

10 Best Practices in Graduate Student Wellbeing

Graduate school necessarily stretches us. When we strive to achieve experiences, content and context expertise, and professional mastery, we rely on every part of our intellectual, emotional, physical and purposeful self. Stretching in these ways is inherently stressful, and according to the National College Health Assessment (NCHA) graduate students report stress, feeling exhausted, and anxiety to be factors that can surface in different ways than they did in undergrad.

Read up on some of the ways you can care for yourself through increasing academic rigor and demands.



Create a sleep routine for 7-9 hours at the same time every night. Our bodies crave routine for resting; we engage in our best sleep when our bodies follow the routine we set.



Get out of your study/writing/lab space every day and **sit or walk outside for 15 minutes.** Give yourself a break that includes natural light and a change of environment.



Choose an **exercise routine that matches your needs.** Do you need to laugh and be social? Do you need alone time? Do you need vigorous exercise or movement that includes meditation? Your needs may change, so open yourself to the variety of ways to move your body that meet what you are needing during your week. Sun Devil Fitness is free for students and offers many different paths to keep active and centered.



Learn a good breathing technique for calming your body. Breathing is the one physiological part of your body that you can consciously control, and it impacts all other physiological functioning. Try a 4-7-8 breath a couple times a day to lower your body's reaction to stress.



Remind yourself of the **bigger meaning** in your work. What are you learning? How will this challenge help you or how will it make you stronger in the future?



Become aware of **how to fuel your body** to be your best. What types of food and drink do you consume, and at what frequency? These decisions impact your overall energy. Our bodies tell us we are impacted by stress when our sleep and fueling routines change.



Identify your **circle of trust.** These are the few people who you can be totally yourself with, who you can call and not skip a beat, those who you can name exactly how you are feeling, and who will provide an honest check in that you'll trust, even if it stings. These people remind you of who you are and remind you of what you are striving so hard to achieve.



Connect with other graduate students. ASU has hundreds of graduate student programs, leaving a wide array of communities in which to connect.



Ask your mentors/supervisors what they need/want/expect from you in your role. Generate conversation about their answer in an authentic way. Having **clear communication** from the start will help you return to conversations in the future.



Do something that isn't graduate school every week. You have **many identities**, and one of them is graduate student. Ensure you are supporting your whole self through this journey. Make this form of self-care important enough to schedule into your calendar.