The semester has gotten off to a brisk start, and you may already be feeling the pinch of having much to do with little time to do it. The general tendency is for people to try to work harder and faster when they feel pressed for time. Often, this leads to feelings of increased pressure and loss of control. This heightened sense of urgency doesn’t always result in heightened performance. Usually, just the opposite occurs. Just as revving your engine when your tires are stuck in sand or mud will only bury the tires deeper, revving your emotional engine when you feel stuck in too much to do will only increase your stress and make your efforts less productive.

A better option is to disengage from what you are doing and engage in some activity that will relax your mind and body. This might be some kind of physical activity such as a brisk walk or swim. It might also be some kind of emotional activity such as deep breathing, alternately tensing and releasing your muscles, or meditation. Since it can be difficult to pull yourself out of a stressful situation once you are buried in it, the best course of action is to plan in advance to have these stress-relieving activities built into your schedule. For every hour that you schedule to study, plan for ten minutes to breathe before moving on. This will help prevent mental fatigue and stress, making you more productive.

September 17 is on the Horizon

If you’re looking for a way to feel better and to make life better for others, remember the annual Life Saver 5K and 1 Mile Fun Run happens on September 17. There’s still plenty of time to break in your running/walking shoes and to register for the race.

The race is sponsored by the OCCC Student Nursing Association and the Student Physical Therapist Assistant Organization. All proceeds will go to support scholarships for students.

Special points of interest:

- Be steady and deliberate in your studies.
- Plan your own healthy snacks to save money and calories
- Use your bed for sleeping only.
Create a Healthy Snack Plan

It can be difficult to juggle classes, work, family life, and healthy eating. With a little thought, knowledge of your options, and preparation, it can be possible to eat healthy while maintaining everything else in your hectic life. The best plan is to try lots of different combinations of healthy options so you don’t get burned out.

**Fruits and Vegetables:** These are still solid choices for healthy eating. Fresh, canned, dried fruit, and even frozen are all good choices that could be manageable for a college student. Planning out your fruits and vegetables for the week can really help you stay on track. If you freeze them, you can throw them in your backpack, and they will be ready to eat by midday.

**Fruit Leathers:** Some brands of fruit snacks are more like candy than fruit and should be avoided due to their high content of added sugars and lack of real fruit. Look for all natural or no sugar added varieties.

**Smoothies:** Many store-made smoothies have added sugars and are not healthy choices. Make your own by blending fruit with juice, yogurt, or milk. Frozen fruit is ideal for make-at-home smoothies.

**Veggie Pockets:** Cut whole-wheat pitas in half and add veggies with light dressing or hummus.

**Popcorn:** Look for low-fat popcorn in a bag or microwave popcorn. You can season it by adding parmesan cheese, garlic powder, or other non-salt spices.

**Low-fat Cheese:** Look for low-fat cheeses to pack as snacks. Mozzarella sticks and brands such as Mini Babybel Light and Laughing Cow wedges are all good choices.

**Yogurt:** Yogurt is a very versatile food and a healthy snack. Look for varieties that are low in fat and added sugar. Yogurt can be enjoyed on its own, used as a fruit dip, or mixed to use as a sauce or dressing.

**Whole Wheat English Muffins, Pita, or Tortillas:** Stuff these with veggies or dip them in hummus or bean dip. You can also enjoy them with real fruit spreads or low-fat peanut butter.

**Nuts:** Nuts are one of the best sources of protein and they make for a great snack.

Happy snacking!

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### Fun Fall Snack Mix

Returning to school means reconnecting with old friends and having opportunities to make new ones. What better way to connect with others either to study, work on a project, or just watch a game on TV than with a tasty, and healthful, snack. Rather than buy something from the store that is highly processed and full of sodium and fat, you can make one yourself.

1 cup diced dried apricots
1/2 cup dried cherries or cranberries
1 1/2 cups unsalted or lightly salted roasted peanuts
1/2 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
1/3 cup white chocolate chips (optional)

Add all of the ingredients to a gallon size plastic bag and seal.
Toss the bag around to mix all of the ingredients well.
Pour into a bowl and enjoy with friends.
From time to time, we all have a difficult time going to sleep or staying asleep. We can't seem to relax as the pressures of the day send our minds into overdrive. Fortunately, there are strategies to help us get the quantity and quality of sleep that our bodies need each night.

**Keep a regular sleep schedule:** Ever wonder why young children get so cranky when you go on vacations or on holidays with them? It's because we take them out of their routine. Likewise, when we have the added stress of school demands, we often take ourselves out of our comfortable routine. The result is disrupted sleep and irritability. Go to bed at the same time each night and get up at the same time. If you need to adjust your schedule, do it in fifteen minute increments and gradually make the change. Rather than sleeping in, get up at your usual time, and then break for a nap later.

