

Wellness Tips
Osher Center for Integrative Health
FY23

Use these 24 wellness tips in weekly team emails, newsletters, or meetings. Tips are also great on the first slide of a PowerPoint, prior to presentation start.

Physical Activity:

Why posture matters

Poor posture can lead to back pain, headaches and tension in your shoulders and neck. Many aches and pains come from slouching. By being aware of your posture while working, you can improve these issues and improve your breathing, core strength and have better form during your workouts.

1. Place your feet flat on the floor.
2. Toes and knees pointing forward.
3. Lift tall through the top of your head.
4. Line up your ears above your collar bone.

Additional resources [here](#) and [here](#).

Fitting in Movement Throughout Your Day

We are all busy and have a lot going on, but movement is connected to how we feel every day. So, it is worth finding moments, not matter how small to move. Think about what is meaningful in your life and how you want to show up. Movement can help you with energy and allow you to participate in the activities and moments that fill you up. Our bodies were made to move.

Here are some tips to get your body moving:

- Park further away when you go to the store
- Take a walk while on a work or personal call
- Swap your chair for an exercise ball
- Turn on your favorite song and dance
- Exercise or stretch while watching TV
- If possible, take the stairs
- Try a 10 minute workout

Additional resource [here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#).

What's the Big Deal with Resistance Training?

Resistance training helps maintain and combat the loss of muscle mass that occurs as we age. In addition to increasing our muscular fitness, resistance training can help prevent osteoporosis, decrease our risk of heart disease, lower blood pressure, improving cholesterol levels, and lowering body fat. The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) recommends that resistance training be done at least two (non-consecutive) days each week. Each workout should consist of 8-10 exercises and 8-12 repetitions for each exercise. Additional resource [here](#).

Focus on Your Core Stability to Improve Function

You might be wondering isn't the core the same as abdominal muscles? Nope, the abs are four muscle groups. The core is everything once you take away the arms, legs, and head. You may have heard the core referred to as the trunk, which includes the diaphragm, intercostals, transverse abdominis, obliques, rectus abdominals, all the muscles along the spine and the pelvic floor. Doing exercises for core stability will ensure you have adequate power to perform movements and support your daily functional movements.

Start activating your transverse abdominis (TA) by pretending blowing out a candle feeling length through the top of your head and a lift in your pelvic floor. You should feel a wrapping around your entire center. You can still brace your core, but breathe out to the side and back. Check out this [video](#) and this [video](#) on engaging your core and this [video](#) and this [video](#) to strengthen the core.

Check out some stability exercises and how to access core stability [here](#) and [here](#).

Nutrition:

Adding in More Fiber

The current fiber recommendations are to consume 25g/day for Women and 38g/d for Men. Unfortunately, most Americans are not reaching this goal!

Fiber is important as it can:

- Reduce our blood sugar and lower the risk of chronic diseases like diabetes
- Helps us to feel more satiated, or full
- Plays an important role in lowering the risk of cardiovascular disease.
- Feed the microbes in our gut and supports a healthy microbiome

So how can we increase fiber in our day? Here are some easy tips and tricks to try!

- If you struggle to get vegetables in the morning, try adding frozen cauliflower to your smoothies or opting for a savory breakfast full of sauteed vegetables or avocado toast.

Additional resources [here](#) and [here](#)

Eating Well on a Budget:

Eating well doesn't have to break the bank. Check out these tips for eating well while sticking to a budget.

- Meal plan:
 - Plan your meals before you shop based on what is on sale/in season, meals you actually enjoy cooking and eating, and ingredients that can be used in more than one meal.
- Grocery Shopping:
 - Make a list and stick to it.
 - Shop at home first. Use ingredients you already have in your pantry instead of buying new.
 - Buy in season fruits and vegetables.
 - Buy bulk when appropriate.
- Skip eating out. Preparing your meals at home can cut food costs dramatically.

Additional resource [here](#).

Workplace Snacking and the SNACKLE BOX:

Snacking at work can have a huge impact on our health goals. Stay on track with your personal health goals with these office snacking tips:

- Not an option to remove office candy, sweets, or salty snacks? Store in opaque containers and/or place them in low traffic spots.
- Keep a few of your favorite snacks on-hand for convenience.
- High fiber snacks (like nuts, fruit, whole grains, & veggies) will curb your hunger for longer!
- Bring snacks in a snackle box! Buy a beading box or tackle box (for fishing) from the hobby store. Fill each compartment with various snacks like: dried fruit, nuts, string cheese, hard boiled eggs, granola, high-fiber crackers etc.
- Include a protein and fiber source at snacks and meals!

Additional resources [here](#) and [here](#).

Mindfulness:

Basic Mindfulness:

Practicing mindfulness can help us to decrease stress and anxiety and put everything into perspective. In mindfulness practice, we connect with our innate awareness, giving ourselves the space to respond rather than react to daily stimulus. Mindfulness practices don't need to be complicated or take up a lot of your time. Try out one of the practices below daily to see what impact it has on your life.

