



# HOW THE DOCS DO IT

PHYSICIANS SHARE THEIR PERSONAL WELLNESS ROUTINES.

➡ Doctors don't just concern themselves with others' health and wellness: They practice what they preach. The Vail Valley is fairly small to have such an elite team of healthcare providers. But they, like most of the county's population, are interested in living active, healthy lives, and Vail is the perfect place to do it. Read on to discover some of the medical community's busiest physicians' wellness priorities.

➡ **Dr. Jeff Brown, MD, Pediatric Hospitalist**

### What are some ways that you maintain your personal health and wellness?

There are the obvious things that I pay attention to — exercise, good nutrition, good sleep, moderate alcohol and caffeine intake, as well as a reasonable work schedule.

I try also to keep in mind that it is essential to good health to keep a good work-life balance. Having time with family and friends is key to good health — both physical and mental.



➡ **Dr. Tracee Metcalfe likes to exercise outdoors — skinning in the winter and running in the summer.**

I find that being in medicine

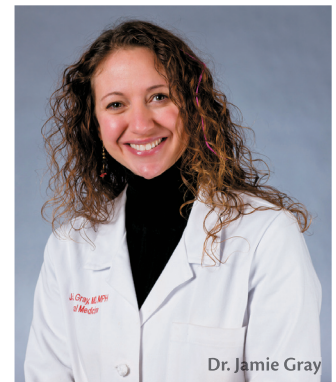
can make this difficult, since a career in medicine can be like a sponge that is never saturated — it just keeps taking and taking. But, if you can maintain a good work-life balance, you can have a vibrant and fulfilling career.

### Describe your fitness and wellness regimens or your ways of maintaining an active lifestyle.

I try to diversify my activities as much as possible — biking, hiking, squash, golf and others. By diversifying your activities and workouts, you can keep your interest and enthusiasm up in regard to staying active.

### Any vices?

Sometimes I get tired. When I should be heading to the athletic club, I head home for a beer and some down time instead. To fight against this, I might eat a Power Bar when I'm leaving work. It gives me the energy to keep the car headed to the club. Also, if I arrange to meet folks to do workouts I am reluctant to cancel, and this helps me follow through.



Dr. Jamie Gray

➡ **Dr. Jamie Gray, MD, Hospitalist and Internal Medicine**

### What are the things that you pay attention to in terms of personal health and wellness maintenance?

Diet, to me, is the foundation of wellness. I try to eat a balanced diet with an abundance of organic fruits and vegetables, minimally processed foods and plenty of water.

Regular exercise is incredibly important, but I try and respect my body and its natural limits. If I feel fatigued on a particular day, I will modify or even skip my



workout, to honor myself and my well-being.

Happiness is highly under appreciated as a path to wellness. Although there are many circumstances that create chaos in my world, I believe I have the ability to navigate these challenges in a way that still brings joy into every day. When I am successful at this, I simply feel better.

### How do you stay fit?

I make it a goal to get on my yoga mat at least five times a week. It is not always easy finding time. It may be getting up an extra hour earlier, sneaking away during a lunch break, or finding a few hours after I put my kids to bed. I realized that when I set this as a goal, and I'm flexible about how it happens, I can almost always find some time.

Beyond that, I just like to play outside. Mountain biking is probably my favorite activity. But close behind are hiking, cross-country skiing, and more recently, taking my skis into the backcountry.

### Your vice?

Coffee, definitely coffee. And I'm not ready to tackle that one yet.

➤ **Dr. Rick Cunningham, MD,**  
*Orthopaedic Surgeon*

### How do you stay healthy?

Most illnesses in America are lifestyle illnesses. Eating a highly processed, animal-based diet high in saturated fat and cholesterol causes heart disease and several cancers. Eating mainly a plant-based diet can significantly reduce your risk of developing these deadly diseases.

### What was your New Year's resolution?

I make a massive veggie juice every day and drink it down. I try to get my veggie fix every morning.

### Any other tips?

Your mental health is important. Exercise so you sleep well. Surround yourself with friends and family so you have that social support. Mental and physical health are definitely interrelated.



Dr. Rick Cunningham at the Leadville 100.



Dr. Tracee Metcalfe during the Elk Mountain Grand Traverse.

### YOU RACED IN THE LEADVILLE 100 LAST YEAR. WHAT'S YOUR EXERCISE PLAN?

*If you have core strength, there's less chance of an injury. Personally, I'd rather be outside than in the gym, though I do focus on strength building (in the gym) once or twice a week. But I do a little bit of trail running and biking, and Nordic, telemark and even some downhill skiing in the winter. Keeping activities in balance is in your best interest. Cross-training is important. If you bike or ski that's great, but try to understand the muscle groups and work all of them.*

### You're a father of four. Are your kids active?

My oldest is a soccer player, and my daughters like to swim. Vail is great for kids growing up. There is so much for them to do.

### Any vices?

I like my coffee — and chocolate.

➤ **Dr. Tracee Metcalfe, MD,**  
*Internal Medicine and Medical Co-Director of Hospice of the Valley*

### How did you come to Vail?

I moved to Breckenridge after high school. As soon as I saw the beauty of the mountains, I knew I had to spend my life in them. I went on to do my undergraduate work at Colorado College and medical school at University of Colorado. My goal has always been to practice medicine in a rural mountain community.

### How do you exercise?

My favorite things to do are run

and climb mountains, or basically anything I can do with my dog, Riley. I love running because it's easy to squeeze it into a busy day. You can get a good workout in just 30 minutes, and it's easy to find 30 minutes during a lunch break, or before or after work. Running is also great because all you really need is a pair of shoes.

### You run year-round?

No, in the winter the days are short and the roads and trails are slick and dangerous. I prefer to get out into the backcountry and go skinning and skiing instead of running. Much like running, skinning is convenient and can practically be done right outside your back door. The mountains are right here and it's great to use what nature has given us rather than go work out inside a gym. When I don't have time to go deep into the backcountry, I skin up Vail Mountain.

### Do you have advice for new runners (or people just starting to exercise)?

Start slow and stick with it! I still remember when running a mile without stopping was impossible; now I have completed five marathons. Same thing with skinning. Skinning to the top of the gondola used to seem like an insurmountable challenge. Recently I finished several backcountry ski races, including the 40-mile Elk Mountain Grand Traverse, the Teva Games Skimo race and the Power of Two Skimo race in Aspen, where my partner and I took first place for the women's teams and second place overall. This spring I will be the doctor on a month-long five-person search and rescue team on Denali. This opportunity would never have been available to me without making exercise and a healthy lifestyle a priority. ▣