**Regulate your sleep-wake cycle:** Melatonin is a hormone produced in the brain that helps regulate the sleep-wake cycle. Your brain produces more melatonin when there is little light and shuts off production in full light. During the day, take full advantage of the sunlight and allow as much on your face as possible. Take periodic breaks to go outside. If necessary, use a light therapy box indoors to simulate the ultraviolet from the sun. This exposure will help keep you alert and active during the day. Check your bedroom for devices that may be giving off light and inadvertently keeping you from reaching a deep sleep. Electronics such as televisions and computers may suppress melatonin production if left on, but they can also stimulate the brain rather than relaxing it. Opt instead for soft music which has a calming effect. Replace bright bulbs in the bedroom with softer, low-wattage bulbs. If you enjoy reading at night and you use an electronic device, use one that isn't backlit and that requires an additional light source such as a lamp.

**Create a relaxing environment:** Keep noise levels down. Your brain attends to stimuli even if you're “asleep”. If necessary, mask outside noises by using a fan or soft relaxation recordings. If necessary, consider using earplugs. Temperature also affects sleep, so maintain a slightly cool environment for the best sleep. Make sure that your bed is comfortable and roomy enough for you. If your bed serves as the catch-all space in the room, take some time to rearrange things so that you have the space you need to be comfortable. Remember, to, that the only two activities that should take place in your bed are sleeping and sex. If you routinely eat, watch TV, study, play video games, text, etc., your brain has to work through a long laundry list of reasons why you might be in bed before it finally lets you relax and fall asleep.

**Eat well and get regular exercise:** Avoid heavy meals close to bedtime and try to allow a few hours between your last meal and when you go to bed. If you feel hungry, eat something light that won't interfere with your sleep. Avoid alcohol and caffeine as each of these can negatively affect your sleep. Although alcohol may make you feel drowsy, it interferes with your quality of sleep, so you may awaken feeling just as tired as you were when you went to bed. A bit of light exercise can have a relaxing effect on your body thereby allowing you to fall asleep, and stay asleep.

**Seek professional help if you need it:** If nothing you've tried seems to help, see your doctor to find out what the underlying cause might be. You, and the people who depend on you, deserve for you to feel rested and renewed each day.

Do you have ideas for articles or recipes? Send them to Mary Turner at mtturner@occc.edu or to Alta Price at aprice@occc.edu.
Student Support Services houses a variety of services designed to enhance the performance and well-being of students at Oklahoma City Community College.

- Services to Students with Disabilities, including providing accommodations for documented disabilities, interpreting and captioning services for deaf and hard of hearing students, and assistive technology.
- Professional counseling by licensed providers.
- Learning support specialists to assist with academic needs such as learning styles, study skills, test-taking, and general health and wellness issues.
- TRIO Grant Programs (Upward Bound and Trio Student Support Services) designed to help first generation college students learn more about college before they arrive and how to be more successful once they are here.

For more information about our services and how to access them, please visit our website at http://www.occc.edu/support/ or call us at 682-7520. We are located on the first floor of the Main Building near SEM Entry 3.

Greek Feta Burgers (Serves 2)

Cucumber Sauce:
- In a small bowl, combine 3 tablespoons seeded and chopped cucumber, 2 tablespoons light sour cream, 1 clove garlic (minced), 1/2 teaspoon snipped fresh flat-leaf parsley, 1/4 teaspoon snipped fresh mint, and 1/8 teaspoon sea salt. Makes about 1/4 cup.

Ingredients:
- 8 ounces 90 percent or higher lean ground beef
- 1 tablespoon crumbled reduced-fat feta cheese
- 1 and 1/2 teaspoons snipped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 whole wheat hamburger bun, split and toasted
- 1/2 cup fresh spinach leaves
- 2 tomato slices
- Thin slivers of red onion (optional)

Prepare cucumber sauce and set aside. In a medium bowl, combine ground beef, cheese, parsley, garlic, and pepper. Shape mixture into two 1/2 inch thick patties.

In a large nonstick skillet, cook patties over medium-high heat for 8 to 10 minutes or until an instant-read thermometer inserted into sides of patties registers 160 degrees F. Turn once halfway through cooking.

Line cut sides of bun halves with spinach. Top with burgers, tomato slices, and sauce. If desired, garnish with red onions.

Per Serving:
- 292 calories
- 14 total grams fat
- 79 milligrams cholesterol
- 356 milligrams sodium
- 14 grams carbohydrates
- 2 grams fiber
- 27 grams protein