

From the Nutritionist

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Finding Balance

Is your life in balance? Do you have a good sense of what that means? We often hear about “Work-Life Balance,” finding the balance between work — which might include a job as well as classes and homework for a college student — and fun or relaxing activities like sports, reading, hiking, yoga or spending time with family and friends. Balance in this respect is important so you can avoid stress and burnout. But balance is the key to many different aspects of life. Consider these ways to find balance in your life:

- There are many benefits to eating a healthful diet — like preventing illness and chronic disease, managing weight, and giving you energy to get through each day.

However, it isn’t necessary to completely avoid all foods that give you pleasure — in fact, if you feel constantly deprived you may develop an unhealthy relationship with food. Most of the food you eat should provide your body with the nutrients it needs, but balance it with occasional indulgences.

- Many people choose to avoid eating foods from certain food groups — like vegetables, because they don’t like them, or grains, because they don’t want to eat a lot of carbs. All of the food groups (grains, vegetables, fruits, dairy, and protein foods) contain important nutrients that work together to allow your body to function at its best. Balance your intake of foods from all food groups so your body gets all the nutrients it needs.
- Regular exercise has many benefits, including helping to prevent chronic disease, reducing stress, and managing weight. However, the body also requires adequate rest. Aim to be physically active most days of the week, but find balance by taking at least one day off each week so your body can rest, as well as getting at least 7-8 hours of sleep each night.
- It’s OK to want to improve yourself. Looking honestly at the things you want to improve can help motivate you to be the best you can be. But don’t be too hard on yourself. Realize that there are things about you that you can’t change, especially physical characteristics like your height or bone structure. Find balance by also looking honestly at your strengths. Are you good at dancing, basketball, or art? Are you a history buff, or do you love science? Are you kind? A good listener? Make a list. If you have a hard time, ask friends and family what they think your strengths are. You have talents, interests, and characteristics that make you a unique individual — appreciate them!

Each February, SUNY Cortland celebrates Body Appreciation Week — this year’s theme is “It’s a Balancing Act.” For more tips on finding balance in your life, come to the Body Appreciation Week events Feb. 22-25. Each day from 11 am to 3 pm in the SLC Lobby, groups will be tabling about different aspects of body appreciation. Also check out the following events, held in the Corey Union Function Room each evening at 7:

- Monday: Runway and discussion on outer appearance
- Tuesday: Open Mic Night with performances by A Capella, Danceworks, Gospel Choir, Cortland Kickline and more
- Wednesday: Wellness Wednesday Keynote Event: Candlelight vigil followed by “Bringing Recovery to Life” presented by Cheryl Kerrigan
- Thursday: Panel discussion: What is it like to conform to gender roles in society?

Andrea Hart, registered dietitian nutritionist and New York state-certified dietitian/nutritionist, is available for free, confidential, one-on-one counseling and as a speaker or facilitator for campus groups, panels or classes.