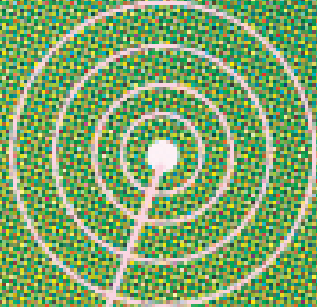




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NINERTIMES

Sweep away the stress

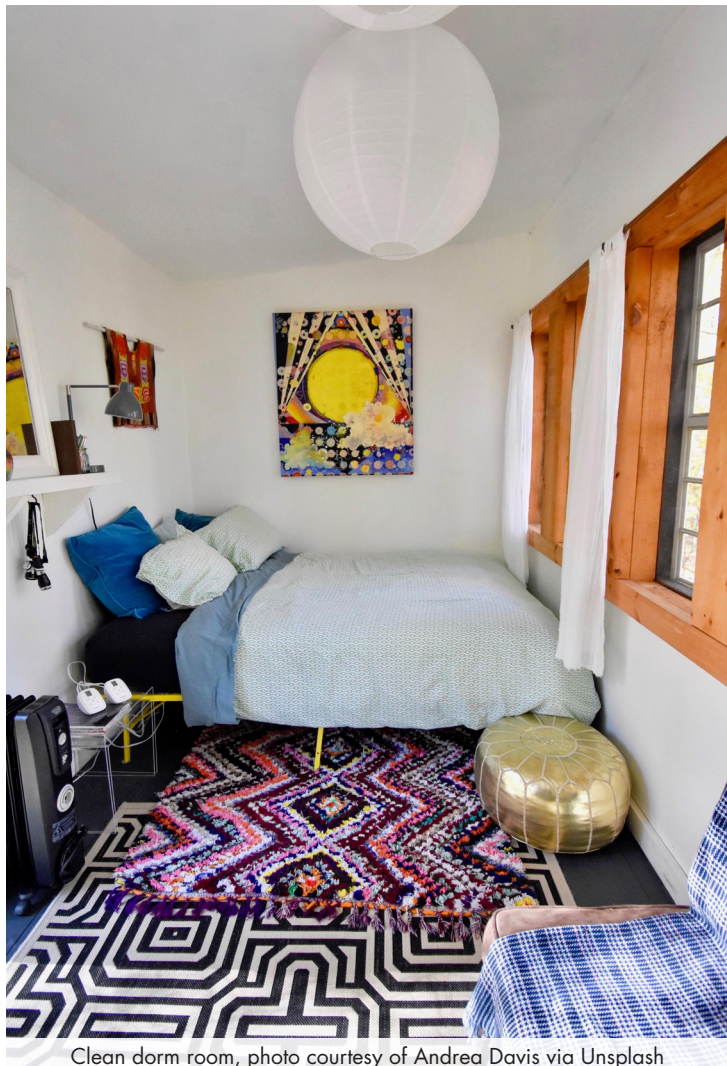
Why you should keep your living space organized

by Hiral Patel
Opinion Editor

Most college students know the struggle of not having their life together, especially when trying to balance numerous tests and exams, lack of sleep, unhealthy diets and working for pay. But do you know what's worse? Not having your life and living space together. In my experience, there is just something about the organization of my personal space that makes me feel like I have my life together even when I really don't. I recently did some research exploring this intuition and realized that the task of cleaning can lead to a better lifestyle, both for my mental health and for my pockets.

Let's talk about cleaning in general. Cleaning is seen as a chore, but really, it's a form of victory. Think about cleaning as if you're working hard to achieve a goal. The best part about this is that you know exactly what to do to achieve this goal, and when you're done, it feels rewarding. VICE reported on a study done by the University of Southern California and found that "[Cleaning] gives people a sense of mastery and control over their environment... Life is full of uncertainty and many situations are out of our hands, but at least we can assert our will on our living space. Clutter can be visually distracting, too, and serve as a nagging reminder of tasks and chores undone." Cleaning can also help you meditate and give you peace of mind. Usually, having clutter proves that there is something distracting about your space, and physically getting it out of the way can be meditating.

Now focusing on what a clean space can do for your mental state, Princeton University Neuroscience Institute published a study (The Journal of Neuroscience, 2011) that explains the psychological effects of organized living. "Multiple stimuli present in the visual field at the same time compete for neural representation by mutually suppressing their evoked activity throughout visual cortex, providing a neural correlate for the limited processing capacity of the visual system." This basically means that when your environment is disorganized, the mess prevents you from focusing and processing information and it causes a distraction. You feel like there is something missing—something that makes your mind want to think about solving that issue before moving on to other tasks.



Clean dorm room, photo courtesy of Andrea Davis via Unsplash



Shoes resting beside a vacuum cleaner, photo courtesy of The Creative Exchange via Unsplash

Not only will keeping your living space clean help with your mental state, but it can also help with the external parts of your life: social and financial. With the social aspect, a clean space can help your friends or whoever is visiting feel more welcomed and comfortable around you and your home. They would also think that you're reliable; they know that you take care of your things, so they can trust you with their things too. On a financial level, having a messy space often results in one losing an item or two. If everything is organized, you probably know where everything is and won't waste money on lost possessions. You would also have a better memory of what you own, so you wouldn't have to spend money on things that you don't remember having.