- Additional resources [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

Mindfulness practices can be a quick way to manage current stress and get you out of a reactive state into one of choice. Here are a few practices to try that can last as little as 30 seconds:

-“Come to your senses” is a mindfulness practice where you stop what you are doing to pay attention to what you can hear, see, smell, taste and feel.

-STOP practice: stop what you are doing, take a breath (or two!), observe what is happening right now, and finally proceed with intention and compassion.

-2x breath is a breathing practice where your exhale lasts twice as long as your inhale. Try inhaling for 2, exhaling for 4 and repeat.

-Box Breathing: inhale for 4, hold for 4, exhale for 4, hold for 4. Repeat.

Cultivate Gratitude:

Feeling like you're in a slump? Research has shown that expressing gratitude on a daily basis can improve your energy levels and mood as well as help you get more sleep, boost your immune system, and lower your risk of disease. Try this "Three Good Things" practice to help cultivate gratitude in your own life.

3 Good Things Practice:

- Take out a piece of paper
- Write down 3 good things that you are grateful for today
- Keep up the practice for at least 2 weeks before reflecting on your experience

Additional resources [here](#) and [here](#).

Additional gratitude practices:

-What went well today? What was your role in that event?

-gratitude letter: write a letter to someone you care about expressing your appreciation for them

-Before you start to eat a snack or meal, think of who and what went into that food being in front of you. Practice gratitude for the energy that went into this essential nourishment.

How Breathing Affects our Feelings:

When we are feeling anxious or scared, we tend to breathe quicker, shallow breaths. This leads to a lower concentration of carbon dioxide in our blood causing us to feel lightheaded, clammy, sweaty, and have tingly fingers or toes. Learning how to control our breathing can help us better manage the emotions we are feeling. Next time you are feeling anxious, scared, or upset try this:

- Sit comfortably. Close your eyes if you want to.
- Breathe slowly and steadily in through your nose for a count of 4.
- Hold your breath for a count of 2.
- Breathe out slowly and steadily for a count of 4.
- Repeat for a few minutes.

Additional resource [here](#).

Emotional Wellness:

Stress Management:

Positive thinking can help manage your stress and improve your overall health. Try to approach problems with a positive outlook, looking for the bright side and making the most out of a potentially bad situation. Try to find the best in others and yourself. To cultivate positive thinking, try writing three good things that happen each day, embracing humor, or starting each day with your favorite song!

- Additional resource [here](#).

Identifying Emotions:

Identifying and expressing our emotions in a healthy way can help us to better manage the way we are feeling and the impact those emotions have on us and our surroundings. Identifying what we are feeling in the moment allows us to take a step back and make a rational choice instead of letting emotion be our guide. Being able to identify our own emotions also helps us to develop better emotional intelligence which can help improve your relationship with yourself and others.

Use the following practice to help you identify your emotions:

- Write down three positive and three negative emotions you felt today.
- Now think of different words to describe those same emotions.

Additional resource [here](#).

Self-Appreciation:

Self-appreciation is a reflection of our inner sense of well-being. Having low self-appreciation can have many negative impacts on our overall health and wellbeing. Low self-appreciation can negatively impact our relationships with others and ourselves, our ability to do our jobs, and both our mental and physical health. While developing a greater self-appreciation can be difficult, there are some simple things you can do each day to help.

- Challenge negative thinking
- Identify situations or conditions that tend to deflate you
- Take a step back. Observe your thoughts, actions, and situation from an outsider's point of view
- Practice self-care

Additional resources [here](#) and [here](#).

Self-Care:

Self-care is an essential part of our health and wellness. Unfortunately, it is one of the first things to fall by the wayside in times of stress or uncertainty. Ignoring self-care can lead to chronic stress, burnout, and depression. Simple things, done each day can help improve our self-care habits and improve our health and wellness. Look at the ideas below for ways you can practice self-care each day.

- Go for a walk
- Journal
- Meditate
- Go out in nature
- Listen to your favorite music/song
- Do something creative
- Reach out to your support network

Additional resources [here](#) and [here](#).

Environmental Wellness:

Bringing the Outdoors In!

Many studies have shown the benefit that nature has on our overall health and wellbeing. But what if you can't get outside on a regular basis to reap the rewards nature has for us? More recent studies have shown that bringing nature inside to us has similar positive effects on health. Try bringing the outdoors in by:

- Adding plants to your home or office
- Listening to nature sounds
- Facing a window or nature scene

These simple tasks can help to boost productivity and focus, lower stress levels, and promote feelings of relaxation and calm.

- Additional resources [here](#) and [here](#).

Sustainability:

Focusing on sustainability in many areas of life is a key part of maintaining our overall health and wellbeing. While sustainability often sounds like an overwhelming task, there are many small things you can do each day to live a more sustainable life. Check out the following tips for helping reduce your impact on the environment:

- Choose reusable! Instead of single use plastics, opt for reusable items instead
- Recycle! Make sure you are disposing of recyclable materials properly.
- Bring lunch from home instead of going out
- Get creative to limit food waste.

