

# wellness<sup>SM</sup> me coaching

*Information, tools and resources for a healthier you*

Connect.  
Believe.  
Succeed.



Issue

3

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**Reduce stress**

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## THE MIGHTY PEN

# Journaling can help you take charge of stress

### THE SOURCE OF YOUR STRESS

might seem obvious. But, it isn't always so simple. For instance, you may be stressed about work deadlines. But, if you tend to procrastinate, it may be your habits — not your job — that are the problem.

A stress journal can help you find out where your stress comes from and what issues may be behind it. This kind of journal can also:

- Reveal the ways you cope
- Provide a record of how often you feel stressed
- Help you organize your thoughts

- Track your progress
- Help you release emotions and feel less overwhelmed

You can keep your journal wherever you like, whether it's a spiral-bound notebook or smart phone. Just make sure it's for your eyes only. To help you get started, ask yourself these questions:

- What caused your stress?
- How did it make you feel?
- How did you act when you were stressed?
- What did you do to make yourself feel better?

A journal entry might look like the example below.

As you journal, remember to:

- **Set aside time.** Try to not worry about your stress until you sit down to write.
- **Let it flow.** Don't pay attention to how your writing sounds.
- **Stick with it.** If you write daily, you'll begin to notice patterns.

Finally, feel free to write about the good times, too. Focusing on the positive and healthful ways you cope can make stress more manageable the next time it comes your way.

Date	Cause	Feeling	Result	Solution
Aug. 16	Mother moving in with us	Anxious (keeping things tidy, quiet enough for her), worried about not getting enough time to myself	Not sleeping well	Met with spouse, kids, talked about what to expect, how to delegate tasks

## Helpful, healthful online tools for your wellness journey

Below are some useful, informative online health resources to help you take charge of your health and stay focused on your goals.

### Stress management

- [www.helpguide.org/mental/stress\\_signs.htm](http://www.helpguide.org/mental/stress_signs.htm)

### Exercise

- [www.acefitness.org/getfit](http://www.acefitness.org/getfit)

### Weight management

- [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)
- [www.healtheducationanswers.com/Launch/Optumhcs](http://www.healtheducationanswers.com/Launch/Optumhcs)

### Español

- [www.choosemyplate.gov/sp-index.html](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/sp-index.html)

### Nutrition

- [www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov)

### Español

- [familydoctor.org/online/famdoces/home/healthy/food.html](http://familydoctor.org/online/famdoces/home/healthy/food.html)

### Tobacco cessation

- [www.smokefree.gov](http://www.smokefree.gov)
- [www.becomeanex.org](http://www.becomeanex.org)



# Take the worry out of using medicines safely

FOR MANY OF US, taking medicine is just another part of our daily routine. It can ease pain, treat health conditions and even help keep us well. But, in spite of all these benefits, there may be some risks. This is true for both prescription and over-the-counter medications. They may cause unexpected side effects or interact with other drugs. However, there are ways to help protect your health when you take medicine. These steps can help:

**Keep an up-to-date list of your medicines.** Share the list with your doctor at every appointment. Include all your prescriptions as well as over-the-counter drugs, vitamins, and herbal or dietary supplements. Doing so may help you avoid drug interactions that could make you ill.

**Store safely.** Don't keep medicines where it may get hot, cold or humid, such as your bathroom, kitchen or car. This can affect their strength. Also, be sure they're out of children's reach and that bottles have childproof caps.

## Asking the right questions can help you stay safe and ease your worries.

**Toss with care.** Dispose of medicine properly when it expires or you no longer need it. Your doctor or pharmacist can give you specific advice. Most drugs can be mixed with coffee grounds or cat box litter to make them unappealing to would-be abusers. Seal the mixture in a plastic bag or covered container to prevent leakage, and throw it in the garbage. Throwing it in the trash rather than flushing helps keep drugs out of the water supply.

To learn more about using and disposing of medicines safely, talk with your doctor or pharmacist.

