

YOUR GAMEPLAN TO LIVE

ANXIETY AND SLEEP

Anxiety is more common than ever - especially with everything going on in our lives and around the world. Anxious, racing thoughts not only interfere with our comfort and focus during the day, they often also keep us from getting the kind of quality sleep that we desperately need.



The number of antianxiety prescriptions dispensed have increased by over 35% during this pandemic including those for Xanax, Klonopin, and Ativan. Medications for sleep disorders increased by 15%. Though these drugs act fast and do work, they are usually used short-term and at the lowest effective dose closely monitored by a health care provider.

Xanax, Klonopin, Ativan, and Valium are all benzodiazepines (a class of sedating drugs), which can cause a host of issues including memory problems, drowsiness, confusion, and addiction. They can be very difficult to discontinue and should not be stopped abruptly as severe withdrawal syndrome can develop that can include anxiety, irritability, and seizures in some cases. When combined with alcohol or other sedating drugs, overdose can occur.

Drugs such as Ambien and Lunesta are used by many, but they also have many downsides. They can limit REM sleep causing a hangover effect, brain fog, and memory problems. Most people have also heard the stories of episodes of sleep walking, sleep driving, and other odd behaviors that can occur. This can happen at any time during use. People have no recollection that they did these things the following day. Both benzodiazepines and the above sleep drugs carry the FDA's black box warning for serious side effects.

Is there a better way? After all, sleep is important for our body, mind, and spirit!

First and foremost, don't wait. If you are having sleep problems, take action now!



Super Nutritious Smoothie

This Super Nutritious Smoothie is packed with nearly 50% of your daily needs of most essential vitamins and minerals.

Ingredients:

- 3 tablespoons hemp seeds
- 3 tablespoons chia seeds
- 1 cup kale
- 1 cup spinach
- 1 medium carrot
- 1/4 medium red beet, raw
- 1/2 medium apple
- 1 medium orange
- 1 cup frozen mixed organic berries
- 1/2 cup frozen organic mango
- 1/2 cup cooked sweet potato
- 1/4 avocado
- 1 brazil nut
- 1 cup cold water
- 1 cup iced green tea
- Ice

Directions:

Combine all ingredients in a high-speed blender. Add ice if you need it to be thicker, or additional water or iced green tea if you need it to be thinner.

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Here are some tips to improve sleep quality.

- Because sleep is so important, MAKE IT A PRIORITY.
- Address any biological issues that affect your sleep such as chronic pain, sleep apnea, acid reflux, untreated thyroid issues, heart conditions, etc.
- Treat mental health conditions and substance use disorders that you're aware of.
- Go to sleep when you are truly tired.
- Go to bed and wake up on a regular schedule.
- Develop good sleep hygiene.
 - ⇒ Create a restful sleeping environment
 - ⇒ Your bedroom should be a peaceful place for rest.
 - ⇒ Control comfortable temperature, lighting and noise
 - ⇒ If you have a pet that disturbs you, consider having him/her sleep elsewhere.
 - ⇒ Make sure your bed is comfortable – not too soft or too hard, not too small.
- Exercise regularly, but not too late in the day as it will keep you alert.
- Eat light at night. Too much food or drink at night can keep you up.
- Avoid caffeine, alcohol, nicotine, and other chemicals that interfere with sleep.
- If you're going to nap, do it early in the day.
- Try to relax before bed.
 - ⇒ Warm bath or shower, quiet music, a good book (not exciting), meditation, gentle yoga, etc. to relax mind/body/spirit.
 - ⇒ Are you a worrier? Write down every concern that comes to mind before going to bed. If you wake up in the middle of the night ruminating on worries, write them down at that time, too!
- Try sound therapy (soothing sounds to lull you to sleep)
- Keep technology out of your bedroom.
- Keep your clock out of your sight.
- If you simply cannot sleep, get out of bed and occupy yourself with something relaxing.
- Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) uses techniques that specifically address the root cause of insomnia.
- Consider natural supplements such as melatonin, magnesium, l-theanine, GABA, and 5-HTP to help calm the brain and promote healthy sleep. Talk to your healthcare provider about them. Be aware, however, that some physicians may not be familiar with these supplements and their effect on sleep.

