



Guide to School/Work/Life Balance

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This package was created by the Healthy U program at the University of Manitoba. Healthy U is a UM student group made up of a team of friendly volunteers who are trained student health educators.

We provide students with validated health information through our health packages and outreach events, online resources, and one-on-one support. Health topics that we provide resources on include mental health, sexual health, physical health, substance use, social and cultural wellness, and finding a balance.

Please reach out to us if you have any questions at:
healthyu@umanitoba.ca



How balanced are you?

Take this quiz to find out!

1. I feel like I have little or no control over my work or school life. Agree/Disagree (circle one)
2. I regularly enjoy hobbies or interests outside of work and school. Agree/Disagree
3. I often feel guilty because I can't make time for everything I want to do. Agree/Disagree
4. I usually have enough time to spend with my loved ones. Agree/Disagree
5. I frequently feel anxious or upset because of what is happening at work or school. Agree/Disagree
6. When I'm at home, I feel relaxed and comfortable. Agree/Disagree
7. On most days, I feel overwhelmed and over-committed. Agree/Disagree
8. I have time to do something just for me every week. Agree/Disagree
9. I often feel exhausted. Agree/Disagree
10. I rarely lose my temper. Agree/Disagree
11. I usually work through my lunch break. Agree/Disagree
12. I rarely miss out on important family events because of work or school. Agree/Disagree
13. I frequently think about work or school when I'm not there. Agree/Disagree
14. I allow myself to take days off from studying on occasion. Agree/Disagree
15. My family is often upset with me because of how much time I spend working or studying. Agree/Disagree

Flip the page to find out your score!

Scoring your quiz

Give yourself 1 point for every odd question (blue) you answered "disagree" to.

Give yourself 1 point for every even question (black) you answered "agree" to.

My score: _____

If you scored...

0-5: Your life is out of balance - you need to make significant changes to find your equilibrium. But you can take control!

6-10: You're keeping things under control - barely. Now is the time to take action before you're knocked off balance.

11-15: You're on the right track! You've been able to achieve work/school/life balance - now, make sure you protect it.

Why is balance important?

While having a little bit of stress can help you be more efficient, too much stress can be harmful to your mental and physical health. Your answers to the "How balanced are you?" quiz in this package can help give you an idea of how your stress may be affecting your health and well-being.

By taking a few minutes to consider what in your life you can realistically change, you invest in your health, your quality of life, and your ability to enjoy your university experience.

Consider what areas of your life cause you the most stress, and how you might be able to decrease how stressful they are. Can you afford to work a few less hours? Can you take one less class next semester? Are there scholarships or bursaries you can apply for to help with finances?



Finding Balance

Decreasing value or the importance of your wellbeing can reduce academic/professional performance. Prioritizing school and/or work in a way that negatively impacts your relationships, reduces your ability to rest or exercise, or keeps you from engaging in the things you enjoy –may not actually lead to better outcomes.

As students, the line between our school/work and personal life can become blurred with a busy schedule and multiple demands. Not only is balance important for your mental health, but also your physical health.

In fact, if we continue to reduce the priority of our own well-being, we can enter a stage of burnout.

Burnout is a state of “physical and emotional exhaustion” after experiencing long periods of stress. Ignoring it may cause further harm in the future and might impair your ability to handle stress effectively to meet your demands.

Common signs of burnout may include:

- Tiredness and exhaustion
- Drainage, or feelings of emptiness
- Helplessness
- Feeling trapped or defeated
- Having a negative outlook
- Self-doubt
- Difficulty concentrating or getting things done
- Feeling overwhelmed
- GI problems such as nausea or GERD
- Headaches
- Sleeping issues

Burnout can start with feelings of exhaustion, moving to feelings of resenting your job or course work, and later feelings of incapability to complete tasks.



By learning time management skills, you can improve your grades, your professional success, as well as gain more time for hobbies and self-care.

It can be hard to learn how to balance our lives but here are some tips should you wish to give it a try!

