Spring is a good time to consider how we renew and recharge.

Nature reminds us that following a time of rest and recharging there comes a time of renewal and growth. Springtime finds the Vanderbilt campus painted with the new growth of flowers, fresh smells, students and faculty anticipating graduation, and many of us considering how to fit in a summer vacation. With continued needs for us to perform at our peak, we often think that we cannot afford to take time away from the demands of our work. Seeking balance in our work and personal life will just have to wait.

A number of studies point to the benefits of periodically taking some time away from the responsibilities of work as a time to relax, be creative, and recharge. The famed Framingham Heart Study followed 750 women with no previous heart disease over 20 years. Those who took the fewest vacations proved to be twice as likely to have a heart attack as those who took the most.

Time off work can increase workplace productivity, reduce stress, improve relationships, and positively impact health. Try to make your vacations as work-free as possible. If possible, use your Outlook “out of office message” to set expectations up front that you won’t be checking e-mails and designate a contact for urgent matters. It’s your opportunity for relaxation and renewal, so plan to make the most of it.

Ellen Trice, LCSW, Counselor at Work/Life Connections-EAP provides some suggestions for renewal and recharging:

1. Set a specific goal to recharge, whether it is a family vacation to the lake, a cruise to an exotic location, a picnic at the park, being a tourist in our own city, or just doing some things around the house allowing you to rest and recharge. It is good for your health, your outlook, and for your productivity.

2. Stop and smell the roses. There is power in enjoying the moment. Once in the morning and once in the afternoon, stop and take a few moments to focus on the sensations of your surroundings. Note the smells, tastes, warmth, sights, and sounds. This is an example of mindfulness.

(Continued on page 2)
Spring — consider how we renew and recharge

(Continued from page 1)

3. **Don’t limit yourself** to believing that the only way to benefit from time off is a two-week vacation to somewhere exciting. There is a growing body of research in the area of achieving our peak performance suggesting that we are most productive when we alternate between periods of high focus followed by intermittent rest. A long weekend can be just the thing.

Sources: http://www.framinghamheartstudy.org/; http://www.theenergyproject.com/

---

**Start! your spring by getting outside more**

Join more than 9,000 faculty and staff in tracking your physical activity, earning quarterly prizes, and helping Vanderbilt reach the goal of 2 billion steps in 2013. This program is easy, convenient, available 24/7, and requires no equipment or fitness facility. What are you waiting for? Try these activities to get moving:

- **Challenge 2 begins April 1.** There is still plenty of time to meet the challenge goal and win an exercise resistance band as your prize.

- **Walking Wednesdays** — do it alone or with a friend. Join Health Plus Group Fitness Coordinator Lori Cowan as she leads six weeks of 30-minute walks beginning April 3. Meet Lori at the Medical Center North shuttle drop off at noon for a half hour walk, rain or shine. For questions contact Lori Cowan at 343-6576 or lori.l.cowan@vanderbilt.edu.

- **National Walking Day is April 3.** Join Health Plus staff and Vanderbilt senior leaders for a 20-minute fitness walk beginning at noon at the Medical Center North shuttle drop off. After the walk, join in the festivities and if you qualified, receive a prize for completing Start! Challenge 1.

- **May 15 is National Employee Health and Fitness Day,** a day dedicated to promoting worksite health and fitness. Turn to page 3 of this newsletter to learn more.

- **Can’t get outside?** Try one of the three indoor walking maps on the Health Plus Website at [http://healthplus.vanderbilt.edu](http://healthplus.vanderbilt.edu). Find the maps by typing Walking Routes into the Website SEARCH bar.

Click the green Start! button on the Health Plus homepage to begin moving more and having fun.

---

**Work/Life Connections-EAP**

**The Counseling Corner**

Q: **Dear Counselor,**

I thought I would get a break after the holidays and be able to catch up in this new year, but I seem to be falling more behind — I’m stressed to the max! What’s something easy I can do to feel better amidst chaos? Help!

Frazzled

A: **Dear Frazzled,**

Meditation is a great way to reduce stress and improve concentration... and you can do it anywhere! Other major benefits include:

- lower blood pressure
- better sleep
- less anxiety
- lower cholesterol
- stronger immune response

People often think meditation is too difficult or time consuming, but one technique is as simple as breathing. First, let’s revisit quality breathing: begin with a deep, audible sigh; now inhale and see how slow, deep, and regular you can make your breaths. Do this 8 to 10 times before resuming normal breathing.

