

SEE THE STRONGMAN, BE THE STRONGMAN!

ANYONE WHO'S EATEN A LUNCH OR TWO AT RATT CAN TELL YOU IT'S EASY ENOUGH TO PUT THE POUNDS ON WHILE IN UNIVERSITY. BUT WHERE DOES A BRIGHT EYED FIRST YEAR TURN WHEN IT COMES TIME TO LOSE THAT WEIGHT? LUCKILY, EVEN ON A STUDENT'S BUDGET, OPTIONS ARE THICKER THAN A WILDCAT DONAIR.

Staying fit and dodging the freshman 15 doesn't have to be an entirely uphill battle. Of course, if you bike to campus, you might have the occasional uphill battle on your hands – but it's all in the name of fitness, right? There are many ways to reconcile your budget, your busy lifestyle, and your quest for a six-pack.

No bike? Police auctions are held the first Saturday of every month at Fenske Auctions (12135 William Short Road). Make Edmonton's municipal bike path system your roadway to a healthier lifestyle. Consider all that snow a little added resistance training. See, you've already found a poor-ass-student fix to one aerobic conundrum.

Throughout each season, Saskatchewan Drive, the snaking roadway bordering North Campus and the river valley, provides a new and beautiful way to look out over the downtown core while jogging trail systems down to Emily Murphy or Hawrelak Parks. That is, of course, once those pesky summer leaves get out of the way.

Yes, campus is jam-packed with ways to keep your butt from looking like a bell curve, but like any workout, it'll require your incentive. And if you're short on that, perhaps some of the U of A's more structured physical activity options will give you the jump-start you need.

RESTING UP BETWEEN SETS

No fitness regime is complete without the students' oft-neglected need for sleep. We know it can be tempting to doze off in class. There are just so many people and no one will notice little old you, right? Wrong. You'll fart in your sleep or drool or something and we'll laugh at you, so by all means conk out in plain site.

If you'd rather catch your Zs in some (relative) privacy, personal favourites of Gateway staff include the couches on the fourth and fifth floors of Rutherford Library North and the nicely isolated basement of the Fine Arts Building. Finding your own ideal napping spot will be a test of patience, forcing you to find your perfect balance of noise, foot traffic and physical comfort. If you're feeling a little more adventurous, the glass-walled study space along the south side of the Students' Union Building is a bit rambunctious compared to home, but makes the SUB common area seem dizzy by comparison.

And don't forget to wrap a backpack strap around your comatose body. Nothing bites worse than waking up from recharging your batteries to find you need a new laptop.

THE BEST BIG TOPS IN TOWN

The U of A also makes available to its students a variety of facilities, often available for use free of charge. The Saville Sports Centre on South Campus offers indoor tennis courts, curling, and will soon have a fitness facility expanding on the U of A's current 850-square-foot Fitness and Lifestyle Centre (FLC) located in the Van Vliet Centre on north campus.

The FLC offers a wide variety of strength, resistance, and aerobic fitness exercises, and requires only a ONEcard for access. Similarly, the aquatic centre provides splashy wet fun for nothing more than what you've already paid on your tuition. Schedules for weekly use can be found on the recreational use LCD TVs in the Van Vliet basement.

The Van Vliet also offers court bookings for badminton, squash, and other racquet sports. Racquets, towels, and locks are available for rental from the facility, but to avoid racking up a nasty bill over multiple uses, invest in your own equipment. Court booking rules are draconian and intolerant of your incertitude. Book in advance, and be ready to defend your turf.

SCHEDULED APPEARANCES

Infrequently discovered before a student's second or third year, the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation's online activity registration (located on the Faculty's website) is a great way to fit your favourite activity into a day of classes without having to motor down Whyte Avenue to one of its many yoga studios.

In fact, the University offers both yoga and pilates classes for what amounts to a pocket of spare change a class. But be forewarned: classes like these are in high demand and spots go quickly.

Activities offered include aerobics, kick-boxing, tennis, various sports camps/clubs, intramural rec sports, curling, swimming, and kayaking. Even less recognized is that online activity registration is not limited to just sports.

Students can also sign up for more academic health options and enhance their knowledge of first-aid, take physical condition assessments, or take nutrition counselling.

