

Veterinary School Wellness Room Guide

A how-to guide & examples from different institutions



Table of Contents

Introduction

Purpose

What is a wellness room?

Benefits of a wellness room

Terms used

Safety notice:

Examples of wellness rooms in veterinary schools

University of California Davis College of Veterinary Medicine (UCD CVM)

Wellness Room (link)

Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine (Cornell CVM)

Library Wellbeing Area

Community Wellbeing Room

University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine (UGA CVM)

Wellness Rooms (x2)

Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine (ISU CVM)

The Hideaway (link)

Fitness Room

North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine (NCSU CVM)

Meditation Room

Purdue University College of Veterinary Medicine (Purdue CVM)

Wellness Room

Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine (TAMU CVM)

Wellness Room (link)

University of Wisconsin-Madison College of Veterinary Medicine (UWM CVM)

Meditation Room

Tips and procedures for creating and operating a wellness room

Getting Started

Finding a space

Room location

Minimum-requirement wellness spaces

Fundraising

Procuring furniture & exercise equipment

Room materials and set-up

Useful materials for a wellness or meditation area:

Useful materials and equipment for an exercise area:

Room management, rules & regulations

[Basic ground rules](#)

[Who can use the room](#)

[Regulating room usage](#)

[Sign-in systems](#)

[Mitigating risk and liability](#)

[Credit & Thanks](#)

**For a quick overview of all veterinary school wellness rooms listed,
see the [At-A-Glance Comparison Chart](#).**

Introduction

Purpose

This document hopes to serve as a guide for those interested in making a space dedicated to wellness at their college of veterinary medicine. It intends to give direction and examples of successful models towards these efforts. It should not be viewed as prescriptive of any ways to create, structure, or manage, a wellness room. Anyone hoping to begin such a project should work foremostly with their school's mental health professional(s), alongside other relevant administrative authorities and stakeholders.

What is a wellness room?

A wellness room is a place devoted specifically to the mental, and often physical, health of those using it. A wellness room may have characteristics of an exercise room, meditation space, lounge, any combination therewithin, and so much more! A wellness room can be designed to help those who use it to relax, reduce levels of stress, and improve their mindfulness.

Benefits of a wellness room

Wellness rooms are a space for mindfulness and relaxation - when time away from academic and other responsibilities is needed. They can help to improve overall wellbeing and life-effectiveness for those in the veterinary college. They can also aid in building a sense of community within the college. Wellness rooms should not be considered a replacement for a trained mental health professional.

Terms used

Some veterinary schools have wellness rooms that are purpose-made for meditation and rest, while some are for exercise. Some schools have co-opted the use of the terms "wellness room" or "wellbeing room" for either of these models. As such, this guide will cover each of these types of wellness rooms. This guide will differentially use "wellbeing" and "exercise", respectively, when not referring to specific rooms or spaces.

Safety notice:

When working to create or maintain a wellness room, relevant college and university leadership should be consulted closely to ensure adherence to all relevant rules and regulations. These personnel should be closely consulted to ensure that any facilities, spaces, or other results of these efforts are adequately low-risk. Those who contributed to this guide do not assume liability for those undertaking the creation or maintenance of a wellness room, as it is defined within this guide. Always work with a licensed mental health professional when pursuing means to better the mental health of yourself or others.

Examples of wellness rooms in veterinary schools

Presented below is a list of wellness rooms at several North American veterinary schools. Each section contains information on what activities & amenities the room offers, rules regarding its use, and pictures of the room, if available. The following examples are presented in alphabetical order by institution (discluding “University of”).

