake
Lunch	Turkey and cheese sandwich on whole grain bread and an apple	Grilled chicken and fruit salad	Cheese and whole grain crackers with carrots and hummus	Grilled lean meat on a salad with various dressing	Whole grain pasta or rice with vegetable	PB&J sandwich on whole grain bread with a banana	Whole grain tortillas with stirfried chicken and vegetables
Snack	Carrots and hummus	Celery and almond butter	Almonds and/or Chex mix	Apple and almond butter	black bean nachos	Whole grain granola bar	Yogurt or fresh fruit
Dinner	Meatload and green beans	Chili	Chicken fajitas with black beans	Steamed or grilled fish with a vegetable	Hamburger and grilled vegetable	Pizza with a variety of toppings	Tacos and brown rice

PREPARING BALANCED MEALS FOR THE WEEK

Plan and Prep

The two P's for successful meal planning are Plan and Prep. Plan your meals for the week as discussed above. Take the time once a week to prep your food. This includes washing, peeling, chopping and cutting your fresh fruit and vegetables so they can be available later in the week when you are preparing a meal or have a quick snack.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: MY RAINBOW MEAL

TIME

5-20 minutes

MATERIALS

- Paper
- Pen/pencil
- Markers

Activity Description

- Make a list of your favorite foods in all the food groups.
- Use those foods to fill in a plan for a week like the chart above.
- Color code the foods to make sure there is balance.

Red: *Fruits*

Green: *Vegetables*

Orange: *Grains*

Blue: *Dairy*

Purple: *Meats and protein*



Notes

It is important to see a rainbow of foods every day and in every meal.

PREPARING BALANCED MEALS FOR THE WEEK

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Breakfast							
Lunch							
Snack							
Dinner							

HUNGER OR APPETITE

Key Messages

- I will understand the difference between hunger and appetite.
- I will learn how to identify my individual hunger cues.

Background

Hunger is our physical need to eat. It occurs when the energy level in our blood is low several hours after eating. It is a protective measure that makes sure the body has the right amount of energy.

Appetite is our want to eat. It is a sensory reaction to the look or smell of food and can make us think that we are hungrier than we actually are.

Appetite is closely linked with behavior and cravings. Cravings are linked to snack items that are considered empty calories or nutrient deficient. Have you ever been really full from dinner but still ate a piece of chocolate cake for dessert because it sounded delicious? That is your appetite and sometimes it is stronger than hunger. It's difficult to determine whether you are actually hungry for food or if you just have an appetite or craving for food. The problem is that our appetite can make us want to eat food even when we are not really hungry. Our appetite or cravings can be hard to ignore, especially when we get into the routine of listening only to our appetite rather than paying attention to hunger cues.

What Can We Do?

The best way to decide when to eat is simply to listen to your body. Are you exhibiting symptoms of needing food or exhibiting symptoms of wanting food?

- Difficulty concentrating
- Feeling fatigued or tired
- Stomach growling

Appetite or wanting food usually stems from boredom or cravings. This is a battle between your stomach and your brain. Each may be telling you different things. Stop and listen to what your stomach is saying, because that is where hunger comes from. If you're actually hungry, then you can think of nutrient rich foods that you can eat to satisfy the hunger and provide the body with longterm energy. If you're not hungry and are simply craving food, you can recognize this and remind yourself that this is not hunger, but instead, your appetite.

Sometimes it's difficult to tell the difference between hunger and appetite. The key is to take a second to listen to what your body needs, rather than what your brain wants. There's nothing wrong with giving in to our appetite and cravings sometimes. Food provides comfort in more ways than just satisfying hunger. It's important to make sure we're getting the essential nutrients our body and mind needs. By recognizing hunger cues, we can be more aware that this is our body telling us it needs balanced nutrients that provide long-term energy.

Plenty of research supports the fact that eating a balanced breakfast can help decrease the probability of binge eating or appetite-guided eating throughout the day. Studies around breakfast tend to show that people who eat a balanced breakfast:

- Eat more nutrient dense foods throughout the day.
- Participate in more physical activity.
- Are less lethargic, restless and irritable.
- Choose foods that are rich in whole grains, fiber, and protein while low in added sugar.

