

CONTACT THE EDITOR ARIELLE SALLAI  
leisure@ucsdguardian.org

# leisure lifestyle

## It's Your Life: Try Making Time For It

**B**ehold, the greatest barrier between you and the best version of you, the obstacle that holds you back from doing everything on your bucket list and the reason why your Nike Airs are still in

### Student Body

MINA NILCHIAN  
mnilchia@ucsd.edu



mint condition. It's why your New Year's resolutions died the same week they were born and why purchasing that yoga subscription was a total waste of money.

The time excuse.

It's the accepted norm in our culture that you will never have enough time — 24-hours just doesn't cut it anymore.

But here's a news flash: Even if we had 80 hours in a day, we'd still be using the time excuse.

For the past decade or so we've been coming up with the reasons behind America's troubling obesity epidemic. But whether it's that our lives have become increasingly sedentary, or that we're consuming too much calorie-dense and processed food, America's health problems can be traced back further to the tragic belief that we simply don't have the time to be investing in our health.

It's alarming how far the time excuse goes. We don't just neglect our physical health, but also our mental health. You probably can't remember the last time you sat back and just let your mind go blank for a minute or two (and day-dreaming in the uncomfortable chairs in the Solis lecture halls during your anthropology class does not count as meditation). Not just your health, but also your environment (also known as your messy room and obscenely large laundry bag.) Even your relationships are damaged by your insistence that you don't have time (please refer to your mother's eight voicemails).

It's true that living a healthy life, in terms of your body, mind and soul, does entail its fair share of planning and dedication. It seems much easier to grab a McMuffin on your way to your 8 a.m. lecture than it is to slice up an apple for breakfast. And when balancing a full load of classes, an internship and a social life, who has the time to go to RIMAC?

Actually, you do.

Take a minute to undo everything society has conditioned you to believe, and see how much of your life you can change without missing a beat. Delete the phrase, "I don't have time" from your thoughts and your speech for just a week.

Wake up just one half hour earlier and go for that early morning run. Take one quick trip to the super market and stock up on some essentials, and you're set for a week with some healthier study snacks. Go ahead, don't be afraid to take a five minute break, only five minutes, to clear your head with some meditation and notice how much more relaxed and energized you are after. Setting aside these little corners will hardly set you back and keep you from doing the work you need to do.

Slowly but surely, the more you force yourself to believe that you do have the time, the truer it becomes. With enough practice, and by eliminating the excuses, you'll learn to start making your well-being, both mental and physical, a priority. Self-discipline is like any muscle in our body — only strong if properly conditioned. So get on that bench press.

# A SIGH OF RELIEF

Meditation is the key to peace and harmony — and an 'A.'

By Mina Nilchian • Senior Staff Writer



JEFFREY LAU/GUARDIAN

**M**editation is a word that comes with a set of stereotypical associations: elaborate tantric practices, monks dressed in robes sitting inside an incense and chime-adorned temple, spending hours in lotus position while repeatedly chanting the word "om."

But meditating isn't just for Buddha. A universal and multicultural custom, meditation is becoming increasingly popular in Western culture, used not only as a religious tool, but also as a natural way to eliminate stress, tame anxiety and promote greater focus and awareness — as doctors and experts find more and more medical evidence to back up the claims of its usefulness.

Despite its long list of short and long-term benefits, consistent, daily meditation practice may seem more like a burden than a hobby, especially for the American college student. For the average undergrad to sit down and render

blank a mind that's been racing and active all day is no easy feat, and to find a time and a place to do it is a whole other challenge.

But Mehrad Nazari, Ph.D, attests that meditation is a tool that can be utilized by all.

"It is compatible with any lifestyle," Nazari said.

Nazari himself has used the practice to balance his own life in the corporate world. He's earned an MBA and Ph.D. in human behavior, taught at the U.S. International University for 10 years and runs a real estate company.

Yet he has also maintained a spiritual side to his life for the past 25 years. After being trained in Indian Vedic practice by his Zen master (who he mentioned is soon approaching his 105th birthday) and an initiation into Himalayan Yogic traditions, Nazari now serves as a meditation instructor.

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HAVE A DRINK ON US

The Guardian asked Jason Whittington, a bartender at Waterfront Bar and Grill in Little Italy, to recommend a drink. This is his choice.

