

# Feeling good

100 ways to feel better every day



The information in this booklet is for educational purposes only. It should not be interpreted as medical advice and is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Always seek the advice of your health care provider if you have questions or concerns about your health. Always be sure to talk with your health care provider before you start an exercise program.

# Feeling good

100 ways to feel better every day

## How good do you feel?

Let's begin by answering the following ten questions.

- YES  NO Do you have regular checkups?
- YES  NO Do you exercise for at least 30 minutes 4 or more days a week?
- YES  NO Do you eat balanced meals?
- YES  NO Do you get close to 8 hours of sleep most nights?
- YES  NO Do you follow your doctor's advice to quit smoking, lose weight, or limit your consumption of alcohol?

- YES  NO Are you often irritable or short-tempered with people you care about?
- YES  NO Do you have frequent headaches or stomachaches?
- YES  NO Do you feel sad or down very often or cry for no reason?
- YES  NO Do you often feel too busy and “stressed”?
- YES  NO Do you have social, medical, or financial worries caused by drugs, alcohol, gambling, or shopping?

The fact is, we could all take better care of ourselves—physically and emotionally. For some of us, that may mean getting more exercise, losing weight, or eating a healthier diet. For others, it may mean learning how to make time for the people we care about or learning how to manage stress so we have the energy to meet the challenges that come our way each day.

What are some of the things you can do every day to feel better in your life? Look back to the questions on the quiz for some answers. If you answered “No” to any of the first five questions, these are the areas to work on with your physical health. If you answered “Yes” to any of the last five questions, these are the areas to pay attention to with your emotional health.

Feeling good involves taking care of both your physical health and your emotional needs. You’ll find hundreds of ideas in this booklet on how to do that.

As you read through the suggestions that follow, think about how you might pay better attention to your overall well-being. Is it by eating a healthier diet? Making more time for fun in your life? Getting more exercise? Renewing your spiritual self? Next, jot down in the back of the booklet the things you can do to help your body and mind feel better, using the suggestions included here as well as your own ideas.

“Whether we live to a vigorous old age lies not so much in our stars or our genes as in ourselves,” writes Harvard physician George Vaillant in his helpful book *Aging Well*.

Take care of yourself. Maintain close friendships. And choose to feel good even when things aren't wonderful. Experts agree that these are the secrets to successful aging—and to feeling good throughout your life.





# 1

## Start your morning off right.

Breakfast boosts memory, improves your mood, and can help control your weight. A number of research studies have found that students who eat breakfast score higher on tests. The same is true for adults. People who eat breakfast also are generally thinner. Start the day with a healthy breakfast like high-fiber cereal or oatmeal and a glass of juice. If you're not much of a breakfast eater, try having a "smoothie" for your morning meal—blend a banana, low-fat yogurt, and orange juice together.

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New research shows eating a nutritious breakfast every morning may improve memory in healthy elderly people.

*—AlzheimerSupport.com*

## 2

### Cut back on caffeine.

Coffee tastes great and it's safe to drink in moderation. But too much caffeine can make you irritable. It can also upset your stomach and disturb your sleep. Medical experts recommend that you consume no more than 300 milligrams of caffeine a day. That's the equivalent of about two cups of brewed coffee.

Start feeling better today by moderating your intake of coffee, caffeinated tea, and soft drinks with caffeine.

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Which has more caffeine? An 8-ounce cup of brewed coffee or brewed tea? The answer is an 8-ounce cup of brewed coffee.

### 3

#### Make the most of your commute.

Use your **commuting** time to relax, feel good, and make the transition from home to work and back.

- Listen to books on tape. You might listen to a novel, language tapes, or an inspirational recording. Many public libraries have audio books.
- Be a **discriminating** listener. Avoid radio shows that make you feel **annoyed** and that waste your time.
- Spend some time in silence. Revisit your day, think about what's ahead, and spend time in your thoughts.
- If possible, commute with someone you like one or two days a week.
- If you can, take public transportation. Use the time to read and reflect on your day.

# 4

## Get 30 minutes of exercise every day.

Regular physical activity decreases the risk of death from heart disease, lowers the risk of developing diabetes, and is associated with a decreased risk of colon cancer. It also helps prevent high blood pressure and helps you lose weight and keep it off.

- Think of yourself as an active person.
- Make physical activity a part of your everyday routine. Go for brisk walks. Ride a bike. Dance. Do chores around the house and in the yard. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Rake leaves.
- Get 30 minutes of activity that makes you breathe harder, on most or all days of the week. If you can't be active for 30 minutes all at once, get at least 10 minutes of endurance activity at a time.

# 5

## Get those endorphins going.

Health experts call endorphins “feel-good hormones.” Endorphins are natural chemicals released by the brain that improve your mood, relieve pain, reduce stress, and produce an overall feeling of well-being. They also help you sleep better. The easiest way to get your body to release endorphins is to exercise. Even a moderate workout eases tension and improves mental and physical health. More vigorous exercise really gets those endorphins going. The positive effect of endorphins can last for several hours, according to some endocrinologists.

Of course, you should always check with your health care provider before starting a vigorous exercise program.

# 6

## Smile.

“You can be happier at work if you smile more, even if you have to fake it,” according to an article in the *Harvard University Gazette*. Putting on a happy face has positive benefits both for you and the people around you. That’s true in personal and work relationships. Smiling makes everyone feel good.

- Smile at your manager and co-workers.
- Smile when you walk in the door and greet your partner.
- Smile when you talk on the phone with your mother.
- Try it right now! Smile and notice how it makes you feel more relaxed and cheerful.

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Women smile more than men, according to a Yale University study published in *Psychological Bulletin*.

# 7

## Walk every day.

We're less active than ever before and obesity rates are higher than ever. Seven in ten adults in the U.S. aren't regularly active, according to the President's Council on Physical Fitness.

A great way to look and feel better is to walk. Walking is good for people of all ages. It helps you lose weight and keep weight off, and keeps your muscles toned. You can make walking a lifetime habit by starting with this simple plan: Walk 10 minutes a day this week. Then gradually work up to 30 minutes a day 4 days or more a week. For every mile that you walk, you burn 95-100 calories.

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Tip: Wear a pedometer or step-counter when you walk. It's a great motivator and an easy way to track your distance. They're available at most sporting goods stores.





## 8

### Find an exercise buddy.

If you exercise with someone else, you're more likely to stick with it.

- Commit to exercising with someone you like. Find a walking partner or meet a friend at the gym after work. Your exercise buddy should be someone you wouldn't want to disappoint. That way, you won't cancel on days when you aren't feeling very motivated.
- Exercise with your partner or spouse. Couples who go to the gym together are more likely to stick with their exercise program.
- Let your dog be your exercise buddy.
- Schedule time to exercise and stick to it.

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More than 60 percent of adults and 13 percent of children in the U.S. are overweight, according to recent government figures.

# 9

## Exercise your brain.

Exercising your brain can improve memory and reduce the risk of dementia and Alzheimer's disease, according to medical studies.

- Challenge your brain by doing old routines in new ways. Brush your teeth with your other hand. Take a new route to work.
- Do crossword puzzles or other brain-teasers.
- Learn a new language.
- Learn a new computer program.
- Practice or take up playing a musical instrument.

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Brain teaser: How does your brain make sense of this? Doog gnileef. Reverse the order and you've got "feeling good"!

