

# healthy you

mind, body, spirit

SPRING 2021 VOL. 21 ISSUE 2



## Mask Up

What to Know about Proper Mask Use during the Pandemic

## Top 10 Tips for a Successful Virtual Interview

Adapting interviews to a virtual format

## Listen Up! Using Sound-Based Meditation for Stress Relief

Examining alternate forms of meditation through music and sound

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*Healthy You* welcomes letters to the editor and story ideas

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# CONTENTS

- 2 In the Know**  
New research in health and wellness

## *mind*

- 3 Public Health Faculty Spotlight**  
A conversation with public health Assistant Professor Miriam Mutambudzi
- 4 Mindfulness at Your Fingertips: Using Technology for Mental Health**  
An in-depth look at the Sanvello app and its benefits
- 5 Listen Up! Using Sound-Based Meditation for Stress Relief**  
Examining alternate forms of meditation through music and sound
- 6 Creating Opportunities: It's All About Communication**  
Building your professional networks and portfolio
- 7 Top 10 Tips for a Successful Virtual Interview**  
Adapting interviews to a virtual format
- 8 Can You Hear Me Now?**  
The art of listening
- 9 Read This Now or Later: Overcoming Procrastination**

## *body*

- 10 Misalignment from Your Computer Assignments?**  
How prolonged computer use can impact skeletal health and what to do about it
- 11 Mask Up: What to Know About Proper Mask Use During the Pandemic**  
A conversation with Dr. David Larsen
- 12 Unpacking Antioxidants: Be in the Know**  
The importance of antioxidants in your diet
- 13 Navigating Food Choices on Campus**  
Creating a mindful approach to fast-food selections
- 14 Exploring Medicaid and its Importance to College Students**  
Health literacy in action
- 15 The Value of the Orange Fruit**  
The benefits of including oranges in your diet
- 16 Take a Hike**  
The physical and mental benefits of hiking
- 17 "Water" You Drinking These Days?**  
Learn more about the benefits of drinking water

## *spirit*

- 18 I'm Sorry for Your Loss: A Guide for Friends**  
Coping with loss within a campus community
- 19 Redefining Community Service: A Public Health Perspective**  
Transitioning to new volunteer strategies during the pandemic



# IN THE KNOW

Discover new research  
in health and wellness

By Cate Willing and Kinley Gaudette  
Public Health Students  
David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

## COMBATTING ZOOM FATIGUE

At this point in the work- or school-from-home environment, we all are familiar with the feeling of “Zoom fatigue,” a term coined during the COVID-19 pandemic that describes the exhausting strain that constant video calls and school work can have on us. Zoom fatigue refers more generally to the mental and physical toll that video calls can have. In an article in the American Psychological Association’s *Technology, Mind, and Behavior* journal, the unnatural elements resulting from work or school from home were studied. In a normal meeting or class, you would not be looking at yourself and your classmates or co-workers the entire time, and you would have some liberty to be creative and walk around without seeming disrespectful. In Zoom meetings, sitting still with camera on and listening is the common courtesy that can be draining, both mentally and physically. To combat this as a meeting participant, hiding self-view, so you do not fixate on your face but rather concentrate on the speaker, can help. As we move forward with virtual work, there is a call for teachers and those running meetings to creativity combat the fatigue that comes from long video calls, including frequent breaks and more social discussions. For now, hiding self-view, incorporating a cover photo for when you do have to turn your camera off, and walking around for quick breaks can help. Engaging in fruitful discussions with your peers and teachers on how you think online class can be more interactive and less draining can also provide some short-term solutions on a case-by-case basis.

Sources: *The Washington Post* and the American Psychological Association

## READING FOR RELAXATION

Did you know that reading can be used as a form of medicine? It’s called *bibliotherapy*, and it can mean two things:

1. Reading in a structured or clinical setting as a form of prescribed therapy, or
2. An individual struggling with an illness like anxiety or depression using reading on their own to improve wellness.

Regardless of whether bibliotherapy is done in a program or independently, it can have huge health benefits, especially for those who struggle with mental illness. Studies have also shown that reading fictional stories can improve mental health, as they evoke feelings of empathy and allow the reader to resonate with the lived experiences of characters. If you’ve ever read a good

book, you know how easy it is to forget that you don’t know the characters in real life. When you read, the connection you feel to certain characters can be strong enough to allow you to feel what they’re feeling. That emotional response can be healthy for the brain. In today’s world, it can be hard enough to find time to read our required texts for classes, much less read for enjoyment. However, reading for enjoyment has so many benefits and can truly be effective in treating mental health concerns. So, whenever you have the chance, pick up a new book and let the story take you away for a while.

Source: *Psychology Today* [www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/talking-about-men/201905/can-reading-books-improve-your-mental-health](http://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/talking-about-men/201905/can-reading-books-improve-your-mental-health)

## THE POWER OF POSITIVE THINKING

Utilizing the power of positive thinking is more important now than ever. We have spent over a year in the pandemic, coping and adapting to dramatic changes in every aspect of our lives. Recognizing the value that thinking positively can have on your own situation will help you in reaching your goals and maintaining good mental and physical health. According to Johns Hopkins Medicine, people with a family history of heart disease who had a positive outlook on life were one-third less likely to have a heart attack or related event within five to 25 years than those with a more negative outlook. It’s proven: Mindset directly correlates to health outcomes, but how? Positive thinking varies from person to person, but starting with smiling more

can help you look happier externally and think more positively internally. Second, reframing is a concept that helps to shift your outlook on life and to look on the bright side. When things may not be going your way, reframing the situation to recognize what you are grateful for shifts your mindset to think more positively. Lastly, becoming more resilient will benefit coping strategies to unfavorable situations. One suggestion from Johns Hopkins Medicine is to act on situations that may frustrate you, rather than letting them build up over time. Taking small actions to achieve a more positive outlook on life is beneficial today to your mental well-being as well as benefiting your health tomorrow.

Source: Johns Hopkins Medicine

# PUBLIC HEALTH FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

## SITTING DOWN WITH PUBLIC HEALTH ASSISTANT PROFESSOR MIRIAM MUTAMBUDZI

By Cate Willing  
Junior, Public Health  
David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

**M**iriam Mutambudzi, a recent addition to the public health department in the David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics, attributes much of her ability to think critically on public health issues to her past.

Mutambudzi's story does not start with her. It begins with the powerful women in her family who came before her. Her grandmother, born and raised in a rural village in Zimbabwe, lives a simple life. Fast-paced, modern life gives stark contrast to Mutambudzi's 103-year-old grandmother who spent her time taking care of her 10 children, tending to the garden which they ate solely from and going to church. Her lifestyle can undoubtedly be traced to her good health, even at 103 years old.

Mutambudzi's mother, raised in the same small village, left for the United Kingdom after high school and was faced with a dramatically different life than she once lived. In Zimbabwe, the family had its own property, grew its own food and had no debt. In the U.K., however, her mother was met with what she called "the poverty of the paycheck"—the idea that being able to eat or pay for housing is dependent on a monthly paycheck—and the threat this posed to security and overall health.

