

PGR tips: Start off a new year with a healthy mind in a healthy body

As a doctoral researcher working towards the highest academic qualification, you should expect to be challenged, but it is important that the demands of your research are kept in perspective and do not affect your health or happiness.

Spending time away from your research may well be the best thing you can do when feeling under pressure or stressed in order to recharge your batteries and energise your mind and body. Here are some tips that could help you:

- **Get away from it all** – a week or so away with friends or family can have a huge impact on your approach to your research when you get back
- **Keep yourself fit** – a healthy mind in a healthy body! A brisk walk or swim is probably the best quick fix to remove feelings of mental weariness. Check exercise classes or gym facilities on offer in your local area, many will offer off peak deals, and exercises will boost your mood, motivation and confidence
- **Keep your brain fit** – engage in mental exercises other than your research, for example by doing crosswords and sudoku, playing computer games or taking part in pub quizzes
- **Maintain a healthy social life** – help build the social side of your research community, take part in social events of your institution unrelated to research, keep in touch regularly with your circle of friends!
- **Eat and sleep well** – you will feel better if you eat healthy and reserve enough time to rest properly
- **Think positively** - focus on the main goal, completing your doctoral research and reflect on how each small study session is one small step on this important journey in your life! Recall for example positive experiences from your past studies, focusing on how your hard work paid dividends in the end, despite any lack of confidence you may have felt at the time.
- **Get help when you need it** – find out what support you have available within your institution, whether you need it for your research, or for practical and emotional support. Always tackle problems early and don't allow them to risk your long-term health and reduce the chances of completing your degree
- **Get motivated** – use our suggestions in www.grad.ac.uk/beatproblems to improve your motivation and analyse your own personal motivations to see if there is a better way for you to approach your work or the problem

To read more about staying healthy. visit www.grad.ac.uk/stayinghealthy. For a selection of topics of interest to PGRs subscribe to GRADBritain, an online magazine by and for postgraduate researchers. The next issue will be out late in February 2008 www.grad.ac.uk/gradbritain.

NEW programme coming soon!

2008 will be a transition year from the current UK GRAD Programme to a new programme that will support postgraduate researchers and research staff. It will be formally launched in September 2008 and will include and build on many of the activities and support for postgraduate researchers offered in the current UK GRAD Programme. Keep checking www.grad.ac.uk for updates throughout the year.