HUNGER OR APPETITE

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: HUNGER QUICK WRITE/JOURNAL

TIME

5 minutes

MATERIALS

- Paper
- Pen/pencil

Activity Description

Write a short reflection on your eating practices for the current day or the day before.

Questions to think about when writing:

- What time did you eat?
- Why did you eat when you did?
- What did you eat?
- How did you feel when you were eating?
- How did you feel after you ate?

Take time to reflect on your answers.

Notes

The idea with the quick write is to pay attention to the cues surrounding your eating. We want to see if there is an emotional connection or if we are truly eating when our hunger cues are triggered. It's also helpful to consider whether we're truly eating a balanced diet rather than a diet encouraged by our appetite and cravings.

HUNGER OR APPETITE

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: THE POWER OF BREAKFAST

TIME

15-20 minutes

MATERIALS

- Whiteboard or poster paper
- Markers

Activity Description

What does the term “breakfast” mean?

- Break: to separate or divide
- Fast: a period of time without food
- Breakfast: break the fast
- How many hours do you usually sleep? This period is the fast.
- How many hours on a typical day between lunch and dinner?
- **Why is breaking your fast so important before you start your day?** *Example of answers: Less tired, more alert and able to concentrate, more active, less likely to binge eat throughout the day, more likely to make balanced food choices, perform better academically and on extra curricular activities.*
- Our bodies are not meant to fast from dinner one night to lunch the next day. This puts our bodies into a starvation mode and causes the brain and body to slow down to naturally conserve energy. Because of this protective measure, it leaves you feeling lethargic, less able to concentrate, and irritable throughout the day.
- **Ask yourself:** Why do some people not eat breakfast? *Example of answers: Want to sleep in, no time, nothing to eat at home, not hungry, too long to prepare, and do not like breakfast foods.*
- **Ask yourself:** What are some solutions for eating breakfast each morning? *Example of answers: Go to bed earlier, get up 15 minutes earlier, eat school breakfast, pack breakfast to eat on the way to school or work, plan a couple quick breakfasts beforehand, and eat leftovers from the dinner the night before.*
- **Ask yourself:** What makes a balanced breakfast? *Example of answers: Choosing at least three from the following food groups: Fruits, whole grains, protein, and dairy, plus foods low in added sugars and fat, but high in vitamins, minerals and fiber.*
- **Try:** Eat a balanced breakfast and write down how you felt during the day.

Notes

Journal what you learn about breakfast habits and the importance of breakfast. Share breakfast ideas with friends and family.

UNDERSTANDING BEVERAGE CHOICES

Key Messages

- Water is an essential nutrient.
- All drinks are not equal in nutritional content.

Background

Your body is made up of 60% water, so it's not surprising that the most important beverage to drink is water. In order for our body to function at its best, we should drink 8-12 glasses of water per day. There are creative ways to increase your water consumption. You can bring variety to the water you consume by drinking sparkling water or adding flavored powders. Sparkling water can be purchased at the store and is a good substitute when you're craving something bubbly. You can also purchase water flavorings that are either liquid drops or powder packets. These tend to be low in calories and add taste to simple water. Another option is to add fruit or fresh herbs, such as mint leaves, mixed berries, watermelon, pineapple, oranges, lemons, or limes.

Beverages such as milk have various types. Milk is sold as skim, 1%, 2% and whole milk. The percentages indicate the amount of fat in the milk. These beverages also pack in essential nutrients that your body needs.

Tea and coffee are inexpensive, nice alternatives when served plain. They're loaded with antioxidants that can help remove harmful chemicals from our bodies. On the other hand, tea and coffee with added sugar and cream can add many empty calories, sometimes more than 500 calories per drink.

Sports drinks have carbohydrates, minerals and electrolytes. They also have added coloring and flavoring such as high fructose corn syrup. They're meant to replace water and electrolytes lost during fitness activities. They can be helpful to athletes who are doing intense exercise, but be aware that they are not replacements for the water your body needs on a regular basis.

We may think that low-calorie or diet drinks have nutritional benefits. Diet sodas or other diet drinks might be advertised as being enticing choices. However, these alternatives can actually have negative effects on your body. Diet drinks are loaded with artificial sweeteners. Some studies say they might actually lead to weight gain and other body changes. Be aware of the claims that companies make about the health of their products. Read your labels. As a general rule, if you can't understand the ingredients in a drink, it might be filled with chemicals instead of essential nutrients.

