

# spring reboot

It's time for some wellness rehab and banishing that all-or-nothing mentality

It's spring, when new life blooms yet most of the heartfelt resolutions you made at the start of the year have withered away. Not so fast... As the founder of The Life Delicious urban wellness retreat, Catherine Roscoe Barr says, abolish that all-or-nothing philosophy.

A personal trainer and life coach with a neuroscience degree, Roscoe Barr (above) offers one-on-one sessions and weekend retreats with interactive exercises that are geared to transform how you think (cut

just how inactive most of us are for long stretches (unless you're on your feet all day pounding the linoleum in ER). So, instead of sitting for hours, promoting poor circulation, set a timer (try utilizing the Pomodoro technique, 25 minutes on, five minutes off) or whatever timing works for you) to remind yourself to move throughout the day. For a few precious minutes, walk, do jumping jacks, the plank, down dog, or anything other than sitting still. You'll boost blood flow and recharge your focus at the same.

**2 SINGLE TASK** We've become a culture of multi-tasking—to our detriment. Multi-tasking is not as effective as you might think. Roscoe Barr quotes neuroscientist Daniel Levitin: "Multi-tasking creates a dopamine-addiction feedback loop, effectively rewarding the brain for losing focus, and for constantly searching for external stimulation." Instead, single-task, says Roscoe Barr. "You'll actually get more "big" things done instead of just little bits and pieces. Remove distractions that take you on unproductive tangents by using a timer (again, Pomodoro is effective) that fees you to focus on that single task. When time's up, check your texts and email, have a coffee, read the paper, or whatever else may usually distract you. Done.

**3 DOWNLOAD** With the daily onslaught of to-do's and to-haves, it's hard to single-task. You're always forgetting all the things on your mental to-do list. So make it physical. It's old-school and super simple. Write it down or "download," as Roscoe Barr says, keep a journal. Yes, it feels like high school, but putting pen to paper (or typing in the notes app of your smartphone) means you've addressed that mental bag (that is, got it out of your head) and can return to it, later while re-focussing on the present. Your "journal"

(whether a tried-and-true Moleskine or iPhone) can include anything and everything, from registering for an upcoming CME conference to a reminder of that CrossFit class.

**4 BE GOOD ENOUGH** Perhaps the most important take-away from Roscoe Barr's wellness program is her mantra: "Banish the all-or-nothing mentality." You can't do it all or be 100%. Be realistic. And cut yourself some slack. "Be gentle and kind," says Roscoe Barr, "substitute growth for guilt." Crush the ANTs (automatic negative thoughts), that trash-talking, negative feedback loop marching around in your head. Remember that an improvement of 1% is still an improvement. Add a minute to your jog time or one leafy green to your diet. That's better than nothing, and every extra bit is cumulative. Ten minutes of yoga is better than zero. It's about making your goals attainable. After all, losing five pounds is doable, and then five more...rather than setting an immediate goal of 20.

**5 MEDITATE** It works. Just 10 minutes (or five, or whatever time you can carve out) of stillness, deep breathing and mental focus can be the difference between a tense and harried or calm and purposeful day. Roscoe Barr cites psychologist Daniel Goleman, the author of *Focus*: "Think of attention as a mental muscle that we can strengthen by a workout." That workout is meditation. Don't be discouraged if your mind wanders during those few minutes (because it will). The point of meditation is to practise redirecting your mind when you become aware that it has wandered. It's about attention training, and this will help with all the other things already mentioned, whether single-tasking or crushing those ANTs. **—B. Sliq**

**LEARN MORE** Start your wellness reboot by taking one of Catherine Roscoe Barr's three-day weekend wellness retreats or new "Foundation" and "Expansion" one-day sessions. You'll cover everything from starting an anti-sedentary revolution to brain hygiene. Her next weekend retreat is April 15–17. And watch for special wellness retreats across Canada and the world.