Now, focus on making your exhalation slightly longer than your inhalation. Sit comfortably with your eyes closed. Breathe in for a count of 4, and hold for 2; exhale for a count of 6 and pause at the bottom of your breath before beginning the process again... inhale for 4 counts, hold for 2, exhale for 6 counts, and hold for 2. Continue for 10 rounds, and over time, you can increase your practice to 5, 10, 15, or more minutes a day. The best part is you only need to practice a few rounds to notice a difference and enjoy the benefits of feeling more relaxed and re-energized!

For more information and some great free Apps and meditation guides, visit [http://www.meditationoasis.com](http://www.meditationoasis.com).

Hopefully, this will have a positive impact on your stress. If you would like further recommendations based upon your specific situation, Work/Life Connections-EAP is a free resource for Vanderbilt employees and their spouses and same-sex domestic partners. For a confidential appointment just call 936-1327.

Michelle Cortright, BA
Counseling Intern
Work/Life Connections-EAP
Know Your Numbers

Keep your weight and blood pressure in check with monthly Know Your Numbers events. Stop by at a location in April or May:

• Throughout April and May
  All hours of operation, Health Plus, Kensington Garage

• Throughout April and May
  9:00 a.m. – noon and 1:00 – 4:00 p.m., Occupational Health Clinic, 640 Medical Arts Building

• May 13
  11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., Kirkland Hall, Room 201

• May 14
  7:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m., Preston Research Building Lobby

• May 15
  10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., Outside Eskind Biomedical Library

• May 16
  11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., The Commons, Fireside Lounge, Room 107

• May 17
  11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., 100 Oaks, Room 26119

Please remember to bring your Vanderbilt ID card to all Health Plus events.

Faculty and staff have fun doing Zumba on the Lawn as part of the 2012 National Employee Health and Fitness Day.
April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month

One call can change lives forever

Talking on cell phones, texting, and checking mobile devices are not things anyone should do while driving, but they happen all the time. Why? Many drivers don’t believe they are that distracted and think that they can multitask. Research proves otherwise.

- Distracted drivers can miss up to 50% of their driving environment, including stop signs, pedestrians, and red lights.
- Nearly 25% of all crashes involve drivers distracted by cell phones.
- Drivers talking on cell phones — handheld or hands-free — are four times as likely to crash.
- Drivers who text increase their likelihood of a crash by eight to 23 times.

Source: National Safety Council

Before you start gardening this spring, make sure your tetanus/diphtheria (Td) vaccination is up to date.

Health and Wellness Connection
Newsletter Editor: Marilyn Holmes, MS, RD, LDN, Manager Health Plus, Faculty/Staff Health & Wellness
Contact marilyn.c.holmes@vanderbilt.edu or 343-2638.

Health and Wellness Director: Mary Yarbrough, MD, MPH
Department Managers:
Lori Rolando, MD, MPH, and Marilyn Holmes, MS, RD, LDN, Health Plus;
Jim Rendall, LCSW, ACSW, CEAP, Work/Life Connections-EAP;
Melanie Swift, MD, FACOEM, The Occupational Health Clinic;
Diane Neighbors, EdD, Child and Family Center;
Paula McGown, MSN, MAcc, CPA, Health & Wellness Administration.
Q: What are some ways to speed up my metabolism?

A: Contrary to media claims, there are no magic superfoods that miraculously boost metabolism. While green tea and chili peppers temporarily elevate metabolic rates, this increase isn’t enough to offset eating too much or consuming an unbalanced diet. However, according to research from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, there are ways that you can maximize your metabolism to its fullest potential:

- **Eat breakfast:** We all know eating breakfast is good for us. Beyond a better mood, eating breakfast can also help wake up your metabolism. While you sleep, your body burns calories. By the time you wake up, your body is hungry again. Sleeping puts our bodies into “fasting” mode. In the morning you need to “break” your “fast.” Eating within one to two hours of waking up is ideal and it doesn’t have to be a big meal. A piece of fruit, low-fat yogurt, or a slice of toast with peanut butter are all great options.
- **Build muscle:** Increasing your total muscle mass will boost your metabolism. Muscle burns more calories per hour than fat, so if you have more muscle mass you will burn more calories doing your daily activities.
- **Eat a balanced diet:** Make sure to eat a variety of foods, including fresh fruits and vegetables, which contain vitamins and minerals that support your metabolism. Your metabolism peaks in the middle of the day, so try to eat your biggest meal at lunchtime.
- **Don’t skip meals:** This will cause your body to return to “fasting” mode like it does when you sleep. Your body will think it is “starving” and will hold on to calories because it doesn’t know when your next meal will be. This slows your metabolism.

