

BalancedLiving

February 2021



MANAGING STRESS WITH EXERCISE

Stress can make you feel drained, anxious, and even depressed. While there are several ways to manage runaway stress, none is as enjoyable and effective as a regular exercise routine.

"Numerous studies have shown exercise provides excellent stress-relieving benefits," says Cedric Bryant, chief exercise physiologist for the American Council on Exercise. "And let's face it, we all could do with less stress in our lives."

How It Works

Exercise causes the brain to release endorphins, opium-like substances that ease pain and produce a sense of comfort and euphoria. It also encourages the nerve cells in the brain to secrete other neurotransmitters, such as serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine, which improve mood. Deficiencies of these substances, particularly serotonin, have been linked to symptoms of depression, anxiety, impulsiveness, aggression, and increased appetite. According to a study published in the Archives of Internal Medicine, when depressed people exercise, they increase their levels of these natural antidepressants.

According to the National Institutes of Health, exercise also: improves people's ability to relax and sleep; promotes self-esteem; and enhances energy, concentration, and memory. Exercise also provides an outlet for negative emotions, such as frustration, anger, and irritability, thereby promoting a more positive mood and outlook.

Moderate exercise done regularly interrupts the cyclic thinking process associated with depression. A person who is worried about a particular problem may dwell at length on the problem, bringing on more worry. Depression deepens the worry, in a descending cycle. Exercise can break the cycle. Finally, exercise helps you take time for yourself.

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Stress-Reduction Moves

Almost any exercise can provide stress relief, but the following guidelines can help you find those likely to be more effective for you. Choose an exercise you enjoy. The kinds of activities you choose depend on your physical ability as well as your preferences. "It's important to choose activities that are accessible and feasible for you to do regularly," says Mr. Bryant. "You also need to determine if you want to play competitive sports, such as basketball or tennis, or if you'd rather do noncompetitive activities, such as walking, bicycling, or taking an aerobics class. "You also should consider whether you want to do your exercise routine on your own or with others. Exercise every day if you can. The U.S. Surgeon General's Report on Physical Activity and Health recommends 30 minutes of activity on most, if not all, days of the week. "You'll benefit from exercising three to five times a week, but you'll see more consistent stress reduction if you can be physically active every day," says Mr. Bryant.

Consider mind/body activities. In yoga and tai chi, your mind relaxes progressively as your body increases its level of muscular work. "If you're attracted to a spiritual component, these forms of exercise are effective for honing stress management and relaxation skills," says Mr. Bryant. Controlling stress ultimately comes down to making time to exercise. Physical activity provides an enjoyable and effective way to cope with life's troubles as it promotes lasting strength and empowerment.

To be an effective manager, it is essential that you have the skills and knowledge to be a strong leader. Use the following tips and techniques to improve your leadership skills and show the way to increased productivity and success.

Build Guidelines that Promote Accomplishment

- Outline company goals and departmental objectives
- Map out ways to achieve these goals
- Consider budgets and how departments can work together to maximize success
- Create policies and procedures

Plan for Goal Achievement

- Consider each goal and what needs to be done to accomplish it
- Organize the work and provide appropriate people with timelines
- Delegate responsibilities to appropriate departments and team members
- See if you can create teams between groups of people sharing job responsibilities that complement each other

Work with People

- Find the right people to fill positions
- Help employees strengthen skills by providing adequate training and resources
- Motivate workers to achieve
- Schedule routine meetings to talk about goals and progress
- Ensure that your staff knows that you are available for questions or comments
- Make necessary decisions, but invite feedback from workers and other team leaders

Outline and Support Expectations

- Outline expectations for job duties and performance and make sure your employees are aware of what they are
Give corrective action when it's needed



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FINDING BALANCE



Why is being in balance so important? Without balance, you'll find it difficult to organize your life in a way that will support the momentum you need every day to keep up with your responsibilities. Over time, you may begin to lose control of your life and suddenly feel as if you are so out-of-step that you will need to stop and reset. For some, resetting can take precious time away from your studies and your goals, ultimately leaving you feeling as if you have chosen the wrong path or are facing difficulties that you won't be able to overcome. Living a life in balance will help you identify challenges in advance and easily adjust to unexpected changes in your life. To create balance in your life, follow these helpful suggestions:

Identify the parts of your life that make you happy.

Do you receive support from family or friends? Do you have a job that you enjoy? Is there some activity that you look forward to doing every week or month? Make a list of these positive elements and refer back to them when you feel like you're running into trouble. They will help you find your center and reconnect with yourself.

Identify the parts of your life that are difficult.

