

Staying Cool, Calm and Collected

When life seems to get the best of you, listen to your body, mind, and spirit. Don't just push through it without being extra good to yourself. Self-care is a positive thing and will help keep you resilient. The following are a few strategies to help you stay relaxed when life gets hectic.



Shake off unwanted feelings with positive self-talk.

You can help to retrain negative thought patterns by listening to motivating messages. There are lots of apps, videos, and audios out there. Just plug in *motivating or inspiring messages*.

Exercise – Whether you enjoy hitting the gym or a leisurely stroll around the neighborhood, moving your body will make you feel more relaxed.

Meditate – Take a few uninterrupted moments for yourself before gatherings or meetings. Close your eyes and visualize a peaceful scene. Imagine that you are there. Experience the sounds, the touch, the good feelings of that moment. Breathe in and out slowly and naturally.

Take a breather – Schedule a massage, make a date with yourself to read or watch a movie, walk while listening to your favorite podcast; do what you enjoy. Me-time is healthy and necessary!

Set boundaries – One way to prevent stress is to establish boundaries regarding your stressors. For instance, if you often do things you don't want to do out of obligation, give yourself permission to say no. You don't have to be everything to everyone or do everything people ask you to even when it feels like too much. Realize you are doing the best you can.

Talk it out – You don't need to muster through your stress alone. Talk to your partner or a trusted friend, or your therapist. Talking about your feelings before they reach a boiling point can help protect you from ending up with a bigger problem such as anxiety or depression. Sometimes, just verbalizing what's bothering you to another person can clarify the situation and help you create distance from your emotions.

Keep healthy habits going – If you tend to overindulge at times, or maybe too often, realize that unhealthy habits will eventually catch up with you and send your stress levels sky high. Prioritize your health!

- Get enough sleep.
- Stay hydrated.
- Set limits on your consumption of alcohol and unhealthy foods and sweets.
- Stay active including time outside each day.
- Practice relaxation and deep breathing exercises. Try box breathing: breathe in slowly to the count of 4, hold for a count of 4, breathe out for a count of 4, hold for a count of 4 and repeat.



7-Layer Mediterranean Dip

Ingredients:

- 1 8 oz. carton hummus
- 1 cup plain Greek yogurt
- 1 8 oz. jar roasted sweet red peppers (drained/chopped)
- 1/4 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 1/4 cup chopped red onion
- 12 Greek olives, pitted and chopped
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
- Baked pita chips

Directions:

Spread hummus into a 9-in. pie plate. Top in layers with Greek yogurt, red peppers, cheese, onion, and olives. Sprinkle with parsley. Refrigerate until serving. Serve with pita chips.

Recipe and photo <https://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/seven-layer-mediterranean-dip/print/>

Characteristics of Weight Loss Success

What exactly do you want? If your ideal weight is 145 and you weigh 165, you know that you need to lose 20 pounds. You also know that you want to lose fat and not muscle, and you want to look toned and feel healthy and energetic. This is being specific to be terrific! This gives you clarity and motivation, which gives you a better chance of success.



You need to be realistic about your weight loss goals. NO, you will not be able to lose 10 pounds before you hit the beach on the weekend. NO, it is the day before Thanksgiving, and it is not likely that you will honestly be able to resist all those goodies and munch on a green salad. You WILL have challenges. You WILL have setbacks. Be prepared mentally for these.

Plan in advance for healthier options at restaurants, which foods are lean, and which are not. After a cheat day, plan to work out longer and a bit harder the following day. Plan to eat super clean to make up for your day of decadence. Setbacks are fine as long as you know how to jump back on the wagon of health soon after.

Give your willpower a helping hand. It will certainly be difficult to resist unhealthy foods if you have cakes, cookies, and salty snacks in your cabinets at home. Get rid of junk food. If you have people in the house that won't give up their unhealthy foods, put them in a separate space away from where you keep your foods. Then stock up on fruits, vegetables, and foods that you LIKE and are easy to grab but won't derail your weight loss efforts.

If you are tempted, though, learn to substitute with something else. Maybe instead of dessert, go brush your teeth and use some mouthwash. Or instead of plopping down in front of the television, take a quick walk first with the kids or the dogs... you get the picture!

Realize that CHANGE takes time. Weight loss involves changing bad habits. This will be easier if you break up large tasks into small ones... baby steps. Make lists. Plan your day: your meals, your workouts. Plan your food preparation. Make a list for the grocery store. Try to stick to your list. It gets easier as time goes on.