For more information on boosting your metabolism visit [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org) and use keyword “boost metabolism.”

Reviewed by: Dianne Killebrew, MEd RD, LDN Educational Coordinator, The Dietetic Internship Program at Vanderbilt

---

**Eating-Well Recipe**

**Asian ColeSlaw**

- **ColeSlaw:** Combine all vegetables in a bowl, toss.

- **Dressing:** Combine all ingredients in a small bowl and whisk well. Pour over vegetables and toss to coat.

**6 servings.** Per serving: 42 Calories, Total fat 1 g, Saturated fat 0g, Sodium 107 mg, Carbohydrates 7 g, Fiber 2 g, Sugars 4 g, Protein 2 g, Dietary exchanges 1 vegetable.

Source: American Heart Association’s Simple Cooking with Heart Program. For more simple, quick and affordable recipes and videos, visit [heart.org/simplecooking](http://heart.org/simplecooking)

---

**Leading by example**

**Brock Williams**

*(Continued from page 1)*

Group fitness rooms, the exercise room will be expanded, and a new exercise room will be housed on the second floor.

Besides being active by walking on this beautiful campus to meetings, what are other ways you fit physical activity into your life?

I am an avid basketball player and play three mornings a week with former Vanderbilt players and former pro players such as Ron Mercer. There are about 30 – 40 of us who gather faithfully to play. Other days during the week, I lift weights.

What is your favorite healthy family meal?

I love to cook. My favorite meal to prepare is chicken breasts with roasted broccoli and cauliflower that have been prepared in the oven for about 30 – 40 minutes in olive oil.

Would you share with us your favorite healthy snacks?

Nuts and fruit are my standards. Occasionally I will have to give in to my weakness and have a chocolate chip cookie. I do try to limit how many cookies and how often.
take care

Secrets to stop slouching

Slouching puts stress on our skeletal structure, which can negatively affect muscles, organs, and the nervous system.

While sitting...

- **Choose a chair that supports your back**, and allows you to place both feet on the floor.
- **Distribute your weight evenly on both hips**. Don’t sit balanced to one side.
- **Notice your sit-bones**. Sit-bones are the two boney landmarks you sit on. Rock your pelvis forward to back and side to side to find them. Many slouchers sit on a spot behind their sit-bones. Perch yourself directly on top of your sit-bones.
- **Keep your spine upright** by tightening your lower abdominal muscles a bit.
- **Keep your feet flat on the floor**, slightly apart. Your knees should be bent at right angles and even with (or slightly higher than) your hips.
- **Don’t sit too long**. Even just a one-minute walk to the watercooler can keep your body more flexible.
- **Move your pelvis around while sitting** (forward to back, side to side, circles). Do some neck rolls from side to side.

To evaluate your work set-up, conduct your own office workstation evaluation by going to the Vanderbilt Occupational Health webpage [http://www.occupationalhealth.vanderbilt.edu](http://www.occupationalhealth.vanderbilt.edu).

The key to a good relationship — with a spouse, significant other, family member, neighbor, or co-worker — is learning to genuinely apologize.

Here are a few ways to apologize, according to “The Five Languages of Apology,” by Gary Chapman and Jennifer Thomas. Some people more readily accept a specific type of apology; others prefer a combination of one or more.

1. **Express regret** — Say “I’m sorry,” but be specific. The more details you provide, the better. Avoid the temptation to use, “but…”
2. **Accept responsibility** — Admit you were wrong.
3. **Make things right** — Many people have an inborn need for someone to “make things right” when they’ve been hurt or wronged.
4. **Change your ways** — If you genuinely mean you are sorry for what you do or say, you should not make the same mistake again.
5. **Ask for forgiveness** — Sometimes people can forgive immediately; for others, it may take time.
6. **Apologizing doesn’t mean you are accepting blame**. Chad Buck, PhD, Work/Life Connections-EAP Counselor explains that being sorry doesn’t mean you are saying you are to blame, but about owning the hurt or stress your behavior might have caused.

