STAYIN' ALIVE

Talking about safety isn't enough.

HEALTH & WELLNESS NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2021

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EMPLOYEE WELLNESS SOLUTIONS NETWORK

HIGHLIGHTS for the October 2021 Newsletter

Increase THIS to Lower the Risk for COVID-19
FYI...COVID-19 isn't exactly over. The delta variant appears to be even more contagious. Besides the obvious, what else can you do to lower your risk for the coronavirus? You might be surprised...

Rethink Your Drink: Daily Soda Habit Raises Diabetes
How often do you drink soda? The real deal or diet? If you want to prevent or manage diabetes, take a closer look at your soda habit. Here's what you need to know.

Orange Theory: The Fruit to Fight Chronic Disease
Here's a juicy little secret. Eating oranges may help lower the risk for chronic diseases. Want to squeeze some fresh oranges into your diet? Here's how...

Y-Axis: Muscle Makes You Smarter
Want to get stronger AND smarter? You don't have to train like a bodybuilder or chase world records. But you can learn to build muscle. Besides looking good and feeling good, there's a curious side effect to building muscle.

Homemade Popcorn with Olive Oil
Skip the microwave popcorn or the movie theater kind lathered in butter. It's easy to make your own. It costs less, too. Popcorn can be a healthy, low-calorie snack. Try this simple recipe.

Take the October Health Challenge!
Breathe Healthy: Practice breathing to improve your health

Ask the Wellness Doctor:
This month Dr. Don Hall answers the question: What should I do if I'm always tired?

NEWSLETTER

Muscle Makes You Smarter

It's no secret that body-builders and athletes lift weights. It helps build muscle and strength.

But if you're not planning to make a living from flexing your biceps or chasing world records, should you even bother with strength training?

Yes. Building muscle makes you smarter, too.

In a recent study, researchers found that strength training at least two days a week can improve memory, thinking, decision-making, and reaction times.[4]

So go ahead. Lift weights. Do some push-ups. Take a strength training class. You'll get stronger and smarter.

COMMENTS?

Send comments to the editor:
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Increase THIS to Lower the Risk for COVID-19

Study: Sleep protects against coronavirus

Work late. Hang out with friends. Tackle a homework project with a kid well past midnight. Kick off your shoes after a long day and watch late-night TV. Or stay up late to click, swipe, and tap your mobile device. Been there, done that?

There are millions of reasons (and excuses) why you skimp on sleep. But research suggests poor sleep habits raise your risk for contracting COVID-19.[1]

The good news: Every 1-hour increase in sleep lowers the risk for becoming infected with COVID-19, according to the study.

- Are you having trouble sleeping?
- Do you wake up frequently?
- Are you feeling tired, stressed, or burned out?
- Or are you choosing to skimp on sleep for work, entertainment, or something else?

You might think burning the midnight oil is fine with a morning latte, energy drink, or caffeine pill. But if you do, you're fooling yourself. If you're chronically sleep deprived, you're at risk for getting sick and contracting COVID-19.

"...Lack of sleep and sleep disorders may adversely influence the immune system…," says lead researcher Hyunju Kim. "We found that lack of sleep at night, severe sleep problems and high level of burnout may be risk factors for COVID-19…"

How much sleep do you need? Aim for 7 to 9 hours of sleep per night. You'll feel better. You'll be more rested. And you'll help protect yourself from the coronavirus.

MORE

Sleep habits to protect your health
https://tinyurl.com/f9wz2ctb

Rethink Your Drink: Daily Soda Habit Raises Diabetes Risk

Improve your mood + improve your health

Pop...fizz...ahhh. Pop open a can of soda and twist off the cap. Fill up a cup at the fountain. It might sound and taste satisfying, but maybe it's time to rethink your drink.

DID YOU KNOW…

- The average adult drinks about 53 gallons of soda a year
- The original fast-food drink size was about 8 ounces, now it's 32 ounces.
- A regular 32-ounce soda contains about 300 calories and 100 grams of sugar
- The American Heart Association recommends no more than 24 grams of sugar per day for women and 36 grams of sugar per day for men.

