

5-minute wellness

WE OFFER A MONTH'S WORTH OF HABITS TO IMPROVE YOUR WELL-BEING IN A SNAP.

BY LAUREN GRANT

When you're regularly advised to do yoga, lift weights, eat more vegetables, remember your vitamins and be more mindful, a commitment to good health may feel daunting. But wellness shouldn't be a burden. Experience firsthand just how easy it is to put your health first with these research-backed tips.

1 NAMASTE
Just five minutes of yoga and controlled breathing a day can prevent injury and promote movement throughout the day.

2 BREAKFAST FOR SURE
Eating breakfast benefits heart health, blood sugar and weight control. Get a healthy start by preparing overnight oats (see page 50).



3 HIIT IT
High-intensity exercise controls appetite and improves cardio and strength systems. Try one minute each of jump squats, jump lunges, high knees, squat thrusts and stairs.

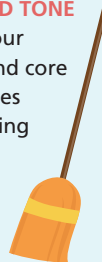
4 CALL A PAL
Take just a few minutes while heading to work to chat with a friend. Research shows that quality friendships can help you live longer and healthier.

5 BOTTOMS UP
Studies show that downing water throughout the day prevents headaches, boosts energy, improves your immune system and keeps your bowels regular.

6 MEDITATE



7 CLEAN AND TONE
Strengthen your thighs, rear and core by doing lunges while vacuuming or mopping. Multitasking at its finest!



8 BROWN-BAG IT
Pack your lunch. You'll not only save time and money, you'll also eat a lot healthier. Don't forget to take along mid-morning and afternoon snacks.



9 6-MINUTE SNOOZE
If you can spare the extra minute, a six-minute midday snooze can improve long-term memory, as well as boost your energy levels.



10 STAND & STRETCH
Get up from your desk and give yourself a good, full-body stretch. Just five minutes can prevent injury, energize your brain, reduce stress and lower blood sugar.



11 OIL UP
A dab of lavender essential oil (diluted in a carrier oil) on your skin can lower anxiety, relieve pain and improve digestion, according to research.

12 SET AND FORGET
In a slow cooker, mix chicken broth; chopped tomatillos, onion and garlic; 1 can white beans; oregano and cumin. Cook 6 hours, then add cooked, shredded chicken.

13 GET A ROUTINE
Perform set exercise movements during your morning tasks, like squatting while brushing your teeth or doing calf raises while making breakfast.



14 RUB ON SUNSCREEN
Use SPF 30 or greater on exposed skin all year round—even on cloudy days, when 80 percent of the sun's rays still affect skin.



15 SMILE
Make a point to smile. Smiling signals the brain to release neuropeptides that fight off stress and depression. A happy smile even naturally relieves pain.

16 DODGE THE DRIVE-THROUGH
Save time, money and calories by swapping your coffee-shop latte with a cup at home. Black coffee offers antioxidant and anticancer properties.



17 GET CRUNCHIN'
Earn a stronger core, better posture and reduced back pain with a five-minute ab workout. Perform one minute each of plank, sit-ups, side planks (both sides) and v-ups.

18 TAKE SHADES
Get in the habit of grabbing sunglasses on the way out the door. They protect eyes from UV exposure, which can cause cataracts and macular degeneration.



19 IN PLAIN SIGHT
Keep bananas and cherry tomatoes on the counter, cut-up carrots and peppers in clear containers in the fridge. Seeing them translates to eating them!



20 GET SUDSY
Washing hands is one of the best ways to avoid common germs. Scrub with warm water and soap for the time it takes to sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice (20 seconds).

21 BELT IT OUT
Singing lowers stress levels and increases happiness and relaxation. So crank up the tunes, and sing away. (Don't worry, quality doesn't count.)



22 SANITIZE HANDS IN A PINCH
Get an alcohol-based hand sanitizer for your purse, car or desk. The next time you can't run to the bathroom to wash up, squirt a dab in your palms and rub.

23 PUMP UP
Can't fit in an hour at the gym? Lift something heavy (a stack of books, a can of paint) above your head for five minutes at a time to boost metabolism and energy levels.



24 TAKE IT OUTSIDE
When making phone calls, step outside. Getting fresh air can improve alertness, increase energy and productivity, and make you happier.



25 HUG IT OUT



26 NO TRASH TALK
Decrease stress levels and gain better coping skills by changing your self-talk. A good rule of thumb: Don't say anything to yourself that you wouldn't say to a friend.

27 DOUBLE UP
While making dinner, make twice as much salad as you need. Put some (sans dressing) in a container for lunch the next day. You'll get more nutrients and save time to boot.



28 VEGGIE SWAP
For a sandwich wrap, use lettuce leaves instead of a tortilla. Swap out pasta with zucchini noodles or spaghetti squash.



29 TALK IN PERSON INSTEAD OF EMAILING
Who knows what unintended tone an email may suggest? Personal contact enhances communication and reduces misunderstandings.

30 INHALE, EXHALE
A few minutes each day, take a few deep, controlled breaths in a quiet place. Regularly practiced controlled breathing makes you more alert and less stressed.



31 SAVOR
Step away from the desk or TV and enjoy meals at a table, without technology. Consciously taste flavors; you'll feel more satisfied and aware.