Stay motivated. Involve others in your endeavor for good health. A workout buddy, or friends that are also interested in healthy eating can be very motivating. Read up on healthy foods and activities. You will be surprised at all the interesting information you will find!

Quick Tips for Joint Health

Move to Help Prevent Joint Pain - Keep joints healthy by keeping them moving. Generally speaking, the more you move, the less stiffness you'll have. Whether reading, working, or watching TV, change positions often. Take breaks from your chair and move around – at least every 30 minutes.

Maintain a Healthy Weight - If you are overweight, work on losing it, because extra body weight creates strain on joints, especially the knee joints. Losing as little as 10 lbs. of body weight can help reduce pain.

Change Up Your Exercise - Doing the same exercise over and over again causes wear and tear on your joints. Vary your exercise routines.



Healthy Spinach Artichoke Dip

Ingredients:

- 14 oz. artichoke hearts drained WELL and cut in small pieces, about 1.5 cups
- 5 oz. frozen spinach about 2.5 cups. thawed and drained
- 1 cup non-fat Greek yogurt
- 1/2 cup small curd cottage cheese (I used 4% milkfat)
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1/4 cup grated parmesan cheese
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder

Directions:

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Thaw and drain spinach thoroughly. You can use a strainer and a paper towel to absorb the liquid. In a bowl mix all ingredients until thoroughly combined. Pour dip mixture into a glass 8x8 or medium oval pan (top with extra cheese if desired!) and bake at 400 for 25 minutes. Broil for 1-2 minutes before serving to get cheese on top brown + melty. Serve with chips or veggies or choice.

Serves : 8 people

Recipe and photo <https://thecleaneatingcouple.com/healthy-spinach-artichoke-dip/?swfoc=1>

(Human Maintenance, continued from page 2)

Train with Weights - Having strong muscles helps to support joints. Weight training helps to strengthen our muscles and ligaments. Talk to your doctor if you have not been previously exercising.

Discover your Strength— Use your strongest joints and muscles to your advantage. For instance, to protect finger and wrist joints, push open heavy doors with the side of your arm or shoulder. To reduce hip or knee stress, on stairs – lead with your stronger leg going up and the weaker leg going down.

Eat a Healthy Diet - Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables and be sure you get enough magnesium, calcium, phosphorus, Vitamin C and D3. Talk to your doctor before supplementing. Drink plenty of water. Forgo sodas and sweetened drinks.

Stay Flexible- Static stretching (stretching that is slow and constant and held at the end position for 10 seconds to 30 seconds), yoga, and Pilates are all good ways to stay flexible, allowing your joints to become better lubricated.

Ask for Help – Instead of taking the chance of straining a joint or muscle, ask for assistance if you know a certain movement will be risky.

Simple At-Home Exercises for Lower Body Strength

Squat - Works your quads, glutes, hamstrings, hip flexors and core.

Step 1: Stand with your feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart. Sit back and down as if you were sitting in an imaginary chair. Send your butt back while keeping your chest up and gaze forward.

Step 2: Lower down until your thighs are parallel to the floor, bringing your arms out in front of you for balance. Press your weight back into your heels making sure your knees don't extend past your toes. If they do, widen your stance.

Step 3: Push through your heels to return to the starting position and repeat.



Forward Lunge - Works your quads, hamstrings, glutes and hip flexors.

Step 1: Stand with your feet hip-width apart.

Step 2: Step your right foot forward into a front lunge until your leg forms a 90-degree angle. Make sure your front knee doesn't extend past your toes.

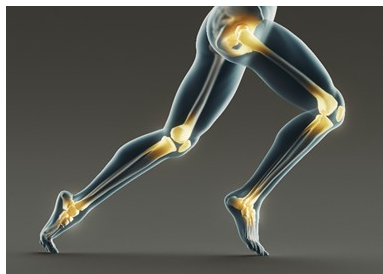
Step 3: Drive through your right heel and press up to return to the starting position. Repeat on the opposite side.

Reverse Lunge - Works your quads, hamstrings, glutes and hip flexors.

Step 1: Stand with your feet hip-width apart.

Step 2: Step your right foot back into a reverse lunge until your leg forms a 90-degree angle. Make sure your front knee does not extend past your toes.

Step 3: Drive through the ball of your right foot and press up to return to the starting position. Repeat on the opposite side.



