**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.
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 to 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 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 brighten 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.
PRACTICE MINDFUL BREATHING: Take 5 minutes to try the “Mindfulness of Breath” session (Healthy Emory Connect -200 points) OR follow the steps below. Mindful breathing simply means focusing on your breath with curiosity, openness and acceptance. When feelings, sensations, or thoughts come up, it’s okay; there is no need to judge or force those away. Instead, just notice them, as if they were waves in the ocean. Then, return to focus on your breathing.

1. Find a relaxed, comfortable position in a chair, on the floor or on a cushion.
2. Relax your body and notice any areas of tightness or tension. Relax more.
3. Feel your breath. Breathe in slowly through your nose and exhale through your mouth.
4. Continue for a few minutes - slow breaths in, hold a few seconds and slow exhalations.
5. If you notice your mind wandering, just redirect your attention back to your breathing.
6. Return to normal breathing and offer yourself appreciation for breathing mindfully!

NOTICE YOUR MOOD & SENSES: Mood is an overall feeling and attitude that can vary from hour to hour, day to day and week to week. Find a word or words that capture your mood right now. Senses are your “window to the world”; your body and mind make meaning of what you see, hear, touch, smell or taste. Thankfully, we are wired this way for survival! Try this exercise:

1. **Hear:** Notice the sounds around you. Try not to judge, just notice.
2. **See:** Observe your surroundings and notice the colors, shapes and sizes. You may see things you haven’t ever noticed before!
3. **Smell:** Shift your attention to the scents around you.
4. **Taste:** You may notice the aftertaste of a drink, meal, mint or toothpaste, or just notice the taste of your saliva.
5. **Touch:** Bring your attention to the sensations of your skin contact with air, your chair, your feet on the floor, clothing, or other objects. Notice the temperature or textures. Hug yourself and feel the love!

When finished, notice your mood and how you feel compared to before this exercise...what has changed? Learn more about the benefits of using the 5 Senses and/or use the “Track Your Mood” Healthy Habit in Healthy Emory Connect to notice any patterns.

CONNECT WITH NATURE: Make contact with the earth. Go outside, take off your shoes and sink your feet into the grass, dirt or pavement to feel grounded. Place your palm on a tree trunk. Play in the sand, leaves, garden, field or water. Wake up with nature by opening a window to breathe in the cool or warm breeze and take in the sights and sounds. No window or scenic view? Bring nature indoors: buy houseplants, bring in fresh flowers, put a crystal or jar of seashells on your desk or table, or start a rock/pebble or pinecone collection. Listen to and watch nature virtually.

LISTEN CAREFULLY: In today’s high-tech, high-speed, high-stress world, communication is more important than ever, yet we seem to devote less and less time to really listening to each other. Mindful listening helps increase understanding and empathy, build relationships, resolve conflicts/problems and improve accuracy. Practice these tips to help develop effective listening skills:

- Maintain eye contact and show that you are interested, attentive, calm and focused.
- Keep an open mind, listen to the words and try to picture what the speaker is saying.
- Don’t interrupt and don't impose your "solutions."
- Ask questions to seek clarification. Learn more about listening skills [here](#).
**TAKE A YOGA MEDITATION BREAK:** Given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, it’s especially important to pause and relax your mind and body. Yoga is a great way to introduce this practice! Explore the links below to learn how yoga can help you refresh and to practice:

- Learn the basics of yoga practice in this starter course: [Whil Yoga Basics](#) (log into HEC first)
- Start a yoga journal: [Yoga Journal Practice](#)
- Join a free, live stream yoga class: [Yoga – Home (emorycovid19.org)](#)
- Learn about safely practicing yoga in your: [Bring Yoga and Meditation Home](#)

**ASSESS YOUR DISTRESS:** The impact of the ongoing pandemic has taken a toll on most of us. If you are struggling with burnout, depression, anxiety, grief, anger, frustration, sleep problems, substance use, or relationship conflict, you are not alone. As part of Refresh From Stress, we encourage you to pause and assess your distress and coping.

