And we’re back for yet another semester! Heading back to uni from holiday is not easy, and second semester comes with its own particular challenges.

For some of you, this will be the first time you’ve received your marks back, which could have any number of effects on how you’re feeling. For others further along the degree path, this can be when you start to question whether you’re in the subject area/career trajectory that really suits you best.

One way or another, second semester tends to be a time of reflecting. So with that in mind we encourage everyone to take a moment to step back and ask yourself one simple question: “What matters most to me this semester?”

Answering this question is a great way to boost your motivation and ensure you’re heading down the best path.

In this edition of CAPStivate, we look at some ways to help you figure out what matters most and keep it front of mind. To kick off, we’ll be talking about the value of gratitude and noticing the little things. This is an area of research that continues to gain momentum as people realise just how important it is to stop and smell the roses in our increasingly complex world.

We also look at how to deal with conflict in relationships and reflect on what you can learn from it.

So good luck for the semester ahead. We hope all of your steps take you where you want to go!

CAPStivate team
Mariah graduated with a Master of Human Rights and Democratisation (Asia Pacific) last year. She now works as a Research Consultant at the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women International Secretariat in Bangkok, Thailand.

The most interesting thing I have done is: live overseas. Since the age of 16, I have spent much of my time studying, working and volunteering abroad. Of the places I lived, I’ve had the most interesting experiences in the Middle East/North Africa region. Time and again I was humbled by the citizens of Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria – by their willingness to accept me as an individual and not judge me on the country I was born in.

The one thing I am most proud of is... my perseverance. In my late teens to mid-20s I faced multiple personal tragedies that tested my resolve to continue reaching for my academic and career goals. Yet instead of being defeated I learned my own strength. I found solace in my academic work as well as the opportunities it afforded me to study abroad.

People might be interested to know... that I am a complete hypochondriac. My imagination often runs wild on possible medical emergencies in the countries I visit. But I think travel is my best weapon against this particular form of anxiety. I confront and conquer my fear whenever I go off into the world.

What I have learned over the years is: to listen. I think the main task of human rights practitioners is to listen. We need to hear what people want, before we can assist them to reach their goals. Listening is fundamentally crucial in all aspects of life.

I’m a big fan of... individuality. I’m inspired by... the truth. In the field of human rights we seek out the truth in the world. It is the moments when I feel I have discovered the truth that are most inspirational. Yet more importantly, it is the individuals who are courageous in making the truth known that truly inspire me.

I regularly remind myself... to breathe. As someone who has dealt with anxiety their entire life, I know the therapeutic qualities of breathing. I know how crucial it is for me to take moments every day to reconnect with myself through that simple act of thoughtful breathing.

My favorite quote is... by Eleanor Roosevelt. “A mature person is one who does not think only in absolutes, who is able to be objective even when deeply stirred emotionally, who has learned that there is both good and bad in all people and in all things, and who walks humbly and deals charitably with the circumstances of life, knowing that in this world no one is all knowing and therefore all of us need both love and charity.”
We all want to be happier, and it’s tempting to think we need certain things to be truly happy – lots of money, a good-looking boyfriend or girlfriend, fashionable clothes ... But what if you already had all the stuff you need to be happy and you forgot to notice?

Research has shown that noticing the good things in our lives makes us happier. This means that, even if not everything is going to plan, noticing good things can make you at least a bit happier.

Here are a few strategies to become better at noticing the good stuff.

**APPRECIATE WHAT YOU HAVE**

1. **Before you go to sleep each night, remember three good things that happened in your day.** What did you enjoy? What went well? What were you thankful for? Maybe small everyday things like a great coffee or sharing a joke with a friend come to mind. Or it could be something bigger like getting started on a major project or getting tickets to a music festival you are looking forward to.

2. **Write it down – this step is important!** You can use a notebook, or an app on your phone such as Three Things (iPhone) or Attitudes of Gratitude (Android).

3. **Think about it.** For each thing, think about why it happened and what it was that made you feel good.

4. **Look over what you wrote, at the end of a week.** How do you feel when you read about all this good stuff in your life? Do you notice any patterns?

5. **Keep going.** For the next few weeks, continue to write down three good things every night. You may find it so useful you’ll want to make it an ongoing bedtime ritual. Either way, chances are it will improve your ability to notice more of the good things in your life.

**SAVOURING JOY**

Whenever you realise that you are enjoying something, slow down and really notice it. If you pay more attention, then things like a delicious sandwich, a catchy song, or the look on a friend’s face as they laugh at a funny story, can add great joy to your life.