# 10

## Trust your instincts.

Instinct is that inner voice that affects how you think, feel, and act. It's part of what experts refer to as "emotional intelligence." Trusting your instincts often leads to positive outcomes.

- Trust your instincts when analyzing information. If something doesn't seem right, review it until you have the information you need to make a good decision.
- Let your instincts guide you as a parent.
- Trust your instincts when it comes to safety. If someone makes you feel uncomfortable or unsafe, pay attention to that feeling and take steps to protect yourself and the people you care about.

# 11

## Rid yourself of one bad habit.

We all have a bad habit or two, whether it's smoking, gambling, overeating, overspending, being a couch potato, or not being supportive enough to a partner, spouse, co-worker, or friend.

Choose one bad habit and work on changing it this year. And remember this advice from experts:

- To talk yourself out of a bad habit, you have to think about now and later. “If I eat these French fries now, I’ll feel good. But I won’t feel good later. If I don’t eat these fries now, I’ll see the payoff later.”
- Take it one day at a time. You may backslide, and that’s OK. Learning new habits takes time. Unlearning bad habits takes time as well.

# 12

## Do strength training exercises.

Strength training builds strong muscles and boosts your metabolism. It also improves balance and posture and helps to prevent bone loss. It's an ideal way for men and women to stay toned and fit.

Experts agree that two evenly distributed sessions a week of strength training are enough to build and strengthen muscles. It's easy to begin a program at home. All you need are dumbbells (hand weights), ankle weights, an exercise mat, and a book or a video about strength training to help you get started. Be careful not to strain your muscles, and check first with your health care provider before beginning a strength training program.

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True or false: Strength training can make your thighs young again. The answer is true, according to *Strong Women Stay Young* by Miriam E. Nelson.

# 13

## Work out at work.

These simple exercises from the book *Office Yoga* will help you feel better no matter what kind of work you do:

- Arm stretch. Hold your arms out to the side. Stretch with your fingertips to the opposite walls. Breathe and relax.
- Phone stretch. While you talk on the phone, stretch your legs out and rotate your ankles and feet. Notice your attention increase as you stretch.
- Stop what you're doing once an hour and stretch for a few moments.
- Exercise during your lunch break. Take walks or join a nearby gym or fitness center.

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For more great stretches, read *Office Yoga: Simple Stretches for Busy People* by Darrin Zeer.



# 14

## Accept responsibility for your health.

If you take responsibility for your health and choose to live a healthy lifestyle, you increase your chances of living to a ripe old age.

- Have regular medical checkups. Have an annual flu shot, a pneumonia shot if you are over 65, and other immunizations recommended by your doctor.
- Participate in workplace blood pressure and cholesterol screenings, and get the routine preventive care tests recommended by your doctor, including a mammogram, prostate cancer screening test, pap test, colonoscopy, and other important exams.
- Quit smoking and limit how much alcohol you drink.
- Stay active physically and mentally.

# 15

## Find a doctor you like and trust.

Research shows that patients who have a good relationship with their doctor feel better about their health.

- Don't wait until you are sick to find a doctor. A doctor who is familiar with you and your medical history is more likely to be able to help you get the best possible care.
- Look for a board-certified doctor who is well trained and experienced and whose approach you trust—someone who is a good listener and who takes your concerns seriously. Choose a doctor whose location and hours you find convenient.
- Seek care consistently from one physician or physicians' group. This helps prevent potentially interfering medications from being prescribed by different doctors.



# 16

## Make someone else feel good.

Doing for others makes you feel good. It may also be good for your physical health. A recent University of Michigan study found that people who give support and assistance to others live longer.

- Help a friend, relative, or neighbor with errands, transportation, shopping, babysitting, or other tasks.
- Get involved in a volunteer organization.
- Teach your child how good it feels to give to others by volunteering together at a local soup kitchen or helping out an elderly neighbor.
- Pick up trash when you see it in a park or on the beach.
- Let someone else take the good parking space or go ahead of you in line.

# 17

## Go away.

A weekend away is a great way to reduce stress, improve your mood, and feel good. It's a way to focus on one thing only: relaxation. When you go away, don't take your work with you. Turn off your cell phone (except for emergencies). And leave your computer and worries behind so you can concentrate on friends, family, and yourself. You'll return feeling renewed.

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"Once a year, go some place you've never been before."

—Dalai Lama



# 18

## Spend time outdoors.

We spend most of our lives indoors. But being outdoors has many health benefits, from breathing fresh air to taking in the sun. A little sunshine feels great, can help lift feelings of depression, and is a great source of Vitamin D, so long as you protect yourself with sunscreen. Being outdoors in good weather also encourages physical activity. Try to spend time outdoors as often as you can.

- Read a book or newspaper outdoors on your lunch break. Or take a walk.
- Do gardening. It's rewarding, good therapy, and a great workout.
- Go camping, hiking, or take nature walks with friends and family.

# 19

## Spend time with your pet.

Owning a pet is good for your physical and mental health. Many studies have shown that spending time with your pet eases feelings of stress, loneliness, and depression. It may even lower blood pressure. Try to spend some time with your pet every day. After a long day at work, playing with your pet is a great way to unwind and reduce stress.

If your circumstances don't allow you to own a pet, offer to walk a friend's pet.



## 20

### Take your daily multivitamin.

The *Journal of the American Medical Association* now encourages all adults to take a daily multivitamin. Multivitamins may help prevent a number of chronic diseases, including some cancers, osteoporosis, and heart disease. When you buy multivitamins, always check the expiration date. Check for the letters “USP” on the label. This mark tells you that the U.S. Pharmacopeia has declared that the vitamin actually contains the ingredients and the amounts stated on the label and that the tablets will dissolve effectively. For the best absorption, take your multivitamin with a meal. Talk to your doctor about vitamins and calcium supplements.

# 21

## Get the calcium you need.

Calcium is essential to a healthy diet and it helps prevent osteoporosis in later life. But most of us don't get the calcium we need.

- Beginning at age 9, children should get 1,300 milligrams of calcium per day in their diet. Serve your child low-fat milk and foods high in calcium such as yogurt, cheese and other dairy products, cereal with calcium, orange juice with calcium, and dark-green leafy vegetables. An 8-ounce glass of low-fat milk has 300 milligrams of calcium.
- Most adults up to age 50 need 1,000 milligrams a day of calcium. Pregnant women and people over 50 need more than that.

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Half of all children under age 5, 35 percent of teenage boys, and about 85 percent of teenage girls do not consume the daily calcium recommended by experts.

# 22

## Be a healthy traveler.

It's especially important to take care of yourself when you're away from home and familiar routines.

- Drink plenty of water and carry a bottle of water with you wherever you go. Remember to drink water when you fly because air cabins are very dry. Drink an 8-ounce glass of water before, during, and after your flight so you stay hydrated.
- Eat healthy meals and don't skip breakfast.
- Pack healthy snacks in your carry-on bag for the plane or train trip.
- Get regular exercise when you are away from home.
- Schedule a time to relax every day to unwind and relieve stress. You might meditate, get a massage, watch a movie, or read a good book.



# 23

## Get in the sleep mood.

Most of us average 6 hours 54 minutes of sleep a night—about an hour less than the 8 hours that many experts recommend. Too little sleep can affect your mood, your work, and how you feel. If you have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep at night, or if you're sleepy during the day, you may be sleep deprived.

