

From: Shiel, Lana <l.shiel@ucl.ac.uk>
Sent: 15 January 2021 18:17
To: +Math.Academic <maths.academic@ucl.ac.uk>; +Math.Postdocs <maths.postdocs@ucl.ac.uk>; +Math.Phd <maths.phd@ucl.ac.uk>; +Math.Support.Staff <maths.support.staff@ucl.ac.uk>; +Math.Teaching.Fellows <maths.teaching.fellows@ucl.ac.uk>; +Math.Coru <maths.coru@ucl.ac.uk>
Subject: Wellbeing update 1 - 2021

Hello again all,

Well done for getting to the end of a long week!

In this session:

- How to manage burnout
- Desk yoga – it's important to move!
- Yoga classes and youtube yoga guides
- Virtual tea rooms (by Wellbeing@UCL)
- Dealing with overwhelming work
- Reflection journal

The start of this year was met with a lot of uncertainty and confusion around government announcements which has impacted how all of us are working and relaxing. As we find ourselves in another national lockdown, I thought now would be a good time to check in once again.

End of Year Journal

These new restrictions can feel like we are in the same position we were faced with in March last year and may feel like we are moving backwards, so reflecting over the last year and noticing changes from then to now is even more important for us. Calm, the meditation and sleep app, have created an End of Year Journal (attached as a PDF) to allow you to reflect on all that has happened last year and to set intentions for 2021.

If you would prefer this as a Google slide deck to complete, you can find this option at the bottom of the page here:

https://www.calm.com/blog/end-of-year-journal?utm_medium=email&utm_source=lifecycle&utm_campaign=journal12302020

Yoga

Our working hours during a lockdown are much more sedentary and many people are working from home or using set ups that are not ergonomically ideal. To combat this, I have attached some simple yoga poses that you can do at your desk to help with posture and comfort whilst we cannot access our teaching spaces and offices. This has been put together by Hannah Legg Yoga and if you are looking for some classes, please take a look at her website, the link is in the footer of the document. One class offered is Hatha Yoga for UCL staff on Tuesdays 12:00-13:00.

If doing yoga at your own pace or in solitude is more your speed, Yoga with Adriene is fantastic and has all different levels available from complete beginner, as well as 20 day or 30 day challenges.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/yogawithadriene>

Wellbeing@UCL have re-launched their Virtual Tea Rooms following their success before the holidays. The Virtual Tea Room is a space that any member of UCL community (staff or students) can join for a friendly chat at the end of the week. This can provide a much-needed space to

connect, especially for people living alone, so please have a look at the link below for more information and to join a session this month or next month.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/virtual-tea-room-tickets-136620151551>

Managing burnout

I hope that the 2-week break helped you to come back well rested and motivated for work but you may be feeling low, burnt-out or like the amount of work there is to do overwhelming. If you are feeling this way, The Choice Point by Dr Russ Harris may help you to understand why these feelings arise. Find it as the first video here: <https://www.actmindfully.com.au/free-stuff/free-videos/>

Managing motivation

If you are unsure of which task at work to start first, maybe the Eisenhower Decision Matrix can help you. This method gets you to arrange your work into 4 categories, depending on whether the work is valuable or not valuable, and whether the work is exciting or not exciting to you. Once you have organised your 4 sections, it outlines which order to complete them in. You can find full information on this under the Eisenhower Decision Matrix here: <https://www.leapers.co/articles/2020-06-12/tackling-lockdown-lethargy-lack-of-motivation> This link is also helpful with general ideas of how to keep your motivation up whilst working.

One of my intentions in my End of Year Journal was to check in with you all more regularly, so I am aiming to drop into your inboxes every 2 weeks during this term. If you have any suggestions to add to these updates, please send them along to me and I will add them in my next email.

Finally, it has recently been brought to my attention that many of the suggested mental health activities such as walking, exercising, getting out in nature and crafting and not always possible or easy for those who are not able-bodied. If you know of any helpful alternatives I can include in these wellbeing emails, I would love some guidance on how to educate myself around this topic so please do get in touch with me.

As always, I'd like to remind you all that I am the designated Wellbeing officer for staff in the Department of Mathematics and am always available to talk or offer guidance and information on any work or personal issues. Please do reach out to me if you would like to talk.

Warm regards,
Lana

Ms. Lana Shiel
Teaching & Learning Administrator
Wellbeing Champion

Department of Mathematics
University College London
25 Gordon Street, London, WC1H 0AY

[Email: l.shiel@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:l.shiel@ucl.ac.uk)
Tel: not currently available

End of Year Journal

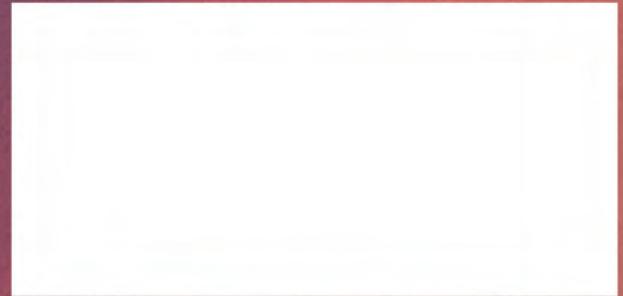
Calm

2020 Reflections

What challenges did you face?



