

Stay Healthy

Issue: ARP 10 2025 **Health Fitness & Wellness Weekly**

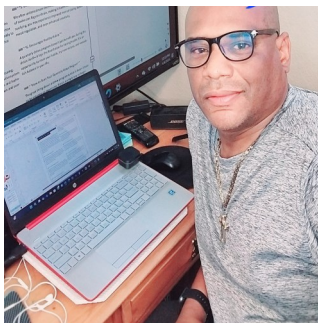
HEALTHY SODA POP

But Is It Really Healthy?

PUBLISHERS

Thoughts

NEVER STOP LEARNING NEW THINGS



Learning is a lifelong journey, not a destination. Whether you're mastering a new hobby, exploring innovative technology, or diving into books that expand your worldview, the ability to learn is one of humanity's greatest gifts. But why does the pursuit of knowledge remain so essential, and how can it shape the way we experience the world?

In this fast-paced age, where industries transform overnight and ideas evolve rapidly, the importance of staying curious and adaptable cannot be overstated. Learning new things isn't just about acquiring skills—it's about fostering creativity, staying relevant, and developing resilience in the face of change. From mental benefits like improved memory and reduced stress to the sheer joy of discovery, the act of learning enriches our lives in profound ways. Here are some effective strategies that you may want to consider.

Personal Growth

- Expanding knowledge and skills keeps your mind sharp and builds self-confidence.
- Learning new things fosters curiosity, creativity, and adaptability.

Professional Advantages

- Lifelong learning helps you stay competitive in your career by keeping your skills relevant in a rapidly evolving job market.
- Acquiring new certifications or expertise can open doors to promotions or entirely new career paths.

Cognitive Health

- Engaging in continuous learning has been shown to improve memory, problem-solving skills, and overall brain health.
- It may lower the risk of age-related cognitive decline,

such as dementia.

Emotional Well-Being

- Learning can be deeply fulfilling and boost mental health by combating boredom and creating a sense of purpose.
- It can reduce stress by focusing your mind on productive and enjoyable activities.

Social Connections

- Lifelong learning often brings people together in classes, workshops, or discussion groups, fostering a sense of community.
- It can strengthen relationships by providing shared interests and experiences to bond over.

Expanded Perspectives

- Learning exposes you to diverse ideas, cultures, and ways of thinking, broadening your understanding of the world.
- It encourages open-mindedness and empathy toward others.

Adaptability to Change

- In an ever-changing world, the ability to learn ensures you're better equipped to handle new challenges and opportunities.
- Whether it's mastering new technology or understanding evolving social issues, lifelong learners are more resilient.

Pure Enjoyment

- The process of discovery and achievement brings joy and satisfaction, turning learning into a rewarding journey.

Embracing the lifelong journey of learning opens doors to infinite possibilities. With every new skill or piece of knowledge, we grow, adapt, and thrive in a constantly changing world. So, never stop exploring, discovering, and expanding your horizons—the adventure of learning is one that never truly ends."

Jaye Kenzie



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Healthy Soda Pop: But Is It Really Healthy?

KATHRYN MASON-Dietitian

The buzz around the health soda pop industry is undeniable. With promises of gut-friendly prebiotics, reduced sugar, and natural ingredients, these fizzy drinks have positioned themselves as the "better-for-you" alternative to traditional sodas. But as more brands flood the market with claims of wellness benefits, it begs the question: are these sparkling beverages truly as healthy as they claim, or are we sipping on clever marketing? In this article, we'll pop the lid on the facts, myths, and everything in between to uncover the real story behind the latest trend in health-conscious refreshment.

Facts:

- 1. Prebiotic Ingredients:** Many health sodas, like Poppi and Olipop, include prebiotic fibers such as chicory root or agave inulin, which are believed to support gut health.
- 2. Lower Sugar Content:** These sodas often contain significantly less sugar (4–7 grams per can) compared to traditional sodas, which can have over 30 grams.
- 3. Calorie Reduction:** Health sodas typically range from 25 to 50 calories per can, making them a lower-calorie option.

Myths:

- 1. Guaranteed Health Benefits:** While marketed as gut-friendly, the amount of prebiotic fiber in these sodas (around 2 grams per

can) may not be sufficient to provide meaningful health benefits.

- 2. Diet Soda Comparisons:** Some believe health sodas are entirely free of risks, but they can still contain acidic ingredients like apple cider vinegar, which may erode tooth enamel.

Pros:

Healthier Alternative: Compared to traditional sodas, these drinks offer reduced sugar and calories, making them a better option for those watching their diet.

Functional Ingredients: Some include added vitamins, minerals, or probiotics, which may provide additional health benefits.

Flavor Variety: Health sodas often come in unique, natural flavors, appealing to a broader audience.

Cons:

Cost: These sodas are often more expensive than regular sodas, which can be a barrier for some consumers.

Acidity: Ingredients like apple cider vinegar can harm dental health if consumed frequently.

Uncertain Benefits:

The actual health impact of these sodas is still debated, as the prebiotic content may not be enough to make a significant difference.

The industry is evolving rapidly, and while these sodas are a step in the right direction for healthier beverage options, they aren't a perfect solution. Moderation and a balanced diet remain key.

The health pop soda market is buzzing with innovative brands offering healthier alternatives to traditional sodas. Here are some popular names:

1. **Poppi:** Known for its prebiotic sodas infused with apple cider vinegar, Poppi offers a variety of fruity flavors and is designed to support gut health.
2. **Olipop:** Another big player in the prebiotic soda space, Olipop combines natural ingredients and fibers to create flavors reminiscent of classic sodas like root beer and cola.
3. **Culture Pop:** This brand focuses on probiotic sodas with bold, unique flavors, often incorporating spices and herbs for an extra kick.
4. **Wildwonder:** A newer entrant, Wildwonder offers sparkling drinks with prebiotics, probiotics, and botanicals, aiming to blend health benefits with refreshing taste.
5. **Turveda:** This brand combines turmeric and other functional ingredients in its sodas, targeting wellness-conscious consumers.

These brands are leading the charge in redefining soda as a functional and health-oriented beverage.

Here's a breakdown of the health benefits associated with each of the popular health pop soda brands:

1. ****Poppi**:**

- Contains prebiotic fibers like chicory root and apple cider vinegar, which may support gut health.
- Low sugar content (around 5 grams per can) and fewer calories compared to traditional sodas.
- Apple cider vinegar is believed to aid digestion and help maintain healthy blood sugar levels.

