Bridging the Gap
Using Evidence-Informed Research to Promote Healthy Living.
INTRODUCTION

Often, as students, we are swamped with our day-to-day activities. Due to our hectic schedule, we may often forget the simplest things that we should do to maintain a healthy lifestyle (e.g., drinking enough water, taking regular walks). Due to the variety of things that we might often forget to do, it is hard to ‘design’ an ‘ideal environment’ that would remind us to perform the tasks. Over time, it may be difficult for us to develop a habit of performing these tasks, only because these tasks are not factored into our daily lives, or because we do not think about the need and importance of these tasks to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Through a fun and easy ‘game’ format, this project aims to use evidence-informed research to remind us that healthy activities can be simple and does not take up too much time in our daily lives.

-Jeffrey Neo
THE RULE OF THIS ‘GAME’

1. Each page consists of a guide for you to perform one healthy task.
2. There is a total of 30 tasks.
3. Before you attempt the first task, remember the date today (e.g., April 1, 2016).
4. Make a note of the date that is 30 days from today (e.g., April 30, 2016).
5. Each day, you are strongly encouraged to perform ONE healthy task from this ‘game’. Do NOT perform more than ONE task a day.
6. At the end of each day, indicate if you did/did not perform the task. Please indicate your initial (e.g., AC for Albert Corey) as well. For instance, if you performed the task ‘Brisk walking’, please indicate ‘yes’ on the page behind that particular task.
7. At the end of 30 days, count the number of YES that you’ve indicated at the back of each page.
8. Pass on this ‘game’ to another friend!
BRISK WALKING – TAKE A BRISK WALK FOR 20 MINUTES.

Regular brisk walking can help you 1) maintain a healthy weight, 2) prevent or manage various conditions, including heart disease, high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes, 3) strengthen your bones and muscles, 4) improve your mood, and 5) improve your balance and coordination (Seiger et al, 2012).

Walking is the best possible exercise. Habituate yourself to walk very fast.
Thomas Jefferson, 3rd U.S. President
1743-1826
DON’T DO GROCERY WHILE YOU’RE HUNGRY – IF YOU’RE HUNGRY BEFORE GROCERY SHOPPING, EAT A HEALTHY SNACK BEFORE HEADING OUT.

In a study conducted by Cornell researchers, it was revealed that people who hadn't eaten all afternoon chose more high-calorie foods in a simulated supermarket than those who were given a snack just before online food shopping. In a real grocery store, shoppers bought a higher ratio of high-calorie foods to low-calorie ones in the hours leading up to dinnertime compared to earlier in the day (Tal & Wansink, 2013).

Weight loss and healthy eating is a journey that begins at the grocery store. Anonymous
RELAX OCCASIONALLY – TAKE 15-20 MINUTES OFF AND DO SOMETHING THAT YOU ENJOY.

Through measurements of body temperatures and heart rates, relaxation and music therapy were effective in reducing stress in patients (Guzzetta, 1989)

The time to relax is when you don’t have time for it.
Sydney Harris, American Journalist 1917-1986.
CLIMB THE STAIRS – USE THE STAIRS FOR THE ENTIRE DAY INSTEAD OF THE ELEVATOR.

Through a small increase in daily activity, we can reduce our risk of developing heart disease, diabetes, and high blood pressure (US Department of Health and Human Services, 1996). Moderate physical activity includes “lifestyle” activities that can be performed daily, such as walking or biking instead of driving and using the stairs instead of elevators or escalators (Kerr et al., 2004).

There is no elevator to success. You have to take the stairs.
Zig Ziglar, American Author and Motivational Speaker 1926-2012
BRING A FRUIT TO SCHOOL – BRINGING A FRUIT WITH YOU TO SCHOOL CAN SERVE AS A HEALTHY SNACK IN BETWEEN MEALS.

Most children and adolescents in the U.S. consume less than recommended amounts of fruit and vegetables (Larson, et al, 2009). Experts recognize the school environment as a fundamental setting for providing children access to nutritious food and opportunities to learn about the importance of healthy eating (Davison & Birch, 2001).

When eating a fruit, think about the person who planted the tree...

