

SEPTEMBER
2025

Pantry power-up

A well-stocked pantry is your secret weapon! Before you shop, take a peek inside your cupboards and make a list of what you already have and what you need. Think about the meals you enjoy and the ingredients they require. Next, head to the store with your list in hand.

HEALTHY STAPLES

- **Whole grains:** Think brown rice, quinoa, whole-wheat pasta, and oats. These provide lasting energy and fiber.
- **Canned goods:** Choose low-sodium beans, lentils, and diced tomatoes. They are budget-friendly and versatile.
- **Dried fruits and nuts:** Opt for unsweetened dried cranberries, almonds, and walnuts for healthy snacks and recipe additions.
- **Healthy fats:** Keep olive oil and avocados on hand for cooking and adding creamy textures.
- **Flavor boosters:** Stock up on herbs, spices, garlic, and onions to add deliciousness without extra salt or unhealthy fats.
- **Baking essentials:** Whole-wheat flour, baking soda, and baking powder are great for homemade treats in moderation.

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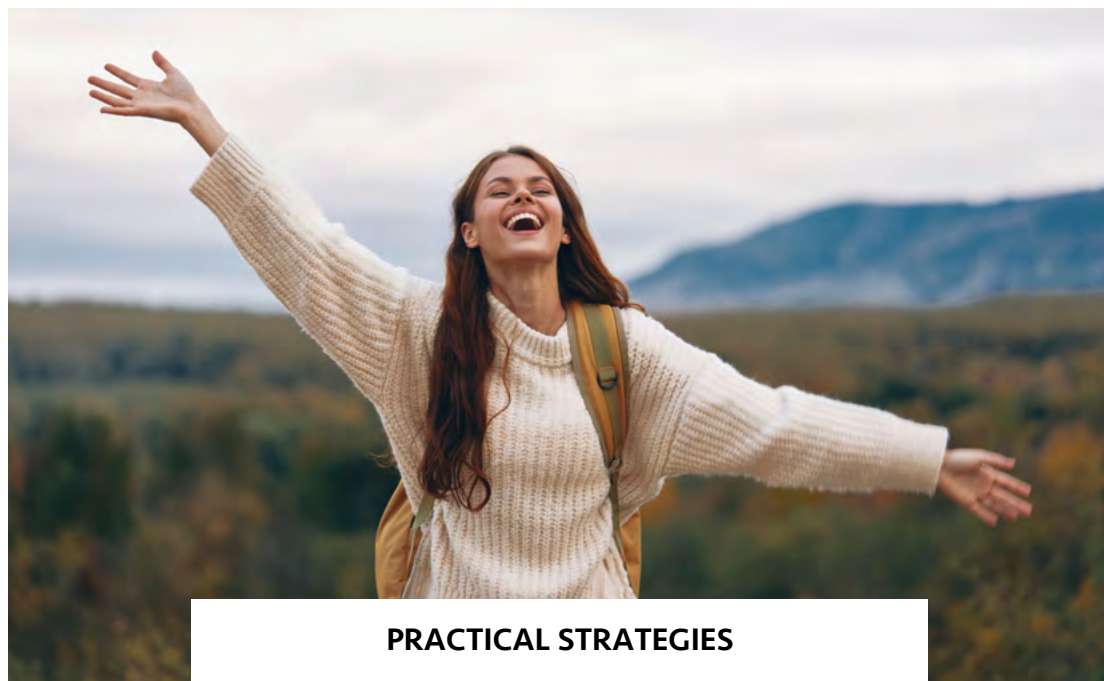
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Unplug & thrive

Achieving digital well-being isn't about abandoning technology altogether. It's about being mindful and intentional in our usage. It involves setting boundaries and creating habits that support our overall health.



