

WEEK 1: PLAY & CREATIVITY

1. Set aside time for play and creativity.

Just as you make time for work, exercise and hanging out with family and friends, you should make time for play and creative endeavors. Making time to play can benefit your relationships, job, school, and overall mood. The benefits of play extend beyond childhood, offering relaxation, enhanced brain function, stimulation, boosts in energy, and improved well-being for adults. Engaging in playful and creative activities with various connections, such as friends, family, and pets helps ward off stress and depression while also serving as a catalyst for empathy, compassion, trust, and intimacy through moments of laughter and fun. Engaging in play and creativity can infuse your life with more joy, enhance the learning process by making new tasks and concepts fun, overcome mental blocks by activating your creative networks and silencing the inner critic, and foster resilience by promoting a more positive experience and outlook during life's challenges, disappointments, and losses. Remember, the more you do it, the easier it becomes. Give yourself grace as you work to add more play and creativity into your life.

Options for play include, but are not limited to:	Tips for incorporating creativity into your life:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Goof off with friends and/or share jokes• Playing catch or tossing frisbees on the Pentacrest• Dress up for holidays/festivities• Going for a bike ride• Visit local businesses: bowling, miniature golf, pool, karaoke• Game nights with friends or family• Play a board game• Complete a puzzle• Get outside and fly a kite• Play with a pet (at home or an animal shelter)• Engage in various brain challenges• Surround yourself with playful people• Embrace a playful nature/state of mind• Attend a campus event	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Set aside a designated time.• Devote as much time as possible but take comfort knowing even just 10 minutes a day has benefits• Eliminate distractions• Engage in activities for intrinsic enjoyment• Invest in art supplies, construction toys, or science kits• Explore online courses and resources• Embrace a non-judgmental attitude

Upcoming campus events:

- **Craft Your Calm:** Managing your stress with arts and crafts.
Wednesday, April 17th from 11am – 2pm
IMU River Room 1 & 2

Check out more fun campus events here:

- [After Class Student Events](#)
- [Campus Activities Board Calendar](#)
- [Outdoor Rental Center](#)

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2. Pick one experience to truly savor each day.

We often neglect to fully appreciate positive experiences, but savoring allows us to revel in life's joys. Savoring is defined as the ability to notice, appreciate, and intensify positive moments, which helps us to focus on the positive and cultivate gratitude. This practice not only reduces mental space for negativity but also amplifies positive emotions, fostering resilience and psychological well-being. Research shows that savoring promotes emotional health, reduces stress, and contributes to improved physical health. Best of all, it's a cost-effective method of self-care (free). Savoring can be done individually, through reflections, or with others to strengthen relationships. There are three types of savoring: savoring the past (reminiscent), savoring the present (experiential), and savoring the future (anticipatory). Initially, savoring new tasks may be challenging, but with practice, you can immerse yourself more deeply in positive experiences. The goal is not to eliminate negative thoughts or experiences, but to prioritize savoring, even during adversity.

10 tips for savoring from GGSC at UC Berkeley		
1	SHARE	If you're feeling good, then share it with others. Positive events and news can make everyone feel better and create a sense of bonding.
2	MENTAL PICTURES	When you encounter a smell, visual, taste, or noise that resonates with you, take a moment to appreciate and mentally capture the experience.
3	CONGRATULATE YOURSELF	If you've done something you're proud of, then congratulate yourself. You should enjoy your successes, no matter how big or small they are.
4	USE YOUR SENSE MUSCLES	Enhance your senses by focusing on each on individually. Close your eyes, eliminate distractions, and strengthen your ability to concentrate.
5	BE LOUD	Express your good feelings. Although there may be cultural considerations, embrace laughing out loud. Allow yourself to jump for joy. Avoid putting your hand over your mouth when you're smiling or giggling, just let it happen.
6	COMPARE FEELINGS	When times are tough, gain perspective and enhance appreciation for your current circumstances by comparing your situation to more challenging ones. For example, if you're struggling with a course, reflect on the privilege of education and cultivate gratitude for the opportunity to learn and grow.
7	GET LOST	Experience the magic of getting lost in the moment. Practice pausing, reflecting, and immersing yourself in positive experiences – whether it's a walk, a work of art, a creative project, or a favorite hobby.
8	BE THANKFUL	Cultivate awareness and appreciation of joy-inducing things and regularly express gratitude to your loved ones. Voicing appreciation amplifies positive feelings in your life.
9	LEAN TOWARD HAPPY	Acknowledge negative emotions but avoid dwelling on them. Process and move on when possible. Conversely, cherish and replay positive emotions regularly.
10	TIME	Remind yourself how quickly time flies. When you're aware of this, you're less likely to take the good times for granted and more likely to see a light at the end of the tunnel when a bad time arises.

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3. Try something new or explore a new place.

Developing a habit of openness to new experiences can be transformative. Trying new things and exploring new places challenges the assumptions we hold about ourselves and expands our horizons. Trying new things may reveal undiscovered talents and passions, even if initial attempts are not immediately successful. Fear often prevents us from trying new things, but with time and persistence, you'll realize that your mind frequently exaggerates things, and the fear is not as limiting as it seems. Engaging in activities such as learning a new sport, solo travel, trying new recipes, starting a new job, or any novel experience can bring rewarding benefits to your life. The commitment to novelty stimulates creativity, enhancing problem-solving skills and fostering a positive mindset. Moreover, venturing into unexplored territories, whether through travel or other activities, enhances mental well-being and functions as an act of self-care that rejuvenates the mind, body, and soul, enabling you to flourish into your best self. Increased physical activity, healthy diversity in eating habits, and a reduction in boredom are additional perks of embracing new experiences. The benefits extend beyond personal growth to include enhanced communication, acceptance, confidence, and self-esteem. Embracing failure as part of the process and persisting in trying new things can lead to a profound sense of accomplishment and self-discovery. In essence, the pursuit of novelty is not just a way to break free from routine; it is a pathway to a more fulfilling and satisfying life.