This observation is key in understanding the structural determinants of health, in Mutambudzi's eyes. The experiences of her grandmother and mother taught Mutambudzi early on that "the value of healthy lifestyles and quality of life was so different from the mainstream" and that being healthy isn't one-dimensional.

Structural issues, one of Mutambudzi's specialties, were always a topic of interest for her, but she didn't connect these interests to public health until later in life. From an early age Mutambudzi was interested in examining structural issues and how these correlate to opportunities individuals are afforded, affecting potential health outcomes and overall quality of life.

"Health is going to impact your opportunities, the opportunity of your children and future generations," she says, "and on the

other hand, the opportunities you have now are going to impact your health." This bi-directional relationship was the light bulb for Mutambudzi as she expanded her public health studies.

Perspective is key to Mutambudzi. Living in Africa, Europe and now the United States has allowed her to "objectively look at something without the emotion, without the attachment to a history, a story or legacy."

A key difference, from a public health angle, between the U.S.

and Europe is the health care system. Living in both a countries with universal health care and then in the U.S., where many do not have access to care, was perplexing to Mutambudzi. "Having access to health care is an absolute human right," she says. "It was perplexing that it is considered a privilege, in a system that ignores historical, structural and systemic factors, which make it difficult for some groups to access this level of privilege."

Mutambudzi's narrative on issues like health care, education and other systems that are tied to health outcomes is well taken. In her course Health Disparities and Underserved Communities, these are addressed with updated contextual discussions of the pandemic, which, she says, has prompted an "accumulation of

disadvantage that nobody's really talking out." The long-term effects of stress from economic and health challenges will be detrimental.

While the pandemic exacerbated many systemic issues, Mutambudzi sees a light at the end of the tunnel. "The issues around structural and social determinants of health are being taken more seriously," a step in the right direction.

Mutambudzi teaches courses relating to inequalities, structural issues and global health. She is working on research assessing chronic health outcomes in the refugee community in Syracuse, diving deeper into what makes chronic disease more prevalent in communities of low socioeconomic status. Additionally, she suggests reading Sir Michael Marmot's work if social and structural determinants of health are of interest to you.

Miriam Mutambudzi is available at [msmutamb@syr.edu](mailto:msmutamb@syr.edu). For more information regarding her background, visit [falk.syr.edu/people/mutambudzi-miriam/](http://falk.syr.edu/people/mutambudzi-miriam/)



# MINDFULNESS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS: A DEEPER LOOK AT SANVELLO

## AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT THE SANVELLO APP AND ITS BENEFITS

By Kinley Gaudette  
Sophomore, Public Health  
David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

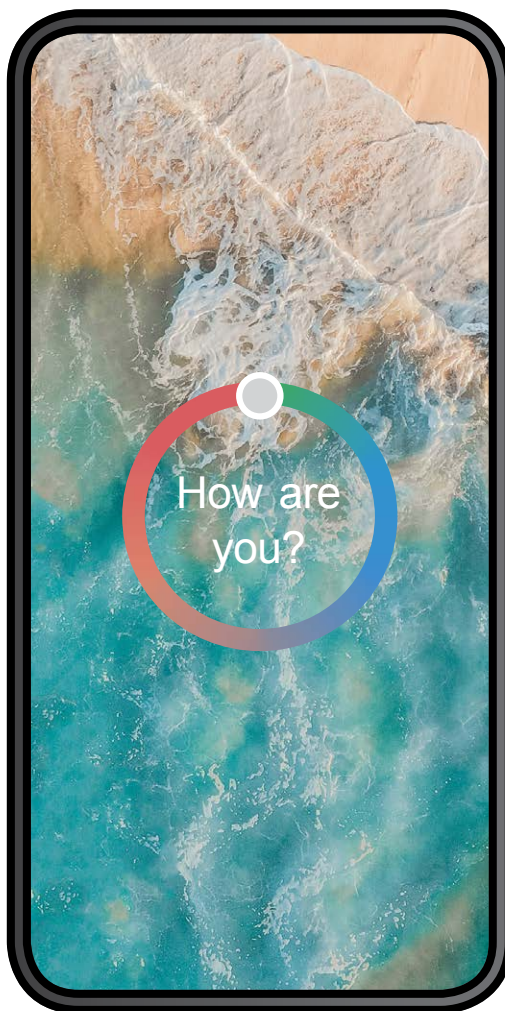
In college, it can be easy to lose touch with yourself. First priorities are schoolwork and socializing, and there are only so many hours in a day. Self-care often slips between the cracks. However, there are easy ways to stay mindful that don't include two-hour hot yoga classes or crystal energy. One great resource for Syracuse University students is an iPhone app called Sanvello. While Sanvello normally costs money, it is free to University students if they create an account with their school email.

As an employee at the Barnes Center at the Arch Health Promotion, Yhanelly Ruiz '23 is well-versed in practicing mindfulness. She works as a member of the SAMHE team, which stands for Students Advocating Mental Health Empowerment.

"The Sanvello app has helped me practice mindfulness because it reminds me to do so," says Ruiz. "As silly as it sounds, I forget to check in with myself, and maybe others face the same issue. That's why I like the daily reminders of checking in, logging in how I feel, the hobbies I've done for the day. I can look at quotes or cute phrases that can distract me for a little while. It's also accessible and private."

Sanvello describes its app as a toolkit of sorts, based on the contributions of experts. The app features tutorials on cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT). In addition to CBT exercises and video instructions, the app allows its users to connect via forums when they are experiencing similar circumstances. This enables users to feel a greater sense of community and to recognize that they are not alone.

"There's a section with different topics like gratitude, school stress, movies, music, relationships, YouTube and so much more,"



says Ruiz. "And once you click on the topics, you can post anything that's on your mind and others can react to it. They can like your post, comment, save or share, and it's so nice to see those interactions."

A great feature on Sanvello is goal-setting and tracking, where users can set specific goals for themselves and track their progress. The app makes recommendations for videos and exercises based on the goals the user sets. For busy college students, this is a great way to stay on track and keep personal goals prioritized. Since its services range from goal planning to CBT exercises to group conversation, Sanvello is a great fit for anyone. It can meet the users where they are at and help reduce anxiety through whatever means are most relevant.

After you log in to Sanvello with a University email account, your profile will sync with the University and your home page will contain resources for you here on campus.

"There are emergency resources, and it includes all of the resources SU offers," says Ruiz. "It has the phone number and email of the Barnes Center at The Arch, SU counseling, Health Services, Sexual and Relationship Violence Response Team,

DPS, Dean of Students Office, SU Title IX Coordinator and even resources for staff."

With just a quick trip to the App Store, you can take a huge step toward mindfulness and connect yourself with University resources for mental health.

### For more information:

[www.sanvello.com/self-care/](http://www.sanvello.com/self-care/)

[www.syracuse.edu/life/services-support/counseling/](http://www.syracuse.edu/life/services-support/counseling/)



# LISTEN UP! USING SOUND-BASED MEDITATION FOR STRESS RELIEF

## EXAMINING ALTERNATE FORMS OF MEDITATION THROUGH MUSIC AND SOUND

By Amanda Burnes  
Senior, Public Health  
David B. Falk College of Sport  
and Human Dynamics

**M**editation is often misconstrued as an intensive practice, but it's not as complicated as it may seem. There are a variety of ways to practice meditation, especially as a college student, that are accessible. Regardless of whether you are experiencing anxiety or high levels of stress, or just want to take a break from your day, sound bath meditation can be a great tool for you.

