Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most of us are spending more time in our apartments/dorms than we are used to. If you're like me, your bedroom now doubles as a classroom and study area for zoom classes. Now more than ever, it is important that we prioritize our environmental wellness. Read More (p. 4)

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How exposure to blue light affects your brain and body

The disruption to your sleep schedule might leave you distracted and impair your MEMORY the next day.

A poor night’s sleep caused by smartphone light can make it HARDER TO LEARN.

Over the long term, not getting enough sleep can lead to NEUROTOXIN buildup that makes it even harder for you to get good sleep.

People whose melatonin levels are suppressed and whose body clocks are thrown off by light exposure are more prone to DEPRESSION.

By disrupting melatonin and sleep, smartphone light can also mess with the hormones that control hunger, potentially increasing OBESITY RISK.

There’s a connection between light exposure at night and the disturbed sleep that come with it and an increased risk of breast and prostate CANCERS.

Researchers are investigating whether or not blue light could lead to CATARACTS.

There’s some evidence that blue light could damage our vision by harming the RETINA over time – though more research is needed.

SOURCES: Nature Neuroscience; Harvard Health Publications; AOS, Sleep Med Rev, American Macular Degeneration Foundation; European Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgeons; JAMA Neurology

BY DISRUPTING MELATONIN, SMARTPHONE LIGHT RUINS SLEEP SCHEDULES. THIS LEADS TO ALL KINDS OF HEALTH PROBLEMS:

As we all know, switching to virtual classes has presented with many new challenges. Having an overabundance of screen time can result in many physical issues, such as eye strain, headaches, and blurred vision. Having these symptoms can make it even more difficult to focus on your academics. To cope with this, make an effort to set aside time for screen time breaks.

Try to find activities you enjoy that do not require a screen, such as drawing, exercise, or cooking. Invest in a pair of blue-light blocking glasses or turn on night mode on your devices to minimize the amount of blue light exposure. Limiting screen time is very beneficial for your sleep cycle, so that the blue light does not suppress melatonin production. Getting optimal sleep is correlated with better academic performance!

BOOK REVIEW: ATOMIC HABITS

by Chase Chaplin
Senior, Fisheries

Atomic Habits by James Clear is a great book to read (or listen to) if you are looking for tips and tricks on forming new habits and breaking old ones.

This New York Times Bestseller does a spectacular job of explaining the fundamentals of habit-forming behavior such as make the habit easy and make it attractive, while using the same principles to help break down negative habits. The premise of the book is based on small changes leading to large impacts, and I believe this is a critical way to view things such as habits because change takes time.

If you are looking to a new and different approach to goal and habit forming this is a great book to check out! Find Atomic Habits on Amazon, Audible, or wherever you get your books!
START WITH MEDITATION

by Mike Kassels
Sophomore, Aerospace Engineering

Another dimension of wellness that can be focused on throughout quarantine is one’s spiritual wellness. With all the time we have had to focus on ourselves, and with the likelihood of having more time being high, now is a great time to work on ourselves internally.

At first glance this can be a bit of a scary and big achievement, but if you start small, it sets you on the track of becoming more in tune with yourself. A great place to start is with meditation. Taking 10-15 minutes each day to clear your mind, doing whatever you may like. And meditation doesn’t have to be the stereotypical sitting on the ground and saying “ohmmm”. Meditation can come in forms of reading or simply laying in bed or standing in the shower or cooking. It doesn’t matter what you do, if you can freely let your mind wander away from your thoughts and stresses of the day.

Spiritual wellness can be a dimension that is easy to gloss over with our current online workload and it being seemingly unending. But taking time throughout the day to pause and not let your mind worry of the responsibilities of the day can be a great way to relax yourself and make those responsibilities start becoming easier. And getting this time alone can help you to know yourself and have a good grip for when times bounce back to normal.

APP REVIEW:
VIZER

By Molly Morris
Senior, Biomedical Sciences

Ever wanted a way to fight America’s hunger crisis while getting in your daily exercise? Then Vizer is the app for you!

According to Feeding America, 1 in 9 Americans experience hunger related problems, and the number of struggling families is only expected to go up as the global pandemic continues. As we continue to do our best to prevent the spread of Covid-19 it can be easy to feel disconnected from the greater whole of society, but an excellent way in my experience to remedy that feeling is working towards helping others.

Giving back into the community is a great way to work on spiritual wellness, and it is even better if you can work on your physical wellness at the same time. Vizer is an app that noninvasively tracks your physical activity either directly through your phone or through any wearable smart device such as an Apple Watch. Every day you can meet one of three physical activity goals on the app: reaching 10,000 steps (does not require a wearable smart device), logging in a certain number of active minutes (requires a wearable smart device), or going to an exercise class with one of the many workout facilities partnered with the app (does not require a wearable smart device). When you meet your goal for the day, Vizer corporate partners donate a meal to a community food pantry to distribute to its local people in need.

A really cool part of the app is that it tells you which corporate partner is sponsoring the donation and where in the country the donation is going. Vizer is available for free anywhere smartphone apps are sold, and it is a great opportunity to give a little back while keeping your physical wellness goals in check.
WHOOP

by Hunter Best
Senior, Aviation

Recently I purchased a new fitness monitoring device called WHOOP. This device is worn on your wrist and is extremely comfortable. If you are looking to maximize your performance, improve your sleep quality and gain a better understanding of how your body functions, and recovers I highly recommend it.