TEQUILA FRESH



This refreshing drink is a new school take on the old school margarita. The crisp combination of fresh lime juice and spear-muddled cucumber brightens up a meal with its sweet, light flavors. Similar to salt on watermelon, a pinch of salt and pepper in this smooth drink highlights the sweet notes of the agave nectar.

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 oz agave nectar
- 1/2 oz fresh lime juice
- 1 cucumber spear-muddled
- 2 oz tequila

Shake ingredients, strain over ice and add cucumber and a pinch of salt and pepper to garnish.

— Tiffany Chin  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

RESTAURANT REVIEW

SNOOZE, AN A.M. EATERY

San Diego is no stranger to breakfast joints, which is why it's so hard to get excited about new kids on the breakfast block — we've already got hot spots like Broken Yolk and Hash House a Go Go satisfying our hunger for the occasional pancake stack or omelet anyway. But early risers beware: Some real competition is finally here. Snooze, an a.m. eatery, headed west last November all the way from Colorado (where it's a local favorite) to set up shop in Hillcrest.

After only a few months here, the restaurant is already buzzing. It's not uncommon to see a crowd of people waiting outside to be called — hallelujah for 30 minutes, a serious nod for an hour — but once inside everything is forgiven. The sky high ceilings and all glass store front give space for you to relax, while the light atmosphere of this retro-furnished eatery is brought out not only by the summery colors that fill the big space, but also (more so) by the enthusiasm of the servers. On a side note, a nice bar is located at the right of the



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHARLES WAGNER

entrance — yes, Snooze sells alcohol (mimosas, and lots of 'em). One of the unique features of Snooze is that you can customize your own meals. Upon requests, it's possible to combine dishes together without an extra charge.

The Pancake Flight (\$9) is a great way to save money since it allows you to choose any three pancake flavors, including the pancake of the day. We opted for a popular trio: the Pineapple Upside Down Pancake, the Red-Eye Velvet Pancake and Ichabod Crane's Pancake.

The Pineapple Upside Down Pancake is an exceptionally fluffy, moist and warm pancake with caramelized pineapple chunks inside, and house-made vanilla cr me anglaise with cinnamon butter lightly dripping over. With the right amount of milky sweetness enveloping your tongue as it melts in your mouth, this pancake is a standout.



PHOTO COURTESY OF STEVE BOTT

The Red-Eye Velvet Pancake is the weakest of the bunch — a bland red velvet buttermilk pancake topped with indistinguishable espresso infused maple syrup, a light cream cheese frosting and chopped pecans.

Its flavors were so subdued that they didn't synchronize very well at all, and thus, did not leave much of an impression.

Ichabod Crane's Pancake, an unforgettable one-of-a-kind buttermilk pancake sprinkled with candied pumpkin seeds, and topped with mellow yellow pumpkin cream and a chili-spiced Vermont maple syrup, had an amazing mix of buttery and smooth flavor with a finishing taste of sweet pumpkin. A tinge of spice and pumpkin embraced each other



Hours:  
Mon.-Fri.  
6:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.  
Sat.-Sun.  
7 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

Location:  
3940 Fifth Ave., San Diego, 92103

Recommended:  
Pineapple Upside Down Pancake

firmly in unison.

But Snooze isn't all pancakes. Corn Beef Hash (\$9.50) — with its signature shredded hash mixed with an ample amount of corned beef, caramelized poblanos and onions, with two eggs and toast or tortillas on its side — is recommendable for brunch, since it's a bit too meat-heavy and salty for breakfast.

Ham Benedict III (\$9.50), a soft and crunchy signature English muffin topped with slices of hickory smoked ham, soft poached eggs and smoked cheddar hollandaise, is a savory breakfast dish that is good for both breakfast and brunch. The golden-brown house hash browns that come on the side help in toning down the impressive, yet strong hollandaise taste.

Hitting equally upon the savory and the sweet, Snooze is a breakfast joint anyone's taste buds can appreciate. But with a 20-minute car ride from campus and a typically long wait, it's a place for a worthy occasion — not a weekly tradition.

— Ashley Kwon  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Nazari Recommends Daily Meditation For Stressed Out Undergraduates

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tor at UCSD's "The Zone," which holds meditation sessions several times a quarter.