2. ****Olipop**:**

- Includes a proprietary blend of prebiotic fibers such as chicory root, Jerusalem artichoke, and cassava root, promoting gut health
- Offers 9 grams of fiber per can, which is beneficial for digestion.
- Low sugar and calorie content, making it a healthier alternative to sugary sodas

3. ****Culture Pop**:**

- Features live probiotic cultures that support gut health and digestion.
- Uses organic fruit juices and herbal extracts for natural



sweetness and flavor complexity.

- No refined sugars or artificial sweeteners, making it a cleaner option.

4. ****Wildwonder**:**

- Combines prebiotic fibers and live probiotics to enhance gut health.
- Infused with superfoods like ginger, turmeric, and rose, which may boost immunity and reduce inflammation.
- Vegan, GMO-free, and low-calorie, catering to health-conscious consumers.

5. ****Turveda**:**

- Incorporates turmeric, known for its anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties.
- May support joint health, digestion, and overall wellness due to the presence of curcumin.
- Targets wellness-focused individuals with functional ingredients.

Each brand offers unique benefits tailored to different health needs. The flavors of these health pop soda brands vary widely, offering unique taste profiles to cater to different preferences.

Here's a comparison:

1. ****Poppi**:**

- Flavors like Raspberry Rose, Strawberry Lemon, and Cherry Limeade are fruity and refreshing.
- The apple cider vinegar base adds a tangy undertone, which some find invigorating, while others may need time to adjust to its distinct taste.

2. Olipop:

- Offers nostalgic flavors like Vintage Cola, Classic Root Beer, and Orange Squeeze, which mimic traditional sodas but with a healthier twist.

- The flavors are often described as smooth and balanced, with a hint of natural sweetness from fruit juices.

3. Culture Pop:

- Known for bold and adventurous combinations like Strawberry & Rhubarb, Watermelon & Lime, and Orange Mango with a hint of chili.

- The use of spices and herbs creates a sophisticated, layered flavor experience.

4. Wildwonder:

- Features exotic blends like Guava Rose, Mango Turmeric, and Raspberry Lychee, inspired by global flavors.

- The drinks are light, fizzy, and infused with botanicals, offering a delicate and refreshing taste.

5. Turveda:

- Focuses on wellness-inspired flavors such as Blood Orange Passion Fruit, Lemon Ginger Turmeric, and Lavender Vanilla Ashwagandha.

- These flavors are crafted to provide a balance of sweetness and functional benefits, with a soothing and earthy profile.

Each brand brings its own flair to the table, from nostalgic classics to innovative and health-focused blends. Incorporating health sodas into your diet can be a refreshing and enjoyable way to make healthier choices while still indulging in fizzy beverages.

Here are some tips and ideas:

1. Use Them as a Soda Replacement

- Substitute traditional sugary sodas with health sodas during meals. For example, pair Poppi or Olipop** with lunch or dinner for a lower-sugar, gut-friendly option.

- They can help satisfy your craving for carbonation without the added guilt.

2. Pre- or Post-Workout Drinks

- Opt for flavors like citrus or ginger-infused sodas (e.g., Wildwonder's Mango Turmeric) as a light, energizing pre-workout drink.

- After exercising, health sodas with prebiotics and probiotics can support digestion and recovery.



3. Mocktails and Mixers

- Get creative by using health sodas as a base for mocktails. Mix Wildwonder's Guava Rose with fresh mint and lime for a tropical twist.

- They also work great as mixers for cocktails, offering unique flavors and reducing overall sugar content.

4. Midday Refreshments

- Replace your usual afternoon coffee or snack with a fizzy, low-calorie health soda for a satisfying pick-me-up.

- Choose a flavor like Olipop's Vintage Cola for a nostalgic energy boost.

5. Support Gut Health

- Incorporate them into your daily routine to promote better digestion. For example, having a bottle of Culture Pop with lunch can add live probiotics to your diet.

6. Balance and Moderation

- While these sodas are a healthier alternative, they should complement a balanced diet, not replace nutrient-dense beverages like water or smoothies.

- Aim to enjoy them a few times a week as a treat or enhancement to your meals.

Here are some key studies exploring probiotics in beverages and their potential benefits:

1. **Fruit and Vegetable Beverages Fermented with Probiotic Strains**:

- This study highlights how probiotics, such as lactic acid bacte-



ria (LAB), can enhance the bioavailability and antioxidant properties of phenolic compounds in fruit and vegetable beverages. It emphasizes the potential of probiotics to improve the functional properties of these drinks.

2. ****Development of Fruit-Based Drinks Fortified with Probiotics**:**

- Researchers developed fruit-based drinks enriched with probiotics like *Lactobacillus casei* and *Lactobacillus rhamnosus*. The study found that these drinks maintained high probiotic viability during storage and were well-received in sensory evaluations.

3. ****Recent Updates on Probiotic Dairy-Based Beverages**:**

- This review discusses advancements in dairy-based probiotic beverages, including the incorporation of next-generation probiotics and postbiotics. It highlights the growing interest in minimally processed, health-focused beverages.

These studies demonstrate the potential of probiotic beverages to support gut health and offer functional benefits.

Here's an overview of methodologies commonly used in studies on probiotic beverages:

Probiotic Strain Selection:

- Researchers select specific probiotic strains, such as *Lactobacillus* or *Bifidobacterium*, based on their health benefits and ability to survive in the beverage matrix.

Fermentation Process:

- Probiotic beverages are often created through fermentation. This involves inoculating the beverage (e.g., fruit juice, plant-based milk) with probiotic cultures and allowing them to ferment under controlled conditions (temperature, pH, and time).

Viability Testing:

- The viability of probiotics is assessed to ensure they remain alive and active during storage. Techniques like plate counting or flow cytometry are used to measure colony-forming units (CFUs).

Sensory Evaluation:

- Sensory tests are conducted to evaluate taste, texture, and overall acceptability. This often involves trained panels or consumer surveys.

Nutritional and Functional Analysis:

- Studies analyze the beverage for changes in nutritional content, such as increased antioxidant levels or enhanced bioavailability of nutrients, due to fermentation.

Storage Stability:

- Researchers monitor the stability of probiotics and the beverage's quality over time, under various storage conditions.

Health Impact Studies:

- Some studies involve human or animal trials to assess the health benefits of the probiotic beverage, such as improved gut health or immune function.

