



STAC Your Wellness = Small, Tangible Actions Change Your Wellness

You want to prioritize wellbeing to feel better, but it feels overwhelming, there's not enough hours in the day, you feel stuck and motivation is nowhere to be found. **We hear you!**

Good news! No matter how challenged you feel, this can be your moment for a *wellbeing reset* while you **STAC Your Wellness**.

Why STAC Your Wellness?

[Research](#) shows that small, achievable steps towards behavior change, stacked up, over time, are more likely to yield enduring habits, contributing to long-term wellbeing. All you need is a willingness to try one small new action.

Who should STAC their Wellness?

Anyone! That's part of the beauty of this idea. It can take seconds to do and no money or special abilities are required. We would like to offer this protocol to the Vet Techs of CVM as a way to take steps to care for yourself during your worktime and beyond. This is not just a wellness challenge. It's a completely doable way to change how and when you care for yourself, starting now and lasting well into your future.

How to STAC Your Wellness:

- Three common facets of wellbeing relate to matters of the body, mind, and heart. Which one do you feel most compelled to pay attention to right now? You may think you want to tackle them all – and you can! **But at first, choose just one.**
- Within your chosen facet, ask yourself: What is one little, reasonable action you can commit to doing nearly every day? Simple suggestions for each facet are listed below. Pick one or develop one of your own. **To start, choose something new and easy, that you want to do, even on your craziest day.**
- Make a promise to yourself to **perform your chosen action nearly every day**. Put it on your Outlook schedule, set a reminder on your phone, put a Post-It note on your mirror, tell someone close to you, commit to it publicly - whatever will help you be successful.
- Consider an **accountability partner** (perhaps a fellow LVT!) and agree to try the same action. Check in with one another on a regular basis to talk about what's working and/or how you feel. You'll keep each other on track and create connection – a wellbeing win/win!
- At the end of two weeks **reflect on your action**. How do you feel? Were you consistent? Were there hurdles that got in your way? If the action you took worked and made you feel better, keep it and add on another STAC action, ideally from a different facet of wellbeing. If the action you chose didn't stick, don't worry. Simply try again and set yourself up for success with a new action.

STAC Your Wellness – Action Items to Try

The Body:

1. [Box breathe](#): aim for four cycles.
2. Choose a route or find a set of stairs and set a timer [for 3 minutes](#). Move with gusto, like you have an important place to be, to increase your heart rate.
3. Do five [sun salutations](#) or hold a [standing yoga pose](#).
4. Eat one additional fruit or vegetable serving. Check out [these visuals for appropriate serving sizes](#).
5. Drink one additional glass of water, ideally first thing in the morning.
6. Stretch your calves while you standing at the kitchen counter. Here are some [stretch options](#).
7. When checking email, perform a [seated cat cow exercise](#) to help with mobility of the low back and torso.

The Mind:

1. Engage your five senses in [this mindful, grounding technique](#).
2. Read a book or magazine that interests you or sparks creativity for at least 5 minutes.
3. Download. Write down any worries, stressors, or anxieties you're feeling. Crumple and toss it out or keep it as a reminder of how you felt.
4. Draw or take a photo of something natural that catches your eye. This is a form of intentional image journaling.
5. When your mind is going a mile a minute, try a [5-finger breath exercise](#). Or, give it a try when you are getting ready for bed. This multi-sensory, breath based exercise can help slow the heart rate and provide a sense of ease.
6. Play. Do something that feels fun or joyful with no end goal in mind other than intentional play. (Examples to get you started: hula-hooping; swapping jokes with a friend; dancing; blowing bubbles; coloring in an adult coloring book.)
7. Before you see your next patient, take one minute to close your eyes, breathe deeply, and let your mind wander on purpose. You might daydream to a scape or scene that brings you a sense of relaxation and ease.

The Heart:

1. Write down three things that you are grateful for today, however small. Bonus points for swapping them with a friend or loved one.
2. Pay kindness forward by giving someone a compliment. You might make their day – and yours.
3. Do something kind for someone else, without them asking for it and without needing to be acknowledged for it.
4. Qualitatively connect with a loved one or furry friend with no distractions and no expectations. Try some [prompted questions](#) to dig deep.
5. Spend five minutes writing a letter or simple note to a friend you miss. Go analog and use real pen, paper and a stamp.
6. Try a [kindness meditation](#). It'll warm your heart.
7. Join Kevin Hart for a [funny movement meditation](#). Then on a serious note, try a Headspace meditation. It's a great app.

STAC Success Tips:

- Tack your STAC action onto something you already have to do or have a habit of doing. For example:
 - Note three things you're grateful for while you brush your teeth in the morning and/or at night.
 - Buy yourself fragrant hand or dish soap that you love. Use it as a cue to intentionally focus on your breathing and/or senses while you wash up in sudsy deliciousness.
 - Every time you walk into and/or out of work, look for something natural that gives you a sense of awe or wonder. (Tip: the sky serves up this kind of thing every day.)
 - Whenever possible, commit to using a bathroom on a different floor or park your car in a far-off corner of the parking lot.
- Set yourself up for achievement. For example:
 - Place a glass of water in front of your coffee maker before you go to bed. Drink it before your morning coffee to help with hydration.
 - Place a yoga mat on the floor next to your bed. When your feet touch it, do a few sun salutations, stretches, or yoga poses.
 - Keep a book, magazine, or poetry collection in your lunch bag.
 - Put a pen and notebook in your car so you can keep working on a letter to a loved one for a few minutes, download, or make gratitude notes before you end your commute.
- Remove obstacles. For example:
 - Keep nutritionally void snacks or drink that tempt you out of your shopping cart (buy a bunch of bananas, a case of V8, some crunchy apples, or fun flavor of seltzer instead!)
 - If you often turn into a couch potato when you get home from work, stroll or stretch for a few minutes *before* going in the house.
 - Store spare sneakers and umbrellas in your car or under your desk so you have no excuses not to squeeze in a hustle.
 - Join the ["You Are Beautiful"](#) campaign and/or keep some compliment stickers stashed in your pockets, car, or bag so you're never without an easy way to pay someone a surprise compliment.
- Celebrate small wins and acknowledge progress, not perfection. Noting momentum not only builds inertia but reinforces commitments you've kept to yourself. For example:
 - Talk to a friend or your accountability partner about what you've done.
 - Put gold stars on your calendar, just like when you were in grade school.
 - Write a blog post or encouraging note to yourself (consider tacking them up to a real-world bulletin board that you see every day).
 - Keep your seltzer cans for a month so you can watch them pile up.

Last bit of good news! There's no pressure-filled commitment beyond the one you make to yourself. Think of it as a fun experiment that can be made as public or private as you want. Start now, STAC what works, tweak what doesn't, and let momentum build.