

# **Wellness | Prosper in the Pandemic: 5 Tips for Total Wellness in the Midst of a Tough Stretch**

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Eight months into the global pandemic caused by COVID-19, our world remains significantly altered. We're spending more time at home. We're digesting the news reports about widespread racial unrest. Our kids are struggling through virtual schooling. Many face the economic strain of job transitions, furloughs, and clients with tighter purse strings. All of this swirls into a dangerous cocktail that threatens to undermine our physical, mental, emotional, relational, and spiritual health.

And yet, there are opportunities for us to prosper in wellness, even in this season. This article is designed to empower you with five tips for reclaiming wellness in the midst of the multiple crises facing our world right now. Try one, or all five, and reclaim your power to thrive.

## **1. Keep yourself on your list of causes.**

As you zealously represent your clients, consider how important it is for you to be well while striving to help others. There are many "fronts" right now that are unique to 2020, on top of the standard responsibilities we have as lawyers to serve our clients. We battle on the front lines for many reasons, championing change in various causes. Question: Are you on the list of causes you champion? Make sure you are on the list – and consider moving yourself to the top of that list. No one is well-served by your burnout, resentment, or failed juggling act. When you make your well-being a top priority, everyone around you benefits.

## **2. Embrace gratitude.**

Embracing a gratitude practice could be the key to thriving amidst the latest challenges brought on by the pandemic and the emotional shift that many experience heading into the fall season every year. A healthy gratitude practice calls on us to actively seek out reasons to be thankful, even when everything seems like it is going wrong. Gratitude journals are popular and easy enough to start in any cute spiral notebook or journal. If daily journaling scares you, try this: grab a sticky note or index card, and write down "three things I'm thankful for now." Whatever comes to mind goes on the little note. Post that note some place where you can see it throughout the day, and watch how the simple practice of gratitude shifts your whole mood.

## **3. Move through Zoom.**

Most of us are spending more time than ever hunched in front of our computer on Zoom calls. We as lawyers have been bound to our computers since years before the pandemic, churning out hours of work product. Add in catching up with family and friends, and most of us have spent even more work and leisure time in virtual communication lately. Sometimes, we have to wear a suit jacket and be attentive throughout. But many times, we have our video off and our audio on mute the entire time. That's prime time to move, reducing your stress, improving your mood, and raising your heart rate.

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Try one of these quick exercises during your next Zoom call:

- Walk around the room. A normal or moderate pace should add 1000+ steps every 10 minutes.
- Do 10 squats. Mimic the motion of sitting down in a chair – without dipping your hips below your knees or your knees over your toes when you come down.
- Push for 20 high knees. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Raise one knee to your chest, lower it with control, and do the same with the other knee.

#### **4. Nature is your friend.**

While everyone is following the recommendations of social distancing and avoiding large gatherings in enclosed spaces, nature is a welcome and faithful friend. A dose of fresh air has both physical and mental health benefits, while being one of the safest ways to get a much-needed change of scenery after hours in the house or office. Plan a trip to the park. Take a walk on a nature trail. Dig that bike out of your attic. With cooler days coming to Texas, it might be time to move the laptop outdoors on the deck for an hour of each work day. Your body, mind, and outlook will thank you.

#### **5. Beat the Back-to-School Blues.**

For those of us with kids who are going back to school in person, taking virtual classes, trying homeschool, or who are simply unable to participate in their typical childcare arrangements, all early signs point in one general direction: total exercise in frustration. It's mentally and emotionally taxing – for everyone. Here are three reminders to support your mental health as we head “back to school.”

##### **a. Be patient with yourself.**

You deserve some extra self-compassion during this time as you play the role of unpaid teaching assistant, lunch lady, and head nurse – in addition to your income-generating responsibilities and romantic partnership commitments. Be okay with less-than-perfection right now. Be okay with asking for help – at work and at home. Be okay with accomplishing three important things today and not seventeen.

##### **b. Be patient with your student.**

Your student could use some extra patience and forgiveness, too. She has to juggle learning in a new environment -- likely with a new teacher, new classmates, and new expectations – without the fun of being around friends. If the schoolwork isn't perfect in these next few weeks, have a little mercy. Your scholar will fly soon enough. For now, use even more verbal encouragement, and consider adding extra recess time outside, just to let everyone catch their breath.

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### c. **Be patient with your teacher(s).**

They too are operating in a new, uncertain, ever-changing environment. And many of them are juggling the parenting and life partner roles, just like you are – only with a virtual classroom of kids with different needs and attention spans at the same time. Consider sending an encouraging email or text here and there.

Decide that it is possible for you to prosper in mental, physical, and spiritual health during this time. Then take small steps to make that your reality.

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