Conclusion

The rise of healthy soda pops offers an intriguing alternative to traditional sugary drinks, promising benefits like fewer calories, added prebiotics, and refreshing flavors. However, the question remains: are they truly a health revolution or just a marketing trend? While they may support gut health and reduce sugar intake, they should be viewed as one small piece of a larger puzzle—a supplement to, not a substitute for, a balanced diet and healthy lifestyle.

Ultimately, the answer to whether healthy soda pops are truly "healthy" lies in moderation and informed choices. Understanding the ingredients, nutritional value, and claims behind these beverages empowers us to decide their role in our wellness journey. Cheers to sipping smarter!



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Health Benefits of Dark Chocolate Revealed

Chocolate isn't just a delicious treat—it's also packed with powerful health benefits, particularly when it comes to dark chocolate. When enjoyed in moderation and as part of a balanced lifestyle, chocolate can be a nourishing addition to your day. Let's dive into what makes chocolate so good for you and celebrate it with a nutritious, easy-to-make recipe. [...](#)

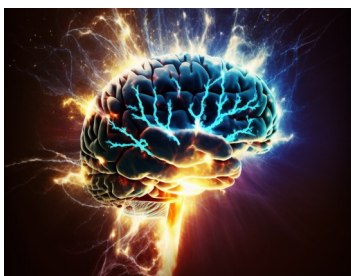
There's More To Your Health Than Exercise

Exercise is fantastic for your health. There is no disputing this, nor would we want to, but we do also want to point out that it's not the be all and end all of health. Yes, you need exercise to be healthy, but you also need so much more in order to be healthy all around. That's what we're going to be focusing on today, so keep reading down below if you would like to find out more [...](#)



Want to Supercharge Your Brain Health? Try These 5 Habits!

Spend more time with people who lift you up, who ignite your passion, and who believe in your dreams. [...](#)



Your Morning Routine Is Making You Sick—Here's What To Fix!

Mornings set the tone for the entire day, but many people unknowingly sabotage their health before they even step out the door. Seemingly harmless habits—like checking the phone first thing, skipping breakfast, or even taking a hot shower—can contribute to fatigue, stress, and long-term health issues. While these routines feel natural, they often disrupt the [...](#)

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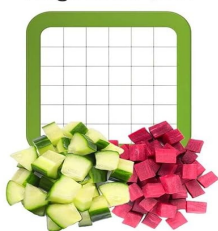


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Why A Simple Quarterly Detox Program Can Do Wonders for Your Health

Amanda Nelson-RDN, CD

In today's fast-paced world, where processed foods, environmental pollutants, and sedentary habits dominate our routines, our bodies often bear the brunt of it all. While our liver and kidneys do an excellent job of filtering out toxins naturally, they, too, can benefit from a little extra care. That's where a simple quarterly detox program comes in—a non-invasive and rejuvenating way to reset your body and mind. Here's why you should consider it:

Boosts Energy Levels

Ever feel like you're running on empty? Accumulated toxins can leave you feeling sluggish and drained. A quarterly detox program helps to eliminate these toxins, allowing your body to operate more efficiently. The result? An energy boost that helps you tackle life with vigor.

Improves Digestive Health

Modern diets can be hard on your gut, leading to bloating, irregularity, or discomfort. A detox gives your digestive

system a break by focusing on clean, nutrient-dense foods and hydration. It paves the way for better nutrient absorption and overall gut health.

Supports Weight Management

Detoxing isn't about drastic weight loss; it's about re-setting your habits. By cutting out processed and sugary foods for a short time, you'll likely notice reduced cravings and a better relationship with food, helping you maintain a healthier lifestyle in the long run.

Clears Your Skin

Your skin reflects what's happening inside your body. Toxins can clog pores and lead to breakouts. A detox program flushes out impurities, often leaving your skin looking clearer, more radiant, and rejuvenated.

Enhances Mental Clarity

We often underestimate the mind-body connection. A buildup of toxins can fog your brain, making it harder to focus. By detoxifying, you may experience improved mental clarity, better mood regulation, and even enhanced creativity.



While detox programs are popular, the scientific evidence supporting their benefits is mixed. Here are some insights from studies and expert opinions:

Detox Diets and Toxin Elimination: A systematic review published in the *British Journal of Human Nutrition and Dietetics* explored detox diets and their effectiveness. While some nutrients, like citric acid and selenium, were found to reduce specific toxins in animals and humans, there was limited evidence supporting the overall effectiveness of detox diets.

Liver Detoxification: Johns Hopkins Medicine highlights that while certain natural compounds like milk thistle and turmeric extract may have positive effects on liver health, there isn't sufficient clinical trial data to recommend their routine use for detoxification.

Detox Diets and Weight Loss: Detox diets often lead to short-term weight loss due to reduced calorie intake, but there is little evidence to support their long-term effective-

ness for weight management.

Potential Risks: Some detox practices, such as extreme fasting or coffee enemas, can be harmful and are not supported by clinical evidence.

Here are some examples of detox diets and the studies or evidence associated with them:

The Master Cleanse

- This diet involves consuming a mixture of lemon juice, purified water, cayenne pepper, and maple syrup for 10 days.

- **Evidence:** While popular, there is limited scientific evidence supporting its effectiveness. A systematic review in 2015 found no randomized controlled trials evaluating the benefits of such detox diets.

10-Day Green Smoothie Cleanse:

- Participants drink green smoothies and eat raw fruits, vegetables, nuts, and hard-boiled eggs.

- **Evidence:** While this diet promotes nutrient-dense foods, there is no strong evidence that it removes toxins. It may lead to short-term weight loss due to calorie restriction.

Juice Fasting:

- Involves consuming only fruit and vegetable juices for a set period.

- **Evidence:** Some studies suggest short-term benefits like weight loss and improved insulin resistance, but these effects are often due to reduced calorie intake rather than detoxification.

Colon Cleansing:

- Includes enemas, laxatives, or hydrotherapy to cleanse the colon.

- **Evidence:** The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has warned against some colon cleansing products due to safety concerns. There is insufficient evidence supporting its effectiveness for detoxification.

Chelation Therapy

- Used to remove heavy metals from the body in cases of poisoning.



- **Evidence:** This is a medically approved detoxification method for specific conditions, but it is not recommended for general detox purposes.

Detoxification in the body is a natural and complex process primarily managed by the liver, kidneys, lungs, skin, and intestines. These organs work together to remove toxins—substances that can be harmful to health, ranging from metabolic byproducts to environmental pollutants. Here's how it works:

1. Liver:

- The liver is the body's main detox organ. It filters the blood and processes toxins through two phases:

- ****Phase I**:** Enzymes in the liver modify toxins so they can be neutralized or prepared for excretion.

