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The Benefits Of Chiropractic Care

Chiropractic care is a form of complementary medicine in which a licenced chiropractic doctor uses his or her hands as well as certain machinery to manipulate joints in the body.

Subluxation is a term used in chiropractic medicine that refers to the misalignment of vertebrae or joints. Subluxation can occur from injury, repetitive motion or certain medical issues, says Verywell Health. When joints do not work properly, range of motion can be compromised and chronic pain may present in the joint or elsewhere in the body.

Chiropractic care can be instrumental in helping a person feel better without having to take pain medications. Chiropractors can treat musculoskeletal pain anywhere in the body, according to the Cleveland Clinic. Adjustments can gently realign joints to decrease pain and increase range of motion. Soft-tissue therapy may be used to relax tight muscles and relieve spasms. A chiropractor also may be able to advise as to exercises and stretches that can maintain joint stability and mobility.

Chiropractic treatment also may decrease tension and boost blood circulation, which could help reduce stressful feelings in the body. Similarly, such treatment may alleviate tension headaches and migraines by realigning the joints in the neck and back that may be contributing to the headaches.

Healthline reports a possible reduction of osteoarthritis symptoms from chiropractic care as well. When joints are properly aligned, it will reduce how much bones rub together.

One of the more profound benefits of chiropractic adjustment is the potential to reduce reliance on opioid drugs prescribed to relieve pain. Because of the efficacy of opioids, people can easily find themselves addicted to them. When their prescriptions are up, they may turn to illegal opioids to chase the pain relief and high they have grown accustomed to. The National Institute on Drug Abuse says more than 106,000 drug overdoses deaths were reported in 2021, and synthetic opioid deaths (primarily fentanyl) continue to rise, advises the NIDA.

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How Exercise Builds A Stronger Heart

The benefits of physical activity are well-documented. Adults may be reminded of the short- and long-term benefits of exercise when visiting their physicians for annual well visits or to treat an illness. Though exercise is often viewed as a means to losing weight, it's equally important for people of all ages to recognize the many other ways physical activity benefits the body, including its role in heart health.

The World Health Organization reports that cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) are the leading causes of death across the globe. A host of variables can lead to a CVD diagnosis, and a sedentary lifestyle is among them. By including exercise in their daily routines, individuals can build a stronger heart that benefits their bodies in myriad ways.

Exercise, The Heart And Lung Function

The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute notes that regular moderate- and vigorous-intensity physical activity strengthens the heart muscle. A stronger heart is more capable of pumping blood to the lungs, which the NHLBI notes ensures a stronger blood flow to the muscles.

Exercise And Blood Oxygen Levels

Exercise helps to increase oxygen levels in the blood by improving the ability of the heart to pump blood not only to the lungs, but throughout the body. That's a notable benefit, as the Cleveland Clinic notes hypoxia, a condition marked by low blood oxygen levels, can lead to adverse health conditions, such as damage to individual organ systems, including the brain.

Exercise And Coronary Heart Disease

Coronary heart disease is a condition marked by the buildup of plaque in the coronary arteries, which the NHLBI notes supply the heart muscle with oxygen-rich blood. Moderate- and vigorous-intensity aerobic activity has been linked to a lower risk for coronary heart disease because it can help people lower their blood pressure; reduce a type of fat in the blood known as triglycerides; increase good cholesterol levels; help the body manage its blood sugar and insulin levels; and reduce levels of C-reactive protein (CRP), which is a sign of inflammation associated with a higher risk of heart disease.

These are just a handful of the ways that exercise can help individuals build a stronger heart. Individuals who have already been diagnosed with heart disease and have lived a largely sedentary lifestyle are urged to speak with their physicians about safe ways to incorporate exercise into their daily routines. Vigorous aerobic activity may not be safe for people who have heart disease, so anyone in that situation should not simply begin exercising on their own.

A healthy heart is a building block of a long life. More information about exercise and heart health can be found at nhlbi.nih.gov.



