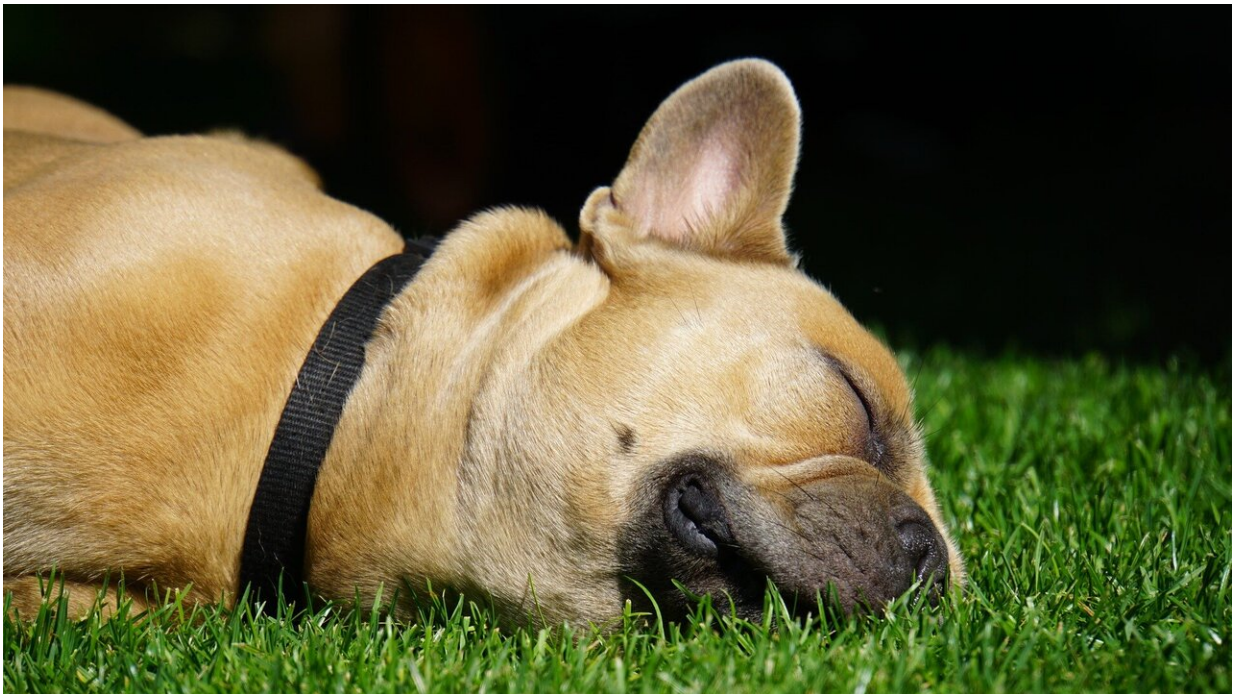


Give me a break: The importance of taking time out

July 30 2019, by Mary Hoang



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Just imagine if sleep-ins could make you smarter or a day at the beach was as productive as a study day. Sounds like an alternate reality, right? But in fact science is finding that it might be key to getting the most out of life and study.

In Western society, we place an overwhelming amount of importance on

the idea of productivity—that is, we're encouraged to expend effort constantly as it's assumed that, as a result, we'll contribute to better outcomes and reap more rewards (whether it's more money, better grades, more Insta followers, etc.)

But we're not robots—we can't just chug along non-stop, only working and studying. In fact, current research in psychology has shown that the non-stop grind takes a negative toll on our bodies and minds, and we end up performing worse as a result.

Our lives require balance, which means time spent nourishing and cultivating a range of areas, aside from work and study, which are central to our well being. Here are a few of the most important ones...

Friends and fam

Social connection is essential to living a happy, healthy and productive life. Recent studies show that people without a strong network of friends & family are unhappier in work and home life, at greater risk of developing health conditions (such as heart disease) and don't live as long.

Human beings are hardwired for connection—it's central to how we've survived and flourished as a species (imagine trying to hunt a herd of wildebeest alone!) Investing in your relationships is incredibly valuable, and pays off by boosting your overall well being. So next time you're feeling stressed or overwhelmed, why not catch up with a friend (irl, not just online), chat, laugh and celebrate the fact that it's scientifically good for you.

Hobbies and playtime

Unless you get all your kicks from in-class content (can we have a woop for algebra!) it's important to find activities that stimulate your body and mind in fresh and exciting ways. By taking part in fun and engaging tasks, you're encouraging your brain to adapt to new challenges, think differently and learn new things. And better yet, these skills are often transferable to stuff you're learning in school!

Find a fun activity that stimulates your mind (e.g. learning a language, practising a [musical instrument](#), playing online multiplayer strategy games, etc.) and then something that lets you move your body (e.g. [team sports](#), yoga, running, dancing, etc.) Injecting a little physical activity in there will boost your endorphin levels, and help you sleep better too!

Rest and rejuvenate

Just like our mobile phones, our bodies and minds have a battery limit that wears down the longer we use them without recharging.

Psychologists have found that engaging in complex, mental tasks which require extended focus and attention eat into this battery, forcing it to deplete. This is why you can feel so pooped after an extended study session or after working on a big assignment.

To rejuvenate, sleep is really essential, but if you don't have the time (or space) to indulge in a hectic nap, [mindfulness meditation](#) can work wonders. This offers your brain the chance to switch off from thinking about the past or the future and just exist in the now. All it takes is 5 or 10 minutes of mindfulness a day to see a reduction in stress & anxiety levels, increased overall health & well being, and even improvements in academic success (and there are great apps to help)!

Of course, it's all about finding balance. Work on getting in touch with your mind and body (mindfulness is great for this too!) to get a feel for what you need and when. Just like you can't study and work 24/7, you

also can't sloth out on the couch or play video games for endless hours and expect to ace all your exams. Practice organizing your time to make priority for all important areas of your life, and as a result, maximize your chances of happiness and success!

Provided by Murdoch University

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