- ****Phase II**:** Neutralized toxins are combined with water-soluble molecules, making them easier to expel through urine or bile.

2. Kidneys:

- Kidneys filter the blood to remove water-soluble toxins and metabolic waste products, such as urea, which are then excreted in urine.

3. Lungs:

- The lungs expel gaseous toxins like carbon dioxide, a byproduct of cellular metabolism, during exhalation.

4. Skin:

- The skin eliminates toxins through sweat. Sweating helps remove certain heavy metals and environmental pollutants from the body.

5. Intestines:

- The intestines play a role by processing food and eliminating waste. Insoluble toxins and byproducts are excreted in feces.

Support for Natural Detoxification

While your body has its own detoxification systems, certain practices can support these processes:

- Eating antioxidant-rich foods like berries and leafy greens protects cells and supports liver function.

- Staying hydrated helps the kidneys flush out waste effectively.

- Regular exercise promotes circulation and supports lung and skin detoxification.

- Limiting processed foods, alcohol, and harmful substances reduces the toxin load on your system.

Your body's detox systems work 24/7 to keep you healthy—it's truly remarkable!

Conclusion:

While these diets are popular, experts often emphasize that the body has its own detoxification systems (liver, kidneys, and skin) that work effectively when supported by a balanced diet, hydration, and healthy lifestyle choices. If you're considering a detox diet, it's always a good idea to consult a healthcare professional. Let me know if you'd like more details!

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The Power of B Vitamins

Natalie Romito, RDN, LD

In the world of health and wellness, B vitamins often take the backstage to their flashier cousins, like vitamin D and C. But this group of eight essential nutrients deserves the spotlight for the vital roles they play in keeping our bodies and minds in top form. From boosting energy to supporting brain health, B vitamins are small but mighty heroes in our daily lives. Let's explore why they matter and how to make the most of their benefits.

What Are B Vitamins?

B vitamins are a group of water-soluble vitamins that work together and individually to support various processes in the body.

The "B complex" includes:

- **B1 (Thiamine)**: Supports energy production and nerve function.
- **B2 (Riboflavin)**: Aids in energy metabolism and helps maintain healthy skin and eyes.
- **B3 (Niacin)**: Promotes energy production and a healthy nervous system.
- **B5 (Pantothenic Acid)**: Involved in hormone production and energy metabolism.
- **B6 (Pyridoxine)**: Plays a role in brain development and immune function.
- **B7 (Biotin)**: Known for supporting hair, skin, and nail health.
- **B9 (Folate)**: Crucial for DNA synthesis and cell division, especially during pregnancy.
- **B12 (Cobalamin)**: Essential for red blood cell formation and maintaining nerve health.

The Benefits of B Vitamins

Energy Boosters

Feeling fatigued? B vitamins help convert the food you eat into energy your body can use. They're like the spark plugs that keep your engine running smoothly.

Brain Health and Cognitive Function

Certain B vitamins, like B6, B9, and B12, are integral for brain health. They support neurotransmitter production and may help reduce the risk of cognitive decline as we age.

Heart Health

B vitamins, particularly B6, B9 (folate), and B12, help manage levels of homocysteine in the blood—a compound that, in excess, can increase the risk of heart disease.

Pregnancy and Development

Folate (B9) is a must during pregnancy, as it helps prevent neural tube defects and supports the healthy development of the baby.

Beauty Benefits

Biotin (B7) has gained fame for promoting healthy hair, skin, and nails. Riboflavin (B2) and niacin (B3) also contribute to a glowing complexion.

Immune System Support

B vitamins, such as B6, play a role in supporting immune health, helping your body stay resilient against illnesses.

Sources of B Vitamins

Getting your B vitamins from whole foods is the best way to ensure you're meeting your body's needs. Here are some top sources:

- **B1**: Whole grains, legumes, nuts, and seeds.



- **B2**: Dairy products, eggs, and leafy greens.
- **B3**: Poultry, fish, and fortified cereals.
- **B5**: Mushrooms, avocados, and sweet potatoes.
- **B6**: Bananas, chickpeas, and salmon.
- **B7**: Eggs, nuts, and seeds.
- **B9**: Leafy greens, citrus fruits, and beans.
- **B12**: Meat, fish, eggs, and fortified plant-based alternatives.

Do You Need a Supplement?

While most people can get enough B vitamins through a balanced diet, certain groups may benefit from supplementation:

- Vegans and vegetarians (due to the lack of B12 in plant-based foods).
- Pregnant women (to meet increased folate needs).
- Older adults (due to reduced absorption of B12).

Always consult a healthcare professional before starting any supplement regimen.

Here are some studies and resources that delve into the benefits of B vitamins:

Energy Production and Metabolism:

- B vitamins, such as B1 (thiamine), B2 (riboflavin), and B3 (niacin), are essential for converting food into energy. They act as coenzymes in metabolic pathways, ensuring efficient energy production.

Brain Health and Cognitive Function:

- Research highlights the role of B6, B9 (folate), and B12 in brain health. These vitamins support neurotransmitter synthesis and may help reduce the risk of cognitive decline.

Heart Health:

- Studies show that B6, B9, and B12 help regulate homocysteine levels, which, when elevated, can increase the risk of cardiovascular diseases.

Pregnancy and Fetal Development:

- Folate (B9) is crucial during pregnancy to prevent neural tube defects. Supplementation is often recommended for expectant mothers.

Immune System Support:

- B6 plays a significant role in supporting immune function by aiding in the production of white blood cells and antibodies.

Here's a guide to the best food sources of each B vitamin:

Vitamin B1 (Thiamine):

- Whole grains (brown rice, oats)
- Legumes (lentils, beans)
- Nuts and seeds
- Pork and fortified cereals

Vitamin B2 (Riboflavin):

- Dairy products (milk, yogurt, cheese)
- Eggs
- Leafy greens (spinach, broccoli)
- Lean meats and fortified cereals

Vitamin B3 (Niacin):

- Poultry (chicken, turkey)
- Fish (tuna, salmon)
- Peanuts and whole grains
- Fortified cereals

Vitamin B5 (Pantothenic Acid):

- Mushrooms
- Avocados
- Sweet potatoes
- Whole grains and legumes

Vitamin B6 (Pyridoxine):

- Bananas
- Chickpeas
- Potatoes and spinach
- Poultry and fish

Vitamin B7 (Biotin):

- Eggs (especially yolks)
- Nuts and seeds
- Salmon
- Dairy products

Vitamin B9 (Folate/Folic Acid):

- Leafy greens (kale, spinach)
- Citrus fruits (oranges, lemons)
- Beans and peas
- Fortified cereals and bread

Vitamin B12 (Cobalamin):

- Animal products (meat, fish, poultry)
- Dairy products
- Eggs
- Fortified plant-based milk and cereals (important for vegans)

Including a variety of these foods in your diet ensures you get a well-rounded intake of B vitamins.