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Recreational Sports That Make For A Great Workout

Billions of people across the globe share a passion for sports. Whether it's youngsters playing on sandlots, adolescents competing in scholastic sports or even professional athletes locking horns at the highest level, there's no denying that sports appeals to people of all ages.

The thrill of competition undoubtedly compels many athletes to engage in sports, but playing a sport also makes for great exercise. That's even the case for various recreational sports, which many athletes look to after their more formal playing days have ended. In fact, the following recreational sports are not only fun, but also make for a great workout.

Pickleball

Perhaps no recreational sport has enjoyed a surge in popularity as significant as pickleball in recent years. The 2023 Topline Participation Report from the Sports & Fitness Industry Association indicates participation in pickleball grew by 159 percent between 2019 and 2022. Pickleball is something of a hybrid sport that combines elements of tennis and ping-pong to form a fun activity that's also great exercise. An ongoing examination of pickleball by Apple has found that participation in the sport helps players reach moderate to vigorous heart rate zones, which cardiologists note can improve cardiac fitness. In addition, a 2023 study published in the journal *Frontiers in Psychology* found that pickleball players enjoyed significant improvements in happiness, life satisfaction and personal well-being after taking up the sport.

Basketball

Basketball is among the more accessible recreational sports, as it's not uncommon for players to find a pickup game at their local park on a nice spring or summer afternoon or evening. Basketball combines various components of a great workout, including cardiovascular exercise, coordination and balance and weight-bearing activity. A 2018 study published in the *Journal of Sport and Health Science* found that both half-court and full-court basketball helped to increase lean body mass, bone mineral density and oxygen uptake, each of which helps to make recreational basketball a great way for players to improve their overall health.

Golf

The serene setting of a typical golf course can make it easy to see the sport as fun but not necessarily a great workout. But that's a misconception, as a round of 18 can make for great exercise. A 2016 study published in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine* noted that golf can be a useful ally in the prevention and treatment of chronic diseases such as heart attack, stroke, certain cancers, and diabetes, among other conditions. Walking the course, as opposed to renting a cart during a round, makes for excellent cardiovascular exercise as well.

Athletes may embrace recreational sports for fun, but these physical activities also can make for a great workout.

Volunteering Is Good For Your Health

Volunteering makes an immeasurable difference in the lives of volunteers and those they help. Many people may be surprised to learn how positive volunteering can be for volunteers. Indeed, studies show that volunteering leads to better physical and mental health, among other benefits.

According to an article published by the American Heart Association and Jeffrey Burr, a professor of gerontology at the University of Massachusetts Boston, Compared to non-volunteers, volunteers have less depression, less anxiety, higher self-esteem, greater happiness, and a greater sense of meaning in life. Burr and the AHA note the health benefits of volunteering occur among all ages, and a deep look at how volunteer efforts are good for personal health shows just how profound giving back can be.

- Reduces stress: The Mayo Clinic reports that volunteering reduces stress and increases positive, relaxed feelings by releasing dopamine. When volunteers spend time in service to others, they report feeling a sense of meaning and appreciation, both of which can have stress-reducing effects.
 - Lowers depression: Research has shown that volunteering leads to lower rates of depression and anxiety, particularly among people 65 and older.
 - Provides a sense of purpose: AmeriCorps reports volunteering can provide a sense of purpose in older adults, which can help replace feelings of inadequacy due to loss of major role identities, such as wage earner or parent. This sense of purpose can improve life satisfaction and happiness.
 - Reduces blood pressure: According to researchers at Carnegie Mellon University, older adults who volunteered for at least 200 hours annually decrease their risk of high blood pressure by 40 percent. This also may lower risk of heart disease and stroke.
 - Eliminates feelings of isolation: Volunteers working together link people to others and their communities. This can help people overcome feelings of isolation, which may come from being new to a community or being a senior and having a smaller social circle.
 - Increases happiness: Those who volunteer regularly tend to be happier and more empathetic towards others. Volunteering also instills a sense of pride that can make people happier.
 - Keeps the mind active: Individuals who volunteer can improve their cognitive health. That's because volunteering engages a person in new skills, requires them to solve problems and keeps them mentally stimulated through various activities.
 - Improves physical health: Some volunteer activities will involve physical tasks that can contribute to improved physical health because they constitute moderate exercise.
- Volunteering offers a number of benefits that can improve both physical and mental health for those donating their time to help others.