To conclude, this is the best time to have consistency in keeping your personal spaces clean. College is a stressful time for everyone, and most of us live independently, so it's not like high school when your parents remind you to clean your room and keep the rest of the house already clean. Keeping your spaces clean is just another small win to your daily routine that could have a huge impact on the internal and external parts of life. Keeping this up can make the harsh realities of "adulting" not seem so difficult.

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Dealing with Gym Intimidation

My experience with gym anxiety

by María Solano
Video Editor

Have you ever met someone that's a gym addict? Someone that is always posting on their Snapchat how much they love working out every day? I'm not one of those people. In fact, I'm the opposite of that but it's not because I'm a lazy person. It's because I have a lot of gym intimidation.

I have never been an athletic person, but I sometimes feel the need to do a light workout. I've never used any of the gyms on campus because just thinking about working out surrounded by people that are way more fit than me is scary. Instead of minding my own business, I tend to overthink a lot about how people perceive me in gym environments. Their silent judgement overwhelms me. Even though I repeat to myself that nobody is paying attention to what I'm doing, it still stops me from enjoying my experience at the gym. I end up not having a consistent routine because of my massive insecurity of doing something ridiculous in front of everyone.

When UREC opened, I decided that I wanted to conquer the gym intimidation that was stopping me from working out. I also wanted to check out the new building; I'm nosy. As I was wandering around it, I arrived at the fifth floor and felt as if a door to heaven opened just for me. This floor is not as open as the rest of the building and it doesn't have as many machines as the other floors, so I thought that

it was a good starting point to make myself feel comfortable. It went well for a couple of weeks because I was lucky enough to find the gym empty, until the day that I found myself again surrounded by people working out because... surprise! The gym is a public place! I started panicking and decided to give up. I have a lot of willpower and I was upset about how this irrational fear was going to prevent me from taking care of myself.

I don't like talking about how the gym makes me feel because I know that everything is in my head, but I had to see if someone felt the same way as I did. I talked to my friends about it and we agreed to workout together so that I could keep my mind distracted from what other people might think of me. This was the best thing I could do. My friends and I have the same stamina, so I don't feel pressured to do things that I'm not comfortable doing. We still workout on the fifth floor because I can still feel overwhelmed doing exercise anywhere else, but I feel that I'm overcoming my gym intimidation bit by bit!

If you feel the same way, don't hesitate to ask your friends if they can go to the gym with you! It's more fun than going alone and it will be beneficial to you in the long run! And if you don't feel like that, at least you have learned that the fifth floor of UREC is the best one.



Fourth floor of UREC, photo by Niyathi Sulkunte

Fighting the Spring Slump

Make the best of your Spring Semester

by Julianna Peres
Assistant Lifestyle Editor

Final Spring semester is what you've been waiting for: your niche. Senior Seminars, Capstone courses, et cetera, are the heart of what you came to UNCC to study. Whether you want to be an accountant or a Russian translator, this school offers some skill that you specifically sought out. These classes are designed to help you get to know your field and hone your abilities before you're thrust into the hands-on environment. This is the time to learn what you want. Ask for recommendations, get on your professors' good side and be the sunshine that their Senior Seminar so desperately needs. You can also make connections with other students at this stage, especially people who will graduate with you and whom you may someday work with. Don't be afraid to put yourself out there because, truly, that's what being a functioning, career-oriented, adult is all about.

You want to leave, you want to get your career, meaning your life, going. Your ambitions are valid, your need for freedom is wonderful, but wait. Take a breath. Your nine-to-five will be here before you know it. This is your time to mingle with friends, to have resources readily available to you. Take advantage of the new gym, the Student Health Center, the fully-stocked library and the numerous club activities. This is a place of resources and opportunities.

Curiosity. At one point or another in our lives, we wanted to learn something. What we wanted to learn varied entirely on what was going on in school, with our friends, our families and with our interests. Oftentimes, by college, many of us have been shamed or reprimanded out of our curiosity. We've been told to stop asking so many questions, to pick a specific career path, to learn a trade or a skill and not 'worry' about the rest of the world. Well, there's a lot of world out there to explore. Asking questions about anything that struck me, anything that jumped off of the page or out of the teacher's mouth, was a turning point for me. That was when I began enjoying school again for the first time in a long time. Find that inquisitive nature of childish novelty; act as if all the information you're receiving in these courses are completely new to you. Knowledge is a gift that not everyone is afforded. That isn't to make you feel guilty or overtly fortunate; it's just a way of saying "what you have here in front of you is good and useful and you should let your mind run free with it because curiosity begets creativity and creativity often begets success, discovery, and fulfillment."

It may feel like everything is dragging, but don't let this spring semester bring you down. There are ample opportunities happening all around you. And, remember: this is the time to try new things, talk to new people and attend lectures that you may not have the chance to again. Make the most of what is the end of this chapter and the beginning of the next.



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4 simple ways to brighten your mood

by Gracie Hood
Staff Writer

Now that the highs of back-to-school shopping are over and we've been in class for a few weeks, we may be left with a sense of uncertainty. It happens to all of us at some point in time during the semester. We get a bad test score, we miss our family and pets or we may simply feel overwhelmed. That's okay. It's okay to not know and to not be okay. I feel that so often our goal is to be sure and to know exactly what is happening. While it is good to plan, it also helps to focus one day at a time and to go step-by-step. Here are some tips and tricks on ways to better yourself and brighten your mood when you're having an unsure, not-so-hot day.