Drinks such as soda, fruit drinks, and energy drinks have high sugar content and added chemicals. They aren't nutrient dense with vitamins and minerals. Many of the energy drinks and sodas also have high amounts of caffeine. Excess amounts of these drinks can actually lead to dehydration rather than providing the body with the water needed for proper functioning. It's important to drink as much water as we can and keep the drinks with high sugar, caffeine and empty calories in moderation.

UNDERSTANDING BEVERAGE CHOICES

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: WHAT'S IN MY DRINK

TIME

5-10 minutes

MATERIALS

- Nutrition Labels for a variety of drinks

Activity Description

Look at the nutrition labels for a variety of drinks, can look online if you do not have drinks at your home. Be sure to include ones that you enjoy drinking.

Energy drinks
Soda
Diet soda or other drinks
Fruit juices
Milk
Sports drinks
Protein drinks
Yogurt shakes

Go through each label and look at ingredients, sugar content, vitamins and minerals, etc. Decide which options are better drink options for nutrition.

Notes

Compare the ingredient labels from each drink. Ingredients are listed from most to least. Check out this website for additional sugar content in drinks: <http://www.cnn.com/2014/07/02/health/gallery/sugar-sweetened-beverages/>

PHYSICAL
WELLNESS

An important aspect of wellness is being able to move your body with strength and endurance. **Physical wellness** is much more than just exercise. Physical wellness is anything and everything having to do with your body. In this pillar we will explore many topics that are important for your body, all being a part of physical wellness.

With movement and exercise, it's important that we explore a variety of movements. Variety helps us maintain interest; there is nothing worse than forcing ourselves to be active in ways we don't enjoy.

A comprehensive program should include activities in four categories: balance, strength, cardiovascular fitness and flexibility. Find movements in each of these categories that you enjoy. Finding ways of moving that you especially like will help you get moving consistently. If you enjoy an exercise or physical activity, you'll be more likely to continue it.

LESSONS IN PHYSICAL WELLNESS

Balance in Physical Wellness
Taking Care of My Body
Movement at Home

BALANCE IN PHYSICAL WELLNESS

Key Messages

- Water, exercise, balanced nutrition and sleep are the four basics of physical wellness.
- I can find balance in each basic area of physical wellness every day.

Background

The human body is a complex, yet well-organized system. Fortunately, we don't have to know everything about how it works in order to increase our physical wellness. Unfortunately, we get many mixed messages from a variety of professionals and wellness enthusiasts. This makes it difficult to decipher what we need to do to improve our overall physical wellness. The following guidelines will help to clarify and recalibrate what's important for improving and maintaining a physically active lifestyle.

"Wellness" is a broad term that includes all aspects of a balanced lifestyle. For example, you may find that a lack of drinking water makes it harder to fall and stay asleep. Not eating with balanced nutrition affects your energy levels. Once a person understands the links between the areas of physical wellness, he or she can begin to find a balance for themselves.

We'll look at four areas of physical wellness. Try and find balance in each area, every day. Consider creating an attainable goal for each area. Achieve that goal and move right along to the next challenge.

Water

One of the simplest, most important things a person can do is drink more water. Water is a vital part of being physically well, and it affects every system in the body. The digestive system needs water to process our food, and the brain needs water to think and remember. Below are several recommendations for drinking more water on a daily basis:

- Drink a glass of water when you wake up and before you go to bed. You'll start your day with a simple health habit, and you'll find you sleep better.
- Drink a glass of water at every meal.
- On hot days or on days you work out and sweat, make sure you drink even more water than usual.
- Urine should be clear or slightly yellowish in color. If the color is darker, we might not be drinking enough water.
- In general, drink 8-12 glasses of water per day, but more if you are sweating a lot.

BALANCE IN PHYSICAL WELLNESS

Movement

Movement doesn't mean that you have to exercise every day. Most people don't need this level of fitness to maintain balance in physical wellness. In fact, if the other areas of physical wellness are lacking, it may not be the best option to over exert yourself with exercise. Being active can mean going for a walk, strength training, playing a sport, or cleaning the house or gardening. General guidelines include:

- Train with resistance at least two times per week - either using body weight or a form of strength training with bands or weighted items around the house (milk jug, water bottle, etc.).
- Walk or move as much as possible. If you have a movement tracker, like a Fitbit, try to take as many steps as you can. Many recommendations encourage about 10,000 steps per day.
- Get your heart rate up for 10-30 minutes, 2-3 times per week.
- Make movement as enjoyable as possible. Find an activity you enjoy, as you'll be more likely to do it consistently.
- Take the stairs whenever possible.
- Park the car at the last parking spot when shopping. Or, ask to be dropped off at the bus stop before your regular stop to add a few more steps in your day.