Sound-based meditation, an emerging sector of meditation, uses sound as a form of therapy, aiming to improve stress and anxiety-related symptoms. Sound baths are a popular form of meditation that involve surrounding yourself with different sounds and frequencies, including gongs, chimes and singing bowls. These induce a deep meditative state that can help promote stress relief and release tension in the body.

Music as a form of meditation and therapy is on the rise, and Professor Dessa Bergen-Cico in the Department of Public Health and coordinator of the addiction studies program at Falk College has taken strong interest in this field. Bergen-Cico has studied trauma, addiction and related therapy, which have led her to explore sound baths as a form of meditation-based therapy. "Sound-based meditation is both spiritual and scientific," she says. "This type of meditation has a strong theoretical basis, but it has been shown to reduce stress for many individuals."

Asked how sound-based meditation can improve mental health, Bergen-Cico explains that "it can help people become more familiar with their inner selves and thought patterns. Sound meditation helps us self-regulate our emotions better, while also redirecting our attention toward our inner selves. We become better at recognizing our stress."

Through sound meditation, you can learn to regulate your own stress and emotions, a key factor in maintaining positive mental health.



Bergen-Cico says that music as a broad category can be therapeutic: It "absolutely is a form of therapy for most people." Ranging from person to person on genre preference, "[music] helps us recognize our emotions better through the use of lyrics and beats." Music has great therapeutic and stress relieving benefits. Don't be too intimidated to try sound bath meditation. It is a simple and relaxing way of reducing stress by surrounding yourself with sounds.

Tamara Goldsby, a research psychologist studying sound healing at the University of California San Diego, found in

a controlled study that sound-based meditation increased feelings of relaxation and decreased stress for those who participated. There are a lot of mental health benefits of using sound as a form of therapy, as well as many physical health benefits. Sound-based meditation has even been found to reduce bodily tension, blood pressure and overall stress post-meditation.

Sound, frequency and vibration are important components of sound-based therapy, which are often attributed to the use of singing bowls and gongs. However, sound-based therapy does not have to only include the individual use of instruments. There are more accessible versions of sound bath techniques as well as streaming platforms like Spotify and YouTube. It's important for everyone to incorporate music into their meditation and relaxation practices, as it can have the same effect on people that a sound bath can. Take advantage of your music library and use it to relax.

For more information:

[ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5871151/](https://ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5871151/)

[psychologytoday.com/us/blog/urban-survival/201907/the-healing-power-sound-meditation](https://psychologytoday.com/us/blog/urban-survival/201907/the-healing-power-sound-meditation)

[healthline.com/health/binaural-beats](https://healthline.com/health/binaural-beats)

# CREATING OPPORTUNITIES: IT'S ALL ABOUT COMMUNICATION

## BUILDING YOUR PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS AND PORTFOLIO

Falk Career Services

**W**hen it comes to resume experiences, there is a perception, often reinforced all through high school, that there is a finite set of opportunities, all of which must be listed...somewhere. In other words, it is a linear path from choosing off a menu, applying and getting. Reality, in this case, is both more complicated and more promising. At a recent panel, one Syracuse alumna described her path from student experience to post-graduation employment like this:

***"With the exception of the first internship I did, each position I've held hasn't quite existed... During my first exercise science class, I was introduced to an individual... He had never had interns before. I said, really, 'just let me come help, let me learn from you...' and so he did that. And then...during my last semester at Syracuse...I wrote up a plan for a work study position [that] got approved... [At] the University of Michigan, I just cold-called the director here and...they ended up opening an additional GA position... and throughout the course of that... I made my case for [a full-time] position and I've been here ever since."***

**-Katlyn Haycock, '11**

(see the full panel here:

[syr.joinhandshake.com/events/713497](http://syr.joinhandshake.com/events/713497))

The important point, here, is that a world of opportunities can be created—whether research, internship, volunteer or full-time employment—if you just make the right case for them. Of course, success is not guaranteed. Haycock likely received her fair share of “no’s” along the way, but you will miss all of these potential growth opportunities if you restrict yourself to only what is listed.

How, then, can you inspire others to take a chance on you? The answer often comes down to communication, but there is more involved than Haycock has let on. Creating a position for a student is a leap of faith, but not one that faculty or employers will take lightly. Ideally, you will already have a relationship formed with whoever you ask for a professional development opportunity (network early). However, if you are reaching out to someone new, you'll need to think carefully about what information you provide.

Strangely, a central consideration to all of this is time. Most professionals, whether professors or managers, are short on this resource. This should help to guide your selection of what

information you provide in an initial attempt to request a new opportunity. If you say too much, relevant details might be skipped, or your message filed indefinitely away for future review. If you say too little, the request to connect will lack necessary context and require your reader to reach out to you for clarification, a step that they may or may not take.

Give thought, then, to what minimal information (no more than a page) this busy professional needs to take an initial interest. Your goal is to lay out a role or project that will serve both their organization and you. Be mindful that it should minimally be time-

neutral for them, in that they will get at least enough benefit out of your work to justify the time they will need to put in to train and supervise you. Certainly, they may adjust this assessment, but a starting point is better than expecting them to take their time to create it for you. You should include:

- What you hope to gain from the role, as framed around your future professional goals (even if they are not set in stone);
- What value you hope to provide to the individual or organization, as framed around the skills and experiences you possess that are directly relevant to the imagined role (do not simply rewrite the resume you will likely attach) and;
- Only those parts of your personal story that directly relate to the needs or interests of your desired employer or faculty mentor.

Once you take your shot, remember that even if the answer is “no,” this is still a new connection for you who knows about your professional interests. Keep in touch with them periodically, as you never know when conditions will change, and the answer may become a “yes.” Avoid repeated requests, but reach out to them about their work or achievements, or to seek advice about an academic or professional decision you need to make. This outreach will help keep you fresh in their mind. They may even connect you to a similar opportunity elsewhere.

**Need more information about any of this or help crafting this outreach?**

Falk Careers is here to help.

Connect with us at [falkcareers@syr.edu](mailto:falkcareers@syr.edu). If not, take some time to consider your interests, build your personal, professional message and get out there to create the opportunities you seek.





# TOP 10 TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL VIRTUAL INTERVIEW

Falk Career Services

**T**he sun is shining, the snow has melted (at least for now), and it is once again that time of year when students of all majors look for ways to gain experience over the summer. Unfortunately, this spring, like last, will probably feature many virtual interviews and meetings with prospective employers. Here, then, are 10 quick recommendations to make sure you put your best foot forward in a virtual setting.

First, however, it is important to remember that experience comes in many forms. Internships are just one way. Volunteering, leadership in clubs or activities, and job shadowing are all just as valuable for exploring your interests and gaining relevant skills. For any of these, don't forget to network and actively reach out to possible employers, as many may be open to working with you in a variety of ways, even though they have not formally posted these opportunities on a website or job board.