1. Do What is Best for You

Don't overlook this (I mean it!). It is so important at the end of the day to make sure that you have the best interest for yourself. Easier said than done, I know, but still. Whether that's eating your favorite food or dessert (my go-to is ice cream) or maybe it's listening to that one song that puts you in a good headspace. Doing something that grounds you will help in the long run. If you feel yourself feeling swamped, when possible, give yourself a minute. Stand up, get some sun, take a break. Yes, you have studying to do and homework due by midnight, but allow yourself to watch an episode of Friends or scroll through Pinterest. A few minutes of doing a chill activity will provide you with enough mental clarity to power through the not-so-fun stuff like preparing for that upcoming Communication Theory test or Chem lab.

2. Laughter

My personal favorite and definitely a mood-booster. Come on, who doesn't like to laugh? Save a meme or video to your phone that makes you laugh every time you see it. When you need a chuckle in your life, go to it. By having something that you know will put a smile on your face, it will be reassurance come hardship. Pro Tip: archive all the funny posts you see on Instagram, then scroll through your saved tab later when you're feeling low. After all, laughter is the best medicine!



Gracie Hood and friend smiling in front of a colorful wall, photo by Gracie Hood

3. Sleep

This one is equally as important as the others. Without sleep we cannot function. Sometimes getting a good night's rest is what is needed most. Do whatever you need to have a day or two during the week where you know you can get a good amount of sleep. That doesn't mean you have to go to bed early, just make sure you'll get plenty of rest. Make sure you have everything you need to sleep well, too. Sound or no sound, the right temperature and lighting are all important aspects when it comes to sleep. Yeah, naps are important but so is 8+ hours of sleep.

4. Show Someone Else Appreciation

Yes this article is about ways to brighten your mood; however, letting someone else know you care is just as effective. Sometimes when I feel depleted or under-appreciated writing cute notes to others makes me feel good. And texts work just as well! Let them know their strengths, why you admire them, how they better you and the world around them. By taking the time to show someone that you care enough about them is powerful. Hying others up only adds energy to yourself.

These are just four simple beginning ways to brighten your mood. Everyday is a new start, a redo. You may have already missed an assignment or spent too much DB, so what? We live, we learn, we grow. Do not let small things set you back and remember that you know yourself better than anyone else. If you have some go-to tactics for when you are under the weather, you'll feel like you have conquered the world... or at least the day.



songs to get you going

For days when it's difficult to be productive

by Madison Dobrzanski
Editor-in-Chief

Image courtesy of mohamed_
hassan via needpix.com

We've all had those days where merely getting out of bed is a challenge. You need to do the dishes, but just can't bring yourself to get to it. You need to get ready for class, but want to wait until the last minute just for more time to rest. You need to go to the gym, but just can't seem to get motivated.

Everyone has their own way of dealing with these days. For some people, a hot shower and a cup of coffee is enough. For others, it takes a long internal pep talk. For myself, sometimes the right song can put me in a more positive and productive mindset. Here is a list of some of those songs that help me get out of bed and do the damn dishes. These are in no particular order and are not categorized by genre.

(Disclaimer: if you have too many days where you're lacking motivation or these feelings are severe, it may be worth considering counseling or professional help. Everyone has bad days and motivational songs can help, but please don't confuse bad days with mental illness. Take care of yourself.)

1. "One Foot" by WALK THE MOON

I'm going to start with a song that has a great sentiment to live by: "Put one foot in front of the other." Known for upbeat and optimistic jams, WALK THE MOON is just an overall great artist if you need an energetic song to sing along to. This song in particular is great for days when you're struggling to get up because it is about taking things one step at a time, putting one foot in front of the other and doing what you have to do. In addition to this positive mindset, it has a kickass beat that makes anyone want to dance.

2. "Dirt Off Your Shoulder" by JAY-Z

"If you feelin' like a pimp, go and brush your shoulders off, ladies is pimps too, gon' brush your shoulders off." This song is all about forgetting anything negative about yourself or your circumstances and remembering you're a boss and can do whatever you want to do!



Woman happily dancing, photo courtesy of Bruno Thehte via pexels

3. "Watermelon Sugar" by Harry Styles

Off of Harry Styles' phenomenal album 'Fine Line' which is full of bops, this song is great for dancing and getting into a good mood. When I listen to this song, I am motivated by just how good it is. If you need a song to sing along to and just dance to, this is it.

4. "she" by Hayley Kiyoko

Hayley Kiyoko, also known as "lesbian Jesus," has a discography full of great dance anthems. She recently released an EP, "I'm too sensitive for this sh*t," which contains the empowering bop "she." The

chorus is all about being the kind of woman people respect and doing things right. The bridge, “Done, she’s gonna get it done, she’ll do it on the run,” makes you want to do exactly that: get things done.

5. “I’m It” by Kota Banks

I found this song on my Spotify Discover Weekly. After I heard it, I was blaring it for weeks. This song makes me feel like the baddest and most successful person in the room, which is exactly what I need to get myself out of bed on difficult days. My favorite line in the song is, “Wake up every morning, tell myself I’m the shit,” because really, shouldn’t we all do that?

6. “Diva” by Beyoncé

“A diva is a female version of a hustler,” so listen to Bey, and get up and hustle. I truly can’t imagine listening to this song and not being motivated to get work done.