The WHOOP device uses different tests such as heart rate variability and Rem sleep monitoring to determining how ready your body is to perform in a day. This can help someone figure out how to exert themselves in a day for a workout. It also helps them understand all the factors that lead to their given recovery score for that day. Some of the factors that can affect sleep are caffeine, blue light before bed, intermittent fasting etc. This device can help analyze these factors and give recommendations to help you perform better in the future.

If you’ve been having difficulty sleeping or waking up feeling unrested, then I would especially recommend WHOOP because this seems to be the area where it has helped me the most.

TV SHOW REVIEW: TIDYING UP WITH MARIE KONDO

by Lauren Parker
Senior, Psychology

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most of us are spending more time in our apartments/dorms/houses than we are used to. If you’re like me, your bedroom now doubles as a classroom and study area for zoom classes. Because of this, it is important that we prioritize our environmental wellness.

One way to do this is by organizing and tidying up. A popular method is the KonMari Method by Marie Kondo. She also has a show on Netflix called ‘Tidying Up with Marie Kondo.’ This organization method is different than most are used to because you do not organize by room, but by category.

There are five categories:
- Clothes
- Books
- Papers
- Miscellaneous items
- Sentimental items

This method is helpful because it allows you to be more productive in getting rid of clutter. After picking a category to work on organizing and tidying, there are six rules to follow in Marie Kondo’s guide:

1. Commit yourself to tidying up.
2. Imagine your ideal lifestyle.
3. Finish discarding first.
4. Tidy by category, not location.
5. Follow the right order.
6. Ask yourself if it sparks joy.

It is truly eye-opening to see how much clutter we do have in our lives and in our home environment. Going through this process contributes to environmental wellness as it gives us a much more workable, organized space.
COLLEGE: THE JUGGLING ACT AND HOW TO ACE IT

By Ashlyn Dallas
Senior, Nutrition and Dietetics

A test Tuesday, a paper due Wednesday, a meeting Thursday, and another test Friday. Sound familiar? Sometimes college feels like a juggling act. It seems like college students today are busier than ever and the chaos is only increasing. Here are some practical tips to balance your academic schedule and master your courses:

Pay attention in class: Whether it's over zoom, a recording, or in person, put away your phone and be fully present.

Take a break after class: Grab a snack, go for a walk, or do something you enjoy to reward yourself for paying attention.

Before you go to bed, review your notes from the day: This will further reinforce the information into your memory, making it easier to study when the test comes around.

Review notes with a friend: This is a great way to add some socialization to your academics. Not only will you make a friend in your class, but you'll probably motivate each other and perform better as well!

Study in 50 minute spurts followed by a 10 minute break to get up and move: This will help you concentrate while setting aside time for a mental break.

Go to office hours: While office hours can sometimes be intimidating, only good can come out of it! Professors will often have a higher opinion of you when they see you going out of your way to connect with them and find the answers to your questions.

Use the resources your tuition is paying for: Auburn University offers free tutoring for many courses through Study Partners. Additionally, The Miller Writing Center is another free resource that offers one-on-one writing assistance to all students whether you need help with a lab report, essay, research paper, PowerPoint, etc.

JOURNALING FOR YOUR SPIRITUAL WELLNESS

by Jake Petro
Senior, Business Management

How many things have to go wrong for you to consider today a bad day? Maybe one big thing, or three small things. Maybe it is just a mindset? What if something good happens first, then does it take more bad things to happen to consider it a bad day?

You can substitute this idea, journaling, for something that suits your most important wellness dimension so it fits your lifestyle; but for me spiritual wellness is the most important thing to me. With that and the fact that I like having good days, I have learned a skill that helps me on a daily basis with daily struggles or things that do not go my way and it is called journaling.

Every morning I start my day with prayer and a simple journal which may be a bible passage, or a written prayer, or what is weighing on my heart that day. Whatever makes you happy, whatever is most important to you, make that the first thing you do every day and watch how the rest of your day goes.

You now have the happiness, the energy, the best version of yourself to take on whatever lies ahead, and no small inconvenience or thing that doesn't go your way is going to overtake the amazing start to your day.
**INTERESTED IN WELLNESS COACHING?**

Email Markie Pasternak at mrp0055@auburn.edu for more information or call Health Promotion and Wellness Services at (334)-844-1528.

Wellness Coaching is a weekly opportunity for Auburn students to work on their healthy living goals. Using a strength based approach and based on the Nine Dimensions of Wellness, students work with a Peer Wellness Coach to set and work towards health goals such as:

- Self-Care
- Stress Management
- Self-Esteem
- Time Management
- Financial Wellness/Literacy
- Sleep Hygiene
- Conflict Management
- Social Wellness/Making Friends
- Healthy Relationships

**COACH SPOTLIGHT: LAUREN PARKER**

*Junior, Psychology*
*Franklin, Tennessee*

I became a wellness coach because I have a passion for mental health, I love helping others, and Wellness Coaching gives college students the opportunity to seek help from other students to help reach their healthy living goals.

Other than Wellness Coaching, I am the Vice President of Active Minds at Auburn and am involved in Delight Auburn. In my free time, I love to read, journal, and watch Netflix with my friends.

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**Nine Dimensions of Wellness**

- Physical
- Emotional
- Social
- Cultural
- Financial
- Occupational
- Spiritual
- Intellectual
- Environmental