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Walk Your Way To Better Overall Health

People turn to many different exercises and pieces of fitness equipment to get in shape and lose weight. What they may not realize is that one of the most effective health strategies requires no additional gear except a quality pair of athletic shoes. Walking is one of the easiest and most accessible activities that can improve overall health. In fact, walking is now being touted as The closest thing we have to a wonder drug, according to Dr. Thomas Frieden, former director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Indeed, walking offers a host of benefits, including:

- Reduces the risk of developing breast cancer by as much as 14 percent, according to the American Cancer Society.
- Helps a person maintain a healthy weight and lose body fat.
- Improves cardiovascular fitness by strengthening the heart.
- Improves muscle endurance.
- Helps to prevent or manage conditions like stroke, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, and type 2 diabetes, according to the Mayo Clinic.
- Boosts immune function to make a person less susceptible to common viruses like the cold and flu.
- Eases joint pain associated with arthritis, and can even prevent osteoarthritis from developing in the first place, according to Harvard Health.

• Helps tame cravings for sweets and other fattening or sugary foods.

The faster and more frequently a person walks, the greater the benefits. One also can alternate periods of leisurely walking with brisk walking as a form of interval training to burn more calories and improve cardiovascular fitness.

How To Organize A Home's Interior

The dawn of a new year marks a convenient time to turn over a new leaf. Much attention is paid to individuals' intentions to eat healthier and exercise more at the start of a new year, but those goals are not the only ways to embrace positive change come January.

A quick look around a home's interior may lead some to conclude that their home environments could benefit from a little less clutter and some improved organization. A more organized home may be easier to navigate and can even have a positive impact on residents' mental health. In fact, a 2021 study published in the journal *Comprehensive Psychoneuroendocrinology* found that women who cared for infants in cluttered homes experienced higher levels of physical stress than those whose homes were more organized. That study suggests an organized home is a less stressful environment, which itself can pay numerous dividends, as the Mayo Clinic notes chronic stress increases a person's risk for various health problems, including anxiety, depression, digestive issues, heart disease, and weight gain, among others.

With so much to gain from an organized home, individuals can consider these strategies to make interior spaces around the house less cluttered.

- Avoid procrastinating. A weekly, if not daily, routine that involves cleaning up spaces like the kitchen and living room can ensure a home is not overtaken by clutter before residents even realize it. Each day, go through the mail and discard papers like grocery store circulars and junk mail so they don't pile up. Parents of school-aged children can organize papers kids return home with each day so all that homework and event announcements does not create clutter.

- Purchase an entryway shoe rack. It might seem simple, but an entryway shoe rack can set an organized tone in a home. Whether the primary entryway is through the front door or a side door, a shoe rack just inside the door can ensure shoes are not strewn about and reduces the chances that floors are muddied.

- Consider furniture that doubles as storage. Many people utilize storage furniture so common spaces like living rooms are not overwhelmed by clutter. For example, a storage ottoman can hold blankets, pillows and other creature comforts so these rooms project a clutter-free vibe when not in use. Similarly, storage benches at the end of beds in each bedroom can help to establish a serene, clutter-free vibe, which can promote a better night's sleep.

- Discard older items. Clutter can pile up when storage areas like closets, dressers, nightstands, and home offices fill up with items people tend to accumulate over the years. For example, a linen closet can be overrun by bath towels that are rarely used, while nightstands can become junk drawers over the years. Periodically go through these areas and discard older items that are no longer used. These tasks won't take long, but can free up ample space throughout the home.

These are just a handful of the many ways individuals can effectively organize their home interiors and reap all the rewards that such efforts produce.

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Exercise Can Be Good For The Brain

It is well documented that physical activity can be beneficial for the body, but what about the effects of exercise on the brain? Exercise enthusiasts will be glad to learn there are some notable ways that physical activity can benefit the brain.