Nutrition

Nutrition is the category many people get stressed out about, as it's easy to feel as if they aren't eating as balanced as they should. Here are some tips to get you started:

- Eat green and colorful foods such as fruits and vegetables in good quantity. Eat 1-2 cups (or as much as you want in excess of this) with every meal.
- Eat about 20 grams of a lean source of protein (poultry, fish, or eggs) with each meal. This will help control hunger and prevent your appetite from taking over.
- Choose whole grains for sandwiches or add a small portion of brown rice or pasta to meals. This will provide the essential nutrients as well as give you some long-term energy to get a workout in during the day.
- Eat breakfast. Give your metabolism a boost by eating lean protein (eggs), whole grains (oatmeal) or dairy (yogurt) and some fruits. Peanut butter on whole grain toast is also a great way to start the day.

Sleep

Sleep is an extremely important component of wellness. Here are some helpful tips to improve your sleep:

- Strive to go to bed at the same time every night. When your sleeping patterns become consistent, you feel more rested. It is recommended to get at least eight hours of sleep per night.
- Short naps of less than thirty minutes during the day can provide us with additional energy. If the naps lead to tired and sluggish feelings, try to shorten the duration.
- During sleep, our body repairs damage done by our environment and activity level. It's important to give our body that time to rest and heal.
- Sleep is when our brain processes what we learned during the day.
- Try to avoid empty calories such as sugar or caffeine in the afternoon. This will allow your body to relax and sleep.
- If you have difficulty sleeping, seek the help of your doctor. He or she may have other tips to consider.

It's important to note as well that individuals are unique by definition, so not all guidelines are perfect for all people. Try some of these tips and see what works for you.

BALANCE IN PHYSICAL WELLNESS

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: BALANCE IN PHYSICAL WELLNESS

TIME

20-30 minutes

MATERIALS

- Paper
- Colored pencils or markers

Activity Description

Make seven columns on a blank sheet of paper and label them for each day of the week across the top.

Then, label time of day down the left side, from 6 a.m. to 6 a.m.

Use the following color code to fill in your chart for the previous day. Fill in the days for the rest of the week to see if there is balance in your physical wellness.

Green: *Eating whole grain, vegetable, or fruit*

Red: *Sleeping*

Orange: *Exercising or moving*

Blue: *Drinking water*

Things to think about:

- How often are you eating a balanced diet?
- How many hours between meals?
- Why is it important not to skip a meal?
- How much sleep are you getting?
- How much water are you drinking? How much movement?

Notes

This a great way to have a visual of how well you are doing in the four areas of physical wellness.

TAKING CARE OF MY BODY

Key Messages

- Hygiene is an important part of my overall health.
- Taking care of my body helps me to look and feel my best.
- Taking care of my body is my responsibility, but if I need help I can ask a trusted person in my life.

Background

Hygiene is an important part of your overall wellness, as it has to do with keeping your body neat and clean. Your hair, skin, and teeth need your care on a daily basis. As we get older, it's even more important to take care of our bodies, since this can prevent many infections. Every person has a responsibility to take care of his or her body. If there is something you need help with, it's important to think about who you can ask to help you. Here are a few tips to remember in keeping our bodies clean.

Washing Your Hands

Washing your hands is a simple way to keep clean throughout the day. By washing your hands, you get rid of dirty germs. This prevents you from getting sick or possibly making others sick. The best way to wash your hands is by following these three steps:

- Wet your hands with warm water.
- Rub soap in your hands for about 20 seconds (or sing "Happy Birthday" to yourself). Be sure to get between your fingers and onto your forearms.
- Rinse your hands with warm water and dry them using a towel or air dryer.