Note: COVID-19 restrictions may limit access to rooms beyond what is stated below

University of California Davis College of Veterinary Medicine (UCD CVM)

Wellness Room ([link](#))

Location description: Located within the Counseling & Wellness Suite

Overseen/maintained by: None

Who is allowed to use this space: Use is generally intended for students within the UCD CVM Community

Hours of operation: The room will be closed if the Counseling & Wellness Suite is closed

- Mon. – Thurs. 8:00 am - 5:00 pm
- Fri. 8:00 am - 4:00 pm

Leave work at door? *Unknown*

Description & purpose: “...a safe and comfortable space for DVM students to get some R & R (rest and relaxation), practice mindfulness or meditate. The Wellness Room is designed to enhance...DVM students’ mental, emotional and physical health. It is a quiet, soft lit room...students can use the space to unwind, de-stress or to just take a few moments to quietly reflect” (From Wellness Room [description page](#))

Planned activities: *N/A*

Rules: *Unknown*

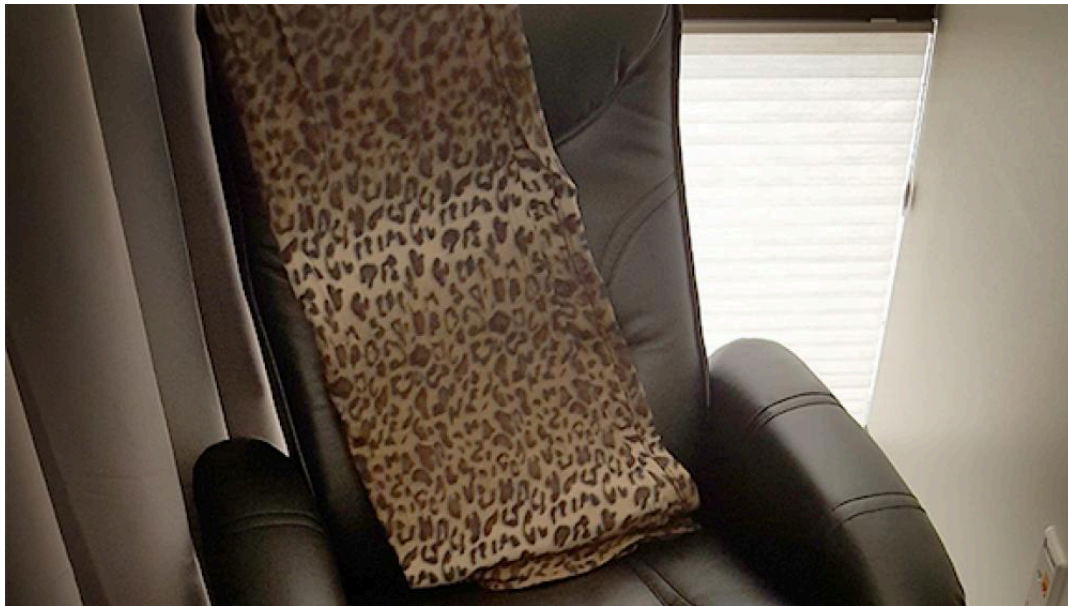
Locked/requires key? No

Amenities:

- Apps
 - [Calm](#)
 - [Relax Melodies](#)

- [Stop. Breathe. Think](#)

Photo gallery:



Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine (Cornell CVM)

Cornell CVM has two areas designated for wellbeing. Both of the areas are maintained primarily by Cornell CVM's previous wellbeing program director. The Student Wellness Initiative also contributes quite a bit to the library area and helps promote events and activities in the community space.

Library Wellbeing Area

Location description: An area at the front of Cornell CVM's library - the space is a section of the library and accessed through it

Overseen/maintained by: *Wellbeing program director*

Who is allowed to use this space: Anyone in the CVM facilities

Hours of operation: Cornell CVM Library [open times](#)