A 2018 study published in *Frontiers in Psychology* indicated that much evidence shows that physical exercise is a strong gene modulator that causes structural and functional changes in the brain that can benefit cognitive functioning and well-being. Exercise also seems to be a protective factor against neurodegeneration.

Dr. Scott McGinnis, an instructor in neurology at Harvard Medical School, says there is a lot of science behind exercise boosting memory and thinking skills. Exercise can encourage production of growth factors, which are chemicals that affect the growth of new blood vessels in the brain and even the number of brain cells and their ability to thrive. Various studies point to exercise causing growth in the parts of the brain that control thinking and memory. The World Health Organization even notes that about two hours of moderate activity or 75 minutes of vigorous activity per week can help improve thinking and memory skills.

Another study, led by a team of sports scientists at the University of Geneva, grouped 350,000 people in the United Kingdom according to genetic variants associated with more or less physical activity. Those who had a genetic proclivity toward being active

tended to perform better on a set of cognitive tests. Additional studies have found that more physical activity correlated to better cognitive performance at age 69 among individuals who had been tracked for 30 years.

Although many health professionals agree that exercise is good for the brain, the amount of exercise and where it takes place also may play a role in cognitive health. A 2023 study published in *Scientific Reports* found that time spent in natural outdoor environments led to increases in cognition similar to those resulting from acute exercises. Researchers found that when exercise and nature are combined, the impact on cognition is magnified.

Researchers have not pinpointed whether one exercise is better than another for improving brain health. Walking is one way to start, as it is accessible for people of all ages and requires little to no equipment. Anyone beginning an exercise regimen should discuss plans with a doctor and speak about their exercise goals.



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Fill Up On Healthy Eating Pointers

Diet and exercise are the key components of maintaining a healthy weight and protecting yourself against chronic disease. According to the Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services, eating smart and being active have similar effects, including reducing risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, some cancers, and diabetes. In addition, these healthy living strategies can improve personal appearance and improve overall well-being while helping people live longer and maintain their independence.

People may wonder how to eat better when faced with many diets, each of which promises great results. It can be confusing when navigating all of the options, and there is no magic formula to eating better. Common sense can come into play when attempting to eat better, and individuals also can consider these strategies to make diet work for them as they seek to live healthier.

- Eat colorful, varied, nutritionally dense foods. Medical News Today says each meal should be 50 percent fruit and vegetables, 25 percent whole grains, and 25 percent protein. Select an array of colorful foods that will provide most of the nutrients needed.

- Choose fiber-rich foods. Fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, nuts, and legumes are good sources of fiber. Fiber helps people maintain digestive health and can help you to feel fuller longer, reducing the potential for overeating, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

- Note how you feel after eating. Create a food journal where you jot down notes about how you feel after eating certain foods. If you notice that certain foods or ingredients trigger adverse reactions, it may be worth avoiding that type of food or looking for an alternative. Stomach upset or bloating after eating dairy, for example, may indicate an intolerance for lactose.

- Explore the Mediterranean diet. While you should avoid fad diets that often produce short-term but unsustainable results, a Mediterranean diet has stood the test of time.

According to the authors of a new study published in JAMA Network Open in October 2023, middle-aged and older adults with overweight or obesity and metabolic syndrome lost visceral fat (belly fat) and showed a greater reduction in the percentage of total fat while adhering to a Mediterranean diet. They also had delayed loss of lean body mass, which often comes with aging. Mediterranean diets prioritize legumes, seafood, vegetables, and Good fats like olive oil.

- Control portion sizes. Sometimes it's not what you eat but how much you eat that affects health. Weighing and measuring food can help you control portions and understand how many calories you're consuming each day. The National Institutes of Health says eating plans that favor 1,200 to 1,500 calories per day for women and 1,500 to 1,800 for men are good targets to lose weight at a healthy pace when combined with moderate exercise.