PRACTICAL STRATEGIES

- **Establish tech-free zones.** Designate certain areas in your home, like the bedroom or dining table, as no-phone zones. This helps create spaces for relaxation and focused connections with others.
- **Set time limits.** Use built-in features on your devices or third-party apps to set daily time limits for specific apps or overall screen time. Gentle reminders can help you stay conscious of your usage.
- **Schedule digital downtime.** Just like you schedule other important activities, block out specific times each day for a “digital detox.” This could be an hour before bed or during your lunch break.
- **Turn off non-essential notifications.** Constant pings and buzzes can disrupt your focus and increase anxiety. Customize your notification settings to only receive alerts from truly important apps and contacts.
- **De-clutter devices.** Unsubscribe from unnecessary apps and emails to help clear your digital landscape.
- **Practice mindful usage.** Before instinctively reaching for your phone, pause and ask yourself why. Are you truly seeking information or connection, or are you just filling a void? Be present with what you are doing online.
- **Engage in offline activities.** Make a conscious effort to engage in hobbies and activities that don't involve screens. Read a book, go for a walk, spend time in nature, or connect with loved ones face-to-face.
- **Prioritize sleep.** The blue light emitted from screens can interfere with your sleep cycle. Avoid using electronic devices for at least an hour before bedtime to promote restful sleep.
- **Regularly evaluate your digital habits.** Periodically reflect on how your technology use makes you feel. Are you feeling more connected or more isolated? Adjust your habits as needed to support your well-being.



Yellow eyelid bumps

Those yellowish bumps that sometimes appear on or around the eyelids might seem like a minor cosmetic issue, but they can actually be a sign of something more. These bumps are called xanthelasmata (zan-thel-az-MAH-tuh), which are cholesterol-rich deposits under the skin.



- Xanthelasmata are benign skin lesions composed of fatty materials, primarily cholesterol. They typically appear as soft, yellowish plaques on the upper and lower eyelids, often near the inner corners of the eyes. While they are not usually painful or itchy, their appearance can be bothersome for some people.
- Most xanthelasmata bumps are not harmful, but they can sometimes be a visual marker for elevated levels of lipids (fats) in the blood, particularly cholesterol. This condition, known as hyperlipidemia, can increase the risk of developing cardiovascular diseases.
- It's crucial to note that not everyone with xanthelasmata has high cholesterol. Some individuals with normal lipid levels can still develop these deposits. However, the presence of xanthelasmata warrants a blood test to check cholesterol levels, especially in younger individuals.
- If you notice these yellowish bumps around your eyes, it's advisable to consult your primary care physician or dermatologist. They can properly diagnose the condition and recommend blood tests to evaluate your cholesterol levels and assess your overall cardiovascular risk.



- Xanthelasmata themselves do not require medical treatment. However, if their appearance bothers you, several cosmetic procedures can remove them. These include surgical excision, laser therapy, cryotherapy (freezing), and chemical peels. It's important to discuss the risks and benefits of each option with your doctor.
- Even if you choose to have xanthelasmata removed, addressing underlying high cholesterol through lifestyle changes is crucial for long-term health. This includes adopting a heart-healthy diet, engaging in regular physical activity, maintaining a healthy weight, managing stress, getting adequate sleep, and avoiding smoking.
- Think of xanthelasmata as a potential early warning sign. While they might seem like a superficial issue, they can sometimes provide valuable clues about your internal health, particularly your cardiovascular well-being. Paying attention to them and seeking medical advice can be a proactive step towards a healthier future.



Lunchbox superpowers

Packing lunchboxes can feel like another chore, but it's a fantastic opportunity to nourish your family and instill healthy eating habits. Forget pre-packaged, often processed options, and let's unlock the superpowers of whole foods and smart planning!



SIMPLE STRATEGIES

- Offer a variety of bite-sized, whole food components. Cubes of cheese, cherry tomatoes, whole-wheat crackers, hummus for dipping, hard-boiled eggs, and sliced bell peppers create a fun and customizable meal. This encourages variety and can reduce food waste, as you can use small amounts of various ingredients.
- Dinner can easily become tomorrow's lunch hero! Portion out leftover chicken stir-fry, lentil soup, or quinoa salad into lunch containers. This saves time and ensures a nutritious, home-cooked meal.
- Include sources of lean protein like grilled chicken or turkey slices, beans, lentils, hard-boiled eggs, or Greek yogurt.
- Opt for whole-wheat bread, pita pockets, or tortillas instead of refined grains. Whole grains provide more fiber, which aids digestion and helps keep everyone feeling full and energized throughout the day.
- Aim for a variety of colors to ensure a broad spectrum of vitamins and minerals. Include sliced apples, berries, grapes, carrot sticks, cucumber slices, or edamame pods. Make it appealing by cutting them into fun shapes or pairing them with a healthy dip.
- Let your children participate in choosing and packing their lunches. This fosters a sense of ownership and makes them more likely to eat what they've packed.

