

FEBRUARY
2024

Give to your community

A strong connection with your local community benefits everyone. Being active in your community gives you a sense of belonging, and your efforts enrich the lives of those around you. Here are a few simple ways you can give back:

- **Shop local.** The small businesses in your area anchor the community. Instead of spending at big box stores or online, spend some of your money locally.
- **Attend or host a community event.** Many communities organize free events to celebrate holidays or support diversity. Attend or organize one yourself.
- **Get to know your elected officials.** You can often attend a meet-and-greet for local officials or invite them to community events.
- **Become a poll worker.** Many communities struggle to find people willing to take on the role. Step up!
- **Volunteer.** Food banks, senior centers, youth sports, community clean-ups, animal shelters, and many more local organizations rely on the generosity of volunteers.

Self-care when you're sick

During the cold months, illnesses such as colds, the flu, COVID-19, and RSV are widespread. You will likely find yourself under the weather at some point this winter. Try these self-care tips to smooth your recovery.



LET OTHERS HELP

Letting other people support you will be easier to get the rest you need.

- Use online grocery ordering and delivery if available in your area.
- Ask family or friends to pick up specific medications, food, and beverages you need for comfort.
- Try a meal delivery service while you're out of commission.
- Take any help that is offered. Let others bring meals, run errands, care for pets, and watch children.

REST

When you're sick, your body needs lots of extra rest. It's not laziness! Your immune system is working hard to fight the infection. Resting allows your body to focus on healing.

- Take naps when you can.
- Go to bed early, and don't set an alarm to wake you.
- Lay on the couch as much as you need to.
- If you have to be up and moving, take frequent breaks to sit down and rest.

HYDRATE

Your need for fluids increases when you're sick. Symptoms like fever, sweating, coughing, and runny nose cause extra fluid loss.

- Drink plenty of water. Have a glass handy and take frequent sips.
- Try fluids with electrolytes such as Gatorade or Pedialyte.
- Snack on fruits such as melons and citrus, which contain a lot of water.
- Suck on popsicles or ice.

BOOST YOUR SPIRITS

Being sick can take a toll not just on your body but also on your mind and emotions. Keep your spirits up by caring for your mental and emotional needs, too.

- Take a long, soothing bath.
- Plan a fun outing for when you're healthy again.
- If the weather allows, get out into the sunshine for short amounts of time.
- Do gentle movements such as light stretching, a small walk, or gentle yoga as you recover.

Your brain needs movement

What's good for the body is often also good for the mind. As people age, cognitive health may begin to decline. But being physically active boosts brain health and helps you feel sharp and focused.



BRAIN BENEFITS OF BEING ACTIVE

- Improved memory
- Decreased anxiety
- Greater focus
- Improved problem-solving
- Increased learning
- Better sleep
- Increased feelings of well-being and emotional balance
- Decreased risk of cognitive decline such as dementia

HOW MUCH YOU NEED

- Aim for 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity every week.
- Do strength training activities at least twice a week. Lifting weights may protect parts of the brain that function in memory.
- If you're over 65, include balance training three days a week. Training your balance works your body and your brain.



TIPS & TRICKS

- If you don't have time for a long workout session, do several short 5-10 minute bouts of activity. Try going up and down the stairs a few times, doing jumping jacks or lunges in your office, playing music and dancing in the kitchen, or taking your dog for a fast-paced walk around the block.
- To reach moderate intensity, your heart rate should be elevated and your breathing deeper, but you should still be able to carry on a conversation.
- If you're feeling sluggish or unfocused during the day, get up and move.
- Whenever possible, take your movement outside. The effect of time outdoors plus moving your body is a double dose of brain-boosting goodness.
- Get social with your movement. Physical activity and social connection are another two-for-one boost for brain health.



Avoid these 5 common stressors

SOME STRESSORS
IN LIFE ARE
UNAVOIDABLE.
HOWEVER SOME
STRESSORS CAN
BE AVOIDED OR
REDUCED BY
MAKING SIMPLE
LIFESTYLE
CHANGES.



- **Lack of sleep.** Regularly getting less than 7 hours of sleep is a huge stressor for your body and mind. Turn off the TV, put down the phone, and go to sleep.
- **Driving in traffic.** You may or may not have control over hitting rush hour traffic, but it's worth exploring your options. Talk to your boss about the issue.
- **Not having enough time.** If you're constantly feeling rushed, you need to evaluate your time management. How can you structure your time so you're not in speed mode every day?
- **Failing to make time for relaxation.** Relaxation doesn't just happen. It can take real intention. Schedule relaxing activities like pleasure reading, crafting, listening to music, and taking walks in nature.
- **Lack of social connection.** Spending time with the people you care about can reduce feelings of stress. Make it a priority.