To improve your sleep, get in the sleep mood. Help your body make the shift from busy-awake time to sleep-time by establishing a “wind-down” hour before bed. During this time, don't work, pay bills, exercise, or watch disturbing shows on TV. Use your wind-down hour to read and relax and soon you'll be nodding off.

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Tip: If you have trouble falling asleep after 20-30 minutes, get out of bed and do something relaxing, such as reading. Try going back to bed after half an hour. Repeat if necessary.

# 24

## Create a community.

Create a community—a network of relationships—and you’ll feel better throughout your life. Get to know the children and adults in your neighborhood. Meet other parents at your child’s school and get together once a month or so to talk about parenting. Organize activities at work that bring people together. Get involved with your faith community. Offer to help a co-worker, neighbor, or friend. Donate your time to a community organization. Become involved in activities that bring younger and older generations together. Be the person who brings people together in your extended family.

# 25

## Laugh.

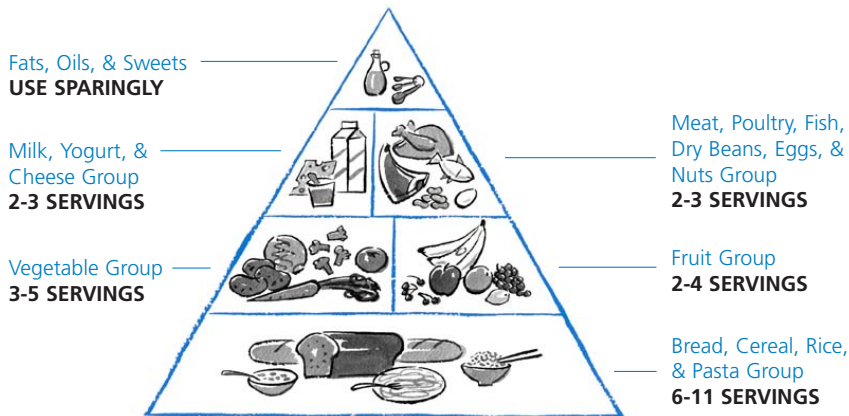
We're all drawn to people with a sense of humor. Humor is a great way to release tension and shake a bad mood. It can also make the workday more fun—so long as the humor is appropriate, not offensive to others, and doesn't interfere with work.

- Use humor to lighten up a difficult situation.
- Look for opportunities to laugh with co-workers. Start a joke-of-the-month contest. Clip and post cartoons that make you laugh.
- Buy a funny card for a co-worker.
- Don't be afraid to laugh at yourself.

# 26

## Know the food Pyramid facts.

The USDA Food Guide Pyramid offers basic recommendations to help you eat sensible portions and well-balanced meals. Let the Pyramid guide you—by choosing whole grains, a variety of fruits and vegetables, and by limiting sugar and saturated fat. Some experts advise eating less red meat and refined grains. The USDA is releasing a revised Pyramid in 2005.



# 27

## Know how much you're eating.

Americans eat larger food portions than nearly any culture in the world. One key to losing weight and keeping it off is to eat sensible portions. Are you aware of how much you're eating?

- *A typical 4-ounce bagel is equal to 4 Pyramid servings.* Most adults should eat a total of 6 to 11 servings a day of bread and other grain foods (see the bottom of the Pyramid). So one bagel comprises nearly half your daily intake of grains, according to the modified Pyramid guidelines, which call for less bread and grains in our diet. Think about how you can change your habits. For example, instead of a whole bagel, try eating half a bagel and some fresh fruit.
- *A medium order of French fries is equal to 4 Pyramid servings.* Again, that's nearly half your grains for the day. Skip the French fries, or order the smallest size.

# 28

## Lose weight if you know you need to.

Obesity is reaching such epidemic proportions that the U.S. Surgeon General considers it the nation's number one health concern. Nearly two-thirds of American adults and 13 percent of children are overweight or obese. Adults and children who are overweight are at an increased risk for some types of cancer, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, arthritis, and other diseases.

If you need to lose weight, talk with your doctor about the right weight management program for you. Then commit to losing the weight you need to lose—through a diet program that includes portion control, exercise, and the support and incentives you need to stick with it.



# 29

## Become a defensive eater.

Walter C. Willett, M.D., professor of medicine at the Harvard Medical School, offers this advice in his book *Eat, Drink, and Be Healthy*: “Practice defensive eating strategies.” Here’s how, according to Dr. Willett:

- Practice stopping before you are stuffed.
- Be selective. Don’t eat things just because they are put in front of you.
- Spoil your appetite. Have a low-calorie healthy snack such as carrot or celery sticks before eating a meal.
- Try keeping it simple. Avoid all-you-can-eat buffets and stick with simple, well-balanced meals.

# 30

## Make healthy choices when dining out.

Dining out at a restaurant doesn't have to mean unhealthy eating.

- Share a meal with someone else or bring half your meal home to eat the next day. Typical restaurant servings are often twice the size of a single serving.
- Send the breadbasket back.
- Avoid fried foods.
- At fast food restaurants, order a grilled chicken sandwich and put the fixings on yourself. Choose low-fat condiments.
- Drink water instead of soda.

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Tip: Value meals aren't such a great deal when you consider the calories and fat you're consuming.



# 31

## Boost your energy.

Exercise and a proper diet are the best energy boosters.

- Never skip breakfast. A good balanced breakfast boosts your energy all morning long.
- Get exercise. Being active is the best way to boost and maintain energy.
- Limit how much alcohol you drink. It depletes your energy.
- Avoid overeating. Big meals leave you feeling sluggish.
- Have light snacks throughout the day. Frequent small meals and snacks help you maintain a constant energy supply. Choose healthy foods that give you energy, such as fruits, nuts, and yogurt. Avoid candy bars, potato chips, and other foods that are low in nutrients and high in calories.

# 32

## Listen to music and relax.

It's no accident that music is a feature of all human cultures. Music can entertain us, distract us from our worries, stimulate our brains, and help us relax. Figure out the music that relaxes you and use it to reduce anxiety.

- Listen to music on the way home after a long day.
- Assemble your own “feel good” music collection and play it when you need a lift or distraction.
- Expand your music horizons by borrowing music CDs and tapes from your local library or by searching and sampling the legitimate online music services.
- Make your own music. Sing or play an instrument.
- Be considerate. Music that makes you relax may be annoying to others.



# 33

## Take a nap.

More than 50 percent of Americans are sleep deprived. Lack of sufficient sleep is also a widespread problem among teenagers. A study conducted by the National Institute of Mental Health suggests that a quick, refreshing “power nap” can do wonders for your mental and physical health. The study found that napping for 20-30 minutes can reduce stress and leave you feeling refreshed. Napping for longer than that, however, can spoil your regular sleep cycle and habits. So don't overdo it!

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Nearly one in five adults report making occasional or frequent work errors due to sleepiness.

–The National Sleep Foundation

# 34

## Be good to your feet.

More than 43.1 million Americans—one in every six people—have trouble with their feet, mostly from shoes that don't fit properly, according to the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons. Here are some tips from the AAOS to help prevent foot problems:

- Have your feet measured every time you buy new shoes. Your foot size increases as you get older.
- Women should not wear a shoe with a heel higher than 2 1/4 inches.
- There should be a 1/2-inch space from the end of your longest toe to the end of the shoe. If the shoes feel too tight, don't buy them.