Leave work at door? No

Description & purpose: *N/A*

Rules: Same as library rules. Put everything back the way it was after use

Locked/requires key? No

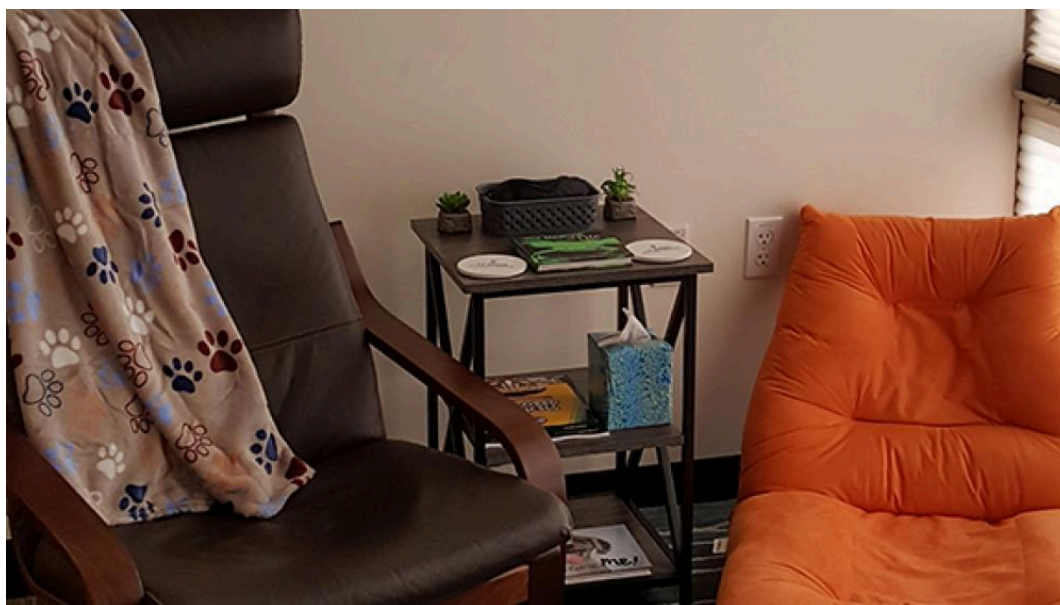
Amenities:

- board games
- knitting
- puzzles
- wellbeing-related and "for fun" reading materials
- coloring books
- Zen Zone - small zen garden
- complimentary hot tea cart

Other notes: There are also various wellbeing amenities in the library itself. There are a few large bean bag chairs throughout the library, as well as access to the garden(not pictured) during the warmer months. The library also has blankets, personal sun lamps, and a few other items for students to borrow. The space is not separate from the rest of the library though, and the tables nearby may be used by students for studying.

Photo Gallery:





Community Wellbeing Room

Description of location: A distinct room designed as a studio-like space within Cornell CVM

Overseen/maintained by: *Wellbeing program director*

Who is allowed to use this space: Anyone in the Cornell CVM community

Hours of operation: *Unknown*

Leave work at door? There are closets and cubbies for people to put their backpacks and shoes

Description & purpose: This can be utilized for rotating fitness classes, weekly massages, meditation groups, or personal workouts during open hours. There are also plans to have organized prayer times, body positivity groups, and regularly scheduled therapy animal visits.

Planned activities:

- dance workshops
- Rotating fitness classes
- Weekly massages
- yoga classes
- meditation sessions/groups

Rules: Rules can be found [here](#)

- Only current CVM employees and CVM students are able to utilize the space. Friends and family are not permitted to utilize the space
- All CVM community members who enter the space must use the sign-in sheet

