Easy Spinach-Lentil Soup

Ingredients:
- 2 Tbsp cooking oil
- 2 carrots, peeled and diced
- 2 celery stalks, diced
- 1 small onion, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp coriander
- 1/4 tsp crushed red pepper flakes
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 14 oz can diced tomatoes, with juice
- 10 oz can lentils
- 2 tsp fresh thyme
- 4 cups vegetable broth
- 4 cups baby spinach

Directions:
1. In a large pot over medium-high heat, heat cooking oil. Add carrots, celery, and onion. Cook until beginning to soften, 5 minutes. Add garlic, cumin, coriander, and red pepper flakes. Cook 1 minute, stirring constantly.

2. Add tomatoes, lentils, thyme, and vegetable broth. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover partially, and simmer until lentils are tender and soup has thickened, about 20 minutes (if most of the liquid has been absorbed, add in 1/2-1 cup additional water).

3. Stir in spinach and continue cooking until wilted, about 2 minutes. Then season with salt and pepper (as desired).

4. Enjoy!

Focus, Fulfillment, and Flow

I’m standing in the infield dirt, watching the batter approach the plate. My body starts to crouch down, and I feel my legs walk me slowly toward the looming action. My eyes zero in on the strike zone. My ears perk up as I hear the crack of a bat, and my legs run me toward the ball. My hands glide down to the ground and swiftly back up to land over my right shoulder. My body twists and my right arm swings overhead. All of this happens without a single thought, worry, or judgement. No attention to the exam I haven’t prepared for tomorrow; no wondering whether I locked my front door; no planning for the weekend. This is flow.

If you’ve ever enjoyed a sport, maybe you’ve felt it too - some call it being “in the zone.” It’s not specific to sports either; flow can occur at work, while playing an instrument, even - albeit rarely- while watching a particularly engaging television program. You may notice that when you’re in flow, your perception of time changes. You could spend hours working on the same thing without noticing so much time passing, or the opposite: time may feel so slow that it is irrelevant. Your actions are spontaneous; they just seem to happen naturally without any thought. You may feel peaceful, zen, or just plain happy. Some have called flow the secret to happiness⁴; so then how can we maximize our flow time?

First it is important to understand what influences a state of flow. Essential to the feeling is a sense of overcoming a challenge or of doing something deemed worth doing for its own sake. Activities that result in flow necessarily involve focus, clarity, and feedback. If a task is too difficult, it can be frustrating; if it is too easy, it will not require enough mental energy to maintain the intense focus that flow requires and will not be rewarding. The goals of the activity must be clear and identifiable, and each step in the process must provide enough feedback to allow you to continue completing the task without stopping to wonder what the next step should be. If you’re struggling to find your flow, consider tweaking the difficulty of a task to find that sweet spot so that it takes up the perfect amount of your mental energy.

A 40-hour work week means that the average American spends about a quarter of his or her adult life at work. In the medical field, 40 hours might be a pipe dream. It follows that if someone wants to be happy, he or she should choose a career that allows him or her to flow as much as possible. If you have yet to choose a medical specialty (or fellowship), consider during which rotation you felt time go by the easiest. Consider how often during each rotation you felt intrinsically rewarded by your actions and how often you felt like you were appropriately challenged. If you haven’t started rotations at all, consider keeping a journal and writing down the times you notice yourself flowing during your rotations; this might make a difficult career choice much easier when it comes to the end of third year.

Finding joy in work, hobbies, and even mundane activities is possible, and while flow is not a secret anymore, it may be a key to being happy in your everyday life. Whenever you find yourself thinking too much, try to just go with the flow.

If you’re interested in learning more about the concept or practice of flow, check out the links below.

¹https://www.ted.com/talks/mihaly_csikszentmihalyi_on_flow/transcript?language=en
³https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/mihaly-csikszentmihalyi-father-of-flow/
Mental Wellness

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Two opportunities to attend!

Saturdays, Oct. 20 or Nov. 3, 2018
9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. each day

Jefferson College of Health Sciences
101 Elm Avenue, SE, Roanoke, VA 24013
Lunch and snacks provided!

Free for students attending Jefferson College of Health Sciences, Radford University DPT, and the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine.

Led by Nationally Certified Mental Health First Aid Instructor Hwal Lee.

Sign up online today for one of the training dates at:
https://www.jchs.edu/form/mental-health-first-aid-training

Sponsored by Jefferson College of Health Sciences Series on Public Health, PA Foundation TM, and Campus Suicide Prevention Center of Virginia.
Go to GO FEST!!!

This Weekend!
October 12-14th
FREE ADMISSION
Fly casting demo
Cool dogs jumping through the air
Paddle board demo
Music
BMX stunts
Lumberjacks

On-Going VTC Wellness Activities

**Pop Pilates**
October 16th 12:15
TBMH Wellness Room,
1 Riverside
October 30th 5:00
School of Medicine
Student Commons

**Walking Wednesdays**
Every Wednesday at noon—group meets at the base of the Riverside 2 steps.

**Mindfulness**
October 29th, November 12th, and December 3rd
12:15-12:30
in M206
with Laurie Seidel
Please feel welcome to submit articles or ideas to any member of the Wellness Advocacy Committee.

Lindsay Maguire - Class of 2019
Jeff Henry - Class of 2020
Ayesha Kar - Class of 2021
TBD - Class of 2022
Dr. Jennifer Slusher, PhD, LPC
Dr. Allison Bowersock, PhD, CSCS, ACSM-EIM
Laurie Seidel, MSN, RN
Emily M. Holt Foerst, Committee Chair

Quote of the Week:

“Some steps need to be taken alone. It’s the only way to really figure out where you need to go and who you need to be.”
- author unknown

If you would like to contribute to or comment about the wellness weekly, please email Emily Holt Foerst, Office of Student Affairs VTCSOM.
To send a “Weekly Shout Out” message,
Email Emily Holt Foerst at Emily_10@vt.edu