Healthy Chicken Pot Pie Soup Crockpot



Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 lb. chicken breasts
- 1 cup celery, 1-inch pieces
- 1 cup carrot, 1-inch pieces
- 1 cup onion finely chopped
- ½ tablespoon garlic finely minced
- 2 cups Yukon gold potatoes peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 cup Yukon gold potatoes peeled and cut into quarters (so that you can remove them at the end)
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon dried parsley
- 3 cups chicken broth or bone broth-low sodium
- 1/4 teaspoon dried basil
- 3 tablespoons parsley for garnish
- 1/2 cup milk of choice almond milk, whole milk, any milk will work

Crockpot Directions:

Heat olive oil in a pan on the stove. Add in the celery, carrot, onion, garlic, salt and pepper, parsley, and basil. Sauté for 2 minutes or until slightly translucent. (This step is optional but recommended!)

Layer raw chicken, cooked vegetables, and potatoes in the crockpot. Add chicken broth. Cover and set to low for 6 hours.

Once cooked, remove the large potato pieces and chicken breasts.

Place large potato quarters, milk plus 1/2 cup of broth *from the pot* (a few ladles full) into a blender until smooth. Add back into the pot.

Place chicken on a cutting board and shred. Put the chicken back into the pot.

Stir everything together until combined and smooth. Garnish with parsley and serve.

Recipe and photo <https://thecleaneatingcouple.com/healthy-chicken-pot-pie-soup/>

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Standing Calf Raises

Step 1: Stand 6- 12 inches away from a wall with your feet hip-width apart and toes facing forward.

Step 2: Place your hands on the wall, shoulder height.

Step 3: Slowly rise onto your toes, lifting your heels off the floor. Keep your knees straight. Do not allow the feet to rotate. Use your hands on the wall to support your balance.

Step 4: Hold the raised position briefly then slowly lower your heels back to the floor. (You can also do this exercise one side at a time, which is pictured.)

Glute Bridge

Step 1: Lie on your back on an exercise mat or the floor in a bent-knee position with your feet flat on the floor.

Step 2: Place your feet hip-width apart with the toes facing away from you.

Step 3: Gently contract your abdominal muscles to flatten your low back into the floor. Attempt to maintain this gentle muscle contraction throughout the exercise.

Step 4: Keep the abdominals engaged and lift your hips up off the floor.

Step 5: Press your heels into the floor for added stability. Avoid pushing your hips too high. Lower back down slowly.

<http://www.acefitness.org/acefit/fitness-programs-article/2863/Top-25-At-Home-Exercises/>
<https://www.purewow.com/wellness/lower-body-exercises>

Chicken and Broccoli Casserole

Ingredients:

- 4 chicken breasts
- 2 bunches of broccoli
- 8 oz. organic shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 bunch green onion, 4-5 sliced
- Salt, pepper, garlic powder (to taste)
- 2 Tbsp. multipurpose seasoning
- 1 1/2 cups sliced almonds
- 1/2 stick organic butter
- 1/2 cup Vegenaise (or mayo with no seed oil)



Directions:

Boil chicken until cooked through. Season and cut into cubes. Steam broccoli until tender. Combine all ingredients except almonds and butter and mix well. Press into a 9x13 baking dish. Sprinkle with almonds on top and drizzle with melted butter. Bake at 375 degrees for approximately 30 minutes.

Recipe and photo <https://drivingood.com/chicken-and-broccoli-casserole/>

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!

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Questions / Support:
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Healthy Christmas Sugar Cookies

Ingredients:

- 1 cup spinach leaves packed tight
- 1/2 cup maple syrup + 1 Tablespoon
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp. almond extract
- 1 Tbsp. apple sauce
- 1/4 cup coconut oil melted
- 1 cup gluten-free flour
- 1/3 cup tapioca flour
- 1 tsp. corn starch
- 1 1/4 tsp. baking powder
- 1/4 tsp. Himalayan salt

Directions:

Preheat the oven 350 degrees F. Line a baking sheet with a silicone mat or parchment paper. In a blender add the spinach or baby kale, maple syrup, vanilla extract, almond extract, apple sauce and melted coconut oil. Blend until smooth with no visible green leaves. In a mixing bowl add the gluten-free flour, tapioca flour, corn starch, baking powder and salt and mix to combine. Add the blended green mixture to the dry ingredients and mix until it forms a dough. If the dough is too sticky, set it in the refrigerator for 15 minutes before rolling it out.

Roll out the dough in between two pieces of wax paper until the dough is about 1/4 inch thick. Cut out into desired cookie cutter shapes. Place on the prepared cookie baking sheet and bake for 8 minutes. Let cool for 3 minutes before transferring to a cooling rack.

Top with your favorite icing, chocolate, and cookie decorations.

Recipe and photo <https://www.yummly.com/recipe/Healthy-Christmas-Sugar-Cookies-2276733?prm-v1>