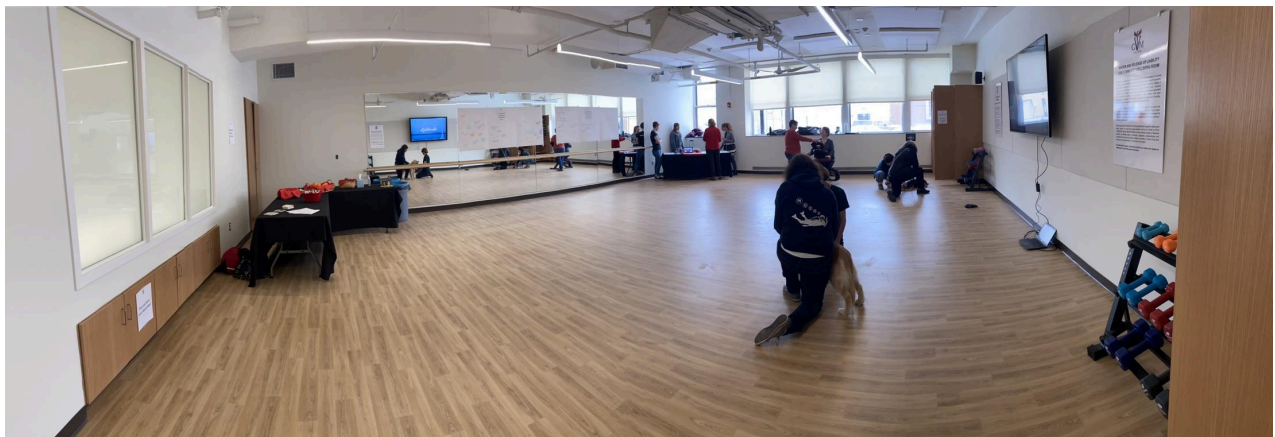
- Participants must report injuries to either 911 or by calling the [Campus Police](#)
- Users must show general respect for the equipment, facility, and toward others using the space
 - No horseplay or loud offensive language will be tolerated
 - The use of photographic equipment to take pictures of any person in the wellbeing room is prohibited without consent
 - Do not drop/throw weights or any other fitness equipment
 - No equipment or furniture can be moved or removed unless otherwise permitted
 - Please wipe off fitness equipment after each use with sanitizer(s) that is provided
 - Please pick up trash, towels, and personal belongings before leaving. Try to leave the space in better condition than when you arrived
- Proper attire is required at all times: wear indoor-only athletic footwear, socks, or no footwear (ex: for yoga) while in the room
- Water bottles are allowed. All other drinks and food are not allowed
- Consult your physician prior to undertaking any physical activity in the space

Locked/requires key? Yes, key card access connected to your Cornell CVM ID card

Amenities:

- yoga mats & yoga blocks
- Weights & resistance bands
- Other non-cardio exercise equipment
- TV connected to a computer with several fitness/meditation apps pre-loaded.

Photo gallery:



University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine (UGA CVM)

UGA CVM is a split campus with 1-2 year students in one building and 3-4 year students at the other, with a wellness room at each site

Wellness Rooms (x2)

Overseen/maintained by: [UGA CVM Office of Academic Affairs](#)

Who is allowed to use this space: Anyone in the UGA CVM community

Hours of operation: *Unknown*

Leave work at door? No

Description & purpose: Students simply go to the rooms when they wish, an approach that has worked well thus far

Planned activities: *N/A*

Rules: Same as college rules. There are no specific rules or protocols at this point.

Locked/requires key? No

Amenities:

Students have added small touches to the rooms:

- lending library
- magazines
- & more

Photo gallery:





Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine (ISU CVM)

ISU CVM has a dedicated wellness room ("The Hideaway") as well as a dedicated workout room

The Hideaway ([link](#))

Location description: Near the cafe and commons area, as well as college administrative offices

Overseen/maintained by: Lauren Wright, *ISU CVM Counseling Services Coordinator*

Who is allowed to use this space: Anyone in the ISU CVM Community

Hours of operation: All times for anyone with access to the college

Leave work at door? Yes

Description & purpose: Designed for users to take time to focus on themselves

Planned activities: None

Rules:

- Please leave all work, studying, laptops, and other responsibilities at the door
- Please be respectful of all equipment and do not remove anything from the room
- Please do not use space for sleep
- Upon leaving, mark the date and time the room was used on the clipboard in room

Locked/requires key? No

Amenities:

- essential oils
- colored pencils
- booklet detailing mental health and wellness resources
- A booklet containing and wellness exercise guides and instructions
- student-made paintings
- meditative stones
- stress sand
- lamp with timer
- knitting yarn and pins
- headphones
- mini sand zen garden
- cushioned chair
- couch

- crayons, colored pencils, and coloring books
- Play-doh

Photo gallery:





Fitness Room

Location description: In the basement adjacent to several labs and a surgery suite

Overseen/maintained by: *Unknown*

Who is allowed to use this space: Anyone in the ISU CVM Community

Hours of operation: Anytime for those with access to the college

Leave work at door? N/A

Description & purpose: An exercise space for all of those at the CVM

Planned activities: None

Rules: Users should sign in and out, noting what equipment they used. All users should wear appropriate clothing