It’s all too easy to overlook these small joys when you’re caught up in a whirlwind of busy-ness. By making a decision to fully experience simple enjoyable things, you can greatly increase your day-to-day happiness.
PHOTO COMPETITION
CAPSture the moment

Take a great portrait and you could win a $50 voucher at JB Hi-Fi.

Have you taken a great shot of your favourite animal or pet? Have you been on a wildlife safari, a bird-watching expedition or a whale-watching cruise? Email it to us by midnight on Friday 5 September 2014 and you’ll be in the running.

Email your photo to caps.competitions@sydney.edu.au

Make sure you include your contact details and a brief description of the photo.

A few points to bear in mind:

– Photos need to be digital, in JPEG format, and 5MB or smaller.
– Keep it simple – entries deemed to have been heavily digitally manipulated will not be accepted. Digital photo development however, is permitted (for example, white balance, levels etc.)
– Click here for full terms and conditions

The winner will be announced on Monday 15 September 2014 We will contact you by email, and your name and winning entry will be published in the next edition of CAPStivate.

Happy snapping!
Q: I did really badly last semester. I just couldn’t seem to get motivated to study, I really want to do well this time. Is there anything I can do to keep myself motivated?

A: This is a really common issue that many students face. Most tend to start off the semester highly motivated (notice how your lectures are full in week 1 and 2?), but as time goes on, things can slide. It’s not easy to keep motivated, especially when work is piling up and you’re feeling overwhelmed.

Try to think of the semester like a marathon race (not a sprint). Your best chance of doing well is to be consistent throughout the whole semester, not just at the beginning. So here’s what we suggest:

1. Firstly, figure out what works best for you in terms of studying.
   - Is studying with friends helpful or distracting?
   - Are you more productive at home or in the library?
   - Are you a morning or night person?
   - Do you study best in longer or shorter chunks of time?

2. With the above in mind, set up a personal study timetable and use it!

3. Set daily S.M.A.R.T goals (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time limited). Write these goals down and look at them regularly.

4. Pace yourself and take breaks – you will burn out if you don’t. Make sure you recharge your battery when it gets low. Figure out what helps keep you energised and include this in your timetable.

5. Keep your eye on the prize at the end (‘finishing your degree!’). And be sure to give yourself little rewards for reaching milestones along the way.

If you find your motivation slipping, take steps as soon as you can to get back on track. CAPS has some excellent workshops and resources to help you stay motivated. Check out our e-books on study issues.

We’ve also got some great workshops to help you stay motivated this semester.

Q: I am halfway through my degree, but recently I have been feeling unsure about whether I want to continue with my studies. I feel so overwhelmed with the amount of work and I can’t seem to get the grades I want, no matter how hard I try. I am now questioning whether I should even finish my degree. What should I do?

A: The first question you need to ask is whether you’re unsure about your degree because of the workload or because you’re not motivated by the subject area.

If the problem is that you’re not inspired by your subject area, then it’s worth asking yourself: “why am I studying this course?” and “am I here for myself or someone else?”.

Remember, we are most motivated when we’re doing something that aligns with our own values. Figuring out why we’re doing something can help us to seek the assistance of a CAPS counsellor.

If the issue is due to your workload, then other steps are needed. Firstly, let’s all acknowledge the simple fact that university is hard! You’re not alone in feeling overwhelmed. Before you decide to withdraw from your course, it might be worth checking in with your faculty’s academic advisor to look at your subject choice and study options. You may be able to drop a subject or two to help get back on track.

You could also visit the Learning Centre to pick up some new study skill tips. Most of all, remember that a big part of university is persistence, which is a great skill to develop and take into all areas of life.

Q: I get incredibly nervous before giving a presentation. What can I do to help with that?

A: Giving presentations makes most of us feel anxious. This is normal! It’s actually nature trying to be helpful by turning on our ‘fight or flight’ reflex – this is the system that helps us to take action when we’re under threat. But it’s not always so helpful and can cause pretty distressing physical symptoms (churning stomach, anyone?).

So, keeping in mind that anxiety is a perfectly normal event that can’t hurt you in any way, our first piece of advice is to stay in the situation (ie, the presentation). Most of us would prefer to escape, but if we avoid things that make us nervous, we never get the chance to find out what would have happened (maybe it would have gone okay), and we’ll be just as anxious or even more so, next time round.