Do you have trouble studying? Is your financial situation a struggle? Do you feel isolated or alone? These are the items that may stand in the way of your success because they may actively or passively pull your life out of balance. Make a list of these negative forces so you can be mindful of their presence in your life.

Address your difficulties

Look at each item on your list that complicates your life to some degree and consider what you should do to resolve them. Do you know a tutor to help you study better? Do you have the extra time in your schedule for a part-time job? What are some social groups you might be interested in joining to make more friends? Whatever your complications are, spend some time thinking about how you can alter those situations. If necessary, speak with someone whose guidance you trust to find additional options you might not have considered.

Be willing to make changes in your life

If you aren't willing to make the changes that are necessary in your life, your life will quickly fall out of balance and you may feel overwhelmed or out of control. Committing to being the agent for change in your own life and showing up every day ready to take some small step toward resolving a conflict or difficulty will help make addressing tomorrow's challenges even easier.

Don't beat yourself up along the way.

Life is different for everyone, and it can be easy to assume that you're doing something wrong because someone else was able to resolve their own problem faster than you've been able to. Remember, everyone is on their own journey and has a different set of challenges and support systems in place. If you stumble along the way, focus on holding onto your momentum by simply standing up and being ready to take each new day as a new opportunity to succeed.



The Wellness News

Tips and resources for living well

February 2021

American Heart Month

American Heart Month is a federally designated event that encourages Americans to focus on their heart health and get their families, friends, and communities involved. According to the American Heart Association, President Lyndon B. Johnson proclaimed the first American Heart Month in February 1964 via Proclamation 3566 on Dec. 30, 1963. The Congress, by joint resolution, requested the president to issue an annual proclamation designating February as American Heart Month.



Go Red for Women, launched in 2004, is an American Heart Association movement that occurs on the first Friday of every February. It was established to close the gap in heart health and improve the lives of women globally. It is dedicated to removing the barriers women face to achieving good health and wellbeing.

For 16 years, it has used the energy, passion, and power of women to band together and wipe out cardiovascular disease — the leading cause of death that claims the lives of one in three women. It challenges every woman to know her personal risk for heart disease and stroke and take action to reduce it.

The American Heart Association states that cardiovascular disease, including heart disease and stroke, remains the leading cause of death globally, taking more than 17.6 million lives. That number is expected to rise to more than 23.6 million by 2030 – and women are at an increased risk.

Although there are risk factors that women cannot change, such as age, gender, family health history, race, or previous stroke or heart attack, women can control or treat some risk factors with lifestyle changes and help from their provider. Those risk factors include:

- High blood pressure
- Smoking
- High blood cholesterol
- Lack of regular activity
- Obesity or overweight
- Diabetes

Heart disease is the No. 1 cause of death for women, impacting more women than all forms of cancer combined. It is important to know your risk - ask your doctor to check your blood pressure and cholesterol. Reduce your risk with lifestyle changes that can be controlled.

Heart Healthy Foods



Consistently eating healthy, nutritious foods not only fuels our bodies, but also keeps our heart in good health. Healthy choices start with where you get your food - the grocery store! These simple tips should leave you feeling confident the next time you shop for your food.

The American Heart Association, American Diabetes Association and the National Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics have some

common recommendations. Here are the research-based recommendations to keep your heart healthy:

- Use olive oil, avocados, nuts and seeds for healthy fat intake
- Eat fatty fish, flax, walnuts, and soy to include n-3 fatty acids two times weekly
- Enjoy whole grains daily (look for products that say 100% whole grain)
- Eat a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables (berries, kale, carrots, spinach, etc.) daily – consider a fruit or vegetable at each meal
- Limit saturated fats such as those found in butter, palm oil, and red meat
- Attempt to eliminate all trans fats (potentially found in sweet breads, store purchased cookies, pies, etc.)
- Limit alcohol per day to no more than 1 beverage for women and 2 beverages for men

The Mediterranean and DASH (dietary approaches to stop hypertension) food plans are consistently identified as heart healthy. They include the tips listed above, along with limiting total salt intake and the inclusion of low-fat dairy products for the DASH diet, which focuses on the reduction of hypertension, a strong risk factor for heart disease and stroke.

These recommendations may be a struggle for some, but by being consistent and aware, we can reduce our risk for heart disease.

Happy heart healthy eating this month and all the rest!

Vegan Black Bean Pasta

Ingredients

- 9 ounces of uncooked whole wheat fettuccine
- 1 tablespoon of olive oil
- 1-3/4 cups of sliced baby portobello mushrooms
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 can (15 ounces) of black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 can (14-1/2 ounces) of diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 teaspoon of dried rosemary, crushed
- 1/2 teaspoon of dried oregano
- 2 cups of fresh baby spinach



Directions

1. Cook fettuccine according to package directions.
2. Meanwhile, in a large skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat.
3. Add mushrooms; cook and stir 4-6 minutes or until tender.
4. Add garlic; cook 1 minute longer.
5. Stir in black beans, tomatoes, rosemary and oregano; heat through.
6. Stir in spinach until wilted.
7. Drain fettuccine; add to bean mixture and toss to combine.