Recipe: Rainbow veggie & hummus pinwheels



INGREDIENTS

- 4 large whole-wheat tortillas
- 1 cup hummus (any flavor)
- 1 cup shredded carrots
- 1 cup baby spinach leaves
- 1 cup thinly sliced bell peppers
- 1/2 cup cucumber, cut in sticks lengthwise

DIRECTIONS

1. Lay each tortilla flat on a clean surface.
2. Spread an even layer of hummus over each tortilla, leaving a small border around the edges.
3. Arrange shredded carrots, spinach leaves, bell peppers, and cucumber evenly over the hummus on each tortilla.
4. Tightly roll up each tortilla.
5. Slice each rolled-up tortilla into 3-4 pinwheels.

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION:

Serves 4: Per serving: 350 calories, 9 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 58 g carbohydrates, 0 g added sugar, 11 g fiber, 15 g protein, and 488 mg sodium



Therapeutic power of tears

Think about the last time you had a really good cry. Afterward, did you feel a sense of release, even a little lighter? Understanding why this happens and the potential consequences of suppressing this natural reaction can offer valuable insights into our emotional well-being.



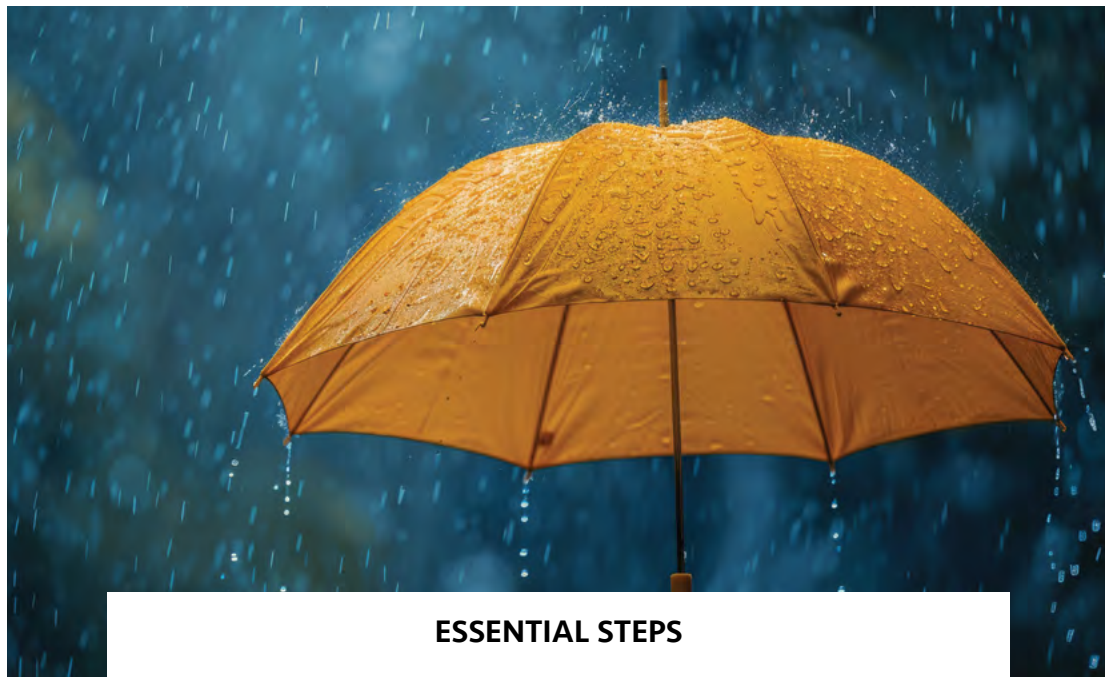
BENEFITS

- Crying serves as a natural mechanism for releasing pent-up emotions. When we experience intense feelings, whether joy, sorrow, frustration, or stress, crying can help us process and alleviate some of that emotional burden. Think of it as a pressure release valve for your feelings.
- Emotional tears contain stress hormones and other biochemicals. By crying, we may be physically removing these substances from our bodies, potentially contributing to a feeling of relief and reduced stress levels.
- Crying can actually activate the parasympathetic nervous system, which is responsible for the body's "rest and digest" response. This can help slow down your heart rate and promote a sense of calm after an emotional outburst. It's your body's way of trying to restore balance.
- Constantly suppressing tears can have negative consequences for our emotional and even physical well-being. Holding back emotions can lead to increased feelings of stress, anxiety, and frustration.
- While we often associate crying with sadness, it's a natural response to a wide range of emotions, including joy, anger, and even physical pain. Allowing ourselves to cry in these situations can still provide a sense of release and help us process the intensity of the feeling.
- Although crying is a healthy response, it's also important to develop other coping mechanisms for managing difficult emotions. Talking to a trusted friend or therapist, engaging in relaxation techniques, and practicing self-care can all complement the natural release that crying provides.



Get prepared

Mother Nature can be unpredictable, and emergencies, whether weather-related or other natural disasters, can strike when we least expect them. Being prepared isn't about fear. It's about empowerment and ensuring the safety and well-being of yourself, your loved ones, and your community.



ESSENTIAL STEPS