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Because a child's feet are constantly growing, it is important to allow at least one finger's width from the end of the longest toe when buying shoes.

—American Academy of Podiatric Sports Medicine

# 35

## Get help if you have a hearing problem.

Hearing loss is fairly common, especially after age 50. One in three people over the age of 65 have hearing loss. Signs of hearing loss include having trouble hearing clearly, having trouble hearing on the phone, and needing to turn up the volume of the radio or TV to hear. To take a quick, written hearing health test, go to [www.audiology.org/consumer/guides/hhqt.php](http://www.audiology.org/consumer/guides/hhqt.php) on the Web site of the American Academy of Audiology.

Talk with your doctor if you have difficulty hearing. Most hearing difficulties can be helped with a full evaluation by an ear specialist and prescribed treatments and aids.

# 36

## Get support if you are a caregiver.

Caring for an older or dependent relative or loved one is emotionally and physically exhausting. That's why it's important to seek support for yourself.

- Remember that you don't have to do it alone. Ask for help from family and friends.
- Get help from a support group. Support groups are a place to share stories, feelings, and information with others who are going through what you're going through. Talk with your doctor, your EAP, or your employee resource program to find a support group in your community.
- Talk about how you are feeling with the people you love. Give yourself permission to feel what you're feeling. Let others offer comfort and be there for you.

# 37

## Look at something beautiful.

The simple act of pausing in your hectic day and looking at something beautiful can improve your outlook and make you feel good.

- Put a picture of someone you love in your work area.
- Take a moment to watch the sunset.
- Put a vase of flowers in your work area.
- Hang a favorite print or painting where you'll enjoy it each day.



# 38

## Take care of yourself if you work nights.

People who work evening and night shifts suffer higher rates of health problems and sleep disorders than does the general population, according to a new study by Circadian Technologies, Inc. It's especially important to take care of yourself if you work nights.

- Pack healthy snacks and meals and avoid fast food and unhealthy vending machine snacks.
- Get regular exercise. It helps you sleep better.
- Relax for an hour or so before getting into bed. Take a warm bath or shower to relax.
- Turn off the telephone while you are sleeping and darken the room.

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According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, approximately 24 million Americans work outside the hours of 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.



# 39

## Anticipate and avoid overload.

Plan ahead to avoid “commitment collision.” As you decide what you can and can’t take on, think ahead to everything that you’ll be responsible for.

- If you’re in charge of the school fundraiser, don’t schedule a visit from your parents at the same time. Plan another time for a visit.
- Revisit your schedule regularly. Think ahead about your long-term schedule to make sure commitments aren’t on a collision course.
- Don’t wait until you’re in crisis mode to look for help.
- Learn to say “no” when you can’t honor a request and find realistic solutions that work for everyone.

# 40

## Take some time off.

Time off helps you feel relaxed and rejuvenated. But many of us don't take as much time off as we should. According to a national study published by the non-profit Families and Work Institute, 25 percent of Americans feel so much pressure to work that they do not take all the vacation time they have earned. Working too hard takes a toll on your health, your work, and your personal relationships.

Make time for activities that you enjoy. Make time for friends, family, and yourself.



# 41

## Ask for help when you need it.

Many people are better helpers than receivers of help. Asking for help—when you are feeling overloaded at work or facing personal or family issues—is difficult for many of us. Remember that asking for help is a sign of resourcefulness and strength, not weakness. It also lightens your burdens and helps you feel better.

If you are going through a difficult time or need help, turn to someone you trust and say, “May I ask for your help?” Most people want to help. They just need to know what to do.

If you could use support and aren’t sure how to find it, contact your EAP or employee resource program.

# 42

## Learn how to recognize and handle stress.

When you are coming down with a cold, you take care of yourself. When you're showing signs of stress, you should take care of yourself, too. The signs of stress include irritability, withdrawing from family or friends, tearfulness or frequent crying, sleeping more than usual or having trouble sleeping, drinking, eating, or smoking more than usual, and lower productivity at work. If you are exhibiting any of these signs, make changes in your life.

- Schedule time for relaxation every day, even if it's just to take a short walk, practice deep breathing, play with your cat, or visit with a friend.
- Breathe! One of the fastest ways to relax the body and calm the mind is to breathe deeply.
- If signs of stress don't go away, talk with your doctor or contact your EAP.

# 43

## Help your child handle stress.

Children feel stressed just like adults do, and they exhibit many of the same signs of stress that we do. These include headaches, stomachaches, overeating or skipping meals, having trouble falling asleep or sleeping too much, a drop in school performance, irritability, angry or aggressive behavior, withdrawing socially, or spending hours a day online or watching TV or playing video games. If your child shows one or more of these signs, here are some things you can do:

- Acknowledge your child's worries and fears.
- Make sure your child gets enough sleep and plenty of exercise.
- Limit exposure to TV violence.
- If the signs of stress don't go away, talk with your child's teacher, a school counselor or psychologist, or your child's physician, or contact your EAP.

# 44

## Stay fit after menopause.

Take these steps to feel better during and after menopause:

- Get at least 30 minutes a day of exercise. It's good for your heart and bones, helps regulate weight, helps you sleep, and improves your mood.
- Get the calcium you need to maintain strong bones and help prevent osteoporosis. The recommendation from the National Institutes of Health is 1,500 milligrams a day of calcium after menopause for women who are not using hormonal replacement.
- Practice relaxation and stress reduction exercises like yoga and meditation.

# 45

## Work to avoid middle-age spread.

The best way to avoid middle-age spread is to get aerobic exercise. Find a way to walk, run, swim, garden, hike, bicycle, or participate in another type of aerobic activity at least four times a week for at least 30 minutes. The goal is to try to exercise at 75 to 85 percent of your Maximum Heart Rate. Your Maximum Heart Rate in beats per minute is calculated by subtracting your age in years from the number 220. For example, the Maximum Heart Rate for a 42-year-old is 178 (220 minus 42). The typical 42-year-old with no health concerns would want to exercise at a heart rate of about 140-160. Check first with your health care provider before beginning any exercise program.

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The age groups with the highest rates of obesity are men between the ages of 65 and 74, and women between the ages of 55 and 64.

—American Obesity Association

# 46

## Choose healthy snacks.

People's top five snacks when watching TV are ice cream, chocolate candy, cookies, potato chips, and other salty foods like microwave popcorn, according to the Tufts University Health & Nutrition Letter. You'll feel better and avoid putting on weight if you choose healthy snacks that you enjoy. These snacks range from 100 to 250 calories:

- a piece of whole fruit such as an apple, a banana, or an orange
- a cup of cereal with low-fat milk
- an ounce of plain roasted peanuts



# 47

## Pack healthy lunches.

Help your child learn to love food that's good for you and to make healthy food choices. Encourage your child to help plan lunches, and ask her what she wants to eat. Offer a variety of healthy foods to choose from, like fresh fruit, vegetables, and low-fat meats and cheeses. Here is a healthy lunch to pack for yourself and your child:

- turkey on whole-grain bread with mustard
- carrot and celery sticks
- grapes
- low-fat milk

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You'll find lots of healthy recipe ideas in the *American Medical Association Family Cookbook: Good Food That's Good for You*, published by Pocket Books.



