

## PhD Student Wellbeing

LAHP Induction

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## Introduction

- *What is my background and how did my interest in student wellbeing develop?*

## Wellbeing Tips for the Current Academic Year

- *What steps can each student take to prioritise their wellbeing during the 2020/21 Academic Year?*

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Freedom to research whatever interests you
- Become an expert on your topic
- Make an original contribution in your field
- Expand career options

## PHD OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES



## CHALLENGES

- Length of time until completion (sustaining motivation)
- Juggling research with other commitments
- Difficulty switching off from work
- Feelings of isolation and self doubt

## The Challenges of Starting a PhD in 2020

- Isolation
- Working from home
- Virtual meetings with supervisors
- Restrictions
- Health concerns
- Uncertainty



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## PILLAR 1: Self Care

- Set small, achievable goals for yourself and make it enjoyable
- Get out of the house at least once a day – even if it's just a quick walk
- Set a bed-time alarm | adopt a daily wind down routine
- Maintain the same wake-up time every morning (even on weekends!)
- Make healthy eating a priority by planning your meals in advance and upgrading foods\*

\*For inspiration see Liana Werner-Gray's, *The Earth Diet: Your Complete Guide to Living Using the Earth's Natural Ingredients* (Hay House, 2014) and *10-Minute Recipes: Fast Food, Clean Ingredients, Natural Health* (Hay House, 2016).



## Pillar 2: Daily Routine

- Establish some boundaries between your working space and living space
- Use the [Pomodoro technique](#) to enhance concentration and focus
- Break tasks down into manageable pieces (for help with prioritizing tasks use the [Eisenhower matrix](#))
- Manage distractions by checking email and social media during designated windows of time throughout the day
- Spend some time making your work space feel organized and welcoming
- Communicate your needs and set boundaries with family members, partners, and flat mates



## PILLAR 3: Detaching from Work

- Set an end to your work day in advance (don't wait until you reach exhaustion or burnout)
- Plan an activity for your time-off
- Carve out time for a new hobby
- Actively give yourself permission to take time off ([PhD Process Journal](#))
- Ease yourself into downtime with a transition activity





## PILLAR 4: Support Network

- Enlist the support of an [accountability partner](#)
- Arrange regular meetings with your supervisor throughout the first term
- Set up a virtual working session with a colleague
- Schedule ongoing catch-ups with family and friends | Have something to look forward to
- Spend some cultivating your inner support system



## PILLAR 5: Mindset (the foundation of all the Pillars)

- Take things one day at a time or week by week
- Acknowledge when you are in a state of worry and gently bring yourself back to the present moment
- Minimize your news consumption | Be mindful about when and how long you watch, read and listen to news
- Adopt a [gratitude practice](#) to put things in perspective
- Use music for an instant boost (make a playlist of calm or upbeat music)
- Reach out to others who may need additional support
- Search for [volunteer opportunities](#) in your area or create your own (see next photo)

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## Wellbeing Links

- Mental Health and Wellbeing, *The London Arts and Humanities Partnership* [www.lahp.ac.uk/mental-health-and-wellbeing/](http://www.lahp.ac.uk/mental-health-and-wellbeing/)
- Student Minds [www.studentminds.org.uk](http://www.studentminds.org.uk)

## Further Reading & Additional Resources

- Persisting with the PhD: Sustaining Motivation During the Coronavirus
- How to Make *Working from Home* Work for You
- PhD Plan B: Managing Detours on the Doctoral Path
- Building Your Mindfulness Muscle
- Managing Your Relationship with Your PhD Supervisor

Any questions? Feel free to get in touch at [info@academease.org](mailto:info@academease.org)