It is recommended to wash your hands before and after you eat, after you use the restroom, after you play with animals, after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing, or whenever you think your hands may have gotten some germs on them. Note: When coughing, a great strategy is to cough into your upper arm rather than into your hands. If you don't have soap and water, try using hand sanitizer. It's important not to use this on a regular basis, as it can dry out the hands and lead to roughness. This can lessen the protective barriers of the skin that are helpful in reducing infections.

Taking a Shower or Bath

Showering or taking a bath is how we can get the whole body clean. When bathing, use a wash rag and body soap to remove the dirt and germs from the day. Some people like to shower or bathe every day as part of their routine. The key is to have a routine and stick with it. As we get older, we release more sweat each day, so a shower can keep you fresh and clean. Some people prefer an every other day routine. That's fine, as you are the one who knows your body best. Like other body parts, our private body parts need to be cleaned and taken care of. Washing hair is not something that needs to be done with each shower. Sometimes, washing hair too much can lead to dryness in the scalp and itchiness. Use a good shampoo (and conditioner if you choose) when you wash your hair to keep your hair clean.

TAKING CARE OF MY BODY

Brushing Your Teeth

Brushing your teeth should be a priority two times a day: once when you wake up and then again before you go to bed. If you have a sticky snack that gets stuck in your teeth sometime during the day, it's important to brush an extra time. Make sure that you brush your teeth for two minutes (30 seconds on each quadrant of your mouth). A timer at the sink or an electric toothbrush with a built-in timer is a helpful way to make sure our teeth get the time they deserve. Brush all parts of your mouth: front teeth, back teeth, and even your tongue. Germs and leftover food can hide all over the mouth, so pay attention to brushing thoroughly. Brushing can also help keep breath fresh. Flossing between the teeth is also a good daily habit, since many foods can get stuck between our teeth. This can lead to cavities. Foods such as popcorn can become lodged, and only a good flossing will remove it. Flossing is important for your gums, because it prevents redness and infections such as gingivitis. Gingivitis is inflammation of the gums caused by bacteria buildup. By brushing and flossing daily, our gums and teeth will stay clean and healthy.

Proper hygiene is key to helping our bodies and teeth look and feel their best. Washing your hands is also part of the universal precautions for preventing disease transmission. Cleaning our bodies and teeth can prevent skin and gum infections from occurring. Create a routine. Your body and teeth will thank you.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: WASHING YOUR HANDS

TIME

5 minutes

MATERIALS

- Glitter
- Vaseline (or something sticky and safe to use on skin)

Activity Description

Put a small amount of Vaseline and glitter (or pepper) on your hands with a small brush.

Ask yourself how this mixture could spread to other parts of the body and to other people. Examples of answers: Touching the same doorknob, sneezing, coughing, rubbing eyes, sharing a glass, etc.

Now wash your hands as you normally would.

Ask yourself: Did you get all of the Vaseline and glitter off your hands? Think about why not.

Examples of answers: Used cold water, only for a few seconds, no soap, etc.

Next add more of the glitter or Vaseline, and wash your hands using warm water and soap while singing "Happy Birthday" or counting to twenty while you are washing. Did this make a difference with removing all the glitter mixture?

Notes

Have the glitter/pepper mixture premade in a little jar.

TAKING CARE OF MY BODY

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: WASHING YOUR HANDS

TIME

15-30 minutes

MATERIALS

- Internet capability
- Computer
- (Optional) Projector

Activity Description

Search “Hygiene” in the browse section at www.jeopardylabs.com. There are several games about hygiene on this website. Choose one that works for you.

Play one of the Jeopardy game to test your hygiene knowledge.

MOVEMENT AT HOME

Key Messages

- I can stretch or take short walk breaks throughout the day
- Movement throughout the day at home can help me to have more energy.

Background

It's important to break up your time at home with movement. Some people sit for at least eight hours a day. Many individuals may sit on the couch watching TV or playing video games for most of the day. Why not spend a little time working and stretching your muscles during the hours of sitting? Researchers have found that movement throughout the day can increase productivity, concentration, and enthusiasm. You may not be spending an hour in the gym lifting weights or doing cardio, but a couple movements every hour or two can make a lot of difference for you and your ability to be productive. If being more productive and enthusiastic doesn't motivate you, think about your body's need to move after being sedentary for an extended time. Sedentary individuals and inactive people have been reported to be at higher risk of cardiovascular disease because of increased levels of insulin, glucose and fatty acids.