Locked/requires key? No

Amenities:

- 1 elliptical
- 2 treadmills

- Pull-up bar
- Weight machine
- Yoga mats
- Dumbbells
- Floor to ceiling mirror along one wall
- Water faucet

Photo gallery:

Pictures forthcoming

North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine (NCSU CVM)

Meditation Room

Location description: In the library

Overseen/maintained by: None

Who is allowed to use this space: Anyone in the NCSU CVM Community

Hours of operation: NCSU CVM [Library hours](#)

Leave work at door? *Unknown*

Description & purpose: Students go to it when they need some space or need to relax.

Planned activities: *N/A*

Rules: ?

Locked/requires key? *Unknown*

Purdue University College of Veterinary Medicine (Purdue CVM)

Wellness Room

Overseen/maintained by: Student Services office staff and Wellness Committee

Who is allowed to use this space: Use is generally intended for students, interns and residents.

Hours of operation: 24 hours via keycard access

Leave work at door? Yes

Description & purpose: A general rest & relaxation, as well as meditation, space. Students (especially in clinics) can also use the room for naps. For sleep, there is a separate area partitioned off for those who want more privacy.. Residents will often use the room to nap. The room has very soft lighting and is equipped with comfortable seating and blankets. One half of the room is usually kept lit, but the other is usually dark for students needing to rest. The need for a keycard is intended to help monitor wellness room usage.

Planned activities: None

Rules: Users need to sign a sheet to check-in/out the key: one is for the door, and one is for the cabinets in the wellness room. The cabinets contain items such as yoga mats and meditation cushions.

Locked/requires key? A keycard access system is installed.

Amenities:

- modular couches
- Several large bean bag chairs
- 1 massage chair
- coffee tables
- Several yoga mats
- meditation cushions
 - used more often as pillows by those on bean bag chairs

Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine (TAMU CVM)

Wellness Room ([link](#))

Location description:

Overseen/maintained by: Dr. Karen Cornell and the Professional Programs Office

Who is allowed to use this space: Open to DVM students, graduate students, staff and faculty

Hours of operation: Current efforts to extend the hours on Friday and Saturday

- 6am - 10pm, Sunday - Thursday
- 6am - 5pm on Friday
- 6am - 2pm on Saturday

Leave work at door? *Unknown*

Description & purpose: Allow students to take a break to exercise and refocus. Help teach students to take care of themselves, so they can be better at taking care of others.

Planned activities: *Unknown*

Specific rules: Students, faculty, and staff must sign a [waiver](#) In order to exercise in the Wellness Room. Failure to follow the below guidelines will be considered a violation of the [Aggie Honor Code](#) and will be treated as such:

- Only individuals that meet the above-mentioned criteria will be provided access to the room
- Individuals who provide wellness room access to people outside of the above-mentioned groups will have their own access revoked
- Use of the equipment is at your own risk; TAMU and the CVM assumes no responsibility for any injury that may occur
- Shirts and athletic shoes must be worn at all times
- Food, alcohol, glass containers, tobacco products, and horseplay are not permitted in this space
- Please wipe down equipment following use with provided wipes
- Limit the use of any single piece of equipment to 30 minutes when others are waiting.
- The CVM is not responsible for lost or stolen items
- Please report faulty or damaged equipment to the [CVM Facilities office](#)

More information on rules and regulations can be found [here](#)

Locked/Requires Key? Fob access is required

Amenities:

- 2 treadmills
- 2 elliptical trainers
- recumbent bicycle
- rowing machine
- [functional training](#) unit
- free weights
- yoga mats

Other notes: faculty and staff who were part of the planning process, and major donations for purchasing gym equipment came from:

- Texas Veterinary Medical Association
- Texas Veterinary Medical Foundation
- Department of Large Animal Clinical Sciences
- Department of Pathobiology
- Department of Small Animal Clinical Sciences
- Department of Physiology and Pharmacology
- Department of Veterinary Integrative Biosciences
- Professional Programs Office

Photo Gallery:







University of Wisconsin-Madison College of Veterinary Medicine (UWM CVM)

Meditation Room

Location description: The Wisconsin SVM meditation room is located next to a quiet student study space on the main floor of the building.