That said, whether you are reaching out to inquire about opportunities or scheduled for an interview, here are some tips to Zoom professionally:



## BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

1. **Set the stage.** Success in the interview depends a lot on attitudes that form ahead of time. Check your social media. If the employer searches you online, will the you they find line up with the version you present in the interview? If not, modify your privacy settings so that only connections can view your posts.
2. **Do your homework.** Remember that you are more than a collection of your skills and experiences. Employers can train skills, so they will want to hear about whether you are a good fit with their organizational values and culture. Research the organization before the call and make those personal/values connections in the interview, as well.
3. **Practice talking about yourself.** Many people are uncomfortable with this, but employers need to hear it. Think ahead of time about the key skills, values and interests you want to highlight. What are your professional goals (note that they do not need to be set in stone)? With these in mind, you can practice answering common interview questions on camera with Big Interview, at [syracuse.biginterview.com](http://syracuse.biginterview.com), by creating a free account with your SU email address.
4. **Choose the right space.** Find a quiet location with a professional backdrop (no beds, towels, dressers, etc.). Make sure that anyone sharing your space knows what you will be doing, so they stay out and stay quiet. If you don't have a reliable space, reach out to Career Services to use one of Falk's interview rooms or sign out a private space in the library.

5. **Test everything ahead of time.** Make a call on the same program (Zoom, Teams, etc.) to a friend a couple of hours or days in advance so you can fix any problems. Make sure you have good lighting, sound and connection speed.

## DURING THE INTERVIEW

6. **Lay out your resources.** One advantage of virtual interviews is that you can lay out a copy of your resume, some notes about the employer and your list of talking points and questions. Be sure to avoid reading a script, as this comes across poorly for a range of reasons. However, just knowing that all these important details are easily accessible, should you need them, can help boost confidence as you speak naturally.
7. **Look the part.** Your choice of clothing will depend on the type of employer you are speaking to. However, as a general rule, think business professional for an interview (collared shirt/blouse and jacket, possibly with a tie). For an informal chat to explore opportunities, think business casual (a collared shirt or blouse). This sounds strange, but don't forget the pants. If you need to stand for an unexpected reason, pajama pants may earn you an awkward moment or two.
8. **Get the right angle.** Make sure your camera is about level with your eyes. It can be awkward for people to look at your ceiling (and, incidentally, up your nose). As you talk, try to make eye contact with the camera rather than staring at the image of the other person (though do keep an eye out for their nonverbal cues). If you are naturally self-conscious, turn off the view of yourself to avoid the distraction.
9. **Keep the spotlight on you.** Avoid sharing your screen to show off a resume or digital portfolio unless this work is the basis of your case for employment. Technical difficulties and side tasks are likely to throw you off your train of thought. Instead, let your words be the focus and save time at the end to provide a link or attachment for these additional resources.
10. **Follow up.** Don't forget to write down names and contact information for anyone you speak to. Send a note within a day or two to thank them for their time and express your continued interest. Avoid the temptation to provide better answers for anything that tripped you up during the call. Let the note convey your professionalism and interest, not a lack of confidence.

If you have questions about any of this, don't forget that Falk Careers is here to help. Be sure to review some additional advice on our website, [falk.syr.edu/careers](http://falk.syr.edu/careers). You can also make an appointment to speak with us via Handshake ([syr.joinhandshake.com/appointments/](http://syr.joinhandshake.com/appointments/)) or by emailing us at [falkcareers@syr.edu](mailto:falkcareers@syr.edu).

# CAN YOU HEAR ME?

## THE ART OF LISTENING

By Janet Pease

Former Head of Collections and Research Services  
Syracuse University Libraries

**POP QUIZ:** What is the difference between hearing and listening?

**ANSWER:** Hearing is the physical process of perceiving sound by the ear. Listening is an active mental process by which we attempt to make meaning of what we hear.

Author and psychotherapist Gwen Randall Young writes that “the most important communication skill is the ability to really listen and yet is also the most difficult.” Young explains that although we are living in a high-tech, high-speed, high-stress world, effective human communication remains an art, and one that most of us are not good at.

According to research published in the *Harvard Business Review*, many of us spend as much as 70 percent to 80 percent of our waking hours in some form of communication and we spend the bulk of it (45 percent) supposedly listening. As for the rest, estimates are that we spend about 9 percent writing, 16 percent reading and 30 percent speaking.

### WHY WE ARE NOT GOOD LISTENERS

One reason we are not good listeners is that while we have had formal training on other communication skills—writing, reading and speaking—not many of us have had much training on honing our listening skills.

Another reason for our poor listening skills is that we can think a lot faster than someone else can speak to us. According to researchers at the University of Missouri Extension, we can listen to people at a rate of between 125 and 250 words per minute, but we have the mental capacity to understand someone speaking at 400 words per minute. This means that we are only using about 25 percent of our mental capacity when someone is talking to us. The other 75 percent of our brain is freed up to think about other things, such as what to have for dinner, what to wear tomorrow, etc. No wonder it’s such a challenge to pay attention when someone is talking to us.

### WHAT CAN WE DO?

Even when we really try to pay attention, it is easy to get distracted and not just by our overactive, multitasking brain. There is also our environment to contend with, background noises and the buzzing and chirping of our mobile devices, just to name a couple.

One way to improve on this is to practice active listening. Active listening is about building rapport, understanding and trust. By learning and practicing active listening, we become better listeners, not just paying attention but communicating our understanding of what is being said instead of what we think is being said or what we want to hear.

So, look smarter and improve your interpersonal relationships by learning how to be an active listener.



### FOR MORE INFORMATION AND MORE TIPS,

See “Become a Better Listener: Active Listening,” [psychcentral.com/lib/become-a-better-listener-active-listening/](https://psychcentral.com/lib/become-a-better-listener-active-listening/)

### TIPS FOR MASTERING EFFECTIVE LISTENING

- Face the speaker and make eye contact.
- Lean toward the speaker, smile and nod to show you are engaged.
- Occasionally paraphrase and summarize what you heard.
- Focus on what the speaker is saying instead of planning your reply.
- Ask open questions that require more than a yes or no answer.
- Allow for comfortable silence to give a person time to think as well as talk.
- Practice, practice, practice.

# READ THIS NOW OR LATER: OVERCOMING PROCRASTINATION

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

**A**re you a part of the procrastination nation? If so, you are in good company. According to the American Psychological Association between 80 percent and 95 percent of college students procrastinate in their schoolwork.

While everyone occasionally puts something off (called situation procrastination), chronic procrastinators have perpetual problems finishing tasks. Joseph Ferrari, one of the pioneers of modern research on procrastination, has found that as many as 20 percent of people may be chronic procrastinators.

## WHY PEOPLE PROCRASTINATE:

Tim Pynchyl, author of *Solving the Procrastination Puzzle*, identified six triggers that cause procrastination: The task is boring, frustrating, difficult, lacking personal meaning, not structured enough or not enjoyable.

Debbie Rosemont, an author and certified professional organizer, writes that the No. 1 cause of procrastination is perfectionism. According to Rosemont, "A perfectionist will put off starting something they worry they can't do perfectly, and they will put off finishing a task because it never seems 'good enough.'"