Here are some examples of movements that can be done anywhere- at a desk in an office, in the classroom, or at home.

Shoulder Shrugs: Shrug your shoulders up and down. Use a rotating motion and pull the shoulder blades back and down together. Repeat 10-15 times. Hold for five seconds on the up phase and then another five seconds on the back and down phases for a good stretch of the neck muscles.

Glute Squeeze: When you're sitting down, squeeze your glute muscles and hold for 5-10 seconds. Repeat 10-15 times.

Walking: Get outside and go for a walk or get up every couple hours to walk around your house.

Pelvic Tilts: While sitting, tighten glutes and shift hips forward, activating the lower abdominal muscles. Feel a stretch in the lower back and stability in the core muscles. Hold 5-10 seconds. Repeat 10- 15 times.

Focus on Posture: Sit up tall, shoulders back, and activate your core muscles. Try sitting with straight posture for 5-10 minutes to relieve pressure on the neck and shoulders.

Leg Lifts: Kick your leg out until it's straight, hold for 3-5 seconds, and relax. Repeat for each leg 10-15 times.

Calf Raises: When standing, raise your heels off the ground. This can be done while watching TV or waiting for your food to heat up. Do single or double heel raises, 10-15 each or together.

MOVEMENT AT HOME

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: CHAIR EXERCISES

TIME

5-10 minutes

MATERIALS

- Chairs for all participants

Activity Description

Do each of the above exercises as a group.

Come up with additional exercises to be done from a chair and try them out or share with friends.

Notes

It may be helpful to find images online of stretches from the chair.

SOCIAL
WELLNESS

Being social means spending time in large or small groups and often means forming relationships with people in the groups. These relationships can take many forms, all of which have different meanings to us.

Relationships are an important part of a person's life. We have many different relationships in our lives, and we use different types of touch with all of those people. Some of those relationships are healthy and others are unhealthy. In the **Social Wellness** pillar, we will learn how to recognize healthy and unhealthy relationships as well as what to do if we are in an unhealthy relationship. We will explore safe and appropriate boundaries, different personality types in our relationships, and social skills to use in our relationships.

Who we spend time with can influence our choices, behavior and opportunities every day. All parts of wellness work together, especially when it comes to relationships. Having healthy relationships is important, not only for support and guidance, but also for fun and safety. Healthy relationships are fun, reduce stress, increase healthy hormones, and regulate good processes

LESSONS IN SOCIAL WELLNESS

Healthy Relationships

Internet and Social Media: Safety and Perception

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Key Messages

- Healthy relationships have a positive impact on our lives.
- Unhealthy relationships may have a negative impact.

Background

We have many different types of relationships in our lives, and it's important to understand what makes a healthy relationship, as well as what makes an unhealthy relationship. Both healthy and unhealthy relationships can be with anyone in your life - family members, friends and romantic partners. Healthy relationships make you feel happy, fulfilled, good about yourself, and loved. Unhealthy relationships might make you feel sad, lonely, or bad about yourself. Many different behaviors contribute to both healthy and unhealthy relationships.

- In a healthy relationship:
 - You take turns making decisions.
 - You respect each other through words and actions.
 - You use kind and caring words.
 - You both share thoughts and feelings even if you disagree.
 - You both support and encourage each other.
 - You communicate well.
 - You can say no.

These are just some examples of behaviors that make healthy relationships. When you're in a healthy relationship, you're more likely to take care of yourself, have other healthy relationships, feel good about yourself, be confident making your own decisions, and have fun.

In an unhealthy relationship:

- You don't respect each other with words or actions.
- Decisions are unfairly made or one-sided.
- One person tries to control the other's actions.
- One or both of you criticize the other's thoughts, feelings, and actions.
- You might feel worried when you disagree.
- You might feel pressured to do things you don't want to do.
- You don't communicate well.
- You may experience yelling or physical aggression during an argument.
- One person wants the other to keep secrets.