Here are the daily recommended intakes for each B vitamin, based on guidelines

for healthy adults:

- **Vitamin B1 (Thiamine)**: 1.1–1.2 milligrams
- **Vitamin B2 (Riboflavin)**: 1.1–1.3 milligrams
- **Vitamin B3 (Niacin)**: 14–16 milligrams
- **Vitamin B5 (Pantothenic Acid)**: 5 milligrams
- **Vitamin B6 (Pyridoxine)**: 1.3–1.5 milligrams
- **Vitamin B7 (Biotin)**: 30 micrograms
- **Vitamin B9 (Folate)**: 400 micrograms
- **Vitamin B12 (Cobalamin)**: 2.4 micrograms.

These values may vary depending on age, gender, and specific health conditions.

B vitamin deficiencies can lead to a range of health issues, depending on which specific vitamin is lacking. Here's a breakdown of the effects:

Vitamin B1 (Thiamine):

- Deficiency can cause *beriberi*, which affects the nervous and cardiovascular systems.
- Symptoms include fatigue, irritability, muscle weakness, and nerve damage.

Vitamin B2 (Riboflavin):

- Deficiency may lead to skin disorders, cracks at the corners of the mouth, and sensitivity to light.
- It can also cause sore throat and swelling of the mucous membranes.

Vitamin B3 (Niacin):

- Severe deficiency results in *pellagra*, characterized by diarrhea, dermatitis, and dementia.
- Mild deficiency may cause fatigue, indi-

gestion, and poor circulation.

Vitamin B5 (Pantothenic Acid):

- Rare, but deficiency can lead to symptoms like fatigue, irritability, and numbness in the hands and feet.

Vitamin B6 (Pyridoxine):

- Deficiency can cause anemia, depression, confusion, and weakened immune function.
- It may also lead to skin conditions like seborrheic dermatitis.

Vitamin B7 (Biotin):

- Deficiency is rare but can result in hair thinning, skin rashes, and brittle nails.
- Neurological symptoms like depression and lethargy may also occur.

Vitamin B9 (Folate):

- Deficiency can lead to megaloblastic anemia, fatigue, and weakness.
- In pregnant women, it increases the risk of neural tube defects in the baby.

Vitamin B12 (Cobalamin):

- Deficiency can cause megaloblastic anemia, nerve damage, and cognitive issues like memory loss or confusion.
- Symptoms may also include fatigue, pale skin, and tingling in the hands and feet.

Final Thoughts

B vitamins might not have the sparkle of some other nutrients, but their importance cannot be overstated. Whether you're looking to boost energy, improve brain health, or support your immune system, this group of essential vitamins has you covered. Incorporating a variety of B-rich foods into your diet ensures your body has the tools it needs to thrive.



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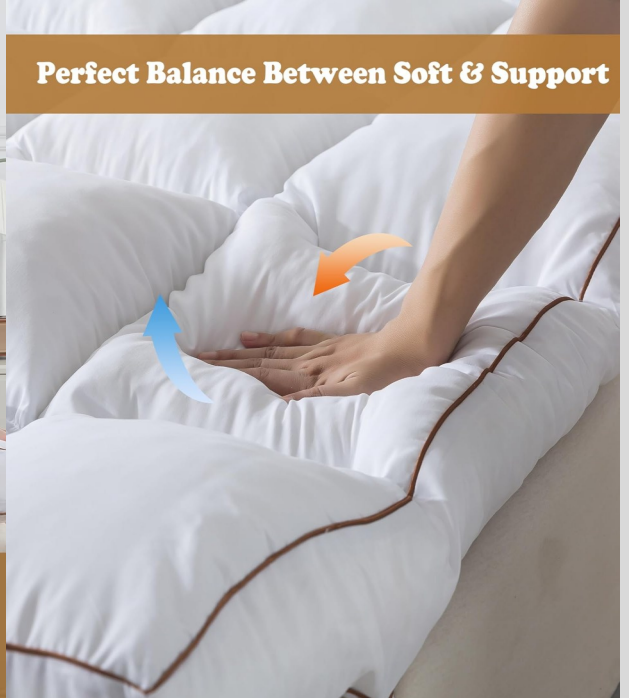
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Everyday Mental Health Strategies

James Salazar-PMHNP, ARNP

Ever felt overwhelmed by life's challenges, be it work stress, relationship struggles, or just the constant noise of daily life? You're not alone. Coping strategies are the unsung heroes that help us navigate through these rough patches.

The Importance of Healthy Coping Strategies

Let's get real: we all cope in different ways. However, not all coping strategies are created equal. While some may bring short-term relief, they can be harmful in the long run (think emotional eating, substance use, or binge-watching TV for hours). That's why it's vital to adopt healthy coping mechanisms. They can significantly improve your mental health, relieve stress, and even increase your overall happiness.

In a world that moves at lightning speed, caring for your mental health is more important than ever. It's not just about handling the tough days; it's about building small habits that sustain you in the long run. These everyday strategies are simple, yet powerful ways to nurture your emotional well-being and foster resilience.

Start with Gratitude:

Taking a few moments each morning to reflect on what you're grateful for can set a positive tone for the day. Gratitude helps shift your focus away from stress and towards the good in your life.

Move Your Body:

Physical activity is not just for fitness—it's for mental health too. Whether it's a brisk walk, yoga, or dancing, movement releases endorphins, the feel-good chemicals that boost your mood.

Practice Mindfulness

Mindfulness helps you stay present and focused on the moment, reducing anxiety and promoting calm. Try simple techniques like deep breathing or a short meditation to bring clarity to your mind.

Connect with Others

Human connection is vital for mental health. Make time to talk with loved ones, join a community group, or check in with friends. Sharing experiences and laughter can lighten your emotional load.

Fuel Your Body

What you eat affects your mind. A diet rich in fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains can help stabilize your mood and energy levels.

Prioritize Sleep

Sleep is the foundation of good mental health. Strive for 7–9 hours of quality sleep each night, and maintain a consistent bedtime to support your body's natural rhythm.

