

HEALTHY *You!*

Your Source for a Happy and Healthy Lifestyle

June 2024

THIS EDITION FEATURES:

Get Away from It All

Eating on the Go

Perfect Plates

Make Your Life Meaningful

The Art of Active Listening

Explore the Outdoors



BROUGHT TO YOU BY

Independence 

GET AWAY FROM IT ALL

Taking a vacation can significantly improve your well-being. In addition to providing a break from the daily stresses of life, it can give you time to relax and recharge. Vacations also offer opportunities for new experiences and adventures, which can boost your mood.

If you've ever shortened, postponed, or canceled your vacation, it may be time to plan your next getaway. Leaving vacation time on the table may be taking a toll on your health. Unplugging is integral to well-being, productivity, and high performance. Vacations can help you:

- **Increase mindfulness.** Breaking out of your normal routine takes you off auto-pilot and makes you feel more present.
- **Take care of your heart.** Vacationing can help relieve stress, which can reduce your risk of heart disease.
- **Reset sleep patterns.** Improved rest and sleep during vacation helps you think more clearly.
- **Boost your brain power.** When your brain is relaxed, it's easier to learn new things and tap into your creativity.
- **Spend quality time with loved ones.** Strengthening bonds and fostering social connections with others is important.
- **Expand your perspective.** Traveling to a new country, or even a new state, can help you appreciate different cultures, customs, and traditions.
- **Get into nature.** Spending time outdoors reduces stress and improves overall well-being.

People often worry that taking a vacation may negatively impact their work. But your vacation time is a well-deserved reward that improves your well-being.

You are more likely to find answers to life's big questions like "What do I really want?" or "What's important to me?" when you are relaxed.

Sources:

hbr.org/2023/07/how-taking-a-vacation-improves-your-well-being

forbes.com/sites/carolinecastrillon/2021/05/23/why-taking-vacation-time-could-save-your-life/

bbc.com/news/business-57139434

bewellshbp.com/heart-health/take-a-vacation-for-your-hearts-sake/





EATING ON THE GO

Not everyone has hours to spend in the kitchen preparing meals. Sometimes convenience is key, but fast food isn't always healthy. Here are a few tips for healthy eating on the go:

- **Plan ahead.** Map out meals for the week, check restaurant menus beforehand, or portion out snacks to intentionally plan for success.
- **Keep it simple and balanced.** Aim to include at least 2–3 food groups at meals and 1–3 at each snack. This simple strategy can help you make healthy choices wherever you are!
- **Pack minimally processed foods.** Although processed snacks are readily available and nicely packaged for on-the-go eaters, they are typically higher in sodium, saturated fat, and added sugars. Choose whole or minimally processed options such as nuts, trail mixes, fruit, yogurt, or string cheese.

You can eat well even on days when you feel like there isn't any spare time. Using strategies that align with your personal goals will help you make the best decisions.

Perfect Plates

The journey towards healthier eating doesn't have to be dull or restrictive. Making food fun and appealing is a transformative approach that turns nutrition into a delightful adventure.

Knowing how these three elements work together is the foundation for preparing food for enjoyment, presentation, and nutrition:

1. **Color.** Color is the first and most important factor for appealing food. Use complementary or contrasting colors. The color in food is created by phytochemicals and other compounds that our bodies use as nutrients.
2. **Shape and size.** The size and shape of food influences how our taste buds perceive it. Geometric shapes — triangles, wedges, strips, circles, half-moons, and cubes — attract our attention.
3. **Texture.** Foods that are crispy, crunchy, or chewy make eating more pleasurable.

Incorporating foods of different colors, shapes, sizes, and textures can make well-balanced meals an enticing and irresistible part of our daily lives.

Sources:
jonisare.com/4-key-components-to-make-a-meal-look-appealing/
sciencedirect.com/topics/food-science/food-texture





RECIPE

Scrambled Eggs with Spinach and Feta

Ingredients

4 oz. fresh spinach
4 large eggs
1 tablespoon butter
1 oz. feta cheese
1 pinch crushed red pepper

Directions

Roughly chop the spinach into pieces. Crack the eggs into a large bowl and whisk. Add butter to a skillet and melt over medium heat. Add the spinach and sauté until soft. Pour in the eggs and gently fold until they solidify. Top the eggs with feta and red pepper.

Source:

budgetbytes.com/scrambled-eggs-with-spinach-and-feta/

Make Your Life Meaningful

Sometimes, life's expectations can be overwhelming. Being busy is not the same thing as being productive or fulfilled. If you feel like you're not doing enough, you don't need another to-do list. You need life management tools.