Managing your time

- **Plan your schedule:** using a day planner or a calendar app can help you schedule time to work on specific tasks. Having time set aside for each task can create less resistance within yourself and your to do list.
- **Prioritize your work:** Rather than increasing your stress about all of the things you must do, prioritize your work so that you're doing one thing at a time. Consider trying to do a few quick tasks first (checking them off the list) and then block off time for the remaining, larger tasks. Or, consider blocking time off for the most important tasks first, easing your mind that these are getting done.
- **Set goals and deadlines:** if you're a procrastinator you may need to set deadlines for yourself. For example, having a rough draft done by the end of the week, editing over the next two days, and having the final copy done the day before it's due. Sticking to your deadlines can help build good habits.
- **Avoid being a perfectionist:** While it's great to aim high, perfectionism can get in the way of your own well-being. Remind yourself that you have done your best, and that there are some things you just have to let go.



Relieving Stress

- Relaxation techniques: Learn to relax your body and mind through techniques like taking a slow walk in nature, a warm bath, meditation, mindfulness, yoga, or breathing exercises. Ask a Healthy U member for help with this!
- Practice positive self-talk: Using phrases like "I can do this," or "one thing at a time" helps you learn to be gentle with yourself. Our thoughts have a strong effect on our mood, so remind yourself to think with kindness!
- Ask for help: There is no shame in asking for help. Whether this is from a friend, a family member, or a professional, asking for support shows that you value yourself and your needs.



Healthier Lifestyle Choices

- Sleep: Just because you're functioning doesn't mean you're at your best! The average young adult needs 7-9 hours of sleep per night. Plan your schedule so that you have enough time set aside for sleep.
- Healthy eating: Food is what fuels your body - protect your health by finding foods you enjoy! Nutritional needs vary between each of us so consider finding exciting food that supports your health! .
- Make time for yourself: Being on-the-go all the time can really wear down your body. Give yourself time to rest, stretch, exercise, or do something you enjoy.
- Exercise: Even light exercise such as walking or stretching can help improve your physical and mental health. Even just 15 minutes of walking, a quick dance off in your kitchen, or a quick at home workout to a Youtube video can really decrease your stress!

Managing Multiple Demands

School, work, family, and friends can place many demands on you, and trying to balance these can be challenging. Here are a few tips to manage this:

- **Be where you are:** Stay focused on what you're currently doing. Remind yourself not to let your worries about school or work interfere with the time you spend with family and friends.
- **Set a schedule:** By scheduling time for class, work, studying, and socializing you can do these things without wondering if you should be working on something else - after all, there's time for that in your schedule too.
- **Remember that you are human:** While setting goals is important, always remember that you can only do so much. Do your best to balance your life and do well, and let go of the things that don't work out.
- **Learn to say "no":** There will always be something else you can do, another opportunity you can sign up for, or another friend who wants to hang out. It's okay to say no to things if your schedule is full or if it will add extra stress to your life!
- **Have some fun:** Don't forget to spend time with family or friends, enjoy your hobbies, or do things that might help relieve your stress.



Hobbies

Although it seems like hobbies can take up a lot of time that you may not have, they're often worth it. Having a hobby is a great way of taking a break, which reduces stress and helps you avoid feeling burned out. It can allow you to socialize or spend time alone, depending on the hobby you choose.

Studies have shown that people who engage in hobbies for at least 20 minutes a week don't get fatigued as easily. That's only 20 minutes to boost your energy for the week!

Adapted from Elizabeth Scott (2018)
VeryWellMind.com

Low-Cost Hobbies

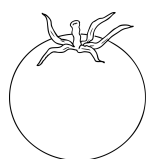
Reading: Not all books are as dry as textbooks! Try finding something that interests you or consider joining a book club!

Writing: This can be a really good outlet for stress or other emotions. You can start a journal, write poems, or create a fictional story. You might choose to share your writing with someone, or write just for yourself.

Listening to music: This counts as a hobby! Listening to music you enjoy can help boost your mood, and looking for new songs can give you something to do when you need a break from studying.