7. “Soulmate” by Lizzo

We all know Lizzo for her empowering anthems, so it should be no surprise she’s on this list. We’ve all heard “Truth Hurts,” but if you haven’t taken the time to listen to “Soulmate,” (also off of her great album “Cuz I Love You”) do yourself the favor and listen to it. It makes you want to love yourself in every way possible, and sometimes that includes doing the dishes. So play this song and go do the damn dishes.

8. “Don’t Stop” by Fleetwood Mac

An oldie but goodie. This song makes me feel so optimistic on days when that seems unattainable. “Don’t stop thinking about tomorrow,” is such a good mindset to have when today is hard. Some of these songs can really push you to do a whole assignment

or clean your whole room, but this is one of those songs that is just good to help you think more positively.

9. “POWER” by Kanye West

If you can listen to “POWER” and not feel like you can conquer the world, what is wrong with you? When I saw Kanye West live, he performed this song four times. No, I am not lying. His reasoning was, “I just really need to hear myself say these words tonight.” That does sound very on-brand for him, but let’s be honest: hearing yourself say, “Do it better than anybody you ever seen do it,” and “At the end of the day, goddamnit I’m killing this shit” makes you feel like you have all the power in the world to do what you want.

10. “I’m Alive (Life Sounds Like)” by Michael Franti & Spearhead

I’ll end the list on one of the most positive notes you can end on: a song about how good it is to be alive, because sometimes we just need that reminder. Don’t get me wrong, life sucks sometimes, but there are plenty of things to be grateful for at the beginning and end of each day.

These 10 songs work well for me, though I recognize everyone’s music taste is different and everyone gets motivated differently. Even if you didn’t find a specific song to help uplift you, I hope you were reminded of the impact that music can have on your mood and how much it can help with your bad days. So next time you are having an unproductive day, I hope you put on some Beyoncé and do the damn dishes.



Headphones connected to a phone, photo courtesy of kaboompics .com via pexels

Fit or fad: New Year's Resolutions

How useful are these new goals?

by Olivia Lawless
Lifestyle Editor

I'll give you the answer right away: New Year's Resolutions can work, but I don't think they'll be very useful when you rely on them as motivation. One of my friends said something to me a few weeks ago when I asked her about any resolutions she had for this year: "I don't really make resolutions. I figure if I really wanted to change something, I shouldn't have to wait for another year to go by."

I think that sums it up. The new year can be a helpful jump-off point, but if you're looking to make a major change in your life, most of them won't be as simple as flicking on a switch as another day passes.

Countless people launch goals at the beginning of each year, some familiar and some unfamiliar, each with varying degrees of success. One of the most common topics New Year's Resolutions seem to center around is fitness. People want to lose weight, go on a diet, build muscle, train for a triathlon, or go to the gym more regularly. And for most people, this is the time of year where they've just about given up, or feel their goal begin to slip away.

If you feel like this right now, I encourage you: don't give up! Just let up a little. I don't think people give up on New Year's Resolutions because we are lazy or poorly motivated. Mostly we just try to do too much at once, often owing to the all-or-nothing culture in society. It's not good enough to go to the gym once a week or just cut out soda and burgers from your diet. No, we want to go vegan and hit the gym at least six days a week, and we want to do it *now*.

Realistically, huge changes like that are just not sustainable. The problem is that most of us are impatient, including myself. There are times when I come back from a really intense workout at the gym, look at myself in the mirror and think, "Wow, where's all the muscle I definitely gained from this one afternoon?"

Fitness goals and other lifestyle changes don't work like that. We know they don't work like that—and if you thought there was any magical workout program/diet/pill/shake to immediately get you where you want to be, there's not. I promise. Yet we still get frustrated when seeing no progress after only one or two weeks of going to the gym.

How to start the work, then? If not the New Year, supposedly the perfect time for a new slate, then when? Well, whenever you want. Just start slow. The best diet/workout/habit is the one you can keep. Make New Year's Resolutions if you want to, but make sure it's one you can build off of for the rest of the year and the years following.



Student exercising on a bike at UREC, photo by Niyathi Sulkunte

Garden Chicken and Gnocchi

by Gracie Hood
Staff Writer

Olive Garden: It's basically the next best thing to a family vacation in Italy. As college students sometimes even Olive Garden maybe a little too boujee for our budgets, so I decided to take matters into my own hands and redo a timeless classic from its menu. Next to their endless salad and breadsticks, soup is another good choice of an appetizer. My personal favorite is none other than the Chicken and Gnocchi soup. It's creamy and hearty which fits well for a nice cold winter day. One of the best things about cooking is you can make it your own and use the recipe as a suggestion guide. This recipe is slightly tweaked and influenced by lecremedelacrumb.com. It will take around 10 minutes of prep time and less than 30 minutes of cook time, which means it's an easy lunch or dinner you can make anytime. Personally, when I cook I eyeball and rarely use exact measurements, but it is up to you in terms of how much you want to add or take away per ingredient!



