**SCHEDULE “ME TIME”:** Create a plan to spend some time for yourself. Start by using your calendar (on your phone, computer, Outlook, or hardcopy) to block off at least 30 minutes each day and set a reminder for each day. Add activities to the calendar from the Refresh from Stress (RFS) Activity Options or create your own self-care activities. If you need inspiration or guidance, this [website](#) provides a short 5-step guide to self-care for busy people.

**SCHEDULE PREVENTIVE HEALTH SCREENINGS/EXAMS:** Have you scheduled your preventive exam this year? Put yourself first and schedule your annual screening today. We are able to show up fully mentally, physically, and socially when we are at our best health. Setting aside time at least once a year to visit your primary care provider can make a world of difference for staying healthy. By doing so, is one of the best ways to identify and treat health issues before they become serious. Scheduling your annual exams might feel like an inconvenience, but this simple step can have a major impact on your health and overall well-being. If you are on the Emory medical plan, there is no out-of-pocket cost for an annual preventive exam when selecting an in-network provider. You can also earn incentives! Learn more about why you should get an annual preventive exam and the incentives available to you [HERE](#).

**PLAN A VACATION:** Ready for a vacation? Take some time to plan a trip for you and/or your family. It could be a short weekend trip, a camping trip, a week-long or 10-day vacation, or even a staycation. Need ideas for a destination? Check out this article for U.S. sites, or go here for international low-budget vacation destinations. If you prefer not to travel out of state yet due to pandemic-related concerns, explore local Georgia areas. Taking staycation or vacation has multiple [benefits](#) for your health!

**STEP AWAY FOR LUNCH:** Instead of eating in front of your computer or “multi-tasking”, give yourself time to enjoy your lunch break somewhere else. This can be at a nearby park, a restaurant, in another area of your home or office, or just a few steps away outdoors. Eating in a distraction-free environment, i.e. no electronics or work, can help you in various ways. Read this article to find out more and your body will thank you for it!

**SLEEP AT LEAST 7 HOURS:** Set a sleep goal and track your progress using the Healthy Emory Connect [sleep guide](#). Check out [tips](#) to help you achieve your goal.

**STOP & STRETCH:** Take stretch breaks throughout the workday to help you recharge and re-focus. A 5-minute break here and there goes a long way. Follow along with [these stretches](#) and read more on the benefits of stretching [here](#).

**EAT A HEALTHY MEAL/SNACK:** Hungry? Good nutrition is a recipe for lower stress and a healthy mood. Learn about all of the [tools and resources](#) in Healthy Emory Connect to help you improve your eating (ensure you are first logged in to HEC to access link). Earn extra points for activities including adding a Zipongo recipe to your grocery list, tracking your daily nutrition, or completing your nutrition guide.
**DECLUTTER:** Recycle, toss or donate at least 3 belongings from your office or home. De-cluttering helps you simplify your life, feel more relaxed and save valuable time. It is usually most effective to “start small,” a few minutes or a few things at a time. If you recycle or donate items to a charity that is important to you or a loved one, the satisfaction of “giving back” to the environment or community will likely inspire you to declutter more. If you need help with where to start, phone a buddy who has been successful with de-cluttering or learn more [here](#). Take advantage of any downtime to “up” your organizing!

**INCREASE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY:** Participate in at least 10 more minutes of physical activity today than originally planned. Some suggestions: use stairs instead of an elevator, park your car further away to increase steps, take short walking breaks throughout the workday, ride a bike, take a virtual yoga class, or turn up the music and dance! Want to get more activity in your day on a regular basis? Use Healthy Emory Connect to set a step goal or challenge your friends to a [Weekday Step-Off or Weekend Rumble](#) (under challenges).

**SAY YES TO LESS:** “Taking good care of YOU means the people in your life will receive the best of you, rather than what’s left of you.” (Carl Bryan). Although our work, ambitions and relationships are often major sources of purpose, fun and connection, we can sometimes feel drained by them. We often automatically agree to requests out of guilt, habit or to avoid conflict, and ultimately take on too much, becoming tired or resentful. The act of setting boundaries is not about being selfish, it’s about communicating our needs and sustaining our health and well-being. Give yourself permission to pause and breathe before reacting to a request or saying yes. Take time to think about it and learn more about the time commitment. If you need to decline, you can always invite others to keep you in mind for future opportunities. When you “Say Yes to LESS,” you may just find MORE for yourself and others!