Health Tip:

Blood Pressure can be affected by a lot of different things.
To control it be sure to:

- Limit caffeine from energy drinks, soda, tea, coffee, and chocolate
- Limit sodium intake to no more than 2300 mg a day
- Manage your stress with breathing exercises, meditation, etc.
- Get at least 30 minutes of cardio exercise each day
- Avoid or reduce nicotine use

Action: *If you have high blood pressure and are sick, be sure to take a cold medicine that is safe for your blood pressure. Ask a pharmacist. According to the Mayo Clinic, having high blood pressure and not getting enough exercise are closely related. The American College of Sports Medicine*

Exercise for Blood Pressure Management



According to the Mayo Clinic, having high blood pressure and not getting enough exercise are closely related. The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) recommends that individuals with hypertension engage in moderate intensity, aerobic exercise 5-7 days per week, supplemented by resistance exercise 2-3 days per week and flexibility exercise $\geq 2-3$ days per week. The Department of Health and Human Services recommends aiming for at least 30 minutes of aerobic activity most days of the week. If you can't set aside that much time at once, remember that shorter bursts of activity count too. You can break up your workout into three 10-minute sessions of aerobic exercise and get the same benefit as one 30-minute session. Also, if you sit for several hours a day, try to reduce the amount of time you

spend sitting. Research has found that too much sedentary time can contribute to many health conditions. Aim for 5 to 10 minutes of low-intensity physical activity, such as getting up to get a drink of water or going on a short walk, each hour. Consider setting a reminder in your email calendar or on your smartphone.

Some examples of aerobic exercise that may lower blood pressure include walking, jogging, cycling, swimming or dancing. You can also try high-intensity interval training, which involves alternating short bursts of intense activity with subsequent recovery periods of lighter activity. Strength training also can help reduce blood pressure. Aim to include strength training exercises at least two days a week. Talk to your doctor about developing an exercise program.

If you have elevated blood pressure, exercise can help you avoid developing hypertension. If you already have hypertension, regular physical activity can bring your blood pressure down to safer levels. However, there are some contraindications to exercise that you need to be aware of. Weight training can cause a temporary increase in blood pressure during exercise. This increase can be dramatic, depending on how much weight you lift. But weightlifting can also have long-term benefits to blood pressure that outweigh the risk of a temporary spike for most people. And it can improve other aspects of cardiovascular health that can help to reduce overall cardiovascular risk. The Department of Health and Human Services recommends incorporating strength training exercises of all the major muscle groups into a fitness routine at least two times a week.

If you have high blood pressure and you'd like to include weight training in your fitness program, remember:

- Learn and use proper form
- Don't hold your breath
- Lift lighter weights more times
- Listen to your body.

Stop exercising if you feel chest pain, weakness, dizziness, lightheadedness, or pressure or pain in your neck, arm, jaw, or shoulder. If you have high blood pressure, be sure to get your doctor's OK before starting exercise, increasing your current exercise, or adding weight training exercises to your fitness routine.

We know it is not always easy to juggle everything & realize simple tips can help provide a different approach. Your EAP is here to help with family, work, health, well-being & legal issues.

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Group Therapy Power



A recent survey by Vida Health found that one out of six people sought professional counseling in 2020. If the price of individual counseling is beyond your reach, don't dismiss group counseling via Zoom. Group therapy is less

expensive, and it has advantages that include experiencing support from others, and accelerated self-awareness as you reflect on how others manage their problems and cope with stress. You may be aware of roadblocks and personal issues hindering your desired changes, and the power of peer influence and constructive criticism is powerful within the group setting. Also, you may identify solutions by observing others solving similar problems, and you will be less likely to intellectualize and discard helpful ideas and suggestions as "not relevant to me." Ask your EAP about group counseling resource directories and let them help you connect. *Source: www.vida.com/mental-health-in-a-pandemic-winter/*

Edible Cannabis Products. How Much do You Know?



Legalized cannabis brings with it sellers of homemade concoctions like candy and beverages. Potency and effects in these methods of cannabis ingestion are not very predictable, and consuming too much is a risk

because the high is delayed. This can lead to accidents and injuries if someone is suddenly intoxicated at the wrong time, in the wrong place. Edibles can also produce hours-long, frightening psychoses—a sometimes reported experience for first-year college students with no history of drug use (pot sellers prefer the term "bad high"). Be better informed by learning more. *Source: www.justthinktwice.gov [search "marijuana edibles"]*

Language That Empowers Workplace Diversity



Welcoming diversity includes adopting language that empowers workers and reduces stigmas. Do the terms "wheelchair bound," "stuck in a wheelchair," or "confined to a wheelchair" sound familiar?

