

Pre – Employment Transition Services Newsletter

June 2020

Have your summer plans been turned upside down due to COVID-19?

Here's an idea to embrace....

Summer Staycation 2020!

It's easy to let our spirits get down and feel disappointed when activities and adventures we have been looking forward to are cancelled or postponed. Instead of wallowing in that feeling of disappointment, we suggest adjusting your mindset to make the best out of the situation. After all, you can still have FUN, make lasting memories, and get inspired during your summer break from the safety of your home!

In this month's newsletter, we share ideas and resources that focus on ways to revitalize your body and mind and give suggestions to encourage you to stay engaged in your career development journey. We hope you apply some of these tips and creative ideas, highlighted below, as they are sure ways to reenergize and spice your summer up in a safe way while at home!

(Insert song Vacation by The Go-Go's here)

Check out this article from The New York Times, written by **Lisa Heffernan**

It's Not Too Late to Get a Virtual Internship

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/27/well/family/virtual-summer-internship-college-students-coronavirus.html>

Learn about how a determined **NC State student** adapted and took charge when her summer abroad plans were cancelled due to COVID-19. Does this sound like something you can relate to? The article provides suggestions and steps to take when looking for a virtual internship. Read through the suggestions and reach out to us if you need any support searching for an internship.

1. Eat Nutritiously

Below is a great outline of the “#JERF (Just Eat Real Food) lifestyle”, from The Inspiration Lab’s blog, **5 FREE Immune-Boosting Activities You Can Do at Home Right Now** (which was an inspiration and resource used to create this month’s newsletter). (The Inspiration Lab, 2020)

“Eat real, whole, nutrient-dense foods.

Veggies

- Aim for six to nine cups of vegetables every day. I know that seems like a lot, but now that you’ve likely got a little more time on your hands, why not try cooking a veggie you’ve never had before? Or prepare your usual veggies in a new way to make them seem more exciting. The other day, I used a blade on my spiralizer I’d never used before. Instead of zucchini noodles, I made zucchini ribbons, which was so fun!
- Eat the rainbow! Especially dark green leafy veggies.
- Stock up on canned (good), frozen (better), and fresh (best) vegetables.

Carbs - Get your carbs from starchy veggies!

- Sweet potatoes, carrots, beets, parsnips, turnips, butternut squash, delicata squash, spaghetti squash, etc., are all good options.
- Include 1/3 cup to 1/2 cup per meal.

Clean Protein

- Enjoy wild fish; pasture-raised chicken, turkey, and eggs; grass-fed/grass-finished beef and pork, etc.
- At least one meal per day should include a clean protein, but ideally, all three meals do.

Healthy Fats

- Olive oil, coconut oil, avocado oil, grass-fed butter/ghee, avocado, olives, nuts, seeds, and high-quality animal fats such as tallow from grass-fed beef, duck fat, etc., are great choices.
- 1-2 tablespoons with each meal is reasonable.

Involve the Whole Family ...

Avoid

- **Sugar** - it suppresses important immune functions, which is not what we want during this pandemic.
- **Gluten** - even if you’re not allergic (i.e., have celiac disease) or don’t have a formal gluten sensitivity, gluten is difficult for your body to digest. Since your digestive tract houses 80% of your immune system, anything that’s hard on your digestive tract suppresses your immunity.
- **Dairy** - it can be very inflammatory and mucus-producing for most people. Two exceptions: butter and ghee from grass-fed cows. Why? They’re lower in inflammatory proteins and sugars.
- **Processed and refined foods** - yes, they’re convenient, but that’s about it. They’re difficult to digest, provide empty calories (so you’re hungry again very soon), and contain tons of highly inflammatory oils, hidden sugars, preservatives, shelf-stabilizers, emulsifiers, coloring agents, and a whole host of other non-nutritive chemicals. Also, they’re devoid of any real nutrients. Any nutrients added to packaged foods are created in a lab, which means your body has a very difficult time processing them and most likely won’t absorb them. So that calcium and Vitamin D added to your Lucky Charms? Not really doing you any good. ...

Does all this sound like a major overhaul from how you’ve been eating? If yes, what better time to reboot your diet than while quarantined at home away from tempting restaurants and donuts in the office? Being in charge of all your meals is a great opportunity to get healthier!” (The Inspiration Lab, 2020)

Click the link below for access to the full blog post and read about other immune-boosting activities:

<https://www.theinspirationlab.co/post/5-free-immune-boosting-activities-you-can-do-at-home-right-now>

Here's a healthy cookie recipe that we are a huge fan of! Give it a try and be sure to let us know what you think!