Limit Negative Inputs

From social media to the news cycle, constant exposure to negativity can weigh heavily on your mind. Set boundaries for screen time and curate your feed with uplifting content.

Set Small Goals

Achieving even small goals can instill a sense of purpose and accomplishment. Break big tasks into manageable steps to stay motivated and reduce overwhelm.

Be Kind to Yourself

Self-compassion is key. Accept your imperfections and treat yourself as you would a dear friend—with kindness and understanding, even on hard days.

Seek Professional Help

Sometimes, the best strategy is reaching out to a mental health professional. Therapists and counselors can offer guidance tailored to your needs, providing tools to navigate challenges effectively.

Final Thoughts

Caring for your mental health doesn't require grand gestures. It's the small, consistent steps that build emotional resilience over time. By incorporating these strategies into your daily routine, you're investing in a healthier, happier you—one step at a time.

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I'm Too Tired to Exercise — What Can I Do to Break This Cycle?

Michael Thomas-Certified FT

For many people, feeling too tired to exercise is a common struggle. The thought of dragging yourself to the gym or lacing up your sneakers for a jog can feel impossible when exhaustion takes over. But here's the paradox: skipping exercise often perpetuates the very fatigue you're trying to avoid. Breaking out of this cycle is challenging but not impossible—and small, intentional steps can help you rediscover your energy and motivation.

Understanding the Cycle of Fatigue

Feeling tired and skipping exercise can create a vicious loop. Lack of physical activity reduces energy levels and increases feelings of sluggishness. Over time, this can lead to decreased fitness, poor sleep quality, and lower mood—all of which contribute to more fatigue. But the good news is, even gentle movement can start to reverse this trend.

Strategies to Reignite Your Energy

Here are practical ways to ease into exercise, even when you feel drained:

1. Start Small and Simple

Begin with light activities that don't feel overwhelming. A 5-minute stretch session or a walk around the block can be just enough to get your body moving without feeling like a huge commitment.

2. Focus on Consistency Over Intensity

Instead of aiming for an intense workout, focus on showing up consistently. A daily 10–15-minute movement practice can grad-

ually rebuild your energy without overexertion.

3. Find Joyful Movement

Exercise doesn't have to mean hitting the treadmill. Dance to your favorite songs, play with your pets, or try a gentle yoga class. Find activities that you genuinely enjoy and look forward to.

4. Build Momentum with Low-Energy Days

Even on your tired days, commit to small actions like stretching or walking. These low-effort movements can still boost circulation and improve your mood.

5. Prioritize Sleep and Recovery

Fatigue often stems from poor sleep quality. Focus on improving your sleep hygiene by maintaining a consistent bedtime, limiting caffeine, and creating a calm environment to rest.

6. Fuel Your Body

A balanced diet can make all the difference. Eating nutrient-rich foods—like fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains—supports energy production and reduces the effects of fatigue.

7. Enlist an Accountability Partner

Having someone to encourage you can be a powerful motivator. Whether it's a friend, family member, or personal trainer, a support system makes sticking to a routine easier.

8. Celebrate Small Wins

Every step, no matter how small, is progress. Celebrate your victories, like taking a walk or completing a short workout, to build confidence and momentum.

9. Listen to Your Body

It's essential to respect your limits. If you're dealing with extreme fatigue or underlying health issues, consult a healthcare professional before starting a new exercise routine.

Breaking Free from the Cycle

Once you begin incorporating even small amounts of movement into your day, you'll likely notice gradual improvements in your energy, mood, and sleep. As momentum builds, you may find that exercise feels less like a chore and more like a gift to your mind and body.

Overcoming mental barriers to exercise is just as important as addressing physical ones. Here are some tips for tackling those mental hurdles:

1. Reframe Your Mindset

- ****Why it helps****: Many people view exercise as a chore,

which can feel discouraging. Reframing it as an act of self-care or a way to boost energy can create a positive association.

- **Tip**: Instead of thinking, "I have to exercise," try saying, "I get to move my body and feel stronger."

2. Start Small to Build Confidence

- **Why it helps**: Feeling overwhelmed by the idea of long or intense workouts can stop you before you start. Small steps make the goal more achievable.

- **Tip**: Commit to just 5 minutes of activity. Often, starting is the hardest part, and you may naturally want to continue.

3. Visualize the Benefits

- **Why it helps**: Focusing on the positive outcomes of exercise—like better mood, improved sleep, or increased strength—can motivate you.

- **Tip**: Spend a moment picturing yourself feeling energized and accomplished after a workout.

4. Ditch Perfectionism

- **Why it helps**: The belief that workouts need to be "all or nothing" can hold you back. Remember, even a little exercise is better than none.

- **Tip**: Let go of the need for a "perfect" routine. Celebrate progress over perfection.

5. Find Your Why

- **Why it helps**: Connecting exercise to a meaningful personal goal—like being able to keep up with your kids or reducing stress—can provide intrinsic motivation.

- **Tip**: Write down your "why" and keep it where you can see it, like on your fridge or phone screen.

6. Use Mental Tricks to Get Started

- **Why it helps**: Our brains sometimes resist change, but a few clever mental strategies can overcome inertia.

- **Tip**: Try the "5-minute rule"—promise yourself you'll exercise for just five minutes. Often, starting leads to longer sessions naturally.

7. Make It Fun

- **Why it helps**: Exercise doesn't have to feel like punishment. Choosing enjoyable activities makes it something you look forward to.

- **Tip**: Explore different forms of movement like dancing, hiking, or group classes to find what excites you.



8. Reward Yourself

- **Why it helps**: Positive reinforcement can build habits over time.

- **Tip**: Treat yourself to a small reward after working out, like a favorite smoothie, a relaxing shower, or an episode of your favorite show.

9. Reduce the Pressure

- **Why it helps**: High expectations can lead to avoidance.

- **Tip**: Remind yourself that something is always better than nothing. It's okay to have days where a stretch or a short walk is enough.

10. Get Support

- **Why it helps**: Feeling alone in your struggles can be demotivating, but connecting with others can inspire you.

- **Tip**: Find an accountability partner, join a fitness group, or talk to a coach for guidance and encouragement.

Including these strategies will help readers address both physical and mental barriers to exercise, making the article even more relatable and actionable. Let me know if you'd like me to expand on any of these points!

Remember, the journey is yours to define. Start where you are, take it one step at a time, and give yourself grace as you work toward breaking the cycle of fatigue. Your energy and vitality are worth the effort.

