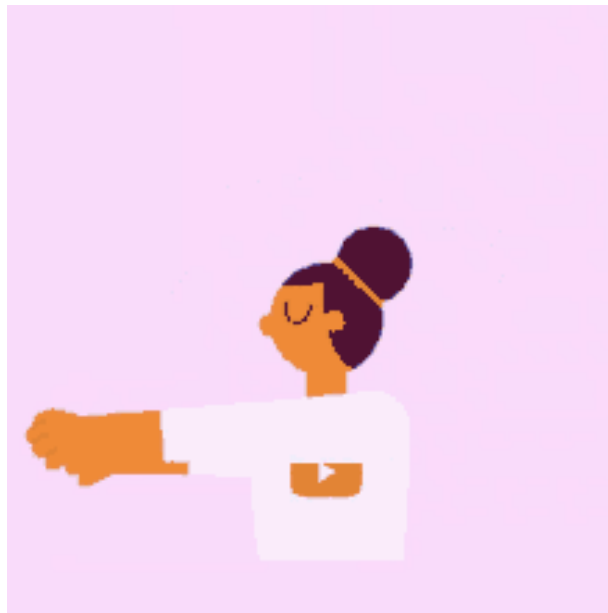




January 2022

Self-Care:
Part 1
All About Self-Care

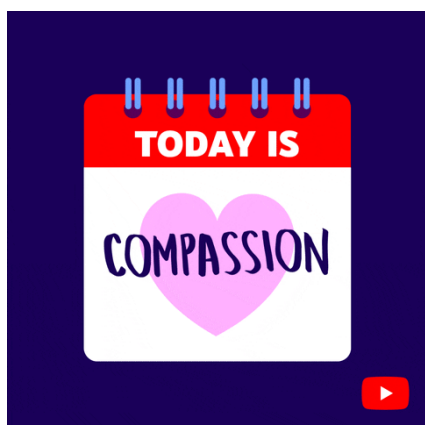


This is Part 1 of *Self-Care*! We'll be discussing why it's important to set some time aside for yourself and practice self-care. Next week we'll provide even more examples to help you get started!

- Self-care is a very broad topic but it can include anything you do for yourself that protects and improves your own well-being and happiness.
- There are many health benefits of practicing different types of self-care.
- Read through some tips on how you can start a self-care routine that works for you.

After you're done reading, [don't forget to listen to our webinars every Tuesday! You can find registration links and recordings here.](#)

We are also holding Healthy Lifestyles Project: LIVE events, every Wednesday at 11 AM and Friday at 1 PM. [Register here.](#)



What is it?

What is Self-Care?

- The World Health Organization defines self-care as: “the ability of individuals, families, and communities to promote health, prevent disease, maintain health, and to cope with illness and disability with or without the support of a healthcare provider.”
- According to this definition, self-care includes everything related to staying physically healthy – including hygiene, nutrition, and seeking medical care when needed. It’s all the steps an individual can take to manage stressors in his or her life and take care of his or her own health and well-being.

Self-Care is Not Selfish

- Self-care is *not* the same as self-indulgence or being selfish- it's a good thing!
- Self-care means taking care of yourself so that you can be healthy, you can be well, you can do your job, you can help and care for others, and you can do all the things you need to and want to accomplish in a day.

A Modern Look at Self-Care

- As self-care has become more mainstream, the definitions have started to become more applicable to the general public and tend to focus on tuning in to one’s needs and meeting those needs.
- Self-care is anything that you do for yourself that feels nourishing. That can be something relaxing or calming, or it can be something that is intellectual or spiritual, physical or practical or something you need to get done.

Types of Self-Care

- Emotional self-care: such as self-talk, weekly bubble baths, saying “no” to things

that cause unnecessary stress, giving yourself permission to take a pause, or setting up a weekly coffee date with a friend

- **Physical self-care:** such as prioritizing sleep, adopting an exercise routine you can stick with, choosing healthy and nourishing foods over highly processed ones
- **Spiritual self-care:** such as attending a religious service, spending time in nature, meditating, incorporating regular acts of kindness into your day, or keeping a gratitude journal

SOURCE: <https://www.everydayhealth.com/self-care/>



Benefits of Self-Care

Self-Care Practices For a Longer Life

- **Exercise:**
 - People who exercised between two and eight hours per week throughout their lives reduced their risk of dying by 29 to 36 percent, according to a March 2019 study published in *JAMA Network Open*.
- **Finding Purpose:**
 - According to the researchers behind a May 2019 study published in *JAMA Network Open*, having a strong life purpose was associated with decreased mortality rates.
- **Diet:**
 - Eating a diet filled with five servings of fruits and vegetables per day was associated with a lower risk of mortality, especially from heart-related issues, according to a July 2014 study published in *The BMJ*.
- **Sleep**
 - A study published in September 2017 in the *Journal of the American Heart Association* found too-little sleep (less than seven hours per night) was linked with higher mortality rates, though too-much sleep wasn't healthy either.
- **Getting Outside**
 - According to a 2019 study published in *Lancet Planet Health*, spending time in green space is associated with a lower mortality rate.

Chronic Conditions

- People with chronic conditions who practice self-care were more likely to follow medication regimens, to be knowledgeable about how to take care of their health, and to have the skills to take care of their health.
- They were more likely to score higher when it came to measures of mental and physical functioning.

Stay In Tune with Your Body

- People who practice self-care say they're more in tune with their own emotions and can more easily identify when they're feeling anxious or unbalanced.
- This self-awareness helps people perform better in their jobs, enables them to be more mindful, and helps them combat burnout.

Help Yourself, Help Others

- We can't function very well if we aren't very well.
- When you get on an airplane and the flight attendant talks about the oxygen masks, the first thing they tell you is: "If you're traveling with children or others who need assistance, put your oxygen mask on first."
- It's the same deal in everyday life. When we don't take care of ourselves, we can't take care of others, either.

SOURCE: <https://www.everydayhealth.com/self-care/>



Start a Routine

How to Get Started

1. Determine which activities bring you joy, replenish your energy, and restore your balance.
2. Start small by choosing one behavior you'd like to incorporate into your routine in the next week.
3. Build up to practicing that behavior every day for one week.
4. Reflect on how you feel.
5. Add in additional practices when ready.
6. Get support through sharing practices from loved ones, a coach, a licensed professional (like a therapist or dietitian), or through your healthcare plan, community, or workplace.

Tips and Suggestions

- Practicing self-care doesn't need to be a heavy lift right out of the gate.
- Try journaling.
- Start each day by paying attention to your breath for five minutes and setting intentions for the day.
- Make sure to eat breakfast.
- Reflect on what you're grateful for each night.
- Put your phone on airplane mode for a half hour each night and release yourself from the flurry of notifications.
- Call a friend just to say hello.
- Take up a relaxing hobby.
- Pick a bedtime and stick to it.
- Note: if you read this and feel a sense of demoralization or sadness from challenges mounting or establishing a self-care practice, it's best to get help and support. There may be barriers to caring for yourself from past trauma, mental health issues, or family situations that may be making it more challenging to get started. Seek support from trusted counselors and behavioral health providers (like therapists), a trusted primary care doctor, or a close friend.

Self-Care Worksheets

- A solid starting point for embarking on a self-care journey is to take an inventory of how good we are at it already. This [Self-Care Checklist](#) breaks self-care down

into physical, psychological, social, spiritual, and professional self-care. Checking how we score in each domain provides a good first indication for what we should prioritize.

- Another is **Energy-Management Audit**, which invites us to understand from which activities we gain energy and how we can best replenish it. It reminds us that our energy sources are tied up with our basic human needs and encompass the mind, body, emotions, and spirit. It gives a clear indication of where we most struggle to care for ourselves and where we may lose most of our energy.
- An excellent resource for self-compassion-based self-care exercises is Kristin Neff's website. Her **How would you treat a friend?** worksheet is particularly significant. It urges us to remember how we would interact with a struggling friend. What would we say to them? What tone of voice would we use? The aim is to treat ourselves with as much care and kindness as we would treat our friends.
- **Changing Your Critical Self-Talk** invites us to notice when we are talking to ourselves in a critical voice. Whenever we feel bad, we are asked mindfully to notice that voice - what it says, which phrases it uses, its tone, and whether, perhaps, it reminds us of someone in our past. We can soften this inner judge and to reframe the observations it makes in a friendlier, more positive way.

SOURCE: <https://positivepsychology.com/self-care-worksheets/>

Let's Stay Healthy!



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Don't see what you're looking for? We can create a custom training based on the needs and interest of your group!



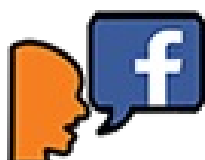
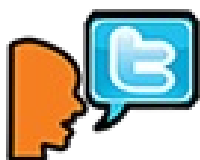
The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey



The [Healthy Lifestyles Project \(HLP\)](#) is a program of The Arc of New Jersey and receives funding through a grant awarded by [The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey](#).

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For more information on HLP and NJSAP
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New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project

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Positive Pulse

Your monthly dose of advice on healthy living

April 2022

Saving the Planet: **Part 1** **Earth Day**



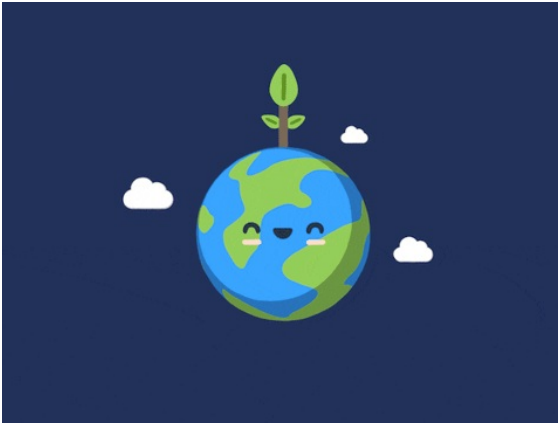
This is Part 1 of *Saving the Planet!* We'll be discussing a special day that happens on April 22 every year: Earth Day!

- Earth Day was started in 1970 and has a rich history leading up to the present day.
- There are many activities you can participate in to celebrate on Earth Day each year and beyond.
- Sometimes we take actions in our efforts to help the

environment that aren't as useful as they seem, so it's important to think about what the best approach may be.

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History of Earth Day

STATISTICS

1970

FIRST EARTH DAY

1 Billion

INDIVIDUALS MOBILIZED FOR
ACTION EVERY EARTH DAY

190+

COUNTRIES ENGAGED

Origins of Earth Day Environmentalism

- In the decades leading up to the 1960s, Americans were consuming vast amounts of leaded gas through massive and inefficient automobiles.
- Air pollution was commonly accepted and mainstream America remained largely oblivious to environmental concerns and how a polluted environment threatens human health.
- In 1962, [Rachel Carson's New York Times bestseller Silent Spring](#) represented a crucial moment, raising public awareness and concern for living organisms, the environment and the inextricable links between pollution and public health.

The First Earth Day

- Senator Gaylord Nelson, the junior senator from Wisconsin, had long been concerned about the deteriorating environment in the United States.
- Then in January 1969, he and many others witnessed the ravages of a massive oil spill in Santa Barbara, California.
- He announced the idea for a teach-in on college campuses to the national media, and persuaded Pete McCloskey, a conservation-minded Congressman, to serve as his co-chair. They recruited Denis Hayes, a young activist, to organize the campus teach-ins and they choose April 22, a weekday falling between Spring Break and Final Exams, to maximize the greatest student participation.
- Recognizing its potential to inspire all Americans, Hayes built a national staff of 85 to promote events across the land and the effort soon broadened to include a

wide range of organizations, faith groups, and others.

- They changed the name to Earth Day, which inspired 20 million Americans – at the time, 10% of the total population of the United States – to take to the streets, parks and auditoriums to demonstrate against the impacts of 150 years of industrial development which had left a growing legacy of serious human health impacts.

Earth Day's Effect on the US Government

- Earth Day 1970 achieved a rare political alignment, enlisting support from Republicans and Democrats, rich and poor, urban dwellers and farmers, business and labor leaders.
- By the end of 1970, the first Earth Day led to the creation of the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the passage of other first of their kind environmental laws, including the National Environmental Education Act, the Occupational Safety and Health Act, and the Clean Air Act.
- Two years later, Congress passed the Clean Water Act. A year after that, Congress passed the Endangered Species Act and soon after the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act.
- These laws have protected millions of people from disease and death and have protected hundreds of species from extinction.

Earth Day Goes Global

- As 1990 approached, a group of environmental leaders approached Denis Hayes to once again organize another major campaign for the planet. This time, Earth Day went global, mobilizing 200 million people in 141 countries and lifting environmental issues onto the world stage.
- Earth Day 1990 gave a huge boost to recycling efforts worldwide and helped pave the way for the 1992 United Nations Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.
- It also prompted President Bill Clinton to award Senator Nelson the Presidential Medal of Freedom – the highest honor given to civilians in the United States – for his role as Earth Day founder.

Earth Day Today

- Today, Earth Day is widely recognized as the largest secular observance in the world, marked by more than a billion people every year as a day of action to change human behavior and create global, national and local policy changes.
- The fight for a clean environment continues with increasing urgency, as climate change becomes more and more apparent every day.
- Earth Day is all about empowering individuals with the information, tools, messaging and communities needed to make an impact and drive change.

SOURCE: <https://www.earthday.org/history/>



Earth Day Activities

Volunteer to Clean Your Local Area

- Each Earth Day, local communities pull together to pick up trash, recycle, and

clean communal areas. Find an event like this is your city or town and volunteer your time and energy! It's a great way to meet people, have some fun, and beautify your hometown all at once.

- Not sure where to look? Try calling or visiting your township building, asking around at your place of worship or community center, search by location on [VolunteerMatch.org](https://www.volunteermatch.org), or find special Earth Day events near you listed on Eventbrite.

Donate Hours to an Environmental Protection Organization

- [The Nature Conservancy](#) is an organization that works to do improve our environment across the globe with several initiatives. The Nature Conservancy works on tackling climate change, protecting land and water, providing food and water through more sustainable efforts, and even building healthy cities around the world. [Find volunteer opportunities in your community here.](#)
- [Point Blue Conservation Science](#) is an organization of scientists that partner with fishermen, ranchers, farmers, and local governments to help reduce the devastating effects of climate change and habitat loss. They also focus on developing nature-based solutions to benefit both humans and animals alike. They are dedicated to innovative conservation science and "applying our scientific knowledge to make life better for birds, other wildlife, and all of us who share the planet with them." [Learn how you can engage with Point Blue Conservation Science here.](#)
- [The Sierra Club](#) uses a combination of grassroots efforts and philanthropic partnerships to help their 3.5 million members promote conservation initiatives and climate solutions to better our environment. Their four main initiatives are centered around: climate and energy; lands, air, water and wildlife; and people and justice. [See how you can get involved with the Sierra Club today.](#)

Protect Bird Wildlife

- [The American Bird Conservancy](#) has been in existence for over 20 years and works to protect extremely rare birds, conserve and protect important bird habitats, reduce major threats to avian wildlife, and build a national community of bird conservationists across the United States. They use a variety of conservation programs to help restore bird habitats, such as restoring land, planting trees, and governmental policy work. [See how you can get involved](#) with the American Bird Conservancy by educating others to live a more bird-friendly lifestyle, joining the Bird Conservation Alliance, building bird-friendly glass, and more.
- You could also look into the [National Audubon Society](#), which is well-known for its American avian conservation programs. The National Audubon Society works tirelessly to protect both birds and their natural habitats throughout America with "science, advocacy, education, and on-the-ground conservation". Today, the National Audubon Society has 23 state programs, 41 nature centers, and almost 500 local chapters that work together to inform, educate, and inspire millions of people about bird wildlife conservation. This year, spend your Earth Day by getting involved and volunteering at your [local Audubon center](#), or by taking action on behalf of the Audubon Society through a number of different initiatives [found here.](#)

Check Out More Ideas Here

SOURCE: <https://ygrene.com/blog/sustainable-living/do-your-part-these-12-earth-day-activities-adults-employees>



Environmental Oops

Recycling Something "Just In Case"

- Although recycling centers do have ways of sorting recyclables from non-recyclables – called residuals – you're just making more work for them.
- According to the National Waste & Recycling Association, contamination rates are around 25 percent. And then recycling centers still have to deal with your trash.
- What's recyclable also varies from place to place, so be sure you know what your town actually accepts. Not everything with a recycling symbol may be recyclable in your area.
- There are things that are almost never recyclable that tend to make their way into bins, too. Common culprits are disposable paper cups, like the ones you might get to go from a coffee shop. The plastic-based lining that makes them liquid-proof is too hard to separate from the paper.
- Other offenders are paper towels, Styrofoam, glass from things like windows or mirrors, plastic bags, greasy pizza boxes and anything that's covered in food.
- When in doubt, check out your city's website; it should have a complete list of what is and isn't accepted.

Putting Plastic Bags Into Recycling Bins

- If you put all your recyclables in a big plastic trash bag and put it in the bin – guess what – that could mean the whole thing is going to the landfill.
- If you must collect recyclables in a plastic bag, dump them out loose into the bin when you take them to the curb, and then toss the plastic bag in the trash where it belongs or reuse it.
- Plastic bags like you get at the grocery store or big box store are recyclable, but you usually have to bring them back to a designated plastic-bags-only receptacle. There's often one right inside the door at grocery stores or places like Walmart. A few other bags can get recycled here, too, like bread bags.
- But other soft filmy plastics, like your candy wrappers, the film you peeled off your lunch meat container or the cellophane that held your muffin from the coffee shop – these are trash.
- Why does this matter? Besides making more work for recycling centers the soft plastics clog up the machinery if not recycled properly.

Using Organic Cotton Tote Bags

- Reusable grocery bags are one of the most popular ways people try to minimize their environmental footprint. Although cutting out plastic bags from your life is a good move, most people don't stop to think about the impact of the tote bag itself.
- In 2018, the Danish Environmental Protection Agency put together a big assessment of the environmental impacts of different types of shopping bags, from the thin plastic bags all the way up to what's considered the most eco-friendly: organic cotton totes. As it turns out, it takes exponentially more resources to make a tote bag compared with the cheap polyethylene.
- The report analyzed how many times you'd need to use each type of bag to equal the environmental impact of a plastic one. Paper bags and plastic-based reusable

totes required between 35 and 84 re-uses.

- A cotton tote, though, had to be used 7,100 times. Organic cotton? 20,000 times. If you used your organic cotton bag twice a week for the rest of your life, it'd be worth it after 192 years.
- Of course, if you're already stocked up on tote bags — organic cotton or otherwise — the best thing you can do is keep using them.

Buying New, More Sustainable Items

- Have you purchased a new tote bag, reusable water bottle, metal straw or coffee mug lately?
- If there already was a cup, bottle, utensil or container at home — or at a thrift shop — that you could've used instead of buying something new, that is the better option.
- That's because any new product requires resources to make. Some are worse than others, sure, but anything new you buy has been made and likely shipped halfway around the world to reach you.
- Try to use less stuff. Instead of buying a new bamboo cutlery set for your purse, just grab a fork and spoon from your kitchen. Instead of buying new mason jars, reuse the glass jars that your pickles and jam came in. And if you already have 10 water bottles, maybe don't get an 11th, even if it's labeled "eco-friendly".

Assuming Anything Vegan, Organic, Local or Non-GMO is Environmentally Innocent

- A lot of environmentally conscious people will gravitate toward products with some sort of "green" labeling like vegan, organic or non-GMO. But these labels don't guarantee the products are better for the environment than their conventional counterparts.
- In some places, buying a local version of a product can reduce its environmental impact by reducing the number of miles it had to travel to get to you. But this concept has diminishing returns, because of how super-efficient it is to ship things like produce in huge batches.
- Some people are so obsessed with "buying local" that "indoor farming" is becoming a thing. Businesses are cropping up that will grow produce year-round, either in heated greenhouses or, in extreme cases, indoors. They're literally replacing free sunshine and rain with electric bulbs and water hoses.
- Artificial lighting systems could add more than 17 pounds of carbon emissions per pound of crops grown.

Putting Compostable or Biodegradable Stuff in the Landfill

- With an upsurge of restaurants making the switch to compostable, biodegradable bowls, cups and servingware, you would assume that these are successfully reducing waste.
- Most landfills are set up so that even biodegradable stuff doesn't biodegrade on any reasonable timescale. That's because most decomposition comes from bacteria and fungi that require oxygen to do their thing.
- Landfills are tightly packed, and once "full," they're often sealed off with layers of clay and plastic to prevent liquids from seeping in or out.
- What little decomposition occurs is carried out by different organisms that create methane as a byproduct — if decomposition happens at all.
- That's why composting food waste is so important. The EPA estimates that most composting households send 28 percent less trash to the curb than their noncomposting peers.

SOURCE: <https://www.discovermagazine.com/environment/9-well-intentioned-efforts-that-actually-arent-environmentally-friendly>

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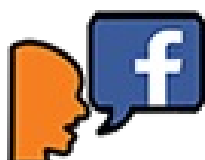
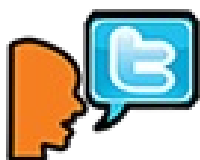
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April 2022

Saving the Planet: **Part 2** **Superheroes**



This is Part 2 of *Saving the Planet*! We'll be discussing a special day that happens on April 28 every year: National Superhero Day!

- "Power Posing" like a super hero is an easy way to feel stronger and more confident in your everyday life.
- Wearing costumes and participating in "cosplay" can also increase positive feelings about yourself through self-expression.
- More and more disability representation is making its way to

the media we consume, resulting in some amazing characters you may want to check out.

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Superhero Yoga

Power Posing

- "Power Posing" is adopting the stances associated with confidence, power and achievement – chest lifted, head held high, arms either up or propped on the hips.
- Both humans and animals express power through their bodies. They tumble in on themselves when they feel unsure, making themselves smaller by hunching over, crossing their arms over their chest and avoiding big movements. When they feel on top of the world, they sprawl out.
- Standing like a superhero for as little as two minutes changes our testosterone and cortisol levels, increases our appetite for risk, causes us to perform better in job interviews, and generally configures our brains to cope well in stressful situations.
- Try "Power Posing" like Superman below as well as other super hero yoga poses below for more ways to feel super!



SUPERMAN

Inhale: Bring arms overhead and make fists.

Exhale: Slowly bring arms down and put fists on hips.

**Keep shoulders back to bring chest and chin up.
Sit or stand up straight.**

SPIDER-MAN

Inhale: Extend your arms upward, reach for the ceiling.

Exhale: Hold your arms in front of you. Breathe.

Rotate your arms so your palms face up. Bring your middle and ring fingers to your palms.

Watch out for webs!



WOLVERINE

Inhale: Stretch your arms out in front. Slowly extend your fingers. Bend wrists up and down.

Breathe: Extend arms to sides and rotate. Exhale and bring your arms to your sides.

Repeat 3 times.





Wonder Woman

INHALE: BRING ARMS OVERHEAD AND REACH THROUGH EACH FINGER.

EXHALE: BRING ARMS DOWN AND CROSS IN FRONT OF YOUR CHEST.

USE THIS POSE TO HOLD IN GOOD FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS WHILE DEFLECTING BAD ONES.

BATMAN

Inhale: Sit up very straight and feel the breath fill up your belly.

Exhale: With arms outstretched, slowly bend forward. Breathe again.

Take another breath, and slowly sit up straight.



SOURCE: [NJSAP Superhero Yoga Training](https://blog.ted.com/10-examples-of-how-power-posing-can-work-to-boost-your-confidence/)

<https://blog.ted.com/10-examples-of-how-power-posing-can-work-to-boost-your-confidence/>



Benefits of Cosplay

What is Cosplay?

- Hundreds of thousands of people around the world gather at various comic and

fan conventions, many of whom take part in cosplay. Cosplay comes from the term "costume play," and involves dressing up as, and often embodying, the personality of a character, usually from a work of fiction.

- Drea Letamendi, a psychologist who specializes in the intersection between psychological science and fictional heroism, described cosplay as:
 - A visual or external expression of fandom – typically through costume, clothing, masks, makeup, armour or props – that is accompanied by a psychological, internal transformation.

Influence on Behaviour

- Research shows that wearing a costume can actually influence your behaviour. Hajo Adam and Adam Galinsky, researchers at Northwestern University, coined the term "enclothed cognition" to refer to the way clothing influences people's psychological processes.
- They found that participants who wore a lab coat described as a doctor's coat performed better on attention-related tasks compared to those wearing a lab coat described as a painter's coat.
- The psychological transformation of dressing like a beloved character is a compelling motivation and is cited by cosplayers as one reason it is fulfilling – the exploration of the identity of a fictional character.
- Based on research, cosplayers report that the enjoyment of dressing as another identity is the most motivating feature.

Expressing Oneself

- Cosplay is a method of expression and escapism and a way to be someone else, even just for a few hours.
- With cosplay, you can feel more confident and comfortable in yourself, and may feel able to do things you're normally not able to do.
- Some people may feel unable to explore experiences and express emotions that may not be socially or culturally acceptable as part of their upbringing in everyday life.
- Negative emotions, for instance, are often risky to express; cosplay gives one the ability to access the traits of a fictional character – features such as boldness, courage, aggression, even hostility – an acceptable context such as cosplay can allow folks to feel validated and even help them develop emotional literacy.
- In many ways, related to emotional development and identity, cosplay is limitless.

A Sense of Empowerment

- For some marginalized identities, cosplay can be particularly empowering. It allows someone to experience and explore the feelings of being in control, actualizing freedom, being heroic, or sensing oneself as physically strong, revered and respected.
- For cosplayers who dress as characters opposite their expressed gender (i.e., crossplay), that can also be empowering: the ability to embody and be seen as having traits that aren't typically "owned" by that gender in our mainstream society, such as power, control, and visibility for women, or sensuality, emotionality, and vulnerability for men.
- In cosplay, gender is much more fluid, flexible, and accessible.

SOURCE: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/talking-about-trauma/202112/becoming-another-person-through-cosplay>

Superpowered Characters with

Disabilities



Echo

- 2021 saw the Marvel cinematic universe expand their definition of superhero to include more characters with disabilities. Disney+ series Hawkeye was recognized with the Seal of Authentic Representation from the Ruderman Family Foundation, which is awarded to television or feature film projects featuring actors with disabilities in substantial speaking roles.
- Hawkeye's Echo (Alaqua Cox) is a superpowered character who is also deaf, played by an actor who is deaf. Cox uses a prosthetic leg as well.
- She faces off against Hawkeye, in a storyline that also incorporates Clint Barton's history with hearing loss.
- One of the very few deaf characters in comics, Echo is also one of the most gifted characters in Marvel. Above being an Olympic-level athlete, she's also an incredible martial artist, a skilled acrobat, possesses photographic reflexes, and is a proficient ballerina.
- This means that Echo is one of the most terrifying opponents that Marvel supervillains encounter.

Professor X

- Professor X of The X-Men has made a career out of helping young mutants cope, learn to live with, and use their powers for the betterment of mankind, and he's done so while using a wheelchair.
- Xavier is a member of a subspecies of humans known as mutants, who are born with superhuman abilities. He is an exceptionally powerful telepath, who can read and control the minds of others. To both shelter and train mutants from around the world, he runs a private school in the X-Mansion in Salem Center, located in Westchester County, New York.
- Xavier also strives to serve a greater good by promoting peaceful coexistence and equality between humans and mutants in a world where zealous anti-mutant bigotry is widespread.

Oracle

- The events of "The Killing Joke" led to Barbara Gordon using a wheelchair and putting aside her role as Batgirl.
- In her new role as Oracle, Barbara tapped into her own intelligence and became the eyes of every superhero in DC Comics. She scouted their missions, provided intel where necessary, and assisted them on a level never before seen.
- Barbara chose not to give up and instead of remaining yet another "Bat" hero, become a more unique, capable, and inspiring character that changed what a hero could look like.

Billy Cranston, The Blue Power Ranger

- The 2017 Power Rangers movie has been divisive, but one positive is the portrayal of Billy Cranston, the new Blue Ranger, as being openly autistic.
- He's notable as the first superhero with autism to be acknowledged directly as such on the big screen.

- He's also a rare example of a black autistic person represented in the media. Autistic people of color frequently go undiagnosed and don't receive the same level of services as white autistic people, so media representation is extra important.
- Billy was one of the five "teenagers with attitude" selected by Zordon to become the original Power Rangers, along with Jason Lee Scott, Zack Taylor, Trini Kwan and Kimberly Hart. Billy became the Blue Power Ranger and was given both the Triceratops Power Coin and the Triceratops Dinozord.
- Billy began the series as the stereotypical "nerd." The other Rangers, especially Trini, defended him loyally, but Billy later evolved to become a stronger individual. He was one of the top members of Angel Grove High's science club and often helped its younger members with their experiments.

Gary Bell from Alphas

- *Alphas* is a tv show that follows a group of people with superhuman abilities, known as "Alphas", as they work to prevent crimes committed by other Alphas.
- The brilliance of *Alphas*' concept is that every hero's strengths were intrinsically linked to their challenges, and that perspective made Gary one of the best portrayals of a person with autism in any TV show.
- His ability to see all electromagnetic signals was a natural extension of his sensory overstimulation. He could function in the wider world but was most comfortable in his own.
- The actor, Ryan Cartwright, completely nailed the character's body language and way of speaking. Gary was so beloved among viewers that his role was increased for the show's second season.