Other experts suggest that some procrastinators wait until the last minute to do things because they think (usually incorrectly) that they work better under pressure and enjoy the adrenaline rush that comes with that.

## EFFECTS OF PROCRASTINATION:

Whatever the reason is for it, procrastination has been shown to have negative effects on both physical and mental health. Procrastination can lead to stress and health problems such as sleep issues. It can also hinder self-esteem, due to guilt, shame or self-critical

thoughts that can come from putting off tasks, or waiting until the last minute and doing them poorly.

Procrastination can also lead to poor grades and negatively impact job performance and hold you back from accomplishing personal and professional goals.

## IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO CHANGE:

All is not lost. Procrastination doesn't have to be a lifestyle choice, but it takes persistence, practice and patience to change habits. You can do things right now to develop good patterns of behavior that will carry forward.

- Try to identify what your procrastination triggers are.
- Ask questions to be sure you know what to do and you understand the task's objective.
- Eliminate distractions and interruptions. Clear your workspace, shut down email alerts and stay off social media.
- Put deadlines on a calendar.
- Do the most unpleasant task first so you can cross that off your list of to-dos.
- Break a big task into smaller pieces so it doesn't seem so overwhelming. Small victories provide encouragement.
- Commit to just 15 minutes and then reward yourself by taking a short break to do something else you enjoy.
- Download an app for your phone to help you stay on track with assignments.
- Remember that done is usually better than perfect when you have a deadline.

**For more information,** look at *Solving the Procrastination Puzzle* by Tim Pynchyl.





# MISALIGNMENT FROM YOUR COMPUTER ASSIGNMENTS?

## HOW PROLONGED COMPUTER USE CAN IMPACT SKELETAL HEALTH AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

By Amanda Burnes  
Senior, Public Health  
David B. Falk College of  
Sport and Human Dynamics

Our lives are centered around technology. From navigation, work, school and relaxation, computers and related technologies have dictated what we do. Our dependence on technology, especially since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, has only increased, and our bodies are just beginning to feel the impact of these changes. Spending extended time on the computer, sitting hunched over for hours, will have a long-term impact on our skeletal health, but there are ways to combat this today.

How we sit at desks or look at our laptops can lead to poor spinal health and neck protrusion. According to Harvard University, our backs have three natural curves: the forward curve of the neck, backward curve of the upper back and the forward curve of the lower back. These curves help to keep our weight balanced to reduce strain and pressure on our joints. Poor posture can lead to back and joint pain, as well as other issues. Extended use of technology is not good for our bodies in the long run, as it can ruin this balance and encourage poor posture.

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased our reliance on technology because of the shift to a virtual environment for school and work. Many people have been working from home for over a year at this point, spending hours looking at their computers and phones while sitting.



When sitting at a desk and looking at a computer, it's important to keep your chin tucked, I learned from a conversation with medical engineer Lee Burnes. Asked about good computer posture, Burnes recommended that everyone keep their backs straight and chins tucked down. He also recommended that people invest in standing desks, or urge their employer to do so, to create a more ergonomically correct work environment. Burnes owns one of these standing desks and when working at home prefers to use it to keep his posture straight and his neck unbent. These types of desks adjust to the user's preferred height and make it difficult to slouch, promoting better posture. Investing in smaller items like a computer stand and back pillow for your desk chair can provide small improvements in posture over time as well.

There are many ways to help prevent poor posture when using technology. Being aware of the way you are sitting and how this translates to how you stand is one of the most important things you can do. Moving around frequently and taking walks between breaks, doing yoga and stretching can also help overall physical health and posture. Even if working from home will never fully go away after the pandemic, addressing back and posture issues now will prove beneficial long term.

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### For more information:

[www.ptforhealth.com/sitting-posture-working-from-home/](http://www.ptforhealth.com/sitting-posture-working-from-home/) [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3309315/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3309315/)

[www.health.harvard.edu/pain/posture-and-back-health](http://www.health.harvard.edu/pain/posture-and-back-health)

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# MASK UP:

## WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT PROPER MASK USE DURING THE PANDEMIC

By Alessia Martini  
Sophomore, Public Health  
David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

**A**t this point in the pandemic, it is hard to imagine a time where we weren't wearing masks. Masks have become a crucial tool for us to continue to do things like go to the grocery store, attend in-person class and be around others. But as new best practices of mask wearing come out, how do you make the transition?

"Double masking" is a term that seems new. In reality, researchers have been studying the benefits of double masking since the pandemic began. Using two masks has shown to be more effective in maximizing protection against COVID-19 and its variants.

David Larsen, professor of public health and researcher at Syracuse University, has focused his work recently on combatting the COVID-19 pandemic. He answered some questions.

**Q: What is our current understanding of masks?**

A: Masks have become a common standard to help stop the spread of COVID-19 since the early stages of this pandemic. Washing our hands more, wearing a mask and social distancing are all a part of our new norm. Larsen says wearing masks could be the single most important tool we have to prevent the spread of the virus.

**Q: What is the difference between wearing one mask and two?**

A: The logic is clear. The general principle is the more filtration we have of the air that we are breathing, the safer we'll be and the more we can protect others. Wearing a second mask not only helps with filtration, but also with the fit of the mask. Wearing two masks can also reduce entry of the pathogens because it can improve the fit of the mask.

**Q: Does the material of the mask matter?**

A: From Larsen's perspective, we should focus on a mask or a face covering as a policy and normalize that. That being said, he says we should try not to scrutinize the type of mask people wear. Larsen lists the following combinations from most protective to less protective: N95 (with goggles for maximum protection); nylon sleeve and cloth mask or surgical mask on top; cloth mask and surgical mask on top; nylon sleeve or surgical mask (similar levels of protection); and finally, the cloth mask.

**Q: Are there certain times where it is more important to be wearing a mask?**

A: Assessing your level of comfort and gauging the area you are going to, whether it's a crowded grocery store or a walk outside, is important in understanding risk. Larsen says a dense crowd of people is the best place to double mask.

**Q: How can the public make sure they are up to date on the best ways to wear a mask?**

A: From the beginning of the pandemic, wearing a mask has been a social policy we have all adapted to. The public should get their information from sources like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and their local health department. Larsen acknowledges the credibility of these websites and says, "They are much more reputable than your friend on Facebook."

**Q: What advice do you have for students on campus regarding mask wearing?**

A: Keep the masks on. It finally seems as if there is some hope for an end with vaccines being administered daily, but it's still important we wear our masks for the time being.

It's so easy to do, and as long as we wear them tightly around our face to maximize their protection, they are excellent prevention tools.

**For additional information:**

[www.ongov.net/health/](http://www.ongov.net/health/)

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html)







# UNPACKING ANTIOXIDANTS: BE IN THE KNOW

## THE IMPORTANCE OF ANTIOXIDANTS IN YOUR DIET

By Amanda Burnes  
Senior, Public Health  
David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

It is easy to resort to topical products and assume they are the only factor that affects your skin. What we eat also has a significant impact on how our skin looks. Antioxidants, which protect cells from oxidation, have proven benefits for our skin, especially in anti-aging. It's important to consume a balanced diet of fruits and vegetables and other foods high in antioxidants, because they can help reduce the damage that aging and sun exposure causes.