There is an endless list of different types of meditation found around the world, but Nazari explained the core philosophy rooted in all of them.

"Meditation is gathering the forces of our mind to direct them into one focused channel," he said. "It's focusing that concentrated energy to connect with our supreme self, to that inner intelligence, that inner wisdom that is connected to the universal energy field."

Nazari explained that many of the ailments we suffer from in our daily lives — issues like depression, anxiety and stress — can all be rooted in a loss of connection with that "universal energy field," and a disjoint between the mind and body.

"Every single cell in the body works in unison to work toward one goal," he said. "As a human being we forget this and we think we are separate and we claim independence from that system. And that is where the disease depression and anxiety [come from] and all the miseries of the world come from — that separation."



It's especially important not to get your ego wrapped up in it. Developing meditation skills is like building any other habit — it takes practice."

MEHRAD NEZARI  
MEDITATION INSTRUCTOR

Medical experts have attached a long plethora of benefits to consistent, daily meditation practice, confirming Nazari's assertion that meditation can help alleviate not only constant stress and anxiety, but combat the physical symptoms associated with them, such as high cholesterol and high blood pressure. What is left behind, he said, is clarity, peace, greater joy and a focused mind.

"In the long term, once we really connect to our true essence, all these things fade away and we work in unison with everything around us," Nazari said. Additionally, there's plenty to be gained by an average UCSD student who's constantly on the academic grind — a relaxed mind is more receptive to learning than a stressed one is, making meditation an effective study tool.

"It's basically a tool for sharpening your mind," Nazari said. "The retention of what you learn is a lot higher, and access to that information is a lot easier. You make this whole idea of education a lot easier once you can place [your thoughts] in a proper place in your brain and get access to it."

While many have given it a try, the inability to clear a mind jumbled full of thoughts can be discouraging, and is often the main reason people give up the practice after a few tries. While



it's a common complaint, it's certainly no reason to give up, Nazari explained.

"The Dalai Lama was in New York and one of my friends asked him why it's so hard for Americans to meditate," he said. "He's so funny, his holiness Dalai Lama. He waved his hand up and said, 'Oh, you Americans think everything is about you. I am the Dalai Lama and it's hard for me to meditate!'"

The key is to let your mind run its course without worrying about reaching a blank state.

"In the western world, we associate with the whole idea of 'I think therefore I am,' and it's just the cause of our problem," Nazari said, explaining that to practice meditation, one needs to be detached from thoughts, not eliminate them altogether. "So when we sit down and we see that train of thoughts going across, not associating with any one thought, that will help you make a separation. That separation is the first successful step toward meditation."

According to Nazari, the mind thinks between 60 to 90,000 thoughts a day, 90 percent of those being repeated thoughts from the day before. That kind of repeated cycle of endless thinking by an uncontrollable mind is a key reason behind mental exhaustion. Practicing mental control can help alleviate the constant agitation from what Nazari calls our mind playing "a broken record."

As for finding the time and place, an hour seated in the lotus position in your dorm room is not required.

UCSD provides multiple opportunities to attend guided meditation sessions, like Nazari's quarterly guided instructions at The Zone. Additionally, his wife, Michele Hebert, will be instructing a weekly meditation class at RIMAC beginning in spring quarter, available to students for about \$20.

But Nazari said it's the "meanwhile" practices done multiple times a day that students can get the most out of. To start, Nazari said, you can find a quiet, isolated place, or even small pockets of time throughout the day. Spend two minutes engaged in abdominal breathing, or breathing in a way that fills up the stomach instead of just the upper chest. That kind of breathing is a signal to the brain to begin relaxing. Then, it's simply a matter of focusing on your breath, and letting your thoughts run their course without associating with any one thought.

"Use it like a snack throughout the day," Nazari said. Another technique is to repeat a word, or find a mantra. "That word, in our teaching, is peace, harmony or well-being," he said. "Once you repeat those words, you have no choice but to get in that state."

It's especially important not to get your ego wrapped up in it. Developing meditation skills is like building any other habit — it takes practice.

"Don't get discouraged," Nazari said. "There are days that it gets a lot easier to sit down and get to that calm state, there are days that the mind has been agitated, activated and it takes a little bit longer. It's a matter of patience, consistency and toler-