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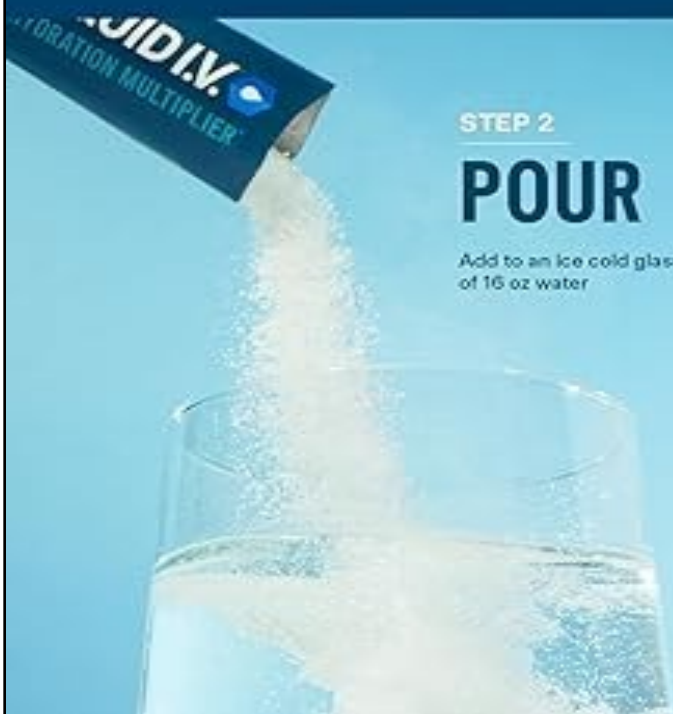
HOW TO USE

STEP 1
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STEP 2
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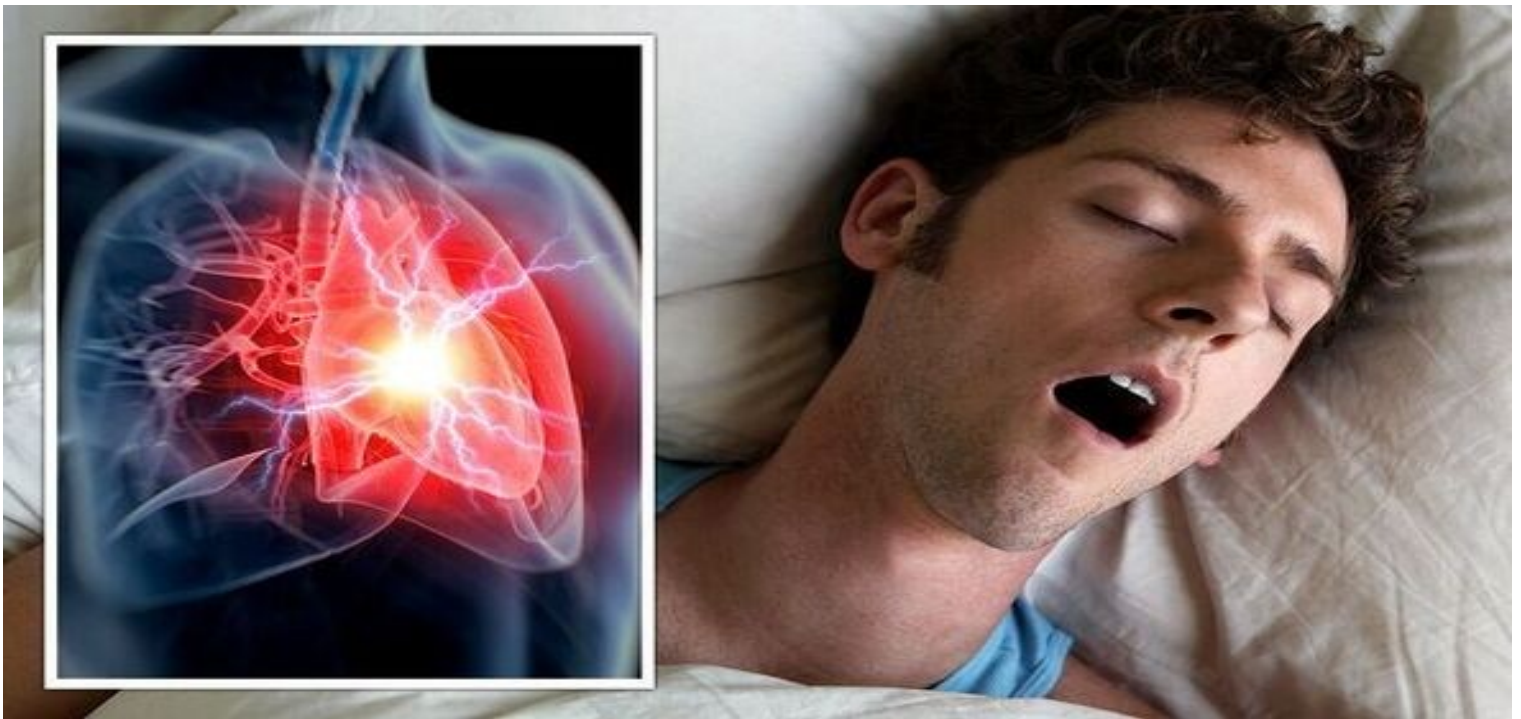
Add to an ice cold glass
of 16 oz water



STEP 3
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Mouth Breathing: A Hidden Heart Health Risk

Thomas Longley, MD

Mouth breathing might seem like a harmless habit or a mere inconvenience, but emerging research reveals that it could have deeper implications for our heart health. Often overlooked, this seemingly trivial act can quietly compromise cardiovascular well-being. Over half of adults in the U.S. identify as mouth breathers, which highlights how widespread this issue is. Let's dive into why mouth breathing deserves more attention.

What is Mouth Breathing?

Mouth breathing occurs when an individual primarily breathes through their mouth instead of their nose. This can happen due to nasal blockages, allergies, structural issues, or even habitual behavior. While occasional mouth breathing is natural, consistent reliance on it may signal underlying problems.

How Does Mouth Breathing Affect the Heart?

Reduced Oxygen Levels

Mouth breathing bypasses the nose's natural ability

to filter, humidify, and regulate the air we inhale. This inefficiency can reduce oxygen intake, leading to hypoxemia (low blood oxygen levels). Over time, inadequate oxygen supply forces the heart to work harder, potentially causing strain and increasing the risk of cardiovascular complications.