Visit the Active Living Centre (ALC): If you're a part-time or a full-time student, you've already paid for a gym membership in your tuition! The ALC has something for everyone: a track, a pool, a skating rink, weights, and lots of exercise machines. Don't force yourself to try something you don't think you'll like, because exercise shouldn't be something you dread. Try something that sounds fun to you and see how you like it!

Pay attention to your interests: If you're curious about something, explore it! Maybe you want to grow a tomato plant, fix up a bike at the UMCycle Bike Kiosk, or try roller-blading... if you're interested in something, honour that curiosity the best you can!



Recharging

The first step of regaining energy is to know when and how to recharge. Resting does not look the same for everyone, but everyone needs to take time off to feel better.

- **What does it mean to “relax”?** According to Stanford University, it is a “state of being free from tension and anxiety”. Relaxation is not about doing a specific form of relaxation or activity, or doing less, but it is to give your mind and body a deserved break to restore your energy, support your cognitive function, and regulate your mood.
- **Too busy to relax?** If you feel that you don’t really need to relax, or struggle to find time to do so, check in with yourself and reflect on your workload. Ask yourself, how energetic do you feel in a given day? Among your list of priorities and things to do, do you feel overwhelmed or stressed thinking about them? After answering this, you can try to develop a priority list and set time off for yourself.
- **Different types of rest:** You don’t have to try every single type of or activity to rest. Instead, try exploring the ones that interest you and find what suits better according to your needs.

Consider choosing something that you enjoy so that you can repeat that activity and have a positive experience. It might be as simple as putting a device away and watching your children or pets play or taking a few breaths and lengthening your exhalation.



1

First Identify your energy domains

This includes reflecting on where your attention is primarily focused. Energy domains may include (but not limited to):

- Work or career
- Finances
- Partners or romantic relationships
- Children
- Family
- Friends
- Physical activity
- Creativity/self-expression
- Enjoyment/happiness
- Learning/growth
- Service to others/community

2

Try to identify which ones you care the most, the least, and neutral about.

You can start realizing which tasks feel depleting compared to fulfilling activities. Remember to reflect on how your priorities interfere with each other.

It is normal to feel resistance towards changing your habits or priorities, especially when they are mandatory tasks demanding your attention.

Consider reaching out for additional or professional support if you feel like you are working beyond your capacity for an extended period.

3

Identify the type of rest that may suit your needs best:

Physical

Try an activity that's somewhere between quiet wakefulness in a hammock and gentle physical movement like yoga, walking, or stretching.

Mental

Try some short intentional breaks and writing down or recording small wins or three good things that happened during your day.

Sensory

Try taking breaks from social media, screens, noise or other environmental stimuli.

Creative

Take some time to wonder around your area to observe nature, art, or music.

Emotional

Prior to attending to others, take some time to check in on your own needs/emotions.

Spiritual

Try finding a feeling of belonging or connection to something beyond daily life. Exploring your purpose can help provide feelings of satisfaction.



Authenticity

Living authentically to one's feelings and identity is an important part of wellness - and it could pose multiple benefits on your life balance.

Authenticity is defined as “the act of expressing one's true self” without the need for external validation, and it has showed to improve social relationships, interpersonal conflicts, and overall burden on oneself. It is to be unapologetically yourself, and act in a way that aligns with your beliefs and values.

Denying ourselves can hurt deeply, even if it is not noticed. This could be when we don't communicate our needs or value our self-worth.

Although the role of authenticity differs from culture to culture, the relationship between authenticity and wellness is notable. According to Psych Central:

“if people are in tune with, and appreciative of, their internal states they are more likely to choose to live healthier lives, will recognize earlier the signs and symptoms of illness, seek medical advice, and be more alert to when they are engaging in self-destructive behaviors”.



According to Psychology Today, authenticity is likely to foster the essential psychological resources that give people perspective on any difficulties they experience and help them manage emotional and environmental challenges.

If we can be attune to who we are, what we need, what we value, and what our purpose is – we can help manage the balance we create in our lives.

UM Resources

Academic Wellness

Academic Learning Centre (ALC)

ALC offers academic resources for graduate and undergraduate, full and part-time students at UM.