Vietnamese Proverb
THINK POSITIVE – THINK OF 5-7 ENJOYABLE THINGS THAT YOU WILL DOING THE WEEK. MAKE A NOTE AND PUT IT SOMEWHERE TO REMIND YOURSELF.

Researchers continue to explore the effects of positive thinking and optimism on health. Health benefits that positive thinking may provide include:

1. Increased life span,
2. Lower depression rates,
3. Lower levels of distress,
4. Greater resistance to the common cold,
5. Better coping skills during hardships and times of stress.

(Brydon et al., 2009).

Have an attitude of gratitude.
Elie Wiesel, Writer and Political Activist
1928-present

http://thumbs.dreamstime.com/z/positive-thinking-wordcloud-sphere-as-creative
DANCE IT OFF – PICK UP YOUR MUSIC PLAYER AND DANCE FOR 15-20 MINUTES.

Dance has been shown to increase critical and creative thinking abilities (Minton, 2003). Overtime, the act of critical and creative thinking may lead to risk-taking behaviors (Keun & Hunt, 2006).

That’s how we finish. We have to dance it out!

Meredith Grey, Grey’s Anatomy, 2014
PORTION YOUR FOOD - ASK FOR A TAKE-OUT BOX BEFORE YOUR FOOD ARRIVES AND KEEP A PORTION OF YOUR MEAL FOR TOMORROW.

Large portions of food may contribute to excess energy intake and greater obesity. Portion size is a modifiable determinant of energy intake that should be addressed in connection with the prevention and treatment of obesity (Rolls, Morris & Roe, 2002).

When you truly understand that your food choices and sizes are powerful and life affirming, you can exercise control and restraint without deprivation,

Anonymous
GIVE YOURSELF – IN THE NEXT ONE WEEK, FIND AN OPPORTUNITY TO HELP SOMEONE.

The relationship between health and volunteering demonstrate that the benefits of volunteering (helping others) are not limited to the recipients of the volunteer services (Dulin & Hill, 2003). People who gave support through volunteering experience greater health benefits than those who receive support through these activities.

Power is the ability to do good things for others.
Brooke Astor, American Philanthropist
1902-2007
PLAY A SPORT – TEAM UP WITH FRIEND(S) TO PLAY A SPORT.

Playing sports in a team does not only increase an individual’s physical activity levels. It can also foster an individual’s sense of leadership, self-confidence and self-respect (Kniffin, 2015).

Life is a sport, make it count.  
Nike, 2014
DRINK PLENTY OF WATER – DRINK ABOUT EIGHT 8-OUNCE GLASSES OF WATER TODAY.

Lack of water can lead to dehydration, a condition that occurs when you don't have enough water in your body to carry out normal functions. Even mild dehydration can drain your energy and make you tired (Sterns, 2014).

Water is the driving force of all nature. Leonardo da Vinci, Engineer 1452-1519
SLEEP ENOUGH - GET 7-9 HOURS OF SLEEP TONIGHT. THIS IS THE RECOMMENDED SLEEP DURATION FOR YOUNG ADULTS.

People who sleep five hours or less may be at higher risk of developing high blood pressure or worsening already high blood pressure. There's also an increased risk of high blood pressure for people who sleep between five and six hours (Levy et al., 2012).

Never give up on your dreams, keep sleeping.
Bill Murray, Actor
1950-Present

http://cimg0.ibsrv.net/cimg/www.fitday.com/693x350_1/8/sleeptime-107008.jpg
STRETCH YOURSELF – TAKE 5-10 MINUTES FOR A QUICK STRETCH TO ENERGIZE YOURSELF BEFORE YOUR NEXT ACTIVITY.

Stretching exercise is reported to be effective at not only improving neuromuscular coordination and flexibility, but also at reducing pain and muscle weakness (Renan-Ordine et al., 2011). Stretching exercise may improve physical activity by encouraging correct posture of body and increasing muscle endurance (Han et al., 2014).

A mind that is stretched by a new experience can never go back to its old dimensions. 
Oliver Holmes JR, Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court 1841-1935

http://www.flokka.com/7-reasons-exercise-morning-best/
HEALTHY SNACKING - IF YOU’RE HUNGRY BETWEEN MEALS, EAT A HEALTHY SNACK (E.G., FRUIT, YOGHURT).