**PAUSE FOR PLAY TIME:** Need to decompress? Take time to stop and play today! Studies show that play reduces stress hormones, lowers risk of developing age-related diseases, increases creativity and productivity levels at work, and facilitates happiness. Give yourself permission to bring out your “kid at heart.” Whether coloring, drawing, board games at home, virtual games with friends, frisbee, jigsaw puzzles, karaoke or dancing, have fun with it! And don’t forget to build play time into work. Lead a wellness activity during a staff meeting, such as a fun icebreaker, trivia or a scavenger hunt. Need more ideas? Check out [15 Outstanding Virtual Team Building Activities & Online Games to Enrich Remote Work](#).

**TAKE A REFRESH WALK:** Walk off your tension by taking a 15-minute Refresh Walk today! It’s about meditation in motion! A “Refresh Walk” will relax you, lower your stress level and give you an endorphin boost to carry you through the rest of the day. What is mindful walking? Mindful walking focuses on the sensations of walking. Without judgement, notice your surroundings, sights, smells and sounds. Feel the air on your skin and the ground on your feet. The speed of the walk doesn’t matter as much as focusing on the sensations. Find a walking buddy or go alone, and of course, follow mask and distancing guidelines. Print or save a photo of these [Self-Guided Walk Instructions](#).
SHARE YOUR SMILE: Say cheese! Refresh yourself and others by sharing your smile with as many people as possible today. This may seem more difficult if you are working from home, but the good news is you can remove your mask for virtual meetings (or behind a closed door onsite), in most cases. No virtual meetings? Smile during phone calls, while looking in the mirror or any time you greet family, neighbors, colleagues, patients or store clerks. Smiling helps relieve stress, boost our immune system and improve relationships, which is especially important during the continued COVID-19 pandemic. Even if you cannot work remotely, “it’s still worth it to smile while wearing a mask,” says body language expert Janine Driver. “We’re lucky a lot of information shows up in the eyes and the eyebrows.” Learn more about the benefits of smiling and smile therapy!

TAKE A LAUGHTER BREAK: LOL with a coworker, family member or friend today. Exchange funny stories, share a humorous video or practice laughter yoga to lighten your day. Creating opportunities for laughter can be an easy and useful strategy for managing stress. Practiced over time, humor and laughter can enhance emotional resilience, improve pain tolerance, boost your immune system, help reduce depression and improve overall well-being. Curious how laughter yoga works? Check out this video!

GIVE A SHOUT OUT: Have you complimented someone or given a “thumbs up” today? Notice others’ accomplishments and make a special effort to acknowledge them in front of others. Encourage team members to start or end a meeting or “huddle” by recognizing someone in person, virtually via Zoom or Microsoft Teams, or via email. You can also submit your compliment through Healthy Emory Connect’s “Shout Out” tool (log in and use drop down under “Friends”). You will make someone’s day and enhance connections with others!

EMBRACE DIVERSITY & INCLUSION: Recognize and appreciate the unique backgrounds, cultural traditions, and perspectives of those around you. Initiate a conversation to learn more, or participate in an activity that broadens your understanding of other cultures:

- Participate in various Healthy Habits found in the Healthy Emory Connect “Drive” pillar, “Embrace Diversity” (ensure you are first logged in to HEC to access link).
- Visit a museum online or in person (safely with physical distancing) – consider exploring Emory’s own Michael C. Carlos Museum.
- Prepare and appreciate a new recipe with an ethnic flavor.
- Learn about Emory’s diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts, including thoughtfully curated tools for self-guided learning.
- Take advantage of Emory’s Social Justice Education Resources, including learning and facilitator guides, and a glossary of key diversity, equity, and inclusion vocabulary.
- Examine your own implicit associations regarding race, gender, sexual orientation, etc., by taking this test.

Theme 2: Social Connections
**Theme 2: Social Connections**

**PRACTICE SOCIAL JUSTICE:** Are you looking to start or continue a personal journey toward social and community well-being? Start by engaging in some simple and meaningful practices that will help you learn more about yourself and the people in the world around you.