# 48

## Drink water.

Water makes you feel less hungry, is calorie free, and has untold health benefits. How much water do you need to drink? The standard advice from nutritionists is to drink about 64 ounces, or 8 cups of water, a day. Drink more water in hot weather and if you're physically active. You'll remember to drink water throughout the day if you keep a bottle of water in your bag, your car, and in your workspace. Being even a little dehydrated can make you more tired. So drink!

# 49

## Take advantage of health screenings.

Many workplaces offer health screenings for blood pressure, cholesterol, and other conditions. Often these are free or are offered at a low cost. A routine screening may uncover a health problem you didn't know you had—before it becomes serious. Take advantage of health screenings at work and see your health care provider for regular checkups.

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A survey by The Commonwealth Fund found that a significant number of men do not get routine checkups, and many ignore symptoms or delay seeking medical attention when sick or in pain.

# 50

## Set work/home boundaries.

It's important to try to leave work behind when your workday has ended. Here are four tips:

- Use an answering machine, voicemail, or caller ID to screen your calls. Turn off your cell phone.
- Prioritize enjoying your time.
- Give yourself a few minutes to “switch gears” when you get home. Change your clothes, eat a snack, or do something else that marks the end of the workday and the beginning of the rest of your day before you jump into your home routine.
- Plan activities at home or with friends and family that will add balance to your day.

# 51

## Take steps to avoid burnout.

If you work long hours and are doing way too much, you may be a candidate for burnout—which is the opposite of feeling good. The signs of burnout include headaches, exhaustion, lack of enthusiasm, loss of interest in sex, heart palpitations, feeling irritable, and having no time for family and friends. If you are feeling burned out, it's important to make some positive changes in your life. Burnout can affect your health and your personal life.

- Get the support you need to balance work/life issues. Ask your manager for help and support. Or contact your EAP or employee resource program.
- Talk with your health care provider about your concerns.
- Force yourself to take daily “mini-vacations.” Go for a walk at lunchtime. Or take time out of your busy day to meditate.

# 52

## Get professional help if problems persist.

If you are facing a problem you can't solve on your own, talk with a professional.

- If you have concerns about your child, talk with the school guidance counselor or your child's pediatrician or your EAP.
- If you are caring for a grandchild or an older relative, contact a support group or your EAP or employee resource program.
- If you could use help with a gambling problem, a shopping addiction, a relationship problem, or another personal concern, talk with your doctor, a therapist, or your EAP or employee resource program.
- Seek spiritual guidance through your faith community.

# 53

## Pay attention to your posture.

Proper posture, especially if you sit and work from a chair for long stretches, is essential for good health.

- Adjust the height of your chair to minimize strain on your legs and back. Your feet should rest flat on the floor or a footrest and your thighs should be parallel to the floor.
- Be sure your chair has good back support. Sit upright in the chair with your lower back against the backrest.
- Don't slouch, sit hunched over, or sit cross-legged when you work. Don't use armrests to slouch.
- Take breaks from the computer every 20 to 40 minutes in order for your body to rest and recover. Working at the computer is very fatiguing on your upper body as well as your eyes. It's important to get up and move around. Do tasks that aren't computer-related.





# 54

## Protect your back.

What do you think is the most effective way to help prevent episodes of back pain? Getting regular exercise, sleeping on a firm mattress, or carrying your briefcase as a backpack instead of on your shoulder? The answer, according to the American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, is getting regular exercise. Proper exercise can help strengthen back and abdominal muscles and help you avoid back injury. Talk with your health care provider about exercises that are right for you.

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Six out of ten students ages 9 to 20 reported chronic back pain related to heavy backpacks, according to the American Occupational Therapy Association. To prevent injury, make sure your child wears both straps, tightens the straps so that the backpack fits close to the body, and carries no more than 10 to 15 percent of his total body weight in the pack.

# 55

## Get help for headaches.

If headaches keep you from going to work or are affecting your personal life, get help.

- Make an appointment to see your health care provider for an accurate diagnosis. Become informed about your headache type and treatment options.
- To help with occasional tension headaches, try a warm shower, rest, or relaxation techniques.
- Some headaches are caused by dehydration. Many physicians recommend that you drink at least 8 ounces of water or a sports drink at the onset of a headache. If you have a chronic medical condition, clear this first with your physician.

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Headaches affect millions of people and cost companies billions of dollars a year in lost productivity, absenteeism, and medical expenses, according to the National Headache Foundation.

# 56

## Get help for chronic pain.

More than half of all Americans suffered chronic or recurrent pain in the last year, according to a recent poll by Research!America, a not-for-profit advocacy group. And more than three in five chronic pain sufferers have been in pain for more than a year. Back pain is at the top of the list, followed by arthritis and joint pain, knee pain, headaches, and shoulder pain. People 18 to 34 are about as likely to experience chronic pain as older people.

The best way to get help for chronic pain is to acknowledge your pain, take it seriously, and find a doctor who takes your pain seriously, too. If your doctor is unable or unwilling to treat your pain, talk to another doctor.

# 57

## Plan something to look forward to.

Plan things to look forward to and you'll always be looking ahead with optimism. Plan to meet a friend next week or month for lunch, dinner, or a movie. Plan a fun family trip for next summer. Plan a way to celebrate an upcoming holiday or special occasion with the people you love. Plan a play date with your child. Plan to hike a mountain you've always dreamed of climbing, or to visit an old friend or niece or grandchild you don't see enough.

Feeling good takes planning and forethought. But when you plan things to look forward to, even the anticipation feels good.

# 58

## Be there for a friend.

Friends can be the best support system of all. Here are some simple ways to be there for a friend:

- Donate your time. Uninterrupted listening time, whether in person or over the phone, is one of the best gifts you can give a friend.
- Be a reminder of positive things.
- Send a card, e-mail, text message, or leave a voicemail message letting your friend know you're thinking about him or her.
- Offer to run errands or care for family members to allow your friend some time to relax.
- Visit in person when possible if a friend is ill or in need.

# 59

## Make time for intimacy.

An intimate relationship is one of life's greatest pleasures. But it also takes some planning and work. We all need to make being together a priority. Otherwise, everything from doing the laundry to paying the bills can get in the way of spending time together.

- Make time for intimacy. Some people carve out a “date night.” Others plan a night away from home and familiar routines.
- Do things together that bring you close and awaken feelings of intimacy. Have breakfast in bed together. Take an afternoon nap together. Take a swim together. Give each other massages and back rubs.
- Be affectionate. How often do you and your partner kiss and hug one another?

# 60

## Touch someone you love.

Physical touch does so many wonderful things. It relaxes, calms, promotes better sleep, and makes you and the person you love feel good all over. Touch the people you love.

- Hug your child, teenager, parent, grandparent, cousin, partner, and friend.
- Spend more time snuggling.
- Give hello and goodbye kisses to the people you love.
- Teach your children to express caring and affection through physical touch.



# 61

## Know the signs of problem drinking.

Problem drinking can begin early or late in life. The signs of problem drinking include:

- drinking to calm your nerves, forget your worries, or reduce depression
- inability to stop drinking without a struggle after one or two drinks (a standard drink is one 12-ounce beer or wine cooler, one 5-ounce glass of wine, or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits)
- lying about or trying to hide drinking habits
- drinking alone
- having medical, social, work, financial, or legal problems caused by drinking

If you think you may have a drinking problem, seek help. Talk with your doctor, your EAP, or contact a support group like Alcoholics Anonymous.



