



Lifestyle Medicine for Students: Information Sheet

Supporting wellbeing, learning, and academic performance in UK universities

Overview

Lifestyle Medicine is the evidence-based use of everyday behaviours — sleep, nutrition, movement, stress management, social connection, and risk-avoidance — to improve health, wellbeing, and cognitive performance. For students in UK universities, these behaviours directly influence concentration, memory, motivation, and academic achievement.

This information sheet summarises key areas where Lifestyle Medicine can support students, drawing on UK research, NHS guidance, and the Universities UK *Stepchange* mental-health framework.

Why Lifestyle Medicine Matters for Students

- Enhances cognitive performance and learning
- Reduces stress, anxiety, and burnout
- Supports attendance, engagement, and progression
- Strengthens resilience during demanding academic periods
- Aligns with UK priorities for prevention and wellbeing

Explore more about Lifestyle Medicine or student wellbeing.

Key Lifestyle Domains

Sleep

Healthy sleep is one of the strongest predictors of academic performance. Benefits include improved memory, emotional regulation, and concentration. Common challenges for UK students include irregular sleep patterns, late-night study, and digital overload.

Learn about sleep health.

Physical Activity

Movement supports executive functioning, mood regulation, and sustained attention. Even 150 minutes of moderate activity per week can significantly improve wellbeing and academic outcomes.

Explore physical activity strategies.

Nutrition

Balanced nutrition stabilises energy, supports cognitive clarity, and reduces fatigue. UK student surveys highlight reliance on convenience foods and irregular eating patterns, which can affect concentration and mood.

Read more about student nutrition.

Stress Management

Stress is one of the most common barriers to academic success. Evidence-based strategies include movement, sleep, mindfulness, structured routines, and supportive social networks.

Discover stress-management approaches.

Social Connection

Positive social connection improves motivation, emotional resilience, and academic persistence. Loneliness is a growing issue among UK students, making intentional connection especially important.

Learn about building social connection.

How Lifestyle Medicine Supports Academic Performance

Lifestyle behaviours influence:

- Memory consolidation
- Attention and focus
- Emotional stability
- Motivation and engagement
- Exam performance
- Overall academic achievement

These findings are consistent across UK research from King's College London, Oxford, Student Minds, and NHS Digital.

Practical Strategies for Students

- Establish a consistent sleep routine

- Incorporate movement into daily life (walking routes, active travel, short exercise sessions)
- Choose balanced meals and regular eating patterns
- Use structured stress-management tools (breathing, mindfulness, pacing)
- Build supportive social networks
- Seek early support from university wellbeing services

Explore practical wellbeing tools.

How This Fits Within UK University Systems

Lifestyle Medicine aligns with:

- **Universities UK Stepchange Framework**
- **Office for Students (OfS) mental-health priorities**
- **NHS Long Term Plan**
- **University wellbeing and retention strategies**

It supports improved academic outcomes, reduced mental-health interruptions, and stronger student satisfaction (NSS).

Who This Resource Is For

- University students
- Academic staff supporting student wellbeing
- Student services teams
- Health-profession students exploring Lifestyle Medicine
- Anyone interested in evidence-based wellbeing strategies

Neuro Vivo Approach

This resource reflects the Neuro Vivo philosophy:

- Neuro-inclusive
- Occupation-based
- Evidence-informed
- Focused on sustainable, real-world change