## What to tell your doctor

When you get a prescription, tell your health care team if you are:

- Being treated for any other illness, including a behavioral health condition
- Pregnant or might become pregnant
- Breast-feeding
- Allergic to any medicines

Also, be sure to talk with your doctor and pharmacist about all the medicines and supplements you take. And, share the names of other doctors who have prescribed or suggested them.



CUT AND SAVE



## ? New prescription? Ask these questions

When you're prescribed a new drug, be sure to get the facts from your health care team. Write down the answers to questions, such as:

- What are the brand and generic names of this medicine?
- Why am I taking it, and how long will I need to take it?
- Are there special instructions for how I should use it? When and how should I take it — how many times a day, what time of day, at or between meals?
- How soon can I expect it to work? How will I know if it's working?
- What possible side effects should I watch for? What should I do about them?
- What should I do if I miss a dose?
- Where and how should I store it?
- Are there foods, drinks, medicines or activities I should avoid while taking this medicine?
- I'm already taking a prescribed medicine. Is there any chance that this new one will interact with what I already take? Does it replace anything I currently take?

Be sure to carefully read and follow the label and directions from your doctor or pharmacist. And, when you pick up your medicine, double-check that you have the right one.

# Habits by design

WE WANT TO LOSE WEIGHT. Or get more exercise or feel less stressed. So, we often vow that we'll adopt new habits.

But, as we all know: Change can be hard. And often, our resolve dissolves for one reason or another — and soon we're back to our old ways.

So, what's the secret to making lifestyle changes that last? Behavior experts will tell you it typically involves more than good intentions. It also takes some patience, commitment and hard work — three things that may feel more doable when you have the help of a solid plan.

So, if you're ready to change your habits for the better — and for good — devise a strategy for success. Put the following behavior-changing steps to work for you. You've probably heard some of these tips before. The key is to combine them in a plan that's

designed for *your* goals, *your* needs, *your* life.

**1 Think small — and specific.** Big, long-term goals can seem out of reach. And, when we see them that way, it becomes easier to give up. But, success breeds success. So, work toward smaller, more achievable goals — and soon you'll be closer to your ultimate one.

For example, if you'd like to lose 20 pounds, make it your goal to lose just 1 pound this week. Once you reach that milestone you're likely to realize, *Hey, I can do this!* Then, you can aim to lose another pound the next week.

This same strategy is important in terms of the number of goals you set. It's best to focus on one or two changes at a time rather than taking on several at once.

**2 Have your reasons.** Create a list of why you want to make a particular change. For example, maybe you want to quit smoking. Some of your reasons might be to:

- Feel healthier, have fresher breath and get whiter teeth
- Play with your kids without coughing or being winded
- Keep smoke away from your family
- Prevent future health problems — so you can be around to meet your grandkids
- Save money

Post your list where you can see it, or keep it handy. That way, you can refer to it anytime you need a little extra motivation.

**3 Don't go it alone.** Can you bring your spouse, a friend or a co-worker into your plan? Does your workplace have a group wellness



# 7 secrets to lasting lifestyle changes — for a strong body and peace of mind

program? Sharing a common goal can help keep you motivated — and accountable. For example, when you know a friend is waiting for you at aerobics class, it's tougher to skip out. And, just asking for support from those who care about you — even if they don't participate directly — may help.

**4 Track your progress.** Write down your plan and progress. Maybe, it's on a desk calendar, a spreadsheet on your laptop or your smart phone. The method doesn't matter. What does matter is that you can see how you're doing. And, this helps you stay interested — and on course.

**5 Outsmart your obstacles.** Think about what might get in the way of your goals — or what's been problematic in the past. Then, plan around those potential hurdles.

For example, maybe your family's schedule makes it difficult to fit in exercise after work. You might schedule walking or a quick workout during your lunch break instead. Or, perhaps you tend to munch while

you watch TV. Try distracting yourself with a hot cup of herbal tea instead. Or, floss and brush your teeth before you grab the remote.

