

SEPTEMBER  
2021

## Get moving TO BOOST YOUR IMMUNITY

Exercise provides so many health benefits. Recent research now adds strengthening the immune system to the list. Here are three ways exercise can help fight infections and prevent you from getting sick.

- Regular bouts of moderate to high-intensity exercise reduce inflammation in the body. Lower levels of inflammation are linked to a decreased risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes.
- Exercise supports the healthy bacteria in the digestive tract. These bacteria, called the microbiome, make up about 70% of your immune system.
- Consistent physical activity may prevent the decline in immune function that is common as people age. Being active keeps the body's defense system in peak condition.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

# Daily habits for a restful sleep

Your habits during the day have a significant influence on how well you sleep. From the moment you open your eyes in the morning, the choices you make determine whether your body will be ready to rest at bedtime.

Creating a sleep-minded daily routine will set the stage for a good night's rest. If you're struggling to fall asleep or stay asleep, it's time to reset your daily rhythm so you wake up refreshed and ready to go.



## GET UP AT THE SAME TIME EACH DAY

A consistent sleep schedule lets your body know when to be alert and when to settle down for bed. Getting up at the same time each day is essential to establish a sleep rhythm.

Think of getting up in the morning as step one of your sleep schedule. If step one is consistent, then all the other steps can fall into place. If you're tired, it's better to go to bed early than sleep in late.



## SPEND TIME OUTSIDE

Natural light is a signal to the body that it's time to be awake and alert. Being outdoors stimulates hormones related to your circadian rhythm. These hormones help determine how energetic you feel during the day and how well you sleep at night.

Exposure to early morning sunlight is ideal for regulating your sleep/wake pattern. If you are unable to get outside, use bright lights early in the day to simulate sunlight.



## EXERCISE IN THE MORNING

Being physically active first thing in the morning can give you a boost of energy. The more active and energetic you feel during the day, the more likely you will wind down at night.

If exercising first thing isn't possible, make sure to get your exercise in as early in the day as you can. Avoid exercising within a few hours of bedtime as it may make you too energized to fall asleep.



## EAT CONSISTENT MEALS

The timing of your meals is an important part of your sleep cycle. When you eat, you are communicating the time of day to your body. Consistent meals also provide energy so you can be alert and productive during your waking hours.

Avoid skipping meals or snacking late at night. Eating or drinking close to bedtime sends the wrong signal. At night, you want your energy levels to drop and your body to focus on repair and rest.

# Farmers market:

## *Fresh produce & more*



Eating a whole-food, plant-based diet is one of the best things you can do for your health. Foods found at local farmers markets may be more nutritious as they are picked at the peak of ripeness. And, since they don't have to travel a long distance to reach you, they're better for you and the environment.

Try these tips to get the most out of your next trip to the farmers market.

### BUY WHAT'S IN SEASON

The foods that are growing in abundance in each season will likely be the least expensive. They will also be the most delicious! Nothing beats a fresh, in-season fruit or vegetable.



### GET TO KNOW THE FARMERS

The people who grow your food are a wealth of knowledge. Ask them for recommendations and cooking ideas. They can help you be a better shopper and a better eater!

### DON'T STOP AT PRODUCE

Most farmers markets have vendors selling eggs, meat, cheese, honey, flowers, fresh bread, and so much more. Take advantage of all the tasty, local products your area has to offer.

### SHOP EARLY FOR THE BEST SELECTION

The good stuff often goes fast. Get there early to find the best and prettiest produce.

### OR SHOP LATE FOR THE BEST DEALS

If you're shopping on a tight budget, hit the farmers market near closing time. Many vendors will offer discounts so they don't end up with a lot left over.

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture

## Recipe:

# Farmers market salsa



### INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup corn (fresh cooked or frozen)
- 1 can black beans (15 ounce, drained and rinsed)
- 1 cup tomatoes (fresh, diced)
- 1/2 cup onion (diced)
- 1/2 cup green pepper (diced)
- 2 tablespoons lime juice
- 2 garlic cloves (finely chopped)
- 1/2 cup Picante sauce

### DIRECTIONS

1. Combine all ingredients in a large bowl. Chill until serving time.
2. Drain before serving.
3. Serve with low-fat baked tortilla chips or fresh vegetables.

Nutrition Facts: 8 servings, Calories 95, Total fat 0g, Saturated fat 0g, Sodium 236mg, Total carbohydrates 19g, Fiber 6g, Protein 5g.

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture

SUCCESS  
OVER STRESS

# *Fun ways to reduce family stress*

Spending time with people you care about can be a powerful stress reliever. This is true for every person in your family. Finding activities you all enjoy can strengthen family bonds, reduce everyone's stress, and bring more fun into your life. Here are some stress-relieving activities that can work for the whole family.



## **PLAN A CRAFT NIGHT**

Creative activities are a great way to relax together. Put on some music and get out crafting, drawing, or painting supplies. If you're not much of a crafter, consider signing up the family for a class or a night out at a local craft shop.

## **PLAY A SPORT**

Find a sport you all enjoy. Plan a weekly or monthly time to play together as a family. Keep it low stakes and focused on fun. Being active as a family can relieve stress and put everyone in a more positive mood.

## **WATCH A COMEDY**

Turn on a show everyone finds funny or look up some silly online videos. Instead of each family member retreating to their own screens, make time to watch something together. Choose something that will get everyone laughing to reduce stress and promote family bonding.