Visit the Office of Sustainability [here](#) for more ways to get involved.

Clutter:

Clutter is simply the accumulation of more possessions than can fit in the available space. Clutter can induce a physiological response increasing cortisol levels (stress hormone) in our body. Clutter can also make it difficult to move, think, and process both mentally and visually. Removing the clutter from a space can help us to be more productive and feel less stressed.

Tips to help declutter:

- Tidy by category, not location (i.e. all clothing, not just the bedroom closet)
- Start by discarding/donating- get rid of things first before you start to organize
 - If you find this difficult, invite an objective person to help
- Find a place for everything, and put everything in its place (prevents clutter from building back up)
- Store like items together
- Purchase with intention- don't buy or keep things "just because"

Additional resources [here](#) and [here](#).

Intellectual Wellness:

Fostering Creativity:

Fostering our innate creativity is one way we can improve our intellectual wellness. Fostering creativity helps us to become better problem solvers, help us better cope with stress, and keeps our brain healthy as we age. There are many ways to foster creativity including writing, drawing, painting, dancing, playing or listening to music, and more! Think of a way you can foster your creativity and practice it for 5 minutes daily.

- Additional resources [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

Growth Mindset:

Growth mindset is the idea that we can grow our brain's capacity to learn and solve problems. Having a growth mindset is important in many areas of life but it can have a particularly strong impact in achieving our health or wellness goals. You can nurture a growth mindset by asking for feedback, criticism, or ways to improve, and by looking for opportunities to grow instead of obstacles.

- Additional resource [here](#).

Social Wellness:

Assertive Communication:

Communicating assertively means clearly and calmly expressing what you want without being too aggressive or passive. Communicating assertively doesn't guarantee that your needs will be met but it makes it more likely, and it can improve your relationships with others. Assertive communication includes compromise, talking and listening, and recognizing that your needs matter as much as anyone else's. Assertive communication and I statements help you focus on your reality, lessens blame and over generalizations, and promotes ownership of feelings and experiences.

An easy way to practice assertive communication is using I statements to describe what you are feeling. A template for this can simply be "I feel (BLANK) when (BLANK)"

- Additional resource [here](#).

Support System:

Having a support system is an essential part of your health and wellness. This support system can be made up of friends, family, and coworkers. Having a social support system can help you better deal with stress, improve your mental health and self-esteem, and help encourage healthy lifestyle behaviors. Grow your social support system by taking classes, volunteering, or joining a gym or fitness group.

One way to strengthen and maintain your support system is scheduling time with a friend or family member. Pull out your phone and reach out to someone in your social circle you would like to connect with.

Social Wellness:

Social wellness refers to the relationships we have and how we interact with others. Social wellness involves building healthy, nurturing and supportive relationships as well as fostering a genuine connection with those around you. Having good social wellness is an important part of developing emotional resilience. Boost your social wellness by reaching out to someone you haven't spoken to in a while, learning more about your communication style, or expressing gratitude for your support system.

Here are a few ideas to get started:

- Make time for social connections and schedule time with friends and family in the same way you would physical activity or a doctor's check-up.
- Make it a point to enjoy at least one meal a day with a friend, family member, or peer and take time to get to know them better.
- Get involved with a new hobby or volunteer organization to give back to your community and meet new people.

Physical Wellness:

Sleep:

Sleep is important for both our physical and mental wellbeing. Getting enough sleep can help with mood regulation, learning and memory, healthy eating, weight management, and increase our energy levels.

If you struggle with getting enough sleep or falling asleep when you want to try these hacks to set yourself up for success!

- A healthy bedtime routine starts in the morning! In order to maintain our bodies natural clock, or circadian rhythms, consider getting 10-30 minutes of direct sunlight in the morning (between 8-10am)
- turn off electronics at least 1 hour before going to sleep.
- Dim the lights in your house at night time
- Practice incorporating relaxing activities around bedtime like: meditations, stretching, journaling, reading etc.
- Try a Yoga Nidra or Body Scan Meditation for sleep, check out the one linked below!
- Additional resources [here](#) and Body scan meditation [here](#).

Incorporating Play and Adding Fun into the Day:

Play is a fun way to reduce physical or neural fatigue, recovering from the day's stresses. Choosing to incorporate play into the day is one way to decrease boredom, or the feeling of days filled with repetitive tasks. When having fun, our ability to reconnect with body and soul is heightened... we're increasing feelings of well-being!

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Choose a song that you like and dance along. Step-by-step instructions can be found online, too!
- Take a blank sheet of paper and draw something that brought you happiness today. You can copy a picture, make it up, or base it on nature.
- There are apps with brain-stimulating and relaxing games like the Impulse app. You can challenge yourself to a 5-minute activity.
- Tossing a paper wad into a wastebasket - make some paper balls and throw them in your office trash.
- Putting together a puzzle.
- Choose a song you like, get the lyrics and sing along!
- Storytelling can produce a sense of timelessness and happiness. You can write about it or share with a friend.

Additional resource [here](#).