201 Tier

204-480-1481

academic_learning@umanitoba.ca

<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/academic-supports/academic-learning>

Career Services

Career support for undergraduate and graduate students with their career planning and job search, offering a wide range of help throughout a student's career journey. They also support recent alumni in their job search, and help employers with their recruitment needs.

474 UMSU University Centre

204-474-9456

cs.receptionist@umanitoba.ca

<https://www.umanitoba.ca/career-services/>

University 1 First Year Centre

Academic advisors for all first year students in any faculty.

205 Tier

204-474-6209

FirstYearCentre@umanitoba.ca

<https://umanitoba.ca/university-1>

Academic Advisors

Talk to your faculty-specific academic advisors about your path as a student.

<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/academic-supports/academic-advising>

UM Libraries

There are various libraries across UM campuses. You can receive information about materials, subject guides, research and instruction support.

25 Chancellors Circle

Libraries.GeneralEnquiries@umanitoba.ca

204-474-9881

<https://umanitoba.ca/libraries/>

Elizabeth Dafoe Library

Access computers, books, or online study rooms.

25 Chancellors Cir

204-474-9881

dafoe@umanitoba.ca

<https://umanitoba.ca/libraries/elizabeth-dafoe-library>

Student Accessibility Services (SAS)

SAS provides supports for students with disabilities and to foster success for your academic future.

520 UMSU University Centre

204-474-7423

student_accessibility@umanitoba.ca

<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/accessibility>

UM Resources

Mental Health

Student Counselling Centre (SCC)

The SCC provides students with supports for their mental wellness. The offer offers individual counselling, workshops, and groups.

474 UMSU University Centre

204 474-8592

<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/student-health-and-wellness/student-counselling-centre-scc>

Health and Wellness

The Health and Wellness Educator is a Registered Psychiatric Nurse and available to talk about health and wellness topics.

469 UMSU University Centre (within the SCC)

204-295-9032

healthandwellness@umanitoba.ca

<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/health-wellness>

Console

Console is a mental health service available to UM students who have insurance through the university. Console offers 24-hour crisis support, daily journal, wellness assessment quizzes, mental health literacy training, and self-guided therapy. Console also connects students with mental health professional support VIA telephone.

https://studentcare.ca/rte/en/IHaveAPlan_UniversityofManitoba_Console_Console

Healthy U

Healthy U provides students with health and wellness resources.

healthyuofm@umanitoba.ca

<https://www.healthyuofm.com/>

Sexual Violence Resource Centre (SVRC)

Provides support, resources, information and referral services for any student, faculty or staff member who has been affected by sexual violence

537 UMSU University Centre

svrc@umanitoba.ca

204-474-6562

<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/sexual-violence-support-and-education>

UM Resources

Physical Health

University Health Services (UHS)

UHS has health care providers that provide patient-centered, collaborative, multidisciplinary primary care.

ACW-Lot temporary trailer (behind the Isbister building)

204-474-8411

<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/health-wellness/university-health-service>

University Pharmacy

The University Pharmacy can fill prescriptions and has snacks, dorm essentials, and non prescription medicine.

111 University Centre

204-474-9323

<https://umanitoba.ca/campus-services/university-centre-pharmacy>

U of M Foodbank

422 University Centre

<https://umanitoba.ca/financial-aid-and-awards/u-m-food-bank>

Recreation Services

Membership and recreational programming for both UM students and the general public.

This includes access to:

- Fort Garry: Active Living Centre, Frank Kennedy Centre and Max Bell Centre
- Bannatyne: Joe Doupe Recreation Centre
- Virtual health and fitness
- Group fitness classes (Zumba, yoga, dancing, martial arts)
- Casual rec use
- Intramurals

146 Frank Kennedy Centre

rec_services@umanitoba.ca

204-474-7279

<https://umanitoba.ca/community/sport-recreation/recreation-services>

UM Resources

Social and Cultural Wellness

Spirituality Services

One-on-one emotional and spiritual support.