Upcoming campus opportunities:

- **Learn CPR/AED & Narcan in the FREE [Red Watch Band program](#)** (registration required):
 - [Sunday, April 7th from 1pm-3pm](#)
 - [Thursday, April 18th from 5pm-7pm](#)
 - [Friday, April 26th from 4pm-6pm](#)
 - [Tuesday, April 30th from 6pm-8pm](#)
- **Explore or deepen your mindfulness practice at the [3-hour Silent Mindfulness Retreat](#)** (registration required):
 - Sunday, April 21st from 1-4pm, IMU
 - Additional workshops and information: [Mindfulness | Student Wellness - The University of Iowa \(uiowa.edu\)](#)
- **Try a new craft at [Craft Your Calm](#):** an opportunity to manage your stress with arts and crafts.
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4. Have fun creating a colorful plate with new fruits or vegetables.

Exploring diverse foods not only adds excitement to meals but also promotes better nutrition. Eating a wide variety of foods introduces the body to new sources of essential nutrients, aligning with the “eating the rainbow” concept for overall well-being. Incorporating colorful, delicious, and nutritious foods into daily meals offers numerous health benefits, from weight management and avoiding unhealthy fats to reducing the risk of chronic conditions like heart disease and diabetes. Beyond fruits and vegetables, the rainbow diet extends to herbs, spices, legumes, nuts, seeds, whole grains, and tea. Embracing a diverse palette of foods supports both physical and cognitive health. To make the process enjoyable, try focusing on creating vibrant breakfasts, exciting salads, and varied lunches. The emphasis on color diversity in meals ensures that you receive a wide array of essential nutrients, vitamins, and minerals, boosting overall health and vitality.

COLOR CHART OF NUTRIENTS					
Blue & Purple	Red & Pink	Orange & Yellow	Green		Brown & White
Blackberries	Beets	Carrots	Collard greens		Potatoes
Eggplant	Cherries	Pumpkins	Cucumbers		Mushrooms
Purple sweet potatoes	Cranberries	Sweet potatoes	Green beans		Cauliflower
Purple cauliflower	Pink grapefruit	Yams	Green cabbage		Parsnips
Plums	Pomegranates	Cantaloupe	Green grapes		Garlic
Purple grapes	Radicchio	Corn	Green onions		Onion
Mulberries	Red radishes	Tangerines	Green peppers		Leeks
Lingon berries	Red apples	Orange peppers	Brussel sprouts		Shallots
Blueberries	Red grapes	Yellow peppers	Mustard greens		Bananas
Black currants	Red peppers	Papayas	Romaine lettuce		Jerusalem
Dates	Red potatoes	Grapefruit	Sugar snap peas		
Prunes	Rhubarbs	Lemons	Snow peas		
Purple figs	Strawberries	Oranges	Green lentils		
Raisins	Tomatoes	Mandarins	Artichokes		
	Watermelons	Acorn squash	Asparagus		
	Tomatoes	Butternut squash	Avocados		
	Guavas	Yellow squash	Bok choy		
	Raspberries	Apricots			
	Red cabbage	Mangoes	Broccoli	Pears	
	Red onion	Nectarines	Celery	Spinach	
	Dragon fruit	Peaches	Kale	Watercress	
	Swiss chard	Pineapple	Kiwis	Zucchini	
	Amaranth	Yellow apples	Leeks	Parsley	
	Cactus pear		Limes	Arugula	
			Okra	Lima peas	

We encourage you to seek out additional support during this challenge. Either through the Connect discussion board, scheduling with a Student Wellness health educator or reading more online:

- [Nutrition Consultation](#)
- [Wellness Coaching](#)
- [Keep Fruits & Vegetables Fresher Longer](#)
- [What Color is Your Food?](#)

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5. Spend 30 minutes moving your body in a way you enjoy.

We all enjoy different activities. Physical activity should be fun. It is important to find active movements that are a right fit for you and fit them in regularly. Studies show that exercise can reduce stress, boost energy, concentration, memory, creativity, mood and so much more! However, if we're exercising solely because we feel like we must and we're doing something that isn't enjoyable for us, we may miss out on some of these benefits. Finding movement you enjoy helps motivate you to do it more regularly. So, make sure you're choosing movement that you look forward to! Set aside 30 minutes to actively move your body in a way you enjoy.

Consider these activities that are often reported as enjoyable:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yoga• Dancing• Zumba• Rock climbing• Walking or hiking – there are many great parks and trails in the area! | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Active video games• Basketball, volleyball, other sports• Jump rope, hula hoop or other “kids” activities• Martial arts |
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Need tips or ideas just for you? Or want to learn how to use some type of equipment? **Schedule a Student Wellness [Fitness Consultation](#)** – a free service for students!

Other ideas or resources to get active on campus and online:

- [Group fitness classes at CRWC or FH](#)
- [HITT for Beginners with Jenna](#) (follow along)
- [Two Dumbbell Strength Workout](#) (follow along)
- [Yoga with Adriene](#) (follow along)
- [Fueling your body for fitness](#)
- [ACE Fitness Blogs](#)
- [Biking at Iowa](#)

End of Week Reflection:

Don't forget to submit a reflection at the end of the week on the **Week 1 Reflection Discussion Post** on ICON.

Reflecting helps us develop our skills and review their effectiveness, rather than just carry-on doing things as we have always done them. It is about questioning, in a positive way, what we do and why we do it and then deciding whether there is a better, or more efficient, way of doing it in the future.