SOURCE: <https://www.themarysue.com/marvels-eternals-and-hawkeye-honored-for-disability-representation/>
<https://www.comicbasics.com/superheroes-who-are-disabled/>
<https://www.cbr.com/on-the-spectrum-11-characters-living-with-autism-and-5-more-who-might-be/>

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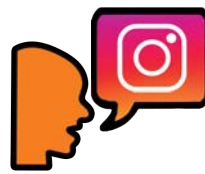
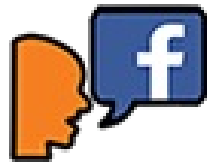
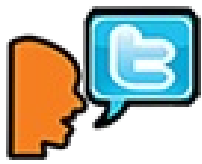


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August 2022

Summer Nights:
Part 1
Nighttime Habits



This is Part 1 of *Healthy Nights*! We'll taking a look at some healthy nighttime habits that you can practice in the evening.

- Stargazing can be a relaxing activity to relieve stress at night.
- Keeping regular nightly rituals can improve your mood for the next day.

- Getting enough sleep even during summer heatwaves is very important to keep your body healthy.

After you're done reading, [don't forget to listen to our webinars every Tuesday! You can find registration links and recordings here.](#)

We are also holding Healthy Lifestyles Project: LIVE events, every Wednesday at 11 AM and Friday at 1 PM. [Register here.](#)



Stargazing

Research Findings

- Findings in psychology research demonstrate that time spent in nature has positive effects on mental wellbeing, such as decreasing stress and increasing attention span.
- Additionally, psychology research findings also show that an experience which elicits a sense of awe increases altruistic behavior in humans.
- Astronomy lies at the intersection of these two phenomena—stargazing is a way for people to be exposed to natural environments, and perceiving and/or learning about the vastness of the universe is very often accompanied by an experience of awe.

Astronomy as a Useful Coping Mechanism

- Social distance friendly: a group of people can observe the night sky while remaining at safe distances from one another, and lessons about the universe can be communicated over online platforms.
- Low cost and accessible: even without the use of equipment such as telescopes, naked-eye star gazing is accessible to anyone who has access to reasonably dark skies.
- Indigenous narratives: the experience of looking at the night sky can be enriched by making links to existing cultural narratives and myths surrounding constellations, cosmology. This enables people to learn from their local cultures and histories, providing an additional tool for creating meaning in life. Additionally, the use of narratives in teaching astronomy-related content can make otherwise abstract concepts digestible and memorable.

Stargazing Is a Perfect Stress Reliever

- Interactions with nature are vital contributors to overall health and wellbeing. Sadly, most Americans can't peep out of their windows and enjoy the beautiful night sky.
- Research shows that prolonged exposure to artificial light decreases sleep quality and indirectly contributes to mental health concerns such as anxiety and depression.
- Stargazing can become a dark-sky sanctuary that can help you escape the busy schedules of modern urban life.

Stargazing Can Spark Your Creative Mind

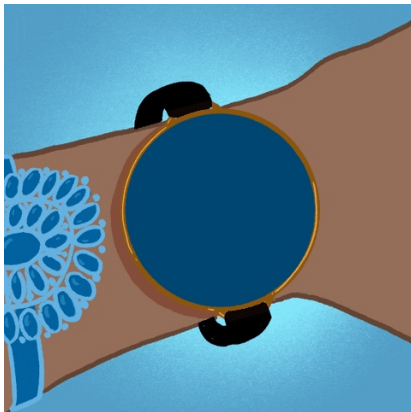
- The world of dark skies never gets boring at any point. You can attribute this to the fact that there is always a new natural wonder to explore. It allows you to view things from a different perspective.
- Physiologists point out that the best ideas come forth when we're at peace. Watching the clear night sky can quiet your thoughts, letting your creative spirit flow through you.
- Moving to an open outdoor spot where you can enjoy everything astral may be the solution to your creative block.

Stargazing in NJ

- To find a stargazing spot indoors or outdoors in New Jersey, check out the below link.

Stargazing in NJ

SOURCE: <https://www.astro4dev.org/flagship-themes/celebrating-our-common-humanity-astronomy/astronomy-mental-health/>
<https://vinesofsandhill.com/4-amazing-health-and-social-benefits-of-stargazing/>



Nighttime Rituals

Tidy Up

- Clutter is stressful. Take 10 minutes to pick up and put the last of the dinner dishes away
- If you have trouble stopping when you start tidying—use a timer.

Prep for Tomorrow

- Create a new habit of spending a few minutes of prep instead of immediately collapsing on the couch. Once you're down and relaxed, it's hard to get going again.
- Set out your gym clothes to set the intention of getting exercise. Put together an overnight oatmeal or a make-ahead smoothie for breakfast, and pack up leftovers for an easy lunch. You'll be amazed how much this simple practice eases anxiety.

Smart Snacking

- You should cut yourself off from the kitchen about 3 hours before bedtime, so know what time is the last call if you're hungry.
- Greasy chips or sugary candy may be calling you, but reach instead for a few nuts

or a banana because they contain sleep-inducing tryptophan.

- For a dose of the sleep-regulating hormone melatonin, try whole grains or cherries.

Take a Bath

- A bath can do more than just relieve stress; a nightly bath ritual can detox and relax the body, soothe sore muscles, help stop colds and infections, and open congested sinuses.
- A healing soak can be as simple as pouring in some Epsom salt to transform the experience with a thoughtful mix of functional ingredients.
- For exercise overachievers, try a blend of sea salts, red clay, and pink Himalayan salt to soothe tired muscles and an overactive mind. Pour in a 1/2 cup of the blend, light a candle, and unwind.

Brain Purge

- You're out of the bath and in your comfy PJs. Don't let the couch and television lure you back!
- Read a book or start a gratitude journal.
- Record all of your to-do's for the following day, but don't overwhelm yourself with a million chores. Focus on just three things to accomplish the following day.

Tea

- A warm cup of chamomile or turmeric tea is incredibly calming and comforting.
- Just make sure to stick with decaffeinated teas so you don't interfere with your ability to get a restful sleep.

Stretch

- Strike a couple of simple yoga poses, like child's pose and forward bends, before bed.
- Put your legs up against the wall or lay in dead man's pose for a few minutes.

Brush and floss

- When you can pick yourself up off of the floor, it's time for brushing and flossing.
- Detox your dental routine with natural toothpaste and floss and make it a habit.

Wash Your Face & Remove Makeup

- When you take the time to really enjoy your skincare routine, it can be incredibly soothing.
- Self-care is how you communicate that you love yourself and appreciate your body. So don't rush through it and feel guilty about taking a few minutes for yourself, or, worse, sleep in your makeup!

SOURCE: <https://helloglow.co/10-healthy-bedtime-rituals-will-make-tomorrow-awesome/>

Summer Sleep



The Right Pajamas

- What to wear to sleep when it's hot outside is debatable, with one side arguing less clothing is cooler, and the other saying without fabric to wick away moisture, your body gets hotter.
- But one thing everyone can agree on is that you can't be wearing flannel pajamas to bed in August.
- Instead, go for a loosely woven cotton, or fabric designed specifically to wick moisture away, like a bamboo-viscose blend.

Mattress and Sheets

- You probably thought you were done with wool for the season. But assuming you're not allergic, a wool mattress topper can actually help keep you cool all night long.
- Wool is naturally thermo-regulating and breathable, which means it reacts to your body temperature and can absorb and then release moisture.
- So, if your mattress turns into a miniature hot plate once the temperatures start soaring, consider getting a wool mattress cover instead of a traditional foam one.
- Another way you could be sabotaging yourself every night is by sleeping on sheets that are too luxurious. A high thread count might feel amazing, but it makes sheets less breathable.
- Opt for a lower thread count with a softer cotton fiber, such as percale or Egyptian cotton, to keep your bed cool all night long.

Exercise Before Bed

- You might think that exercise before bed is a terrible idea, but do it right, and you'll be glad you picked up the habit.
- Try to exercise around an hour before bed, which will tire you out and still give your heart rate adequate time to drop back down to normal.
- Follow it all up with a hot shower, and you can trigger that body temperature drop that helps you fall asleep.

Adjust the Thermostat

- If your household squabbles over what temperature your house should be, let science decide once and for all. While there isn't a single magic number that will make you sleep all night long, a range of 65-72 degrees is considered optimal.

Sleep Mask

- The longer days of summer are a curse and a blessing. You've got more time to enjoy outdoors, but the sun can also wake you up earlier than it does in winter.
- If this is a problem for you, get a lightweight sleep mask.

Stay Hydrated

- You might not realize it, but going to sleep dehydrated is a great way to get a lousy night's rest.

- Being dehydrated can cause disruptive snoring and nocturnal leg cramps. And hotter temperatures outside mean you need to drink even more to compensate for the water you're losing from sweating.
- When the temperature starts to rise, make sure to drink extra water to avoid waking up parched.

SOURCE: <https://bestlifeonline.com/better-sleep-summer-nights/>

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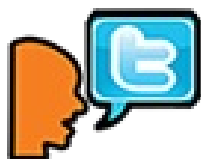
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August 2022

Summer Nights:
Part 2
Star Stories



This is Part 2 of *Summer Nights*! We'll taking a look at some stories created by different cultures when looking at constellations in the night sky.

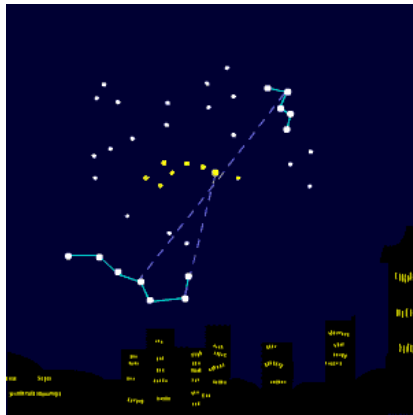
- Native American cultures have many stories that hold great meaning based on the arrangement of stars in the sky.
- You may be familiar with the Greek Zodiac that uses some of

these same stars to explore Greek myths.

- You can learn more about the stars you can see in your area using websites and apps or just finding a good viewpoint outside.

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Native American Star Stories

History

- Before the age of global positioning systems or compasses, people looked to the stars to find their way and formed their own beliefs about their significance.
- In North America, indigenous tribes had differing ideas about what the stars meant, some believing that the night sky had spiritual meaning, and some attributing human-like qualities to the twinkling objects.
- Archaeoastronomy is the study of how people of the past understood the stars and the sky, however, this broadly applies to all ancient cultures. The Mayans, Celts, and Egyptians alike all had their own methods for tracking the movement of the stars and heavenly bodies, but all of these cultures have the common belief that the phenomenon above their heads was somehow larger and greater than they were.
- As such, the vast majority of ancient cultures associated the origins of everything, including the sky, moon, sun, and earth with some form of mythology related to the stars.
- Astronomy played in an important role in early Native American cultures, serving as the basis for governance, agricultural practices and more. And studying the stars also caused tribes to theorize about the beginning of life in the universe.

The Pawnee's Guiding Principles

- The Skidi band of the Pawnee Indians referred to a ring of stars in the sky as “The Council of Chiefs.” The Pawnee believed the circle represented their governance style of elders holding council to resolve important matters.
- This constellation was paramount to the way the Pawnee interacted daily as well as their religious beliefs. They used the stars to set agricultural patterns and embody their own societal values.
- The Council of Chiefs was connected to their “Chief Star,” what is now referred to as Polaris, which represented their primary god Tirawahat.
- They built their lodges with openings at the top - not only to allow smoke to escape from warming fires inside but to allow a clear view of the “Council” stars.

Today, those stars are known as the Corona Borealis.

The Anasazi

- In New Mexico, researchers found a cave painting that appears to depict a supernova explosion; the orientation of a crescent moon and stars indicate that the art may represent the Crab Nebula, formed in 1054 A.D. by a supernova.
- The Anasazi way of life remains somewhat of a mystery, but researchers found that the tribe built a solar observatory, suggesting that the sky was extremely important to the Anasazi way of life.

Navajo Creation of the Sky

- A Navajo legend describes the Four Worlds that had no sun and the Fifth World, which represents Earth.
- According to the legend, the first people of the Fifth World were given four lights but were dissatisfied with the amount of light they had on Earth. After many attempts to satisfy the people, the First Woman created the sun to bring warmth and light to the land, and the moon to provide coolness and moisture.
- These were crafted from quartz, and, when there were bits of quartz that were left behind by the carving, they were tossed into the sky to make stars.

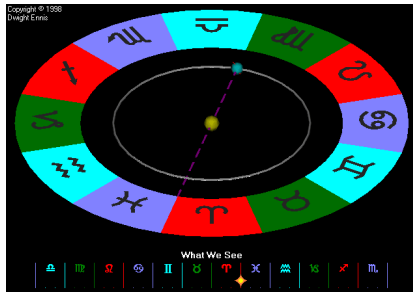
Hopi Blue Star

- Like the Navajo, the Hopi believe there were worlds before this one. The modern era is believed to be the Fourth World, and each world that came before this one ended with the appearance of “the blue star.”
- In carvings created by the Hopi in the American Southwest, it seems what they saw may have led them to a belief in aliens, a belief that certainly retains a place in the culture of the U.S. to this day.

Atima Atchakosuk/“Dog Stars”

- This myth is a nehyiaw tale about the grouping of seven stars that many know as Ursa Minor, or the little dipper, and how they came to be.





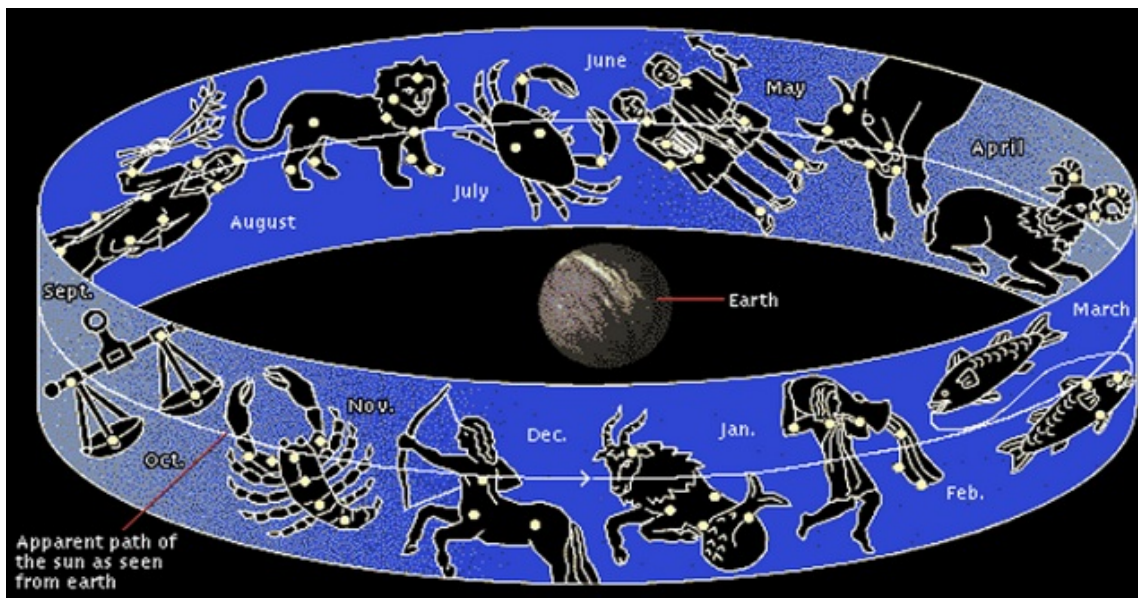
Greek Star Stories

Greek Zodiac

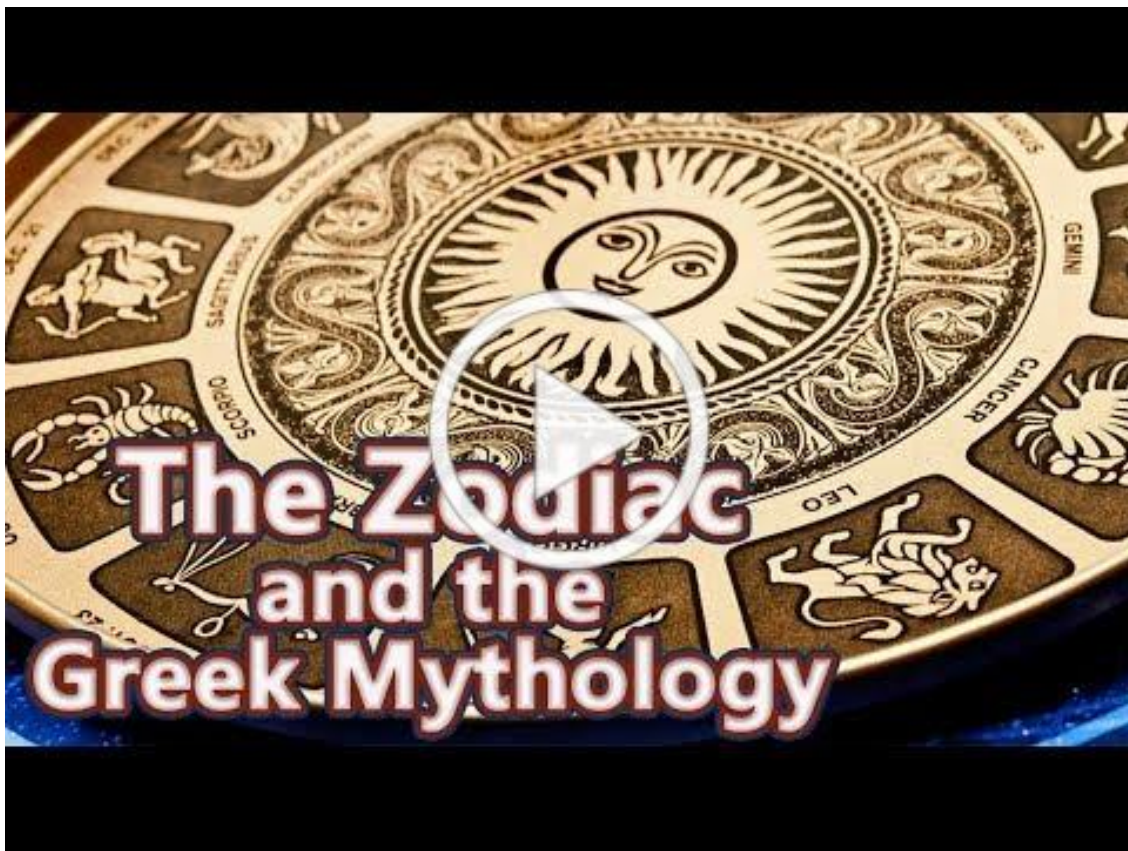
- The Greek word for constellations was katasterismoi. Of these, the twelve signs whose paths intersect with the dawn rising of the sun were known as zodiakos (the zodiac) or zodiakos kyrklos (circle of small animals).
- The constellations, as described in Greek mythology, were mostly god-favoured heroes and beasts who received a place amongst the stars as a memorial of their deeds. They were regarded as semi-divine spirits--living, conscious entities which strode across the heavens.
- The main sources of Greek star myths were the lost astronomical poems of Hesiod and Pherecydes and later works by Pseudo-Eratosthenes, Aratus and Hyginus.

Virgo (August 23 - September 22)

- The sign we are under right now is Virgo.
- Virgo is the sixth astrological sign, symbolizing labor. Virgo is ruled by the god Mercury and is represented as a woman. Because of this, Virgo has been associated with various goddesses, such as Artemis and Aphrodite. In Greek mythology the constellation is represented by the goddess Astrea.
- Astrea helped her Titan father by being a bearer of lightning during the war between the Titans and the Gods. Zeus respected her loyalty and decided to raise her into the heavens, placing her among the stars and creating the constellation Virgo.



Listen to more Zodiac stories in the video below.



SOURCE: <https://www.theoi.com/greek-mythology/star-myths.html>



Spotting Stars

How to Find Constellations

- Depending on your location and the time of year, different stars will be visible. There are a lot of different resources online which can help you identify the position and shapes of constellations. If you don't have a veteran stargazer on hand to show you the ropes, a star map can help you locate each constellation.
- [Google Sky](#) lets you practice from the convenience of your PC. [AstroViewer](#) is another good place to start. The site will create a customized star map based on your location to help get you going. You can also download their interactive sky map for reference if you don't have an internet access. Other services like [Starmap](#), which is also available as an iOS app, can turn your smartphone into a constellation reference guide. Alternatively, you can download their maps as PDFs and print them for later use.
- Beyond knowing what to look for, you'll have to be able to actually see some stars. You should try to get as far away from cities as possible since ambient light will blot them out. Pack a binocular or telescope so you can see fainter stars and other features that you wouldn't pick up with the naked eye.

- Try to get into the habit of orienting yourself after the North Star (or Polaris). It's roughly aligned to the Earth's rotational axis, making it pretty consistent in its position on the sky – and having a firm point of reference will help you navigate easier. So let's start with that one.
- Note: the “best seen” dates below are rough guidelines, as most constellations are visible for up to 6 months a year. The dates apply in the Northern Hemisphere.

Ursa Minor, Little Bear, & the North Star

- Best seen: June.
- Ursa Minor (or the Little Dipper) is a great first constellation to distinguish in the sky. It can help you find your way if you get lost. That's because it houses the North Star, which marks the celestial north pole.
- It's a relatively small constellation on the sky and was named after its size and visualization as a baby bear – albeit, one with an unusually long tail, which ends with the North Star. In practice, what you'll see is four stars in a box-like shape, with a three-star tail.
- Its distinctive features are the strong curvature of the tail, the bright North Star on its end. The four stars that make the Dipper are of second, third, fourth, and fifth magnitudes, making Ursa Minor an effective reference for estimating other stars' luminosity.
- The name comes from the story of Callisto. She was a beautiful young nymph who Zeus fell in love with. Naturally, his wife Hera wasn't too big on the idea so she turned Callisto into a bear. Callisto's son Arcas would eventually run into the bear on a hunting trip and decide to kill the animal. Zeus intervenes, turns him into a bear cub (Ursa Minor), and places them both on the night's sky.

Ursa Major, the Big Bear

- Best seen: April.
- Ursa Major is probably the most widely-recognized constellation in the Northern Hemisphere – because it's almost always visible from this side of the Earth.
- It's sometimes named the Big Dipper, which technically speaking isn't correct – the Dipper is just a part of Ursa Major. Still, it's the most easily recognized part, it's virtually always visible, it looks a lot like Ursa Minor, and it can help you find the North Star.
- The Big Dipper also has four stars in a box and a three-star strong tail. It's most distinctive feature is the overall shape of the Dipper. You can differentiate it from Ursa Minor through the downward bend in the tail, its size, and the position of the brightest stars.

Aquarius, the Cupbearer

- The Aquarius, with its distinctive right arm.
- Best seen: October.
- It's one of the biggest and oldest among named constellations. However, despite its size, the Aquarius doesn't have any defining features. Its stars are also faint and relatively hard to see. Still, they're not unrecognizable – you'll just need to find a light-free area to spot this one in the sky.
- One of Aquarius' most striking features is the protruding line of stars starting from the top and going to the right, known as the “right arm.”
- It takes the name from Greek mythology, meaning “water carrier,” and represents Ganymede, who was remarked for his pleasant figure and invited by Zeus to be the gods' cupbearer and in return received eternal youth and a place in the night's sky. Also it kind of looks like a pitcher pouring water if you squint hard enough at it.

Orion, the Hunter

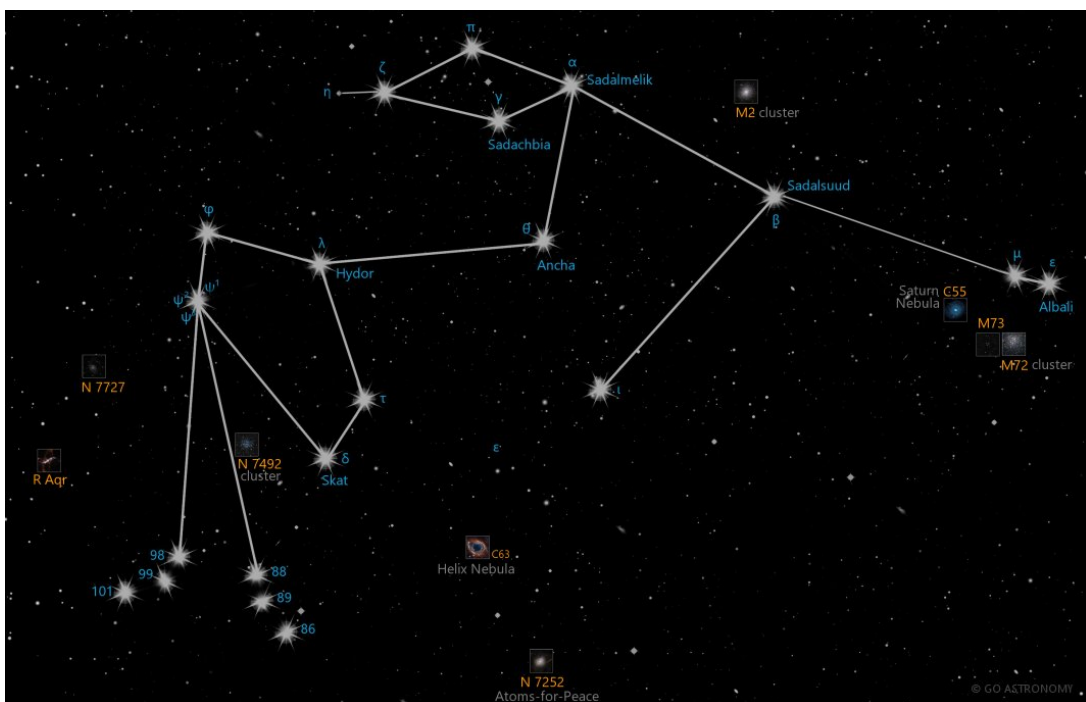
- Best seen: January.
- It's one of the largest constellations out there and can be seen from around the world as it's right on the celestial equator.
- It also is one of the best-known constellations. The belt is one of the easiest to

spot, with its three bright stars. Other defining features are Beta Orionis/Rigel and Alpha Orionis/Betelgeuse. Finding the belt and those two stars is enough to pinpoint the constellation. But on clear, dark nights you can see the full constellation looks like a man holding a bow, from which it takes its name.

- Orion is said to have been a giant, superbly gifted hunter, and son of Poseidon. He often hunted with Artemis (the goddess of the hunt) and once boasted he will kill every animal on the planet. Gaia/Mother Earth didn't appreciate that so she sent a scorpion against Orion. The scorpion killed the hunter, which is the reason why Orion and Scorpius are said to never be visible at the same time. The mythos further says that Orion was revived by Ophiuchus (the serpent bearer) which is why this constellation comes between Orion and Scorpius.



Ursa Major and Ursa Minor



Aquarius



Orion

SOURCE: <https://www.zmescience.com/other/feature-post/starter-guide-constellations/>

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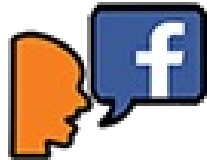
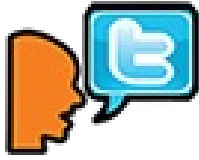


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Positive Pulse

Your monthly dose of advice on healthy living

December 2022

Healthy Holidays: Mental Health Part 1



This is Part 1 of Healthy Holidays! We'll be talking about ways that people may struggle with mental health issues during the holidays and how to handle these moments.

- It's important to distinguish between the holiday blues and something that could become a mental health disorder.
- The holiday season is often stressful for many people for variety of reasons.
- There are many ways to deal with these stressors in a healthy way and enjoy the season.

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Holiday Mental Health Facts

Mental Health Disorders Or Holiday Blues

- While there are no systematic reviews about the increase of mental health problems around the holidays, there are findings from surveys that suggest people feel more stress, anxiety and depression in the period between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day.
- In other words, mental health disorders themselves do not increase around the holidays but signs and symptoms associated with mental health temporarily worsen around this time of year. This is particularly important because these temporary signs and symptoms can develop into mental health disorders later in the year if individuals do not take care of themselves around the holiday season.
- There is a difference between the holiday blues, which typically passes when the holiday season ends, and more severe depression, which lasts longer and interferes with activities of daily living.

Statistics

- The holiday season can be a tremendously stressful time for many individuals who are struggling with a mental illness such as depression and anxiety. According to a survey, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) reported that approximately 24% of people with a diagnosed mental illness find that the holidays make their condition "a lot" worse and 40% "somewhat" worse.
- The pressure of trying to do everything, planning the perfect holiday, traveling to visit family, saying yes to every event, meeting those year-end deadlines and the financial burdens of holiday shopping, can be enough to send anyone into a tail spin.
- This holiday hustle and bustle cannot only heavily impact individuals who are

prone to anxiety, depression and stress (and a lack of sleep) but can also take a toll on those who have never experienced a mental illness.

- Approximately 755 of respondents in a NAMI survey reported that the holidays contribute to feelings of sadness and dissatisfaction. 68% of survey participants felt financially strained, 66% experienced loneliness, 63% felt an overwhelmingly sense of pressure, 55% found themselves remembering happier times in the past contrasting with the present, while 50% were unable to be with loved ones.

SOURCE: <https://discoverymood.com/blog/raising-mental-health-awareness-holiday-season/>



Common Issues Around the Holidays

If you are experiencing any of these feelings, know that you are not alone!

You're Lacking the "Holiday Spirit"

- Being surrounded by cheeriness can be stigmatizing when you don't feel the same level of enthusiasm as others.
- The pressure to be social, happy, and present can make it difficult to speak up if you feel otherwise.
- You may also feel left out if your spiritual traditions aren't the dominant ones on display this time of year.

You're Overwhelmed by Grief and Loss

- If you are living with grief, loss, trauma, or loneliness, it can be easy to compare your situation to others', which can increase feelings of loneliness or sadness. Take time to check in with yourself and your feelings and have realistic expectations for how the holiday season will be.
- If you are dealing with loss or grief, gently remind yourself that as circumstances change, traditions will change as well.