A good goal for a between-meal snack is something with fewer than 100 calories. Generous portions of fruits or vegetables can easily help fill you up while staying below that calorie count. (USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, 2016)

I don’t go long without eating. I never starve myself: I grab a healthy snack.

Vanessa Hudgens, Actress and Singer 1988-Present.
ONE MINUTE STRESS STRATEGY – THESE SIMPLE STRATEGIES CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN HOW YOU HANDLE STRESS.

Tension release 1) Tense your muscles, one area at a time, and enjoy the relaxation upon release, 2) Take a deep breath and hold it as you curl your toes for about 5 seconds, then let your breath go all at once 3) Next clench your calves, thighs, buttocks, arms, shoulders, jaws and finally squeeze your eyelids (University of Michigan, 2014).

Stressed spelled backwards is desserts.
Loretta Laroche, Author and Stress Expert
1966-Present

STANDING WHILE WORKING – STAND FOR 45-60 MINUTES WHILE WORKING ON A TASK.

Spending more of your day standing could reduce the risk of obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and cancer (Buckley, et al., 2015). However, simply standing is insufficient. Movement is important to get blood circulation through the muscles (Dunstan, Thorp & Healy, 2011).

If I have seen further, it is by standing upon the shoulders of giant.  
Isaac Newton, Physicist and Mathematician  
1643-1727

If your feet are sore from standing, do take occasional breaks by sitting down.
GO NATURAL – DURING GROCERY SHOPPING, REPLACE 2-3 PROCESSED FOOD THAT YOU’LL NORMALLY BUY WITH NATURAL FOOD.

Overconsumption of processed food may lead to conditions such as atherosclerosis (Osypuk, 2009; Caspi et al., 2014). Highly processed foods include prepared meals, white bread, cookies, chips, soda and candy. Unprocessed or minimally processed foods include fresh or frozen vegetables, fresh meat, milk, eggs and dried beans (CDC, 2016).

The food you eat can either be the safest and most powerful form of medicine or the slowest form of poison. Ann Wigmore, Nutritionist 1909-1994
SET SMART REALISTIC GOALS – MAKE A LIST OF GOALS/THINGS THAT YOU’LL LIKE TO DO OR ACHIEVE THIS WEEK.

A technique for behavior change that has achieved considerable success is called “SMART” - Specific. Having a specific goal is the key. Getting fit, for example, is a pretty general goal. Running a marathon is a more specific goal, but even you can be even more specific by including in that goal the training you'll need to do (Bovend, 2009).

A goal without a plan is just a wish.
Antoine de Saint-Exupery, French writer 1900-1944

WORKOUT - GET A WORKOUT WHILE WATCHING TV FOR 20-30 MINUTES

Watching TV while running or cycling can help decrease boredom and provide distraction from discomfort, thus helping you push through the pain and exercise at a greater intensity or for a longer time. Audio and visual stimuli can lower rates of perceived exertion and increased levels of dissociation and positive emotion during intense exercise more than listening to music alone (Karageorghis & Priest, 2012)

Fitness is not a destination, it is a way of life.
Anonymous
DRINK ONLY WATER AFTER MEALS – REPLACE SODA OR ALCOHOL WITH WATER AFTER EACH MEAL.

The greater the fluid intake, the lower the incidence of bladder cancer, with more significant results when the fluid is water (Michaud et al., 2007). One possible reason could be that urinating more frequently prevents the buildup of bladder carcinogens. Staying hydrated may also reduce the risk of colon cancer and breast cancer (Tang et al., 1999).

Drink water like it’s going out of style.
Melissa Morris, Fitness Motivator
1984-Present
Smartphones and tablets can disrupt your sleep. The light exposure can interfere with melatonin, a hormone that helps control the natural sleep-wake cycle. Dimming the device brightness and holding the device at least 14 inches from your face will reduce its potential to interfere with melatonin and impede sleep (Krahn & Ramar, 2013).

My phone is like my lover, it’s the last thing I see at night and the first thing I wake up to every morning.

Anonymous
WALK TO THE RESTROOM – IF YOU HAVE 2 RESTROOMS ON 1 LEVEL, WALK TO THE ONE THAT IS FURTHER AWAY FROM YOU.

