



May

# Member Newsletter



## Exercise for focus, moods and more: How to get moving (no matter what!)

Want something to counter negative moods, anxiety, and depression, while also helping you sleep better, improve social interactions, and boost your energy, memory, and attention span? Physical activity's effects on your brain offer the right prescription! If you're feeling drained, down and stuck, these tips can help you overcome those hurdles and make physical activity a lifelong habit.



### Lean into everyday household activities.

Gym workouts aren't the only way to start feeling more energized. Forgo the leaf blower and opt to rake the leaves or sweep the deck for a good half hour. Or try dancing while you're dusting.



### Focus on the feel-good boost you'll get!

The key is to start slow and easy. For example, if you're feeling too exhausted to leave the couch, just plan on a brief brisk walk for, say, 10 minutes, assuring yourself you can return to the couch afterwards. The energy and uplift you experience can spur you on to increase the length of your walks, helping you feel great about yourself, more energized and ready to keep moving!



### Don't let a tight schedule hold you back.

Make your goal to exercise regularly whenever you can. Maybe that means you'll take laps around the soccer field during your kid's practice every Saturday.



### Look for activities that help stimulate your senses.

This is especially important if you're stuck in a low mood. Aim for movement that engages your arms and legs as well as your sight. Hiking along a scenic trail, for instance, is a great way to break the cycle of negative thoughts that feed depression. You'll feel invigorated in body, mind and soul!



**Buddy up.** Pairing up with someone to regularly stroll through the neighborhood, visit an indoor skating rink, or chase Frisbees, for instance, is one of the best ways to stay motivated to move!

**If your anxiety, depression or other mental health issue persists, don't wait to talk to your practitioner or a qualified counselor.** These issues can be addressed through counseling, medication and lifestyle changes.



# Energy Boosters versus Energy Drainers

Managing your energy can help you lead a more satisfying life. The goal of energy management is to focus on energy-boosting activities that help you feel good, motivated and ready to go, while avoiding energy drainers that make you feel tired and unmotivated. **Try these tips!**



### Energy booster: Healthy eating

Eating small, frequent meals throughout the day can help keep your metabolism stoked and energy levels up. Snacking on healthy items between meals can also help improve energy levels.

### Energy drainer: Choosing unhealthy foods

Food and beverages that provide few nutrients can result in sluggishness, as they don't provide the body what it needs to function efficiently. Too much caffeine and sugar can also cause a slump.



### Energy booster: Physical activity

The more you move, the better you'll feel. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate activity each week.

### Energy drainer: Sedentary behavior

When you sit, your entire body slows down, resulting in few calories burned and decreased circulation.



### Energy booster: Balancing work and life

Leave work at work and home at home for a more satisfying day.

### Energy drainer: Blending work and home life

Allowing your work and home lives to blend can often result in burnout in both aspects of life.



### Energy booster: Doing things you enjoy

Focus on hobbies or activities that leave you feeling recharged and refreshed. Spending time with family, friends, coworkers and pets can improve your mood and boost your energy.

### Energy drainer: Forgetting to take time for yourself

Consistently forgetting to put your own needs first can leave you feeling drained.



**Don't forget the most obvious energy booster: Sleep!** Aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep each night.

When you lack sleep, you lack the energy needed to help you take on each day.

## How to truly help someone

Life's challenges—whether the loss of a loved one or income, a health issue, relocation, birth of a baby, or some other change can make it hard for someone to handle even the minor details of their daily routine. You may want to offer to make their life easier.

**Here's how to make sure your offer is the most meaningful.**

### **Stand in their shoes and make a specific offer.**

Avoid a vague offer like “Let me know if I can help.” And don't assume you know what would be most helpful for someone. Instead, pay attention to their routines to target the right kind of help. Say something like, “I'd like to get your groceries or take-out if you can text me a list.” Or offer to drive them to appointments, pick the kids up from school, mow the lawn, etc.

**Talk with their close family and friends.** You may find out what help would work best as well as how to lighten the load for the other helpmates. They may be plugged into a website like [Lotsa Helping Hands](#) and [Meal Train](#) that helps organize volunteers for meal prep, delivery and more.

**Follow up!** Try suggesting something like, “How about if I check in quickly with you on Sunday at 7 or a time that works best?” Offer simple, concrete options to avoid overwhelming them with decisions.

### **Understand that everyone processes life challenges**

**differently.** Some people need constant company and a listening ear, while others need more time alone.

**Be ready to pivot to changing needs.** With time, your friend or family member may need less, more or entirely different help. Stay flexible.

### **Finally, respect boundaries and try not to overcommit.**

Be clear about the time and effort you can reasonably offer so you don't become drained and possibly resentful. Practice self-care—take breaks, call on others to share the help, and look into resources such as [caregiver.com](#) as well as online caregiver support groups.



**For more help,** talk to Health Advocate, your health practitioner or a licensed counselor.

## May is Mental Health Awareness Month

The disruptions of the pandemic have left many people suffering in silence, feeling anxious, depressed, hopeless and stuck, unable to function fully or move forward. Right now is the time to tell others about your feelings and to reach out for the help you need to restore your emotional well-being, connections and energy to go ahead with your life. You are not alone!

**[Click here to take a quiz on depression.](#)**