These are just a couple reasons health experts predict 1 in 3 adults could have diabetes by 2050. And that's a problem. Left unchecked, diabetes can lead to…

- Nerve damage
- Poor circulation
- Vision loss
- Kidney disease
- Heart disease
- Amputations
- And other health problems

Homemade Popcorn with Olive Oil

Skip the microwave popcorn or the movietheater kind lathered in butter. It's easy to make your own. It costs less, too. Popcorn can be a healthy, low-calorie snack. Try this simple recipe:[5]

Ingredients

1/2 C popcorn kernels

1 T extra virgin olive oil

1/4 tsp salt

Directions – Air Popcorn Machine

1. Pour in the popcorn kernels. Place a large bowl beneath the chute. Turn on the popcorn machine, and wait until all the kernels are popped.
2. Drizzle with olive oil. Sprinkle with salt. Mix well.

Directions – Stovetop Popcorn

1. Place olive oil and popcorn kernels in large pot on medium heat. Cover with lid.
2. When kernels begin to pop, turn up the heat. Move the pan back and forth, until all kernels are popped or pot is full.
3. Sprinkle with salt and mix well.

(83 calories/serving. Serves 7)

Orange Theory: The Fruit to Fight Chronic Disease

Aim to eat 1.5 to 2 cups of fruit per day

"Incoming!" Watch out for flying oranges if you're in Ivera, Italy. Every year the city hosts the annual Battle of the Oranges.

The event dates back to the Middle Ages when townsfolk overthrew a tyrant. But no clubs or swords are swung around.

Instead, thousands of people throw oranges in a friendly battle to relive the victory. About 500,000 oranges are used. And it's a juicy mess.

Looking for a sweet way to improve your health?

New research suggests oranges can help fight chronic diseases, like:[3]

- Heart disease
- Obesity
- Diabetes

The Juicy Details About Oranges

What makes oranges healthy? Here are a few juicy details:

Vitamin C: One orange has about 116 percent of the daily amount of vitamin C your body needs.

Fiber: This citrus fruit is also a good source of fiber. It has about 12.5 percent of the fiber you need per day.

Getting enough vitamin C and fiber in your diet can help:

- Strengthen the immune system
- Lower the risk for heart disease and stroke
- Reduce bad cholesterol
- Control blood sugar
- Prevent certain types of cancer

Pick up some oranges the next time you're at the grocery store. But don't throw them at people. It's better for your health to eat the fruit.

Aim to eat about 1.5 to 2 cups of fresh fruit a day, along with 2 to 3 cups of fresh vegetables.

MORE
Oranges vs. orange juice: Which is better?
https://tinyurl.com/ybc4z8jv

Rethink Your Drink: Daily Soda Habit Raises Diabetes Risk (continued from page 1)

Thirsty? Drink More Water

If you want to cut your risk for diabetes, drink more water. Just one soda a day may raise the risk for diabetes and other health problems.

A recent study found that people who drink 1 to 2 sodas a day or more are more likely to develop diabetes than those who don't.[2] And it doesn't really matter if it's regular or diet soda.

Do you drink soda? The real deal or diet? If you're thirsty, skip the soda and drink more water. And if you want a little flavor, add lemon, lime, kiwi or cucumber slices.

MORE
Learn more about soft drinks & disease
https://tinyurl.com/hwd8kcy

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Take the October Health Challenge!
Breathe Healthy: Practice breathing to improve your health

Ask the Wellness Doctor:
This month Dr. Don Hall answers the question:
What should I do if I'm always tired?

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WELLNESS CHALLENGE

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Breathe Healthy

CHALLENGE
Practice breathing to improve your health

Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read "Breathe Healthy."
2. Practice breathing daily to improve your health.
3. Keep a record of your completed health challenge in case your organization requires documentation.

Take the Breathe-Right Quiz

How much do you know about the health benefits of breathing?