You're Feeling Pressured to Participate

- We all have our own personal history with holidays. We dream about the ways the holidays are supposed to be, which can be a dangerous perspective.
- We get caught up in wanting to do it all, but we can aim to set more realistic expectations for ourselves and others.

You're Stressed About Giving Gifts

- It's very common to get caught up in the commercialization and marketing of the holidays. We can feel stressed about spending on a strained budget or from trying to find just the right gift.
- Advertisers will take advantage of our susceptibility, but we have the ability to

put it in perspective and remind ourselves that we are the ones creating that anxiety, and we are the ones who can reduce it.

- Giving to others is not about spending money. And of course, what goes along with setting realistic expectations is maintaining a budget and being transparent.

Lack of Sunlight Is Affecting Your Mood

- In the northern hemisphere, the holidays coincide with winter's lack of available sunlight. Less exposure to natural light can lead to new or increased symptoms of depression.
- Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is a more severe form of the winter blues. According to researchers, the percentage of people in the United States who struggle with SAD ranges from 1.5% in southern Florida to 9% in northern states.

You're Alone or Feeling Isolated

- While it's true that many of us have friends and family to connect with during the holiday season, there's also the danger of becoming isolated.
- If you are predisposed to depression or anxiety, it can be especially hard to reach out to others.

SOURCE: <https://www.mcleanhospital.org/essential/mcleans-guide-managing-mental-health-around-holidays>



What To Do To Feel Better

What To Do When...You're Lacking the "Holiday Spirit"

- Recognize that you don't need to force yourself to be happy and that it's good to acknowledge feelings that aren't joyful; remember that you are not alone in feeling this way.
- Avoid numbing or avoiding feelings by using alcohol or other substances, which worsen anxiety and depression.
- If possible, surround yourself with people who feel similarly; celebrate your traditions or create new ones.
- It's important to understand that triggers for holiday angst come from many sources. Memories, stressful patterns that seem to occur every holiday, or potential new crises are common triggers.
- Preparing yourself by understanding how different triggers affect you can help reduce stress. Additionally, by finding out why you become anxious or sad around the holidays, you may be able to navigate the rest of the season.

What To Do When...You're Overwhelmed by Grief and Loss

- If holiday observances seem inauthentic right now, you do not need to force yourself to celebrate. During this time, connect with and plan to check in with a support group, a therapist, a faith community, or friends who understand.
- As much as possible, let your loved ones know how they can support you, whether it's helping you with shopping or meeting up for a regular walk. Often, people

want to help but don't know what to say or where to start.

What To Do When...You're Feeling Pressured to Participate

- Accept your limitations and be patient with others too.
- Try to see others' points of view and recognize that we're all feeling at least a little stressed—especially this time of year.
- Prioritize the most important activities or schedule get-togethers for after the holidays: If you feel overwhelmed by social obligations and what others are asking of you, learn how to be comfortable saying “no”.
- Expectations to celebrate holidays in a specific way can bring up old trauma or family conflicts; for self-care, consider outlining your plan for the season.
- Speaking of self-care, make a schedule of when you will do your shopping, baking, cleaning—and be sure to schedule time to take care of yourself.
- You may choose not to celebrate at all—instead of spending the holidays the way you think you should, you might opt for an activity you actually feel like doing—whether it's making a favorite dish or having a Netflix marathon.
- Regardless of your plans, it can be helpful to communicate intentions to friends and family early in the holiday season so everyone knows what to expect.

What To Do When...You're Stressed About Giving Gifts

- Consider how much money you can comfortably spend and stick to the amount. If purchasing gifts for everyone is difficult, consider having a Secret Santa or White Elephant exchange to reduce the number of items everyone needs to buy. You can also simply let people know you are unable to give gifts this year.
- Sometimes personal gifts—like a poem, short story, or framed photo—are the best ones.
- You can also give the gift of helping a neighbor, a friend, a family member, or a stranger. It's the act of giving that is more important than a present. Our generosity can be a gift to ourselves, because when we focus on others, and less on ourselves, we tend to reduce our anxiety.

What To Do When...Lack of Sunlight Is Affecting Your Mood

- Try to get as much sunlight as possible. To boost your mood and regulate sleep, schedule outdoor exercise in the middle of the day when the sun is brightest. If you can, work near a window throughout the day. Even outfitting your home with warm, bright lighting can help improve your mood. Many traditions this time of year incorporate candles and twinkling lights for a reason.
- If you feel the need to slow your pace and hunker down this time of year, consider reframing the winter months as an opportunity to work on “quieter” projects and activities suited for the indoors, such as writing, knitting, or taking online courses.
- If you feel hopeless, have suicidal thoughts, or changes in appetite and sleep patterns, talk to your doctor. Effective treatments for SAD include light therapy, talk therapy, and medication.

What To Do When...You're Alone or Feeling Isolated

- Remind yourself of the people, places, and things that make you feel happy. Consider scheduling a regular call or video chat with friends on a weekly or biweekly basis so you don't have to think twice about making the effort.
- Take advantage of other ways to connect, including sending out holiday cards and communicating with family and friends by phone, text, email, and social media.

- Calming activities, such as reading, meditating, and gratitude journaling, can be helpful if you don't feel comfortable in social situations.
- Don't forget about self-care. We know the importance of a balanced diet, moderate exercise, and plenty of sleep, but because there are so many distractions and stressors this time of year, we lose sight of some of the basic necessities. We need to take care of ourselves and pay increased attention to ensuring we fulfill these areas of our lives as we get closer to the holidays.

SOURCE: <https://www.mcleanhospital.org/essential/mcleans-guide-managing-mental-health-around-holidays>

Let's Stay Healthy!



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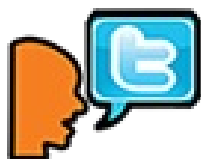
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Positive Pulse

Your monthly dose of advice on healthy living

December 2022

Healthy Holidays:
Part 2
More Health Tips

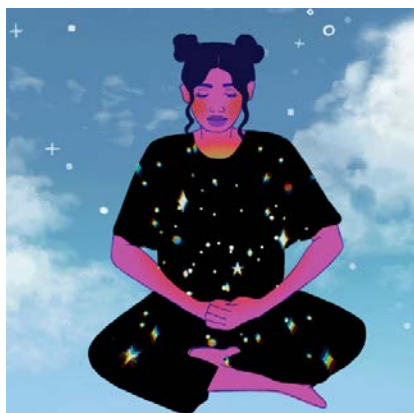


This is Part 2 of Healthy Holidays! We'll be talking about ways that people may struggle with mental health issues during the holidays and how to handle these moments.

- It's more important than ever to practice mindfulness during the busy holiday season.
- Holidays are full of feasts, but we can still eat healthy.
- If video trainings are more appealing than text, we have plenty with healthy holiday tips.

After you're done reading, [don't forget to listen to our webinars every Tuesday! You can find registration links and recordings here.](#)

We are also holding Healthy Lifestyles Project: LIVE events, every Wednesday at 11 AM and Friday at 1 PM. [Register here.](#)



Mindfulness

Practice Active Listening

- It's easy to tune out during holiday dinners and get-togethers, but try being attentive by using active listening. You might be surprised how rewarding it is and also how much more you will observe and hear.
- Try to understand the complete message that people are conveying—not just through their words, but also through their actions and body language.
- Active listening works best when you minimize distractions, so put away your smartphone, turn off the TV and turn down the music so that you can hear what people are saying.
- Acknowledge and encourage people to communicate by giving a simple nod or smile and respond by engaging directly with what they said (you don't have to agree).

Be Open To Emotions

- By being attentive and receptive to the people around you, you can increase your ability to connect.
- Observe how people are feeling during the holidays and be open to communication of those feelings.
- Holidays can bring up a whole host of different emotions—and not all of them happy or celebratory. For many, the holidays can be reminders of loss, grief or loneliness.
- You might experience these difficult feelings, especially when loved ones are absent, so allow yourself to make space and acknowledge whatever emotions come up for you rather than try to get rid of them.

Let Go of Hurtful Habits

- Holidays come with traditions and memories but, sometimes, old patterns can perpetuate negativity. It's easy to fall into familiar patterns.
- Perhaps you're annoyed with your in-laws repeating the same story at the dinner table or anxious around a competitive coworker vying for attention. Notice these thoughts and feelings that are happening now, and try to be curious about what is happening, rather than being stuck in thoughts or feelings you might be carrying from the past.
- This opens the possibility of a new experience in your interactions and can reduce feelings like frustration or boredom for you.

Expand How You Communicate Care

- The holidays often mean gift-giving for many cultures, though there are many other ways of showing that you care.
- Explore how you show you care by asking yourself questions before buying something: What are you trying to communicate through a gift? Are there additional ways to show that feeling or care, such as spending quality time, expressing how you feel about them directly, or doing something nice and supportive?

Let Go of Judgment

- Conflict with family and friends during the holidays can lead to judgment and self-criticism. Whether you're blaming your partner for not helping you prepare the holiday dinner or feeling disappointed in yourself when looking back at your year, notice when you're making judgments.
- Take a step back and try to loosen those feelings of being "bad," "wrong," or "inadequate." Even if it's hard to let go of criticism completely, simply notice when it is happening and let those thoughts be, without entangling yourself in them, to give yourself distance from the feeling.

Balance Your Needs

- Holiday obligations can be important but be sure to balance them with awareness of your own needs. Operating on obligations alone and trying to please everyone's expectations can lead to resentment and burnout.
- Rather than focus solely on planning the perfect dinner or getting the perfect gift, observe how these expectations affect you. Make sure to take the time and space you need to nourish yourself in the meantime.

Practice Self-Compassion

- During a busy holiday season, don't forget to take care of yourself and be good to yourself. Get regular sleep and exercise, and take time to do relaxing or fun things so that you can recharge.
- Taking care of yourself allows you to be able to be more attentive and calmer when you're with others during the holidays. You may even find that when you take care of yourself, it is possible to be kinder and more giving to others—all keeping in the holiday spirit.

SOURCE: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/urban-survival/201612/8-mindfulness-tips-during-the-holidays>



Eating Tips

Find Healthy Alternatives

- Healthy eating doesn't mean you have to give up your holiday favorites — all they need are a few modifications.
- You can use less butter and bacon in green bean casseroles, yogurt instead of mayonnaise in the devilled eggs, and bake the turkey instead of deep frying it.
- With these simple tricks, you can keep all your favorites on your plate without all the excess calories.

Moderation

- Moderation will be your saving grace during the holiday season. There's nothing wrong with enjoying an indulgent, festive dinner — but you'll want to make sure that your meals surrounding it are healthy and nutrient-dense.
- Have a light lunch like salad with olive oil dressing, and opt for a healthy breakfast the next morning like avocado on whole wheat toast.
- By eating healthy during the holiday season, you can afford to go all out for a few big events.

Homemade Instead Of Processed Foods

- Homemade everything can be difficult when you have a lot going on, but it can also ensure that you're eating much healthier.
- Canned, processed and premade foods are full of excess salt and sugar that you can avoid by making the dishes yourself. Reduce your sodium intake by making your own cream of mushroom soup, and reduce your sugar by making cranberry sauce from scratch. Both take only moments to stir in a pot before letting them simmer.
- Making the food from scratch will also make you much more aware of what you're eating and when, giving you more control and awareness in the long run.

Add More Vegetables

- It's easy to go all-out with our favorite recipes, but sometimes eating better is as simple as keeping more healthy choices on hand.
- Increase the number of vegetable dishes on the dinner table, finding small twists to dress them up without making them unhealthy. Roasted asparagus can be beautiful on its own, and roasted carrots or sweet potatoes are rich in taste and a bright pop of color.
- When in doubt, serve vegetables first — like a salad before dinner or a vegetable-based appetizer earlier in the afternoon. This will help everyone make sure they get the vegetables they need instead of filling up on buttery mashed potatoes.

Slow Down During Meals

- While the decadent food might make us eager to eat, a key tip to staying healthy over the holidays is to slow down during mealtime.
- Multiple studies have shown that eating slowly can give our stomachs enough time to send the hormonal signal to our brain telling us that we're full, which will stop us from accidentally overeating. This can help us maintain better portion control as a result.

Portion Control

- Speaking of portion control — portion control will be your best friend throughout the holiday season. Eat small snacks during the day, and have three medium meals instead of three extra-large ones.
- This will improve your digestion and reduce the amount you're eating, both during meal times and overall. If you're worried about portion control, you can use smaller plates or reduce the number of dishes you serve at each meal.

Take a Walk After Dinner

- Walking after a meal can give you several distinct benefits. First, you can get exercise at a time when you might not otherwise be exercising as frequently. It can also provide some quiet alone time to de-stress and aid your digestion all at once.
- All of these factors combined are good for your physical and mental health, and can contribute to weight loss. To maximize these benefits, research suggests that walking immediately after a meal is better than waiting even an hour.

Don't Forgo Exercise

- There's a million other things to do, and if you're away from your home gym, working out can seem even more difficult.
- Despite that, it's important to maintain regular exercise for both your mental and physical health. Exercise is good for your body and can also relieve the stress that's so commonplace during the holiday season.
- Even if you can only exercise in small bursts throughout the day, make time to do some jumping jacks on the patio or go ice skating with your family.

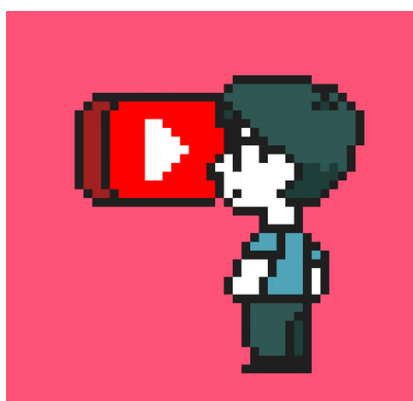
Stick To Your Typical Sleep Schedule

- This can be particularly challenging with the increase in parties and family in town. But sticking to your sleep schedule will improve your quality of sleep both now and after the holidays.
- Studies have shown that, unsurprisingly, irregular sleep schedules can lead to poor sleep quality, fatigue, poor eating habits, and daytime sleepiness that can take time to reverse.
- Avoid this by going to bed and waking up as close as possible to the same time as you usually do.

Take Time For Yourself

- The holidays are full of family and friends, and while this can be a great thing, it can also be draining and stressful.
- Whether you're staying with family over the holidays or just attending a large number of events, remember to take time every day for yourself.
- Go for a walk, meditate once a day, or offer to go to the store for a few minutes of quiet. Even extroverts need time to recharge.

SOURCE: <https://www.healthline.com/health/healthy-holiday#tips-and-tricks>



Holiday Video Trainings

Holiday Video Trainings

- Veronica speaks about five tips that can remind you about the importance of staying connected, focus on the positive, eat delicious seasonal foods to fight diseases and also plan to stay active!
- Malik teaches you how to make glitter holiday cards. Create cool cards, posters, and pictures using glitter and glue. Let your imagination soar and see what you can design for this holiday season.
- Matt gives us three exercises that are great for winter sport lovers. Even if you

prefer sneakers over ice skates or ski boots these are fantastic for every day fitness!





SOURCE: <https://www.youtube.com/c/njsap>

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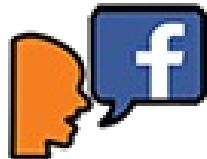
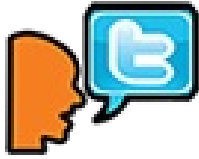


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February 2022

Healthy Hearts:
Part 1
Healthy Bodies



This is Part 1 of *Healthy Hearts*! We'll be discussing how you can keep your heart healthy and recognize when you are unwell.

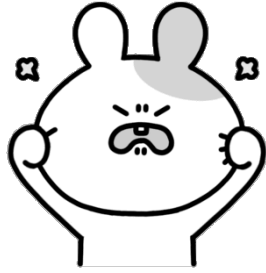
- Stress can put immense strain on your heart and lead to heart disease and ill health.
- There are many foods that you can incorporate into your diet

to help keep your heart strong.

- It is important to be aware of the signs and symptoms of heart attacks and cardiac arrest so you can get help.

After you're done reading, [don't forget to listen to our webinars every Tuesday! You can find registration links and recordings here.](#)

We are also holding Healthy Lifestyles Project: LIVE events, every Wednesday at 11 AM and Friday at 1 PM. [Register here.](#)



Stress and the Heart

What is stress?

- Stress can be broadly defined as a threat or demand placed on your body that outweighs your ability to cope with it.
- Common stressors include issues involving home, family life and health-related events, finances, work-related issues and relationship problems.
- Regardless of the cause, stress sparks our fight or flight response that floods the body with adrenaline. When stress becomes constant, the body remains in alert mode. And perpetually high levels of stress hormones can trigger physiological changes.

Coping Styles Differ

- Some people tend to cope by engaging in social activities, such as calling up friends, or sedentary activities, such as reading, watching television or eating.
- Others turn to physical activities, such as exercising or playing sports.
- Taking an active role in facing your stressor is healthier and more effective than avoiding it by sleeping, drinking or isolating yourself.

Stress Management

- Yoga
 - There are many types of yoga. The ones that focus on slow movement, stretching, and deep breathing are best for lowering your anxiety and stress.
- Meditation
 - Meditation works well for many people and has many benefits. It can lower stress, anxiety, and chronic pain as well as improve sleep, energy levels, and mood.
- Deep Breathing
 - When you practice deep breathing, you turn on your body's natural ability to relax. This creates a state of deep rest that can change how your body responds to stress.

- **Connect**
 - Spend time with a friend or family member who will listen to you. It is a natural way to calm you and lower your stress.
- **Behavior**
 - How you respond to people directly impacts your stress levels.
 - Try not to overcommit yourself.
 - Share responsibilities.
 - Count to 10 before you respond to something stressful.
 - Walk away from a heated situation.
 - Distract yourself with music or podcasts.
- **Inner voice**
 - Nothing affects your stress levels like the voice inside your head. The good news is you are in control. You can exchange negative thoughts for positive ones.
- **Talk therapy**
 - Long-term talk therapy helps some people deal with stress. One approach, cognitive behavioral therapy, helps you change negative thought patterns. Your therapist can guide you toward other approaches that might be helpful.

SOURCE: <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/how-is-stress-and-heart-disease-related/>
<https://www.webmd.com/balance/stress-management/stress-management>



Foods for Your Heart

Leafy Green Vegetables

- Leafy green vegetables like spinach, kale, and collard greens are well known for their wealth of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants.
- They are high in vitamin K and nitrates, which can help reduce blood pressure and improve heart function.
- Studies show that a higher intake of leafy greens is associated with a lower risk of heart disease.

Whole Grains

- Common types of whole grains include: whole wheat, brown rice, oats, rye, barley, buckwheat and quinoa.
- Studies show that eating whole grains is associated with lower cholesterol and blood pressure, as well as a lower risk of heart disease.
- When purchasing whole grains, make sure to read the ingredients label carefully. Phrases like “whole grain” or “whole wheat” indicate a whole grain product, while words like “wheat flour” or “multigrain” may not.

Berries

- Strawberries, blueberries, blackberries, and raspberries are jam-packed with

important nutrients that play a central role in heart health.

- Berries are rich in antioxidants.
- Studies show that eating them can reduce multiple risk factors for heart disease and lower (bad) cholesterol, systolic blood pressure, body mass index, and certain markers of inflammation
- Berries can be a satisfying snack or delicious low calorie dessert. Try adding a few different types to your diet to take advantage of their unique health benefits.

Avocados

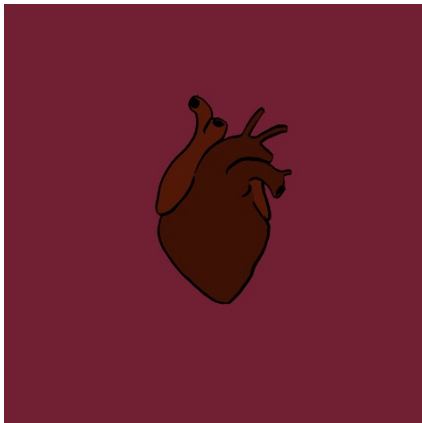
- Avocados are high in monounsaturated fats and potassium.
- They may help lower your cholesterol, blood pressure, and risk of metabolic syndrome.

Fatty Fish and Fish Oil

- Fatty fish like salmon, mackerel, sardines, and tuna are loaded with omega-3 fatty acids, which have been studied extensively for their heart-health benefits.
- If you don't eat much seafood, fish oil is another option for getting your daily dose of omega-3 fatty acids.
- Omega-3 fatty acids may help reduce heart disease risk factors, including blood pressure, triglycerides, and cholesterol.

[Find 10 more healthy heart foods here!](https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/heart-healthy-foods#TOC_TITLE_HDR_2)

SOURCE: https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/heart-healthy-foods#TOC_TITLE_HDR_2



Heart Attack Symptoms

Catch the Signs Early

- Don't wait to get help if you experience any of these heart attack warning signs.
- Some heart attacks are sudden and intense. But most start slowly, with mild pain or discomfort.
- Pay attention to your body and call 911 if you experience the following symptoms:

Chest Discomfort

- Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes - or it may go away and then return. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.

Discomfort of the Upper Body

- Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.

Shortness of Breath

- This can occur with or without chest discomfort.

Other Signs

- Other possible signs include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness.

Men and Women

- As with men, women's most common heart attack symptom is chest pain (angina) or discomfort.
- But women are somewhat more likely than men to experience some of the other common symptoms, particularly shortness of breath, nausea/vomiting, and back or jaw pain.

"Just a Little Heart Attack" Video

- "A little film about a super mom who takes care of everyone except herself", starring and directed by Emmy-nominated actress Elizabeth Banks.
- See a reenactment of some of the signs and symptoms of a heart attack in the video below.
- Remember to call 911 if you think you are having a heart attack.



SOURCE: <https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/heart-attack/warning-signs-of-a-heart-attack>

Let's Stay Healthy!



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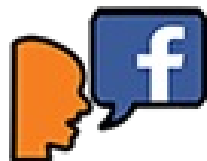
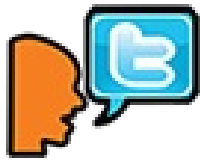


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February 2022

Healthy Hearts: **Part 2**



This is Part 2 of *Healthy Hearts*! We'll be discussing love and healthy relationships.

- There are many benefits to having close relationships with loved ones.
- Breakups can be difficult, but there are ways to help heal a broken heart.
- "Love Languages" are important to understand and maintain healthy communication in your relationships.

After you're done reading, [don't forget to listen to our webinars every Tuesday! You can find registration links and recordings here.](#)

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Health Benefits of Love

Live Longer

- Studies show that those engaged in positive relationships live longer.
- People, particularly men, are healthier when they're married, and they live longer.
- Experts attribute this phenomenon to factors like reduced stress.
- In romantic relationships a partner often gives up bad habits—like heavy drinking or smoking—in support of the relationship. As a result, healthy habits increase longevity.

Heal Quicker

- Patients with strong social supports have better recoveries.
- This can be from friends or family, or even support from an animal partnership, like a pet.
- Improved recovery is likely due to lower levels of stress hormones, like cortisol.

Lower Blood Pressure

- Finding a love connection can make your heart skip a beat, but the safe and secure feeling of a positive relationship calms anxiety and keeps your blood pressure in check.
- People feeling love are more relaxed and more likely to engage in exercise or other activities beneficial to the heart.
- When your main squeeze makes your heart race, it's giving your heart a healthy workout. Those loving feelings cause your brain to release dopamine, adrenaline, and norepinephrine, which make your heart beat faster and stronger in response to such emotions.

Bolster Your Immune System

- The moment we experience heightened stress levels, either from work or personal conflicts, a cold is sure to follow.
- Studies show that people who engage in supportive, positive relationships produce more oxytocin and seem less likely to succumb to the negative effects of stress, anxiety, and depression.

Stay or Get Physically Fit

- When it's hard to stay motivated to exercise and eat right, the support of a good

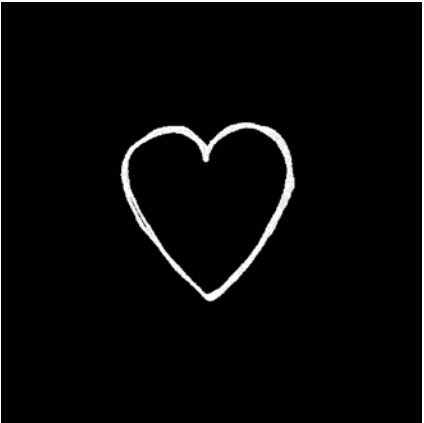
friend can give you a needed boost to stay on track.

- New romantic relationships are a boon to weight loss and good health since we want to look and act our very best for that special someone.
- There's nothing quite like a flurry of compliments to motivate us to maintain our physical appearance.

Feel Less Pain

- A behavioral study demonstrated that experimentally-induced pain was reduced when participants were presented with pictures of a romantic partner.
- By contrast, showing suffering subjects random photos of attractive people didn't show any reduction in reaction.

SOURCE: <https://healthcare.utah.edu/healthfeed/postings/2017/02/relationships.php>



Healing a Broken Heart

Take Time to Grieve

- If possible, try to think of the loss of the relationship as a grieving process.
- Give yourself time. Do not try to find someone new right away. The best thing we can do is to try to honor our emotions and not judge our emotions.
- Take time to be alone, look inward, or see a therapist to work through the complicated emotions of a breakup.
- Take the time to allow the healing to happen with time, care, gentleness, and deeper self-understanding.

Find a New Source of Joy

- After a breakup, we may be more open to saying 'yes' to new things, people, and experiences as a way to explore a newfound sense of freedom, even if it hurts.
- Push yourself to do things, even when you don't feel like it. Meeting a friend for lunch may help you feel better than if you had stayed home alone.

Make a Self-Love List

- When you are feeling low about yourself, consider making a list of all the good things you did for your past partner or all the qualities they liked about you – and the qualities you like about yourself.
- For example, you might write a self-love list like this:
 - I made him coffee in the morning.
 - I picked her up from the train station when it rained.
 - I put on her favorite song when she was sad.
 - I reminded him about his dad's birthday.
- You may also find it helpful to write out a list of positive things you'll do in future relationships.

Acknowledge Your Thoughts of the Past

- When thoughts of your ex arise, try not to stop or block them.

- When the thoughts come up, take a step back and acknowledge them.
- Practice observing and letting them go.
- The minute you pay attention to one and label it as something ‘important,’ you are now judging them. Judging brings more negative emotions since your expectations were not met.

Turn Your Attention Toward Others

- When the pain of a breakup is too hard to bear, you may find that focusing on the needs of others can help boost feelings of wellbeing and distract you from focusing on yourself.
- Consider volunteering at a local soup kitchen or animal shelter, helping a friend in need with meals or cleaning, or cutting a neighbor’s grass.

Allow Emotions to Flow

- You may find it helpful to talk to a trusted friend, family member, or therapist about emotions related to your breakup or ex-partner.
- If you’re not comfortable sharing all of your feelings, consider writing them down or meditating on them. You can also engage in another project, such as painting, that may help you release what’s on your mind.

SOURCE: <https://psychcentral.com/blog/10-tips-to-mend-a-broken-heart#tips>

What is your
love language?

Love Languages

What Are Love Languages?

- The five love languages are five different ways of expressing and receiving love: words of affirmation, quality time, receiving gifts, acts of service, and physical touch.
- Not everyone communicates love in the same way, and likewise, people have different ways they prefer to receive love.
- You can take a quiz to find out what is most important in your life.
- Watch our webinar to learn more about Love Languages and how to best communicate with those you love.

**Take the quiz and find
out yours here!**



SOURCE: <https://www.5lovelanguages.com/quizzes/love-language>

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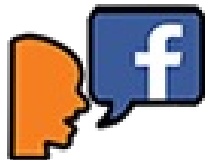
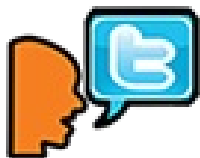


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New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project

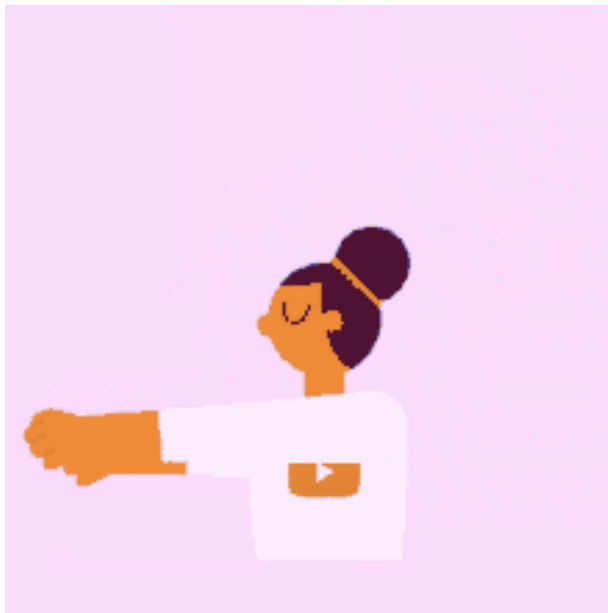
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January 2022

Self-Care:
Part 2
Self-Care Activities



This is Part 2 of *Self-Care*! We'll be discussing why it's important to set some time aside for yourself and practice self-care.

- Self-care is often composed of solo activities you do by yourself

to recharge your energy.

- You can also practice self-care with your friends and family.
- Our pets can also contribute to our daily health and well-being.

After you're done reading, [don't forget to listen to our webinars every Tuesday! You can find registration links and recordings here.](#)

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Solo Self-Care

Gaze at the Stars

- An open, star-studded sky works well to put things into perspective.
- Grab a blanket and head to a spot where you'll have the best visibility.
- Instead of running through your to-do list for the next day or worrying about the fight you had with your significant other, try to unwind by focusing on the beauty above you instead.