Overseen/maintained by: The school as a whole takes responsibility for this space, but no specific group(s) or person(s) is designated to oversee it.

Who is allowed to use this space: Students are the primary people who use this space, and faculty and staff also use it as needed

Hours of operation: Students can access the meditation room during business hours.

Leave work at door? No

Description & purpose: Students use it for meditation practice or for taking a quiet break. When empty, different departments will occasionally use the space for small rounds.

Planned activities: monthly chair massages, put on by UWM's SAVMA chapter

Rules:

- The room is able to be rented out whenever available for ~30-minute blocks
- Students are asked to leave it as it was when they entered
- There is no rule against single-person vs. group usage and occupation
- The room has stayed well-maintained and civil with common decency and respect among students.

Locked/requires key? **Yes.** Students check out a key from our Office of Administrative Affairs front desk, put up a sign that says the room is in use, and then return the key once they are finished.

Amenities:

- a happiness light - multiple different lights of different intensity
- mats to lay on
- meditation pillows
- a large exercise ball
- carpet
- several decorations, including canvases of calming scenes
- mindfulness cards
- & more

Tips and procedures for creating and operating a wellness room

This section was created based on information about the rooms listed above, as well as the experiences of its contributors. Your experience may differ from what is described below, and may necessitate actions outside of what this document describes. Contact neil.vezeau@gmail.com if you feel any changes can be made to this guide to reflect your experience.

Getting Started

Before doing anything else, it is best to introduce yourself and your intentions to any wellness professional(s) at your school. Their professional knowledge and insight will be critical to the successful implementation of any wellness-related project. More specifically, you may consider reaching out to any [Veterinary Mental Health Practitioner \(VMHP\)](#) personnel at your school or other licensed mental health professionals at your institution. If you are having trouble identifying current wellness faculty/staff at your college, consider contacting your college's student academic affairs & activities office-equivalent first. If this yields no results, consider contacting current leadership within VMHP.

Finding a space

This is the most important part of creating a wellness space, and often the most difficult. Speak with your school's mental health professional(s) about contacting those who might have knowledge regarding expendable or unused space accessible to those within the college. Those who might have knowledge of such areas in your school include the personnel in your student academic affairs & activities office-equivalent, or personnel within the college or university's facilities management office-equivalent.

Room location

While having the room by an area with heavy foot traffic might make it more accessible to the school, some users may be most comfortable with it being in a more quiet and secluded spot. This is especially true for a wellbeing or meditation room, more so than an exercise space. It is optimal for an exercise room to be close to a locker room, or simply lockers and a bathroom.

Minimum-requirement wellness spaces

If no other space is available, consider making a small dedicated wellness section or sports equipment storage container in your veterinary school library or in any common area. Check that anything such area set-ups are consistent with the wishes of all relevant mental health, facilities, and college administrative personnel and authorities, among others. Especially if the area is (planned to be) set up in or near a hallway, ensure the space is consistent with applicable fire code.

Fundraising

Ask your college's mental health professional(s) if they know of any opportunities for fundraising, or groups/people who may be interested in donating towards such a cause. Below are people and opportunities that are commonly open to supporting such projects:

- [\[National\] SAVMA Wellbeing Committee Awards & Grants](#)
- College alumni
- College, university, state, or other organization-specific grants for wellness-related projects
- State Veterinary Medical Association
- State Veterinary Medical Foundation
- Departments within the veterinary school

You may consider working with your college's fundraising and programming teams to seek fundraising for this specific wellness-related line-item(s). Plans to include any of the materials below can give tangible goals that increase the effectiveness of fundraising.

