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Neighbors to the rescue

When disaster strikes, your local community is your first line of defense. By teaming up early, you ensure everyone stays safe, healthy, and resilient.

SAFE STREETS GUIDE

- Identify neighbors who live alone or have limited mobility to ensure they have a specific person checking on them.
- Collect phone numbers and emergency contacts for everyone on your block to share real-time updates when power lines go down.
- Note who has medical training, owns a chainsaw for fallen trees, or has a generator to keep medications like insulin cold.
- Encourage everyone to maintain “go-bags” and consider a communal stash of extra water, batteries, and first-aid supplies for the group.
- Natural disasters are stressful. Offer emotional support and a listening ear to neighbors to help reduce long-term trauma and anxiety.
- Discuss several ways to exit the neighborhood and establish a common meeting point if your street becomes inaccessible or unsafe.

Shields up
against RSV
PAGE 2

Vision under
the sun
PAGE 3

A commuter's
kitchen
PAGE 4

Mind your
mindset
PAGE 5

Move to the
groove
PAGE 6

Tune into
you
PAGE 7

The family
builder
PAGE 8

Shields up against RSV

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) might sound like a mouthful, but it is a common seasonal virus that affects the lungs and breathing passages. While often mild, it can be serious for infants, older adults, and other higher-risk groups, making prevention and early treatment key to staying healthy.



DEFENSE STRATEGY

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. These are the primary entry points for the virus to enter the body and begin replicating in your respiratory system's delicate lining.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces like doorknobs, light switches, and mobile devices regularly. This is especially important if someone in your household is feeling under the weather or if you had guests over during the peak winter season.
- Avoid close contact, such as kissing, shaking hands, or sharing cups and eating utensils, with people who have cold-like symptoms or a persistent cough.
- Ask your doctor if an RSV vaccine is recommended for you. Older adults have weaker immune systems, especially those with heart or lung disease, putting them at increased risk for severe RSV illness. Immunization is also recommended to protect infants.
- If you feel sick, stay away from work, school, and public areas to protect vulnerable populations.
- Early RSV symptoms include runny nose, congestion, coughing, sneezing, and fever.
- Signs of severe RSV infection include wheezing, rapid breathing, or a "caving in" of the chest, which require immediate medical attention.
- Use over-the-counter fever reducers and pain relievers to improve comfort. Also, drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration and use a nasal rinse to help relieve nasal congestion.



Vision under the sun

Photokeratitis is essentially a sunburn on the clear front surface of your eye, often caused by ultraviolet (UV) rays reflecting off snow, water, or sand. While the pain is temporary, understanding how to protect your vision is vital for long-term health and ocular comfort.

SYMPTOMS

- Pain
- Redness
- Blurred vision
- A gritty sensation like sand in your eyes
- Extreme sensitivity to light, which typically appears several hours after the initial UV exposure occurred

CAUSES

This condition is caused by overexposure to UV radiation from natural sunlight or artificial sources like tanning beds and welding torches. Reflection off highly reflective surfaces like snow can double your exposure risk.

PREVENTION

- Wear sunglasses that block 99% to 100% of both UVA and UVB radiation. Doctors recommend wrap-around styles to prevent rays from entering through the sides and damaging the cornea.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat or cap, which can block up to half of the UV radiation from reaching your eyes. This also protects the delicate skin of your eyelids from burning.
- Limit your time in direct sunlight during peak hours, usually between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., when the sun's rays are most intense.



SELF-CARE

- For immediate pain relief, place a cold, damp washcloth over your closed eyes to reduce inflammation and soothe the burning sensation.
- Use preservative-free artificial tears or lubricating eye drops to keep the surface of the eye moist. This helps alleviate the “gritty” feeling and supports the regeneration of the damaged corneal epithelium.
- Remove contact lenses immediately if you suspect photokeratitis. Wearing them can increase irritation and the risk of infection while your eyes are in a compromised, healing state.
- Retreat to a darkened room to rest your eyes. Avoiding further light exposure, including blue light from digital screens, allows the sensitive tissues to recover without additional strain or discomfort.
- If your symptoms persist for more than 48 hours or if you experience significant vision loss, see an eye doctor immediately to rule out more severe solar retinopathy or secondary bacterial infections.



