**Theme 1: Self-Care**

**SCHEDULE “ME TIME”:** Create a plan to spend some time for yourself. Start by using your calendar (on your phone, computer, Outlook, or hardcopy) to block off at least 30 minutes each day and set a reminder for each day. Add activities to the calendar from the Refresh from Stress (RFS) Activity Options or create your own self-care activities. If you need inspiration or guidance, this [website](#) provides a short 5-step guide to self-care for busy people.

**SCHEDULE PREVENTIVE HEALTH SCREENINGS/EXAMS:** Have you scheduled your preventive exam this year? Put yourself first and schedule your annual screening today. We are able to show up fully mentally, physically, and socially when we are at our best health. Setting aside time at least once a year to visit your primary care provider can make a world of difference for staying healthy. By doing so, is one of the best ways to identify and treat health issues before they become serious. Scheduling your annual exams might feel like an inconvenience, but this simple step can have a major impact on your health and overall well-being. If you are on the Emory medical plan, there is no out-of-pocket cost for an annual preventive exam when selecting an in-network provider. You can also earn incentives! Learn more about why you should get an annual preventive exam and the incentives available to you [HERE](#).

**PLAN A VACATION:** Ready for a vacation? Take some time to plan a trip for you and/or your family. It could be a short weekend trip, a camping trip, a week-long or 10-day vacation, or even a staycation. Need ideas for a destination? Check out [this article](#) for U.S. sites, or go [here](#) for international low-budget vacation destinations. If you prefer not to travel out of state yet due to pandemic-related concerns, explore local Georgia areas. Taking staycation or vacation has multiple benefits for your health!

**STEP AWAY FOR LUNCH:** Instead of eating in front of your computer or “multi-tasking”, give yourself time to enjoy your lunch break somewhere else. This can be at a nearby park, a restaurant, in another area of your home or office, or just a few steps away outdoors. Eating in a distraction-free environment, i.e. no electronics or work, can help you in various ways. Read [this article](#) to find out more and your body will thank you for it!

**SLEEP AT LEAST 7 HOURS:** Set a sleep goal and track your progress using the Healthy Emory Connect sleep guide. Check out tips to help you achieve your goal.

**STOP & STRETCH:** Take stretch breaks throughout the workday to help you recharge and re-focus. A 5-minute break here and there goes a long way. Follow along with [these stretches](#) and read more on the benefits of stretching [here](#).

**EAT A HEALTHY MEAL/SNACK:** Hungry? Good nutrition is a recipe for lower stress and a healthy mood. Learn about all of the tools and resources in Healthy Emory Connect to help you improve your eating (ensure you are first logged in to HEC to access link). Earn extra points for activities including adding a Zipongo recipe to your grocery list, tracking your daily nutrition, or completing your nutrition guide.
DECLUTTER: Recycle, toss or donate at least 3 belongings from your office or home. De-cluttering helps you simplify your life, feel more relaxed and save valuable time. It is usually most effective to “start small,” a few minutes or a few things at a time. If you recycle or donate items to a charity that is important to you or a loved one, the satisfaction of “giving back” to the environment or community will likely inspire you to declutter more. If you need help with where to start, phone a buddy who has been successful with de-cluttering or learn more here. Take advantage of any downtime to “up” your organizing!

INCREASE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: Participate in at least 10 more minutes of physical activity today than originally planned. Some suggestions: use stairs instead of an elevator, park your car further away to increase steps, take short walking breaks throughout the workday, ride a bike, take a virtual yoga class, or turn up the music and dance! Want to get more activity in your day on a regular basis? Use Healthy Emory Connect to set a step goal or challenge your friends to a Weekday Step-Off or Weekend Rumble (under challenges).

SAY YES TO LESS: “Taking good care of YOU means the people in your life will receive the best of you, rather than what’s left of you.” (Carl Bryan). Although our work, ambitions and relationships are often major sources of purpose, fun and connection, we can sometimes feel drained by them. We often automatically agree to requests out of guilt, habit or to avoid conflict, and ultimately take on too much, becoming tired or resentful. The act of setting boundaries is not about being selfish, it’s about communicating our needs and sustaining our health and well-being. Give yourself permission to pause and breathe before reacting to a request or saying yes. Take time to think about it and learn more about the time commitment. If you need to decline, you can always invite others to keep you in mind for future opportunities. When you “Say Yes to LESS,” you may just find MORE for yourself and others!

PAUSE FOR PLAY TIME: Need to decompress? Take time to stop and play today! Studies show that play reduces stress hormones, lowers risk of developing age-related diseases, increases creativity and productivity levels at work, and facilitates happiness. Give yourself permission to bring out your “kid at heart.” Whether coloring, drawing, board games at home, virtual games with friends, frisbee, jigsaw puzzles, karaoke or dancing, have fun with it! And don’t forget to build play time into work. Lead a wellness activity during a staff meeting, such as a fun icebreaker, trivia or a scavenger hunt. Need more ideas? Check out 15 Outstanding Virtual Team Building Activities & Online Games to Enrich Remote Work.

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 rest of the day. What is mindful walking? Mindful walking focuses on the sensations of walking. Without judgement, notice your surroundings, sights, 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, and of course, follow mask and distancing guidelines. Print or save a photo of these Self-Guided Walk Instructions.