

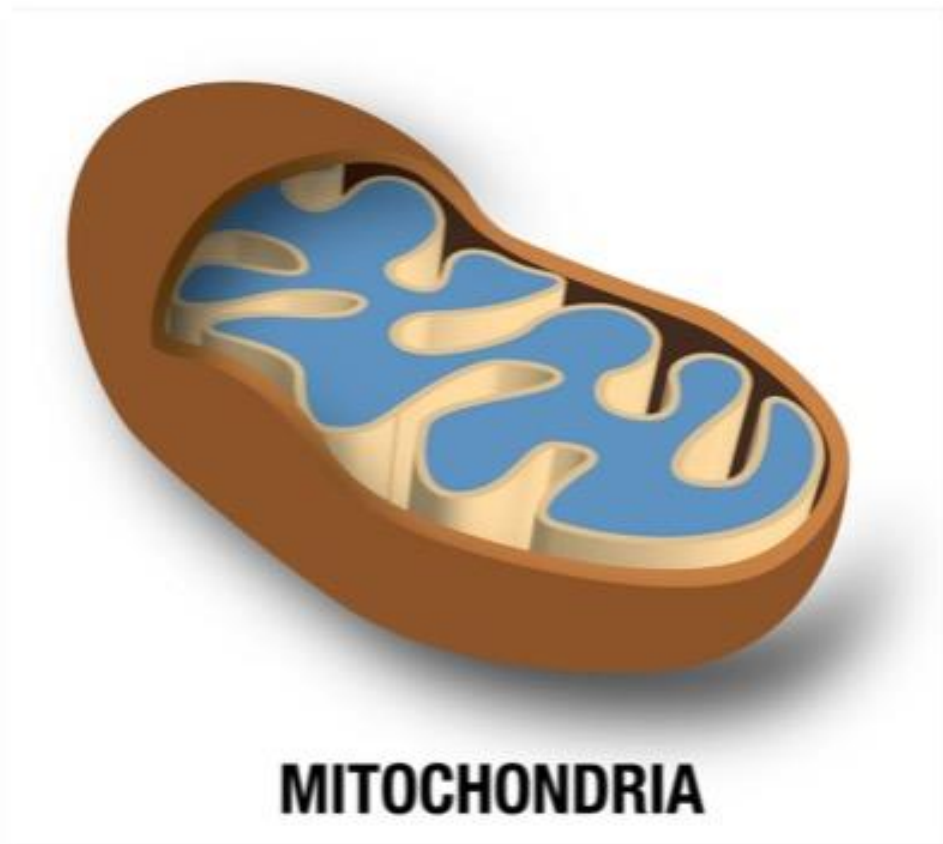
dear residents

Thriving at Work - Time vs Energy

September 25, 2022

Dear Residents,

It's the autumnal equinox – days and nights are now equal in length. From this point onwards, while the daylight hours will get progressively shorter, we will still have the same 24 hours we have always had. We often measure our workload in terms of “work hours” – after all this is how we define the limits of what is permissible – no more than 80 hours per week, no more than 24+4 hours of a continuous shift, etc. We all know that the shortest shifts can leave you feeling depleted, and the longest shifts can inexplicably energize you. Perhaps our strategy should be to manage our energy rather than our hours.



The mitochondrion does remind me of a comfy cot or a poolside cabana

Our work is demanding, but we can't solve our workload by working longer hours. Time is a finite resource, but energy can transcend time. You may have heard of the [concept of flow](#) – when one is so immersed in a task, that time seems to dilate.

As a residency program, our goal is to invest in you, rather than get the most work out of you. By creating structure around your day, we make it permissible to attend morning report, noon conference or have a scheduled day off. We could be doing better. I know that Epic chat and your pagers are intrusive and interrupt your state of flow. Distractions are costly. [Multitasking is a myth](#). We could build more sanctuaries, where you can take a break and unwind. What we do well in this program is creating positive emotions. We celebrate you with shoutouts and highlight your accomplishments. We treat each other with kindness and respect. We use positive words and acknowledge when things are not going well. By creating a space where you can express yourselves freely, without fear of recrimination, I hope we energize you to be your best self.

You are high performing individuals. I am in awe of your knowledge and skills. We depend on you to prioritize personal health through sleep, nutrition, and exercise. You depend on us to help you achieve these goals. The program has carefully guarded your scheduled days off and it's one advance in our operations that we must never retreat from. Please do switch off from work when you are off. That email can wait, as can that module. I hope that you maximize restoration on your time off in whatever manner that works for you.

Our work is very satisfying - we experience joy in scientific discovery and in helping others. We tap into the energy of the human spirit because our everyday work is consistent with our values. We draw energy from service to our patients and from being a resource to each other. We find meaning and purpose in our daily activities - solving diagnostic conundrums, experiencing the joy of new knowledge or honing new patterns of thinking. It's important for us to pause and reflect on our core values which can become less visible in the frenetic pace of our daily work. We have spent the better part of the last two and a half years in "crisis mentality" attempting to cope with the disruption of the pandemic. Sometimes, I fear that we are being pulled back by our muscle memory of yesterday, when we seemingly took care of more patients in less time, with fewer days off and with apparently more energy. Enter the EHR, the mandatory modules, the quality and safety hurdles - we find ourselves in a very different environment. The program leadership sees this as a key juncture to take ourselves to a different level of performance - one that maximizes your energy and not just your time.

Thank you for energizing me,

Dino Kazi