

Social, emotional, spiritual, mental, and physical health are integrated factors or aspects of wellbeing that influence and affect each other. Trying to achieve a balance of these factors is the best way of obtaining optimal wellbeing.

Taking care of your wellbeing will help you to better cope with everyday stressors and challenges, and enable you to be more resilient to those things that come along unexpectedly and are out of your control. Complete wellness is not realistic, no one is ever completely well or unwell – it's about achieving a good balance across all aspects of your health.

Tips for optimal wellbeing

Connect and engage with others

How well are you connected to the people around you? Do you have positive relationships with family, friends, other students, and University staff? Are you taking time regularly to engage with others?

- Smile, and aim to be positive about what the day will bring
- Expect the best of yourself and others, and see the best in people
- Spend time with people with positive attitudes
- Get involved with university and community activities and events
- Find people to spend time with who share similar interests to you
- Schedule regular time for friends and family
- Buy a digital photo frame and have photos of friends and family flicking through your day
- Attend classes and talk to your lecturers even if it's just a quick 'hello', or email your lecturer. They want to connect with you!
- Ask another student to be a "study buddy", or just a "grab a coffee buddy" and catch up regularly.

Acknowledge and share your feelings

How are you coping with the challenges of life? Do you acknowledge and share your feelings in a positive way with others? Do you seek support when you need it?

- Take control of your day. Wake up and go to bed at the same each day, plan your day, week, and semester
- Take time each day for "me time". Do what makes you feel good and helps you relax - music, a funny movie, a warm bath, time with your pet, or pampering your body
- Know that it is normal to feel lonely and sad some of the time, and not to always be happy
- Find humor in situations
- Share how you are feeling with your friends and family
- Challenge negative thoughts, and try to replace them with positive ones
- Accept that sometimes you need to take action even when you don't feel great
- Learn techniques to take your attention away from your thoughts and to the present
- Learn relaxation, mindfulness and meditation techniques – quick and easy ones are available online
- If low or anxious feelings persist then seek support

Align with your values and give to others

Is what you are doing aligned with your values? Are you using your strengths and gifts? Is there time in your life for peaceful reflection and connection with the outdoors, your pets, and the people around you?

- Acknowledge and share your strengths and gifts
- Know your values and let them guide your actions
- Stay focused on your dreams!
- Make changes to bring your life more in line with your values and goals
- Find and spend time with people who share your values
- Be kind to people and animals, enjoy time outdoors
- Help a neighbor or volunteer for a community group
- Smile at a stranger
- Give back to the planet and recycle, plant trees, or just use less water

Enjoy and sustain learning

Do you have the mental space for new ideas and experiences? Are you learning new things, seeking new challenges, and applying what you're learning to your life and the world around you? Do you have a healthy study routine?

- Read broadly, don't get bogged down with your study all of the time
- Plan to have a new experience, undertake a challenge, or learn a new skill every study break
- Share what you know with others – be a mentor, or form, lead, join a group
- Plan your study to allow time for all aspects of your health
- See university as a “job” requiring shifts of work, rather than being all consuming
- Let your brain and body have a complete break in between study “shifts”
- De-clutter your study space and surround yourself with sights, sounds, smells, and textures that enhance your concentration and reduce stress
- Seek support from JCU staff early
- Make regular time for self-reflection

Nourish and exercise your body

Do you have enough energy to get through your day, with some to spare? Are you eating and sleeping well? Have you checked in with your doctor lately?

- Eat nutritious food, and eat regularly
- Aim to get 8 hours of sleep a night
- Exercise regularly, every day if you can, even if it's just a brisk walk to or around university
- Combine exercise and social activity – ask a friend to go walking with you
- Drink plenty of water
- Have regular health checkups. JCU Health bulk bills for students if you need a new doctor.
- Don't forget your study breaks during the day
- Go on a holiday during semester break. You deserve it!

Support is available for all JCU students. Contact JCU Student Equity and Wellbeing <https://www.jcu.edu.au/student-equity-and-wellbeing>

Further information

Check out the Wheel of Wellbeing website at <https://www.wheelofwellbeing.org/>

Student Equity and Wellbeing

James Cook University

Web <https://www.jcu.edu.au/student-equity-and-wellbeing>

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