Increased Blood Pressure

Studies have shown that mouth breathing can lead to an imbalance in carbon dioxide and oxygen levels, which might contribute to elevated blood pressure. Chronic hypertension is a significant risk factor for heart disease and stroke.

Sleep Apnea and Heart Disease

Mouth breathing is often linked to sleep apnea, a condition where breathing temporarily stops during sleep. Sleep apnea has been directly associated with an increased risk of heart arrhythmias, heart failure, and heart attacks.

Signs of Chronic Mouth Breathing

- Dry mouth and throat
- Chapped lips
- Snoring or sleep disturbances



MOUTH BREATHING RISKS

Heart Health: Controlled breathing can lower blood pressure and heart rate, reducing stress on the cardiovascular system.

Pain Management: Deep breathing has been shown to reduce pain perception by altering the body's response to stress and discomfort.

Mental Health: Breathing exercises are linked to reduced symptoms of anxiety, depression, and stress, as well as improved emotional regulation.

Digestive Health: The parasympathetic response triggered by slow breathing enhances blood flow to the gut, aiding digestion.

Here are a few effective breathing exercises that can improve physical and mental well-being:

Diaphragmatic (Belly) Breathing:

- Sit or lie down in a comfortable position.
- Place one hand on your chest and the other on your belly.
- Inhale deeply through your nose, letting your belly rise as it fills with air.
- Exhale slowly through your mouth, feeling your belly fall.
- Repeat for 5–10 minutes to reduce stress and improve oxygen flow.

Box Breathing (Square Breathing):

- Inhale deeply through your nose for a count of 4.
- Hold your breath for a count of 4.
- Exhale through your mouth for a count of 4.
- Pause and hold your breath for a count of 4 before starting again.
- Repeat the cycle 5–10 times to promote relaxation and focus.

Alternate Nostril Breathing (Nadi Shodhana):

- Sit comfortably and close your right nostril with your thumb.
- Inhale deeply through your left nostril.
- Close your left nostril with your finger, release your thumb, and exhale through your right nostril.
- Inhale through your right nostril, close it, and exhale through your left nostril.
- Continue this pattern for 5 minutes to balance your body and calm the mind.

4-7-8 Breathing:

- Inhale through your nose for 4 seconds.
- Hold your breath for 7 seconds.
- Exhale through your mouth slowly and completely for 8 seconds.
- Repeat the cycle 4–8 times to reduce anxiety and improve sleep.

Pursed-Lip Breathing:

- Inhale slowly through your nose for 2 seconds.
- Exhale gently through pursed lips (as if you're whistling) for 4–6 seconds.
- Use this technique during physical activity to control breathing and improve oxygen flow.

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How to Keep Your Mind Sharp: Simple Strategies for Mental Agility

Elizabeth May -Clinician

In a world that constantly challenges us, maintaining mental sharpness is essential for thriving both personally and professionally. A sharp mind not only enhances problem-solving skills but also fosters creativity and resilience. Here are practical strategies to keep your mind in top shape:

Embrace Lifelong Learning

Never stop exploring new horizons. Engage in activities that challenge your intellect, such as reading, taking online courses, or learning a new skill. Continuous learning helps to build cognitive reserves and keeps your brain active.

Stay Physically Active

Physical health and mental sharpness are intricately connected. Exercise increases blood flow to the brain, which can improve memory and cognitive function. Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise most days of the week.

Prioritize Nutrition

Fuel your brain with a diet rich in antioxidants,

healthy fats, and vitamins. Foods like blueberries, salmon, walnuts, and leafy greens can help to support brain health. Don't forget to stay hydrated—your brain needs water to function optimally.

Challenge Your Brain

Games like puzzles, chess, or Sudoku are not just entertaining—they also keep your brain agile. Mixing things up by trying new hobbies or exploring creative outlets, like painting or writing, can also stimulate neural pathways.

Get Quality Sleep

Sleep is crucial for consolidating memories and processing information. Adults should aim for 7-9 hours of restorative sleep each night. Establish a consistent sleep routine to help your brain recharge.

Practice Mindfulness and Stress Management

Chronic stress can hinder cognitive performance, so finding ways to manage stress is key. Techniques such as meditation, deep breathing, or yoga can promote mental clarity and resilience.

Socially Connected

Engaging with friends and family can keep your mind sharp. Social interactions stimulate cognitive skills and improve emotional well-being. Join community groups, participate in team activities, or simply have heartfelt conversations with loved ones.

Limit Digital Overload

In today's digital age, it's easy to become overwhelmed by constant notifications and screens. Make an effort to unplug regularly to give your mind a break and nurture more meaningful experiences.

There are plenty of other strategies that can help keep your mind sharp and thriving:

Cultivate Gratitude

Research has shown that practicing gratitude can positively affect mental health and cognition. Keeping a

gratitude journal or reflecting daily on what you're thankful for can enhance your emotional and mental resilience.

Spend Time in Nature

Regular exposure to nature—whether it's a walk in the park or hiking a scenic trail—can lower stress levels, boost creativity, and improve focus. Nature has a calming effect that benefits overall cognitive health.

Engage in Journaling

Writing down your thoughts regularly encourages introspection and self-expression. It also stimulates creativity and helps organize your ideas, which can lead to improved mental clarity.

Listen to Music

Music can enhance brain function by improving memory, reducing stress, and stimulating cognitive pathways. Learning an instrument can also provide the added benefit of challenging your brain in new ways.

Volunteer

Helping others can expand your perspective and keep you socially engaged. Volunteering offers a sense of purpose, builds relationships, and provides stimulating experiences that contribute to mental sharpness.

Read Fiction

Reading novels can boost your ability to empathize, broaden your imagination, and stimulate mental processing as you immerse yourself in complex characters and plots.

Maintain a Positive Outlook

Optimism can improve mental and physical health. Building habits that encourage positive thinking, such as reflecting on your achievements, can help train your brain to tackle challenges constructively.

Research highlights that gratitude has profound



effects on the brain and mental health. Studies show that practicing gratitude can activate brain regions associated with reward, empathy, and social bonding, such as the prefrontal cortex and anterior cingulate cortex. It also boosts the production of neurotransmitters like dopamine and serotonin, which are linked to feelings of happiness and well-being.

Gratitude practices, such as journaling or expressing thanks, have been found to reduce stress and improve resilience. Additionally, engaging in gratitude can help unshackle individuals from toxic emotions and foster a more positive outlook on life. Over time, these practices can lead to lasting changes in brain function and emotional health.



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