- Educate yourself about social justice:
  - [https://socialjustice.emory.edu/](https://socialjustice.emory.edu/)
- Watch or listen to podcasts to learn more about diversity, allyship, and other topics.
- Listen more to understand and build empathy. Encourage healthy conversations.
- Consider your interests and decide what causes are important to you. Identify an action plan to volunteer your time for promoting social justice.
- Learn how you can help: reach out to community organizations and/or legislators via email and phone to ask questions. Join or start a diversity committee.
- Donate financially to a cause that aligns with your interests and values.
- Speak up when you witness injustices, hear microaggressions or experience inequities.

**SUPPORT OTHERS:** Supporting others brings mutual benefits because we usually feel good after we have helped someone. Take time today to ask a friend, family member or colleague what they need during this challenging pandemic and time of social unrest. Whether pitching in to complete a work project, running errands for someone who is unable to leave home, or just listening, make time to provide a helping hand and heart.

**VISIT WITH A FRIEND (SAFELY):** Reconnect with a friend you haven’t talked to in a while by calling or visiting virtually or in person (with masks and physical distancing). Meaningful social connection is a basic emotional need and maintaining healthy connections is important for a sense of stability and minimizing loneliness. If you wish, write about your experiences with reconnecting in a journal or verbally share with a colleague to encourage this activity.

**ENJOY TIME WITH FAMILY OR A PET:** Plan an activity that is realistic for the time you have available. Make time for play, being present in the moment and spontaneity. Given the COVID-19 pandemic, you may need to adjust for safety precautions, but creating fun moments and memories will help you focus on what’s most important in life. If you wish, write or verbally share how the experience impacted your level of stress.
**RECONNECT WITH A COLLEAGUE:** Connection in the workplace is crucial! Given the average American spends almost 1/3 of their life at work, it’s important to understanding your teammates’ perspectives and backgrounds to facilitate collaboration and make for a more pleasant workplace. Try one of these activities to connect with members of your team, whether you are working in-person or remotely:

- **Host a Virtual Discussion** – Grab your lunch and get to know your colleagues better. There are great resources to facilitate conversation with those with different backgrounds than you, like inclusivv.co.
- **Grab Lunch or Coffee** – Invite a colleague for a coffee, tea lunch break! Spend time catching up, and if you feel comfortable, talk about something other than work.
- **Invite a Colleague for a Walking Break** – This is a great way to connect and get in some exercise! Take a stroll around campus, your building, or if you are virtual, make it a call or FaceTime walk using your smartphone. Consider joining Healthy Emory’s [Walking on Wednesdays](#) and check out walking locations around Emory.

**EMBRACE EMORY COMMUNITY:** During Homecoming Weekend (October 21-23, 2021), all members of the Emory community are invited to head to main campus and celebrate with outdoor festivities, campus tours, and a multi-act concert on Saturday, October 23. Sign up at [together.emory.edu/homecoming](together.emory.edu/homecoming) and bring family or colleagues. Consider taking part in one or more of these other Emory opportunities to get closer to your community:

- **Single Mingle** – Join the Faculty Staff Assistance Program’s monthly Single Mingle via Zoom to meet other single colleagues or reconnect with previous participants.
- **Emory Athletics Events** – Cheer on the Gold and Blue at Emory Women’s Soccer game on Friday, October 22, at 4:00 PM at the Woodruff PE Center. Free and open to all!
- **Emory Employee Council (University Employees)** – Engage in the Employee Council’s monthly meeting on Monday, October 18 from Noon – 1:30 PM.
- **Emory Alumni Association** - Emory employees are welcome to attend Emory Alumni Association activities. Join virtual or in-person opportunities, including webinars with Emory experts, networking nights, social gatherings, and more.
- **Emory Cares Day of Service** – Emory employees are invited to host or serve as a volunteer with an Emory Cares project on November 13, 2021!

**PAY IT FORWARD:** Surprise someone or give forward and this will feed your soul, too.

- **Make a Gift to a Charity** in someone’s honor or memory.
- **Donate Books** – Give some books to your local public library, Goodwill, or drop them off at a [Little Free Library](#) in your neighborhood.
- **Be Kind** – Being courteous is a simple way to brightest someone’s day. Consider being especially kind to frontline workers and customer service professionals.
- **Give Kudos** – See someone doing a great job? Give them a compliment for a job well done! A simple compliment can make a huge difference in someone’s day.
- **Donate Funds** to the EU or EHC Hardship Fund or the [Momentum Keep Fighting COVID](#) in support of Emory Healthcare workers and researchers fighting the pandemic.