

Tips for a Healthy Lifestyle

The pace of Oxford life means it is easy to forget to take care of your own health and wellbeing. Looking after yourself while here will help you to concentrate on your work, minimise procrastination and allow you to enjoy your time away from studying. Regular sleeping patterns, a balanced diet and exercise can keep your body healthy and create a stable routine that puts your mind at ease.

FOOD:

- Having a balanced diet (eating meals with food from all 5 food groups) and following regular meal times gives you structure and looks after your body.
- It is easy to binge on sugary snacks when feeling down or stressed – try to avoid doing this too much, and replace snacks like sweets and chocolate with dried fruit or nuts.
- If you have any issues with eating that mean the meal plan does not suit you, contact the Home Bursar, Mike Naworynsky (mike.naworynsky@pmb.ox.ac.uk). If you have a problem with the food in hall, contact the Executive Chef, Kevin Dudley (kevin.dudley@pmb.ox.ac.uk).

HYDRATION:

- Drink plenty of water throughout the day to keep you hydrated (carrying a water bottle round helps!)
- Minimise the amount of caffeine you drink – it is easy to fall back on teas, coffees, energy drinks etc. when you get tired, but too many will only hinder your concentration and will make it harder for you to wind down at the end of the day.

SLEEP:

- Aim for 8 hours sleep each night – it can make you feel better in your body and mind, and helps you concentrate.
- Try to create a regular sleep routine – go to bed at similar times each night and set an alarm for the same time each morning.
- Avoid caffeine at least 3 hours before you go to bed.
- Avoid looking at screens before you go to bed (the blue light produced by phones and laptops affects levels of the sleep-inducing hormone melatonin) – switch off

phones and laptops an hour before going to bed and do something to help you relax e.g. reading or writing.

- If you are struggling with insomnia, this NHS website has some helpful advice and support links <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/insomnia/Pages/bedtimeritual.aspx>

EXERCISE:

- Getting outdoors and taking regular exercise is good for your cardiovascular fitness, and can make you feel good about yourself. There are loads of places to go for walks or runs in Oxford, from Christ Church Meadows to University Parks.
- Pembroke also has lots of sports clubs e.g. the running club, rowing, football, rugby, netball, lacrosse and much more. Head to the JCR sports page for more info on how to get involved: <http://www.pembrokecollegejcr.com/#!about1/cc15>
- Similarly, the university has sports clubs and societies which you can join: <http://www.sport.ox.ac.uk/>

MIND AND BODY:

- A range of excellent podcasts and online advice is available for students struggling with a range of problems, including sleep, procrastination, perfection and revision skills: <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/counselling/self-help?wssl=1>
- Oxford can be a stressful place and many people find spending time to relax useful – mindfulness is one way which has become more widely used recently. Books addressing mindfulness and other relaxation techniques are in the library.

ALCOHOL:

While at Oxford you may feel pressurised to participate in activities which involve alcohol or drugs. Remember that extreme alcohol consumption and drug use can have a severe impact on your health and wellbeing.

- Do not be tempted to consume alcohol to excess just because you may see others doing so. Make it your choice whether, what and how much you drink.
- The recommendation for alcohol has been revised to 14 units per week for both men and women, spread evenly across the week, with drink-free days.
- 14 units is: 6 pints of 4% beer, or 6 175ml glasses of 13% wine, or 14 25ml shots of 40% spirits.