Watch the Sunrise

- Everyone deserves to start the day with something beautiful.
- Whether you hike to a local vista that gets a great view of the horizon or just kick back in your backyard with a cup of freshly brewed coffee, taking some time to be alone with your thoughts can be the perfect way to prepare for a long day.

Try a New Workout

- Whether it's cycling or kickboxing chances are there's a group exercise class you've been dying to try.
- Though you're showing up solo, you'll experience the evidence-based benefits of working out with a group, like the positive effects it has on social bonding, pain tolerance, and athletic performance.

Experiment in the Kitchen

- Some of us are born chefs, while others struggle to whip up tasty meals in the kitchen.
- Cooking for yourself gives you the time to experiment with different recipes and sharpen your skills, and you can cook to your specific tastes.

Get Organized

- If your home is practically unrecognizable beneath a mountain of knick knacks and laundry, it's time to get organized.
- Clutter can lead to stress and impact your productivity, so make sure you give

yourself some alone time to clean up.

Meditate

- There's more evidence now than ever that meditation is beneficial for your mental *and* physical health.
- According to Everyday Health, meditation can improve concentration, reduce stress, prevent cognitive decline, and keep your brain healthy and alert as you age.

Take Up a New Hobby

- Life is short and now is the time to do that thing you've always dreamed of doing, whether it's knitting, photography, or gardening.
- Plus, when you have something fun to look forward to, you'll be motivated to plan more alone time for yourself in the future.

Figure Out Your Mantra

- It's that phrase you say over and over in your head when you need to summon some courage.
- Mantras can be words, phrases, or sentences that focus your thoughts, relieve stress, or lift your mood. You can include them in a daily meditation, or you can repeat them to yourself as you face obstacles throughout your day.
- Examples include
 - "I love myself"
 - "I deserve to take care of my mind and body"
 - "I am strong"

SOURCE: <https://www.womansday.com/life/advice/a54496/things-to-do-by-yourself/>



Self-Care with Friends and Family

Home Spa Day

- Get some friends together for an at home spa day. Use your favorite face masks, paint your own nails, or do a hair mask.
- While you apply your treatments, you can chat, listen to music, watch fun movies, etc. To make it really feel like a spa, you can also put out some cucumber water, light candles, and play relaxing music to help everyone get into the calming vibe of a spa.

Go to a Yoga Class

- Another one of the best self care ideas to do with friends is a yoga class.
- Doing yoga with other people can be fun and will hold you accountable for showing up to the class.
- It can be especially good to bring someone with you to your first yoga class to

make it less intimidating.

- If going into the yoga studio isn't quite your thing, you and your friends can also set up some yoga mats in your house or the yard and follow along with a [guided yoga video on Youtube](#).

Spend Time Outdoors

- Spending time outdoors is good for both your mental and physical health. So why not do it with friends?
- Being outside is a great way to find peace and connect to nature. It's also good for you because you will absorb Vitamin D from the sunshine.
- If you have a job where you sit inside all day, it will be a great change to soak up some sunshine outdoors.
- Looking for ways to spend time with others outside? Go for a walk, take a bike ride, or meet up for lunch at a restaurant with outdoor seating.

Do Something Creative

- It can be calming and freeing to get in touch with your creative side, making it one of the best self care ideas to do with friends.
- Get together with a friend and do something creative together. You can start a DIY project together or sign up for a painting class together.
- [Yaymaker](#) as well as other websites have virtual classes as well if you prefer to do a class right from home!

Get Dressed Up...Just Because

- It can be really fun to get dressed up just because.
- Getting dressed up can also be a great way to build confidence and feel good about yourself.
- Invite some friends over to get ready together. Play some music and chat while you do your hair and get dressed.
- Then just enjoy each other's company at home or take your looks out on the town and treat yourselves to a fun dinner or some drinks.

SOURCE: <https://selfcareseeker.com/self-care-ideas-with-friends/>



Self-Care With Your Pets

How Pets Help with Self-Care

- A 2011 study published in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology showed that pets provide social support for owners, which improves their overall well-being.
- A 2005 study of elderly patients found that interacting with animals increased patients' overall perception of their quality of life, even when nothing else about their situation or health had changed. Pets were also shown to decrease symptoms of depression.
- They make us more open and comfortable with other humans. A 2017 study showed that when doctors ask a patient about their pets, the patient is more

comfortable and open about everything going forward.

- Studies have found that owning a cat lowers your stress. By lowering stress levels, cats also help lower their owners' risk of cardiovascular disease, heart disease, and stroke.
- Studies have found that many people (women, in particular) actually prefer to sleep with their pets, even report sleeping better with a cat than with a human as their bedmate. In a Mayo Clinic study, 41% of participants said they slept better because of their pet.
- In a 2016 study, researchers found that dogs can be good audiences for humans with performance anxiety. In the study, children who struggled with reading were asked to read aloud to a trained dog, and after the dog reading session, the kids' anxiety lessened and their reading skills improved.
- Physical activity is a key component of self-care and owning a dog has been shown to increase overall activity levels.

How to Practice Self-Care with your Cat

- Spend time playing with them every day. It's fun and relaxing, and will put both of you in a better mood.
- Set aside some cuddling time every day. The act of cuddling helps create a stronger bond between you and your cat by releasing oxytocin, the "bonding hormone" that makes us feel cozy and lovey-dovey, in your brain.
- Teach your cat some basic training commands. Yes, cats can be trained, and it's a fun bonding activity for both of you! It will challenge both of you and can serve as a stimulating distraction for when you're feeling bored or blue.

How to Practice Self-Care with your Dog

- Take a walk! Owning a dog tends to make you more active, and physical activity is key in boosting your mood. It doesn't have to be the longest walk in the world, just get out of the house and take the dog! They'll appreciate it and you'll most likely experience a mood lift from the exercise and the fresh air.
- Pet them, it's that simple! Just like when you cuddle with your cat, petting or snuggling your dog releases oxytocin in your brain, making you feel all warm and cozy and instantly improving your mood.
- Play a game with them. Go outside for a rousing game of fetch, or introduce a food puzzle that will give your dog a nice mental challenge. Whatever game you choose to play, you'll enjoy watching your dog have fun, and your mood will be boosted in the process. If the game involves exercise, so much the better, but either way, it will be a great bonding activity and will boost those feel-good hormones for both of you.

SOURCE: <https://www.cuteness.com/13715707/how-to-practice-self-care-with-your-cat-or-dog>

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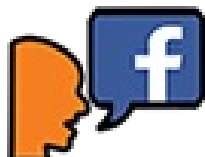
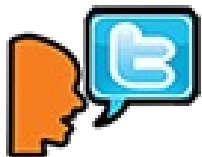


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Positive Pulse

Your monthly dose of advice on healthy living

July 2022

Summer Bugs:
Part 1
**Dealing with Summer
Insects**



This is Part 1 of *Summer Bugs!* We'll taking a look at some bugs and insects that you may see during this time of year and how to deal with any trouble they may cause.

- There are certain bugs that are out in full force in the warm weather.
- With this extra activity, bug bites and stings are common but typically easy to treat.
- If the creepy crawling are invading your outdoor space, there are a few ways to keep them at bay.

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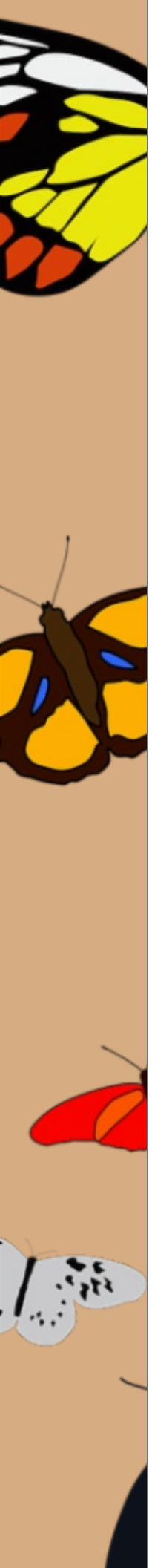
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Insects Most Active in Summer

Bees

- Bumble bees are the inspiration for the drawings of cute, cartoon bees that we



see everywhere, and are arguably the easiest bee to identify. Large and furry, these bees are mostly black in coloring, with a few bands of yellow, white, or even orange. Bumble bees are nonaggressive and rarely sting people; when they do, it's usually because someone has stepped on, or disturbed, their nest. Contrary to popular belief, they do not die after stinging. Bumble bees are a welcome addition to any yard or garden!

- Honeybees, like bumble bees, are also fuzzy. Smaller than bumble bees, they are more subdued in color, often appearing tan and black rather than yellow and black. While beekeepers raise honeybees in wooden boxes, in the wild the bees like to build their waxy hives in hollow trees or along the edges of branches or other outcroppings. Honey bees do sting but prefer not to, as they lose their stinger and die directly afterwards. They will rarely sting you unless they feel that they, or their hive, is threatened.

Wasps

- Wasps are carnivores who live off of other small creatures, mostly insects, using this protein to feed their young. Unlike bees, many types of wasps do sting and can be very aggressive. The ability to sting multiple times without harming themselves, and to send out alarm pheromones quickly bringing more wasps to the scene, means that they can be quite dangerous to humans.
- Yellow jackets are commonly mistaken for bees because of their striped black-and-yellow markings. The major difference is that yellow jackets are smooth—never fuzzy or hairy like bees—and their yellow stripes tend to be brighter and shinier. They also have a thin, “wasp” waist.
- You may be noticing a spike in wasp and hornet activity during the summer months. By the time late summer rolls around, the queen has laid enough eggs to produce thousands of wasps in the colony. With so many wasps in the nest and the worker wasps beginning to emerge, you're likely to see an increase in wasp activity around the nest.

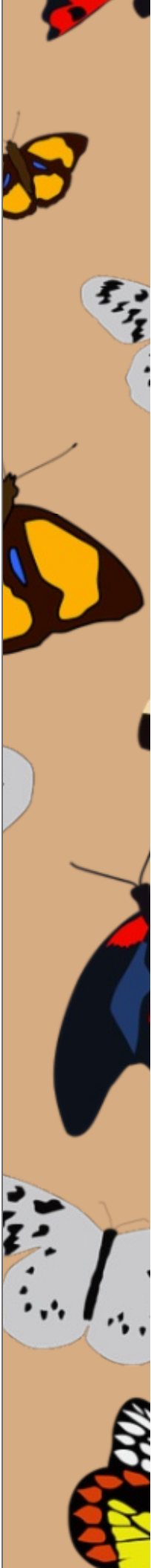
Ants

- Ants become active when the temperatures are consistently between 70 degrees and 90 degrees and are actively foraging for food.
- Some species, such as the odorous house ant, will forage in greater numbers during times of day when the temperatures are cooler, but many ants will forage almost any time of day and night in the summer. Ants foraging more often means you're more likely to see them in plain sight.
- Ants occasionally come inside in search of water, particularly during dry periods. In this case you may see them in bathrooms or other humid parts of the house.

Fruit Flies

- Late summer into early fall is the prime time for fruit fly activity, with it being the harvest season.
- This is the season for fresh fruits and vegetables, which are a key to completing the life cycle of a fruit fly.
- Fruit flies lay eggs on organic matter, such as fruits or vegetables, and immediately upon hatching, the larvae survive by feeding on it.
- You may wonder why you see so many fruit flies at a time. A fruit fly can lay upwards of 500 eggs in its lifetime and the entire life cycle only takes about one week. What this means, is that a few fruit flies can quickly turn into a full-blown infestation.

Mosquitoes

- Mosquitoes love summer and can reside year-round in warm, tropical locations.
 - In addition to their love for heat, they also enjoy moisture. They are commonly found lingering by standing water like ponds, swamps, flower pots, etc.
 - Mosquitoes can reproduce within about 2 weeks time but they live no more than a week to a few months at most.
 - These pests can carry diseases such as Malaria, Dengue Fever, West Nile Virus, and Zika.
- 

- Many would say this is the most irritating insect during summer months.

Ticks

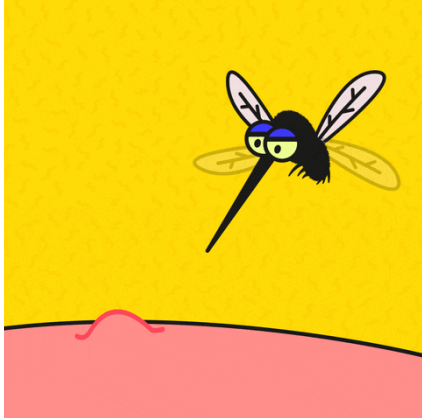
- Ticks are most active in the spring and fall, but they can still be around during the summer months.
- They are commonly found in areas with thick foliage, high grass, or even in grass clippings. You don't have to go hiking in the deep woods to spot ticks. They can be found as close as your backyard.
- Ticks are tiny pests that latch on their hosts to feed. These tiny hitchhikers can simply climb onto people or pets. Not only can their bites leave painful swelling, but ticks also carry dangerous diseases like Lyme and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever.
- The best way to deal with ticks is to keep your yard clear; ticks are drawn to overgrowth. If you are heading outdoors, wear repellent to keep these parasites off. It's also a good idea to wear long sleeves and pants if you plan on going into the deep woods.
- Always check your body for ticks after hikes or outdoor activities. If you should find a tick on you, a loved one, or a pet, you should remove it immediately.
- What if I find a tick?
 - First: Remove it promptly. [Watch this video](#) on how to properly remove a tick. You may want to save the tick for later ID (see Next). Perform a full tick check in case there are others. Remove clothing and tumble dry on high heat for 1 hour to kill additional ticks.
 - Next: Knowing the tick's species, life stage, and engorgement level can help you determine your risk of tick-borne disease. You may be able to bring it to your county's cooperative extension office or mosquito control agency for Tick ID, check with them for more information. You can also use [this online tool](#) from the University of Rhode Island to identify them yourself.
 - Be on the lookout for symptoms of a tick-borne disease, such as fever, headache, muscle ache, or rash. Should symptoms develop, see a physician immediately and tell them about the tick bite.

Harmless Bugs

- Not every bug is out to harm you.
- As discussed above, bumble bees can sting but are generally not aggressive and are very important pollinators for the environment,
- Ladybugs and butterflies are common in the summer and are known for their pretty appearance.
- Even though almost all spiders have venom and possess the ability to bite, most arachnids found in New Jersey gardens pose little to no risk to humans. In fact, most spiders are more scared of people than people are of them. A few potentially dangerous species reside in New Jersey, [however, and knowing the habitat and appearance of these venomous spiders can help you avoid them.](#)

SOURCE: <https://www.terro.com/articles/why-summer-bugs-are-active>
<https://njaes.rutgers.edu/tick/>

Bug Bites & Stings



Overview

- Most insect bites and stings are mild and can be treated at home. They might cause itching, swelling and stinging that go away in a day or two.
- Some bites or stings can transmit disease-causing bacteria, viruses or parasites.
- Stings from bees, yellow jackets, wasps, hornets and fire ants might cause a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis).

Symptoms

- When an insect bites, it releases saliva that can cause the skin around the bite to become red, swollen and itchy.
- The venom from a sting often also causes a swollen, itchy, red mark (a weal) to form on the skin. This can be painful, but it's harmless in most cases. The affected area will usually remain painful and itchy for a few days.
- The severity of bites and stings varies depending on the type of insect involved and the sensitivity of the person

For Mild Reactions

1. Move to a safe area to avoid more bites or stings.
2. Remove any stingers.
3. Gently wash the area with soap and water.
4. Apply a cloth dampened with cold water or filled with ice to the area of the bite or sting for 10 to 20 minutes. This helps reduce pain and swelling.
5. If the injury is on an arm or leg, raise it.
6. Apply to the affected area calamine lotion, baking soda paste, or 0.5% or 1% hydrocortisone cream. Do this several times a day until your symptoms go away.
7. Take an anti-itch medicine (antihistamine) by mouth to reduce itching. Options include nonprescription cetirizine, fexofenadine (Allegra Allergy, Children's Allegra Allergy), loratadine (Claritin).
8. Take a nonprescription pain reliever as needed.
9. Seek medical care if the swelling gets worse, the site shows signs of infection or you don't feel well.

When To Seek Emergency Care

- Call 911 or your local medical emergency number if a child is stung by a scorpion or if anyone is having a serious reaction that suggests anaphylaxis, even if it's just one or two signs or symptoms:
 - Trouble breathing
 - Swelling of the lips, face, eyelids or throat
 - Dizziness, fainting or unconsciousness
 - A weak and rapid pulse
 - Hives
 - Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
- Take these actions immediately while waiting for medical help:
 - Ask whether the injured person is carrying an epinephrine autoinjector (EpiPen, Auvi-Q, others). Ask whether you should help inject the medication. This is usually done by pressing the autoinjector against the

- thigh and holding it in place for several seconds.
- Loosen tight clothing and cover the person with a blanket.
- Don't offer anything to drink.
- If needed, position the person to prevent choking on vomit.

SOURCE: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/first-aid/first-aid-insect-bites/basics/art-20056593>



How to Ward off Bugs

Bug-repelling Tech

- Try an outdoor bug zapper. These do not emit any scent or sound; rather, they work by luring insects to a UV light, which then electrocutes them. Zappers can be effective, in the right environment.
- The only downside is they're only really effective at night. If you have competing light sources, like street lights or porch lights, they won't be as effective.
- A bug zapper with a UV lamp makes it most effective in luring surrounding bugs.
- Different from a bug zapper, a fuel-powered repeller burns repellent into the air once you power it on. They can protect up to 15 feet with silent, chemical-free repellent, making it best for relaxed hangouts in a smaller outdoor space.

Replace Incandescent Bulbs with LEDs

- If your patio or deck is adorned with twinkling string lights, you may want to rethink the bulbs you're using. There's no doubt that bugs will be attracted to light sources no matter what, but more so to bright and hot lights more than other styles.
- Try switching out any traditional incandescent bulbs with warm-colored LEDs, like orange or yellow hues. These outdoor LED string lights create a warmer glow than an incandescent counterpart.

Use Citronella as a Bug Repellent

- Whether city dwellers or country folk, most people have used citronella candles in an outdoor space. These are an easy and affordable option, and while these candles aren't nearly as powerful as bug zappers or insecticides, they are a more atmospheric option that fits seamlessly with your outdoor decor.
- For maximum and widespread citronella power, try buying a large pack of citronella tea light candles.
- Another, much more natural, citronella option is to stock your outdoor space with citronella plants, whether you have a few of the annuals in pots, or plant them around your patio.

Physical Enclosure

- You can physically keep bugs away with an enclosure. These are typically built with a mesh screen that blocks bugs while still allowing sunshine or moonlight and a cool breeze to flow through.
- A pop-up gazebo is the perfect portable option for those who don't want to

commit to a constructed enclosure in the backyard.

- When all else fails, it may be time to try another area or go inside!

Remove Mosquito Eggs

- Stop mosquitoes from laying eggs in or near water.
- Once a week, empty and scrub, turn over, cover, or throw out items that hold water, such as tires, buckets, planters, toys, pools, birdbaths, flowerpots, or trash containers.
- Check for water-holding containers both indoors and outdoors.

Insect Repellent

- Read and follow the label directions to ensure proper use; be sure you understand how much to apply.
- Apply repellents only to exposed skin and/or clothing. Do not use under clothing.
- Do not apply near eyes and mouth, and apply sparingly around ears.
- When using sprays, do not spray directly into face; spray on hands first and then apply to face.
- Never use repellents over cuts, wounds, or irritated skin.
- Do not spray in enclosed areas.
- Avoid inhaling or breathing in a spray product and do not use it near food.
- Try clicking below to see what EPA tested products are available.



Find the Repellent that is Right for You | US EPA

mosquitoes, ticks or both; protection time; active ingredient; or other product-specific information. Consider these factors when choosing a repellent: Do you need protection from mosquitoes, ticks or both? How long will you be exposed to them?...

[Read more](#)
www.epa.gov

SOURCE: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/reviewedcom/2021/04/09/how-repel-backyard-bugs/7160250002/>

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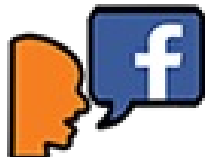
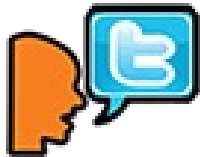


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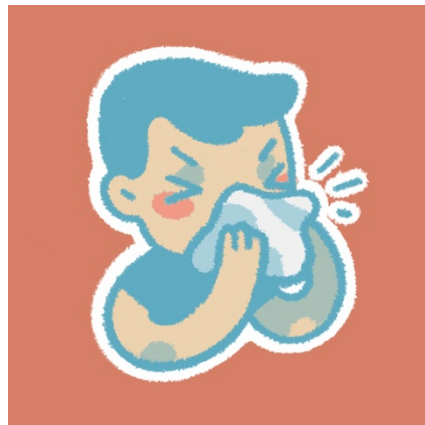
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Promoting Advocacy and Independence for People
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July 2022

Summer Bugs: Part 2 Illnesses & Accidents



This is Part 2 of *Summer Bugs*! We typically think of getting sick only in the winter, but you can still fall ill in the warm weather. We'll taking a look at some of the most common summer illnesses and accidents to look out for.

- There are some sicknesses to be aware of that are typically caught in the summertime.
- It is important to continue practicing some COVID prevention

methods while enjoying your summer.

- There are also some accidents to watch out for that tend to happen more often in the summer.

After you're done reading, [don't forget to listen to our webinars every Tuesday! You can find registration links and recordings here.](#)

We are also holding Healthy Lifestyles Project: LIVE events, every Wednesday at 11 AM and Friday at 1 PM. [Register here.](#)



Common Illnesses

Swimmer's Ear

- Swimmer's ear is an inflammation that occurs in the skin of the ear canal. The ear becomes infected when moisture or water is trapped in the ear canal. An infection can also occur when there is trauma to the ear from the use of cotton swabs or hearing aids.
- Swimmer's ear can cause significant ear pain. Common symptoms include: ear discharge, itching, hearing loss and a sensation of fullness in the ear.
- The best treatment for swimmers ear is a course of antibiotic ear drops. A good cleaning and removal of debris in the ear canal is also important.
- The best way to prevent swimmer's ear is to avoid using Q-tips, keep the ear clean and dry and remove all water from the ear canal after swimming.

Poison Ivy Rash

- Poison ivy rash is a red, itchy rash that forms when skin comes in contact with the oil or resin of a poison ivy plant. The rash develops within hours or even days after contact, and the severity of the reaction depends on the amount of oil you have gotten on your skin.
- If you come in contact with a poison ivy plant and develop a rash:
 - Apply cool compresses to the skin.
 - Apply calamine lotion and hydrocortisone cream to reduce itching.
 - Take an oatmeal bath to dry out the rash and reduce itching.
- Poison ivy plants have three green leaves and a red stem, and they typically grow in the form of a vine. Remember: "Leaves of three, let them be!"

Summer Colds

- Colds in the summer always feel so much worse than they do in the winter.
- The types of virus can be slightly different, but essentially there is not much of a difference. Summer colds seem worse because during the summer everyone wants to be outside and swimming. On occasion, the viruses can cause a more insidious course, so you feel sick for a longer period of time.
- Symptoms of a summer cold include: nasal congestion, discharge that is clear or thick, a dry cough, ear pressure, and occasionally, a fever.
- To treat summer colds, stay hydrated, use nasal saline rinses, and take oral

decongestants and oral anti-inflammatories.

- The best way to prevent a summer cold is to stay away from people with colds.

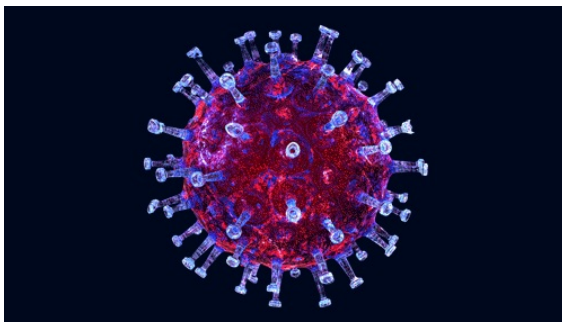
Food Poisoning

- Foodborne illnesses increase during the summer because foodborne bacteria grow faster in hot, humid conditions and people increase their outdoor activities, which include cooking and eating outside.
- Most foodborne illnesses cause vomiting and diarrhea, but you should see your doctor if you have a fever over 101.5 °F, blood in your stool, signs of dehydration, or diarrhea that lasts for more than three days.
- To prevent the spread of foodborne illnesses, the United States Department of Agriculture recommends:
 - Washing hands and surfaces often.
 - Separating meats when prepping and grilling.
 - Cooking all raw beef, pork, lamb and veal to 160 °F.
 - Refrigerating perishable foods such as cooked meats and foods containing mayo, like potato and pasta salads.

Asthma

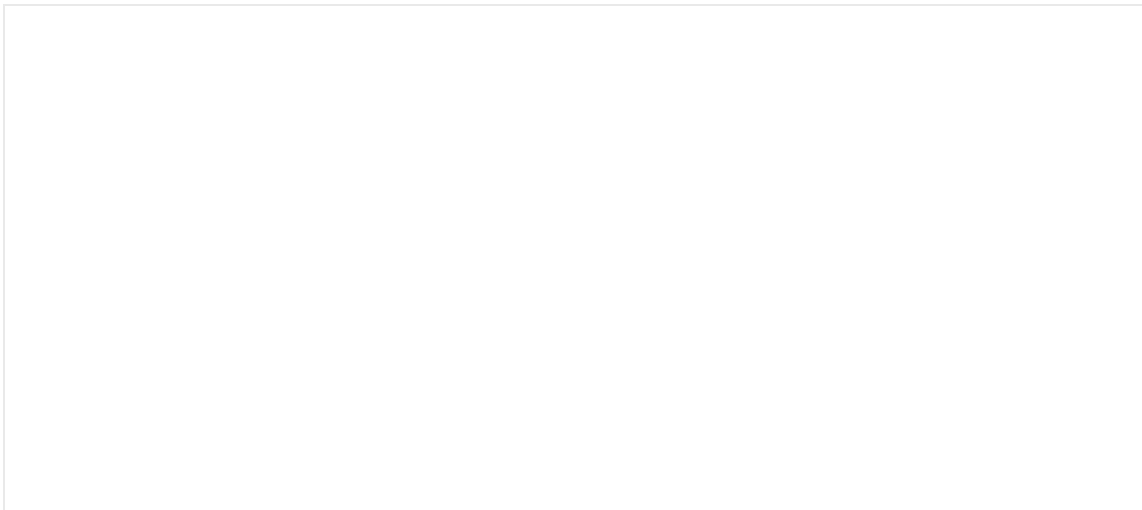
- Summer can be a dangerous time for those suffering from asthma, particularly when your asthma triggers are commonly found outdoors.
- Sudden changes in weather, like a humid day or a cool breeze, can trigger an attack. Even smoke billowing from a campfire can cause an asthma flair-up.
- To prevent a summer asthma attack, know your triggers and get tested for allergies. It's also important to continue your normal treatment routine and carry your inhaler at all times.

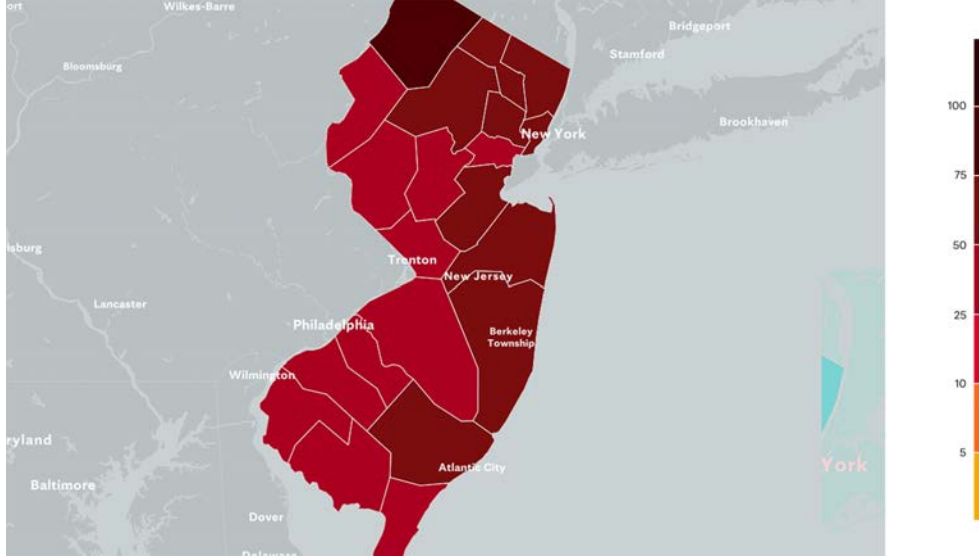
SOURCE: <https://www.piedmont.org/living-better/the-5-worst-summer-sicknesses>



Covid Cases

Covid-19 is still around with cases going up and down, so be mindful of what it is like in your area. You can keep an eye out on your county's caseload and the current hotspots in New Jersey using the Mayo Clinic map below.





New Jersey Coronavirus Map: Tracking the Trends

What you can do Get a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as it's available to you. If you are fully vaccinated, you can more safely return to many activities that you might not have been able to do because of the pandemic.

[Read more](#)

www.mayoclinic.org

You can also find all relevant COVID-19 information for New Jersey on the official Information Hub below.



NEW JERSEY COVID-19 Information Hub

New Jersey COVID-19 Information Hub

The official COVID-19 Information Hub for the State of New Jersey. Find the latest news, guidance, resources, and support here.