Procuring furniture & exercise equipment

Unless the college is willing to sponsor all of the materials and equipment your space will need, you and your college's mental health professional(s) may need to find relatively inexpensive second-hand options or for them or donations of them. Here are places to look:

- Communicating to those working and studying within the college, to donate or sell any equipment or materials from the room
 - You may want to extend this search to friends and family of those associated with the college, especially alumni
- Seek old gym equipment from your university's gyms or from local gyms
- Seek old furniture from the facilities management department at your university
- Local thrift or second-hand goods stores
- Though there is inherent risk in peer-to-peer sales networks on the internet, the use of Facebook sales pages and Craigslist often provides a practical opportunity to purchase any of a large variety of inexpensive items.

You may consider working with your college's fundraising and programming teams to seek fundraising for these specific wellness-related materials.

Room materials and set-up

Useful materials for a wellness or meditation area:

- Couches, sofas, padded chairs, and bean bag chairs
- A rug or carpeting
- Meditation cushions
- Plant(s)
- Table(s) for crafts

- Soft & low lighting or other types of chromotherapy
- Warm/neutral-colored walls
- Wall decorations, pictures, and/or paintings
- Coloring books and colored drawing materials
- Materials outlining resources and methods in maintaining wellness, including wellness apps
- Tactile/stress alleviating materials (play-doh, sand, etc.)
- Headphones, especially noise-canceling
- Tablets, computers

Useful materials and equipment for an exercise area:

- Treadmills, ellipticals, & stationary bikes
- Dumbbells
- Yoga mats
- Weight machines
- Outdoor sports equipment

Room management, rules & regulations

Basic ground rules

It is important to set ground rules for the use of any space within the college or elsewhere, and the wellness room is no exception. The most important broad rule is for users to respect the space and others using it. Generally, most successful rooms require that there is no horseplay, excessive noise, or any foul language for any kind of wellness room. Users should leave the room the way they found it, and ensure that all materials and equipment aren't damaged or taken from the room.

Who can use the room

It is often most practical to allow all those working and studying in the veterinary college facilities to use an exercise room, though some may want to restrict meditation and wellness rooms to use by only veterinary students. For exercise rooms, it is often best to not allow use by family and friends of those associated with the college for liability reasons.

Regulating room usage

Monitor the amount of use the room has, and the nature of this use. Especially in wellness/meditation spaces, it may not be necessary to strictly enforce any rules at all if the social health around the room's use is high. If there are problems, either present or foreseen regarding its use, you may want to consider enforcing the following rules:

- Discourage or ban users from working or studying in the area to make it relaxing for all
- Either allowing or disallowing sleep
- Restrictions on room use or overuse with the following
 - Requiring users to block time in advance

- Setting a limit for the time used consecutively, per day, or per week for any given person or group
- Limiting the number of people in the room at any given time

Sign-in systems

Having a check-in/sign-out system can help greatly to monitor time and the general level of space usage. It also encourages accountability for keeping the space clean and maintained by all users. This can be done with a sign-in sheet, a card-swiping/fob system, or a key check-out system. Exercise areas may benefit the most from more secure methods of access and/or sign-in. Sign in systems can also be used to create an organized way for people to rent out materials or equipment.

Mitigating risk and liability

Due to the increased risk from physical activity and exercise equipment, more oversight for an exercise space may be necessary. It might be logistically infeasible for your college's recreation activities/gym department to oversee an exercise space specifically at the college, and any management from within the veterinary school may be required. Especially for exercise spaces, it is likely safer to have mainly staff/faculty oversight, as opposed to purely student-led oversight. Those overseeing an exercise space may want to require users to consult a physician before using, or a signed waiver. This will help to decrease the risks to users of the space. See the ["Safety notice"](#) section on page 3 for more information.

Credit & Thanks

The following individuals, groups, and organizations contributed information and materials used this guide

Names are in alphabetical order by last name. All positions listed were held as of the academic spring 2020 semester

Christina Frank, MS, LPC - UWM CVM - *Counselor*

Colleen Jackson, PhD - Purdue CVM - *Counselor*

Makenzie Peterson, MSc - Cornell CVM - *Wellness Program Director*

Neil Vezeau - ISU CVM - *Student*

Lauren Wright, MS, LMHC - ISU CVM - *Counseling Services Coordinator*

Cover picture credit: <http://clipart-library.com/>