When facing up to the situation, it’s useful to have a few techniques up your sleeve to help you remain grounded. These tricks won’t completely banish the anxiety (remember it’s normal), but will make you better able to focus on the task at hand. To learn these skills, check out the CAPS eBook on Managing Stress and Anxiety. Try out some of these strategies beforehand and see what works best for you.

Remember: if you need a bit of help to work through these skills, a counsellor or psychologist will be able to provide you with some guidance.

CAPS is here to support you. In this section, our experts answer some common questions about your health and wellbeing.
Tired of not getting your way when you disagree with your partner? Feel like you are stuck on repeat, with nothing ever getting resolved?

Most of us have never been taught how to resolve conflict, or how to have an appropriate discussion on thorny relationship issues.

Here are 12 rules to help you resolve conflict with your partner in a fair and constructive way that will keep both of you out of the dog house!

1. Focus on one problem at a time and try to resolve it. Don’t bring up past issues. Stay focused in the present.
2. Never resort to any kind of physical violence or intimidation during an argument. Try to remain calm.
3. State the problem clearly and stick to the facts. If possible, focus on the behaviours of your partner you are upset about and provide some examples of these.
4. Use ‘I’ messages to describe feelings of anger, hurt, or disappointment during an argument. Try to remain calm.
5. Use ‘I’ messages to describe feelings of anger, hurt, or disappointment. Avoid ‘you’ messages such as, “you make me angry ...”. Instead, use phrases like, “I feel angry when you ...”
6. Don’t use words such as ‘never’ or ‘always’ to describe a problem. These descriptions are too general and are likely to be exaggerations that will lead to your partner becoming defensive, and escalate the conflict.
7. Don’t use ultimatums or threaten to leave the relationship, unless you really mean it. These statements are often a way of one party attempting to regain control of power during an argument, but they can do irreparable damage to your relationship.
8. Take time to understand your partner’s perspective. The opposing point of view can still make sense, even if you don’t agree with it.
9. Propose specific solutions to the problem and ask your partner to nominate solutions as well.
10. There is no prize for winning an argument. Aim for a win-win outcome or to reach a compromise. Some couples get caught up needing to win the argument, and forget in the process they are doing damage to their relationship.
11. How an argument ends is crucial. Research shows that couples who resolve conflict and make up afterwards are likely to have longer-term successful relationships. Recognise when the olive branch is being offered to you; this may be in the form of a joke or a cuddle. An apology goes a long way and doesn’t necessarily mean that you are the one in the wrong. You can always apologise for hurting or upsetting your partner, which helps to defuse the disagreement.
12. Choose your battles. You don’t need to confront your partner on every single thing they do that annoys you. Focus on the important issues.

While it may seem a bit hard to put all of this into practice, it will be easier the more you try. Studies show it is not the frequency of conflict which predicts separation, but rather the way in which both parties manage conflict within the relationship. So try following these rules next time you have an argument with your partner. And remember – fight fair!
TAKE THE CHALLENGE!

Want to be sharper for study? Have more energy and sleep better? Be able to better manage the demands of study and life? Spend less down time with colds or flu? Or just feel better about yourself?

We all know the multitude of benefits gained from exercise. Slowly building up an exercise regime will go a long way to bringing these benefits into your life. The beginning of the semester is the perfect time to get into some good routines that will help you later on if things get tough.

If you’re not really the exercising type, it’s helpful to start gradually with some light exercise and increase your heart rate. If you find it hard to get motivated, try to commit to exercise on certain days, or talk to a friend into coming with you!

TIE THOSE LACES

Start off by taking a brisk walk (or any activity that increases your heart rate) for five minutes a day, at least three times a week. Each week for the next six weeks, increase this amount by five minutes. By the final week you’ll be doing 30 minutes a day.

TIPS

If you’re pressed for time, just reduce the amount of time spent exercising but continue with your commitment. You will retain that sense of achievement and your body will thank you for it.
Making the most of Sydney in these colder winter months requires some inspiration. We’ve put together a few suggestions on how to have fun while keeping those tootsies warm.

**ENJOY BEING A LOUNGE LIZARD**
What better way to spend a cold winter’s night than hanging out with friends in the comfort of your living room. Invite some friends to come over wearing their best flannelette ensembles or their favourite onesie, cook up some popcorn and settle in for a LAN party, a night of DVD watching, or a board game challenge. So old school daggy it’s almost cool (and definitely comforting).