# 62

## Get help for drug or alcohol addiction.

Alcohol and drug abuse are the causes of many of life's ills—family problems, depression, physical problems, financial problems, car accidents, and problems at work. Have friends, family members, or your employer expressed concerns about your drinking or use of drugs? Is it hard for you to stop using alcohol or drugs even when you really try to?

If you are concerned that you may have a drug or alcohol problem, it's important to seek professional help. Contact your EAP or employee resource program. Call the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence at 800-622-2255. Or contact a local chapter of Narcotics Anonymous or Alcoholics Anonymous.

# 63

## Talk with your teenager about alcohol.

One in four ninth-grade students reported binge-drinking—having five or more drinks on one occasion—in the last month, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Children are drinking at younger and younger ages. Girls now consume alcohol at rates equal to boys.

Research shows that children are less likely to drink when their parents are involved with them, discipline them consistently, and set clear expectations. Talk often with your child about the dangers of alcohol, and take underage alcohol use seriously. Model healthy drinking habits at home. For more information on teenage drinking, contact your EAP or employee resource program.

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Fifty percent of deaths in the 15-24-year age range involve alcohol or drug abuse.

—American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

# 64

## Remind your teenager to wear a seat belt.

Teenagers get in more accidents than do any other age group, and are the least likely to wear safety belts, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

- Be a nag about wearing a seat belt and set a good example by wearing one yourself. Remind your teenager every time he leaves the house to buckle up.
- Sign the SADD Contract for Life with your teenager. It commits teenagers to wearing a seat belt and to never riding with a drunken driver. It commits parents to providing a safe ride home if their children are ever in an unsafe situation. You can find the Students Against Destructive Decisions Contract for Life at [www.saddonline.com/contract.htm](http://www.saddonline.com/contract.htm).

# 65

## Don't hold grudges.

Researchers have found that stress levels and blood pressure go up when we're angry and go down when we forgive. In some studies, forgiveness is also linked to less back pain and depression. The ability to let go of anger and resentment is one of the best predictors of good health well into old age.

- Decide to forgive someone. If you have unresolved anger toward someone at work or in your personal life, try to make peace with the person. Write the person a letter. Or call to talk or meet in person to resolve old issues. If that's not possible, decide to let go of the anger that you're holding inside and to move on.
- Forgive yourself. Blaming yourself for things that went wrong is just as unhealthy as holding a grudge against someone else.

# 66

## Spend time with people younger than you.

To feel good throughout your life, you need to keep on learning and growing. We learn a lot from people older than us. There's also a lot to learn from those who are younger. The young can teach us about art, music, technology, and about what the future will look like. They offer a fresh new perspective.

- Learn from your child and your child's friends. Spend time with teenagers, too.
- Be open to learning from younger co-workers, neighbors, and people in your community.
- Read books by new young authors. Go to movies by new young directors. Change the radio dial once in a while and become familiar with new performing artists.



# 67

## Have meals together as a family.

Having meals together is good for families. A University of Michigan study found that mealtime at home was the single strongest predictor of better achievement scores and fewer behavioral problems for children. Mealtime was far more powerful than time spent in school, studying, worshipping, playing sports, or art activities.

It can be hard to find time for regular meals together as a family. But try hard to do that, and keep in mind that it's the time spent together, not what you're serving, that counts. Keep in mind, too, that your shared meal doesn't have to be dinner. If the only time you're together is at 7 a.m., then have family breakfasts.

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In a national YMCA poll, 21 percent of teenagers rated “not having enough time together with parents” as their top concern.

# 68

## Vary your routine.

Fitness experts recommend that you vary your routine to get the maximum benefits from exercise—alternating cardiovascular and strength training exercises to avoid boredom and muscle injury. It's a good idea to vary your routine in other areas of your life as well.

- Try new foods, visit new places, and meet new people.
- Change everyday routines.
- Take on a new challenge at work.

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“Do something unfamiliar. Do anything besides rushing off in the same old direction, up to the same old tricks.”

—Pema Chodron, *When Things Fall Apart*



# 69

## Renew your spiritual self.

One key to a vital life from youth through old age is to “cultivate spirituality,” according to George Vaillant, author of *Aging Well*. Spirituality can reduce feelings of stress, promote a sense of well-being, and strengthen social and family connections. Whether your source of spiritual renewal is through prayer, meditation, spending time outdoors, or helping others, make time for it on a regular basis.

# 70

## Turn off your cell phone.

Cell phones are a great way to keep in touch with co-workers, customers, and the people you care about. But for your own sense of peace and well-being—never mind other people’s—it’s important to know when to turn off your cell phone:

- Turn it off when you are having a conversation with someone in person.
- Turn it off when you are with friends and relatives so that you can be fully present. That makes others feel good.
- Turn it off for some time each day so that you have “down time”—time when you’re not working and when you can’t be interrupted by a ringing phone.

# 71

## Use your break to feel good.

Breaks are good for you, especially if you take advantage of your break to do healthy things.



- Get up out of your chair. Stand up and stretch in your work area. Take a walk down the hall if you're able to leave your area.
- Share a joke or funny story with a co-worker.
- Take a break from what you are doing if you're feeling frustrated or blocked with a project or task. Come back to it after a short break.
- Get some fresh air on your break if you can.



# 72

## Help your child feel good.

The American Heart Association recommends that children and teenagers get at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day.

Help your child feel good by being a physically active parent. Take family walks, hikes, and bicycle rides together. Play tag or softball together as a family. Limit your child's computer and TV time. Walk to school with your child. Have your child come with you to walk the dog. Take part in a fitness charity event with relatives and friends. Make your next family vacation an active one.

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In a survey by the American Obesity Association, 24 percent of parents said their children are less physically active than they were as children.

# 73

## Protect your body when playing sports.

Here are three tips for adults and children:

- Use recommended protective gear. Wear a helmet that fits snugly when bicycling, skating, snowboarding, skiing, and scooting. Make sure your child always wears recommended safety equipment such as wrist guards, kneepads, and a mouth guard when playing sports.
- Always take 5 to 10 minutes to warm up and stretch before and after physical activity. Hold stretches for at least 10 to 30 seconds. Encourage your child to stretch, too, before sports practice and games.
- Don't overdo it. Too much exercise can be as bad as too little exercise.

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According to government figures, baby boomers riding bicycles die from head injuries at nearly twice the rate as children riding bicycles because they aren't wearing helmets.

# 74

## If worries are keeping you awake, get help.

Stress keeps millions of people from sleeping well at night. Family matters, work, and money are the top three things people worry about most, according to a recent survey by the Better Sleep Council. If worries are keeping you awake, talk with your doctor about your sleep problems. Some symptoms of stress can also be indications of depression or other conditions. Check with your physician if you are concerned about any aspect of your health.

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Tip: Keep a pad of paper and a pen beside your bed. If you wake up at night with an important thought, write it down. You will be able to go back to sleep more easily knowing that your idea will be there for you in the morning.

# 75

## Make soup.

Chicken soup has been called everything from “flu therapy” to sustenance for the soul. Here’s a good recipe you can make in under an hour.