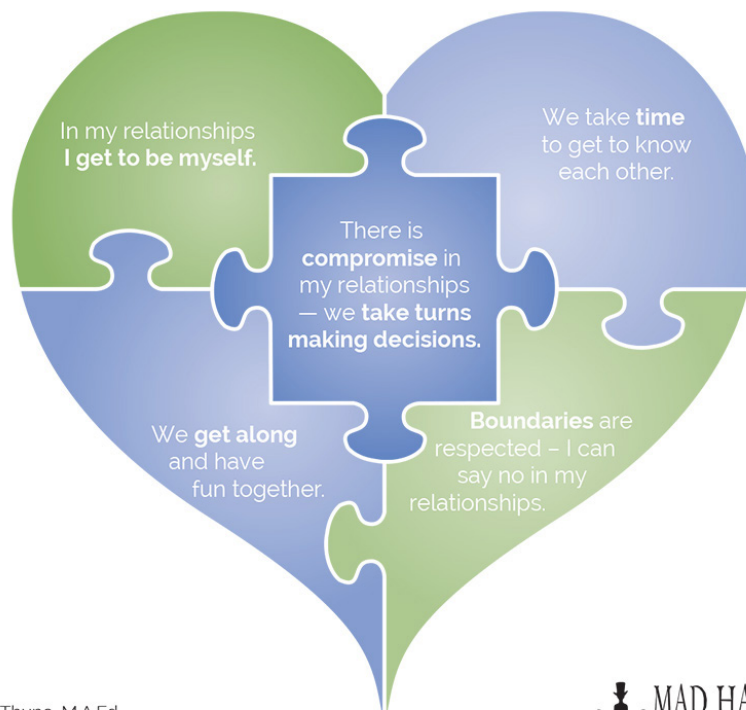
These are only a few examples of unhealthy behaviors in relationships. When you're in an unhealthy relationship with someone, you might feel sad frequently, have lower self-esteem, experience self-doubt, stop caring for yourself, and allow other relationships to suffer. If you're in an unhealthy relationship with a friend, family member or romantic partner, it's important to tell someone about it. Also consider asking how to create some boundaries for yourself.

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

When we're forming or participating in all the different relationships we have in our lives, it's important that we feel good about ourselves. Look for ways to have fun, learn about each other, and continue developing the relationship over time. One way to nourish relationships is to do activities that you enjoy together. You can try new activities together as well. It's important to stay positive and encourage each other throughout your time together.

Relationships are somewhat like puzzles. If one piece is missing, the puzzle isn't complete. Here are five pieces of a healthy relationship. If one piece is missing, the relationship may need some work to become a healthy relationship.

THE HEART OF RELATIONSHIPS



Katie Thune, M.A.Ed.
www.sexualityforallabilities.com



In my relationships I get to be myself. I don't have to pretend to be someone else. The relationship is truthful and real.

We take time to get to know each other. The amount of time to get to know someone is different for all relationships. There is compromise in my relationships - we take turns making decisions. There is a shared power in the relationship.

We get along and have fun together. We have things in common. Arguments are brief and end respectfully.

Boundaries are respected - I can say no in my relationships. If I say no, the other person doesn't get upset with me.

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: LOVE IS...

TIME

30-40 minutes

MATERIALS

- Large paper
- Markers or colored pencils
- Pen/pencils
- Scissors

Activity Description

Draw a big heart in the middle of the large paper.

On the inside of the heart, write feelings you have when you're with someone with whom you enjoy a healthy relationship. Be creative. Think of as many good feelings you have when you are around them as you can.

On the outside of the heart, write down the feelings you may have if you're in an unhealthy relationship. Discuss the differences between how you feel when you're in an unhealthy relationship and in a healthy relationship.

(Optional) Cut out the heart with the positive feelings on it as a reminder of what healthy relationships look like.

Notes

A fun variation on this activity is to use old magazines to make a collage of the feelings instead of writing the words. Another variation is to enlarge the "Heart of Relationships" and use that as the background for the collage. Glue the cut-out words and pictures on top of each category/puzzle piece.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: THINGS IN COMMON

TIME

30 minutes

MATERIALS

- Paper
- Pen/pencil

Activity Description

This activity can be done with partners - family member, caregiver, roommate or friend via zoom. Each partner, on their own paper, should draw a line down the center of the page, making two columns. On the left side of the paper, write down hobbies or activities that you love to do.

When both partners are finished, compare your lists.

On the right side of the paper, make a list of things you have in common.

Brainstorm new ways you can do these activities together. Examples:

- If you both like baseball, schedule a time to play catch.
- Do you like to walk or run? Find new places or routes to go together.
- Do you both like reading? Find new libraries and bookshops where you can browse through your favorites and discuss them.