**WARM UP WITH A JUMP ON THE TRAMPOLINE**
If you’re feeling cooped up as a result of the cold, wintery days, head to one of the trampoline parks popping up all over Sydney. At $18 for an hour of bouncing (including grippy socks) it’s a fun way to release some energy, get some exercise and connect with your inner child. For more information, see [www.skyzone.com.au/location/alexandria](http://www.skyzone.com.au/location/alexandria) or Google for other options around Sydney.

**SNUGGLE UP WITH 50 OF YOUR CLOSEST FRIENDS AT THE MOVIES**
Check out Govindas, an inner Sydney city restaurant, famous worldwide for its delicious vegetarian buffet and ultra comfortable boutique cinema, the Movie Room. You can’t go wrong at only $30 for an all-you-can-eat buffet of delicious vegetarian food followed by a movie. Govinda’s really is the perfect way to make the most of a chilly evening. For more information, check out [www.govindas.com.au](http://www.govindas.com.au)

**TAKE A MINI-BREAK**
Rug up in those winter woollies and head off on the train to the Blue Mountains. Once you get there, explore one of the many pretty mountain towns, go for a bushwalk, check out the boutique shops, enjoy a pub lunch or indulge in a hot chocolate. It’s the perfect place to embrace the winter season! See [www.bluemts.com.au/info](http://www.bluemts.com.au/info)

**HUNT AND GATHER**
Make an adventure of your weekly fruit and veg shopping with a trip to Flemington Markets on Saturday morning. The markets stock great value fresh produce, flowers and a large ‘garage sale’. The bargains are amazing and the experience couldn’t be more different to shopping at the supermarket. If you team up with a group of friends, buy in bulk and split your purchases, you can save a bundle. The market is accessible by train or car. For details, see [www.sydneymarkets.com.au](http://www.sydneymarkets.com.au)
This edition, we’re going to try out ‘Tabata’. This is a form of high intensity interval training that is great at boosting your cardiovascular fitness. But, before you have a go at Tabata, make sure you’ve built up your fitness to a reasonable level by working through the regimes detailed in the first two editions of CAPStivate. We don’t want anyone pulling a hammy.

Tabata involves doing an exercise vigorously for 20 seconds, then having a 10 second break before moving onto the next exercise. You repeat this pattern until the entire set of exercises has been completed (normally eight exercises in total). The pros do four sets with a one-minute rest in between each set, totalling about 20 minutes all up. To make life easier, download one of the free Tabata apps on your smartphone. Or use any old type of stopwatch.

Ready to get started? Take a look at the four sets we’ve put together, and jump in! Remember to warm up first (review the last two editions of CAPStivate if you need a refresher) and take things at a pace that’s appropriate for your body.

If you can only work through one set, that’s fine. Better to do a little than none! Aim to do your Tabata workout twice per week and you’ll definitely get your blood pumping during these cold months.

**FUNCTIONAL FITNESS
WINTER WORKOUT**

Welcome to Round 3 everyone. If you’ve been following the workouts from the last two editions of CAPStivate you should have a pretty impressive fitness baseline! So let’s step things up a little.

---

**Tabata workout (one minute rest between each set)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SET 1</th>
<th>SET 2</th>
<th>SET 3</th>
<th>SET 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Push ups</td>
<td>Sit ups</td>
<td>Plank</td>
<td>Push ups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jumping Jacks</td>
<td>Squats</td>
<td>Side plank on the right</td>
<td>Jump squat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternating lunges forward</td>
<td>Side lunges</td>
<td>Side plank on the left</td>
<td>Alternating scissors jumps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternating lunges backward</td>
<td>Burpees</td>
<td>Sit ups</td>
<td>Jumping Jacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Push ups</td>
<td>Sit ups</td>
<td>Plank</td>
<td>Push ups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jumping Jacks</td>
<td>Squats</td>
<td>Side plank on the right</td>
<td>Jump squat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternating lunges forward</td>
<td>Side lunges</td>
<td>Side plank on the left</td>
<td>Alternating scissors jumps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternating lunges backward</td>
<td>Burpees</td>
<td>Sit ups</td>
<td>Jumping Jacks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Reader, published in Germany in 1995 and subsequently translated into 37 languages, is an interesting exploration of some very complex themes related to coming to terms with the past.

Set in post-war Germany, the key driving force of the novel is the relationship between Michael (first encountered in the novel as a 15 year old) and Hannah (aged 36, a former prison guard at Auschwitz). A sexual relationship develops between Hannah and Michael. He becomes Hannah’s ‘Reader’—she has him read classical novels to her before their sexual encounters.

