

Running on Wellness

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I made the bold decision to run the Chicago Marathon in October. It has always been a bucket list item for me to run a marathon. However, it is quite the undertaking. Despite it having been a convention summer, the humidity in Missouri making it easy to make excuses, and all of the other demands that come with life, I have found successful ways to train. Running or any sort of wellness is important to many in our profession as we fight to find balance. It has allowed me to create a network of individuals and continue friendships with others outside of the field. I have composed four best practices to help you stay motivated and to foster wellness and balance.

Doing it to keep in touch with friends. When I made the bold decision to run the Chicago Marathon, I made the decision to do it with my graduate school friend. My running partner, who also works in higher education, and I have been able to hold one another accountable through the [Nike Running app](#). On this app we have been able to have running challenges, see our mileage, and keep in touch over our progress. I can thank running for helping me to continue fostering relationships with friends from afar. Training for a race can sometimes feel isolating as priorities shift and social opportunities may not be at the forefront anymore. By training with a friend (even from afar), you do not feel so lonely.

Allowing you to expand networks in your community. It is so effortless to become engulfed in our routines and our work and then fail or forget to expand our networks. One way I have been able to meet other young professionals outside of the field has been through cross training at my Pure Barre studio. Through these classes I have been able to easily meet women from all different backgrounds and careers. While the primary nature of class is not necessarily social, it has been great finding a network of supportive women to meet up with before and after class. We have learned to understand each other, what our careers mean to us, and how our class gives us balance in the nonsense that our schedules may give us sometimes. Take up opportunities to find classes in your local neighborhood. [Classpass](#) is a new monthly membership program where you could try out a series of different classes at different studios (cycling, barre, yoga, Crossfit, etc.) to find what works best for you.

Enhance your self-reflection. While I had always kept a personal journal, I did not necessarily always keep up with it. When I started marathon training, I noticed that running gave me a lot of time to self-reflect and think. Whether it be thinking about my own development, getting an “a-ha” moment for a project I’d been working on, or just random musings that crossed my mind, I knew it was important to write these down. Running (and I believe many forms of exercise) helps increase your self-reflection and bring ideas to you when you least expect them. Exercise is proven to be great for your mental health. By doing any sort of exercise and taking care of ourselves, we are helping to keep ourselves more inspired, more creative, and more stress free in our daily jobs. Writing after running has helped me tremendously, which has allowed me to work on my own self-reflection and personal development.

Doing it for a cause. When I told myself I wanted to run 26.2 miles, it occurred to me I could not justify such a feat without connecting it to a charity or cause of sorts. My sorority membership has made me passionate about a variety of different causes. I built such a love for the new

organization my sorority has started a partnership with recently that I decided to also support the organization through running the marathon. Doing this has allowed me to connect with other teammates connected to the cause and also raise money for something I care about. The feeling of doing it for a cause makes me connected to something bigger than myself and keeps me more motivated. Additionally, if you are looking for different causes to support and to motivate you, there are apps out there such as [Charity Miles](#) that allow you to raise money for a cause while working out as well.

While these four motivators may not work for everyone, I have found they have helped me. I feel better, more balanced, and more committed to the work I am doing personally and professionally. Setting small goals, whether it be to run a mile a day or simply do 30 minutes of walking, will help us all in wellness during the busy semester!