The most common antioxidant-rich foods are raspberries, blueberries, dark chocolate and artichokes. Other food groups, such as leafy greens like kale and spinach, also provide antioxidant benefits. Additionally, many skin care products containing vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin E, vitamin B3 and other vitamins/minerals act as great antioxidants for the skin, topically. The use of these foods and products is beneficial for skin, as they reduce free radicals that build up from oxidation, potentially causing harm or disease.

Nutrition student and teaching assistant Nicole Brennan '21 encourages students to read up on antioxidants because they "have great benefits for the skin, especially after a lot of sun exposure."

Brennan is a big proponent of eating fruits and vegetables that are "vitamin-rich," and typically these foods provide antioxidants as well. If eating antioxidant-rich foods is not an option, using topical skin care products containing antioxidants can provide similar benefits.

What we eat directly influences the quality of our skin, so it is important to consume a balanced diet of fruits and vegetables to maintain positive skin and physical health. A poor diet can reflect onto the appearance of your skin. In addition to eating more antioxidant-rich foods, limiting your sun and UV exposure is an easy way to prevent the oxidation of your skin cells.

Doing all these things, according to Brennan, can help reduce skin damage and improve the appearance of your skin. It's in our best interest to be aware of what we eat and its impact in our body. Including a healthy balance of fruits and vegetables in your diet, particularly those high in antioxidants like leafy greens and berries, will naturally protect your body from harmful external exposure.

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### For more information:

[healthlinkbc.ca/healthy-eating/antioxidants](http://healthlinkbc.ca/healthy-eating/antioxidants)

[ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3583891/](https://ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3583891/)

[healthline.com/nutrition/foods-high-in-antioxidants](http://healthline.com/nutrition/foods-high-in-antioxidants)

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# NAVIGATING FOOD CHOICES ON CAMPUS

## CREATING A MINDFUL APPROACH TO FAST-FOOD SELECTIONS

By Alessia Martini  
Sophomore, Public Health  
David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

**A**s college students, there can be pressure to eat a healthy diet, but what does healthy really mean? While on-campus options can all be good in moderation, promoting mindfulness at fast-food restaurants can also be beneficial. With our fast-paced lives, choosing healthy and quick fast-food options can be a challenge.

The recent renovations to the Schine Student Center have expanded the dining options on campus. Most of these restaurants offer healthy options to grab before class, but sometimes it isn't clear which options are best. Student health activist Nicki Cox '22 suggests planning ahead. "Knowing what you want [to order] before going into a fast-food place" can help give you a better understanding of what you are putting into your body, especially at restaurants where the nutrition breakdown is unclear, she says.

Nutrition Professor Jane Uzcategui cautions the heavy use of sodium in fast food. She agrees that looking over the menu beforehand can promote mindful choices.

The dining services at Syracuse University can be helpful in planning meals.

SU Dining Services offers each day's entire menu online with a breakdown of what is in each meal. Along with this, in the dining halls they have nutrient analysis codes, which you can scan with your phone to get the nutrition information of each menu item. Tools like this are useful in understanding what makes up your food so you can make mindful choices. The cafes on campus offer grab-and-go bites, which can also be a healthy option.

"Look for protein combined with fruits and veggies such as hummus, or string cheese and crackers, and also Greek yogurt is great. Read labels and try and get 7 to 15 grams of protein so it's filling," Uzcategui says.

Cox runs a health social media page that encourages college students to focus on mindful eating and physical activity. She wants to encourage students to start "thinking about how food makes you feel." As a student whose diet is plant-based, she chooses food that makes her body feels best. Uzcategui seconds this, adding, "Don't be too self-critical; planning and mindfulness are two helpful tools." The transition between home and college can be tough for many students, but there are many options to maintain healthy eating habits on campus.

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### For more information:

[foodservices.syr.edu/](http://foodservices.syr.edu/)

[www.instagram.com/nickicoxfit/](https://www.instagram.com/nickicoxfit/)

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# EXPLORING MEDICAID AND ITS IMPORTANCE TO COLLEGE STUDENTS

By Cate Willing  
Junior, Public Health  
David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

**M**ental health and health care coverage in the United States is complicated and often nonsensical. As college students, many of us may not recognize the disparities in health care coverage. Currently, about 30% of young adults are uninsured, higher than any other group. Because of COVID-19 and accompanying job loss, many young Americans are now seeking Medicaid coverage. The passage of the Affordable Care Act in 2013 was a step in addressing health care disparities in the United States, but we still have a ways to go.

With the inception of the 2008 Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act, an extension of the Mental Health Parity Act of 1996, mental health and substance use disorder treatments were legally required to meet the same level of care as medical/surgical. Despite these parity laws, mental health care is often harder to access than traditional physical health care, especially when looking at Medicaid coverage.

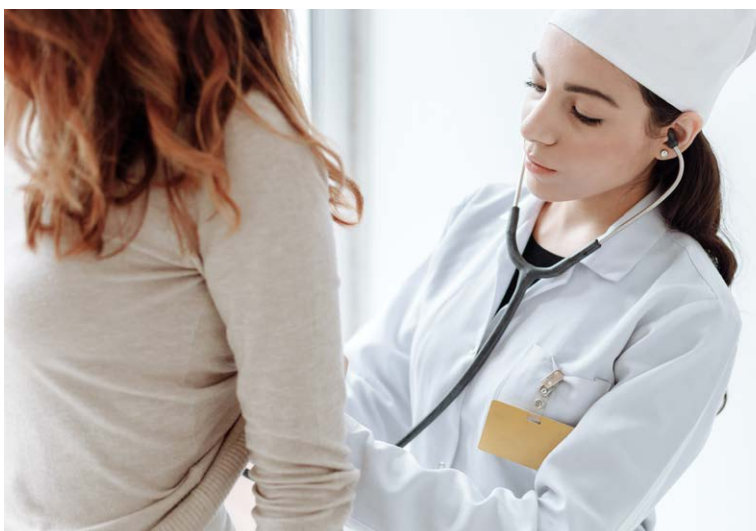
There is great variation across states regarding the availability of mental health care and how it is administered and financed. Most mental health care in the Medicaid program operates on a waiver basis. States apply for waivers from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services; waivers can both expand and limit what Medicaid covers federally. Waivers demonstrate an emergent need for mental health care because they work to cover gaps in the system.

Many federal Medicaid regulations are not sufficient in treating individuals with mental illness or substance use disorders, as they are primarily focused on physical health treatments and subsequent surgeries.

While mental health care's coverage by Medicaid is constructed

differently by state, mental health issues and diagnoses are not limited to specific geographic areas. We have seen a dramatic increase this year in mental health issues because of COVID-19. Yet, access to care, especially in the Medicaid program, has not expanded to meet these emerging needs.

Medicaid originated as an extension of federally funded programs to assist the poor. Since its inception, Medicaid has expanded to cover a larger number of low-income Americans. Medicaid puts much emphasis on coverage for children and their mothers.