Hannah abruptly disappears from Michael’s life and years later, as a law student, he encounters her again as a defendant at a war crimes trial. She is on trial for her role as an SS officer in the death of 300 Jewish women in a church fire. The secret at the centre of the novel unfolds and is explored, in the past, present and also in the future.

The novel engages on many levels. It is partly a metaphorical exploration of the relationship between past and present, and also an exploration of juxtaposed moral issues. The author writes succinctly, sparsely, almost coldly, with a lack of sentimentality. This could be because the novel bears the traces of its German authorship in its tone and precise, economic use of descriptive language.

Schlink’s novels characteristically explore the experience of the generation of people born after World War II. This novel is likely to resonate with the children born to parents who lived through dark and terrible times in the recent past. At its heart, it’s a novel about guilt, secrecy and living with the shadow of the past.

The Reader was made into a film in 2008, featuring Kate Winslet in the role of Hannah (for which she won an Oscar). The film bears a good depiction of the novel and captures the tone and quiet anguish of the main protagonists. Both the book and the film are very highly recommended.
Here are a few exercises to help give your brain a workout, in between your studies. All you need to do is fill each column, row and 3x3 box so they contain every number between 1 and 9.

You can find the solutions on: sydney.edu.au/current_students/counselling/capstivate/sudokuans
RED LENTIL AND TOMATO SOUP
SERVES 4
APPROXIMATE COST: $7

A hot bowl of soup is very comforting on a cold night. It’s also a cheap and nutritious meal. It’s a good idea to make double the quantity and store in individual portions in the freezer for those times when you need food fast.

INGREDIENTS
1 tablespoon of oil
1 brown or red onion, chopped
1 clove garlic, crushed
1 carrot, peeled and diced
400g can chopped tomatoes
1 cup split red lentils
5 cups vegetable stock or 5 cups water and stock cube
1 bay leaf
Salt and pepper to taste
Spice it up
½ teaspoon smoked paprika
1 red chilli chopped

Garnish options
Chopped herbs – parsley, or coriander
Natural yoghurt
Crispy bacon
Lemon wedges

METHOD
Heat oil in a large saucepan. Add the onion and cook until transparent. Add the carrot and cook for three minutes, stirring occasionally.

Add the garlic, and any spices you have chosen, and cook for a further minute, stirring constantly.

Add lentils, stock or water, tomatoes, and bay leaf. Bring to the boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 25–30 minutes until the lentils are very soft.

Remove bay leaf and season to taste with salt and pepper. You may like to put the soup in a blender or food processor, or you can leave it chunky.

Serve with your choice of garnishes and crusty bread. Enjoy!
FOUR MOBILE PHONE APPS TO REACH YOUR EXERCISE GOALS

You know what they say – a summer body is made in winter. So let’s get moving. Even if the idea of exercise on these cold winter mornings sends chills down your spine, we are confident these apps will help you get motivated.

RUNKEEPER (FREE)
According to its developers, more than 28 million people use RunKeeper to track their runs, walks, bike rides, and hikes using the GPS system in their phone. You can track your progress over time and view detailed stats on your performance. RunKeeper also allows you to share your goals and achievements with your friends, so you can support each other.

NIKE TRAINING CLUB (FREE)
This app has more than 100 workouts you can do at home, including full-body 15, 30 and 45-minute workouts that you can do in your study breaks. You can watch step-by-step video demonstrations of each drill, and track your favourite workouts and training history. Check it out and be part of the biggest female fitness community online.

COUCH TO 5K ($2 TO BUY)
If you’re looking for a way to break the couch habit, this app is perfect for you. Designed for beginner runners, the Couch to 5K app encourages you to do just 30 minutes of exercise a day, three days a week for eight weeks. By then, you will be able to run 5km comfortably. You can also log each session and share your workouts.

JEFIT WORKOUT EXERCISE TRAINER (FREE)
Bodybuilding and fitness app JEFIT is like having your own personal trainer. It enables you to record customised exercise routines and the amount of reps and weight you are lifting. There are handy videos showing how to perform the exercises correctly. Other features include a resting timer to use in between sets, a 1 rep max calculator and an exercise database with plenty of new exercise ideas.
COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES
Level 5, Jane Foss Russell Building (G02)
The University of Sydney
NSW 2006 Australia
T +61 2 8627 8433 or 8627 8437
E caps.admin@sydney.edu.au
sydney.edu.au/counselling