	T	F	
1.	☐	☐	Closing your eyes is required to benefit from mindful breathing.
2.	☐	☐	Endorphins released during mindful breathing can help reduce pain.
3.	☐	☐	It takes 60 minutes of quiet breathing to reduce stress and improve mood.
4.	☐	☐	Deep breathing can help lower heart rate and blood pressure.
5.	☐	☐	Research shows a regular breathing practice can help treat anxiety and depression.

How did you do? If you answered any of these statements incorrectly, you could benefit from learning more about mindful breathing to improve your health. It only takes about 10 minutes of quiet breathing to reduce stress and improve your mood. And you don't have to close your eyes. (If you can't take a 10-minute break, start with 2 or 3 minutes.)

Answers: 1. False. 2. True. 3. False. 4. True. 5. True.

What's it feel like when you're stressed out?

You know...you're late for work and stuck in rush-hour traffic. Maybe your kid is having a meltdown in the middle of the grocery store. Or you've got a looming work deadline and a million other priorities. Ugh!

Your heart rate rises. Maybe you break a sweat. Your stomach turns in knots. Or your frustration meter starts to rise. Sound familiar?

Or maybe your stress is tied to something bigger like moving, a job change, car trouble, relationship matters, health problems, or money.

Chances are pretty good you know what stress feels like.

Maybe it's in the form of headaches, neck and shoulder pain, fatigue, or even an overwhelming sense of gloom or uneasiness. Maybe you're irritable or in a bad mood. Or maybe you make it through the day, but then can't get to sleep at night.

Been there, done that? Stress can take a heavy toll on your health and happiness.

Too often, people try to beat stress in unhealthy ways to feel better. For example...shop therapy, gambling, drinking, eating too much, or maybe binge-watching shows instead of doing something better.

But it doesn't have to be that way. There's an easy way to beat stress, improve your mood, calm your mind, and protect your health. It's free. It only takes a few minutes. And you can do it anytime...anywhere.

Take a deep breath, cause it's literally that easy. Take the month-long health challenge to Breathe Healthy

Relax: Breathing tips to beat stress
https://tinyurl.com/yaxcdkzu

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Do You Take Time to Breathe?

Most people don't, says Stanford University researcher Dr. Emma Seppälä. She's the author of the book, *The Happiness Track*, a frequent TED Talks speaker, and director of Stanford's Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education. And she helps people learn to use breathing to reduce stress, improve health, and increase happiness.

TIP: When you're stressed out, and you've got a million things to do at home or at work, it's easy to think you don't have time for mindful breathing. But before you rush off to the next thing on your to-do list, give it a try.

"Breathing is the single most important act that we do every day," says Seppälä. "Daily breathing practices activate the parasympathetic nervous system, which is associated with resting and digesting, and a more peaceful mind and body."
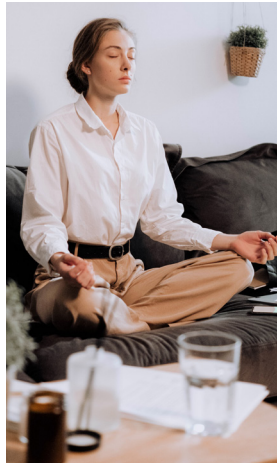
7 Steps to Healthy Breathing

Want to learn how to breathe to improve your health? Here's one easy-to-follow breathing practice you can use. Follow these seven steps:

1 **Create a breathing practice.** Set aside 10 to 15 minutes each day to breathe. Schedule it just like you would an important meeting.

2 **Find a quiet place** where you won't be disturbed. Close your office or bedroom door. Go to your car. Sit on a bench in a quiet area of a park.

3 **Set a timer.** Start with 10 minutes. As you get comfortable with breathing, increase the time to 15 or 20 minutes.

4 **Sit comfortably**, and place one hand on your stomach.

5 **Breathe in through your nose**. Inhale deeply and slowly. Pay attention to your chest rising as your lungs fill with air. Focus on your breathing, and try not to think about anything else.

6 **Exhale through your mouth**. Tighten your stomach muscles, and try to push out as much air as possible.

7 **Repeat the process** until time's up.

This is just one example of a breathing exercise you can use to reduce stress and feel better. But it's not the only way to use breathing to improve your health.