Ingredients: 6 cups of chicken broth that’s not too salty; 1 lb. skinless, boneless chicken breasts; 1 tablespoon oil; 1 medium onion, chopped; 2 medium carrots, cut diagonally into slices; 2 celery ribs, cut into slices; salt and pepper; 3 tablespoons finely chopped fresh parsley.

Cook chicken in broth. Bring to a boil. Skim surface and simmer for 30 minutes. Transfer chicken to a plate. Shred when cool. While chicken is cooking, sauté onion in oil in a soup pot over moderate heat until softened. Add carrots, celery, salt, and pepper. Cook about 8 minutes. Add cooking broth and simmer, covered, until vegetables are tender, about 10 minutes. Stir chicken and parsley into soup and serve. Serves 4.





# 76

## Take up a hobby or take a class.

Treat yourself to an activity you enjoy or to an adult education class. It can be satisfying to learn something new and to spend time on something that engages you. It can also be a way to take your mind off your worries and meet new people who share your interests.

- What activities do you enjoy in your free time? What topics interest you in your reading or on TV? Those might be clues to what you'd like to learn more about.
- Think about hobbies or pastimes you had in the past. Might you pick one of them up again?
- Contact your local high school, community college, or library to find adult education or skills training courses in your community.

# 77

## Recognize and deal with angry feelings.

It's normal to feel angry from time to time. But when we don't channel those feelings productively, they can spill over into other aspects of our life.

- Know the warning signs of anger in yourself so that you're able to control and manage your anger. These include feeling frustrated, irritated, or annoyed; clenching your fists; or muscle tension, especially in your neck, back, or jaw.
- Take a slow, deep breath when you find yourself getting angry. Count to five. Exhale. Repeat.
- Address problems early on so that they don't worsen and become harder to resolve.
- If you could use help managing angry feelings, or if you are living with a person who gets angry often, speak with your physician, a leader from your faith community, or contact your EAP.

## 78 Make time for you.

We all need time alone and time with people. Alone time is good for your body and soul—it's a time to relax, reflect, and think about life and your day. It's a time to clear your head and be quiet with yourself.

- Try to spend some time alone every day. Quiet time alone allows you to tune in to the present moment.
- Spend your time alone doing something you enjoy, such as reading, taking a bath, or being outdoors.
- Don't feel guilty about relaxing. It's OK to just sit in a comfortable chair and unwind after a busy day.



# 79

## Get help for depression.

About 10 percent of people suffer from depression. Common symptoms of depression include overwhelming sadness; feelings of hopelessness; an inability to concentrate; fatigue; changes in eating or sleeping habits; loss of interest in activities once enjoyed, including sex; persistent physical ailments such as headaches, digestive disorders, and chronic pain; and thoughts of death or suicide.

Depression is highly treatable. Talk with your health care provider or your EAP if you have concerns. If you have thoughts of death or suicide, seek help immediately.

You can take a confidential depression screening test at the National Mental Health Association Web site at *[www.depressionscreening.org](http://www.depressionscreening.org)*.

# 80

## Know the signs of depression in children.

Children and teenagers can experience depression just as adults can. The signs of depression in children and teenagers include being angry or irritable, overeating or not eating enough, having trouble sleeping or sleeping too much, difficulty concentrating, loss of energy or low motivation, feelings of sadness, crying more than usual, headaches, stomachaches, lack of interest in playing with friends, frequent absences from school or poor performance in school, drug or alcohol abuse, or thoughts of death or suicide. Look for behaviors that are out of the ordinary. For example, missing money can be a sign that a teenager is stealing to buy alcohol or drugs.

If you see signs of depression, talk with your child, listen carefully, and get professional help. Depression is treatable. Your health care provider, school counselor, or EAP can help you find a counselor or therapist.

# 81

## Make a change if you have no time.

When you're squeezed for time and life isn't what you want it to be, something has to give.

- Be realistic about how long things take so you don't schedule too many things for yourself.
- When things get too hectic, ease up on some of the nonessential activities that you and your family are involved in.
- Make mornings less hectic by packing lunches and getting your work things organized the night before.

# 82

## Light up your life.

Seasonal affective disorder, or SAD, is a type of depression related to decreased daylight hours in the fall and winter months. Its symptoms can be mild or severe, and it afflicts about 5 percent of Americans. SAD can cause sleep problems, depression, overeating, or anxiety. Whether you are affected by SAD or not, you will benefit from these simple tips:

- Keep curtains and shades open during the fall and winter months to let in more light.
- Spend time outdoors on sunny days.
- If you are suffering from SAD, talk with your doctor. There are therapies and medications that can help.



# 83

## Know your comfort zone.

When you know what your comfort zone is—under what conditions you feel most comfortable and satisfied—you feel better. You feel greater peace of mind at work and at home.

- Get in touch with what you are thinking and feeling.
- Set goals and priorities so that you live according to the work-life balance ideals you are striving for.
- Be willing to step outside your comfort zone every so often. “To keep growing,” says author Bruce Tulgan, “you’ve got to push yourself out of your comfort zone. That allows you to take healthy risks and work toward new goals.”



# 84

## Find a mentor or mentor someone else.

Mentors are good to have throughout your life. A mentor can inspire, steer you in the right direction, and help you through personal and work challenges. Your mentor might be a neighbor, friend, relative, teacher, co-worker, or someone from your community. Help your child find a mentor, too.

Being a mentor also brings rich rewards. To learn more about how to become a mentor, go to *[www.mentoring.org](http://www.mentoring.org)*.

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According to the National Mentoring Partnership, children and teenagers who have had a mentor do better in school, are less likely to be involved with drugs and alcohol, and are more likely to go to college.

# 85

## Feel good without spending money.

Our best memories often involve things that don't cost money. Sitting before a warm fire with cousins on a chilly night. Bobbing in the waves with someone you love. Reading a great book and talking about it with a friend. Admiring the Milky Way with your partner. Looking at photographs with people you love. Snuggling on the couch with your child on a rainy day. Having potluck dinners with neighbors and friends. Watching a feel-good movie by yourself.

There are hundreds of ways to feel good without spending money. Make these a part of your life.

# 86

## Take a tea break.

Teatime is good for you. People all over the world have known that for centuries. Sipping tea alone or with a friend is a great way to relax and unwind and take a pause in your busy day. Studies show that drinking certain kinds of herbal and decaffeinated tea may even help prevent heart disease and cancer, soothe a sore throat, and relieve stress.



# 87

## Do yoga.

Yoga is the Sanskrit word for “union,” and it means a bringing together of the physical, emotional, and spiritual parts of ourselves. Yoga is beneficial at any age. It makes your body feel good; improves balance, flexibility of the joints and muscles; and relaxes stiff, tight muscles. Yoga also relieves stress, makes you more “mindful” and aware, helps improve concentration, and helps you feel more peaceful and calm.

Get into the habit of practicing yoga. Just 15 minutes a day can bring tremendous results. Be sure to look for an experienced, qualified teacher.

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An estimated 18 million American adults now take some type of yoga class.

*—AARP Magazine*

# 88

## Get a massage.

A massage isn't just an indulgence. It's a way to clear your mind, soothe sore muscles, and feel more relaxed. Massage therapy is sometimes used to treat medical conditions such as chronic pain and headaches. More and more health care providers are recognizing the benefits of these therapies. Check with your physician to see if massage therapy and other alternative medical treatments are recommended for you and are covered on your plan.