Seek professional help if these tips are not working for you. Sleep disorders, anxiety, panic attacks, depression, and other mental health issues are not things to put off. Your mental well-being is extremely important, especially with all the stresses going on right now. Waiting to get treatment until the pandemic is over could make you feel worse over time.

<https://www.marketwatch.com/story/anti-anxiety-medication-prescriptions-have-spiked-34-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic-2020-04-16>



Spinach Salad with Roasted Sweet Potatoes, White Beans & Basil

Roasted sweet potatoes are paired with spinach, cabbage and white beans and tossed together with a bright basil dressing in this healthy main dish.

By Carolyn Casner

Ingredients:

- 1 sweet potato, peeled and diced (1/2-inch)
- 5 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- ½ teaspoon ground pepper, divided
- ¼ teaspoon salt, divided
- ½ cup packed fresh basil leaves
- 3 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped shallot
- 2 teaspoons whole-grain mustard
- 10 cups baby spinach
- 1 (15 ounce) can low-sodium cannellini beans, rinsed
- 2 cups shredded cabbage
- 1 cup chopped red bell pepper
- ½ cup chopped pecans, toasted

Directions:

Preheat oven to 425 degrees F. Toss sweet potatoes, 1 tablespoon oil, ¼ teaspoon pepper and 1/8 teaspoon salt together in a large bowl. Transfer to a large rimmed baking sheet and roast, stirring once, until tender, 15 to 18 minutes. Let cool for at least 10 minutes. Meanwhile, place basil, the remaining ¼ cup oil, vinegar, shallot, mustard and the remaining ¼ teaspoon pepper and 1/8 teaspoon salt in a mini food processor. Process until mostly smooth. Transfer to the large bowl. Add spinach, beans, cabbage, bell pepper, pecans and the cooled sweet potatoes. Toss to coat.

Recipe and Photo Credit: <http://www.eatingwell.com/recipe/277639/spinach-salad-with-roasted-sweet-potatoes-white-beans-basil/>

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<https://www.healthline.com/health/xanax-and-alcohol#xanax-and-alcohol-side-effects>
<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sleep-and-tiredness/10-tips-to-beat-insomnia/>
<https://www.amenclinics.com/blog/importance-getting-good-sleep/>

RESTORATIVE YOGA POSES & MEDITATION

For those who are not familiar with yoga, restorative poses are those that are very still and relaxing opposed to physically challenging.

Restorative practice can be intimidating to beginners mostly because “props” are used. These props include: blocks, blankets, towels, walls, scents, sandbags, eye covers, and pillows—or whatever you like to aid in comfort and relaxation.

The ultimate goal is to let your mind be silent (meditate) and to relax, which is not easy for many people. However, in time and with practice, you will easily be able to ease into a place of contentment, where your mind and body can enjoy stillness.

During restorative poses, let your whole body be HEAVY with gravity. Relax the muscles in your face and throat. Close your eyes and breathe deeply through your nose. Stay in these positions anywhere from 5-15 minutes. Adjust yourself so that you are always in comfort. There should be no discomfort or strain.

VIPARITA KARANI (Legs up the wall)

Lie on your back and pivot yourself so that the backs of your legs are pressing against the wall and the bottoms of your feet are facing up. Your sitting bones should now be pressed up against the wall, or slightly away from the wall, and your back and head rested on the floor. (You may use props – i.e. a pillow or blankets under your low back against the wall.) Gently roll to one side to get down off the wall.



SUPTA BADDHA (Reclined Cobbler’s Pose)

Place your blanket under your back with buttocks on the floor (do not sit on the blanket). Place the soles of your feet together and support your legs with blocks, pillows, etc. under your knees. Gently recline yourself onto your blanket and be sure that your forehead is higher than your chin by placing an extra pillow/blanket, or blocks under your head.