Recipe: Travel power wrap



INGREDIENTS

- 1 whole-wheat tortilla (8-inch)
- 2 Tbsp. unsalted almond butter or hummus
- 1/2 cup thinly sliced bell peppers and cucumbers
- 1 Tbsp. hemp seeds or chia seeds
- Optional: 2 oz. grilled chicken breast or chickpeas

DIRECTIONS

1. Lay the tortilla flat and spread your choice of almond butter or hummus evenly, leaving a 1-inch border.
2. Layer the sliced vegetables and protein in the center.
3. Sprinkle with seeds for extra fiber and healthy omega-3 fats.
4. Fold in the sides and roll tightly. Wrap in parchment paper or reusable beeswax wrap to keep it secure in your carry-on.

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION:

Per serving 1 wrap: 340 calories, 16g total fat, 2g saturated fat, 32g carbohydrates, 0g added sugar, 8g fiber, 14g protein, 290mg sodium

A commuter's kitchen



Staying healthy on the move is easy with the right fuel. Pack these nutrient-dense essentials to maintain your energy and feel great during your journey.



NUTRITION ROADMAP

- **Focus on whole grains.** Opt for whole-wheat tortillas or brown rice crackers to gain lasting energy and essential B vitamins for stress management.
- **Select heart-healthy fats.** Pack walnuts or almond butter to support brain function and keep your heart healthy while sitting for long periods.
- **Hydrate regularly.** Drink plenty of water to combat the dry air of cars, buses, and planes, which helps prevent fatigue and aids in digestion.
- **Choose lean proteins.** Bring hard-boiled eggs, grilled chicken, or lean meats to help repair tissues and keep your appetite satisfied between distant travel stops.
- **Incorporate colorful produce.** Sliced carrots and bell peppers provide antioxidants and vitamin C, boosting your immune system against common travel germs and viruses.
- **Monitor sodium intake.** Avoid pre-packaged snacks that are high in salt to prevent uncomfortable bloating and maintain healthy blood pressure levels.
- **Limit added sugars.** Reach for fresh berries instead of candy to avoid energy spikes and crashes that can make jet lag feel worse.
- **Prioritize food safety:** Keep perishable items in insulated bags with ice packs to ensure your “on-the-go” foods stay safe and bacteria-free.

Mind your mindset

Your brain acts like a powerful lens. Whatever you choose to focus on becomes your emotional reality. By dwelling on stressors or perceived failures, you amplify negative feelings. Conversely, shifting attention toward solutions and gratitude can fundamentally transform your mental well-being and physical health.



CATASTROPHIZING THE FUTURE

This involves assuming the worst possible outcome in every situation, which spikes cortisol levels and creates unnecessary chronic anxiety that impacts long-term cardiovascular health.

ALL-OR-NOTHING THINKING

Viewing life in black-and-white terms—where you are either a “success” or a “failure” leaves no room for the healthy middle ground of progress and human imperfection.

FILTERING OUT THE POSITIVE

This “mental binocular” trap involves zooming in on a single negative detail while completely ignoring dozens of positive experiences, leading to a skewed and darkened perspective.

PERSONALIZATION & BLAME

Taking responsibility for external events outside your control creates a heavy burden of guilt, which can contribute to depressive symptoms and lowered immune function.

MIND READING

Assuming you know exactly what others are thinking, usually something negative about you, leads to social withdrawal and prevents the authentic connection necessary for emotional resilience.

EMOTIONAL REASONING

This trap occurs when you believe your feelings are fact. For example, feeling “stupid” doesn’t mean you lack intelligence, yet your brain treats the feeling as an absolute truth.



“SHOULD” STATEMENTS

Holding yourself and others to rigid, unrealistic rules creates a constant state of frustration and resentment, which significantly increases physiological stress on the body.



LABELING & MISLABELING

Instead of describing an error you made, you attach a negative label to your global identity, such as calling yourself a “loser” rather than acknowledging a mistake.



THE POWER OF REFRAMING

Consciously choosing to view a “problem” as a “challenge” shifts the brain from a defensive, stressed state into an active, problem-solving mode that fosters resilience.

