Practice Mindful Breathing: Just breathe! Take 5 minutes to try the “Mindfulness of Breath” session. (200 points) Mindful breathing simply means focusing on your breath with curiosity, openness and acceptance. When feelings, sensations, or thoughts come up, it’s okay. There is no need to judge or force those things away, instead, notice them, as if they were waves in the ocean. Then, gently return to the focus on your breathing.

Try the guided session above OR follow these steps to practice:
1. Find a relaxed, comfortable position in a chair, on the floor or a cushion.
2. Relax your body and notice any areas of tightness or tension. Relax more.
3. Feel and listen to your breath. Breathe in slowly through your nose and exhale through your mouth.
4. Continue for 5 minutes - slow breaths in, hold a few seconds and exhale.
5. If you notice your mind wandering, that’s okay – just redirect your attention back to your breathing.

Finally, return to normal breathing and let yourself relax even more. Offer yourself some appreciation for breathing mindfully!

(Source: http://www.personal.kent.edu/~dfresco/mindfulness/Bishop_et_al.pdf)

Curious to learn more about Mindfulness? Explore the Whil Mindfulness 101 session. (200 points)

NOTICE YOUR MOOD & SENSE: Mood is an overall feeling and attitude that can vary from hour to hour, day to day and week to week. Find a word or words that capture your overall feeling and attitude right now. Use the “What’s Your Mood?” Healthy Habit tracker on Healthy Emory Connect to help you monitor your moods and look for patterns.

Senses are your “window to the world”; you experience life through your senses. In your daily routine, you may not notice that your body and mind are busy making meaning of whatever you see, hear, touch, smell or taste. Thank goodness we are wired this way for survival! Try this exercise to notice your senses:

Hear: Notice the sounds around you. Try not to judge the sounds - just notice them.
See: Observe your surroundings and notice the colors, shapes and textures. If you really look, you may see things you haven’t noticed before.
Smell: Now shift your attention to the smells around you. Close your eyes to better focus.
Taste: You can do this one even if you don’t have food in your mouth. You may notice an aftertaste of a previous drink or meal, or just notice the taste of your saliva and your breath.
Touch: Now bring your attention to the sensations of your skin contact with your chair, clothing, or feet on the floor. Notice any pressure or temperature like the warmth or coolness of your hands or feet. Feel textures of several objects around you.

When finished, pause to notice how your body and mood feel in this moment. Compare now with how you felt a few minutes ago - what has changed?

Learn more about the benefits of Using the 5 Senses.

COMPLIMENT YOURSELF & OTHERS: Take time to be mindful of your strengths and others around you. Give yourself and someone else a compliment! Write down 3 traits or strengths about yourself that you appreciate. Reflect on these strengths throughout the day. If interested, learn about your strengths here: VIA Classification of Character Strengths. Think about how you are impressed by others around you and share with at least one person two or three of their strengths.
CONNECT WITH NATURE: Make contact with the earth. Go outside, take off your shoes and socks and sink your feet into the grass. Or find a tree and place your palm on the trunk. Play in the dirt, a garden, or in the sand. Just as sinking your bare feet into the earth will ground you, so will digging into it with your hands. Bring nature indoors. Buy some houseplants, bring in fresh flowers, put a crystal or jar of seashells on your desk, or start a pinecone collection. Wake up with nature. Open your window, look outside and take in the beauty of nature. Breathe in the colors, shapes, textures and sounds. Notice the color of the sky, the shapes of the clouds and the sounds of the birds.

LISTEN CAREFULLY: In today's high-tech, high-speed, high-stress world, communication is more important than ever, yet we seem to devote less and less time to really listening to each other. Mindful listening helps ensure understanding, solve problems, build relationships, resolve conflicts and improve accuracy. Here are a few tips to help you develop effective listening skills:

- Face the speaker and maintain eye contact; be attentive, but relaxed.
- Keep an open mind, listen to the words, and try to picture what the speaker is saying.
- Don't interrupt and don't impose your "solutions." Wait for the speaker to pause to ask clarifying questions.
- Ask questions only to ensure understanding. Try to feel what the speaker is feeling. Give the speaker regular feedback. Pay attention to what isn’t said—to nonverbal cues.

For more details about these tips, see this article.

TAKE A REFRESH WALK: Walk off your tension by taking a 15-minute Refresh Walk today! It’s about meditation in motion! A “Refresh Walk” will relax you, lower your stress level and give you an endorphin boost to carry you through the day. What is mindful walking? Mindful walking focuses on the sensations of walking. Notice, without judging, your surroundings, smells and sounds. Feel the air on your skin and the ground on your feet. The speed of the walk doesn’t matter as much as focusing on the sensations. Find a walking buddy or go alone. Use this Self-Guided Walk Instructions.

UNPLUG FROM SOCIAL MEDIA: Disconnect from all social media for a period of time that challenges you. This includes Facebook, Instagram, Gaming, and other online social interaction.

If you are typically connected:
- all day - Try at least 1 hour
- most of the day- Try 2 to 5 hours
- part of the day – Try 6 to 8 hours
- only an hour or less a day – Try 24 hours

During your downtime, try one of the following:
- Try a new recipe or read a short book
- Hand write a letter or catch up on chores
- Try a new walking trail; go hiking or biking
- Spend more time communicating with family/friends
- Take in the arts (attend a music event or museum)
- Get some much needed sleep or rest

EAT SLOWLY & MINDFULLY: Eat one meal or snack today in a slow and mindful way so that you truly enjoy each bite, as well as notice the texture, taste and smell of your food. For a snack, try this: Find a comfortable seated position, take a few deep breaths, and notice how you feel physically. Place a snack, such as raisins or nuts, in your hand. Notice the impulse you might have to eat it right away. Take a minute and look at your snack, examining it with curiosity as if you’ve never seen it before, and notice how it feels in your hand - the texture, shape, and weight. Put a small bite (one raisin or nut) in your mouth and appreciate the texture and flavor. Enjoy!