SAVASANA (Corpse Pose)

This is the most basic pose for relaxation. Place your feet about as wide as the mat and let them roll out naturally, toes pointing out. Lift your behind and lengthen



Vegetarian Taco- Stuffed Zucchini



By Julia Levy
Servings: 4

Ingredients:

- 1 (14 ounce) package extra-firm tofu, drained
- 4 medium zucchini (about 1 ½ pound)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 cup chopped medium yellow onion
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic (about 3 cloves)
- 1 ounce package 30%-less-sodium taco seasoning
- ¾ cup no-salt-added tomato sauce
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 ounces (½ cup) shredded Mexican cheese blend
- ½ medium ripe avocado, chopped
- 2 ounces radishes, thinly sliced
- ½ cup chopped red onion (from 1 small)
- Fresh cilantro leaves

Directions:

Preheat oven to 425 degrees F. Wrap drained tofu in several layers of paper towels; top with a heavy skillet to squeeze out more liquid. Let sit 10 minutes. Break into chunks.

While tofu drains, slice zucchini in half lengthwise and scoop out flesh, leaving a 1/4-inch border around the sides; discard flesh. Place zucchini shells in a single layer in a 13- x 9-inch baking dish. Set aside.

Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high. Add chopped yellow onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 4 minutes. Add garlic and taco seasoning and cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add tofu chunks and stir to break into bite-size pieces and fully coat in spices. Stir in tomato sauce, and bring to simmer. Remove from heat.

Sprinkle zucchini halves evenly with salt. Spoon tofu mixture evenly into zucchini halves. Sprinkle with cheese.

Bake in preheated oven until zucchini is tender and cheese is melted, about 20 minutes. Top with avocado, radishes, red onion and cilantro. Serve immediately.

Recipe and Photo Credit: <http://www.eatingwell.com/recipe/275277/vegetarian-taco-stuffed-zucchini/#printview>

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your body (be as tall as you can on the floor). Place your arms—with palms up—about a foot from your body. Relax your forehead, then your shoulders, arms, and on down your body. Let your mind be quiet. Anytime you find yourself ruminating, stop and go back to a quiet mind.

IS HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE REALLY A BIG DEAL?

The short answer to that question is “Yes.” According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention approximately one out of every three American adults have high blood pressure, or hypertension. Because it is so common, don’t assume that it’s not a very big deal, because when left untreated, high blood pressure can put you at risk for potentially life-threatening complications including those from COVID-19.



Normal blood pressure should be less than 120/80mm Hg. Everyone’s blood pressure varies throughout the day, but if, on average, your blood pressure is 140/90 (current guidelines for the top tier of borderline high blood pressure) or 150/90 (people over age 60), most practitioners will want to start drug therapy.

To help keep your blood pressure in check or to try to reduce high blood pressure without drugs, you should:

- Reduce salt to less than 2 grams a day
- Lose weight if you are overweight
- Quit smoking
- Limit alcohol to no more than 2 drinks a day for men and 1 a day for women
- Eat a healthy diet with plenty of fruits/vegetables, lean protein, and stay clear of processed foods and sugar
- Exercise regularly
- You should also discuss with your practitioner or dietician about adequate intake of vitamins and minerals such as magnesium, potassium, and calcium. Are you getting enough from your food?

The negative impact of high blood pressure on your body:

It increases your risk of heart attack and stroke by damaging the walls of your arteries making them more likely to develop deposits of plaque that harden, narrow or block those arteries potentially leading to blood clots that can flow through your bloodstream and block blood flow to your heart or brain.

Your risk of heart failure increases when your arteries are hardened or narrowed, because your heart has to work harder to circulate blood. This can cause your heart to become larger and fail to supply your organs with blood.



Sweet Potato Chips

Make perfectly crunchy veggie chips at home with this healthy recipe. Use a mandolin to slice the sweet potatoes extra-thin for the optimum crunch!

By Devon O’Brien

Ingredients:

- 1 large sweet potato (about 1 pound), thinly sliced (about 1/8 inch thick)
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

Directions:

- Preheat oven to 200 degrees F. Line two large baking sheets with parchment paper.
- Toss sweet potato slices with oil and salt. Spread in a single layer on the prepared baking sheets.
- Bake on the upper and lower oven racks until crisp, rotating the pans top to bottom and front to back halfway through, about 3 hours. Cool on the pans for 30 minutes before serving.