Ingredients for chicken and gnocchi soup, photo by Gracie Hood

A simple and satisfying Co

Ingredients:

- Cooked and shredded boneless skinless chicken breasts
- Chopped celery
- Fresh spinach
- Shredded carrots
- Diced white onion
- Diced or minced garlic
- Sunflower Oil or olive oil
- Chicken broth
- Thyme
- Basil



- Potato gnocchi
- Half and half
- Shredded mozzarella

First, go ahead and prep your veggies. I chop the celery and spinach, shred the carrots, and dice the onion and garlic all together. Compared to the other vegetables, you need less onion and garlic so that the dish won't be

Photo by websu

Gnocchi Soup for the soul

Copcat Olive Garden soup recipe

overpowered with intense flavor. Once everything is nicely prepped go ahead and heat up a pot with some sunflower oil on medium heat. I just happened to have some sunflower oil on hand but you can also

use olive oil instead. The pot will heat up quickly so once the oil is heated up put it all in to cook for roughly 4 to 5 minutes. It should become lightly brown and that's the queue to add the next ingredients.

Next, include the cooked chicken and chicken broth into the pot.

Fun fact: I bought a rotisserie chicken from



Chicken and vegetables heating, photo by Gracie Hood

gnocchi, so I added a lot to the recipe. Ultimately, it is up to the individual as to exactly how much they want in the soup.

The gnocchi only takes a few minutes to fluff up, so once it's soft and thick, you can add the half and half cream. A small amount goes a long way, so be cautious and pour it in little by little. At this stage turn down the heat to low so that all the ingredients can simmer before the dish is served.

After about 5 minutes, Volia! Your Copycat Olive Garden Chicken and Gnocchi soup is ready to be served. Since I don't have the restaurant's cheese grater handy, I topped my soup with a handful of mozzarella cheese. Share with your friends or relax and eat it by yourself. It was my first time and it turned out really good, so I definitely will be making this again soon. It is a fun and easy dish that is tasty throughout the cold months and can be made in large batches. This classic is the new homemade dish you've got to try out!

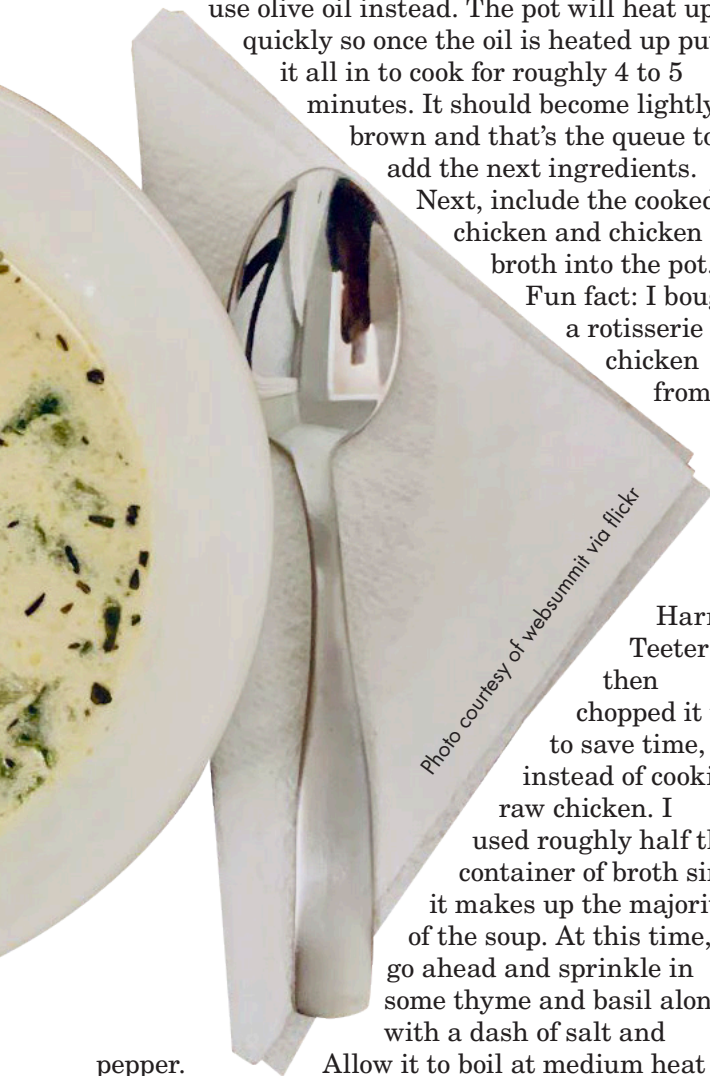


Photo courtesy of websummit via flickr

Harris Teeter then chopped it up to save time, instead of cooking raw chicken. I

used roughly half the container of broth since it makes up the majority of the soup. At this time, go ahead and sprinkle in some thyme and basil along with a dash of salt and

pepper. Allow it to boil at medium heat for about 10 minutes. Once all those spices have had a chance to blend together, you can include the gnocchi. Recently, I have been obsessed with

summit via Flickr

Spruce up your Salads

by Olivia Lawless
Lifestyle Editor

If the thought of a salad makes you sad, it may be because you aren't doing it right. Of course a bowl of leaves, cheese and croutons is going to be disappointing! Level up your salad game by making sure you include these three parts:

- 1. Protein.** Protein adds substance to the salad to keep you full. While grilled chicken is an easy and popular choice to throw on top of any salad, don't feel limited. You could also use salmon or steak. If animal-related proteins aren't your thing, turn to plant proteins instead: various beans, peas, nuts or seeds work as well. My personal favorite is black beans, which contain many other helpful nutrients in addition to protein.
- 2. Flavor add-ins.** They make your salad interesting. While salad dressing is a good way to add flavor, too much of it can be unhealthy or take over the flavor of the rest of the ingredients. Instead of going nuts with the dressing, try flavoring your salad with onions or peppers. A little bit of red onion goes a long way. And although cheese and bacon bits are not the healthiest options, they definitely add some flavor as well.
- 3. A variety of extras.** This is everything besides your base (which may be leaves, pasta or some grain). Be creative and generous when adding extra ingredients such as shredded carrots, cucumbers, cherry tomatoes or bits of other fruits. Adding "a little bit of everything" will provide more varied nutrients and flavors. Just make sure you aren't too creative or else you'll end up with a mash of unpleasantly clashing ingredients.