Balanced eating is a major component of a healthy lifestyle. While there are many fad diets, eating plans with a proven track record that are supported by the medical community may be your best bet.



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Healthy Ways To Cope With Stress

Stressful experiences are a part of life, and the physiological responses that occur in response to these challenges are natural tools humans developed as survival mechanisms. People learn and grow as they deal with positive stressful occurrences, such as when speaking in public or taking a test. But when stressors cannot be avoided or prove chronic, the body's response to stress can take a toll on a person's mental and physical well-being.

The COVID-19 pandemic, inflation, an uptick in strong storms and subsequent weather-related disasters, and global conflicts have proven stressful for people around the world. According to a report from the American Psychological Association titled *Stress in America 2023: A Nation Recovering from Collective Trauma*, the long-term stress sustained since early 2020 has had a significant impact on well-being, as evidenced by an increase in chronic illnesses. The report found people between the ages of 35 and 44 have been particularly affected.

Long-term stress poses many health risks, including wear and tear on the immune system and an increase in worry, anxiety and irritability. Some people turn to drugs or alcohol to combat stress, but there are healthy options. The following are better ways to cope with stress.

- Reduce the number of stressors. It is not possible to remove all of the stress of life, but people can try to reduce some forms of stress. Think about sharing some responsibilities or asking for help. If a person is causing you stress, then distance yourself from this person as much as possible. Work is a major source of stress for many people. Finding a new job or cutting back on tasks could help.
- Get quality sleep. Prioritize sleeping better and longer. Fatigue can exacerbate the ability to deal with even minor stressors, leaving you more irritable and edgy. Most adults require between seven and nine hours of sleep per night, so adjust your schedule to achieve this.
- Plan for daily exercise. The APA says brisk movement improves sleep and can combat stress. In one study titled *Relationships between Leisure Time Physical Activity and Perceived Stress*, first published in 1996, researchers found that working adults who engaged in moderate physical activity had half the perceived stress when compared to working adults who did not participate. A 30-minute session each day can work wonders.
- Engage in pleasurable activities. It's easy to drop fun things from the schedule when stress is high. But the Cleveland Clinic advises making time for pleasurable things as a means to combatting stress. Laughter and humor can go a long way towards reducing stressful feelings, so a night out at a comedy show or watching a funny movie can help.



- Improve your diet. Well-nourished bodies can handle stressors, illnesses and life in general much easier. Aim for a well-balanced diet that is low in processed foods and sugar. Avoid alcohol, caffeine and nicotine, as each can worsen stress in the long run, according to Sutter Health.

Stress is a natural part of life. When stress becomes too much to take, individuals can cope in various healthy ways.

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Did You Know?

Encouraging children to be physically active can be an important step in helping them to be healthier later in life. The Physical Rehabilitation Network (PRN) says active kids are more likely to become healthy adults. Studies have shown that being physically active and making smart food choices while young can lead to a reduced risk of developing many serious health conditions later in life, which can include diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity, heart disease, and even certain cancers. What's more, Better Health Victoria in Australia says evidence suggests that physically active children also are more likely to mature into physically active adults. Developing fitness skills early in life is a wise choice. However, one in six kids between the ages of 2 and 19 in the United States are obese, and just one in three are physically active each day, reports the PRN. Families can work together to help kids get on paths to better health and to become more active. This may involve putting limits on screen time and encouraging outdoor play and group active activities like sports or dance.

3 Tips To Get A More Restful Night's Sleep

There is no magic formula to ensure long-term health. However, if there were such an equation, sleep would be a critical component. Though adults may be able to function with less sleep than doctors recommend, the National Institutes of Health note that consistent lack of sufficient sleep can interfere with work, social functioning and driving ability.

The National Institute on Aging notes that adults of all ages generally need the same amount of sleep, typically between seven and nine hours of rest per night. That's an important distinction, as busy adults in mid-life might feel as though they can operate on less sleep without adversely affecting their overall health. However, in addition to the problems noted by the NIH, the NIA reports that ongoing lack of sleep, or even consistently poor sleep quality, can increase risk for cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, depression, and obesity.