- Get a professional massage after an especially stressful period at work or whenever you're feeling tense.
- Ask your partner, spouse, or a friend to rub your shoulders for a few minutes when your muscles are tense.
- Give your child a massage.

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According to one Swedish study, young children who massage one another do not fight.

# 89

## Give your weary eyes a rest.

Take care to avoid eyestrain, especially when you are working at a computer or doing close-up work.

- Take eye breaks. Look away from your computer screen periodically and focus on distant objects like a scene outdoors. After 20 minutes of computer use, look at distant objects for 20 seconds.
- Sit at a comfortable distance from your computer monitor. Generally, the preferred viewing distance is between 20 and 40 inches from the eye to the front surface of the computer screen.
- Reduce glare. Place your monitor away from bright lights and windows or use an anti-glare screen.

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Tip: Have a routine eye exam by an optometrist or ophthalmologist every one to two years. This is especially important if you have any special health care needs, such as diabetes.

# 90

## Take care of your teeth.

Encourage everyone in your family to protect their teeth to avoid problems later on.

- Brush thoroughly twice daily with a soft toothbrush that lets you reach all surfaces of your teeth. Floss daily to reduce dental plaque and to prevent gum disease. Teach your child to floss regularly, too.
- Brush your child's teeth twice a day until your child has the skills to handle the toothbrush alone.
- Get a new toothbrush every three months.
- Visit your dentist every 6 to 12 months.
- Do not put your baby to bed with a bottle or a “sippie” cup at night or at naptime.
- Reduce injuries by having your child wear a mouth guard or face mask when playing sports.

# 91

## Quit smoking today.

Quitting smoking adds years to your life, no matter when you stop. Research shows that after 10 to 15 years, a previous smoker's risk of premature death approaches that of a person who has never smoked. Here are four tips on quitting from the American Lung Association:

- Join a stop-smoking program like Freedom From Smoking® from the American Lung Association. You'll find helpful tips and information at the ALA Web site at *www.lungusa.org*.
- Pick a good time to quit. Don't try to quit when you're under a lot of stress.
- Set a quit date. Stretch out the time between cigarettes as your quit date approaches.
- Don't give up. The odds of quitting for good increase with every effort you make.



# 92

## Talk about smoking with your children.

The best way to keep your child from smoking is to not be a smoker yourself. The next best thing you can do is to talk about the dangers of tobacco with your child. Here are two tips from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- Start talking about tobacco use when your child is 5 or 6 years old and continue talking about it through the high school years. Talk about the risks of tobacco use. If friends or relatives died from tobacco-related illnesses, talk about this as well.
- Know if your child's friends use tobacco. Talk about ways to refuse tobacco.

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Parents who quit smoking when their children are young reduce the chances of their kids becoming teen smokers.

—Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center

# 93

## Meditate.

Meditation is a way to calm both your body and your mind—it helps you slow down, clear your mind of clutter, and feel calm. Take a few minutes and try this simple meditation exercise:

Sit in a comfortable position in a quiet room, either on a chair or cross-legged on the floor. Close your eyes. Focus your attention on a silent thought, word, or phrase. If your attention wanders, gently redirect it back. Concentrate on the sensation of each breath as you inhale and exhale.



# 94

## Practice deep breathing.

Focusing on your breathing and practicing deep breathing exercises help relieve tension and stress. Here is a simple exercise to do every day for a few minutes:

Stand or sit in a comfortable position, with good posture so that your stomach is not compressed. Put one hand over your belly button. Now breathe in slowly and deeply through your nose, letting your stomach expand as much as possible. Hold your breath for a few seconds, then exhale slowly through your mouth. You may need to make a conscious effort to relax your stomach muscles as you breathe in. When you've relaxed your stomach muscles and this deep breathing is working, your hand on your stomach will rise and fall about an inch with each breath. When your lungs are empty, start again with another deep breath. After just three or four breaths, you should feel the calming effect through your whole body.

# 95

## Make time for personal relationships.

People with close relationships feel good, suffer less anxiety and depression, and are more fulfilled through old age. But personal relationships take some effort.

- Make time for friendship, no matter how busy you are. Schedule time with friends into your calendar.
- Don't let a misunderstanding get in the way of a great friendship. Be willing to talk openly. Communication is key to lasting friendships.
- Make time for family and extended family. Plan visits with those who live near and far.
- Keep on making new friends throughout your life.

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“The happiest people surround themselves with family and friends, don't care about keeping up with the Joneses next door, lose themselves in daily activities and, most importantly, forgive easily.”

—Martin E. P. Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*

# 96

## Connect in person when you can.

In today's fast-paced digital world, face-to-face time can easily be replaced by phone calls, e-mails, and text messages. But human connection is an important part of overall emotional well-being. Make conscious efforts to connect in person with the people in your life.

- Take a break from calling or e-mailing co-workers to talk in person.
- Read to your children and have talks before bedtime.
- Plan to visit extended family when you'll have time to enjoy each other's company.
- Go on a date with your partner or spouse so you have time to talk and be together. Reconnecting with each other will make you both feel good.

# 97

## **Schedule time for fun into your calendar.**

When you're busy and your schedule is packed, you can forget to schedule time for fun into your calendar. Make it a habit to look ahead and block out regular time for family dinners, trips to the park, visits with friends, seeing a funny movie, and doing fun things alone and with others. Having fun keeps you healthy, happy, and rejuvenated.

# 98

## Pay attention to what's important.

It's easy to lose sight of what's important when you're working hard and juggling a million things. To stay focused on the things that matter, you need to make time for reflection—time for thinking about your life, values, priorities, and where you are going. Are you taking care of your physical health? Are you happy? Do you laugh enough? How are your relationships with the people you care about?

As you ask yourself questions and reflect on what's important, you'll discover what changes you need to make so that your life feels more balanced and so you have time for the important things.

# 99

## Talk yourself into feeling good.

Optimism is a skill most of us can learn. It just takes practice. Here are some things to tell yourself as you practice feeling good:

- “This is an opportunity to grow, learn, practice patience.” Tell yourself this when you’re recovering from everyday hassles like a flat tire, a bad day at work, or a missed flight.
- “Today is great because (fill in the blank).”
- “I feel better.” Most of the time, if you tell yourself you feel better, you do feel better.

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“If you think the worst and get the worst, you suffer twice. If you think the best and get the worst, you only suffer once.”

—humorist Loretta LaRoche



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## Realize that it's never too late.

It's never too late to

- spend more time with your children
- learn a new skill
- get in shape
- go back to school
- start a diet
- be there for a friend
- start exercising
- go somewhere you've never been
- tell your partner or parent or child or a friend, "I love you"

## Get started on your feeling good plan.

Now you're ready to put the tips and ideas you've read in this booklet to use. Write down here the tips you'd like to work on and the steps you could take to achieve your goals. For example, "Tip 23. Get in the sleep mood. Steps I'll take: Turn off the TV an hour before bedtime. Use that time to take a bath and read a good magazine."

As you get going on your feeling good plan, try new tips, change old habits, and before you know it, you'll be feeling better!

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We'd like to hear any suggestions or ideas you have on this topic. Please write to us at *publications@ceridian.com*. Be sure to include the title of the booklet in your message.

Thank you.

Illustrations by Nishan Akgulian

