

# Find Balance by Boosting Energy

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*Carving out time for self-care will boost our energy and can make a real difference in finding balance in our lives.*

Everyone is looking for ways to find balance and to have the energy to accomplish what is most important in life. Often we neglect the self-care necessary to make it all happen. Carving out time for self-care will boost our energy and can make a real difference in finding balance in our lives.

**Finding time for things that matter.** Planning and completing the most important tasks first will make a big difference, also eliminating all that is unnecessary. Dealing with the daily time-wasters helps us to find balance and more time for activities that support our health and well-being. Try the following:

- Get up on time.
- Decrease media time.
- Consolidate tasks and errands.
- Reduce interruptions.
- Avoid busy work.
- Use phone, email and computer effectively.
- Stop fussing.



## Physical Activity

Can you boost your energy by using your energy? Yes, you can! Exercise means that more oxygen is flowing into our cells. This improves the function of cells while giving us an energy boost at the same time. Regular physical activity gives you more energy and can produce long-term health benefits.

**Getting started.** For most people, getting started is the hard part. Incorporate more activity into what you are already doing. If you are adding an activity or exercise, pick something you enjoy.

**Choose the right activity.** Make a list of possible exercises or ways to increase activity. Start by being active for 10 minutes five days each week. Gradually add time until you are getting at least 30 minutes of activity most days.

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**Set a goal.** Set short-term goals that are specific and that can be tracked. For example, instead of saying I am going to be more active, set a goal of walking 30 minutes a day, three days a week.

What works best for you? Schedule exercise on your calendar. Set an alarm. It's time to go!

## Keeping It Interesting

- Switch it up, try some new activities, find new places to walk.
- Make it social. Involve friends, family, club members, etc. Be active with your kids. Be a role model.
- Use DVDs from the library.
- Find someone to remind you to get moving and help you reach your goal.
- Break through road blocks. What's keeping you from being more active? List your barriers and ways to overcome them.
- Track progress in a journal to visually see your progression.
- Reward yourself. Select rewards that motivate you. Avoid using food as a reward.
- If you have access to Internet, use the USDA's Physical Activity Tracker at [www.supertracker.usda.gov/physicalactivitytracker.aspx](http://www.supertracker.usda.gov/physicalactivitytracker.aspx).
- Connect to nature. Spending time outdoors is good for our physical and psychological health. Pick one that you enjoy!
  - Gardening
  - Bird-watching
  - Walking
  - Hiking
  - Biking
  - Fishing

## Sleep

Sleep plays a vital role in good health and well-being. Lack of sleep will affect decision-making, problem solving, memory, emotions, behavior and ability to cope with change. You may take longer to finish tasks, have a slower reaction time and make more mistakes.

### Tips to improve sleep:

- Go to bed at the same time each night and rise at the same time each morning, even on weekends.

- Use the hour before bed as quiet time. Avoid strenuous exercise and bright artificial light.
- Make sure your bedroom is a quiet, dark and relaxing environment that is neither too hot nor too cold.
- Make sure your bed is comfortable and use it only for sleeping. Don't use your bed for reading, watching TV or listening to music. Remove TVs, computers and other electronics from the bedroom.
- Avoid large meals within a couple of hours of bedtime. Avoid caffeine and nicotine.
- Spend time outside every day when possible and be physically active.
- Take a hot bath or use relaxation techniques before bed.

## Social Connections

Meaningful friendships are vital to joy in our lives and positive health outcomes. Friendship satisfies psychological needs and therefore improves happiness. The amount of connection varies by personality, but we all benefit from positive social interaction.

- Make time for friends.
- Join a club.
- Volunteer.
- Invite a neighbor over for dinner.

**Consider which one of these areas you would like to change to boost your energy. Set a realistic goal and start today!**

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