528 UMSU University Centre
spiritualcare@umanitoba.ca
204-298-2467

<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/spiritual-services>

UMSU Student Clubs

UMSU has many student clubs with the following categories:

- Academic
- Communities
- Environmental
- Ethnic and Cultural
- Faculty and Program Specific
- Feminism
- Health and Wellness
- Hobbies
- Networking
- Political
- Religion and Spirituality
- Skill Building and Development
- Social Justice / Volunteerism / and Community Service
- Sororities and Fraternities
- Sports and Recreation

<https://umsu.ca/student-clubs-associations/student-clubs/>

Student Communities

Find groups and clubs that help you find community during your time at UM.

<https://umanitoba.ca/current-students/first-year/um-commons/student-communities>

Student Associations

Student associations that deliver important programs, events and services for undergraduate students at UM.

<https://umanitoba.ca/current-students/first-year/um-commons/student-government>

Student Life

Get involved with your campus community. Find out how to volunteer, different learning modes, and about CCR.

225 University Centre
204-474-9093

<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/get-involved>

International Student Centre

The International Centre provides international students with resources to succeed in university.

541 UMSU University Centre
204-474-8501

international@umanitoba.ca

<https://umanitoba.ca/international>

UM Resources

Finding Balance

Indigenous Student Centre (ISC)

The ISC provides resources for Indigenous students including academic, cultural, personal, and physical wellness.

Reach out to the ISC or visit them in-person!

Migizii Agamik - Bald Eagle Lodge

isc@umanitoba.ca

204-474-8850

<https://umanitoba.ca/indigenous/student-experience>

Student Support Case Management

Provides free resource information, practical supports and safety planning in a confidential manner. Assistance with academic needs such as authorized withdrawals, deferred assignments/exams.

520 UMSU University Centre

204-474-7423

stadv@umanitoba.ca

<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/academic-supports/student-advocacy/case-management>

Financial Aid and Awards

Learn about scholarships, bursaries, and financial supports available to UM students.

204-474-9531

awards@umanitoba.ca

<https://umanitoba.ca/financial-aid-and-awards>

Student Advocacy

Confidential support to help you understand your rights as a student including assistance with making academic requests (e.g., deferrals or withdrawals), filing a complaint, or accessing resources.

520 UMSU University Centre

204-474-7423

stadv@umanitoba.ca



168 Hour Week

Do you find yourself wishing that there were more hours in a day? How often do you look at another looming deadline and think that you're a bad time manager? Maybe you're not as bad a time manager as you think. It could be that you just don't have an accurate sense of how much time you actually spend on other tasks. We often forget that sleeping, eating, bathing, jobs, doing laundry or simply visiting with friends take up a lot of time. Getting an accurate sense of how much time you spend on those activities makes goal setting, making a to-do list, and creating a useful (and do-able) schedule easier.

Estimate the number of hours a day you spend on each task and then multiply by the number of days per week that you do that task. If you have consistent hours of work or classes, you can simply enter those times in the Total column (i.e., if you work 25 hours a week then put 25 in the total column).

Activities	Hours	X	# of days	Total
Sleeping				
Personal care (showering and grooming)				
Eating (preparation and clean-up)				
Travel time (work, campus, other)				
Work				
Other commitments (volunteering, church)				
Exercise & sports				
Leisure and social time				
Errands/cleaning/laundry				
Classes (3 hours per every credit + lab time) For example, 5 courses (5 x 3 = 15) plus 2 labs (2 x 3 = 6) would equal 21 hours per week spent in class				

Add up the total column to calculate the weekly hours spent on activities _____

Hours in a Week

168

Hours Spent on Activities

—

=

Time Remaining

If you don't have much time left, then you might need to look at reducing the courses you are taking, the number of hours you are working, and/or other commitments (friends, sports, volunteering), because you have not even begun studying or preparing assignments yet! If you have a lot of time left, then your challenge is to use that time wisely. Interestingly, it is easier to waste time when you think you have extra time. Realistically, if you are a full-time student, you should be spending about 35 hours a week on school which means you should be studying at least 10-15 hours in addition to going to classes and labs.

You have the tools. We'll help you use them.