**6 Don't sweat the setbacks.** You're bound to slip up from time to time. It's important to get past these snags in your plan. Think about why it happened. But, don't beat yourself up or dwell on it. It's best to regroup and move on.

**7 Celebrate success.** When you reach a milestone or goal, reward yourself with something positive. Maybe, it's a manicure, a round of golf or a movie. Or perhaps, some well-deserved me-time would suit you fine. The idea is to celebrate your hard work and commitment — in a way that doesn't compromise your goals.

## Expert guidance

Of course, if it involves your health, a doctor should be an important part of your plan. Discuss your goals — and ask for advice on how to reach them.

## Good riddance: Dump your cigarette habit for good

Breakups are never easy. But, sometimes, they're for the best.

That's certainly true if you have a relationship with cigarettes. You'll be better off once you put smoking behind you — and, you probably know that. Even so, quitting is tough. The important thing to remember is that while it isn't easy, it is possible. A lot of people have done it. And, you can be one of them.

So, what has worked for others? There are different ways to go about giving up cigarettes. Some people quit cold turkey. Many find success in stop-smoking programs that offer support and counseling. And, nicotine replacement therapy has helped a lot of people stop smoking, as well.

There is no one right way to quit. But, successful attempts generally include four key elements:

- A decision to quit
- A set plan and quit date
- Ways to cope with withdrawal
- Strategies for staying smoke-free over time

You might begin by talking with your doctor about your desire to quit. You can also learn more about your options at [www.cdc.gov/tobacco](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco).

One last point: Many people try to quit several times before they succeed. If you slip and light up, don't give up. It doesn't mean you won't get there. Try again — and again, if necessary.



Take the stress out of making changes. Plan it, plot it, make it happen: Designing a course of action that fits you — and your goals — can be key to success.



## Go fish! Baked salmon Dijon

You won't miss added salt in this flavorful salmon entrée. It makes for a quick, easy family meal — or a dish to impress guests. And, if you wish, substitute fresh varieties for the dill and garlic.

### Ingredients

- 1 cup fat-free sour cream
  - 2 teaspoons dried dill
  - 3 tablespoons scallions, finely chopped
  - 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
  - 2 tablespoons lemon juice
  - 1½ pounds salmon fillet with skin, cut in center
  - ½ teaspoon garlic powder
  - ½ teaspoon black pepper
- Fat-free cooking spray, as needed

### Directions

1. Whisk sour cream, dill, scallions, mustard and lemon juice in small bowl to blend.
2. Preheat oven to 400° F. Lightly oil baking sheet with cooking spray.
3. Place salmon, skin side down, on prepared sheet. Sprinkle with garlic powder and pepper. Then, spread with the sauce.
4. Bake salmon until just opaque in center, about 20 minutes.

Nutrition information: Makes 6 servings. Serving size: 1 piece (4 ounces). Amount per serving: 196 calories, 7g total fat, 2g saturated fat, 76mg cholesterol, 229mg sodium, less than 1g total fiber, 27g protein, 5g carbohydrates, 703mg potassium.

Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute



## Tasty tips to be salt-smart

### *Ideas to slash sodium — from store to stove*

DO YOU KNOW how much salt slips into your home and onto your plate?

There's good reason to pay attention to this commonplace — but potentially menacing — mineral. Too much salt, or sodium, can cause high blood pressure. In turn, that condition can raise your risk of heart disease, stroke, heart failure and kidney disease.

For better health, take on these two salt-smart roles.

### The savvy shopper

- **Look to the label.** The nutrition facts can help you spot low-sodium items. These foods have 5 percent or less of the Daily Value of sodium per serving. High-sodium foods have 20 percent or more.
- **Do a side-by-side check.** Sodium levels in similar foods — such as different brands of tomato sauce — can vary. So, compare labels, and choose versions with less sodium per serving.
- **Go natural.** Choose fewer processed products. Even foods that are only moderately high in sodium can add up — if you eat too many of them. Replace processed items with more whole foods, such as fruits, vegetables and whole grains.

