



Finding Balance: A Guide for UWM Students

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Norris Health Center



Norris Health Center

www.norris.uwm.edu

Free or low-cost counseling, stress management, & wellness services.

First Year Center

www4.uwm.edu/access_success/first_year_center.cfm

Peer & professional help adjusting to life as a college student.

LINKS Peer Outreach & Mentoring Center

www.links.uwm.edu

Students helping other students in areas of personal growth, social experience & college life.

Women's Resource Center

www.wrc.uwm.edu

Advocacy and support for women students.

LGBT Resource Center

www.lgbt.uwm.edu

Resources and safe space for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students and their allies.

Multicultural Student Center

www.msc.uwm.edu

Lounge space, non-academic advising, referrals and support for multicultural students.

UWM Resources

Career Development Center

www.cdc.uwm.edu

Advice on career choice & graduate school applications; assistance with resumes & interview skills.

Office of Adult & Returning Student Services

www.oarss.uwm.edu

Advising and support for nontraditional students.

Student Accessibility Center

www.sac.uwm.edu

Services for students with disabilities.

University Legal Clinic

www.uwm.edu/StudentOrg/ULC/

Free legal assistance and referrals for students.

Center for Volunteerism & Student Leadership

www4.uwm.edu/cvsl/

Volunteer opportunities and leadership training.

Dean of Students

<http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/OSL/DOS/dos.html>

Assistance with student concerns unable to be resolved through other campus venues.

Finding Life Balance: Academics & Career, Emotional, Social, Physical and Spiritual

Being a college student is a difficult balancing act. It is easy to get weighed down with the pressures of academics, social life, choosing a major and career, and working. On top of all this, you may have family, relationship, or other personal problems. All this might make you feel overwhelmed enough to lose your balance. This guide is designed to help you learn ways to deal effectively with problems and to provide you with information about resources on campus so that you can maintain balance in different parts of your life.



Academic & Career Life

As a student, you may be distracted by the many other exciting pieces of college life and fail to focus on your classes. You may study without breaks or relaxation and burn out after one semester. Or, you may learn to balance your academic life and end up not only learning a lot, but also maintaining a healthy lifestyle and growing as an individual.

Consider how to manage the time you have wisely. In a calendar or organizer, write all the due dates for the semester, as well as reading and other required projects. With this overview, you can plan your days, weeks and months to get everything done. Schedule in study time, but also schedule social events, exercise, and other things you need. Decide up front how much time you want to give to yourself and to friends and significant others. Then, stick to your schedule as much as possible without allowing it to cause unneeded stress. Form good study habits and be responsible regarding your academic work. But remember to balance your studies with other aspects of your life — social, emotional, physical and spiritual.

Emotional Life

College is a very emotion-filled time for most people. There are many exciting new activities, but stress and the unknown can also cause sadness, hopelessness, fear, and feelings of being overwhelmed. The first step in finding and maintaining emotional balance is to identify the stressors of college life. Some of these, which can be positive or negative, might be:

- Leaving the familiarity of family & friends
- Experiencing a new environment alone
- Adapting to natural relationship changes and pressures within the family
- Discovering high academic demands
- Finding financial freedom & responsibility
- Developing a new & possibly very different social life
- Loneliness & isolation
- Exposure to new kinds of people & concepts
- Identity confusion
- Preparing for the future

Minimize the negative impact that strong emotions have on your body and mind by doing the following:

- Set attainable goals
- Learn to prioritize
- Develop your time-management skills
- Find ways to relax & unwind
- Talk to someone about how you are feeling
- Work hard to make new friends
- Live a healthy life complete with balanced diet and exercise
- Get enough sleep

Social Life

It is not only possible to develop a strong social life in college and still fulfill your responsibilities as a student, but it is also quite healthy. A healthy social life is all about balance; while socializing all the time is not wise, neither is refusing to meet people and get involved.

In order to make sure you can find the needed social balance in your life, make a decision at the beginning of each term that you will not allow your academics to keep you out of the rest of your life. Make sure that you have some time to interact with people and unwind. When scheduling your days, allow for free time spent with others. If possible, work hard most days of the week in order to have a large chunk of time — like Saturday — free to interact with others. If it is possible to do these things off-campus, even better. This provides a mental release from your academics. Balance is crucial to a healthy and whole life; protect your school time fervently, and do the same for your free time. This will help ensure that you're growing as a well-rounded person in college — not too social nor too academic.

Physical Life

It's impossible to separate your physical life from your mental, social and emotional life. The body will perform as well as it has been treated; so, in order to prevent your body from breaking down halfway through the semester, getting sick when you're trying to study, or not having the energy to hang out with friends, you must find physical balance just as you find balance with other aspects of your life.

First, consider your sleep schedule. Meeting new people is important, academics are important, and family responsibilities are important. But without the proper amount of sleep, your body won't continue to support the lifestyle you are pursuing. College students need at least 8 hours of sleep a night and actually perform better on 9. If you really like staying up late, schedule later classes. If you need to talk to your roommate about the lights going out at a certain time, do it.

Next, exercise. Your body needs cardiovascular exercise at least 30 minutes, 4 times a week. Not only will it keep your body in shape, but it will also relieve some stress and help you sleep better. Once again, find balance. Too much time in the gym is also unhealthy. Build a daily routine that incorporates regular exercise — for example, walk to your classes instead of driving.

Spiritual Life

Students on campus today are a diverse group ethnically, socio-economically, religiously, and politically. While you may have high ambitions for academic and career success, you may also actively deal with existential questions. Students often search for deeper meaning in their lives, looking for ways to cultivate their inner selves, seeking to be compassionate and charitable, and determining what they think and feel about issues confronting society.