Salad and soup at Sovi, photo by Olivia Lawless

It may take some experimentation to find a classic salad you can enjoy (mine is pictured above: spinach, quinoa, cucumbers, red onion, carrots, cherry tomatoes, black beans, grilled chicken, a little bit of dressing and cracker sticks to top it off), but a good salad is worth the effort.

Productive procrastination

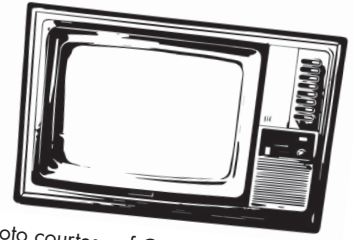


Photo courtesy of Cristiano Tavares via pixabay

Non-TV alternatives to procrastination

by Noah Howell
Arts and Entertainment Editor

As work piles up in the middle of the semester, it is easy to cast aside your responsibilities for an episode (or ten) of your favorite show on Netflix. It is important to give yourself a break from schoolwork; so, this article won't be lecturing you on why you shouldn't. But sometimes it can be nice to mix things up from your typical go-to. Here's a list that will present you with some alternatives to obsessing over Baby Yoda.

Read a Book. I don't think there is anything wrong with preferring to watch/play something as opposed to reading and vice versa, because both can have their advantages over the other. Books allow your brain to experiment more, using the words on the pages to build your own mental image of a world and its characters. Books also have the perk of letting you get more closely attached to the characters since you typically spend more time with them in a book than in a movie.

Doodle. Just grabbing some paper and drawing can be relaxing. If you're having trouble thinking of what to doodle, try your favorite character or your favorite animal. This creative outlet is one way to express yourself in a fun way, and if you like the end result, you can hang it on your wall!

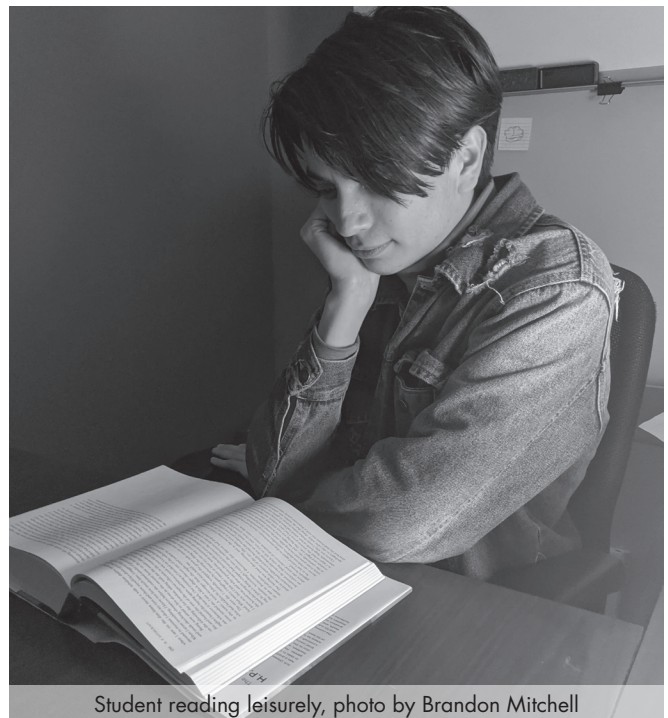
Go for a walk. Going for a walk can be the best way to clear your head of all the woes from school. You can pop in your earbuds too and listen to your favorite band. Try some new music for a change or maybe listen to an audiobook. Finding some cool new places to walk and explore can be good too, as the change of scenery can help rid you of your mental fog.

Write something. Maybe if you are not gifted with the ability to draw, much like myself, writing can be an alternative way of expressing yourself.

Write a short story, a poem, a review of your favorite show or even keep a journal. Journals can be especially fun and useful, as keeping your thoughts of the day can be neat to look back on in the future.

Learn an instrument. Maybe you've been wanting to learn piano or guitar. Setting time aside each day to learn a new instrument can be a fun experience. It may take a bit more dedication than other points on this list, but it is immensely rewarding. If you already know an instrument, try learning a new song or set up a low-key concert for close friends.

Ultimately, you don't need Netflix to procrastinate. These alternatives will help you take a brain break



Student reading leisurely, photo by Brandon Mitchell

Avoiding cabin fever in the dorms

by Julianna Peres
Assistant Lifestyle Editor

With the winter cold and lack of sun, it's totally normal to want to stay indoors for these "almost Spring" months. It's also normal to go a little stir-crazy after your months of hibernation. Here are a few things you can do when staying inside is driving you nuts:

1. Play some board games. They're much more fun in big groups. My freshman year, my floor mates and I remembered just why we used to love playing Candy Land, Monopoly and Go Fish as kids. If you only have one roommate who wants to play, I recommend buying a simple pack of cards. With these cards, the two of you can play Spades, Slap-Jack, Rummy, Nerts, Crazy Eights and countless other games.