Master the fine art of saying you’re sorry — for real

Reviewed and commented on by: Wilma Traughber, MSN, RN, Manager, Vanderbilt Occupational Health Ergonomics Program

Reviewed and commented on by: Chad Buck, PhD, Work/Life Connections-EAP Counselor
According to the American Cancer Society, more than one million people in the United States get cancer each year. While what we know about cancer prevention is still evolving, chances of developing cancer can be affected by the health choices you make.

The National Cancer Institute and the Mayo Clinic outlines the following lifestyle changes to help reduce your risk.

1. **Avoid cigarette smoking and tobacco use.** Tobacco use is strongly linked to an increased risk for many kinds of cancer. Scientists believe that cigarette smoking causes about 30% of all cancer deaths in the United States.

2. **Get immunized.** Certain viruses are able to cause cancer. For example, hepatitis B can increase the risk of developing liver cancer.

3. **Use sunscreen.** Skin cancer is one of the most common forms of cancer. Learn ways to protect yourself from the sun.

4. **Eat a healthy diet.** Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables, while limiting high fat foods.

5. **Limit alcohol.** Studies have shown that drinking alcohol is linked to an increased risk of cancer, such as oral, esophageal, and liver cancer.

6. **Maintain a healthy weight and increase physical activity.** Studies show that people who are physically active have a lower risk of certain cancers than those who are not. Also, obesity increases your risks of certain cancers.

7. **Avoid risky behaviors that can lead to viral infections.** Practice safe sex and do not abuse IV drugs.

8. **Get regular medical care.** Regular checkups for early detection and learning self-examination techniques can increase your chances of discovering cancer early, when treatment is more likely to be successful.

An oncologist at Vanderbilt Ingram Cancer Center, Dr. Hande points out that “This is an excellent list of things individuals can do to decrease their cancer risk. Many of these activities also have benefits in preventing other serious medical illness such as heart and lung disease. Our treatments for certain cancers remain suboptimal. For instance, our overall cure rate for patients with lung cancer is less than 20%. Efforts to never start or to stop smoking are more effective than dealing with lung cancer once it occurs.”

Take cancer prevention into your own hands. Find more ways you can improve your health by contacting your health care provider. Make that appointment today!
Health Plus offers this workplace prenatal health promotion program to full-time Vanderbilt employees, spouses, and dependents. The program encourages early and consistent prenatal care and provides monthly educational opportunities. An incentive is offered to those who register in their first trimester, attend at least three of the monthly classes, and go to all prenatal provider visits.

WIN PRIZES:
- Take 40 aerobic classes (3 classes per week) and win a prize.
- Take 80 classes (6 classes per week) and win a bigger prize.
- Grand prize for the person taking the most classes.
- Different bonus classes each week (3 extra points for bonus classes).

WHY SHOULD YOU TAKE THE CHALLENGE? It will be loads of fun, you will meet new people, it is an indoor activity in the hot summer, it helps keep you motivated through the summer, and beginners are welcome!

SUPERCLASS! The Aerobic Challenge will begin with a two-hour Superclass on Wednesday, May 15 from 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. at Health Plus. There will be six 20-minutes classes. Try one or all of the classes. If you sign up for the Aerobic Challenge at the Superclass, you will receive 5 extra points for taking at least 3 out of the 4 classes. Check the Health Plus Website for the lineup.

For details, call Group Fitness Coordinator Lori Cowan at 343-8943, or contact her at lori.l.cowan@vanderbilt.edu.

Occupational Health Compliance Hotspots hit the spot!

Performance evaluations are here — are you ready? Log in to the Health & Wellness Information Portal to see what you need at myhealthandwellness.vanderbilt.edu. For quick and convenient shots and TB tests, visit one of the Occupational Health Compliance Hotspots. You don’t have to come to us – let us come to you!

Visit http://occupationalhealth.vanderbilt.edu to find a location convenient to you.