- Take a free, anonymous self-assessment screening
- Reach out for free, confidential assistance:
  - Emory University staff and faculty: Contact FSAP for short-term counseling, coaching, a Well-being Check-in Visit, or referral services. Call FSAP @ 404-727-WELL (9355) or email @ efsap@emory.edu
  - Emory Healthcare employees: Contact BHS for short-term counseling, coaching, or referral services @ 800-327-2251 or online @ Portal.BHSonline.com

**PRACTICE COMPASSION:** Compassion is the emotion evoked when we witness someone outside of ourselves suffering. It is being with and supporting someone who is having a challenging time. Here are a few specific ways to practice compassion:

- Start with yourself: The best way to learn how to be compassionate toward others is to be compassionate with yourself. Start small by praising yourself for successes and forgiving yourself for mistakes.
- Practice Being Present: Try being fully present with everyone you encounter today. Avoid looking at your phone, computer or TV, or multitasking.
- Listen with Compassion: Avoid interrupting, judging, or trying to fix. When you listen with compassion in mind, you create a non-judgmental space to truly hear a person, and this is the first step toward fostering an environment of compassion and connection.
- Participate in regular [online Compassion Practice (Cognitively-Based Compassion Training - Emory University)](#)

**UNPLUG FROM NEWS & SOCIAL MEDIA:** Disconnect for a period of time that challenges you. This includes TV, radio, smartphone apps, gaming, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and other news feeds. Take a break from Zoom and other videoconferencing if possible. During the current pandemic, it’s especially important to take breaks from hearing and seeing difficult news.

*If you are typically connected:*
- All day –Try at least 1 hour
- Most of the day – Try 2 to 5 hours
- Part of the day – Try 6 to 8 hours
- Only an hour or less – Try 24 hours

*During your downtime try one of the following:*
- Make a new recipe or read a short book
- Write a letter, catch up on chores or take a nap
- Try a new walking trail, hike or bike path
- Spend more time with family/friends/pet
**EAT SLOWLY & MINDFULLY:** Eat one meal or snack today in a slow and mindful way so that you truly enjoy and appreciate each bite. For a snack, try this: Find a comfortable seated position, take a few deep breaths and relax your muscles. Place a snack, such as a raisin, nut, mint or chocolate, in your hand. Notice the impulse you might have to eat it right away. Take a minute and look at your snack, examining it with curiosity as if you’ve never seen it before. Notice how it feels in your hand – the texture, shape and weight. Slowly smell the aroma with your eyes closed. Gently place the snack in your mouth, swirl it around and notice the texture and flavor. Slowly eat, chewing longer while you appreciate where it came from!

**FIND SILVER LININGS:** Even with all the challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic and social/racial/political unrest, there are still positive outcomes if we pay attention. Try this exercise:
1. List 3 things that currently make your life enjoyable, enriching, or worthwhile.
2. Now, identify 3 previous or current bright sides of the pandemic, social unrest or other challenges. For example, increased time with family, cooking or a new appreciation.
3. Finally, embrace your silver linings amid the clouds!

**LIVE IN THE MOMENT:** Being present is important but not always easy. We may not realize it, but the tendency to get sucked into the past and the future can leave us perpetually worn out and feeling out of touch with ourselves and others. Here are a few ways to practice living in the moment:
1. Focus on the “now”: Shut off your TV, computer or phone, slow down, and savor the present.
2. Set aside a regular block of time each day (e.g., 5 minutes first thing in the morning or before you go to bed) to turn your attention to your thoughts, breathing, and bodily sensations.
3. Try not to worry: It’s much harder than it sounds but remember that worrying today won’t change future outcomes. Every moment spent worrying about the future is a moment of the present wasted. Instead, focus on ways you can solve an existing problem or otherwise improve the current moment. Life moves quickly — don’t miss it!

**MAKE MINDFULNESS A ROUTINE:** Practicing mindfulness means bringing awareness to the present state of our body, thoughts, emotions and surroundings. Try these strategies to form a habit:
1. Establish a regular time to practice, even if it’s only 5 minutes.
2. Practice bringing your attention to daily activities you often perform mindlessly, such as walking, brushing your teeth, taking a shower, cooking or drinking your coffee or tea.
3. Take time each day to “check in” with the sensations of your body. Focus on relaxing tense muscles, such as your neck, shoulders, jaws, and stomach.
4. Use technology as a mindfulness reminder to bring yourself back to the present:
   a. Set your home screen on your phone to an image that will remind you to take a mindful pause before using it. Or, set alarms on your phone, watch or laptop.
   b. Take a deep breath before checking email.
   c. Join the Office of Spiritual & Religious Life’s (OSRL) Mid-Week Musical Meditation every Wednesday from Noon – 12:15pm via Zoom ([Register here](#)) or Facebook Live.
   d. Join FSAP’s weekly Mindfulness Practice Wednesdays at 1pm or Weekly Refresh at 4:30pm.
   e. Leave your phone or iPod at home when you go for a walk or run, and just pay attention to the natural world around you!