[Read more](#)

covid19.nj.gov

SOURCE: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/coronavirus-covid-19/map/new-jersey>
<https://covid19.nj.gov>

Top Summer Accidents



Motor Vehicle Crashes

- More cars are on the road during the summer season due to people being busier with toting around kids, going on vacations, and taking road trips.
- According to the latest data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), there were 9,025 fatal motor vehicle accidents in 2019 from June to August alone. Here are some reasons why car accidents occur most in the summertime:
 - Drivers under the influence of alcohol
 - Distracted driving such as talking or texting on the phone, talking to children in the backseat, changing the radio, using a GPS device
 - Driving while drowsy
 - Reckless driving behaviors such as speeding, not obeying traffic signals and signs, and tailgating

Bicycle Accidents

- More people enjoy bike rides during the summer season. Whether biking for recreation or exercise, cyclists must take extra precautions when riding with traffic.
- Bicycle accidents can be the catalyst to a life-threatening injury when in a crash with a motor vehicle.

Pedestrian Accidents

- Many people enjoy walking, and some may even walk to work during the summer season. Sadly, pedestrian accidents are not uncommon when the weather gets warmer.
- From drunk drivers to motor vehicles going through crosswalks, pedestrians crossing the street are at high risk of an accident. Pedestrians have no protection against motor vehicle crashes, and are more prone to sustain a severe or fatal injury.

Motorcycle Crashes

- According to a National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) study, the highest hospital admission rate for motorcycle accidents happens during the summer.
- Motorcyclists are at an increased risk of being involved in a fatal collision with a motor vehicle since they do not have protection such as airbags or metal encasing to keep them protected in the event of an accident.
- Sadly, bikers often sustain traumatic brain injuries, spinal cord injuries, and severe fractures after a motorcycle accident.

Swimming Accidents

- While the pool can be a place for a splashing good time, and it's a popular activity for people of all ages, swimming pool accidents are far from uncommon during the summer season.

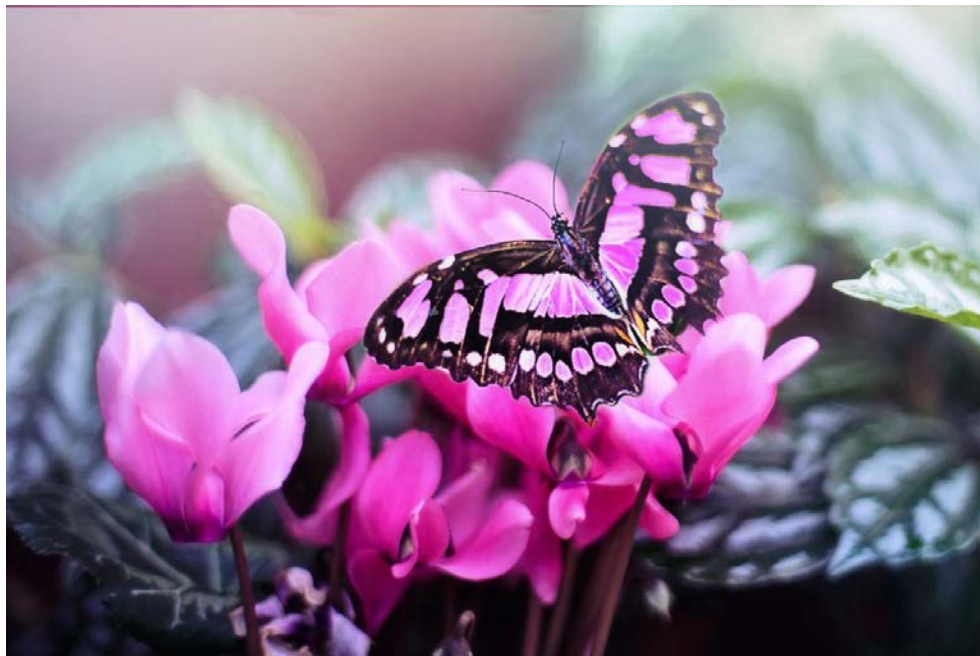
- Sadly, severe incidents like drowning or injuries occur far too often. Here are some reasons why swimming pool accidents happen:
 - Lack of maintenance on pool equipment
 - Unsupervised children
 - Wet and sloppy areas unmaintained around the pool
 - Yard and lawn equipment in and around the pool area posing tripping hazards

Trampoline Accidents

- Although trampolines look fun, they can quickly turn unpleasant when someone gets hurt.
- In a September 2000 study, The Consumer Product Safety Commission reports that trampoline-related injuries have tripled since 1991.
- The majority of injuries due to trampolines occur in children between the ages of 6 and 12. One of the most common reasons for trampoline accidents are
 - The trampoline does not have a net
 - Too many people on the trampoline at one time
 - Jumping from high places into the trampoline (such as roofs and ladders)
 - Poor assembly of the trampoline

SOURCE: <https://www.bandaslawfirm.com/blogs/2021/july/the-top-6-summer-accidents/>

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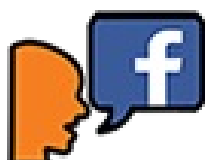
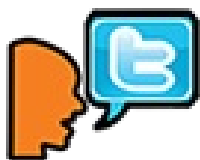


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June 2022

Healthy Grilling:
Part 1
Grilling and BBQ Tips



This is Part 1 of *Healthy Grilling*! We'll taking a look at how food

cooked on the grill can benefit your health. In Part 2 we'll explore some recipes and suggestions for you to cook at your summer barbecue.

- There are pros and cons to cooking your food on the grill.
- Make sure to practice safe grilling practices each time you fire up the grill.
- Some quick tips can be followed to make your grilling even healthier!

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Pros and Cons

Pro: Grilling Brings You Outdoors

- Most people do other activities while grilling rather than just sitting around.
- The performance of grilling encourages everyone to gather outdoors and enjoy the fresh air.
- Physical activities done outdoors is an additional healthy activity along with eating your food.

Con: Charred Meat

- If you're cooking meat on the grill, fat drips down and creates chemical-filled smoke which is unhealthy to breathe, just like cigarette smoke.
- When you cook on charcoal, it uses very high heat and carcinogenic heterocyclic amines (HCAs) and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) are formed when you cook animal proteins at high temperatures.
- Both substances have been linked to higher risks of cancer.
- Research shows that the more well done you grill your meats, the higher the risk of cancer is. However, experts tend to agree that everything in moderation should be okay.
- Gas grills tend to have a lower rate of risk because you create less smoke and control the temperature.

Pro: Grilling Reduces Fat

- No matter if you use a charcoal or gas grill to do your cooking, the healthiness of your meal is up to you.
- Grilling naturally lets you eat less fat. As you cook, the extra fat from whatever you're grilling drips down through the grates.

- Foods like vegetables and meat hold onto their vitamins, minerals and nutrients better when you grill.

Con: Be Careful of Traditional BBQ Foods

- What does your traditional backyard barbecue look like? For many people, grilling means cooking high-fat meats like burgers, hot dogs and sausages.
- This means eating more saturated fat, calories and cholesterol than you might realize.
- Like with everything else, moderation is key. Focus your regular menu on lots of veggies, chicken and fish for heart-healthy grilling.

SOURCE: <https://blog.mercy.com/summer-survival-guide-healthy-grilling-guide-grilling/>
<https://www.livestrong.com/article/440489-is-charcoal-cooking-a-healthy-option/>

Safety Tips



Only Use Grills Outside

- It may be tempting to set up your barbecue grill inside of your open garage or under a covered balcony, but propane, gas, and charcoal grills are strictly designed for outdoor use where there is plenty of ventilation.
- Any combustible materials that surround or hang over the grill when it's in use can catch fire easily and quickly.
- Make sure that the area over top and around your grill is clear and unobstructed.

Place Your Grill Away From Your Home

- Barbeque grills are often placed just outside the back door or on the back deck against a railing. You should avoid placing your grill in these areas because it can pose a potential fire hazard.
- Grills that are placed too close to the house or other wood structures can heat up adjacent materials and cause a fire to start.
- Be sure to keep your grill at least 10 feet from your home or other structures.

Put Your Grill on a Flat, Level Surface

- Grills that are placed on slopes or other uneven surfaces can tip over easily and cause a fire.
- Make sure that your grill is set up on a stable surface such as a concrete pad so that it remains level while cooking food.

Check Your Grill for Leaks

- If you store your grill inside during the winter months, it's important to check it over thoroughly when grilling season begins.
- A leak in the gas lines can cause propane or natural gas to build up inside the BBQ when the lid is closed.
- Check the gas lines to make sure that they are free of leaks before using your

grill, and always open the lid of your barbecue before lighting.

Always Clean Your Grill After Use

- Barbecuing regularly causes grease to build-up on the grill plates and collect inside the grease tray. If not cleaned, the build-up can then act as fuel and catch fire while the grill is in use.
- Clean your charcoal or gas grill after each use with a grill brush and empty the grease tray when it begins to fill up.

Never Leave Your Grill Unattended

- You should *never* walk away from your barbecue while it's in use
- Because barbecues use high heat and open flames to cook food, they can become a safety and fire hazard if left unattended.
- If you must leave the grill, ask another adult to watch the grill for you.

Wear Appropriate Clothing

- Articles of clothing that have long sleeves or pieces that dangle can catch fire easily when too close to an open flame.
- When grilling food, wear clothing that won't interfere with the cooking process and make sure that any apron strings are tied back.
- If a piece of clothing does catch fire, remember to stop, drop, and roll to extinguish the flames quickly.

Keep a Spray Bottle on Hand

- It's common for grills to flare up as fat drips from meat as it cooks, and this can cause a section of the grill to remain on fire as it burns away.
- If left alone, the flames will continue to burn and cause excess smoke to billow out from under the lid.
- Keep a spray bottle filled with water beside your grill so that you can quickly extinguish smaller flames before they spread.

SOURCE:



Healthy Tips

Grill Fruits and Vegetables

- Grilling fruits and vegetables is a great idea, whether or not you're grilling meat or fish to go with them.
- We all need to eat lots of fruits and vegetables, and this is an appealing way to serve them.
- Eating antioxidant-rich fruits and vegetables benefits the body in so many ways -- reducing your risk of coronary heart disease, stroke, obesity, and some types of cancer.
- But here's the best part: PAHs and HCAs don't form on grilled fruits & vegetables.
- Some fruits and vegetables that are great to grill:
 - Tomatoes, Onions, Bell peppers, Zucchini, Eggplant, Endive, Pineapple, Mango, Apple, Pear

Grill Lean

- When you're grilling meat, limit the amount of fat that drips on the coals by starting with lean cuts.
- If you put a very lean cut of beef or pork, or skinless chicken, onto the grill, you're off to a healthy start.

Marinate

- You've gotta love the idea of infusing flavor into meats, fruits, and vegetables by soaking them in a tasty marinade!
- Some favorite marinade ingredients include wines, vinegars, lemon or lime juice, low-sodium soy sauce, honey, garlic, onions, herbs, and spices. Use fat-free or low-fat marinades on your grilled meats, fish, and poultry to limit the fat that drips on the coals. The simple act of marinating before grilling has been shown to reduce the formation of HCAs by as much as 92% to 99% in some studies.

Marinating Tips

- When choosing bottled marinades over making your own, look for products or recipes that contain olive or canola oil (and that only use a little oil).
- Refrigerate any foods that are marinating longer than 1/2 hour.
- Don't baste your food during grilling with the liquid the meat was marinating in (this passes raw meat juices to your cooked meat). Before you add the meat, set aside some of your marinade for this purpose.
- Meats and poultry should marinate at least 1-2 hours; fish and vegetables generally only need to marinate for an hour.

Cut Down on Grilling Time

- Grill smaller portions of meat, poultry, and fish so they cook faster and spend less time on the grill.
- Another trick is to precook the meat, fish, and poultry in the oven or microwave, then finish cooking on the grill.

Flip It

- Flipping food frequently may help prevent the formation of HCAs, according to recent research using hamburger patties.
- To turn meat without piercing it (which releases juices that drip onto the coals), use tongs or spatulas instead of a fork.

Skewer It

- A fun way to cut down on grilling time is to thread small pieces of meat or fish on a skewer.
- Scallops and shrimp are naturals for skewers, too. Try alternating pieces of meat, chicken, or seafood with bell pepper and onion pieces, zucchini slices, cherry tomatoes, and/or small mushrooms.
- Don't have skewers? Use branches of rosemary as skewers. They infuse a hint of rosemary into the food as it cooks -- not to mention the beautiful presentation it makes.

SOURCE: <https://www.webmd.com/food-recipes/features/a-healthier-way-of-grilling>

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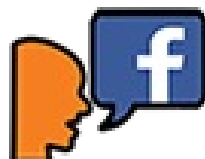
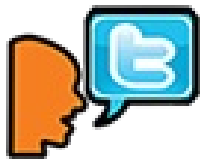


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June 2022

Healthy Grilling:
Part 2
Healthy Grill Recipes



This is Part 2 of *Healthy Grilling*! We'll taking a look at some recipes

and suggestions for you to cook at your summer barbecue.

- **Entree:** Grilled Eggplant and Tomato Sandwiches
- **Side:** Grilled Corn and Bell Pepper Salad
- **Dessert:** Grilled Peaches With Vanilla Mascarpone

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Grilled Eggplant and Tomato Sandwiches

Tasty grilled eggplant needs strong flavors to stand up to it, and the pungent Roquefort and sweet-savory tomato in this recipe do that job well. Crusty-outside, soft-inside grilled sourdough is the perfect bread to contain everything. For an even more indulgent version of the sandwich, add a couple slices of crisp bacon for a BLT-E.

Ingredients

- ¼ cup plain fat-free yogurt
- 3 tablespoons (about 3/4 ounce) crumbled Roquefort or other blue cheese
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley
- 1 tablespoon light mayonnaise
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 2 Japanese eggplants (about 1 pound)
- Cooking spray
- 8 (1-ounce) slices ciabatta or sourdough bread
- 8 (1/4-inch-thick) slices tomato (about 2 tomatoes)
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 cups trimmed arugula

Instructions

1. Prepare grill.
2. Combine yogurt, blue cheese, parsley, mayonnaise and garlic in a small bowl, stirring well.
3. Trim ends from eggplants. Cut each eggplant lengthwise into 3 slices; lightly coat eggplant with cooking spray.
4. Place eggplant on grill rack coated with cooking spray; grill 3 minutes on each side or until browned and tender.
5. Remove from grill; cut slices crosswise in half.
6. Place bread slices on grill rack; grill 3 minutes on each side or until lightly toasted.
7. Spread yogurt mixture evenly over 4 toast slices. Top each with 3 eggplant pieces and 2 tomato slices; sprinkle evenly with salt and pepper. Top each with 1/2 cup arugula. Cover with remaining toast slices.

SOURCE: <https://www.myrecipes.com/recipe/grilled-eggplant-tomato-sandwiches-with-roquefort-dressing>



Grilled Corn and Bell Pepper Salad

Get the most out of your grill space by adding a little char to every element of this quick, fresh corn salad. Add all the vegetables at once; remove each as it finishes cooking.

Ingredients

- Cooking spray
- 2 large ears fresh yellow corn, husks removed
- 1 medium red bell pepper
- 1 medium yellow bell pepper
- 1 medium shallot, peeled and halved lengthwise
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 3/4 ounce Cotija cheese, crumbled (about 3 Tbsp.)

Instructions

1. Preheat grill to high (450°F to 550°F).
2. Coat grill grate and corn, bell peppers, and shallot with cooking spray. Add vegetables to grill. Cook corn 14 minutes, turning after 7 minutes. Cook bell peppers 10 minutes, turning occasionally. Cook shallot 8 minutes, turning after 4 minutes. Remove vegetables from grill; cool 5 minutes.
3. Cut corn kernels from ears and place in a bowl. Cut bell peppers into 3/4-inch pieces; add to corn. Chop shallot; add to corn mixture.
4. Add parsley, oil, vinegar, salt, and pepper to corn mixture; toss. Sprinkle with cheese.

SOURCE: <https://www.cookinglight.com/recipes/grilled-corn-bell-pepper-salad>

Grilled Peaches With Vanilla Mascarpone



Fresh, in-season peaches make this simple dish really sing. The recipe is sweet, but not overly so. If you want to cut back on sugar even further, you could easily omit brushing maple syrup onto the fruit, and it'll still taste quite good. This makes an lovely way to finish a summer meal, or turn these grilled peaches into a hearty breakfast by adding your favorite crunchy granola.

Ingredients

- 2 large ripe fresh peaches, halved and pitted
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 5 teaspoons pure maple syrup, divided
- 3 tablespoons vanilla whole-milk Greek yogurt
- 1 tablespoon mascarpone cheese, at room temperature
- 1 tablespoon small fresh mint leaves

Instructions

1. Preheat grill to medium-high (400° F to 450° F). Or heat a grill pan over medium-high.
2. Brush both sides of peach halves with olive oil.
3. Place peach halves on oiled grates, cut side down, and grill, uncovered, until grill marks appear, about 1 minute.
4. Flip peaches, brush 1 teaspoon of the maple syrup on cut side of each peach half, and grill until tender throughout, about 1 more minute.
5. Stir together yogurt, mascarpone, and remaining 1 teaspoon maple syrup in a small bowl.
6. Serve peaches warm or at room temperature, topped with mascarpone mixture and mint.

SOURCE: <https://www.cookinglight.com/recipes/grilled-peaches-with-vanilla-mascarpone>

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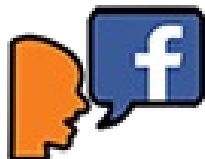
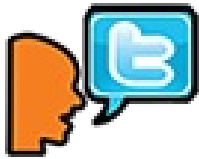


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Positive Pulse

Your monthly dose of advice on healthy living

March 2022

Now or Later: **Part 1** **Procrastination**

TIME TO BE PRODUCTIVE!



SLOTHILDA.COM

This is Part 1 of *Now or Later*! We'll be discussing procrastination,

why we put off tasks, and how to avoid it.

- Procrastination is a long, specific word for a very common problem that affects us all.
- There are many reasons we procrastinate and it is important to know which applies to our own lives.
- Once you know why you procrastinate, you can form a plan to help you focus on completing tasks in your life in a timely manner.

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Procrastination Explanation

What is Procrastination?

- Some researchers define procrastination as a "form of self-regulation failure characterized by the irrational delay of tasks despite potentially negative consequences."
- More simply, procrastination is the act of unnecessarily postponing decisions or actions.
- If you think, "Why do this now when I could do it later?", you are probably procrastinating!
- People procrastinate in different ways and in different areas of life, by engaging in various types of delaying behaviors, either intentionally or unintentionally.

Examples of Procrastinating Tasks

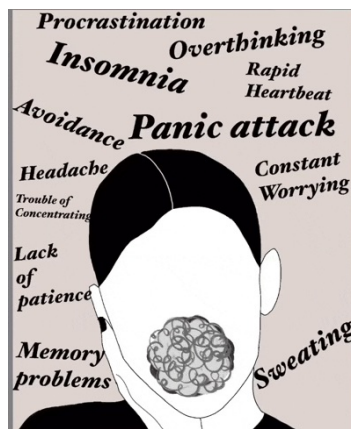
- Browsing social media at work instead of getting started on important tasks.
- Repeatedly putting off a homework assignment until the night before it's due.
- Wanting to start a new positive habit, such as dieting, exercising, or saving money, but repeatedly delaying it while telling yourself that you'll start sometime in the near future.
- Wanting to create a project or start a business, but wasting time looking up inspirational material and unimportant information instead of actually setting something up.

Facts and Numbers

- Research indicates that approximately 20% of the adult population and around 50% of the student population procrastinate in a consistent and problematic manner, meaning that they experience significant difficulties in their everyday life as a result of their procrastination.
- The number of people who procrastinate in general is even higher. Approximately 80%-95% of students say that they engage in procrastination to some degree.

- Procrastination is such a commonplace issue among students, that the tendency to procrastinate on tasks until right before they are due is sometimes referred to as the student syndrome.
- The rate of procrastination in the population is increasing over time, which is consistent with the growing prevalence of similar issues, such as overeating and gambling, that involve self-control.
- However, procrastination is far from a new phenomenon, and it has been documented by various people throughout history, as evident, for example, in the writing of the following Greek poet:
 - “Do not put your work off till to-morrow and the day after; for a sluggish worker does not fill his barn, nor one who puts off his work: industry makes work go well, but a man who puts off work is always at hand-grips with ruin.” – Hesiod, in “Works and Days” (circa 700 BCE)

SOURCE: https://solvingprocrastination.com/procrastination/#What_is_procrastination



Why Do We Procrastinate?

Why Do We Procrastinate?

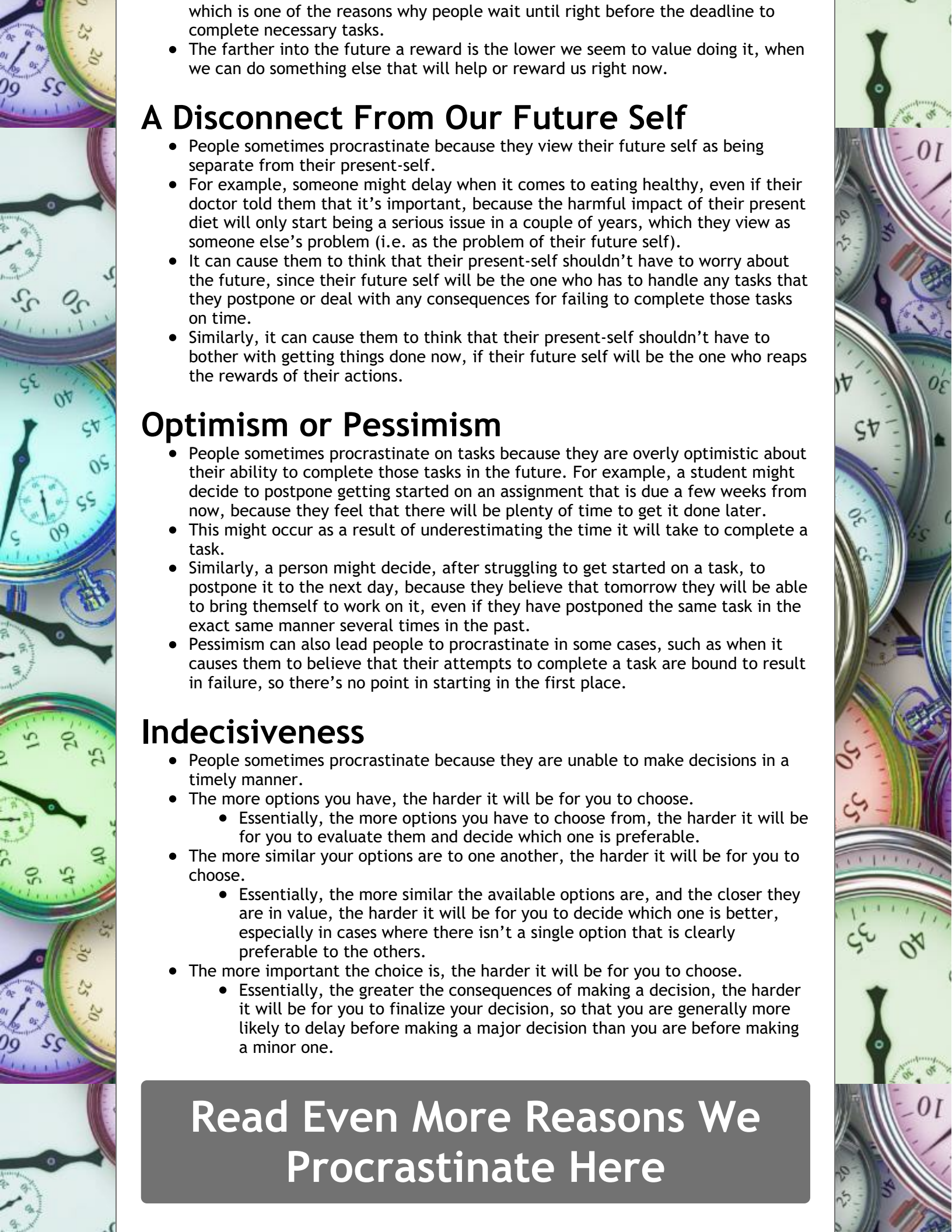
- We procrastinate because our self-control and motivation, which might be hindered by factors such as exhaustion and rewards that are far in the future, are outweighed by demotivating factors, such as anxiety and fear of failure.
- This causes us to fail to self-regulate our behavior, which means that we postpone things unnecessarily, even when we know we should be doing them.
- There are some exceptions to this, in cases where procrastination is driven by some other factor, such as rebelliousness or the desire to add excitement to otherwise boring work. However, for the most part, the reason outlined above is the main one that explains why people procrastinate.

Abstract Goals

- The word abstract means existing in thought or as an idea but not having a physical form you can sense.
- People are more likely to procrastinate when their goals are vague, compared to when their goals are concrete and clear.
- For example, goals such as “get fit” or “start exercising” are relatively vague, and are therefore likely to lead to procrastination. Conversely, a goal such as “go to the gym on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday right after work, and spend at least 30 minutes on the treadmill, running at high speed” is concrete, and is therefore much more likely to lead you to take action.
- If a person finds it unlikely that they will attain a certain goal, this can cause them to view that goal as abstract, and they may procrastinate on achieving it.

Outcomes That Are Far In The Future

- People often procrastinate on tasks that are associated with rewards that they will only experience a while after completing the task
- For example, it's easier to discount the value of attaining a good grade on an exam while that exam is still weeks away compared to when it's only days away,



which is one of the reasons why people wait until right before the deadline to complete necessary tasks.

- The farther into the future a reward is the lower we seem to value doing it, when we can do something else that will help or reward us right now.

A Disconnect From Our Future Self

- People sometimes procrastinate because they view their future self as being separate from their present-self.
- For example, someone might delay when it comes to eating healthy, even if their doctor told them that it's important, because the harmful impact of their present diet will only start being a serious issue in a couple of years, which they view as someone else's problem (i.e. as the problem of their future self).
- It can cause them to think that their present-self shouldn't have to worry about the future, since their future self will be the one who has to handle any tasks that they postpone or deal with any consequences for failing to complete those tasks on time.
- Similarly, it can cause them to think that their present-self shouldn't have to bother with getting things done now, if their future self will be the one who reaps the rewards of their actions.

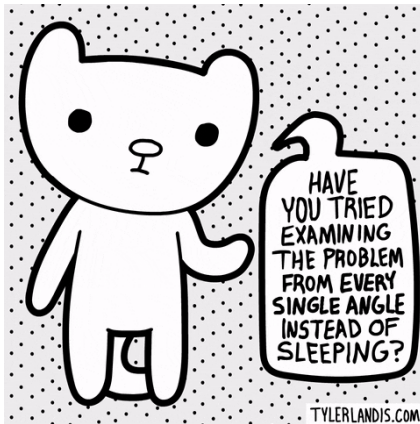
Optimism or Pessimism

- People sometimes procrastinate on tasks because they are overly optimistic about their ability to complete those tasks in the future. For example, a student might decide to postpone getting started on an assignment that is due a few weeks from now, because they feel that there will be plenty of time to get it done later.
- This might occur as a result of underestimating the time it will take to complete a task.
- Similarly, a person might decide, after struggling to get started on a task, to postpone it to the next day, because they believe that tomorrow they will be able to bring themselves to work on it, even if they have postponed the same task in the exact same manner several times in the past.
- Pessimism can also lead people to procrastinate in some cases, such as when it causes them to believe that their attempts to complete a task are bound to result in failure, so there's no point in starting in the first place.

Indecisiveness

- People sometimes procrastinate because they are unable to make decisions in a timely manner.
- The more options you have, the harder it will be for you to choose.
 - Essentially, the more options you have to choose from, the harder it will be for you to evaluate them and decide which one is preferable.
- The more similar your options are to one another, the harder it will be for you to choose.
 - Essentially, the more similar the available options are, and the closer they are in value, the harder it will be for you to decide which one is better, especially in cases where there isn't a single option that is clearly preferable to the others.
- The more important the choice is, the harder it will be for you to choose.
 - Essentially, the greater the consequences of making a decision, the harder it will be for you to finalize your decision, so that you are generally more likely to delay before making a major decision than you are before making a minor one.

**Read Even More Reasons We
Procrastinate Here**



How To Stop Procrastinating

Where to Start?

- Understanding why you procrastinate can help you successfully figure out how to solve your procrastination problem.
- For example, if you notice that you procrastinate because you use abstract goals, you can make sure to define more concrete goals for yourself.
- Similarly, if you notice that you procrastinate because you feel overwhelmed by a large task that you have to deal with, you can break that task apart into a series of small tasks that you will feel more comfortable handling.

General Steps

- Start by establishing your goals.
 - When doing this, make sure to define your goals as clearly as possible, and make sure that these goals are significant enough that they'll allow you to make meaningful progress, while also being possible for you to accomplish in reality.
- Figure out the exact nature of your procrastination problem.
 - You can do this by thinking about cases where you procrastinated, and then identifying when, how, and why you did so.
- Create a plan of action.
 - This plan should involve a combination of relevant anti-procrastination techniques, that will allow you to deal with situations where your procrastination problem is preventing you from achieving your goals.
- Implement your plan of action.
 - As time goes by, make sure to monitor your progress and refine this plan, by modifying or dropping anti-procrastination techniques based on how well they work for you, and by adding new ones if you think they could help.

Anti-Procrastination Techniques

- Prioritize tasks based on how important they are.
- Break large and overwhelming tasks into small and actionable pieces.
- Get started on tasks by committing to only work on them for a few minutes.
- Remove distractions from your work environment.
- Identify when you're most and least productive, and schedule your tasks accordingly.
- Set intermediate deadlines for yourself on your way to your final goals.
- Create a daily goal and mark streaks of days on which you've successfully achieved it.
- Reward yourself when you successfully implement your plan of action.
- Focus on your goals instead of on the tasks that you have to complete.
- Visualize your future self experiencing the outcomes of your work.
- Count to ten before you indulge the impulse to procrastinate.
- Avoid a perfectionist mindset by accepting that your work will have some flaws.

