



This article contains general information dealing with health and wellness. It does not constitute medical advice and should not be relied on for diagnosing or treating any illness, injury or disease.

June 12, 2024

Your Summer Health Checklist – Part 2

This is Part 2 of 2 in our final ReFresh installment of the 2023/2024 school year, launching you into a healthy and *ReFreshing* summer!

Release and Focus on You!

You have just spent more than 10 months on the *Go, Go, Go*, and many of those days may have been on an 'alert' setting. Tension may have built up inside of you, and it is not always easy to just 'let go' and relax at the beginning of your summer vacation. Be kind to yourself, as it will take time to release and unwind from the year's accumulation of responsibilities.

Remember that you have spent the past year driven by a passion to be there for students, parents, and staff. Now is the time to be there ***for yourself – without any guilt!*** Summer for educators is YOUR time – make the most of it.

1. **Unplug:** disconnect from work-related emails and notifications when you can. Going 'cold turkey' is likely not possible, but you can manage your connections and start to reduce your hours per day by engaging in non-screen activities.
2. **Hobbies and passions:** Those non-screen activities may include things that bring you joy, give your head and body a much-needed break from your regular routine, and bring out your creativity. Think about golfing, painting, learning a new instrument, writing poetry, gardening, fishing... and more.
3. **Connect with others:** You can now dedicate more of your attention to family and friends, and spend quality time with them.

4. **Practice self-care:** You know the drill: get lots of exercise, eat healthy, and get plenty of sleep – which leads me to the next tip...
5. **Prioritize resting your nervous system and bringing yourself back to the 'Rest and Digest' state:** Yoga, meditation, journaling, forest bathing, tai chi – whatever calms your mind and body, and keeps you in the moment. This cools down your brain and the firings of your nervous system.
6. **Professional treatments:** Consider going for an RMT massage, physio, or chiro if you have been putting off those appointments! Or try reflexology, acupuncture, energy work, reiki – even just a body scrub or a facial. Find what best caters to your needs, reduces stress, and encourages relaxation. Spoil yourself: it is well-deserved! Remember that your extended health benefits will cover many paraprofessionals if you need them.
7. **Read for pleasure:** Read what YOU want to read, purely for the enjoyment of it, whether it is for entertainment, mind relaxation, or personal growth and reflection.
8. **Explore nature:** Let nature have its calming effect on your mind and body.
9. **Learn something new:** Use your time to learn something you have always wanted to try, a course or workshop, and follow wherever it takes you! Challenge your brain to think in different ways.
10. **Travel and explore:** In my experience, educators are not shy to get away on a destination vacation. But even a two or three day excursion that takes you out of your 'norm' can be incredibly rejuvenating and invigorating.

The summer holiday is precious time – focus on every moment to maximize the benefits.

Create a new morning routine for your summer, a slow and grateful start. Be mindful as you sip your morning coffee, watching the steam, feeling the warmth of your mug, and enjoying the fragrance and taste.

Be mindful during meals, and be present when you are with friends and family: focus on the camaraderie, be yourself, laugh, engage, and play.

Just be. And, before long, you will feel yourself coming back into balance.

May you find ways this summer to look after your complete health and well-being, and ReFresh your body, mind, and spirit. Think about the positive impact you have made for your students and staff over the past year. Take a few moments to think about what you are grateful for and enter the summer with a positive mindset and joyous anticipation of your break.

We wish you a safe and happy summer and encourage you to focus on your well-being!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Morandini', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rochelle Morandini

Member Health & Well-Being, Director

If you would like to contribute or have ideas about what you would like to see in the ReFresh series, we would love to hear from you: contact rochelle@bcpvpa.bc.ca.