

Christian A.

WELLNESS STORY

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“Facing setbacks forced me to step away from something that had long defined me. What I discovered in that space was that identity is not fixed.”

Medical school has a way of consuming more than just our time— without a conscious effort, it can become our sole identity. This places a lot of importance on how we manage that stress outside of class. During my first two years, I managed that stress by placing much of my identity into one major bucket: being a runner. It grounded me and challenged me physically as much as medicine challenged me intellectually, and it brought me purpose and joy.

But the stress of medical school can be relentless. Moving across the country for third year at the Kaiser program and facing setbacks—including failing Step 1 and making the difficult decision to split my fourth year—forced me to step away from something that had long defined me. What I discovered in that space was that identity is not fixed. I rediscovered my love for cooking and began making meals for friends. I picked up golf. Most recently, I’ve started running again, with a newfound love and appreciation for the peace it brings me.

Medicine demands a great deal from us, but it should never be the only thing that defines us. The lesson I’ve learned is that resilience isn’t just about pushing forward—it’s about allowing ourselves to change, rediscover joy, and remember that we are always more than the roles we hold.