Under the Affordable Care Act, states were required to expand Medicaid to nearly all low-income residents who didn't make enough money to buy insurance. A Supreme Court decision in 2012, however, left it up to individual states to decide whether they wanted to offer expanded Medicaid. Many states, including some of the least healthy Southern states and others in the West, opted against it. That created life-threatening inequities across state lines.

COVID-19 has portrayed the true value of health care, especially preventive health care. As the pandemic lengthens, new or worsening mental health conditions seem to arise, demonstrating an emerging need for expansion in all 50 states.

For college-age students, health care and health issues in the future seem far off, but they are closer and more important than we may think. It is important to keep up with developments in Medicaid expansion and talk with your family about health care coverage options.

## For more information:

[www.cms.gov/CCIIO/Programs-and-Initiatives/Other-Insurance-Protections/mhpaea\\_factsheet#:~:text=The%20Paul%20Wellstone%20and%20Pete,favorable%20benefit%20limitations%20on%20those](http://www.cms.gov/CCIIO/Programs-and-Initiatives/Other-Insurance-Protections/mhpaea_factsheet#:~:text=The%20Paul%20Wellstone%20and%20Pete,favorable%20benefit%20limitations%20on%20those)

[www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/section-1115-medicare-demonstration-waivers-the-current-landscape-of-approved-and-pending-waivers/](http://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/section-1115-medicare-demonstration-waivers-the-current-landscape-of-approved-and-pending-waivers/)

# THE VALUE OF THE ORANGE FRUIT

## THE BENEFITS OF INCLUDING ORANGES IN YOUR DIET

By Kinley Gaudette  
Sophomore, Public Health  
David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

**H**ere at Syracuse University, we bleed Orange. Orange is everywhere we look: in our stadium benches, on our clothing and scattered elsewhere around campus. It is difficult to find an event where Otto isn't running around, or even scooting, but the orange is more than just a mascot. Despite the heavy presence of the orange in our community, we may not realize the value of the actual orange fruit. We know about the Syracuse Orange, and we know it signifies strength, spirit and community. But what does the orange mean in a day-to-day context?

Oranges are a great source of vitamin C, which reduces risk of colon cancer. Vitamin C also supports the formation of collagen, which strengthens the skin and bones. A single orange contains more than 100% of the daily intake of vitamin C. Perhaps a good game day snack might be an orange, to cheer on the Orange!

Oranges are rich in carotenoid and vitamin A, which promote eye health and good vision. Integrating oranges into your diet can really pay off when your game day tickets are way up in the nosebleeds. An important tip to remember is that oranges produce more juice when they are warmer, and rolling them under your hands can also make them juicier.

So, if you'd rather get your orange intake by making juice or a smoothie, keep that in mind.

Heading into the fall, it will be especially crucial to take care of our immune systems. Oranges are a great way to do that, since they contain so much vitamin C. Vitamin C can be damaged when exposed to air, so eat your orange quickly after peeling it. This shouldn't be hard, since they are generally considered to be pretty tasty. Vitamin C boosts the immune system, which can really help during cold and flu season.

In addition to being full of vitamins, oranges are jam-packed with antioxidants. Antioxidants are great for the skin and help you achieve a healthy, natural glow. Antioxidants help the skin by reducing the effects of aging. Signs of aging are often a result of free-radical damage, which antioxidants help stop. If you want to stay looking young, eat more oranges in addition to keeping up your skin care routine. Sunscreen and a diet with oranges can work magic.

Next time you see Otto on his scooter, it can serve as a reminder to eat more oranges. Your skin will be glowing, you'll be more prepared to fight off a cold, and your eyes will be healthier. Including oranges in your diet is a sure-fire way to make sure you look and feel your game day best. Go Orange.

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### For more information:

[timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/health-fitness/diet/why-you-should-eat-oranges/articleshow/4662391.cms](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/health-fitness/diet/why-you-should-eat-oranges/articleshow/4662391.cms)

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# TAKE A HIKE

## THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL BENEFITS OF HIKING

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

If someone tells you to take a hike, you might think it's an insult. But maybe you are getting some good advice. Research has shown that hiking is good for your health—and not just your body. Hiking is beneficial to your mental health as well.

### PHYSICAL BENEFITS:

One of the more obvious benefits of hiking is that it burns calories, which is important if you are trying to lose or maintain your weight. Just an hour of hiking can burn well over 500 calories.

Hiking is a great cardio workout. And if you include hills in your route, the incline will force your heart to work even harder. According to Gregory Miller, former president of the American Hiking Society, a 5 percent to 10 percent incline equals a 30 percent to 40 percent increase in calories burned.

The uneven terrain of a trail helps to engage the core muscles in your torso and improves your balance and stability. According to Dr. Aaron Baggish, director of the Cardiovascular Performance Program at Massachusetts General Hospital, "You usually don't get that type of lateral motion from walking on a treadmill or riding a bike."

Besides your core, hiking can boost your bone density and build strength in your glutes, quadriceps, hamstrings and muscles in your

hips and lower legs. In other words, hiking is a total body workout.

Add to this, being outside in the sunshine helps your body produce vitamin D, which is important for the growth and development of bones and teeth and improves resistance to certain diseases.

### MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS:

It's not all about the physical, though. Hiking has positive effects on mental health as well.

According to a study from Stanford University, time spent in natural environments calms activity in the parts of the brain that are linked with anxiety and depression. According to Greg Bratman, one of the authors of the study, "There is mounting evidence that nature experiences increase positive mood and decrease negative mood."

Hiking experts encourage hikers to use the buddy system to increase safety. Hiking with someone else or a group increases your social interactions and sense of community. A partner can encourage, motivate and push you out of your comfort zone. There is also greater sense of accountability if you hike with someone else. It is not as easy to decide to be a couch potato for the day if someone is counting on you. And of course, there is the added benefit of having someone to help if you get hurt.

The next time someone tells you to take a hike, say thanks and hit the trail.

For more information, visit [americanhiking.org](http://americanhiking.org).





# WHAT ARE YOU DRINKING THESE DAYS?

## LEARN MORE ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF DRINKING WATER TO YOUR DAILY LIFE

By Soleil Sferlazza  
Senior, Public Health  
David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

It's estimated by UF Health Podcasts that about 75 percent of people living in the United States are in a chronic state of dehydration. Experts say nothing is better for improving our health than drinking water. University of Arizona Medical Services recommends that men aim for 15 cups of water a day and women 11 cups. Water is the answer to fewer headaches, better workouts, easier weight loss and clearer skin. Here are details on the benefits of maintaining the proper intake of water each day.

### WATER MAKES YOUR SKIN GLOW

Water works wonders on your skin. Without enough water, waste will build up in your skin and cause breakouts and dull, parched skin. Drinking at least eight glasses a day will help rid the body and skin of toxins. Many people often report that by increasing their water intake, their skin has a more radiant glow. Your skin is composed of 64 percent water, so drinking a healthy amount of water each day will help your skin maintain a fresh glow.

### WATER LOWERS YOUR APPETITE

Kathleen Zelman, M.P.H., R.D., L.D., states in a WebMD article that drinking water before a meal may help overconsumption of food. People often mistake thirst for hunger, and dehydration can cause hunger. Your body can't tell the difference between hunger and thirst, making water a potential appetite suppressant. If you drink an eight-ounce glass of water when you first start feeling hungry, you will be able to tell if you are really hungry or just dehydrated.