How did your heart open?



What lessons did you learn?



What do you want to remember?



How did you grow?



What do you want to celebrate?



How did your heartbreak?

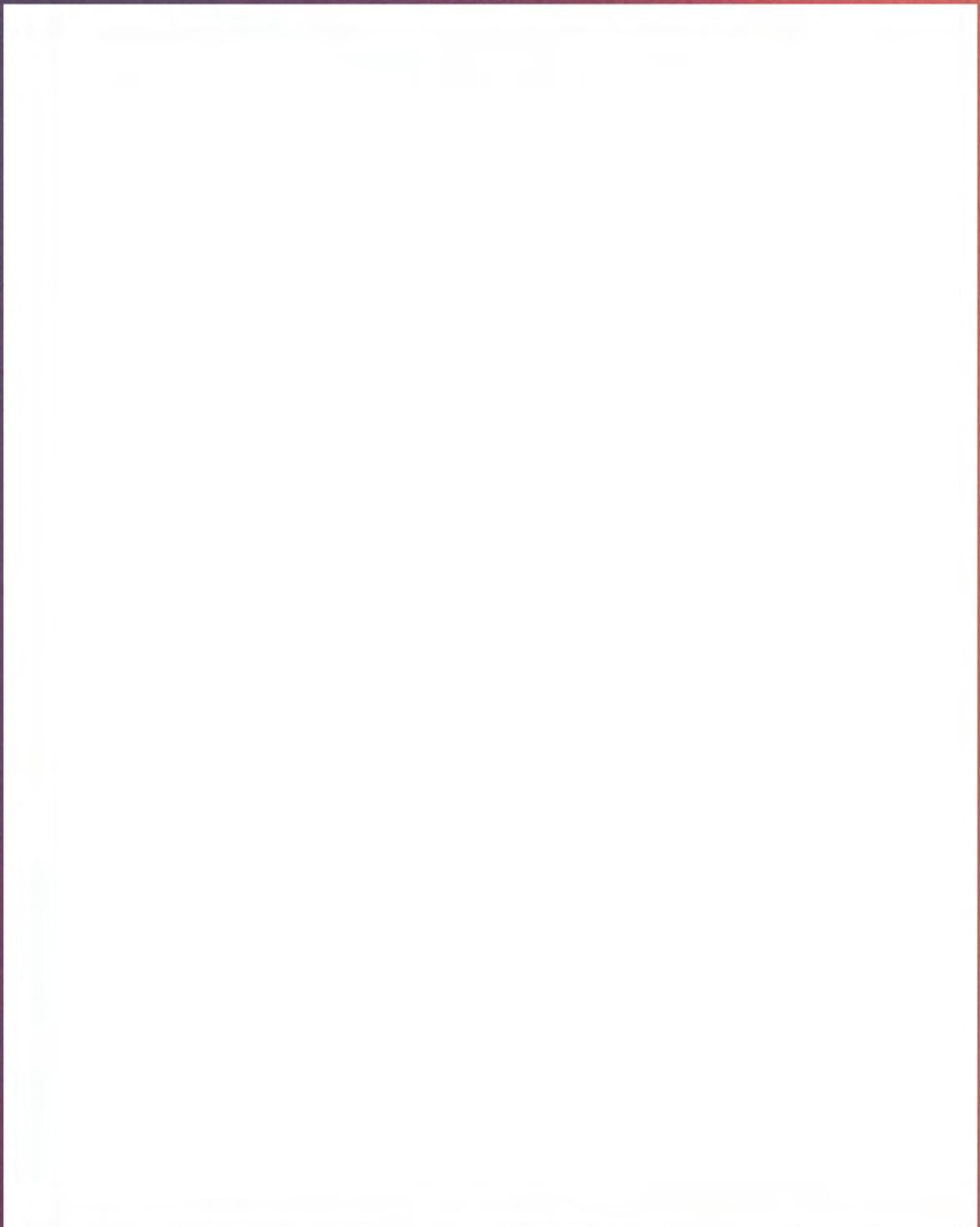


What are you grateful for?



Calm

2020 Reflections



Calm

2021 Intentions

How do you want to approach 2021?

How do you want to take care of yourself?

What qualities do you want to cultivate?

How will you commit to yourself?

What do you want to let go of?

Where will you pour your attention?

How do you want to grow?

What habits or practices nourish you?

Calm

2021 Intentions



Calm

When you consciously slow down and deepen
your breath, you are letting your body know that
it's okay to trust this present moment.