Chickpea Cookie Dough

This easy Chickpea Cookie Dough comes together in MINUTES and tastes incredible! You can't taste the beans. Eat it by the spoon, roll it into balls or bake!

yield: 14 SERVINGS

prep time: 4 MINS

cook time: 6 MINS

total time: 10 MINS

Ingredients

- 1 15-ounce can reduced sodium chickpeas — *rinsed and drained (or white beans or 1 ½ cups cooked chickpeas or cooked white beans)*
- ¼ cup creamy peanut butter or nut butter of choice — *to make nut free, see blog post above for suggestions*
- ¼ cup rolled oats or quick cooking oats — *to make without oats/grain free, see blog post above for suggestions*
- ¼ teaspoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ cup pure maple syrup — *plus additional to taste*
- 1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract
- ⅓ cup dark chocolate chips or mini chocolate chips

Instructions

1. To the bowl of a food processor fitted with a steel blade, add all of the ingredients in the order listed, except for the chocolate chips: the chickpeas, peanut butter, oats, baking powder, cinnamon, salt, maple syrup, and vanilla. Process until smooth, creamy, and completely combined. Stop and scrape down the bowl several times as needed. Depending upon your food processor, this may take several minutes and several scrape downs.
2. Taste the "dough." If you'd like it sweeter, add additional maple syrup 1 teaspoon at a time, until it is as sweet as you like. Transfer the dough to a mixing bowl and fold in the chocolate chips (You also can attempt to mix them directly in the food processor bowl, but I find using a separate bowl is easier and more effective in the end). Enjoy immediately or transfer to an airtight container and refrigerate until ready to serve. You can also bake the dough as cookies. See blog post above.

Recipe Notes

- TO STORE: Cover the chickpea cookie dough, and store it in the refrigerator for up to 5 days.
- TO FREEZE DOUGH: For ease, I suggest storing it in multiple small freezer-safe storage containers. Then, you can thaw them one at a time as needed. You can store the cookie dough in the freezer for up to 3 months. Let thaw overnight in the refrigerator, then give it a good stir before serving.
- TO FREEZE UNBAKED COOKIES: You can also freeze the unbaked chickpea cookies. Arrange your cookies on a parchment-lined baking sheet, and place it in the freezer until the cookies are solid. Transfer them to an airtight freezer-safe storage container for up to 3 months. Bake from frozen as directed.
- TO MAKE NUT/GRAIN FREE: See blog post above for tips to make without nut butter and to make grain free.

TO MAKE COOKIES: This recipe can also be baked as 14 cookies; see blog post above for directions.

Click here if you want to access the full article: <https://www.wellplated.com/chickpea-cookie-dough/>

2. Make sure you are getting good ZZZ's

Maintaining a strong immune system during this time is crucial! The stress of final class projects and exams, pulling all-nighters, COVID-19 and everything else going on in our world right now, can really take a toll on our bodies (both physically and mentally). One way to utilize this time at home is to **rest and recharge!** Rest is always important for our health, but we tend to sleep more and better while on vacation!!! Take that time for yourself!

Sleep affects:

- Mood and happiness levels
- Academic and cognitive performance
- Physical and emotional complaints

What can you do to improve your sleep hygiene?

- Aim for 7 or more hours of sleep per night for those of you who are 19 or older. Teens (13–18 years old) should be getting 8–10 hours of sleep per night.

“The following tips are provided by the AASM to help students learn how to get enough sleep:

- **Get out of bed** - If you have trouble falling asleep, get out of bed and do something relaxing until you feel sleepy.
- **Stay out of bed** - Don't study, read, watch TV or talk on the phone in bed. Only use your bed for sleep.
- **Limit naps** - If you take a nap, then keep it brief. Nap for less than an hour and before 3 p.m.
- **Wake up on the weekend**- It is best to go to bed and wake up at the same times on the weekend as you do during the school week. If you missed out on a lot of sleep during the week, then you can try to catch up on the weekend. But sleeping in later on Saturdays and Sundays will make it very hard for you to wake up for classes on Monday morning.
- **Avoid caffeine** - Avoid caffeine in the afternoon and at night. It stays in your system for hours and can make it hard for you to fall asleep.
- **Adjust the lights** - Dim the lights in the evening and at night so your body knows it will soon be time to sleep. Let in the sunlight in the morning to boost your alertness.
- **Wind down**- Take some time to “wind down” before going to bed. Get away from the computer, turn off the TV and the cell phone, and relax quietly for 15 to 30 minutes.
- **Eat a little** -Never eat a large meal right before bedtime. Enjoy a healthy snack or light dessert so you don't go to bed hungry.

Those who believe they have a sleep disorder should consult with their primary care physician or a sleep specialist.”
(American Academy of Sleep Medicine, 2017)

To learn more about the important role sleep plays on your grades, visit American Academy of Sleep Medicine website: <https://aasm.org/college-students-getting-enough-sleep-is-vital-to-academic-success/>

Lose Sleep, Lose Your Mind And Health

Early studies have linked lack of sleep to both colorectal and aggressive breast cancers.

