



# Employee Wellness Newsletter

JUNE 2021

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

### **Sports Backers Overview:**

June 9 from 12-1pm  
Register at: [UR Talent Web](#)

### **Sit and Stretch w/Cigna:**

June 8 and June 22 at  
12pm and 4pm  
Email:  
[hsadowsk@richmond.edu](mailto:hsadowsk@richmond.edu)  
for the WebEx invitation.

### **Cigna Coaching Overview:**

June 22 at 1pm  
Email:  
[hsadowsk@richmond.edu](mailto:hsadowsk@richmond.edu)  
for the WebEx invitation.

### **Cigna Employee Assistance Program (EAP) – Wellness Webinars:**

June 2: Healthy Life Tips  
for Men  
June 16: Managers: Gender  
Transition and the  
Workplace

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## University of Richmond Employee Wellness

### Travel Tips for Safe and Healthy Travel This Summer

Summer is fast approaching. After more than a year of quarantine, many of us are keen to get away. Luckily, many countries are opening once-closed borders and preparing to welcome tourists.

While summer vacations might not feel as care-free as they normally do, they can still be enjoyed with safety guidelines in mind.

**If you're fully vaccinated, be prepared to prove it.** Those who are vaccinated or planning to vaccinate are the most likely to travel. If you're vaccinated and traveling, some countries and regions may require you to carry a vaccination passport. Be sure to look up the current domestic or international travel guidelines to stay informed, and keep your documentation on hand while you travel. If you aren't vaccinated, check your destination to ensure vaccination isn't a requirement before arrival. Most countries still require proof of a negative PCR test, and, in some cases, quarantine on arrival.

**Don't put the hand sanitizer away yet.** Even after your flight, you'll still want your hand sanitizer. Taking a shuttle to the airport, touching the elevator button at the hotel, or grabbing the handrail at an attraction can all increase your exposure risk. Whether you're vaccinated or not, keeping a small bottle of hand sanitizer nearby could make the difference between stopping the spread of the virus and passing it on.

**Consider private accommodation.** If hotels, hostels, or resorts are normally your accommodation of choice, now might be the time to consider something different. Booking an entire home, cottage, or apartment is a safer choice for both vaccinated and unvaccinated travelers.

**Get outside.** You can always opt for the outdoors. Of those surveyed, 28 percent said they'd like to go camping this summer. With enclosed spaces posing a greater health threat, there's never been a better time to explore the outdoors.

**Avoid big crowds if you can.** Maintaining physical distancing is key to protecting both yourself and others. Arranging sightseeing activities outside peak hours is one way to dodge the throngs. Outdoor excursions also pose less risk, so consider taking trips to places like beaches and national parks.

**Consider the kind of vacation that you really need.** It has been a tough year for many people, and a summer vacation can be your opportunity to truly switch off. Think about what you really need from your vacation. Is it fun and adventure? Rest and relaxation? Or all of the above? You can then plan activities that replenish you.

**Don't put yourself under financial pressure.** Job layoffs and changing circumstances throughout the past year have put added financial pressure on many. When it comes to summer vacations, some people are spending big, while others are unable to spend anything extra on vacations at all. Road trips, short weekend breaks, and destinations close to home can help you to keep costs down.

Source: Healthline



# HOW TO BEAT THE HEAT

*This Summer*

- ### 1. KEEP HYDRATED

Keep yourself well hydrated to escape the summer heat. Make water your best friend. If you need some sprucing up, add fresh citrus fruits and herbs to make flavoured water.


- ### 2. HAVE FRUITS

Load up on citrus fruits this summer to get a burst of vitamin C to build your immunity. You can include fruits like watermelon, oranges, lemons in your daily diet.


- ### 3. USE A SCARF/HAT

Don't forget to cover up whenever you step out. Your skin needs protection from the harsh sun rays. Use a cotton scarf or a hat whenever you go out.


- ### 4. TAKE COLD SHOWERS

Taking cold showers in summers helps cool down your body and also helps you feel energized and refreshed. So hop in whenever you get a chance and enjoy the cool water.


- ### 5. WEAR LOOSE CLOTHES

Wear loose and comfortable clothes during summers to help your skin breathe. Try wearing more of cotton clothes as it helps to absorb sweat and let air pass easily.