Adults who feel their sleep quality is poor or those who aspire to sleep more each night can consider these three strategies to ensure a more restful night's sleep.

1. Keep devices out of the bedroom.

Screens are everywhere in modern life, and that includes the bedroom. In fact, the National Sleep Foundation's 2022 Sleep in America™ Poll found that 58 percent of survey participants acknowledged looking at screens within an hour before bedtime. The NSF reports that device usage so close to bedtime can adversely affect sleep quality because the blue light emitted from screens has shorter wavelengths than other colors in the visible light spectrum, which results in more alertness than warmer tones. The blue light actually confuses the brain into thinking it's earlier in the day, thus making it harder to fall asleep.

2. Skip late afternoon naps.

Short naps can help people re-energize, but the timing of naps could adversely affect how well people sleep at night. The Mayo Clinic notes that napping after 3 p.m. can make it harder to sleep soundly at night. And while short naps can provide a necessary jolt, it's important that naps be no longer than 30 minutes. Naps that exceed a half hour can contribute to feelings of grogginess and even compromise your ability to get restful sleep overnight.

3. Avoid alcohol.

Some may consider alcohol a sleep aide, and there's good reason for that perception, even if it's misguided. Hackensack Meridian Health notes that alcohol acts as a depressant for the central nervous system that can cause brain activity to slow down. As a result, alcohol can increase feelings of relaxation and tiredness. However, that effect is not long-lasting, and as alcohol levels in the blood drop, individuals are likely to wake up and may even find it hard to fall back asleep. Waking up in the middle of the night cuts down on the time individuals spend in the most restorative stage of sleep, which is why individuals often feel as if they got little rest after a night of drinking.

Sleep is an important component of a healthy lifestyle. Some simple strategies may help adults get a more restful night's sleep.

Did You Know?

The American Heart Association reports that a resting heart rate between 60 and 100 beats per minute is normal for most adults. However, a physically active person or athlete may have a resting heart rate as low as 40 beats per minute. Individuals may recognize resting heart rate or know it from past wellness exams, but why is it important? According to the AHA, a person's resting heart rate can be an important clue into how healthy or unhealthy that person may be. The AHA notes that a lower resting heart rate indicates the heart muscle is in good condition and therefore does not have to work as hard to maintain a steady beat. Conversely, a higher resting heart rate has been linked to lower levels of physical fitness, higher blood pressure and elevated body weight.

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All You Need For A Memorable Night Out

A night out can be a welcome respite from the hustle and bustle of daily life. In fact, taking a break and heading out with friends can give people a sense of belonging and boost those feel-good neurotransmitters that keep us feeling happy.

According to a 2019 study found in PLOS One, an open access mega journal published by the Public Library of Science, social networks can influence health-related behaviors and have a positive impact on stress, attitude and self-assessed health perceptions. Human connection is at the core of what most people need to live healthy, satisfying lives. Therefore, regular nights out can provide a chance to laugh, let off steam and connect with others. Here are some ways to have memorable nights out with others.

Send invitations

It pays to give people ample notice of an upcoming evening out so they can plan their schedules accordingly. Waiting until the last minute to see if people want to hang can diminish turnout. Send a text around a week or two in advance to lock down the date and time. Better yet, make it a regular event, such as the last Thursday of each month.

Don't Hype Things Up

Labeling a night as the best night ever or a party to remember can quickly tamp down the fun in a flash. It's best to let the fun develop organically rather than putting a bunch of labels or expectations on the event.

Have An Activity In Mind

Certainly there are some friend groups that simply go on impromptu bar crawls and make magic along the way. But developing a general framework of what's to transpire can help. Identify an activity and go with it, such as a themed club night to dress up and listen to some different music. There are many options for theme nights, including 70s, 80s or 90s, as well as musical theater or movies, or specific genres of music.