Yumi Sakugawa

Calm

Desk Yoga & Pranayama

Desk Yoga

Wrist & Finger Stretches

Begin by extending your arms overhead and drawing 5-10 circles inwards and outwards with the wrists. Follow this by quickly spreading the fingers and closing the fists, releasing excess tension.

Finally, place your arms in front of you, with your palms facing upwards. Gently apply a downward pressure on each palm to stretch the wrist on each side. Switch the palms to face downward for a counter-stretch of the forearms. Hold each stretch for 5-10 breaths.

Working at a desk can build up tension in the fingers, hands and wrists, so these exercises should be done often throughout the day to increase the blood flow.

Neck Release

Take head towards your right shoulder, ensuring that both shoulders are relaxed and shoulder blades down and back.

If it increases your stretch, you can take your left hand behind your back.

Further option to lightly place your right hand on your head to encourage the stretch.

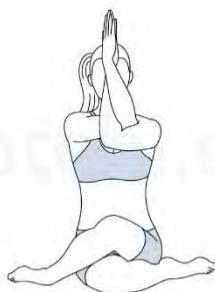
Shoulder Rolls

Simply rolling the shoulders up and back, nice and slowly. Inhale as you bring the shoulders up and exhale as they roll back.

Eagle Arms

Sit tall and place your arms at a 90-degree angle in front of you. Cross one arm over the other, interlocking them and placing your palms together. Lift your elbows and stretch your fingers upwards. Stay in this pose for 3-5 breaths before switching sides. You can add to the pose by crossing the legs (opposite leg on top) and interlocking one foot behind the other.

Eagle pose is a good preventative for carpal tunnel syndrome. It also strengthens the triceps, back and shoulder muscles.



Cow Face Pose (Gomukhasana)

Extend right arm overhead then bend the elbow so that your right hand is between your shoulder blades. Take your left arm behind you, bending the elbow and trying to clasp your hands together. If you can't reach then taking hold of your t-shirt is fine. Switch the sides.



Shoulder Opening

Clasp your hands behind your lower back and stretch your arms out, leaving a micro-bend in the elbows. Inhale as you draw your shoulder blades together,

push your hands away from the body to widen the shoulders and lift the chest. Hold for five breaths then relax. Repeat a few times if it feels good.

To increase the stretch in your spine and legs, you can do this from a standing position and then fold at your hips.

Lateral Stretch

Sit tall and inhale both arms above your head. Take hold of left wrist and take a side stretch towards the right. It doesn't need to be a dramatic stretch –just to the point where you can feel a nice stretch down the side body and you can breathe easily. Inhale back to the middle and repeat to the other side.

Seated Twist

Place your left hand on the outside your right knee with your palm facing up, while your right arm extends down with your fingertips pointing towards the floor and palms facing forwards. Inhale and sit tall then turn to the right as you exhale. Take a few breaths here sitting taller with each inhale and turning a little further with each exhale. Repeat on the other side.

Chair Pigeon

Whilst seated, place your right ankle on your left knee, flexing the foot so as not to place pressure on the knee. Remain in an upright position, keeping an even distribution on both seat bones. When you feel a gentle to moderate stretch in the upper outer thigh, hold for 5-10 breaths. Repeat on the other side.

Seated pigeon pose helps us regain the balance we sometimes lose sitting in our desk chairs, whilst opening the hips and chest.

Restorative Pose

Place your feet flat on the floor and cross your arms onto your desk. Lay your forehead head onto your arms and breathe deeply for up to 5 minutes.

Allowing yourself to unwind means you can continue your work day with a new found energy.

Pranayama

One Minute, Six Breaths

Each breath should take about ten seconds to complete, in and out.

Ideally once in the morning when you get up, once after lunch and once before you go to bed

3-4-5 Breath

Breath in for three seconds, hold for four seconds and breath out for five seconds.

You can do a few rounds or extend to five minutes.

Particularly good for anxiety and stress. When out-breath is longer than in-breath, it encourages body into the parasympathetic (rest & digest) mode.

Box Breathing

Breath in for four seconds, hold for four seconds, breath out for four seconds, hold for four seconds

Especially useful before bedtime, lowers stress levels, calms nervous system and takes your mind away from distracting thoughts.

Alternate Nostril Breathing

Place your left hand on your left knee. Lift your right hand up toward your nose. Exhale completely and then use your right thumb to close your right nostril.

Inhale through your left nostril and then close the left nostril with your fingers. Open the right nostril and exhale through this side. Inhale through the right

nostril and then close this nostril. Open the left nostril and exhale through the left side.

This is one cycle.

Continue for up to 5 minutes.

Good for calming the nervous system and focusing the mind

Restorative Pose

Place your feet flat on the floor and cross your arms onto your desk. Lay your forehead head onto your arms and breathe deeply for up to 5 minutes.

Allowing yourself to unwind means you can continue your work day with a new found energy.

Namaste



Images sourced: spotebi.com

Breathing exercises: some my own others adapted from Dr Chatterjee