Finally, go out and do an activity together or plan out a later time to get together and do the activity.

Internet and Social Media: Safety and Perception

Key Messages

- The internet can be helpful and provide us with a lot of information.
- We need to be careful about who and what to trust on the internet.
- We need to be careful about what we post online in order to stay professional.

Background

As technology advances, people use the internet more and more. Many people use the internet to find out information about others, including new friends, potential employees, people associated with businesses, and more. Not many people realize that the new company they are interviewing with may be going to the internet for information about them, particularly their social lives. A person's association with another person or with an organization may be of interest to companies or individuals attempting to learn about them. This includes checking social media sites where pictures of them might be posted. Social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram catalogue daily activities through posts, status updates, social events and pictures. That's why it's so important to keep an online presence professional - not only for your own sake, but also for the sake of anyone associated with you.

Remember, when a person is associated with an organization, such as Special Olympics, he or she is representing that organization. When people post things that are inappropriate, they are not only risking their own reputation, but the organization's reputation as well.

Everyone has what's called a "digital footprint." What is posted on social media and on the internet leaves traces behind forever. Often potential employers will look back at those digital footprints. This means that once information is out there in cyberspace, it stays there. Before something gets sent or posted, it's important that people consider the consequences. The potential audience is much larger than a person might think. Before putting a post or e-mail out there, consider what others might think of the content. If the content is questionable, everyone who is involved should give consent, or permission, before it gets sent into cyberspace.

While controlling images on the internet is important, it's even more important to stay safe from cybercrime. Cybercrime includes hackers searching for personal and financial information, as well as other crimes that are potentially even more dangerous.

Internet and Social Media: Safety and Perception

Don't:

Post unprofessional or inappropriate pictures.

Post statuses or tweets with inappropriate language, poor work habits, or criticisms of your employer.

Post status updates about everything you do - too much information can put you in a vulnerable position.

Post or share references to illegal drugs, guns, or alcohol.

Post or share sexual or discriminatory posts.

Share passwords or usernames.

Share other personal information, or respond to e-mails or other messages that inquire about personal information (Social Security number, bank account number, birth date, telephone number, or information about your family, school, work, or where you live).

Reply to or click on messages or links from strangers asking for information.

Send pictures of yourself, your home or anywhere else you frequently go.

Chat or e-mail with a stranger who makes you feel scared or uncomfortable.

Meet in person with a stranger you met online. No matter how long you chat with someone online, that person is still considered a stranger. People on the internet are not always honest about who they really are.

Do:

Post positive content that will make a good impression and create a positive digital footprint.

Be kind and respectful to others. Think of the internet as an extension of the world. Treat people on the internet or social media the same way you would treat them in person.

Use privacy settings for passwords and social media.

Make sure that websites you are shopping on are secure. They will have "https" in the web address and will also have a logo that looks like a lock.

Some games or apps that access your location services (GPS) can tell the wrong strangers where you are or where you are going. Make sure your location settings are private.

Be aware of the mood you are in when posting social media content.

Tell a trusted adult if a stranger contacts you through social media, e-mail, or another messaging service or website.

Tell someone if you feel uncomfortable about anything happening on the internet.

INTERNET AND SOCIAL MEDIA: SAFETY AND PERCEPTION

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: GOOGLE YOURSELF!

TIME

30-45 minutes

MATERIALS

- Internet access
- Internet-capable device (smartphone, tablet, computer, etc.)

Activity Description

Begin by entering your name into the Google search bar.

- See what comes up at first.
- Then, search your name in Google with other terms added, including risk words such as “address,” “e-mail address,” usernames for sites you use, your phone numbers, etc.
- Repeat the search process on other search engines, as well as sites that are designed to find people (whitepages.com, peoplefinder.com, etc.).
- Questions: What did you search for? What did you find? How do you feel about what you found?
- Check privacy settings for any social media sites used, as well as e-mail and any other site that might contain personal information.

Notes

If you need help checking privacy settings ask a family member, caregiver or friend for help. You can also check out these videos Four Reasons to Care About Your Digital Footprint (https://youtu.be/Ro_LLrg8rGg) and NS Teens - Friend or Fake? (https://youtu.be/Nb1zAY_cc8o) on www.smores.com.