

ANUx - SP | How_to_Maintain_a_Healthy_Balance_in_Life

Hello, my name is Andrew. I work as a counselor in the Counseling Centre here at ANU. I'm going to talk for a few minutes on how to maintain a healthy balance and rhythm in your life especially while you're studying at ANU. This is a problem that we hear lots of people come in and seeking helpful for, and I guess there's a few things I want to talk about.

The first is as we go through a semester, it's pretty easy to, at the start, have a bit of a balance between work life and Uni and being able to catch up with your friends and sleep. But as the semester progresses, it gets pretty easy to focus just on a couple of things. There might be work because you have to make ends meet. It can be study and attending class.

And the balance and the rhythm to the day and the week and what you're trying to achieve in the long-term can just start to fray a little. So one of the important things is to do, if you're upping the ante in regards to how you want to perform academically it is really important that you do the same thing for the rest of your life too. That means you really need a good balance.

One thing that can be really helpful is utilizing a weekly calendar or a planner, and there's some that you can download from the Academic Skills and Learning Center. I think they're on our Counseling website as well, but you could use a Microsoft Outlook calendar or a Google Calendar or anything else like that.

And essentially, what you want to do is to be able to chart where your classes, where your lectures, labs, tutes, all of that are for the week and any other priorities that you've got to do. So you work hours, if you go to some kind of organized sport or anything like that, you want to put that down. And really, then after that you should be looking at it and thinking, well, I've got all this left over time, how do I want to prioritize it?

Some of it does need to be for study because you're here studying at ANU. Other parts of that, though, and to really help you be successful in your academic pursuits, one important part is making sure you have time that is dedicated to you. And that means being able to have downtime where you don't have to do anything much at all. It might be having a cup of tea and looking out the window, or putting on some music for 10 or 15 minutes, watching some kind of TV show.

But even better than those things, maybe it's getting outside. Work in the garden for 20 minutes, go for a walk, sit in a chair outside and soak up some sun. Essentially, we need to have some time where it's not structured, and you're putting some back into you. It's so easy with getting stressed with assignments and with anxiety because you're trying to balance everything you have on your life to forego that kind of time. But we know, research shows that that is a really important part of what we do in our daily and weekly rhythm. So trying to prioritize time where

you have nothing that you have to do other than being able to just pass the time.

Another really important thing besides making sure you've got the time plan for you is study and work is to be able to prioritize regular exercise. And regular exercise, really half an hour a day would be wonderful if you could do it. And putting it in a part of the day that you need to maximize both your energy going in and maximizing the energy going out. So enough energy that you can still contribute to whatever you've got to do for the rest of the day, but at a time where are you going to get the benefit from the exercise too. That's really important. So not putting it too close to the end of the day where then you're going to go to sleep, and exercising actually too close to the end of the day can get in the way of you falling asleep.

Another thing that is really important to do in looking at how you're having a daily and weekly and monthly schedule and rhythm is trying to establish something that gives you a bit of a predictability for the week. And the more you're able to do that, the more you build in a rhythm to your week, the more you create a sense of flow and rhythm through each week. And that's something that can then really hold you as stress or anxiety starts to take up as the semester progresses.

And that's what we want to do. We want to help you be able to be prepared for the busier time semester by focusing when you've got some time, like maybe early in semester or even in semester breaks to establish a rhythm and routine that is going to be helpful for you. If you're able to do this, that doesn't necessarily mean you're not going to get stressed, but it's something you can fall back to and go, OK, well, I've got all these assignments that I'm doing, but I'm going to make sure I still prioritize catching up with my friends, having my cup of tea in the sun, or reading a book that I like, doing the exercise that I enjoy because those are important elements of creating this rhythm.

I hope this talking tip has been helpful for you. I'm going to leave it there at the moment. Don't forget, too, that if you think it might be benefit for a face-to-face consultation with a counselor here at the Counseling Centre at ANU, just give us a call on 52442 to make an appointment. All right, thanks for listening. Bye, for now.