Tips:

Equipment: Parchment paper

Beets can also be used to make chips. (Two large beets sliced thin.)

Photo credit and recipe: <http://www.eatingwell.com/recipe/256622/sweet-potato-chips/>

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Chest pain (angina) can develop because the heart may not get enough blood so that when people with high blood pressure perform activities such as walking uphill, going up steps, or exercising, angina can cause pressure, squeezing pain, or a feeling of fullness in the chest.

It can cause kidney damage—High blood pressure can cause damage to the arteries around your kidneys. This can reduce their ability to regulate your body’s complex functions and help rid your body of toxins and can even lead to worst case scenario...kidney failure.

You are more likely to develop vision problems if you have high blood pressure. This is because the many small blood vessels in your eyes can be strained or damaged easily by high blood pressure, and it can also cause optic nerve swelling. Left untreated, permanent impairment or vision loss can occur.

Increased risk of hypertensive crisis. *This is a medical emergency, and if you have these symptoms, call 911 or head to your local Emergency Room.* In a hypertensive crisis your blood pressure rises above 180/120 rapidly. If your blood pressure gets too high it can cause damage to your organs and other potentially life-threatening complications.

Symptoms of a hypertensive crisis include:

- Blurry vision or other vision problems
- Dizziness
- Lightheadedness
- Severe headaches
- Nosebleed
- Shortness of breath
- Chest discomfort or pain
- A feeling of anxiety or that something is not right

Your health practitioner can easily identify high blood pressure with regular checks. If found, it can be successfully treated using a combination of medication and heart-healthy lifestyle changes—or sometimes, lifestyle changes alone. You can also monitor your blood pressure on your own. If you find that you have elevated blood pressure, contact your doctor.

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/heart-health/key-minerals-to-help-control-blood-pressure>
<https://www.webmd.com/lung/coronavirus-high-blood-pressure#1>
<https://www.pinnaclehealth.org/l/blood-pressure/>

At the Gameplan for Living, we know that the future of healthcare is in the prevention of illness and injuries.

It is our mission to provide preventative care utilizing sports medicine principles and lifestyle modification training to create an atmosphere of health, safety, and performance to allow employees to enjoy an enhanced quality of life and reach their retirement—and beyond—SUCCESSFULLY!

www.gameplanforliving.com

Questions / Support:
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Cabbage Lasagna

Ingredients:

- 1 large head cabbage, leaves separated
- 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- Olive oil cooking spray
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 ½ lb. ground beef
- 1 (28-oz.) can crushed tomatoes
- 1 tbsp. balsamic vinegar
- ¼ c. torn basil leaves
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 3 c. ricotta (low-fat/part skim)
- 2 eggs, beaten
- ¼ c. grated Parmesan, plus more for serving
- 3 c. shredded mozzarella (part-skim)

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350°. In a large pot, boil 4 cups water. Parboil each cabbage leaf in water for 3 minutes or until tender and place on a paper towel-lined plate to dry. If desired, use a paring knife to remove thicker ribs of cabbage leaves.

In a large skillet over medium heat, heat oil. Add onion and cook until onion is soft, about 5 minutes. Stir in garlic and ground beef, breaking up meat with a wooden spoon. Cook until beef is no longer pink, about 6 minutes; drain excess fat. Add crushed tomatoes and balsamic vinegar. Bring mixture to boil then reduce heat and simmer for 20 minutes. Season with salt and pepper then stir in basil.

In a medium bowl, combine ricotta, eggs, and Parmesan.

Grease a large baking dish with olive oil. Spoon a thin layer of sauce into bottom of baking dish. Add a layer of cabbage leaves, then top with more sauce, ricotta mixture, and mozzarella. Repeat layering twice more.

Bake until cabbage is tender and mozzarella is bubbly, about 25 minutes. Garnish with more basil.

Notes: Feel free to use full fat ricotta or mozzarella. You can substitute ground turkey for ground beef. If you prefer, you can use a jar of tomato sauce vs the tomatoes.

Photo: Chelsea Lupkin

Recipe adapted from: <https://www.delish.com/cooking/recipe-ideas/a22352284/cabbage-lasagna-recipe/>