- Build your home emergency kit. Include enough non-perishable food and water (one gallon per person per day for at least three days), a battery-powered or hand-crank radio, a flashlight, extra batteries, a first-aid kit, medications, a whistle to signal for help, a dust mask, plastic sheeting and duct tape for sheltering-in-place, moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation, a wrench or pliers to turn off utilities, a manual can opener, local maps, and cellphone with chargers and a backup battery.
- Use a phone app that can provide alerts of imminent severe weather events or obtain a weather alert radio.
- Discuss potential emergencies and how your family will respond. Identify meeting places both near your home and outside your neighborhood. Establish an out-of-state contact person who family members can check in with if local communication is disrupted. Practice your plan regularly so everyone knows what to do.
- Once you're prepared, offer to help neighbors who might need assistance gathering supplies or understanding emergency plans. This could involve helping them carry heavy items, sharing information about local resources, or simply offering encouragement.
- Following a disaster (or during, if possible), reach out to your neighbors to check on their safety and well-being. Offer practical help such as sharing resources, assisting with cleanup, or providing emotional support. Even a simple "Are you okay?" can make a big difference.
- Connect with local community organizations or emergency response teams. Volunteering your time and skills can significantly strengthen your community's overall preparedness and response capabilities.

Master your moves

OUR BODIES ARE DESIGNED
FOR MOVEMENT.
UNDERSTANDING
FUNDAMENTAL
MOVEMENT PATTERNS
IS KEY TO STAYING
STRONG, HEALTHY,
AND INJURY-FREE IN
EVERYDAY LIFE.



FOUR PATTERNS

- **Hinge:** Think bending at your hips while keeping your back straight, like when you pick up a box. This protects your lower back and strengthens your glutes and hamstrings – crucial for lifting and preventing injury.
- **Squat:** This involves bending your knees and hips as if sitting down. It builds powerful leg muscles, improves balance, and makes everyday activities like getting in and out of chairs easier.
- **Push:** Any action where you move something away from your body, like pushing open a door or doing a push-up. This strengthens your chest, shoulders, and triceps, essential for upper body strength.
- **Pull:** The opposite of a push, this involves bringing something towards your body, like pulling open a drawer. It works your back, biceps, and grip strength, vital for posture and lifting.

Bathe in sound

This therapeutic experience utilizes the power of sound frequencies and vibrations to promote a state of deep relaxation.



- A sound bath is a meditative experience where you “bathe” in sound waves produced by instruments like singing bowls, gongs, and tuning forks. These sounds create vibrations that can induce a deeply relaxed state, similar to meditation.
- Benefits include reduced stress and anxiety, improved sleep, enhanced focus, and a greater sense of peace after a sound bath. The gentle vibrations can also ease muscle tension and promote emotional release.
- For at-home relaxation, numerous apps offer guided sound baths and soundscapes. These often feature various instruments and durations, allowing you to tailor the experience to your needs.