- Develop a belief in your ability to successfully overcome your procrastination.

SOURCE: https://solvingprocrastination.com/why-people-procrastinate/#Why_people_procrastinate

Let's Stay Healthy and Stop Procrastinating!



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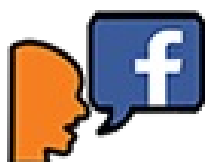
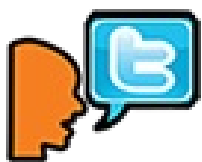


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Positive Pulse

Your monthly dose of advice on healthy living

March 2022

Now or Later: Part 2 **Seize the Day!**



This is Part 2 of *Now or Later*! We'll be discussing how you can make the most of your time and what activities you should prioritize.

- "Carpe Diem" is a famous Latin phrase that is used to mean "Seize the Day!" and can be an effective way to achieve your goals.
- Knowing how to manage your time has many benefits in all aspects of life.
- Setting priorities will help you make sure your time is spent doing the right thing for you to reach your goals.

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"Carpe Diem!"

Meaning of "Carpe Diem"

- The concept of 'carpe diem' revolves around focusing on the present as much as possible, and taking desirable action now, instead of postponing it for later.
- The term 'carpe diem' is attributed to the eminent Roman poet Horace, who mentions this concept in his collection of poems known as the Odes.
 - "Seize the day, place in tomorrow as little trust as you can" [carpe diem, quam minimum credula postero].
- While 'carpe diem' is generally translated today as 'seize the day', a more literal translation of 'carpe diem' is 'pluck the day', which is meant to evoke the metaphor of plucking a ripe fruit or a grown flower.

How To Seize the Day

- To implement 'carpe diem' and successfully seize the day, you should make sure to avoid postponing things unnecessarily, and instead take full advantage of the present moment. Life is short and bound to end eventually, so you should make the most of the time that you have now.
- If you're not sure whether you're doing this properly, take a look at the following statements. The more these statements sound like you, the more likely you are to be following a carpe diem approach:
 - "I try to live every day as fully as I can."
 - "I often focus on the present."
 - "I appreciate every moment of life."
- If you find that the following statements are more like you than the previous ones, then you're likely taking a different approach.
 - "I like having fun all day and night."
 - "What I am doing right now does not affect my future."
 - "There is no point thinking about the future."

Carpe Diem and Mindfulness

- Carpe diem is related to the concept of mindfulness, which is a mindset that involves focusing on present thoughts, emotions, and experiences, and accepting them in a non-judgmental manner.
- Mindfulness influences how we perform certain actions.
- Carpe diem influences which actions we perform.
- For example, a Carpe Diem approach may be to try a new recipe that you've found and haven't found the time for. And mindfulness relates to how you enjoy that meal, taking your time to enjoy the scent and flavors and reflecting on where your ingredients came from.



Benefits of Effective Time Management

What is Time Management?

- Time management is the skill of planning your tasks based on the time you have to do them.
- These skills can help you prioritize items in your daily schedule that allows you to finish them on time.
- With practice, they can ensure you're doing what you're supposed to at the right time.
- Time management can take many forms like using a checklist or a timer to track your progress throughout the day.

Decreased Stress

- Learning to manage your time can reduce your stress levels.
- When you schedule smaller parts of your day, you can leave room for irregularities or issues that might cause stress.
- For example, if you think that a project might take longer than originally planned, schedule extra time for that task.
- Even if you work on it longer, you can still be confident you have time to finish everything else, helping you remain calm.
- By using tools and planning techniques to prioritize your daily tasks, you will feel less overwhelmed by what you need to do.

Increased Productivity

- Once you master time management, you'll be better equipped to finish tasks or projects more quickly, increasing your productivity.
- You may notice that you're completing a task in less time and stressing less about deadlines.
- By following a calendar, tracking deadlines in management software or keeping a to-do list of impending deadlines, you can better plan your work around those deadlines

Improved Focus

- Learning to manage time effectively can improve your focus.
- Dedicating a specific amount of time to a project or task prevents you from juggling too many responsibilities at one time since every task has its own time slot.
- Time management also allows you to schedule daily tasks in an environment where you can be productive and stay focused.
- For example, you might answer emails in a quiet room in your home or conduct highly focused tasks in a low-traffic area of the office.

Streamlined Decision-Making

- Managing your time and making decisions about your schedule can build your decision-making skills in other aspects of your life.
- Time management allows certain decisions to be made simply and quickly because

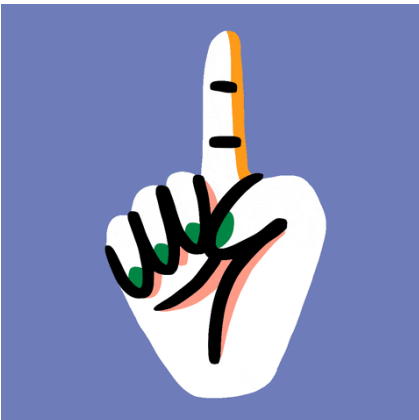
you've planned for them ahead of time.

- The process of making decisions in advance can improve your abilities to identify priorities and what actions need to be taken.

More Confidence

- Practicing time management can boost your confidence through positive self-reinforcement.
- When you complete a schedule of tasks or a small list of goals every day, you can feel satisfied by accomplishing tasks and become more confident in your working abilities.
- When work is going well, you can feel more fulfilled by the work you complete because doing each task feels like accomplishing a goal.

SOURCE: <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/benefits-of-time-management>



Approaches to Set Priorities

Eat a Frog

- There's an old saying to the effect that if you wake up in the morning and eat a live frog, you can go through the day knowing that the worst thing that can possibly happen to you that day has already passed. In other words, the day can only get better!
- Popularized in Brian Tracy's book *Eat That Frog!*, the idea here is that you tackle the biggest, hardest, and least appealing task first thing every day, so you can move through the rest of the day knowing that the worst has already passed.
- The saying also goes: when you've got to eat a frog, don't spend too much time looking at it! It pays to keep this in mind if you're the kind of person that procrastinates by "planning your attack" and "psyching yourself up" for half the day.
- Just get started! Otherwise, you'll almost surely talk yourself out of doing anything at all.

Move Big Rocks

- Maybe you're not a procrastinator so much as a fiddler, someone who fills her or his time fussing over little tasks. You're busy all the time, but somehow, nothing important ever seems to get done.
- You need the wisdom of the pickle jar. Take a pickle jar and fill it up with sand. Now try to put a handful of rocks in there. You can't, right? There's no room.
- The pickle jar is all the time you have in a day. You can fill it up with meaningless little busy-work tasks, leaving no room for the big stuff, or you can do the big stuff first, then the smaller stuff, and finally fill in the spare moments with the useless stuff.
- To put it into practice, sit down tonight before you go to bed and write down the three most important tasks you have to get done tomorrow. Don't try to fit everything you need, or think you need, to do, just the three most important ones.

- In the morning, take out your list and attack the first “Big Rock”. Work on it until it’s done or you can’t make any further progress. Then move on to the second, and then the third. Once you’ve finished them all, you can start in with the little stuff, knowing you’ve made good progress on all the big stuff.
- And if you don’t get to the little stuff? You’ll have the satisfaction of knowing that you accomplished three big things. At the end of the day, nobody’s ever wished they’d spent more time arranging their pencil drawer instead of writing their novel, or printing mailing labels instead of landing a big client.

Covey Quadrants

- If you just can’t relax unless you absolutely know you’re working on the most important thing you could be working on at every instant, Stephen Covey’s quadrant system as written in *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change* might be for you.
- Covey suggests you divide a piece of paper into four sections, drawing a line across and a line from top to bottom. Into each of those quadrants, you put your tasks according to whether they are:
 - Important and Urgent
 - Important and Not Urgent
 - Not Important but Urgent
 - Not Important and Not Urgent
- The quadrant III and IV stuff is where we get bogged down in the trivial: phone calls, interruptions, meetings (QIII) and busy work, shooting the breeze, and other time wasters (QIV). Although some of this stuff might have some social value, if it interferes with your ability to do the things that are important to you, they need to go.
- Quadrant I and II are the tasks that are important to us. QI are crises, impending deadlines, and other work that needs to be done right now or terrible things will happen. If you’re really on top of your time management, you can minimize Q1 tasks, but you can never eliminate them - a car accident, someone getting ill, a natural disaster, these things all demand immediate action and are rarely planned for.
- You’d like to spend as much time as possible in Quadrant II, plugging away at tasks that are important with plenty of time to really get into them and do the best possible job. This is the stuff that the QIII and QIV stuff takes time away from, so after you’ve plotted out your tasks on the Covey quadrant grid, according to your own sense of what’s important and what isn’t, work as much as possible on items in Quadrant II (and Quadrant I tasks when they arise).

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	Quadrant I: Urgent & Important	Quadrant II: Not Urgent & Important
NOT IMPORTANT	Quadrant III: Urgent & Not Important	Quadrant IV: Not Urgent & Not Important

SOURCE: <https://www.lifehack.org/articles/featured/back-to-basics-setting-priorities.html>

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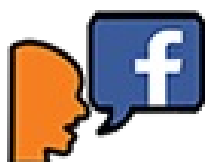
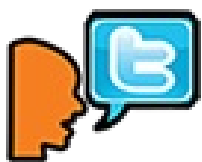


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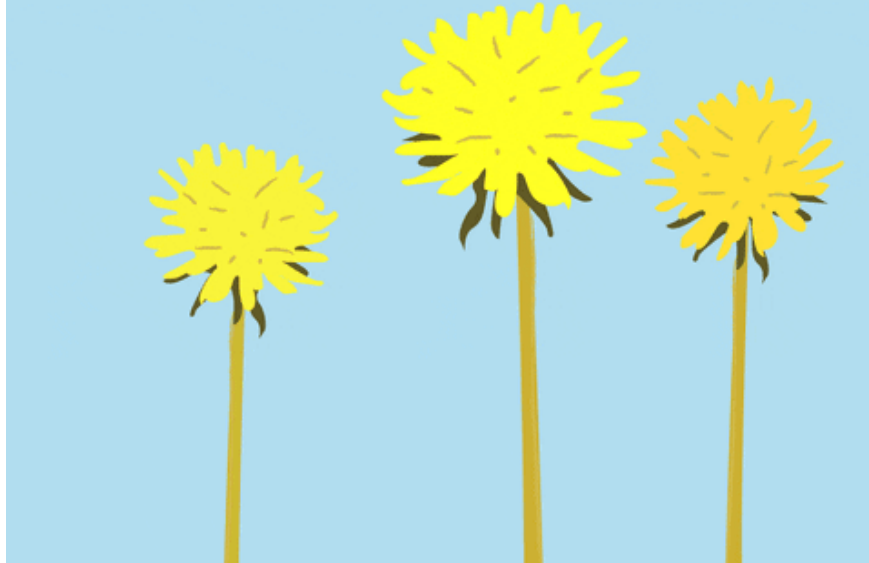
Promoting Advocacy and Independence for People
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May 2022

All About Allergies:
Part 1
Living with Allergies

ALLERGIES



This is Part 1 of *All About Allergies*! We'll be discussing what allergies are, signs and symptoms, and how to feel better.

- It is important to know about the different types of allergies that may affect you.
- The signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction can help you differentiate from other illnesses.
- There are various ways to manage your allergies and provide relief from your symptoms.

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SPRING
(*ALLERGY SEASON*)
IS HERE

What are Allergies?

Allergy Overview

- Allergies are one of the most common chronic diseases. A chronic disease lasts a long time or occurs often.
- An allergy occurs when the body's immune system sees a substance as harmful and overreacts to it. The substances that cause allergic reactions are allergens.
- When someone has allergies, their immune system makes an antibody called immunoglobulin E (IgE). These antibodies respond to allergens. The symptoms that result are an allergic reaction.
- There is no cure for allergies. You can manage allergies with prevention and treatment.
- More than 50 million people in the U.S. experience various types of allergies each year. They are the sixth leading cause of chronic illness in the U.S.

Types of Allergens

- Medicine
- Food
- Insects that sting (bee, wasp, fire ant); bite (mosquito, tick); or are household pests (cockroach and dust mite)
- Latex
- Mold
- Pet (dog or cat urine, saliva and dander)
- Pollen

How Do Doctors Diagnose Allergies?

- Personal and medical history.
 - Your doctor will ask you questions to get a complete understanding of your symptoms and their possible causes. Bring your notes to help jog your memory. Be ready to answer questions about your family history, the kinds of medicines you take, and your lifestyle at home, school and work.
- Physical exam.
 - If your doctor thinks you have an allergy, they will pay close attention to your ears, eyes, nose, throat, chest and skin during the exam. This exam may include a lung function test to detect how well you exhale air from your lungs. You may also need an X-ray of your lungs or sinuses.
- Tests to determine your allergens.
 - Your doctor may do a skin test, patch test or blood test. No one test alone is able to diagnose an allergy. Test results are just one of many tools available to assist your doctor in making a diagnosis.
- There is no test that can determine how severe an allergy is for someone.

Skin Prick Test (SPT)

- In some cases, skin tests can be the most accurate and least expensive way to confirm allergens.
- For prick/scratch testing, the doctor or nurse places a small drop of the possible allergen on the skin. They will then lightly prick or scratch your skin with a needle through the drop.
- If you are sensitive to the substance, you will develop redness, swelling and itching at the test site within 15 minutes. You may also see a "wheal," or raised, round area, that looks like a hive. Usually, the larger the wheal, the more likely you are to be allergic to the allergen.

Intradermal (Under the Skin) Test

- In intradermal (under the skin) testing, the doctor or nurse injects a tiny amount of allergen into the outer layer of skin.
- The doctor checks your skin after a set amount of time for results, like with the skin prick test. Doctors may use this test if the skin prick test results are negative but they still suspect you have allergies.

- A doctor may use this test for diagnosing drug or venom allergy.
- At this time, there are very few indications for intradermal skin testing for food allergy.

Blood Tests (Specific IgE)

- If you have a skin condition or are taking medicine that interferes with skin testing, allergen blood tests may be used. They may also be used for children who may not tolerate skin testing.
- Your doctor will take a blood sample and send it to a laboratory. The lab adds the allergen to your blood sample and then measures the amount of antibodies your blood produces to attack the allergens.
- This test is not a good screening test due to the high rates of false positive results.

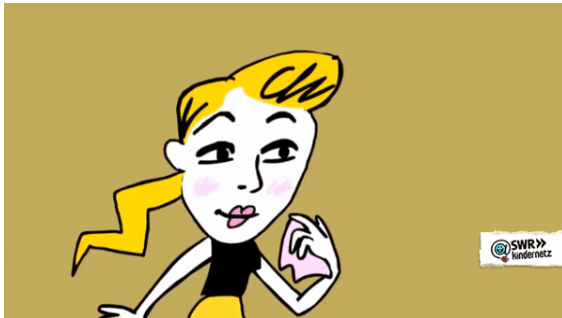
Physician-Supervised Challenge Tests

- In your doctor's office, you inhale or take a tiny amount of an allergen by mouth. This test is usually done with possible medication or food allergies.
- A physician, usually an allergist, should supervise this test due to the risk of anaphylaxis, a severe life-threatening reaction.

Patch Test

- This test determines what allergen may be causing contact dermatitis.
- Your doctor will place a small amount of a possible allergen on your skin, cover it with a bandage and check your reaction after 48 to 96 hours.
- If you are allergic to the substance, you should develop a local rash.

SOURCE: <https://www.aafa.org/allergies.aspx>
<https://www.aafa.org/allergy-diagnosis/>



Signs and Symptoms

What Are the Symptoms of an Allergy?

- An allergy occurs when the body's immune system sees a substance as harmful and overreacts to it.
- The symptoms that result are an allergic reaction.
- The substances that cause allergic reactions are allergens.
- Allergens can get into your body many ways to cause an allergic reaction.

How Do Allergens Get Into Your Body?

- You can inhale allergens into your nose and your lungs. Many allergens are small enough to float through the air.
 - Examples are pollen, house dust, mold spores, cat and dog dander and latex dust.
- You can ingest allergens by mouth.
 - This includes food and medicines you eat or swallow.
- Your body can have allergens injected into it.
 - This includes medicine given by needle and venom from insect stings and

bites.

- Your skin can absorb allergens.
 - Plants such as poison ivy, sumac and oak can cause reactions when touched. Latex, metals, and ingredients in beauty care and household products are other examples.

SYMPTOMS OF AN ALLERGIC REACTION

The severity of symptoms during an allergic reaction can vary widely. Some of the symptoms of an allergic reaction include:

- Itchy, watery eyes
- Itchy nose
- Sneezing
- Runny nose
- Rashes
- Hives (a rash with raised red patches)
- Stomach cramps
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Bloating
- Swelling
- Redness
- Pain
- Tongue swelling
- Cough
- Throat closing
- Wheezing (a whistling sound when you breathe)
- Chest tightness and losing your breath
- Feeling faint, light-headed or “blacking out”
- A sense of “impending doom”

Some of these symptoms can be sign of a [life-threatening allergic reaction](#).

What Is Anaphylaxis?

- Anaphylaxis (anna-fih-LACK-sis) is a serious allergic reaction that is rapid in onset and may cause death.
- Symptoms usually involve more than one organ system (part of the body), such as the skin or mouth, the lungs, the heart and the gut.
- Medicines, foods, insect stings and bites, and latex most often cause severe allergic reactions.
- Some symptoms include:
 - Skin rashes, itching or hives
 - Swelling of the lips, tongue or throat
 - Shortness of breath, trouble breathing or wheezing (whistling sound during breathing)
 - Dizziness and/or fainting
 - Stomach pain, bloating, vomiting or diarrhea
 - Uterine cramps
 - Feeling like something awful is about to happen
- Ask your doctor for a complete list of symptoms and an anaphylaxis action plan.

What Is the Treatment for Anaphylaxis?

- Epinephrine (ep-uh-NEF-rin) is the most important treatment available.
- If you have a known severe allergy, always carry two epinephrine auto-injectors so you can quickly treat a reaction wherever you are.
- Promptly inject the medicine at the first sign of an anaphylactic reaction.
- Call 911 to go to a hospital by ambulance. You must seek medical care immediately - even if you feel better - because symptoms can recur.
- You may need other treatments, in addition to epinephrine.

If you think you are having anaphylaxis, use your self-injectable epinephrine and call 911. Do not delay. Do not take antihistamines in place of epinephrine. Epinephrine is the most effective treatment for anaphylaxis.

Symptoms	Coronavirus [†] (COVID-19) Symptoms range from mild to severe	Cold Gradual onset of symptoms	Flu Abrupt onset of symptoms	Seasonal Allergies Abrupt onset of symptoms	Asthma Gradual or abrupt onset of symptoms
 Length of symptoms	7-25 days	Less than 14 days	7-14 days	Several weeks	Can start quickly or last for hours or longer*
 Cough	Common (usually dry)	Common (mild)	Common (usually dry)	Rare (usually dry unless it triggers asthma)	Common (can be dry or wet/productive)
 Wheezing	No	No**	No**	No**	Common
 Shortness of breath or trouble breathing	Common	No**	No**	No**	Common
 Chest tightness/pain	Sometimes	No**	No**	No**	Common
 Rapid breathing	Rare	No**	No**	No**	Common
 Sneezing	No	Common	No	Common	No***
 Runny or stuffy nose	Common	Common	Sometimes	Common	No***
 Sore throat	Common	Common	Sometimes	Sometimes (usually mild)	No***
 Fever	Common	Short fever period	Common	No	No
 Feeling tired and weak	Common	Sometimes	Common	Sometimes	Sometimes
 Headaches	Common	Rare	Common	Sometimes (related to sinus pain)	Rare
 Body aches and pains	Common	Common	Common	No	No
 Diarrhea, nausea and vomiting	Common	Rare	Sometimes	No	No
 Chills	Common	No	Sometimes	No	No
 Loss of taste or smell	Common	Rare	Rare	Sometimes	No

Your symptoms may vary. [†]Information is still evolving. Many people may not have symptoms. *If your quick-relief medicine is not helping your asthma symptoms, or if you are in the Red Zone on your Asthma Action Plan, call your health care provider or seek medical attention immediately. **Allergies, colds and flus can all trigger asthma which can lead to shortness of breath, chest tightness/pain and rapid breathing. COVID-19 is the only one associated with shortness of breath on its own. ***If you have allergic asthma, you may have symptoms of both asthma and allergies at the same time.

Sources: Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
edited 5/21/21 • aafa.org/covid19

SOURCE: <https://www.aafa.org/allergy-symptoms/>



Manage Your Allergies

Antihistamines

- These medications are the mainstay for treating the sneezing, runny nose, and itchy eyes that come with allergies. Antihistamines also relieve hives and other symptoms of some food allergies.
- Many people who suffer from hay fever are familiar with the older antihistamines such as Benadryl. While these drugs work well, they leave many people feeling groggy, sleepy, or just "out of it."
- Thankfully, the newer generation of antihistamines, including Zyrtec, Clarinex, Allegra and Claritin are far less likely to cause drowsiness at recommended doses. Their effects are also longer lasting, so usually you need to take them only once a day instead of every four to six hours.

Decongestants

- Decongestants help relieve the stuffy, blocked-nose symptoms of nasal congestion.
- Short-term use of decongestants usually provides good symptom relief and can make you feel better quickly.
- But some decongestants can increase your heart rate and blood pressure and keep you awake at night. These medications can worsen prostate problems and glaucoma. If you have existing health problems—particularly a heart condition—be sure to get your doctor's advice before taking a decongestant.
- Regular use of decongestant nasal sprays can cause irreparable damage to the lining of the nose, so be sure to follow the directions exactly. Don't use these too often, or for many days at a time.

Allergy Shots

- Allergy shots can help reduce sensitivity to the triggers that set off your allergies. This therapy involves injecting small and increasing amounts of allergens (substances that cause allergic reactions) over regular intervals.
- Typically, this means weekly injections with increasing doses for three to six months and then monthly injections for three to five years.
- The treatment can be very effective for seasonal allergies that cause sneezing, nasal congestion, and itchy and swollen eyes.
- Allergy shots are almost always recommended for life-threatening allergies to stinging insects, and may help in the treatment of allergic asthma. Right now, allergy shots are not used to treat food allergies.
- The biggest drawback to this treatment is the risk of a potentially serious allergic reaction from the shot itself. Improvements in allergy extracts and dosing schedules have reduced this risk to what researchers estimate is about 1% of all allergy shots.

Avoidance

- The easiest way to avoid an allergic reaction is to stay away from the allergen that bothers you.
- Depending on the allergen, this is easier said than done.
- Tune in to next week's newsletter for some substitutions and alternative steps you can take in your life to avoid food, pet, and other kinds of allergies!

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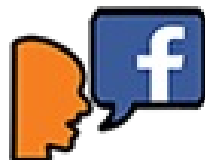
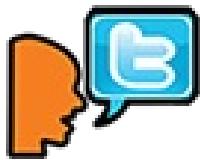


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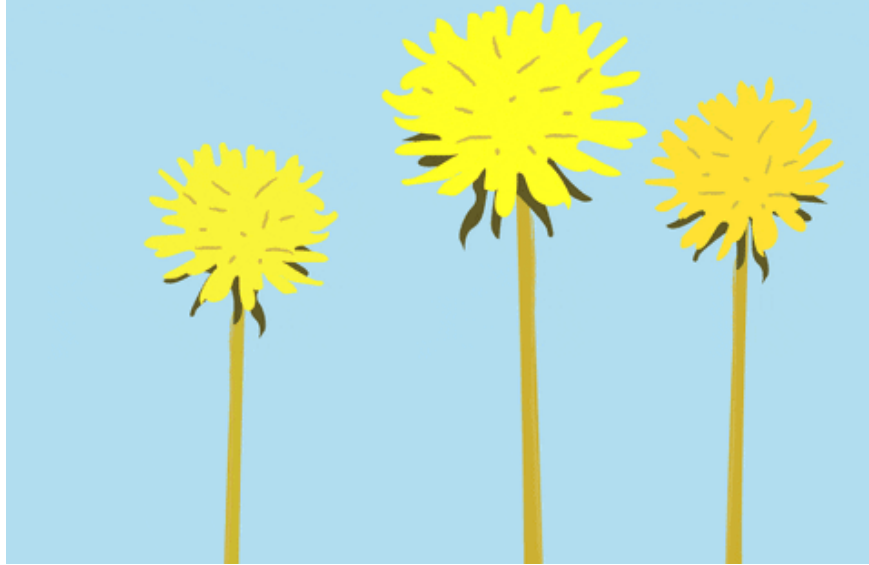
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May 2022

All About Allergies:
Part 2
Allergies & Alternatives

ALLERGIES



This is Part 2 of *All About Allergies*! We'll be discussing some substitutions and changes you can make in your life to avoid having an allergic reaction.

- When you have food allergies, it is important to read labels carefully and use substitutions to any food allergies you may have.
- No cat or dog is truly hypoallergenic, so you must be careful when choosing a pet if you have pet allergies.
- Plant allergies can be caused by many types of trees, grasses, and flowers, so you should note the best and worst kinds for your allergies.

After you're done reading, [don't forget to listen to our webinars every Tuesday! You can find registration links and recordings here.](#)

We are also holding Healthy Lifestyles Project: LIVE events, every Wednesday at 11 AM and Friday at 1 PM. [Register here.](#)

Food Allergies



Food Allergies

- Food allergies are estimated to affect 4% - 6% of children and 4% of adults, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Food allergy symptoms are most common in babies and children, but they can appear at any age. You can even develop an allergy to foods you have eaten for years with no problems.
- While allergies tend to run in families, it is impossible to predict whether a child will inherit a parent's food allergy or whether siblings will have a similar condition. Some research does suggest that the younger siblings of a child with a peanut allergy will also be allergic to peanuts.
- Symptoms of a food allergy can range from mild to severe. Just because an initial reaction causes few problems doesn't mean that all reactions will be similar; a food that triggered only mild symptoms on one occasion may cause more severe symptoms at another time.

Common Food Allergies

- While any food can cause an adverse reaction, nine types of food account for about 90 percent of all reactions: Eggs, Milk and Dairy, Peanuts, Tree nuts, Fish, Shellfish, Wheat, Soy, Sesame

Learn How to Read Food Labels

- Most food manufacturers must list all major food allergens on their labels. This can be done in several ways:
 - Listing an ingredient by its common name ("shrimp")
 - Putting the allergen in parentheses ("whey (milk)")
 - Providing a "contains" statement next to the ingredient list ("This product contains tree nuts.")
- While many manufacturers issue advisory warnings about cross-contact ("This product might contain peanuts."), they are not mandatory.

Peanuts and Tree Nuts Alternatives

- Between 1997 and 2007, the number of children with peanut and tree nut allergies tripled in the United States. Peanuts and tree nuts are different substances. Peanuts are legumes, while tree nuts include almonds, walnuts, cashews, and pine nuts. However, peanut and tree nut allergies both can cause life-threatening anaphylaxis.
- While some people are allergic to both peanuts and tree nuts, others only need to avoid one of these allergens. However, you should always look for risks of cross-contact. Many facilities process both peanuts and tree nuts. You should also avoid getting food from places with increased risks of cross-contact, such as bakeries, ice cream shops, buffets, salad bars, and bulk food stores.
- If you're allergic to both peanuts and tree nuts, you can still safely eat seeds and seed butter. Popular substitutes include pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, chickpeas, sunflower butter, and soy butter.

Avoiding Milk

- There are a wide variety of milk substitutes, including coconut, soy, almond, hemp, and rice milk.
- However, milk proteins are common ingredients in many foods. The following products frequently contain milk products:
 - Processed meats, such as hot dogs, lunch meat, and breaded meats
 - Muffins, cakes, cookies, pancakes, waffles, and other baked goods
 - High-protein cereals
 - Egg substitutes
 - Salad dressing and mayonnaise
 - Margarine and other butter substitutes
 - Chocolate and caramel
- When in doubt, look for kosher foods listed as “pareve” or “parve.” These should not contain milk products.

Egg Substitutes

- There are a lot of egg substitutes on the market, but some are best used for baking rather than making an omelet or a quiche. For baking, you can substitute the following for eggs:
 - Applesauce
 - Bananas
 - Commercial egg substitutes
 - Ground flaxseed or chia seed
 - Gelatin
 - A combination of baking powder, oil, and water
- You’ll want to think about why you’re adding eggs to a recipe. People add eggs for flavor, leavening, binding, and other purposes. Depending on the purpose, you’ll want to use a different substitute.
- For cooking, you can use silken tofu and chickpea flour for egg-free scrambles, omelets, and other dishes.
- For custards and puddings, consider replacing eggs with agar powder or coconut milk.
- When you’re buying prepared foods, be particularly careful when you get baked goods, salad dressings, breaded meats, meatballs (many recipes use egg as a binder), pudding, custard, and ice cream.

Going Gluten- and Wheat-Free

- Wheat-free and gluten-free diets are not the same. Gluten is a sticky protein that makes baked goods stretch and pull apart. Make sure you understand your exact sensitivity — if you’re only allergic to wheat, you might be able to eat rye and spelt.
- However, if you have celiac disease, a wheat-free product could still trigger your symptoms. Thankfully, there are many wheat-free and gluten-free options in your grocery store.
- For home cooking, try alternative flours, such as tapioca, rice, oat, and almond.
- Pure cornmeal and potato starch are also wheat-free.

