

Physical Wellness

The change from a highly structured high-school programme to university brings not only the challenges of a new curriculum, different social life and personal growth, but an enormous change to a student's physical lifestyle. Indeed, one of the biggest lifestyle changes as a university student can be the lack of structured physical activity or sport that many students might have been accustomed to in high school.

It is commonly acknowledged that students starting at university tend to adopt more sedentary habits in comparison to other times in life up to that point. Typically, after a hectic time in high school, students often claim they just want to chill and hang-out with friends as they ease into the demands of a university system. Also, having a wide-open schedule outside of lecture times — when one can typically freely choose what to do, when to do it, and how to do it — can leave little time for what was previously experienced as compulsory sport.

Adopting and maintaining an ongoing connection with being physically active in the face many other activities, attractions and distractions at university is a genuine challenge for most students, not only first years. Furthermore, schedules and demands increase as students' progress through their undergrad degrees and into postgrad life.

The start of the year is often met with great enthusiasm for signing up for formal sports (like soccer, hockey, squash or volleyball). However, following signing up and having your student account being debited and perhaps attending a few early training sessions, enthusiasm for physical activity commonly fades in preference for general socialising, meeting a demanding academic timetable or just catching up on sleep after a late night of partying.

In the face of many academic demands and social attractions, students at all levels of academia and academic success can and should take a few easy steps to keep up their physical wellness. After all, physical wellness will have a definite and positive impact on your academic performance.

Here are a few ideas and some rationale about keeping up with your physical wellness while at university:

- University brings diversity in choices and opportunities:
 - Previously, the choices of what sport or physical activities were available to you at school were typically limited to rugby, netball, hockey, tennis, swimming. At Rhodes, you are fortunate enough to have all of these sports available and many more. Have you heard of dance sport, canoeing, mixed martial arts, table tennis or the mountain club? You might just find a Sports Club to ignite a new passion.
- Strategize!
 - The academic demands of university are real. Trying to squeeze in lectures, socialising and a million other things can be a real challenge. The solution is to be organised and plan, plan, plan. This will help you avoid last-minute panicking, contribute to your ultimate success, and ensure that you do get time for a chosen sport, outdoor activity or going to the Health Suite.

- Be flexible, but prioritize:
 - If things get tight with deadlines, be flexible enough to reschedule your activity of choice. Tutorials cannot wait but that impulsive trip to the club can wait a little longer.
- Sports Clubs and Societies are good for your social life:
 - You can get fit, play sport and socialise all at the same time. Generations of Rhodes students have made lifelong friends through sport played with or against friends. And, if you don't like organised sport, you can include your friends in your preferred activity, such as a throw-together game of Futsal or basketball, an outing to the pool, or a walk on Mountain Drive.
- 30 minutes a day is all it takes:
 - Yes, the recommended minimum exercise for adults is just 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise (including fast walking, spinning, jogging, biking). So you don't need to train like Rocky to be healthy; a good lap around the campus can do the job.
- Explore Grahamstown and its surrounds:
 - We live in a beautiful town with quiet streets, the Bots, scenic dams and hills in and around town. Now and then, get some exercise just by exploring!

RU Sports Clubs:

<https://www.ru.ac.za/sportsadmin/sportsclubs/>

RU Health Suite sign-up:

<https://www.ru.ac.za/healthsuite/exercisesmart/>