

Student Story | Dylan R. Lewis | Fitness and Stress Management & Fitness and Nutrition
Summer 2016 Interphase Program | Written by Sarah K. Johnson

The Physical Education Program's Health and Wellness courses offer a unique student experience through hybrid coursework: half of the course is instructional physical activity while the other half is content and discussion-based. Bodyweight exercises and stretches are taught so that they could be replicated anywhere, including a dorm room or the park. In addition to fitness principles, specific content includes nutrition, sports nutrition, and stress-management.

Dylan R. Lewis '20 entered MIT in summer 2016 as an Interphase student. Interphase is a program for pre-freshman to complete traditional academic courses and one physical education course before freshman orientation. Dylan's prospective major will be Course 3 Materials Science and Engineering and after graduation he would like work with renewable technology to make it more affordable and efficient. As an Interphase student, he had the opportunity to immerse himself directly into MIT life, including participating in a physical education course. Dylan participated in the Fitness and Stress Management course during the summer Interphase session and then Fitness and Nutrition during Quarter 1. He was drawn to these classes because he wanted to learn about and develop healthy habits that could be easily integrated into his daily routine at MIT. Dylan expressed that these goals were met and he is reaping the benefits of the health and wellness courses now.



"It has enhanced my MIT experience and life overall," he says.

Before attending the courses, specifically stress management, Dylan did not view meditation and stress management as a priority; in fact, this was something that should just be "put off". But "in reality," he said, "you can't really do that, especially as an MIT student." Dylan now practices the importance of stress management techniques by incorporating what he has learned, such as meditation and exercise, into his MIT lifestyle. He said that if Physical Education was not a requirement, he would not have found a way to manage his stress or a time in the day to exercise. Similarly, as a result of taking Fitness and Nutrition, Dylan expressed that he has also learned how to make more informed nutrition decisions, such as carefully reading food labels and being more mindful of what he eats.

Dylan said that students, especially those with a sedentary background, may have the mentality that "PE and its requirement can feel like a burden." But, he countered, "it has had the opposite effect, and is really key. It makes sense why MIT makes it a requirement."

A piece of advice for students?

Dylan said to "truly take advantage of the health and wellness courses," or in his experience, Fitness and Nutrition and Fitness and Stress Management. As the classes are split into 20 minutes of fitness and 20 minute of discussion, he recommended that students "definitely take advantage of both, and with the exercise [portion], push yourself as hard as you can in that short period of time." Further, he conveyed that because he pushed himself, he was able to secure the benefits of exercise in 20 minutes.

Moving forward, Dylan wants to take yoga courses, as he has developed a passion for yoga through the health and wellness course curricula.

"These courses have really allowed me to go beyond my limits academically while also maintaining my health," Dylan stated. "I think without PE, there would have been an imbalance and I found a balance with the PE program."