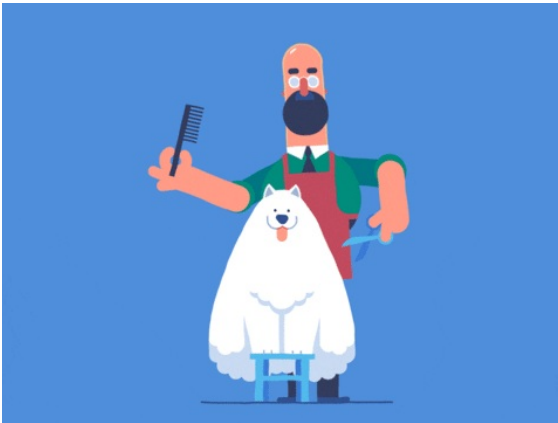
Shellfish

- You might think that shellfish are relatively easy to avoid. However, many condiments and prepared foods contain shellfish-based ingredients.
- Don’t assume that “imitation crab,” sometimes called surimi, is shellfish-free. Instead, look at the product’s ingredients to determine whether the manufacturer uses shellfish in its recipe.
- You should also carefully check the ingredient list on fish sauces.
- Kosher foods should not contain shellfish.
- You can always replace shellfish with other lean proteins or mushrooms (such as oyster or shitake mushrooms).

Soybeans

- Americans eat a lot of soy, and a soy allergy requires a lot of diligence. Most prepared and process foods contain soy.
- Thankfully, most soy allergies are relatively mild. Depending on your purpose, your soybean alternatives might include:
 - Coconut aminos, instead of soy sauce
 - Chickpea or adzuki bean-based miso
 - Lima or fava beans, rather than edamame
 - Quinoa or coarse bulgur, instead of soy-based meat substitutes
- While processed soy oils typically do not trigger an allergic reaction, it is possible.

SOURCE: <https://acaai.org/allergies/allergic-conditions/food/>
<https://www.canopyhealth.com/tasty-alternatives-for-common-food-allergies/>



Pet Allergies

Pet Allergies

- A pet allergy is an allergic reaction to proteins found in an animal's skin cells, saliva or urine.
- Signs of pet allergy include those common to hay fever, such as sneezing and runny nose. Some people may also experience signs of asthma, such as wheezing and difficulty breathing.
- Most often, a pet allergy is triggered by exposure to the dead flakes of skin (dander) a pet sheds. Any animal with fur can be a source of pet allergy, but pet allergies are most commonly associated with cats and dogs.
- If you have a pet allergy, the best strategy is to avoid or reduce exposure to the animal as much as possible. Medications or other treatments may be necessary to relieve symptoms and manage asthma.

“Hypoallergenic” Dogs

- Contrary to popular belief, there is no such thing as a “hypoallergenic” dog. While some non-shedding, short-haired and hairless dog breeds are promoted as such, allergies are more complicated than fur alone.
- There are no 'nonallergenic' dog breeds. The protein that causes allergies is found in an animal's saliva, dander and urine. So a specific type of fur alone will not guarantee any hypoallergenic qualities.
- There are low-allergen dogs. They are not 100% hypoallergenic, but they do not produce as much of the allergens as other dogs.
- Low-allergen and low shedding dogs:
 - Basenji, Bedlington Terrier, Schnauzer, Airedale Terrier, Bichon Frisé, Chinese Crested, Kerry Blue Terrier, Poodle, Portuguese Water Dog, Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier, West Highland White Terrier

“Hypoallergenic” Cats

- If you suffer from allergies, cats are particularly tricky pets. Cats seem to be more allergenic than dogs. Almost all already allergic people exposed to cats on a

regular basis will develop a cat allergy.

- The major allergen responsible for cat allergies is Fel d1, which is found primarily in cat saliva, which is spread throughout the animal's fur during grooming.
- Currently, researchers are working on a novel new way to treat cat allergies. By immunizing cats against Fel d1, a new vaccine could effectively neutralize the protein, according to a promising study published in the Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology.
- Lower-shedding cat breeds spread less allergens around the home. For people with mild cat allergies, the following "hypoallergenic" cat breeds may be less problematic.
- Bengal, Burmese, Colorpoint Shorthair, Cornish Rex, Devon Rex, Javanese, Ocicat, Oriental Shorthair, Russian Blue, Siamese, Sphynx

Exotics & Fish

- If you have allergies, you might consider an exotic pet, like a reptile, amphibian or fish. Because these animals lack both dander and fur, they're essentially allergen-free.
- Some people may be allergic to their reptile's lunch. Feeder insects such as crickets, grasshoppers and locusts can exacerbate allergy and asthma symptoms.
- Highly sensitive individuals should consider herbivores, such as iguanas, or stick with a fish tank.

Other Small Animals

- While reptiles have their fans, you may prefer to have a furry friend. Smaller companion animals (or pocket pets) including rats, mice, ferrets, gerbils and hamsters may be suitable for some homes.
- They're so much smaller that they produce considerably fewer allergens in their environment.
- Small animals with longer hair, including many breeds of rabbits and guinea pigs, should be avoided.
- Not only are people more allergic to these small pets, but they eat hay. Many people are very allergic to the hay that rabbits and guinea pigs need to eat to survive.

SOURCE: https://www.petmd.com/dog/wellness/evr_multi_hype_of_hypoallergenic_pets



Plant Allergies

Worst Plants for Allergies

- You can expect more plant pollen and seasonal allergies if you put any of these plants in your yard.
- Flowers/herbs
 - Amaranth (pigweed), chamomile, chrysanthemums, daisies, ordinary sunflowers
- Shrubs/vines
 - Cypress, jasmine vine, juniper, wisteria
- Trees

- Alder, ash (male), aspen (male), beech, birch, box elder (male), cedar (male), cottonwood (male), elm, hickory, red and silver maples (male), mulberry (male), oak, olive, palm (male), pecan, pine, poplar (male), sycamore, walnut, willow (male)
- Grasses
 - Bermuda, fescue, Johnson, June, orchard, perennial rye, redtop, salt grass, sweet vernal, timothy
- Weeds
 - Cocklebur, ragweed, Russian thistle, sagebrush

Better Choices

- You'll have fewer worries with these plants that make little to no airborne pollen, so you can enjoy working with them and watching them grow.
- Flowers
 - Begonia, cactus, chenille, clematis, columbine, crocus, daffodil, dusty miller, geranium, hosta, impatiens, iris, lily, pansy, periwinkle, petunia, phlox, rose, salvia, snapdragon, thrift, tulip, verbena, zinnia
- Hypoallergenic sunflower seeds
 - All these grow 5 to 6 feet tall, and the pollen is too heavy to be spread easily.
 - Apricot Twist (apricot with gold center), Infrared Mix (dark crimson, ruby, golden-reds), The Joker (showy red-and-yellow double blooms), Pro-Cut Bicolor (stunning mahogany and yellow with black centers)
- Shrubs
 - Azalea, boxwood (if clipped often), hibiscus, hydrangea, viburnum
- Trees
 - Apple, cherry, Chinese fan palm (female), fern pine (female), dogwood, English holly (female), Bradford pear, crepe myrtle, hardy rubber tree, magnolia, pear, plum, red maple (female)
- Grasses
 - St. Augustine

SOURCE: <https://www.webmd.com/allergies/best-worst-plants>

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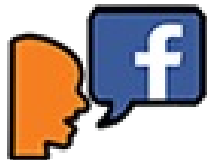
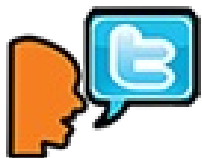


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November 2022

Fall Foliage:
The Beauty of Autumn
Part 1



This is Part 1 of Fall Foliage! November is still full of beautiful views of the trees changing color, so we'll be talking about how to enjoy

the beauty of autumn while it lasts.

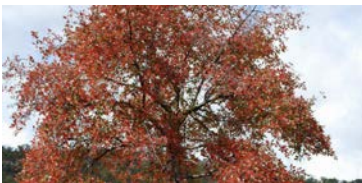
- Not all trees change color in the fall, but here are just a few types in NJ that are particularly pretty.
- We've had some wonderfully warm weather perfect for hikes, so check out some of the great spots in the state where you can hike.
- The falling leaves can be used as crafting materials in a wide variety of projects when you get the urge to be artsy.

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Colorful Autumn Trees in NJ



Red Maple (ACER RUBRUM)

- One of the most easily recognizable trees, the red maple, also called swamp maple or scarlet maple, turns brilliant shades of red or orange in autumn.
- A fast-growing tree, it can reach heights of 35 - 80 feet and a spread of 25 - 70 feet (depending on the cultivar).
- Red maples like full sun and work well as a shade tree but shouldn't be planted too close to sidewalks, driveways, or roadways as the roots tend to cause the pathways to buckle.

Sugar Maple (ACER SACCHARUM)

- Another kind of maple, the sugar maple, has more yellow to orange fall colors.
- It is a slow-growing tree that can tolerate shade (though it prefers full sun).

- Sugar maples are the most common types of trees for sugaring, where the trees are tapped for the production of maple syrup.
- They make a good shade tree, and bees love their flowers.
- Sugar maples grow to an average of 60 - 75 feet tall with a spread of 40 - 50 feet. They are easily damaged by salt so don't plant them near roadways or walkways that will be salted in the winter.

Blackgum (NYSSA SYLVATICA)

- This tree has many names including Blackgum, Black Tupelo, Sourgum, and Water Tupelo.
- Blackgum trees grow to about 30 - 50 feet tall and only 23 - 30 feet wide.
- They like full sun or partial shade, and produce small white flowers that provide valuable nectar for bees.
- The shiny leaves turn bright red in the fall. Deer tend to avoid these trees.

River Birch (BETULA NIGRA)

- River birch trees not only have yellow fall foliage, their trunks provide interest all year round.
- The trunks have a unique red, tan, and pink peeling bark that looks pretty even in the winter months.
- River birch trees have extensive root systems and need plenty of room to grow. They have a spread of 40 - 60 feet and a height of 40 - 70 feet, with roots extending even further.
- These trees love full sun or partial shade, and they grow quickly.
- As the "river" part of their name might imply, river birches thrive in wet or evenly moist soil conditions.

Maidenhair Tree (GINKGO BILOBA)

- Ginkgo trees are recognizable by their fan-shaped leaves and the saffron yellow leaf color in fall.
- This tree loves full sun and will grow to 50 - 80 feet with a spread of 30 - 40 feet, although it grows at a slow to medium rate.
- The maidenhair tree does well in the cold, is resistant to wind and snow damage, and is somewhat tolerant of salt and poor air quality, making it a great tree for urban or suburban areas.
- You may recognize the scientific name of this tree, Ginkgo biloba; it's a popular supplement used to treat a wide range of conditions.
- Native to China, this tree is actually endangered, but if well cared for a ginkgo tree can live for 150 years or more!

SOURCE: <https://alpinetreenj.com/great-trees-for-fall-color-in-new-jersey/>

Best Fall Foliage Views



Timing of the Fall Season

- Leaves usually change color starting from Maine and higher elevations of New England and then work their way south.
- New Jersey fall foliage generally starts in the northwest corner at High Point and in the Highlands region in north central, progresses to the central part of the state, and finally to the south and the coastal regions.
- This means that leaves could be past peak in North Jersey but still barely changed in South Jersey.
- As we are currently late in the season, the best chance for any color is to look towards the eastern and southern coasts.

Potentially Colorful Views in NJ Right Now

- Palisades: [Peanut Leap Cascade](#) / [Giant Stairs](#) / [Alpine to Forest View](#)
- Tenafly Nature Center / [High Mountain](#)
- South Mountain: [Hemlock Falls Loop](#) / [Fairy Trail](#)
- [Watchung Reservation](#) / [Jockey Hollow](#)
- [Turkey Swamp](#) / [Manasquan Reservoir](#)
- [Double Trouble](#) / [Brendan Bryne - Pakim Pond](#)
- [Parvin State Park](#) / [Belleplain](#)

Some of the Best Fall Foliage Hikes in NJ

- [High Point State Park - Monument Trail](#)
 - Hike the Appalachian Trail to the highest elevation in NJ, climb an obelisk, enjoy vast views of NJ, PA, and NY.
 - Sussex County, NJ.
- [Cheesequake State Park](#)
 - Short, easy hike through beautiful marshlands and pine barrens with the assistance of numerous boardwalks.
 - Middlesex County.
- [Jenny Jump - Ghost Lake](#)
 - Hike along a ridge packed with viewpoints of the surrounding mountains and valleys before arriving at Ghost Lake. 5.5 miles total round trip with an option to extend it a bit to check out the “Fairy Cave”.
 - Warren County, NJ.
- [Parvin State Park](#)
 - A short, easy loop around Parvin Lake through South Jersey’s pinelands and an Atlantic white cedar swamp. Foliage varies between late October and early November. Salem County, NJ.
- [Hacklebarney State Park](#)
 - Fall foliage is stunning along the Black River in this small, easily hiked, but very popular park. Morris County, NJ.
- [Belleplain State Forest](#)

- Hike a loop from Lake Nummy using the East Creek trail and sand roads in Jersey's pine barrens. Good for later season foliage in early November. Cape May County, NJ.

For more options, [click here!](#)

SOURCE: <https://www.njhiking.com/best-fall-foliage-hikes-in-new-jersey/>



Leaf Crafts

Leaves, both real and paper, are great for an abundance of Fall crafts. Try one of these options when you are feeling creative!





SOURCE: <https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/life/parenting/g33010213/fall-leaf-crafts/>

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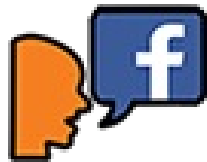
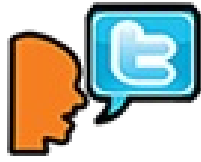


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November 2022

Fall Foliage:
The Science of Autumn
Part 2



This is Part 2 of Fall Foliage! We'll be talking about nature, especially the changes that happen in the autumn and why they

occur. We'll also give you a few tips for keeping the environment healthy in the fall.

- There's a reason why certain trees change color and lose their leaves each autumn.
- Many animals take action in autumn to prepare for the winter.
- Fallen leaves pile up quickly, but there are a few options for what to do with them.

After you're done reading, [don't forget to listen to our webinars every Tuesday! You can find registration links and recordings here.](#)

We are also holding Healthy Lifestyles Project: LIVE events, every Wednesday at 11 AM and Friday at 1 PM. [Register here.](#)



Why Do Leaves Change Color?

Autumn Basics

- Every autumn we revel in the beauty of the fall colors. The mixture of red, purple, orange and yellow is the result of chemical processes that take place in the tree as the seasons change from summer to winter.
- During the spring and summer the leaves have served as factories where most of the foods necessary for the tree's growth are manufactured. This food-making process takes place in the leaf in numerous cells containing chlorophyll, which gives the leaf its green color.
- This extraordinary chemical absorbs from sunlight the energy that is used in transforming air and water into food for the plant.
- Along with the green pigment are yellow to orange pigments, which, for example, give the orange color to a carrot. Most of the year these colors are masked by great amounts of green coloring.

Chlorophyll Breaks Down

- But in the fall, because of changes in the length of daylight and changes in temperature, the leaves stop their food-making process. The chlorophyll breaks down, the green color disappears, and the yellow to orange colors become visible and give the leaves part of their fall splendor.
- At the same time other chemical changes may occur. Some mixtures give rise to the reddish and purplish fall colors of trees such as dogwoods and sumacs, while others give the sugar maple its brilliant orange.
- The autumn foliage of some trees show only yellow colors. Others, like many oaks, display mostly browns. All these colors are due to the mixing of varying amounts of the chlorophyll residue and other pigments in the leaf during the fall season.

Other Changes Take Place

- As the fall colors appear, other changes are taking place. At the point where the stem of the leaf is attached to the tree, a special layer of cells develops and gradually separates the tissues that support the leaf.
- At the same time, the tree seals the cut, so that when the leaf is finally blown off by the wind or falls from its own weight, it leaves behind a leaf scar.
- Most of the broad-leaved trees in the Northern States shed their leaves in the fall. However, the dead brown leaves of the oaks and a few other species may stay on the tree until growth starts again in the spring.
- In the Southern States, where the winters are mild, some of the broad-leaved trees are evergreen; that is, the leaves stay on the trees during winter and keep their green color.

Only Some Trees Lose Leaves

- Most of the conifers - pines, spruces, firs, hemlocks, cedars, etc. - are evergreen in both the North and South.
- The needle- or scale-like leaves remain green or greenish the year round, and individual leaves may stay on for two to four or more years.

Weather Affects Color Intensity

- Temperature, light, and water supply have an influence on the degree and the duration of fall color.
- Low temperatures above freezing will produce bright reds in maples. However, early frost will weaken the brilliant red color.
- Rainy and/or overcast days tend to increase the intensity of fall colors.
- The best time to enjoy the autumn color would be on a clear, dry, and cool (not freezing) day. Enjoy the color, it only occurs for a brief period each fall!

SOURCE: <https://www.esf.edu/pubprog/brochure/leaves/leaves.htm>



Autumn Animals

Rutting Deer

- A rut usually means being stuck, but for members of the deer family—including its largest species, the moose—it means mating season.
- From September to mid-October, males of the otherwise solitary moose—a species that ranges across the northern U.S., Canada, Alaska, and northern Europe—seek out other males to fight for access to females.
- A surge in testosterone causes the soft, fuzzy skin covering on moose antlers, called velvet, to shed, turning them into sharp weapons that they'll wield in battle.
- Research spanning nearly 40 years in Alaska's Denali National Park has found that these victorious males—usually the largest and highest-ranking—are responsible for 88 percent of mating events.
- Females birth their calves in the spring, usually starting in late May.

Resting Birds

- As birds fly south for the winter, several species take autumnal pit stops along the way.
- After leaving the U.S. Pacific Northwest and Midwest, eared grebes, for example, gather in great numbers to eat and molt at Mono Lake in California and the Great Salt Lake in Utah.
- Other species that take rest stops include Franklin's gulls on the Great Plains, wood ducks on the Great Lakes, and red knots and other shorebirds on various beaches.
- Red knots, which migrate annually from the Arctic to the Southern Hemisphere and back, will travel 1,500 miles at a clip and then pause to rest, feed, and molt, faithfully returning to the same places each year.

Resilient Bears

- In fall, North American bear species are busily engaged in a process called hyperphagia, eating and drinking as much as they can to gain weight for their long winter hibernation.
- While people would suffer serious health consequences from an extended period of obesity and inactivity, a recent study in Communications Biology found that grizzly bear genes are regulated differently during fall and winter to cope with such physical trials.
- For instance, during hibernation, their genes are expressed in a way that reduces sensitivity to insulin, so that their blood sugar stays at a normal level and is spared for use by the brain, which needs it during the long sleep.
- This also allows the big mammals to metabolize fat during hibernation, something resting humans can't do.

Gluttonous Ladybugs

- There are around 5,000 species of ladybug, and many—such as multicolored Asian lady beetles, which are invasive in North America—will “be fattening up on thousands of aphids and soft-bodied prey” as fall approaches.
- After this banquet, the insects will gather, sometimes in large masses, where they'll enter a dormant state to wait out the long winter.
- Ladybugs prefer to hunker down in the crevices of rocky outcrops, but will sometimes congregate instead on the sides of people's houses.
- This ladybug heap often goes unnoticed by predators, but should a hungry animal discover one of these groups and not heed their bright warning colors, the insects may turn to reflex bleeding. Smelly hemolymph, aka bug blood, will seep out of their “knees” and give the disappointed predator a bad taste.

'Hibernating' Bird

- While other birds are busy flying south for the winter, the common poorwill of western North America and Mexico is having a staycation.
- These nocturnal members of the nightjar family are the only bird species known to go into a torpor, a similar state to hibernation, during which the animals can bring their body temperature down to 41 degrees.
- Poorwills “hibernate” the way they nest—on the ground, where their mottled brown camouflage renders them almost invisible. Like mammals, they're at their highest weight before they go into their torpor.
- Hibernating poorwills face the southwest, likely so the afternoon sun will help warm them as a complement to their body's own metabolism.
- The average poorwill torpor is about five days—but one especially sleepy bird slumbered for 45!

SOURCE: <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/article/hibernation-birds-mammal-fall-autumn>



What To Do With Fallen Leaves

Options for Fallen Leaves

- If you are able to, simply let the leaves stay where they fall. This leaf litter will break down quickly and many organisms use this ecosystem to live in during the cold winter months.
- Mulch the leaves using your lawn mower. The leaves will break down more quickly providing fertilizer to your yard after they are chopped up.
- Rake the leaves and compost them. You can add the leaves to an existing compost pile, or make a leaf compost pile separately. Leaves break down quickly and will make great fertilizer for your garden or yard in the spring.
- Use them as mulch around plants. Leaves provide some protection to plants in cold weather, and as they break down they add nutrients to the soil.
- Some municipalities offer leaf composting or collection. Check with your township to see if these services are offered where you live.

Other Tips For A Healthy Yard

- Create a brush pile.
 - Instead of getting rid of tree branches blown down by autumn winds, pile them up in a corner of your yard. The brush pile will shelter birds and small mammals from winter's cold, and also give them a place to hide from predators.
- Remove invasive non-native plants.
 - Invasive species displace native plants that provide food and habitat for wildlife. One of the worst is Japanese barberry, recognizable in fall by its bright scarlet berries. Winged euonymus, also known as burning bush, is another highly recognizable invasive this time of year because of the pinkish-red color of its leaves.
- Plant natives.
 - The cool, crisp days of fall are a great time to plant native trees and shrubs. Dogwood and spicebush are New Jersey natives that produce nutritious fruit for birds during their fall migration. Junipers, bayberries, hollies, hawthorns and sumacs produce fruits and berries eaten by birds during cold weather. While you're visiting your local nursery, you may be lucky enough to find bargains on leftover perennial flowers that will bloom next spring.

SOURCE: <https://www.njconservation.org/leave-the-autumn-leaves/>

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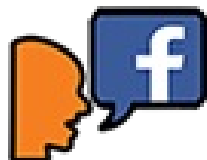
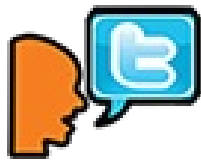


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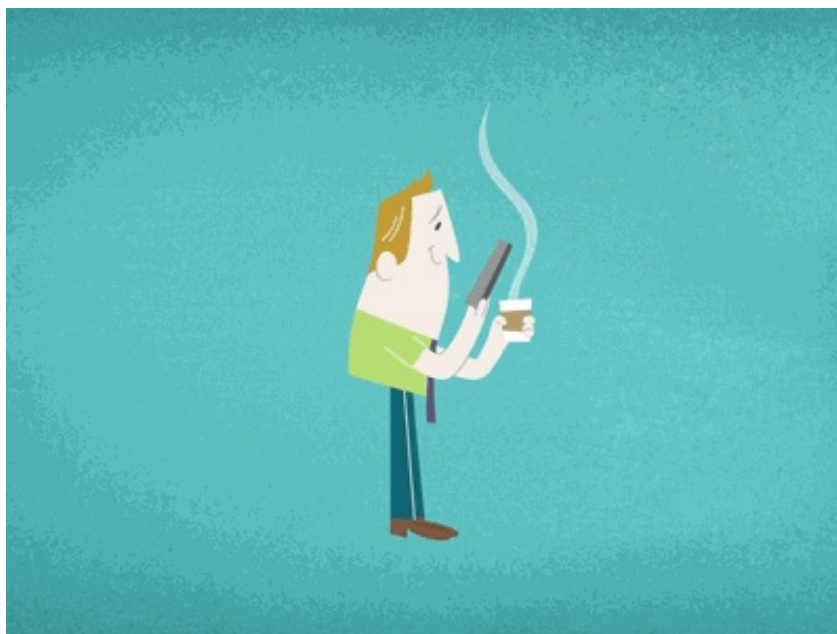


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October 2022

Employment:
Workplace Etiquette
Part 1



This is Part 1 of *Employment: Workplace Etiquette*! October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month, so we'll be focusing on ways to stay healthy, happy, and successful in the workplace.

- No matter where you work, there are basic social rules you should follow to have the best relationships with the people you work with.
- Email and other virtual communications also involve some unwritten rules to follow to ensure you communicate effectively.
- Proper etiquette starts before you even land the job; be sure to be mindful starting at the job interview.

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Workplace Etiquette



Punctuality Matters

- Arriving on time for work is crucial because it conveys the effectiveness of your time management skills to your coworkers and supervisors. Certain companies have daily morning meetings at the beginning of their workdays, meaning that punctuality can help these meetings start on time. This etiquette reinforces your reliability and demonstrates your respect towards your coworkers and work.
- Unexpected circumstances may occur that cause you to be late for work. Such instances are understandable as long they're an occasional occurrence and not a recurring one. For example, suppose you use public transportation to go to work. If you notice you're continuously arriving late, consider leaving your place of residence earlier to compensate for any public transport delays. Supervisors typically appreciate an employee that comes to work early.

Greet Others Politely

- Consider politely greeting your coworkers or customers with a "good morning" or "good afternoon" and a smile. Ensure you're making eye contact with people, calling them by their name, and taking the initiative of introducing yourself to new coworkers.
- When you present a friendly demeanor in your workplace, it can help others feel more comfortable, which may encourage them to ask you for assistance or advice.

Keep the Workplace Clean

- Offices and cubicles provide an opportunity for you to create a dedicated personal space. Even though most companies are typically flexible about what their employees place on display in their work areas, consider minimalism and cleanliness.
- Avoid overcrowding your office and instead strive to keep personal items to a minimum, as that can help your work area stay clean and neat. Consider how your coworkers and supervisors may react to the possessions you display by ensuring these items are work-appropriate.
- It can also be helpful for your career, and work relationships to extend this office etiquette to your overall workplace, which means that it's vital to be mindful of how you use communal areas. For example, most companies have a break room where employees can store foods in the refrigerator, use dishware, and make tea and coffee. When you use these amenities, ensure you clean after yourself and respect the possessions of others.

Lunch/Break Locations

- Most businesses have a designated lunchroom or cafeteria for their employees to eat. Consider going to these designated areas or outside restaurants or food courts during your lunchtime and other breaks you may have.
- By leaving your office or cubicle, you gain an opportunity to relax, which is beneficial for your mental state and motivation. This can also help you refocus once you return to your workplace.

Dress Appropriately

- Dress codes can vary depending on the industry of your workplace, but it's customary to strive for modesty and respect for what you wear. For example, even if your office encourages employees to wear casual attire, selecting semi-casual, simple, and comfortable clothing is appropriate. This dress code also includes other factors such as perfume and general hygiene.
- Most companies establish a dress code as part of their employee manual. You can refer to this manual or consider contacting human resources for more information about a company's acceptable work attire. It can also help to observe what your coworkers are wearing for further clarification of your workplace's dress code standards.

Practice Mindfulness

- When you practice mindfulness in the workspace, you showcase your collaboration and teamwork abilities. For example, you can hold the door for others and stay quiet when moving through the office to avoid disturbing your coworkers.
- Sometimes your tasks may be dependent on your team members completing their tasks first. Offer assistance when possible and when the roles reverse, consider finishing your tasks accurately and quickly so others can begin theirs.

SOURCE: <https://ca.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/etiquette-in-workplace>

Virtual Etiquette

— — —

Properly Manage your Inbox

- It's common to receive numerous emails every day at work from various sources, ranging from your immediate coworkers to other departments to clients.
- While you can check your inbox regularly, consider establishing a segment of your workday to manage your emails. Depending on your workload, this dedicated time for email correspondence can be once or twice a day.
- By doing this, you can continue your tasks without interruption, and it can help you focus more easily on how to write your replies.

Clear Intent and Format

- A good example of workplace etiquette is how you communicate via email and the format you use in your email.
- Ensure your subject line is short, clear, and concise. Follow that with a polite greeting, an introduction of yourself, and the purpose of your email.
- Consider including your openness to discuss or clarify matters further with your recipient.
- End your email with a "thank you" or "best regards" and your name or signature. You convey your respect, appreciation, and expertise to your coworkers and clients by practising professional email etiquette.

Use Professional Language

- When contacting clients or supervisors, writing concisely, professionally, and respectfully demonstrates the importance and care you place in crafting emails. It reflects a level of professionalism that can help you nurture significant work relationships.
- Consider keeping this professional tone at all times to establish personal consistency, but you may use a more casual style or vocabulary when contacting a coworker you know well. It's usually more professional to avoid slang and emojis.

Proofread Your Emails

- After drafting your email, it's vital to proofread its content before clicking send. This action allows you to check your grammar, the tone of your email, ensure the spelling of the recipient's name is correct, and that your intent is clear and easy to understand.
- If possible, it can help to read your email aloud to gain a better understanding of how your recipient may read it.

Responding to Emails

- It's courteous to respond by the end of the day, if possible, but not longer than 24 hours. You don't want to leave people hanging.
- Avoid using 'reply all' - if it doesn't pertain to all. It only adds to the bulk of a busy person's inbox. A response is generally needed by only the sender, who will summarize and send results to the group.
- Acknowledge the email even if you can't send the requested information right away. Send a quick response that you're working on it and when you expect to have the information to the sender.
- Stay on subject. Respond to the topic of the email, but avoid introducing a new subject in the same email thread. Start a new email instead.
- Don't always respond to an email with another email. Sometimes, it's best to pick up the phone instead or have a face-to-face meeting if the tone or topic of the email is emotional, terse, or needs a lengthy discussion.

SOURCE: <https://ca.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/etiquette-in-workplace>



Job Interview Etiquette

Prepare

- Taking time to prepare is the most important thing you can do before an interview.
- A job opening at a company typically indicates a real need for more people, meaning that the individuals you're interviewing with are taking time from their schedules to speak with you.
- The best way to be respectful is to arrive fully prepared to answer their questions and ask your own insightful questions.