[TheLifeDelicious.ca](http://TheLifeDelicious.ca)

Catherine Roscoe Barr of The Life Delicious



doctors share their picks, plans + pleasures

SMALL TALK

DR. MICHELE FOSTER is adding MD to her list of achievements this spring. Whether on hospital rounds or visiting the Temple of Queen Hatshepsut in Egypt, she stays grounded by meditating every morning (a recent practice she learned during The Life Delicious program founded by her childhood friend; see page 34). And indulges in the odd candy treat...

**My name:** Michele Foster  
**I live and practise in:** Studied medicine at University of Calgary; starting residency in psychiatry at the University of Alberta

**My training:** Bachelor of Music, MBA, MD (April 2016)  
**Why I was drawn to medicine:** I am passionate about the field of mental health and am hoping to specialize in child

Louise—one of the most beautiful places on earth (I never wear anyone)  
**Dream vacation:** I would love to go to Antarctica on an icebreaker adventure cruise  
**Favourite city:** New York

**I have too many:** High-heeled shoes, which I never wear anymore because they are so impractical for hospital work  
**I'd describe my home as:** Small, cozy and perhaps a bit too much cat hair

struggle with negative self-talk, but I recognize this is a work in progress

**The best that word describes me:** Positive—you'd be amazed at how your perspective changes when you start keeping a gratitude journal. I have an app that reminds me to journal five things I am grateful for every day.

**I'm inspired by:** My best friend since Junior High—Catherine Roscoe Barr; her enthusiasm and zest for life is contagious and the 12-week journey she led me through has completely changed the way I think, and my life. I am now the healthiest I have ever been, both mentally and physically and feel I can bring my best self forward to patients and the practice of medicine.  
**My motto:** Whether you think you can, or think you can't, either way, you are right (Henry Ford)

**A cause close to my heart:** Animal rescue—I have three adopted and very spoiled cats  
**On my must-do list:** Scuba dive with Manta Rays

**If I wasn't a doctor, I'd be:** A wedding planner



Dr. Michele Foster with her husband at the top of the Ling Peak in Canmore, AB, last spring

**My guilty pleasure:** Candy, although I try to maintain a healthy diet through the week. I always make sure to take a day to enjoy some treats guilt-free

**My go-to exercise class/sport:** Spin class at Spoke N Spin in Calgary—it's a combination of spin and TRX, or suspension bands that work both upper body and core strength

At the Temple of Queen Hatshepsut in Egypt



**Most excited place I've travelled to:** Egypt—a two-week group tour, which was exhausting but so fascinating!

**Memorable restaurant:** L'Atelier de Joël Robuchon—my husband and I had an eight-course tasting menu with wine pairings and we still talk about it to this day!

**A "wow" hotel I'd happily stay in again:** The Rasananda in Koh Phangan, Thailand

**A favourite place that I keep returning to:** Lake

**Must-see TV show:** *The Mindy Project*—light-hearted and ridiculously fun

**Gadget or gear I could not do without:** My iPhone—it keeps me connected, organized, entertained and is a useful resource on the wards

**Last splurge:** As a graduation present, a wine tour through Champagne-Burgundy with my husband!

**Most frequented store:** Lululemon



With best friend Catherine Roscoe Barr of The Life Delicious (see page 34)

THE LIFE DELICIOUS WELLSHIP RETREAT PHOTOS: ANDREWBARON.COM



The Life Delicious wellness retreat



Morning run during the wellness retreat



The Pomodoro Technique tomato timer

yourself some slack), move (join her anti-sedentary revolution) and even eat (tinch towards a more plant-based diet). It's a far more organic approach to achieving those resolutions you try to start each year with. And Dr. Michele Foster (see page 38) credits it for carrying her through a stressful year of clerkship on the way to achieving her MD.

**1 MOVE IT** Obvious, yes. But Roscoe Barr's "anti-sedentary revolution" underlines