Turning your normal walk into a fitness stride requires good posture and purposeful movements. Here’s how you should look while walking 1) Your head is up. You're looking forward, not at the ground, 2) Your neck, shoulders and back are relaxed, not stiffly upright, 3) You're walking smoothly, rolling your foot from heel to toe (Seiger et al., 2014).

If you’re walking down the right path and you’re willing to keep walking, eventually you’ll make progress.

Barack Obama, Current U.S. President 1961-present.
GET A SALAD AND ASK FOR A REDUCED PORTION/LOW FAT DRESSING.

The adoption of a low-fat diet has been associated with decreased risks of chronic disease and obesity (Institute of Medicine, 2002). The use of fat-modified foods can be a successful strategy for decreasing fat intake (Kennedy & Bowen, 2001). Based on the 1985 Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals, salad dressings are identified as a major source of fat in women’s diets (Krebs-Smith et al., 1992).

The embarrassing thing is that the salad dressing is out grossing my films.

Paul Newman, Actor and Film Director
1925-2008
COMMUNICATE YOUR LOVE—TELL YOUR LOVE ONES HOW MUCH YOU LOVE OR APPRECIATE WHAT HE/SHE HAS DONE FOR YOU.

No matter who you’ve got in your life, whether it’s a huge family or just one best friend, communication is an often an critical aspect to sustaining relationships. The more you talk about your feelings and emotions, the easier it is to identify any potentially troubling signs (Jenkins, 2014).

When I tell you I love you, I don’t say it out of habit, or to make conversation. I say it to remind you that you’re the best thing that ever happened to me.

Darla Day, Singer and Song Writer
1977-Present

http://www.ifairer.com/article_image/7-romantic-ways-to-show-your-love-for-your-partner-1-
WALK MORE – IF YOU’RE TAKING THE BUS TO SCHOOL, GET OFF 1 TO 2 STOPS EARLIER. IF YOU’RE DRIVING, PARK A LITTLE FURTHER AWAY AND WALK TO YOUR DESTINATION.

Physical activities such as regular walking can prevent leading chronic disease including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and cancers (e.g., colon cancer) (Bloomberg, 2010).

All truly great thoughts are conceived while walking

Friedrich Nietzsche, German philosopher
1884-1900
EAT BY THE CLOCK – SET A FIXED TIME FOR EACH MEAL TODAY.

People who eat on schedule tend to eat about 80 calories less per day than most people who eat at erratic times and skip meals (Briffa, 2005).

Those who think they have no time for healthy eating, will sooner or later have to find time for illness.
Edward Stanley, British Statesman
1826-1893
Studies revealed that the likelihood of having a mental health problem is three times higher among people who have debt. Depression, anxiety disorders and psychotic disorders were among the common mental illnesses people in debt experienced (Richardson, Elliott & Roberts, 2013).

It’s not your salary that makes you rich; it’s your spending habits. Charles Jaffe, Chess Master 1879-1941
The negative effects of extended sitting can't be countered by brief bouts of strenuous exercise. The answer is to incorporate standing, pacing and other forms of activity into your normal day and standing at your desk during work or meetings are some of the easiest way of doing so (Levine et al., 2006).

Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.

Sir Winston Churchill, Ex UK Prime Minister
1874-1965

Do this activity whenever it’s appropriate.
STORE THE HEALTHIEST FOOD IN THE FRONT OF THE FRIDGE.

When the fridge door opens, make sure you see the healthiest items first. If the leftover food is shoved in the back corner, chances are the eye will gravitate towards the shiny apple right up front first.

*Your diet is a bank account. Good food choices are safe investments.*

Bethenny Frankel, Reality TV Personality 1970-Present
THE ART OF SHARING

Share with your friends on three of your favorite ways to improve your physical activities, eating habits and mental wellness. The three ways could be from this guide, or it could simply be three of your personal favorites!

Now, pass on this guide to another friend and tell him or her that healthy living starts today!

The more we share, the more we have.
Leonard, Nimoy, Actor and Director
1931-2015
Cited works

References indicated by (**) are references featured in DEA 6610 Environments and Health.


Cited works


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