Treat Everyone You Meet With Respect

- This extends to all areas of life, and it remains true in the context of a job interview.
- From the moment you leave your home on the day of the interview, make a conscious effort to be respectful. Be mindful of how you behave on the commute or in an elevator—no one wins points for cutting off the CEO in the parking lot or failing to hold the door for the hiring manager.
- Think ahead of time about how you'll treat everyone in the office with respect and present yourself well. Security personnel, receptionists and anyone else you encounter on your way to the interview room may be asked to give feedback on you.

Practice Polite, Confident Body Language

- As you go into the building, hold your head up and pull your shoulders back. Your posture will help you convey professionalism and confidence.
- Avoid being on your phone so you can keep your body language open and focus on being present.
- Respect communal space. Don't lounge in the waiting or interview rooms in a way that inconveniences others (resting your feet on another chair, spreading your legs, placing your belongings in a chair someone else could sit in, etc.).

Ace The Introductions

- Look them in the eyes and smile. Offer a greeting, like "It's nice to meet you ..." and say their name.
- You'll be more likely to remember their name if you say it out loud when you first meet.

Send A Thank You Note

- You should follow up with an email thank you to the hiring manager within 24 hours. This can be a quick note simply thanking them for their time or a longer note that elaborates on some things you talked about.
- If you have multiple interviews on the same day with various people, it's best to send a personalized thank you note to each individual who interviewed you.

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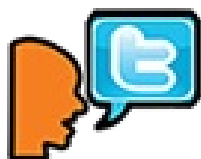
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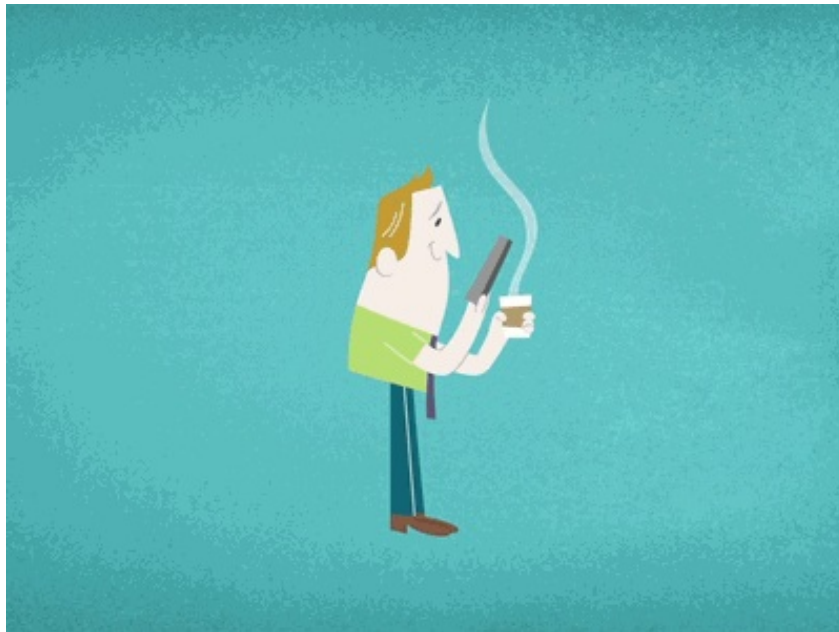


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October 2022

Employment:
Workplace Wellness
Part 2



This is Part 2 of *Employment: Workplace Wellness*! October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month, so we'll be focusing on ways to stay healthy, happy, and successful in the workplace.

- We should all be mindful of helpful ways to stay healthy at home and on the job.
- If you bring lunch to work, there are many ways to make healthy choices.
- If you are able to, some basic stretches and activities can be added to your work day to get you up and moving.

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Workplace Health Tips

Drink More Water

- If you find it difficult to drink more water at work, here are several tips you can incorporate into your day.
- Purchase a reusable water bottle that you can bring to work each day and refill as needed.
- If you prefer flavorful drinking options, purchase a fruit infuser bottle to add a hint of your favorite fruit to your water.
- Use your reusable water bottle to set goals for yourself. You can use markers to set deadlines for when you need to drink a particular amount of water. For example, you may want to reach the bottle's halfway point by noon.
- If you have a fitness tracker, you can often set reminders to yourself to drink a glass of water. Otherwise, you can set these reminders using your phone or computer.

Utilize Good Posture

- If you can provide your own chair, choose an ergonomic model that offers padding to support your back, neck and lower body.
- Adjust your chair to ensure that your feet are flat on the floor and your wrists and forearms can lay straight on your desk.
- Keep your computer screen at eye level and about an arm's length apart from you. Use larger font sizes or display settings to avoid straining your eyes.
- If you make phone calls regularly, try using a headset or headphones to reduce the strain of leaning and cradling your phone in your neck.

Take Breaks Regularly

- Remaining productive during the day does not necessarily mean you cannot leave your desk. Taking regular breaks can help you refocus and re-energize your mind, allowing you to return to your workspace ready to work.

- Consider using your break time to incorporate healthy habits, such as taking a brief walk, getting some fresh air and sunshine or grabbing something healthy to eat.
- Even when busy at work, you can set reminders for yourself on a regular schedule, such as every hour, to take at least a five-minute break from your desk.

Keep Your Workspace Clean

- A clean workspace can help you keep a clear mind, as you avoid getting distracted by a multitude of papers and other items cluttering your space.
- At the end of each day, try to take some time to organize your workspace and put away anything you will not need the next day.
- The most-used items on your desk, such as your keyboard, mouse and phone, can also collect dust and bacteria. You can promote good health by cleaning these items regularly with disinfectant products, such as sanitizing wipes.

Use Good Hygienic Practices

- Colds and cases of flu can spread around offices, so always try to use good hygiene practices. If you notice someone else is feeling unwell, try to keep your distance.
- When you feel sick, remember to take the day off or work from home when possible. These practices can help keep you and your coworkers healthy and avoid spreading germs.
- Rather than coughing or sneezing into your hands, use a tissue and throw it away immediately. If you do not have a tissue, use the inside of your elbow.
- Wash your hands regularly, including after you cough, sneeze or use the restroom or other high-traffic areas. Make it a habit to wash them for at least 20 seconds.
- Keep a bottle of hand sanitizer at your desk for instances where soap and water are not readily available.

Learn Stress Management Techniques

- In your role, you may take on numerous tasks and responsibilities daily. These efforts may make you feel tired and stressed, affecting both your mental and physical health.
- You can incorporate various management techniques to help handle your stress, boost your productivity and avoid feeling burnt out such as:
 - Listening to your favorite music or podcasts
 - Using time management apps to track and prioritize your tasks at work or set deadlines for yourself
 - Asking your coworkers or supervisors for support when you need help completing a task
 - Socializing with your coworkers during free time to get your mind off of work for a few minutes during breaks

Get Sufficient Sleep

- Getting enough sleep the night before work can help prepare you for the day and maintain your focus. Many people try to get at least eight hours.
- When you get sufficient and high-quality sleep, you may feel less sluggish in the morning and ready to take on the day's responsibilities. It can also help you avoid feeling tired during the workday.
- You can boost the quality of your sleep by creating a bedtime routine and limiting distractions.

Reward Yourself

- Another way to keep your morale at work high is to reward yourself when you have completed difficult or lengthy tasks.
- Your reward can vary on your preferences, such as taking a 10-minute break or grabbing your favorite snack.
- Having something to look forward to can help motivate you to complete the task. Taking a moment to appreciate yourself can also help you recognize your value

and make you feel good.

- Maintaining a cheerful attitude and positive self-esteem can help you care for your mental health.

SOURCE: <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/stay-healthy-at-work>



Work Lunch Tips

Bring a Packed Lunch

- You can make healthier food choices by planning and preparing lunches to bring to work. By preparing this meal the night before, you can avoid rushing in the morning or grabbing something potentially unhealthy on your way into the office.
- Some of the food types to incorporate into your meal include lean proteins, healthy fats, salads, vegetables and fruits. Numerous online sources offer simple, healthy lunch ideas and recipes.
- Along with being healthy, make sure to pack yourself a meal you feel excited about eating. Having something to look forward to can help keep you in a positive mood.

Make Smart Snack Choices

- Along with lunch, you may consider packing healthy snacks. By planning your snacks for the day, you can avoid grabbing something from the vending machine or stopping by the candy bowl on a coworker's desk.
- Examples of healthier snacks include granola bars, fruits, nuts and vegetables. Some water-rich fruits, such as watermelon, strawberries or oranges, can also help you stay hydrated.
- Snacking throughout the day, as opposed to solely eating one large meal, can also support your energy levels. You can have a small snack every two to three hours to avoid an afternoon slump and getting over-hungry.

Reduce Your Caffeine Consumption

- Some people enjoy having coffee during the workday to help them stay alert. However, this alertness only lasts for a short period and sometimes leads to a crash later in the day.
- For some people, too much coffee results in other side effects, such as nerves, restlessness, upset stomachs or dizziness. These effects could disrupt workplace performance.
- Limiting how much coffee you drink may help you to be more energetic. Consider reducing your consumption to one cup in the morning, though you may want to conduct this process slowly to avoid withdrawal headaches.
- You can also replace your coffee habit with healthier drink options, such as water or decaffeinated coffee and teas.

Try these "Five Make-Ahead Work Lunches That Don't Need Reheating" in the video below.



SOURCE: <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/stay-healthy-at-work>



Workplace Fitness

Incorporate Exercise Into Your Day

- Finding ways to exercise throughout your day can help boost your energy and benefit your physical health.
- Exercising can be as simple as taking a walk during your break. You can also raise your activity levels by making simple changes to your habits, such as parking further from the office entrance or using stairs instead of elevators.
- If you need some motivation, you may ask a colleague to join you on regular walks or turn a regular one-on-one meeting into a walking meeting.
- For example, you can perform leg lifts or calf raises while sitting at your desk.
- You can also keep weights at your desks or move outside for simple, short exercises such as lunges and high knees.

Try out some workplace stretches and exercises in the resources below.



Try these stretches to reduce stiffness at work

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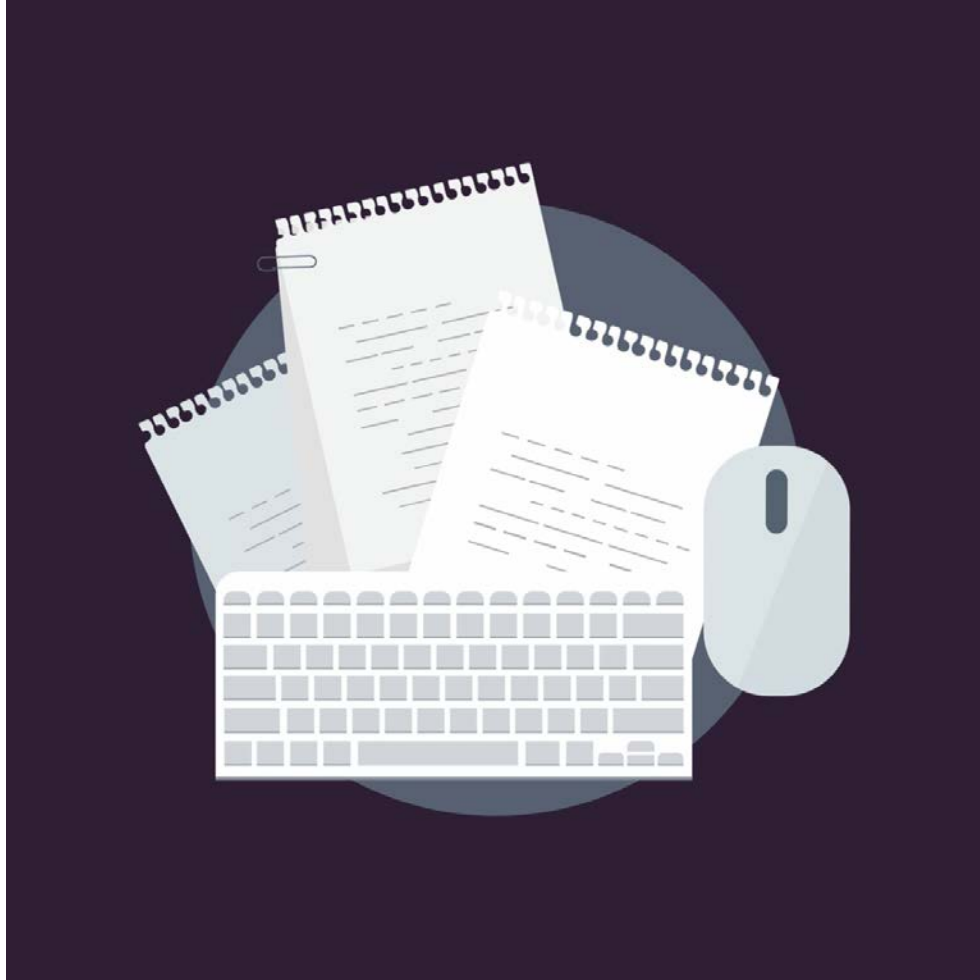
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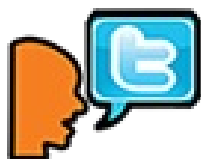


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September 2022

Lean on Me:
Support Systems
Part 1



This is Part 1 of *Lean on Me*! We'll taking a look at how social support systems can improve your life and help you when times are tough.

- There are many mental and social benefits to building and maintaining a social support network.
- Learn how to support others so you can be a part of their support system.
- Try to be open and ready to accept help from others when needed.

After you're done reading, [don't forget to listen to our webinars every Tuesday! You can find registration links and recordings here.](#)

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Social Support Networks

Social Support Network

- A social support network is made up of friends, family and peers. Social support is different from a support group, which is generally a structured meeting run by a lay leader or mental health professional.
- Although both support groups and support networks can play an important role in times of stress, a social support network is something you can develop when you're not under stress. It provides the comfort of knowing that your friends are there for you if you need them.
- You don't need to formalize your support network. A coffee break with a friend at work, a quick chat with a neighbor, a phone call to your sibling, a visit to a house of worship or volunteer work are all ways to develop and foster lasting relationships with others.

Benefits of Social Support

- Studies have demonstrated that social isolation and loneliness are associated with a greater risk of poor mental health and poor cardiovascular health, as well as other health problems.
- Other studies have shown the benefit of a network of social support, including the following:
 - Improving the ability to cope with stressful situations
 - Alleviating the effects of emotional distress
 - Promoting lifelong good mental health
 - Enhancing self-esteem
 - Lowering cardiovascular risks, such as lowering blood pressure
 - Promoting healthy lifestyle behaviors
- If you want to improve your mental health and your ability to combat stress, surround yourself with at least a few good friends and confidants.

Building Social Supports

- Volunteer. Pick a cause that's important to you and get involved. You're sure to meet others who share similar interests and values.
- Join a gym or fitness group. Incorporating physical fitness into your day is an

important part of a healthy lifestyle. You can make friends while you exercise. Look at gyms in your area or check a local community center.

- Take a class. A local college or community education course puts you in contact with others who share similar hobbies or pursuits.
- Look online. Social networking sites can help you stay connected with friends and family. Many good sites exist for people going through stressful times, such as chronic illness, loss of a loved one, a new baby, divorce and other life changes. Be sure to stick to reputable sites, and be cautious about arranging in-person meetings.

SOURCE: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/social-support/art-20044445>



How to Support Others

Be Available To Listen

- This means that you provide a sounding board when the person who needs your support approaches you.
- It doesn't mean that you provide help regardless of whether you're being asked for it.
- Let the person you care about know that you're willing to listen, uncritically, when the situation demands it.

Be Available With Advice

- When you are approached for help, providing advice can prove to be very supportive.
- Providing unsolicited advice isn't perceived as particularly supportive, but being ready for it when asked will help ensure that your advice hits a receptive audience.

Show Love And Affection

- Without providing anything in the way of objective support, it's often enough just to know that someone cares to help get the stressed individual through tough times.
- The love and affection could be of the face-to-face form, and it's probably best when it is, but it can also come in the form of virtual cheers.

Help Out

- Give a hand with daily chores or by running errands.
- This is often something you need to be able to do in person, so if you live some distance away from the individual you would like to support, it may mean that you take a trip there every now and then to help out.

Decision-Making Process Help

- The person you care about may have to come up with plans that require more

than just a sounding board or advice.

- Being patiently willing to go through the steps required to solve the problem can give the person you care about a more balanced perspective than would be possible if he or she were making this decision alone.

Be A Person Who They Trust & Confide In

- Being trustworthy is key. Worrying that the person you confide in might violate that trust can only add to the stress of their problems.
- You might think it's enough for the person you care about to sign up for an established support network or to be able to receive financial or emergency assistance. The friendship, trust, and sensitivity a family member or friend provides can make an even greater difference.
- Fulfillment in our relationships involves willingness to give the support that will make the most difference in helping those we care about.

SOURCE: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/fulfillment-any-age/201708/six-ways-be-more-supportive-those-closest-you>



How to Accept Help

Allow Yourself To Be Vulnerable

- To accept help, you have to let go of control and be vulnerable.
- For some, that may be the hardest hurdle to overcome but it is important in order to let others step in and help.

Examine Your Beliefs On Receiving

- If you're having difficulty letting others take control, examine some of the reasons this may be.
- What's stopping you from accepting help from others?
- Do you feel that you don't deserve to receive their compliment or love? Why do you feel that way?
- What is your relationship with money?
- Being vulnerable is not a weakness and neither is asking for help.

Give Others An Opportunity To Give

- Receiving is not only about you. It's also about the giver.
- Imagine a well-intentioned, loving person giving you something and you reject their gifts. How would that make them feel? Unappreciated? Awkward? Embarrassed?
- Open yourself up and let others help and give you this most precious gift.

Pay It Forward Instead Of Returning It

- Sometimes when people aren't comfortable with receiving, they would return the love, the compliment, or the gifts in another form immediately. For example, when someone gives them a gift, they feel obliged to find something to give back.
- When it's your time to receive, it's important for you to embrace the moment. Don't be in a hurry to give back to the other person. You are just deflecting their love back to them. It's like: "I can't receive your love. Here have it back." Then what you give them, would not be authentic.

Feel The Love and Be Grateful

- To receive is such a beautiful experience. Start a journal of gratitude to write down how thankful you are to have someone in your life that cares for you and gives you support when you most need it.

Practice Accepting Help Everywhere

- You don't have to wait for someone to give you help to practice receiving. Whenever you need help, just ask for it. Don't worry about being rejected. Give others an opportunity to help you. If they aren't the one, move on to the next.

SOURCE: <https://www.hncsupport.org/6-ways-to-accept-help-when-its-uncomfortable/>

Let's Stay Healthy and Support Each Other!



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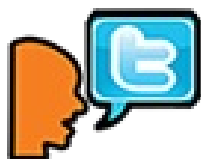
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Lean on Me:
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Part 2

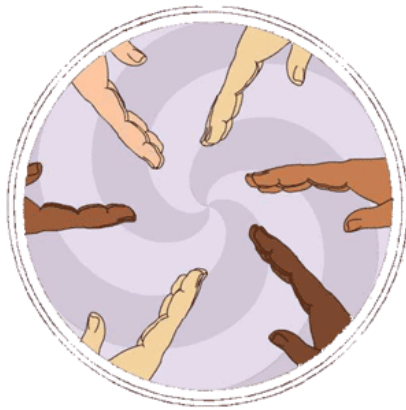


This is Part 2 of *Lean on Me*! We'll taking a look at how social support systems can improve your life and help you when times are tough.

- There are many types of support groups that exist, locally, and virtually, for all kinds of people and situations.
- Animals can also offer support as pets or in a more specific capacity as Emotional Support Animals.
- Not everyone is ready to support others or accept support themselves.

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Support Groups

Structure of Support Groups

- Support groups may be offered by a nonprofit advocacy organization, clinic, hospital or community organization. They also may be independent of any organization and run entirely by group members.
- Formats of support groups vary, including face-to-face meetings, teleconferences or online communities. A lay person — someone who shares or has shared the group's common experience — often leads a support group, but a group also may be led by a professional facilitator, such as a nurse, social worker or psychologist.
- Some support groups may offer educational opportunities, such as a guest doctor, psychologist, nurse or social worker to talk about a topic related to the group's needs.
- Support groups are not the same as group therapy sessions. Group therapy is a specific type of mental health treatment that brings together several people with similar conditions under the guidance of a licensed mental health care provider.

Benefits of Support Groups

- The common experience among members of a support group often means they have similar feelings, worries, everyday problems, treatment decisions or treatment side effects. Participating in a group provides you with an opportunity to be with people who are likely to have a common purpose and likely to understand one another.
- Benefits of participating in a support group may include:
 - Feeling less lonely, isolated or judged
 - Reducing distress, depression, anxiety or fatigue
 - Talking openly and honestly about your feelings
 - Improving skills to cope with challenges
 - Staying motivated to manage chronic conditions or stick to treatment plans
 - Gaining a sense of empowerment, control or hope
 - Improving understanding of a disease and your own experience with it
 - Getting practical feedback about treatment options

- Learning about health, economic or social resources

Possible Risks

- Support groups may have drawbacks, and effective groups generally depend on the facilitator to help steer away from these problems. These problems may include:
 - Disruptive group members
 - Conversation dominated by griping
 - Lack of confidentiality
 - Emotional entanglement, group tension or interpersonal conflicts
 - Inappropriate or unsound medical advice
 - Competitive comparisons of whose condition or experience is worse

Pros and Cons of Online Support Groups

- Online support groups offer benefits and risks that are particular to that format. It's important to consider these factors before joining an online group.
- Benefits of online groups include:
 - More frequent or flexible participation
 - Opportunities for people who may not have local face-to-face support groups
 - A degree of privacy or anonymity
- Risks of online support groups include the following:
 - Communication only by written text can lead to misunderstanding or confusion among group members.
 - Anonymity may lead to inappropriate or disrespectful comments or behaviors.
 - Participation online may result in isolation from other friends or family.
 - Online communities may be particularly susceptible to misinformation or information overload.
 - People may use the online environment to prey on people, promote a product or commit fraud.

How To Find A Support Group

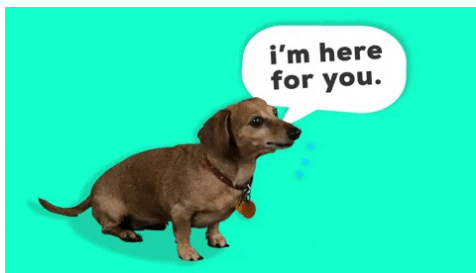
- Your doctor, clinic or hospital
- Nonprofit organizations that advocate for particular medical conditions or life changes
- National Institutes of Health websites for specific diseases and conditions

Questions to Ask Before Joining

- Is the group designed for a specific cause?
- Does the group meet for a set period of time or does it continue indefinitely?
- Where does the group meet?
- At what times and how often does the group meet?
- Is there a facilitator or moderator?
- Has the facilitator undergone training?
- Is a mental health expert involved with the group?
- What are the guidelines for confidentiality?
- Are there established ground rules for group participation?
- What is a typical meeting like?
- Is it free, and if not, what are the fees?

Red Flags For A Problematic Group

- Promises of a sure cure for a disease or condition
- High fees to attend the group
- Pressure to purchase products or services



Emotional Support Animals

Overview

- Do you feel calmer, less anxious, and more capable when you're around your pet? If the answer is 'yes,' you may want to consider applying to register them as an Emotional Support Animal (ESA) and see if you qualify for an ESA letter.
- From rabbits to snakes, Emotional Support Animals can come in all shapes, sizes, and species. Although dogs are the most common choice, almost any type of animal can qualify, as long as a licensed mental health professional has agreed that your pet is helping you to cope with a mental health condition.
- There might be rules about which animals you can take into certain premises or on flights, but no laws limit which species can become an Emotional Support Animal.

Difference Between ESA & Service Animal

- Shops, businesses, and public buildings such as courts and libraries are legally required to admit service animals, even if their general policy is that no dogs are allowed inside. They are not required to accept an Emotional Support Animal.
- Some might be happy to, especially if your dog is wearing a harness which identifies them as an Emotional Support Animal or if you have the paperwork to prove that you need them, but they are not required to. Unlike service animals, however, your pet won't have a legal right to go everywhere with you.
- You should beware that harnesses, ID badges, or collars, which will identify your pet as an ESA are not a free pass. Although these accessories can be a great way to let the general public know that your pet is working, they won't give your four-legged friend the same rights as a service dog.
- An ESA registration and a letter from a licensed medical person will mean your pet is protected by the Fair Housing Act, which states that landlords cannot refuse to accept you for rental accommodation based on your Emotional Support Animal. If your chosen building doesn't allow pets, this rule won't apply to your ESA since it's not legally classed as a pet (which means you won't have to pay a pet fee). A registration is not the defining characteristic of an ESA. Rather the letter is the critical part. The registration can help an owner keep up to date on laws and legal changes.
- Under the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA), airlines are required to allow your ESA to fly in the airplane cabin with you. However, this rule can depend on the size and species of your ESA. It is also worth noting that different airlines will have different rules so always be careful when you travel and do your research ahead of time.

Types of ESA

- Dogs, cats, ferrets, snakes, rabbits, miniature horses, pigs, and hedgehogs are possible emotional support animals.
- Got a pet we haven't mentioned here? Although there are some laws which place safety restrictions on the type of creatures that are allowed on planes, there are no limitations when it comes to which creatures can become ESAs.
- As long as your pet helps alleviate your mental illness symptoms - and can cope with the pressures of working in public - you can apply for an ESA certificate for any species.
- Simply bear in mind that ESAs, unlike other service animals, aren't automatically allowed to accompany you wherever you go. If your ESA is a particularly large or unusual creature, you should be prepared that some airlines won't allow them to



How to Spot Emotional Unavailability

Emotional Unavailability

- Emotional unavailability refers to someone who doesn't respond to your emotional needs or cues. An emotionally unavailable person has persistent difficulty expressing or handling emotions, and getting emotionally close to other people.
- When we say someone is emotionally unavailable, we mean that they are not comfortable feeling their own emotions, sharing emotions with others, or being present and responsive to someone else's emotions.
- On the other hand, someone who's emotionally available is comfortable sharing an uninhibited connection with someone else, and this includes emotional intimacy.

Expressions

- Everyone's different and may express emotional unavailability in their own way. However, someone who is emotionally unavailable may:
 - Seem standoffish in general
 - Find it challenging to talk about their feelings
 - Avoid certain topics or situations that involve emotional expressions
- Many people, particularly male gender-identified people, receive culturally reinforced messages that emotional vulnerability is 'weak,' and in response, they develop patterns of emotional unavailability in an attempt to live up to cultural gender expectations.
- Others may find it difficult to read or understand other people's emotions, but that doesn't mean they don't care or aren't willing to support you

How Does It Affect Others

- You may have felt someone you care about couldn't be there for you emotionally at some point. Maybe they seemed distant, unaffectionate, or uninterested.
- It's natural to be emotionally unavailable when you have a lot going on or need personal space. They may need time and space to work on themselves before helping others.
- If someone seems emotionally unavailable by showing the signs below, you may want to look elsewhere for support or know they may not be receptive towards your support.

They Avoid Intimacy

- Someone who's emotionally unavailable may fear intimacy – sharing their innermost feelings and thoughts with you.
- Discomfort with vulnerability leads some people to distance themselves from their own emotional experiences, which makes it almost impossible to engage

with others in a way that has emotional intimacy and depth.

- When your loved one dodges intimate conversations or situations, it might seem like they don't trust you. But in most cases, it's not a personal thing. They're used to relying on themselves and being self-sufficient.
- You may also find you "hit a wall" every time you try to get close to them.
- Painful emotions, or emotions that make someone feel emotionally vulnerable, are particularly challenging.

They Avoid Commitment

- Commitment is often difficult for someone who is emotionally unavailable.
- They may put off labeling your romantic relationship or initiating a next step, such as moving in or proposing marriage.
- Fear of commitment and fear of getting too close are two common signs of emotional unavailability.
- In a friendship, the person may be hesitant to make plans or might cancel those often. They might also become evidently uncomfortable if you express love for them or treat them as a confidant.

They Get Defensive Easily

- Someone who is emotionally unavailable rarely initiates conversations that involve discussing relationship dynamics, hurt feelings, or requests for behavioral changes.
- An emotionally unavailable partner also tends to respond in a defensive way. Or, they might blame you or someone else for their problems. They find trusting others challenging and this may lead them to emotional detachment as well.

They Aren't Available

- If you tell them you need them, emotionally unavailable people tend to run the other way. Sometimes, they literally are nowhere to be found when you're going through a rough time or simply want to talk.
- Or they might stick around, but they'll tend to minimize your emotions. They could also try to change the subject or just withdraw from an emotional conversation.
- Someone who's emotionally unavailable might also persistently want to keep topics "light" even when you tell them you need to vent or need advice.

They Might Not Empathize

- Because they tend to "turn off" emotions and have poor insight, people who are emotionally unavailable might also exhibit low empathy – the inability to understand or share someone else's feelings.
- In other words, an emotionally unavailable person may not be able to relate to you, put themselves in your shoes, or consider your feelings when making a decision.
- This doesn't necessarily mean they don't care about your feelings, but they might not have the emotional capability to identify and honor your needs.
- Since an emotionally unavailable person isn't comfortable exploring their own emotions, they might not be able to connect with other people's emotional needs, either.

SOURCE: <https://psychcentral.com/lib/signs-of-emotional-unavailability#5-signs-of-emotional-unavailability>

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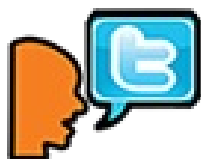
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