Replace this language with "uses a wheelchair" or "wheelchair user." This simple modification of phrasing helps overcome the stigmatizing language of yesteryear. 2021 marks 30 years since regulations for the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) were issued. Celebrate the anniversary with a commitment to a positive, diverse, and welcoming workplace with this simple language tweak. *Source: www.newmobility.com.*

Men -It's Okay to Talk about Your Feelings



Not all men shy away from talking about their feelings, but it's still a common male trait. It stems from the modern culture, learned behavior, and the subtle message that is not okay to show vulnerability,

dependency, or weakness. Did you know, however, that Navy Seals are trained in emotional resilience to not deny feelings and emotions, but to instead pay attention and respond appropriately to them? For both men and women, the ability to express feelings is often a gateway to the next step: reaching out for help with problems like depression, which can be a risk factor for suicide (two-thirds of which are committed by men). *Resource: www.sofrep.com [search "4 steps to emotional resilience"]*

Getting Out of a Couples Rut



You would not overlook changing the oil in a new car—preventive maintenance. But what about your love relationship? Do you practice preventive maintenance with it? Many couple therapists say one of the

biggest mistakes couples make is not giving as much attention to *the relationship* as they do their partner. There is a difference. Bliss will only take a relationship so far. A car without proper care will sputter and eventually break down. The normal ups and downs of a healthy relationship can also become mostly sputters without due care. "Warning lights" of relationship trouble are fighting more often, feeling bored, and losing interest in showing intimacy and affection. To practice preventive maintenance in your relationship, invest in it by practicing behaviors and engaging in activities that produce the following: 1) more positive thoughts about each other, 2) more frequent feelings of confidence that "this is the right partner for me," 3) a desire to behave more affectionately toward each other, 4) feelings of satisfaction following sharing projects, activities, and challenges with each other, and 5) general feelings of happiness and life satisfaction about your relationship when you are alone or sharing time together. *New Resource: The Couple's Activity Book: 70 Interactive Games to Strengthen Your Relationship; Sept. 2020; Rockridge Press*

Don't Give Up on Your Goal



Is motivation for your new year's goal starting to wane? Tried and true ways of getting back on track to achieving a goal that is falling by the wayside exist. 1) Spend an hour or so recalling and refreshing the benefits of your goal. Find images, articles, and videos that make an impact and allow you to feel the renewed motivation. 2) Discover all the "whys" that make it worthy to achieve your goal. 3) Divide your goal into stages. Then divide the stages into steps and the steps into pieces. These increase "do-ability." 4) Identify roadblocks that are interfering with your goal and reduce or manage their interference. For example, are you watching too much TV that fuels procrastination? Then cut back on your TV time. 5) Seek out radical accountability. For example, don't just tell one friend your goal to have him or her hold you accountable. Instead, mail a letter stating your goal to 25 friends! 6) Preplan a lot of rewards for achieving "mini-wins" along the way to meeting your goal.

Opioids in Construction Trades



Opioid addiction is still a national emergency, with 130 related deaths each day. Construction workers are the most-affected occupational group because pain from injuries is often treated with opioids. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recommends asking your doctor key questions if an opioid is recommended. How long do you expect my pain to last? Is there a non-opioid option that will work as well? How long will I be taking this medication? Reduce your risk of dependency by letting your provider know about any personal or family history of addiction. Dependency on opioids can happen quickly, and many users will seek out other opioid-related substances if a doctor resists further prescription, even from questionable sources. *Resource: Download this doctor questions checklist: www.fda.gov/media/132343/download.*

Have a Workplace Injury-Free Year



The American Cancer Society has tips for family members supporting smokers trying to quit. Although the smoker is in charge, consider the following (among other tips): 1) Ask the person quitting whether he or

she wants you to check in with them about how they are feeling as they face withdrawal challenges. 2) Let the person know you are available to give them encouragement. 3) Spend time participating in healthy distractions with the person who's quitting. 4) Be empathic, and do not express any doubts that the smoker will succeed. 5) Remove triggers (ashtrays, lighters, etc.). 6) Work toward getting rid of smoke smell in everything, including clothing, rugs, and drapes. 7) Help out with any child issues, chores, and problems that create stress for the person trying to quit. 8) Celebrate progress and be patient with nicotine withdrawal issues like irritability. *Source: www.cancer.org [search "helping smoker quit"]*

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