### The creative chef

- **Be sly.** After eating less salt for a while, people usually don't miss it. Next time you cook, use less salt and see if you — or your family — notice.
- **Give new flavors a shake.** Add taste with herbs, spices, lemon or lime juice, vinegar and other salt-free seasonings.
- **Make it from scratch.** From rice mixes to salad dressings, many food products meant to be convenient are also high in sodium. Consider whipping up some items yourself — with less salt.



**Keep an eye on servings.** For example, a can of soup may be two servings. So, if you eat the full can, you'd get twice the amount of sodium listed on the label.

# Positive self-talk: Be kind to yourself

DO YOU TALK to yourself? We all do. But, what we say to ourselves can count for a lot.

It's one thing to be your own worst critic every now and then. But, when we think negative thoughts about ourselves over and over, we may begin to believe the messages. Before long, thinking the worst becomes a habit. Then, even minor setbacks may seem massive. And, all this can start to affect our well-being.

The good news: It's possible to replace negative thoughts with positive

ones. Positive thinking can help you feel better about yourself, manage stress and enjoy life more. Research even suggests that optimistic thinking may be good for overall physical health.

## Practice a positive approach

How can you uplift your outlook? Try to:

- **Write down negative thoughts as you notice them.** Some experts say this will help you become aware of when your internal critic typically takes the stage.

- **Consider the words you use.** Watch for statements that include *should*, *never*, *ought* or *must* — these tend to keep company with negative thinking.

- **Cut off critical talk.** When you realize you're tearing yourself down, stop yourself. Then, think of something uplifting to say instead. Easier said than done? Focus on a positive word first — such as *happy*, *peaceful*, *loving* or *warm*. This may help spark sunnier thoughts.

## Try this exercise in positive thinking

In the space below, take a look at the negative statements in the left column. You can add your own, too. Then, think of how you might make them more positive — and write your answers in the blanks.

Negative statement		Positive alternative
"I can never learn to do this."	BECOMES	_____
"No one likes me."	BECOMES	_____
"I'm not good at anything."	BECOMES	_____
"I'll just embarrass myself."	BECOMES	_____
"Things will never get better."	BECOMES	_____
_____	BECOMES	_____
_____	BECOMES	_____

Review the statements you came up with. Keep them handy for when you might need help countering negative thoughts. The more you practice positive thinking, the easier it will get. In fact, it can become a new — and healthful — habit. And, it's one that you won't want to break.

## Congratulations!



You've completed the Wellness Coaching program. We hope you found valuable tools to help you as you continue your journey.

Your certificate of completion will be coming soon.

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# Yoga for the beginner

YOGA CAN BE a great addition to your fitness routine. The practice has its origins in ancient Indian philosophy. But, it's now accepted by millions of Americans as a great way to get exercise and relax. However, it's a good idea to be in the know about yoga before you get started. For example:

**Talk with your doctor.** For safety's sake, get his or her OK before significantly increasing your physical activity. This is especially important if

you have a chronic health condition. Your doctor can let you know if yoga is safe for you or if there are certain positions you might need to avoid.

**Do some research.** There are many different types of yoga. Some are more strenuous. One type — Bikram — takes place in a hot room. Others focus on breathing exercises and gentle stretching. Know what you're getting into before you sign up for a class. For example, do you have a physical challenge, such as arthritis or

osteoporosis? You may want to look for a class designed for people with these conditions. And, ask if the program is appropriate for your age.

**Check credentials.** Once you decide on a class, ask about your instructor's education and experience. There's no official rule about licensing. But, many instructors are registered with organizations that require a certain level of training. A well-qualified teacher can help lower your risk of having an injury.

## Tips for yoga class

Yoga can be a challenging workout. So, take precautions:

- Before your first class, let the instructor know of any health conditions you may have, such as back or neck pain.
- Wear comfortable clothing that allows you to move easily.
- Warm up before each class, perhaps with a few minutes of walking and gentle stretches.
- Take a break if you experience pain or become exhausted.



**START SLOWLY, AND LEARN THE BASICS FIRST. Don't try positions beyond your comfort level.**