

Staying Social in Graduate School

Graduate school can feel overwhelming because you have to balance the roles of student, researcher, teaching assistant, and graduate assistant. It is important to keep your social life intact and self-care a priority! Here are tips to staying social and healthy.

Have a routine and be kind to your body.

- It may be a struggle to keep a routine when balancing major projects and remaining flexible to changes in your schedule. Try to maintain the aspects of your schedule you can control, including sleep! Draw boundaries for self-care in order to create time for exercise, planning meals ahead of time and shooting for 6-8 hours of sleep per night.
- Taking care of your health can allow you to have the energy to do well in school and stay connected with friends and family members.

Keep your hobbies and strategies for self-care.

- Processing a lot of information on a daily basis can make you feel like your mind is still at work even when you're with loved ones. Maintain (or begin!) self-care or hobbies like mindfulness meditation, journaling, cooking, being outdoors, playing sports, exercising, listening to music, or creative activities.
- Create a buddy system for your self-care or hobbies where you have a regularly scheduled activity with a friend. This can include being with a friend while doing the aforementioned activities or even making a grocery store trip together to catch up.

Plan your schedule 1-2 weeks in advance.

- You may not be able to account for all of the surprises in your schedule, but it is critical to plan your workload ahead of time to make space for going out.
- Try to get a head start on all of your projects in order to make time to go out or see loved ones.

Make time to do work with your classmates.

- Working with a classmate holds you accountable to starting and completing projects and may provide extra socializing time in your schedule.

Plan to go out 1-2 times per week.

- After planning your schedule, leave at least one day that you do not look at school work.
- Make plans with friends and stick to it! Planning to go out ahead of time can help you to turn down extra work that you may feel tempted to take on during your day off. You will have several opportunities during your training to take on exciting projects.
- In the long run, you may perform better on tasks when you feel grounded through your social life.

Take advantage of Graduate Student Life!

- Graduate Student Life is a UMD program housed within Student Affairs. They offer monthly social events (including hiking, sporting, and music events), free coffee Thursdays, family programs, workshops, etc. Visit http://thestamp.umd.edu/graduate_student_life for more information!

References

14 Ways to Survive Graduate School. <http://gradresources.org/14-ways-to-survive-graduate-school/>
Tips for Staying Healthy During Graduate School. <http://www.gradschools.com/blog/tips-staying-healthy-during-graduate-school>