### WATER INCREASES YOUR METABOLISM

The findings of a study reported in *The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism* suggest that drinking water may help increase the body's metabolic rate. Regardless of these research conclusions, proper cellular hydration is necessary for efficient cellular metabolism. Drinking more water increases blood volume in the body. This gets more oxygen and nutrients to cells and carries out more waste. These processes help increase the efficiency with which the body's cells work. Being fully hydrated can increase your metabolism by up to 30 percent.

### HYDRATION LOWERS STRESS HORMONES

Being dehydrated by 1 percent to 2 percent can raise your stress hormone, cortisol, which is famous for adding belly fat and breaking down muscle. Renee Melton, director of the weight loss program Sensei, reported that you're likely to get more dehydrated when you're under stress. This is because your heart rate is up and you're breathing more heavily, which causes you to lose fluid.

### WATER IS AN ENERGY BOOSTER

The Healthline website explains that water accounts for approximately 60 percent of our body weight. Every one of our organs requires water to function properly. Dehydration, even at low levels, can cause various bodily function to slow down, leaving you feeling sluggish, tired and irritable. Drinking water helps with mental clarity and energy.

### PLAN AHEAD

Reusable water bottles are an inexpensive way to easily carry water throughout the day. Make goals for yourself on how many water bottles you will drink each day.

So "water" you waiting for? Start drinking more water today.



# I'M SORRY FOR YOUR LOSS: A GUIDE FOR FRIENDS

By Caitlin Mogan '20

David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

**G**rief differs for every individual. Despite the abundance of literature that outlines the stages and emotions that we are supposed to go through, there is no correct way to grieve. As college students, we may face two circumstances that are particularly challenging: a loved one from home dying or losing an acquaintance from a campus community. Helping friends through either of those times may seem like a monumental task, so what can we do?

"I have to go home for a funeral."

We've probably all heard a friend or a classmate hesitantly explain an absence with that line. According to a study done by Dr. David Balk at Brooklyn College of the City University of New York, at any given time 22 percent to 30 percent of all college students are in the first 12 months of grieving a family member. What does this mean? At any point, almost one-third of our peers are grieving.

A death in the family while you're away at school brings up a lot of stress, sadness and sudden planning. Recognizing this is a good first step to supporting a grieving friend. The best way to show support is to reach out. Though it can be awkward, letting your friend know that you are thinking about their feelings can go a long way. Offering something specific, like making dinner one night, can be immensely helpful for someone going through a faraway loss and can open doors for other ways to help.

The community of counselors at [Healgrief.org](http://Healgrief.org) recommend avoiding statements such as "I know how you feel" because they may come off as a comparison between a loss of yours and a loss of theirs. It is important, though, to acknowledge their struggle by listening. This may make them feel comfortable enough to open up about the emotions they are feeling, a good first step toward healing.

Losing someone in the campus community is another situation.

Simply by being a student at the same university, we are connected to the loss. For this reason, helping friends grieve becomes more complex because you may be grieving as well. Being open and honest is the best practice in this case. Both of you may need to express your feelings and struggles with the circumstances, so listening is vital. It's also important to remember that everyone grieves differently and that there is no correct way to go through that process. Being genuine when communicating should be a priority, and it's OK to say, "I don't know what to say."

It can also be helpful to break the cycle of grief and sadness with activity. Dr. Joseph Mercola at the Peak Fitness website recommends going out for a walk or jog, as the endorphins released

through physical activity can counteract some of the sadness of the grieving process.

Finally, recognizing the signs of out-of-control grief and knowing when to seek additional help are vital. If a friend can't seem to cope for a prolonged period of time or expresses thoughts of hurting themselves or someone else, it may be time to bring a professional to the scene.

Though loss of life is unpredictable, we are all here to help one another through it. Most college campuses provide grief counseling when there is a loss within the campus community. If you, or a friend, need assistance with the grieving process, contact the Barnes Center at the Arch at 315.443.8000.

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**For additional information about the grieving process:**

[healgrief.org](http://healgrief.org)

[www.fairmontstate.edu/studentservices/sites/default/files/Grieving.pdf](http://www.fairmontstate.edu/studentservices/sites/default/files/Grieving.pdf)

[fitness.mercola.com/sites/fitness/archive/2014/06/27/exercise-grief.aspx](http://fitness.mercola.com/sites/fitness/archive/2014/06/27/exercise-grief.aspx)

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# REDEFINING COMMUNITY SERVICE: A PUBLIC HEALTH PERSPECTIVE

By Alessia Martini  
Sophomore, Public Health  
David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics

Getting involved in the community through volunteer work is an integral part of being a college student. With the COVID-19 pandemic, physically volunteering has been put on hold; yet, so many organizations and people continue to utilize community services. Traditional community service opportunities, like working in a soup kitchen or at a school, are less common because of social distancing regulations, but the community still need volunteers.

Professor Lisa Olson-Gugerty, who teaches community health promotion in the public health department, says volunteering is a great way to get involved in your community, especially as a Syracuse University student.

“Finding ways to check in with people, people who are not digitally connected” is so important now, says Olson-Gugerty.

We all crave human connection, and if we can do that in a safe way it will benefit the community around us. So many of us have lost the ability to connect face-to-face; if we are able to find creative ways to replicate that basic human need (in a COVID-safe way) that may be all communities need from us.

As a student you may be thinking, what skills are people looking for right now to help in communities?

According to Olson-Gugerty, it doesn’t take much. “Willingness to be engaged, willingness to spend time, be consistent, be reliable” are all simple services we can provide to each other. “Almost any place you volunteer at, especially right now, is just looking for us to be there for them in whatever capacity they may need.”

## HOW CAN YOU FIND PLACES TO VOLUNTEER AT?

Olson-Gugerty teaches a class that focuses on how we can be engaged in health promotion through community service. One way to find places to volunteer to just reach out. Some places may not be looking for volunteers, but if you call you will get a better sense of their comfort level and what you may be able to do to support them.

Additionally, many places are adjusting their ideas around how community service should operate and will continue to do so as life changes post-pandemic. If you want a more hands-on experience now, the Barnes Center at the Arch, Red Cross, YMCA and the COVID testing center at the Dome all allow face-to-face volunteering.

Places like St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital offer virtual letter writing opportunities that are safe and easy to do. This is a great way to get involved in while also staying safe.

Olson-Gugerty says the pandemic may impact community service in a variety of ways. “We are going to continue to look at digital format options,” and if volunteering does occur in person, some places may look for proof of a vaccination or negative COVID test, she says.

Despite the virtual environment, it is still possible to volunteer now if you are willing to put in the effort. “Just keep trying,” Olson-Gugerty says. “We are all creative and computer-savvy” and if we can use the skills we have, we will be able to benefit our communities.

### For more information:

[www.stjude.org/get-involved/other-ways/online-card-message-patients.html](http://www.stjude.org/get-involved/other-ways/online-card-message-patients.html)

[www.volunteercny.org/](http://www.volunteercny.org/)





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