Multiple studies have suggested a relationship between chronic sleep deprivation and increased obesity risk.

Research has linked short-term sleep deprivation with a propensity to load up on bigger portions, a preference for high-calorie, high-carb foods and a greater likelihood of choosing unhealthy foods while grocery shopping.



A SLEEP study evaluating 1,741 men and women over the course of 10 to 14 years found that men who slept fewer than six hours had a significant increase in mortality risk, even after adjusting for diabetes, hypertension and other factors.

A small, recent study of 15 men, published in the journal SLEEP, found that just one night of sleep deprivation was linked with signs of brain tissue loss.

3. Exercise

Just 30-minutes of exercise per day

- Improves health
- Increases positive moods
- Decreases depression symptoms
- Increases academic performance

We may not have access to gyms just yet but there are plenty of fun ways you can squeeze more movement into your day while at home or out in the community. Exercise doesn't have to be a chore!

Get creative with it – Dance!

Relive favorite pastimes – Hula Hoop!

Experience Zen - Do some yoga!

Soak up sounds of nature and vitamin D- Hike!

Check out this Yoga Digest article: <https://yogadigest.com/yoga-for-the-visually-impaired/#:~:text=In%20addition%20to%20all%20the,posture%2C%20and%20confidence%20in%20movement.>

Hiking Resources:

<https://www.perkins.org/stories/8-tips-for-hiking-while-blind>

<https://parks.nhcgov.com/trails/>

<http://www.pendercountync.gov/2020/03/take-a-hike-this-spring/>

<https://www.onslowcountync.gov/843/Parks-and-Facilities>

<https://www.ncbrunswick.com/things-to-do/nature/>

4. Socialization

Social connections play a big role in our overall sense of well-being and happiness levels. Stay connected with others during this time (remember, they need the connection just as much as you do).

For an extra boost of happiness:

- Perform a random act of kindness
- Make a new social connection (Idea: Reach out to professionals for career exploration!)
- Make an intentional effort to deepen already meaningful relationships

5. Self-Care Suggestions for your STAYCATION!!

Change up your music playlist! Think about the types of music you may listen to while on vacation and create a playlist that channels this! Catch some vitamin D outside while listening to different music to create a vacation like mentality!

Declutter and organize your room and talk with your family about doing this throughout your home. As a member of the low vision and blind community, this is especially important for you to be most efficient and safe in your home environment. In addition to this, hotels during travel are generally decluttered and have great flow to them. Making your home feel like an open and airy space will give you nostalgic feels of family vacations (the good parts about them, at least). Marie Kondo has great tutorials to help with decluttering methods.

Embrace good smelling scents! Imagine a place you would like to visit and then think about the smells that come to mind with that place! Incorporate these smells into your room or home if you family members agree to participate and the scents are not irritating to those in the environment!

Grab and towel, sunscreen, and music and catch some sunlight! If you do not like laying outside and feel bored, just get outdoors and be active!

Paint your nails! Here is a hack for painting your nails with low vision!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E2VgU1X0jrc>

Disconnect from social media and your phone. Every year (except for this one) my family goes to the mountains where there is no cell phone signal or internet. It is one of the most relaxing things I do all year and I feel rejuvenated when leaving and ready to start back on our day to day routines.

6. What would you do on vacation or what would you like to do if on vacation? Do that.

We obviously have to be smart about social distancing and maintaining our distance in order to protect ourselves, family and community, but can still do fun things that do not result in large crowds...or spending money!

If you find that you can't physically go out to these popular travel destinations, **try a virtual experience!**

Stream live concerts: <https://www.vulture.com/2020/05/all-musicians-streaming-live-concerts.html>. Follow your favorite local artists on Instagram and Facebook for news about their upcoming live and recorded shows!

A recent article, featured on Insider, compiled a list of **museums, zoos and aquariums, and theme parks** that are offering virtual tours, exhibits, and live videos. I have listed a few of my favorites, but be sure to click [here](#) to access the full list.

- [Joshua Tree National Park](#)
- [San Diego Zoo](#) has live cams and pre-recorded footage of at least 13 animals!
- [Monterey Bay Aquarium](#) (has a live cam of my personal favorite, Sea Otters!!)
- [Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History](#)
- [NASA's \(FREE\) Space Center Houston mobile app](#) (augmented reality experiences!)

History and Art Buffs, here are some more museums:

<https://www.travelandleisure.com/attractions/museums-galleries/museums-with-virtual-tours>

We Want to Hear from You:

Prepare yourself for pandemic related job interview questions like the ones discussed in this [LinkedIn article by Andrew Seaman](#)

- "What have you learned about yourself during the pandemic?"
- "How have you been spending your time?" (Seaman, 2020)

Reach out to us for interview practice and share your responses!

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