Life management tools help you do more in less time. They also help you create space so you can step out of the hustle and find real enjoyment in life. Start with your end goals, and work backwards with these suggestions in mind:

1. **Pursue a higher purpose.** What do you want from your life? What brings you a sense of joy, peace, and freedom?
2. **One thing at a time mindset.** Take control of your time and make your actions count while focusing on your desired outcome. Don't get caught up in the intimidating details.
3. **Feed your mind during downtime.** Continue learning at every opportunity. Listen to podcasts and audiobooks while doing mundane tasks. Read while waiting for appointments to start.
4. **Cultivate relationships.** Plan for opportunities for deeper connections. Reserve time to play, have fun, and strengthen social bonds. View this time as important to your overall well-being.
5. **Communicate clearly.** Effective communication leads to better relationships at home and work. Slow down and take the time to listen.

It's important to remember that your life is not a to-do list. Lifelong learning and the willingness to explore, make mistakes, and adapt are essential skills for making the most of your life.

“You can't have a plan for your day until you have a plan for your life.”
– Tony Robbins

Source:

tonyrobbins.com/productivity-performance/manage-your-life-not-a-list/



The Art of Active Listening

Communication is key to positive social interactions. Conversations can unravel quickly when we aren't hearing each other.

Active listening is a good way to foster healthy relationships and improve time management. When people know that you'll listen to them and want to understand what they're saying, it's easier to build trust and strengthen relationships. It also helps resolve conflicts, should they arise.

To practice active listening:

- **Give your full attention.** Stop whatever you're doing and make eye contact with the other person. Focus on what they are saying, not on how you will respond.
- **Resist the urge to interrupt.** You don't always have to agree. Pause and consider what others are saying. Reserve judgment and think before you respond. Avoid saying something that you might regret later.
- **Seek clarification.** To ensure you understand the speaker's message, ask open-ended questions that invite them to elaborate, clarify, or explain their point of view. This can help minimize your confusion and help you appreciate their perspective.

Explore the Outdoors

Have you ever taken a walk outside to calm down when you feel stressed or frustrated? Recreational activities are beneficial to your health no matter where you do them, but they reach another level in the great outdoors. Time spent in parks and other green spaces helps to improve mental health and reduce stress.

Whether you're active, creative, or contemplative, you can enjoy popular outdoor activities like running, jogging, biking, camping, fishing, hunting, hiking, rafting, birding, meditating, photography, paddling, swimming, nature-watching, and skateboarding.

There are countless ways to get outside and enjoy nature. Whether you're seeking wide-open spaces or exploring urban neighborhoods, remember to act responsibly when you visit.

- **Know before you go.** Check the status of the place you want to visit for closures, fire restrictions, and weather conditions.
- **Plan and prepare.** Reservations and permits may be needed. Make sure you have the gear you need and a back-up plan.
- **Respect others.** Be kind to all who use the outdoors. There is space for everyone.
- **Leave no trace.** Clean up before you leave. Respect the land, water, wildlife, and communities.
- **Make it better.** We all have a responsibility to support and sustain the places we love.

Sources:

fs.usda.gov/features/wellness-benefits-great-outdoors
healthline.com/health/health-benefits-of-being-outdoors
ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4204431/
nwf.org/home/kids-and-family/connecting-kids-and-nature/health-benefits-and-tips
wilderness.org/articles/article/outdoor-recreation-faqs
nps.gov/planyourvisit/recreate-responsibly.htm



MONTHLY QUIZ

1. Which of the following statements about vacation is NOT true?

- A. Leaving vacation time on the table may be taking a toll on your health.
- B. Unplugging is integral to well-being, productivity, and high performance.
- C. Taking a vacation may affect your job status.
- D. Breaking out of your normal routine takes you off auto-pilot and makes you feel more present.

2. Which of the following can describe on-the-go eating?

- A. Most people don't have hours to spend cooking each day.
- B. Healthy eating can be done even on days when you don't have spare time.
- C. Spending time doing things that matter to you doesn't mean you can't eat healthily.
- D. All of the above.

3. Which of the following is a benefit of active listening?

- A. It fosters healthy relationships and improves time management.
- B. You don't have to pay attention.
- C. It allows you to interrupt people when they're talking.
- D. You can respond to someone else's texts quickly.

1. C, 2. D, 3. A

BROUGHT TO YOU BY

Independence 

Independence Blue Cross is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. The information in this publication is meant to complement the advice of your health care providers, not replace it. Before making any major changes in your medications, diet, or exercise, talk to your doctor.