It's a way to help you get started, create a daily breathing practice, and be more mindful about your health, happiness, and lifestyle choices.

Want to be healthier and happier? Stop what you're doing, and take a few minutes to breathe.

Infographic: The Scientific Benefits of Breathing https://tinyurl.com/y9ajkllv

11 Health Benefits From Taking a Break to Breathe

If you think taking a time out to breathe sounds a little woo-woo, you're not alone. When you're stressed out, rushing from thing to thing, maybe sleep deprived, too, it's easy to dismiss.

Maybe you're even thinking: *"Who's got time for that? I'm breathing just fine."*

But why not give it a try? Take a few minutes to breathe, and you might be surprised by how you feel. Research shows breathing can help:

1. Lower cortisol levels linked to stress, inflammation and chronic disease[1]
2. Control blood pressure[2]
3. Reduce cravings
4. Increase productivity
5. Treat depression and anxiety[3]
6. Improve mood
7. Increase energy and happiness
8. Control impulsive behavior
9. Improve quality of sleep[4]
10. Strengthen the immune system[5]
11. Improve brain function, thinking and problem solving[6]

Video: Calm during COVID: Mindful Breathing https://tinyurl.com/euxkd925

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Breathe Healthy

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CHALLENGE
Practice breathing to improve your health

Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, or add to your digital calendar.
2. Aim to practice breathing to improve your health daily. Find a time that works best for you.
3. Use the calendar to record your actions and choices to practice breathing to improve your health.
4. Review your progress at the end of each day, week, and at the end of the month. Then keep up the practice for a lifetime of best health.

MONTH:							HC = Health Challenge™ ex. min. = exercise minutes
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary
HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	
HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	
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HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	

_____ Number of days this month I practiced breathing to improve my health
_____ Number of days this month I exercised at least 30 minutes

Other wellness projects completed this month:

_____

_____

Name _____ Date _____

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ASK THE DOCTOR

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Q. What should I do if I'm always tired?

A. You wake up and don't want to get out of bed. Even after a morning jolt of exercise, a cold shower, or a cup of coffee, you still feel tired.

You don't have any energy and feel fatigued most of the time. That ever happen?

If you've ever felt this way, you're not alone. In a recent survey, about 69 percent of adults report feeling tired or exhausted at work.[1]

Sleep, stress, diet, exercise, a medical problem, and many other factors can contribute to fatigue.[2]

If you feel tired all the time, you need to figure out why.[3] Is it your lifestyle, genetics, stress, something else, or a combination of these factors?

Once you figure out why you always feel drained, you can make changes to get your spark back. Here's how:

1. See your doctor

After a routine exam and some questions about your lifestyle, your doctor may order a blood test.

Your lab results can help your doctor see if you have anemia, a thyroid problem, or hormones that are out of balance.

They can also show if your vitamin B12, vitamin D, or other vitamins are low.

ASK THE *Wellness* DOCTOR

3 Tips to Fight Fatigue

2. Take a closer look at lifestyle habits

Blood test results will give your doctor a better picture of what's going on inside your body. But it takes time to get those results.

Your doctor can also look at any habits that might make you feel tired. You might need to make some changes, like:

- Improve your sleep habits.
- Get 30 to 60 minutes of exercise.
- Avoid caffeine and drink more water.
- Eat more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, and legumes.
- Achieve and maintain a healthy weight.
- Take time to relax.
- Improve your relationships (family, work, social).
- Identify and deal with stressors in your life.
- Avoid using alcohol, tobacco, or drugs.

3. Change behaviors to beat fatigue

Talking with your doctor can help you develop a plan to beat fatigue.

You may need to change your diet, exercise more, get more sleep, or make other changes. You can do it!

Just focus on what you can do today, per week, and each month. And if you go back to your old habits for a couple of days, just take action and get back on track.

Treating fatigue can be a complex problem

It can take time to unravel because so many factors can be involved. Fortunately, you can do something about it.

If you've felt tired and exhausted for more than a week or two, see your doctor. Look at your lifestyle habits. Then be willing to make changes to improve your health. You'll be glad you did.

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