2. Binge a movie or some Netflix shows. Harry Potter marathons are always a great way to spend the evening; plus getting to know your roommates' favorite films and tv shows is a good way to know them better.

3. Take a walk around campus. If you live in a dorm, then you know just how big and hilly, this campus is. But, have you ever walked around just to... walk around? A few of my favorite places to relax here are the top floor of the library, the greenhouse and strangely enough, Cameron. Wherever you feel most comfortable, wherever you find most interesting, that's where you should go.

4. Reconnect with your hobbies. If you love to paint, play video games or read fantasy novels, but you just don't think you have the time to indulge yourself, do it anyway. Yes, keep your responsibilities in mind, but let your brain rest when you start getting mentally drained. Listen to that podcast, google pictures of cute labradoodles or make your favorite snack.

5. Take the lightrail somewhere. This costs nothing for students and can take you plenty of places in Charlotte. Go to a concert, try out a new restaurant or just walk around the Epicenter. Bowling, skating, bars, coffee shops, and karaoke are fun places and activities to enjoy in groups (plus, it's usually much more affordable if you take a few people with you). Stay safe (another reason to travel in groups), try new things and don't let cabin fever stop you from having a great day.

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Your basic guide to tea

Herbal, green and black tea benefits

by Abigail Shumar
Intern

When you think of tea, you probably think of someone's old British grandma drinking tea out of fine china on a cloudy London afternoon. You don't have to be an old British woman to enjoy a nice cup of hot tea. In fact, people of different ages all around the world prefer tea to coffee. It's lower in caffeine content and known to be generally healthier. Depending on the type of tea you choose, most people agree that it can even taste better than coffee. There are many different types of tea, but I will be focusing on herbal tea, green tea, and black tea.

Herbal teas tend to have absolutely no caffeine, and are used for their medicinal and calming purposes. This includes mint tea, chamomile tea and ginger tea among many others. Chamomile tea is known to lessen anxiety and insomnia. If you have trouble falling asleep or just want to have a relaxing evening, this is the one to reach for. Extra bonus if you can find some that has lavender in it as well, which is also known for its calming properties. Mint tea is perfect for alleviating headaches (and it also helps with period cramps, ladies). If you want an extra caffeine boost with your mint tea, be sure to get some that has green tea in it as well. This is very common to find, so it's something to be aware of. Ginger tea is known to help settle the stomach. So, whether you're suffering the effects of motion sickness or you've come down with a cold, this is the perfect tea to grab.



Cup of tea, photo courtesy of NeONBRAND via Unsplash

Green tea has some caffeine, is known to be very high in antioxidants and has a calming effect. If you want caffeine but suffer from anxiety, this is the perfect beverage for you. Some of my favorites are green tea with jasmine and green tea with honey. If you're out and about, most cafe's (including the Starbucks and Peets on campus) make green tea latte's, which are very good. It's very common to see matcha with green tea. Matcha is a powder that is commonly added

to green tea, which enhances the antioxidant and calming effect. Depending on how long it is steeped, matcha can add a very earthy flavor.

Black tea is the kind of tea the aforementioned British grandma is probably drinking. We also drink black tea very regularly in America, as it is the type of tea used in sweet tea. The most common type of black tea is English breakfast, but earl grey and Irish breakfast are also nice. Black tea is the highest in caffeine content, so it can be the perfect healthy substitute for coffee if you choose it as your morning drink. It is also said that black tea makes you more mentally alert.

Tea is easy to make, only requiring a way to heat water and a mug to drink it out of, rather than a specific machine, like coffee does. It's also usually cheaper and healthier than most types of coffee. That is why I believe that tea is better than coffee. Go try some tea today and see where you stand.

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Bullet journaling lite

The low-pressure version of bullet journaling

by Olivia Lawless
Lifestyle Editor

I love to draw and I love to journal. Bullet journaling is the perfect combination of both of them: Organized notes with the bonus of cute headlines, stickers and doodles. I would love to spend time filling my journal with carefully calculated calendars and perfectly spaced to-do list columns.

But realistically? I just don't have time for that, and I know most people don't either. Instead, I do what I call "Bullet Journaling Lite," something that is way less time consuming than the traditional bullet journaling but still looks nice and encourages creativity in your daily organization habits. This way you can make your notes as fancy or as simplistic as you want without spending hours making it look perfect.

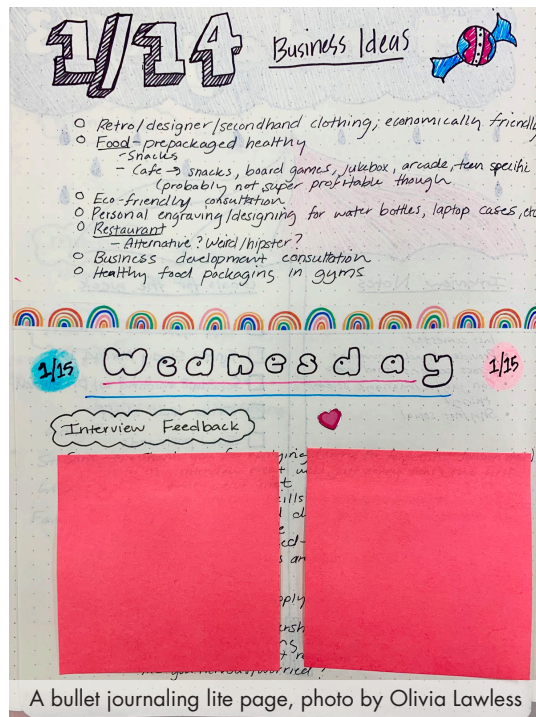
Also, because your journal won't necessarily look "perfect," you'll feel less afraid of ruining it and more encouraged to actually use it for its intended purpose. The worst thing is spending hours curating something to look nice then feeling pressure to make everything absolutely perfect. Bullet Journaling Lite takes away that pressure by not investing too much time into pre-constructed pages and allowing you to mold your mistakes into creative license.