Add A Touch Of Adventure

Experiences with perceived risk or adversity can elevate the sense of enjoyment and camaraderie. While no one is condoning doing something illegal or dangerous, incorporating a bit of adventure into the night can bring about growth and make the experience worth talking about in the future. This may be a reason why escape rooms have grown in popularity. One idea is to explore a new city or town and let other tourists suggest places to visit. Don't stay in one place too long so the adventure keeps evolving.



Leave The Driving To Someone Else

Adults may want to imbibe during a night out, and the safest way to avoid driving under the influence is to let a ride-share service or taxi transport participants where they need to go. Plus, cramming into a car together and heading to another destination can be part of the fun itself. According to Thought Catalog, a community storytelling outlet, driving can create stress and put a cap on the amount of fun you can have.

These are just a few components that can add up to a memorable night out with friends.

Did You Know?

Peaches are tasty and good for the body as well. Peaches are related to apricots, cherries, almonds, and plums. They're known as stone fruit because their flesh surrounds a shell with an edible seed. Peaches are packed with beneficial plant compounds, minerals and vitamins. Peaches contain about two grams of fiber in one medium-sized peach. Fiber helps to move food through the digestive system and reduce the likelihood of constipation, offers Healthline. Peaches also contain Vitamin A, an antioxidant that helps the immune system fight infection. They also have vitamin C, which the body needs to fight off infection. Peaches are good sources of potassium, which the body needs to regulate heart rate and blood pressure. Foods high in potassium also can help lower blood pressure, says WebMD. Vitamin K, which helps heal wounds, also is found in peaches. Research says that peaches may help to prevent cancer as well. One study indicated that consuming peach peels offers the highest level of anticancer phytochemicals, which assist in protecting cells from free radical damage that can lead to cancer.

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How Deep Breathing Exercises Can Help Alleviate Stress

Stress is a normal part of life that is not always as bad as it may seem. For example, a 2013 study from researchers at the University of California, Berkeley found that acute stress caused stems in the brains of rats to proliferate into new nerve cells that ultimately improved the animals mental performance. That led researchers to conclude that intermittent stressful events can improve alertness, which in turn can help individuals perform better.

When noting the potentially positive effects of stress, it's important to note that those rewards are only reaped when stress is acute. VeryWellMind notes acute stress is commonly experienced a few times each day in the face of an immediate threat. Prolonged stress, often referred to as chronic stress, is dangerous, as it can contribute to conditions like high blood pressure that increase individuals risk for cardiovascular disease and stroke. Combatting chronic stress may require lifestyle changes and the adoption of additional strategies, including breathing techniques.

Skeptics may question the efficacy of breathing as a means to combatting stress. However, the National Council for Mental Wellbeing notes that studies have determined breathing exercises can help to alleviate stress by tricking the brain into thinking a person is in a different emotional state than he or she is actually in. When a person is confronting a stressful situation, breathing speeds up and becomes irregular and shallow. Breathing exercises help people slow down their breathing, thus tricking the brain into thinking a person is in a calm state where no threat is perceived.

Deep breathing exercises can help people confront stressful situations, and WebMD offers a guideline people can look to as they seek to calm their nerves.

Deep breathing

WebMD notes that short, shallow breaths into the chest are common but can contribute to feelings of anxiety and fatigue. Deep breathing techniques are designed to teach people how to take bigger breaths. A deep breathing exercise can begin after a person finds a comfortable position and then breathes in through the nose and lets the belly fill with air. Then breathe out through the nose before placing one hand on the belly and the other on the chest. Feel the belly rise as you breathe in and then feel it lower as you breathe out. Take three additional full, deep breaths.

Focus can help make a deep breathing exercise more effective. WebMD recommends using a picture in your mind and a word or phrase to help relax you. Close the eyes before taking a handful of big, deep breaths. When breathing in, imagine the air is filled with a sense of peace and calm. When breathing out, imagine stress is leaving with that exhaled air. A word or phrase can be utilized when breathing in and out to reinforce these feelings. WebMD recommends continuing these exercises for 10 to 20 minutes.

Wellness involves various strategies designed to promote better overall health, and such approaches include ways to combat stress. Deep breathing exercises are a simple and accessible means to navigating stressful situations.



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