From financial worries to work load, we are dealing with ever-increasing stressors in our daily lives that can often blindside healthful habits before you even realize it. Skipping meals or exercise, grabbing fast food or a quick fix from the vending machine, drinking more caffeinated beverages, and losing sleep can all tend to make you more susceptible to fatigue or illness. Use these guides to prioritize yourself and stay healthy!

Staying Active

Trying to keep up your regular exercise routine or just finding time to exercise may feel like an impossible task when the stressors at work and at home are so demanding that the thought of exercise becomes stressful! However, staying active may be the most valuable tool you have to manage stress and to boost energy. Taking a half-hour out of your day to be physically active may benefit you with more energy when you need it most. You can break that 30 minutes into two or three 10-15 minute parts and reap the same rewards. And, long term, exercise provides numerous health benefits to help you maintain your health and prevent disease.

Here are some tips for making physical activity a regular part of your workday:

- **Walk to work.** Walk briskly, part of the way, to or from work. If you take public transportation, get off a few stops early and walk the rest of the way to your destination. If you drive to work, park your car further away from your office to increase the distance of your walk to work.

- **Take the stairs.** Use the stairs instead of the elevator whenever possible. If needed, ride the elevator to a midway point and climb the rest of the way. Add more floors as you build stamina.

- **Take 10 minute walking breaks.** A 10-minute walk can do a lot to re-energize and help you focus. Take a lap around the building or inside the building if the weather is bad.

- **Walk to get your lunch or plan a destination walk.** Go for a brisk walk during your lunch hour and then eat your lunch. Identify a destination for your lunch time walk – to get food, to run an errand, etc.

- **Walk to meetings.** Allow time to walk to meetings on campus instead of taking the campus shuttle.

- **Take walk ‘n’ talk meetings.** Instead of meeting with a colleague in an office, take the meeting outside and walk. This works best with a two-person meeting. Ask your colleague if he or she would mind walking as you talk.

- **Dress the part.** Keep exercise clothes at work – comfortable shoes for walking, loose clothing, an extra t-shirt, and a sweatshirt for colder weather. If you are prepared with the right clothes, it will be easier to think about taking that brisk walk during your lunch hour or breaks.

- **Build an office workout program.** For those with an office or small space around your desk, try exercising at your desk using portable equipment such as exercise bands and small dumbbells (2-5 lb. weights). It’s also possible to perform resistance exercises without any equipment; just use your own body weight. Some exercises to try are desk pushups, floor or chair crunches, and squats.

- **Find a partner.** Exercising may be easier and more enjoyable if you do it with someone else. Find a partner who walks at the same pace you do and is willing to commit to getting together for regular workouts.
- **Join the Health*Matters Walking Group.** The Walking Group meets year-round, every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 12:10 to 1:00 pm at the Campanile (south side). Led by Walking Leaders, the group walks three different routes on campus and accommodates all levels of exercisers, from beginning walkers to advanced, brisk walkers. It’s a great way to get out of the office, break up your day, socialize with your campus colleagues, and most of all, re-energize with exercise!

- **Work out at the RSF.** Join the campus Recreational Sports Facility and work out during lunch, or before or after work.

You may find that the first step is the hardest in becoming more active, but after a few weeks, your physical activity and fitness routine may become a habit that you will look forward to during the day. Try to stay motivated by choosing activities that you enjoy and set realistic fitness goals in small steps, such as “I will walk 10 minutes everyday this week during lunch.” When you reach that goal, increase it by small, realistic increments.

**Staying Healthy During Stressful Times:**
- Eating Well
- Managing Caffeine Use
- Managing Stress
- Preventing Headaches and Muscle Tension
- Sleeping Soundly
- Staying Active