## Healthy Cooking: The Best Green Smoothie

### Ingredients:

1 cup frozen pineapple  
 1/2 cup frozen mango  
 1-inch knob of ginger, peeled  
 1/2 medium avocado  
 2 cups organic spinach  
 1 cup milk of choice  
 Optional: 1 tbsp. oats, hemp seeds, or flax seed meal

### Directions:

1. In a large high-powered blender, add in all ingredients and blend on high for 1-2 minutes or until all ingredients are well combined. If necessary, add in more milk to thin the smoothie and blend again.  
 Serves 1.





## Educational Corner: Can Mindfulness Change Your Brain?

Much has been written about the benefits of mindfulness. There is research suggesting it can counter stress, relieve chronic pain, and even improve aspects of mood, thinking, and memory. But how does it actually work? Does mindfulness actually produce detectable changes in the brain?

In a recently published study, researchers at the University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia set out to investigate exactly how mindfulness can improve your ability to pay attention. To do this, they analyzed data from 81 healthy adults over age 60 who participated in a randomized controlled trial to assess both the immediate effects of an eight-week mindfulness intervention, and long-term effects six months later on attention and brain physiology.

They found that the older adults randomized to the mindfulness intervention showed improvements in sustained attention — improvements that were maintained at the six-month follow-up visit. They also found changes in brain physiology that correlated with the improvement in attention.

The Australian researchers found that two different types of brain processes were enhanced by mindfulness.

First, mindfulness training increased the efficiency of brain pathways that process information coming in from the senses. In other words, the boost in attention helped the participants to *literally* see information more accurately. Scientists often refer to such improvements in sensory abilities as enhancing "bottom-up" processes.

Second, mindfulness training also boosted the ability of the brain to direct attention down to the information of interest. This means that participants were better able to focus on the task and ignore distractions. These types of control processes which allocate attention are often referred to as "top-down" processes.

You now understand how mindfulness training improves one aspect of thinking — attention — at the level of brain physiology. This means that by focusing on the present moment, cultivating mindful awareness toward sensations, and attending to the rising and falling of the breath, you can actually improve your brain's ability to direct your attention and accurately perceive the world.

It used to be thought that components of thinking that make up your IQ, such as attention, were relatively fixed because they are based upon your brain's function. However, from studies like this one, we now understand that is an old-fashioned idea. By practicing cognitive skills such as mindfulness, you can literally change your mind, your brain, and your IQ.

Source: Harvard Health





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## Madeline Nathe, UR Culinary Dietician: Summer Hydration

**Madeline Nathe, MS, RD**  
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If you have been eagerly anticipating Summer 2021 you're not alone! Whether you're hoping to be working outside in your garden, hiking on the trails by the James River, or taking a relaxing break at Virginia Beach make sure you prioritize your hydration this summer. I've got some tips to help you stay healthy and hydrated during these hot months.

- Check the weather before you head out and plan appropriately. Make sure you know if the heat will trend up through the day – this means your sweat losses will be greater as the day goes on.
- What is the intensity of the activity you're planning? The harder the workout, the more you'll perspire and experience fluid loss. Pack extra water, and it might be worthwhile to invest in a handheld water bottle if you'll be on the go frequently.
- At the pool or the beach? You might not realize how much you're sweating or overheating if you're moving in and out of the water throughout the day. Try to take sips consistently during the day.
- You can also eat some foods to help with hydration! Crisp watermelon, cucumbers, strawberries or even cauliflower florets packed in a cold cooler will be sure to refresh you on a hot day.
- If you're someone who struggles to get enough water in throughout the day or like extra flavor in their water, make your own infused water or try out the many types of

sparkling waters (just check that no sugar is added).

Know the signs of dehydration. Early signs are:

- Thirst
- Flushed skin
- Premature fatigue
- Increased body temperature
- Faster breathing and pulse rate
- Increased perception of effort
- Decreased exercise capacity

Later signs include dizziness, increased weakness, and labored breathing with exercise.

**Here's a refreshing infused water recipe you can try out at home this summer!**

Honeydew, Cucumber, and Mint:

- ½ cup honeydew melon, cubed
- 1 cucumber, thinly sliced
- 10 fresh mint leaves, torn

How to:

In a large pitcher, add in melon, cucumber, and mint leaves. Fill with cold water. Infused water will stay fresh for 2-3 days.