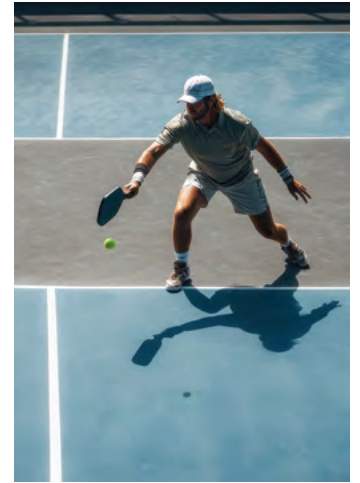
Move to the groove

Exercise shouldn't feel like a chore. Try to think of it as an opportunity to celebrate what your body can do. By infusing joy into your movement, you lower stress and improve consistency. Shifting your focus from "work" to "play" transforms physical activity into a highlight of your day rather than a burden.



BOOSTING YOUR BLISS

- Combat boredom by rotating activities, such as swimming, pickle ball, or yoga. Novelty stimulates the brain and prevents the "fitness plateau" while keeping your enthusiasm high and your muscles challenged.
- Practices like Tai Chi or gentle stretching allows you to connect with your breath, turning a standard workout into a moving meditation that calms the nervous system and improves flexibility.
- Instead of worrying about calories, pay attention to how much more energy you have after a walk. Noticing this immediate psychological benefit helps make exercise feel like a gift to yourself.
- Moving your workout to a park or trail—often called "green exercise"—has been shown to lower blood pressure and significantly reduce levels of cortisol, the body's primary stress hormone.
- You don't need a gym to be active. Dancing in your living room or playing tag with your kids counts as vigorous physical activity that supports heart health and weight management.
- Using fitness apps that offer virtual rewards or friendly competitions can spark a sense of achievement and fun, making the physiological effort feel like a rewarding game rather than a repetitive task.



ELEVATING THE MIND

- Engaging in activities you truly enjoy increases the release of endorphins and dopamine, which naturalizes pain relief and creates a "runner's high" that improves overall mood and mental outlook.
- Exercising with friends or joining a local sports league provides social support. This helps reduce feelings of isolation and increases the likelihood that you will stick with your fitness routine long-term.
- Creating an upbeat playlist can lower your perception of effort. This allows you to work out longer while feeling more energized and less fatigued, thanks to the rhythmic stimulation of the brain.



Tune into you

**SELF-AWARENESS IS YOUR
INTERNAL GPS. BY LEARNING
TO DECODE PHYSICAL AND
EMOTIONAL SIGNALS, YOU
CAN MANAGE STRESS
AND IMPROVE YOUR
OVERALL HEALTH
BEFORE BURNOUT
STRIKES.**



- Slowly mental-check your body from toes to head to identify hidden tension, such as a clenched jaw or tight shoulders, linked to stress.
- Practice naming your specific feeling like “restless” rather than just “bad” to reduce the intensity of the emotional response in your brain.
- Use deep belly breaths to signal your nervous system to relax, helping you distinguish between true hunger and emotional stress eating.
- Tracking daily moods and physical symptoms can reveal how sleep, diet, and social interactions directly impact your mental clarity and energy levels.
- Notice physical cues like a racing heart or “butterflies” as early warning signs of anxiety, allowing you to intervene with calming techniques.
- Check in before meals to see if you are physically hungry or simply bored, which helps build a healthier relationship with food.



The family builder

Healthy talk builds happy homes. Mastering simple communication tools reduces family friction, lowers stress, and strengthens the emotional bonds that support your long-term mental well-being.



TALK TOOLKIT

- Focus entirely on the speaker without interrupting. This shows respect and ensures you truly understand their perspective before formulating a response.
- Acknowledge a family member's feelings by saying, "I can see why that made you upset," even if you don't necessarily agree with their logic.
- Non-verbal cues are vital. Staying engaged through posture and eye contact signals that the other person's message is important to you.
- Frame concerns by saying "I feel..." rather than "You always..." to prevent defensiveness.
- Focus on how to fix the issue together. Ask, "what can we do to make this better next time?"
- Dedicate time for open family dialogue when stress is low, ensuring everyone feels heard and valued before small issues become major grievances.