Headlines are key to Bullet Journaling Lite. They're often the most noticeable part of a page that may be otherwise filled with unremarkable notes or scribbles. That doesn't mean you have to spend thirty minutes on one or two words, though. To create a nice-looking headline, write your date or header in a fun but simple font: block letters, faux-lettering cursive, bubble letters, or with some other twist or font you copied off the internet. My favorite go-tos are block letters with shadows. They stand out and simultaneously are not too hard to create.

As with anything, making nice-looking headlines takes a little practice, but they can look really nice after you get the hang of them. Adding little symbols or accents around the headline gives it a little extra pop as well. If your headline looks a little plain for your taste, box it in with a cloud or rectangle or draw some small symbols beside it (bubbles, swirls, stars, etcetera). A little splash of color helps elevate your design to something especially creative or cute.

To decorate your page even further, have fun with extra add-ons: stickers, washi (decorated) tape, doodles. You can get most rolls of washi tape or sticker sheets for just a dollar or two at Walmart or craft stores, so decorating your journal is cheap.

Now, even Bullet Journaling Lite requires some artistic intentions and desire for creativity. I don't mean that you have to be "naturally creative" to have a nice journal, but you do still have to put some effort into looking up letter styles and practicing designs that work well together. You just have a lot more freedom to decide how much time and effort you want to spend on it. Overall, Bullet Journaling Lite is an awesome time-saving and low-pressure option that's easy to make into a creative habit.



A bullet journaling lite page, photo by Olivia Lawless

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Queen City Nerve
Co-Founder &
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Ryan Pitkin began studying journalism at Central Piedmont Community College in 2008, and interned with local alt-weekly Creative Loafing that same year. He later transferred to UNC Charlotte, where he worked as an editor at Niner Times before graduating in 2012. He worked as a freelancer with Creative Loafing — covering activism, poverty, crime and other similar beats — before getting a full-time job with Union County Weekly and becoming managing editor. In 2015, he returned to Loafing and was editor-in-chief there in October 2018 when the publisher shut it down. A month later, he and his business partner launched Queen City Nerve, where they recently celebrated their one-year anniversary.

For more information please email studentmedia@uncc.edu or call 704-687-7129



Going clubbing

Why you should get involved on campus

by Max Young
Assistant Copy Editor

UNC Charlotte is home to more than 400 clubs and organizations that will help you stake your claim on campus. There is something for every student to get involved with on campus. The more involved you become, the more opportunity you will have to make new friends, develop new skills, and most importantly, have fun!

Make A Difference

There are many clubs on campus that promote activism and volunteer work. One of the primary jobs of UNC Charlotte is to be directly involved in the community. Providing the manpower for community projects, such as volunteering for environmental projects, creates a positive image of the University and its students. These opportunities will open your mind to the Charlotte community in a way that will educate you about important issues that are critical to the function of the area.

There are a multitude of social justice and politically active clubs that will surround you in like-minded people to ensure that your voice is recognized in the diverse community that is UNC Charlotte. Often tied to community engagement, these clubs such as the NAACP at UNC Charlotte, Young Americans for Liberty and the Young Democratic Socialists of America are all clubs that have a political focus as well as trying to do good in the community.

All in all, these student organizations will help you realize the benefits of supporting your community and ensure your involvement during your tenure at UNC Charlotte will be worthwhile.



One of the many student orgs on campus, photo by Chris Crews



SGA members at an election announcement, photo by Chris Crews

Lookin' Good

Everyone has that pesky family member that asks them what they want to do for the rest of their lives. Most of us have the same answer of ambiguity and disdain. However, a tool to mitigate this confusion is to find a club that interests you and will catch the eye of an employer. For example, as a journalism minor, the most attractive aspect for a young journalist to have on his resume is to be involved in some sort of student media. Therefore, I have joined the Niner Times as a writer and editor to show that I have adequate experience in my desired field.

For you political science nerds, it could be useful to join one of the previously-listed and politically-based clubs, or possibly throw your hat in the ring and run for student office with SGA. Engineering students and computer scientists may want to look into Charlotte Hack or Game Dev. Any organization that will not only help you learn information in your field but also sell your skills to an employer is worth looking into.

Begin Your Journey

So, you looked all through Niner Engage and couldn't find the club for you. Well, you're in luck: You can make your own damn club. All you have to do is submit a few forms on Niner Engage, and poof, you are the president of a made-up organization that you and your buddies can enjoy to your heart's content. It's that simple. To reiterate my last point, it will show the initiative to create something that you are passionate about and show your dedication to your cause.

In the end, joining a club should be all about creating new experiences and having fun. It would be worth noting to take chances, follow your passion and have fun doing it.

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