

JANUARY  
2025

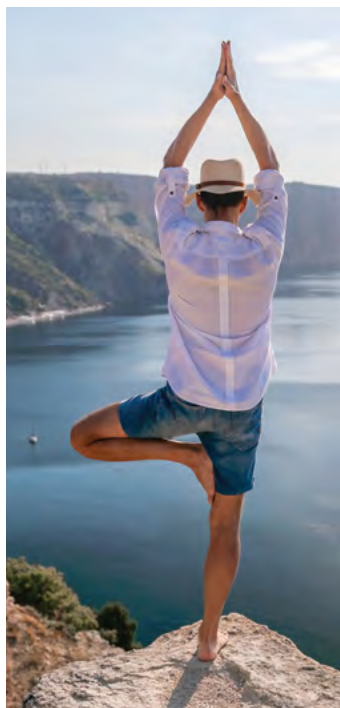
## Thrive as you age

Living a long and healthy life is a goal many share. By prioritizing these four areas of well-being, you can embrace a fulfilling and healthy life after 50!

- **Maintain a healthy diet.** Filling your plate with fruits, vegetables, and whole grains provides essential nutrients for your body. Aim to limit processed foods, sugary drinks, and excessive salt intake.
- **Stay active.** Regular exercise strengthens your body and mind. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity exercise each week. Incorporate a variety of activities like walking, swimming, dancing, or yoga.
- **Prioritize preventive care.** Schedule regular checkups with your doctor to screen for potential health issues. Early detection is key for managing chronic conditions like diabetes and certain cancers.
- **Nurture your mental well-being.** Getting enough sleep, managing stress, and staying connected with loved ones are all crucial for mental health. Practice relaxation techniques like meditation or deep breathing.

# Recharge & reset

Taking a mental health day, also called a self-care day, can be a powerful tool to recharge and return to your daily routine feeling refreshed and focused. A mental health day doesn't have to be elaborate or expensive. It's about carving out dedicated time for yourself.



## TIPS TO STRUCTURE A RESTORATIVE MENTAL HEALTH DAY

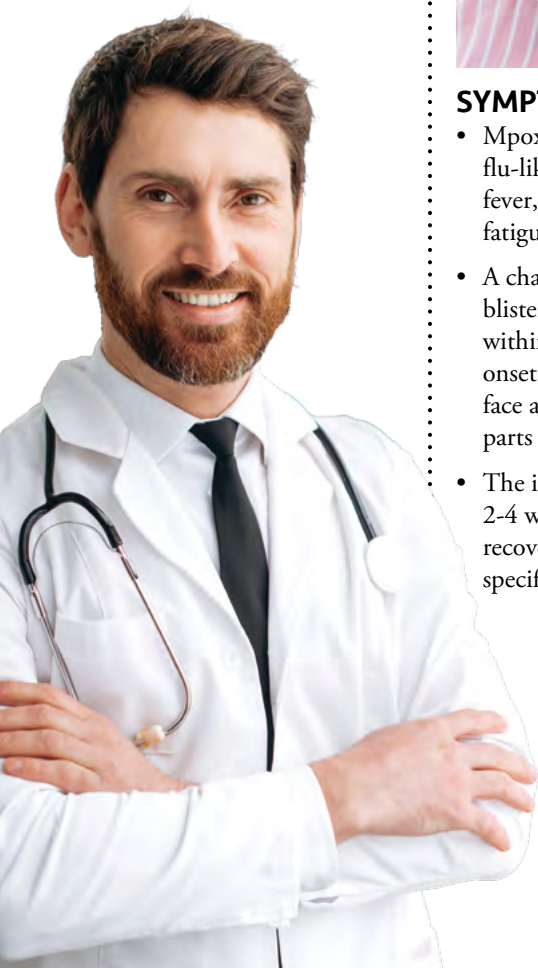
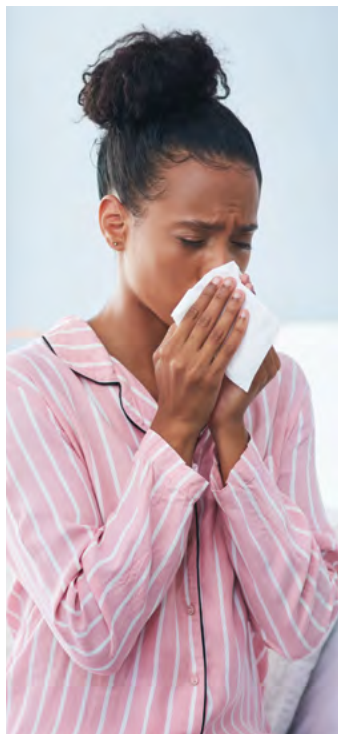


- **Plan ahead.** Don't wait until you're on the verge of a breakdown to schedule a mental health day. Pick a day in advance. This allows you to prepare and minimizes last-minute scrambling.
- **Disconnect to reconnect.** Turn off work notifications, silence your phone, and resist the urge to check email. This creates a crucial space to detach from the constant demands of daily life and reconnect with yourself.
- **Connect with loved ones.** Social connection is important for mental well-being. Spend time with friends and family who uplift and energize you.
- **Prioritize activities you enjoy.** Fill your time with activities that bring you joy and relaxation. Whether it's reading a book, spending time in nature, taking a long bath, or pursuing a hobby, prioritize things that make you feel good.
- **Move your body.** Go for a walk, run, bike ride, or yoga session. Even a short burst of exercise can significantly improve your mood and energy levels.
- **Get enough sleep.** Aim for 7-8 hours of quality sleep the night before your mental health day. Adequate sleep is essential for both physical and mental health.
- **Practice mindfulness.** Techniques like meditation or deep breathing can help quiet your mind and reduce anxiety. There are many free guided meditations available online or through apps, making it easy to incorporate mindfulness into your self-care day.
- **Set boundaries.** Taking a mental health day doesn't mean you have to explain yourself to everyone. Politely let those who may need to reach you know you'll be unavailable and set clear boundaries about when you'll be checking messages.



# Protecting yourself from Mpox

Monkeypox (mpox) is a viral illness. While related to smallpox, mpox is generally less severe and does not spread as easily.



## SYMPTOMS

- Mpox typically starts with flu-like symptoms such as fever, headache, chills, and fatigue.
- A characteristic rash with blisters and bumps develops within 1-3 days of fever onset, often starting on the face and spreading to other parts of the body.
- The illness typically lasts 2-4 weeks and most people recover without requiring specific treatment.

## RISK FACTORS

- Those who have had direct contact with a person with mpox
- Healthcare workers caring for mpox patients
- People with weakened immune systems may be at higher risk for severe illness or complications from mpox.
- Pregnant people can transmit the virus to their fetus during pregnancy or childbirth.
- Those who have direct contact with infected animals

## PREVENTION

- The mpox vaccine is available for individuals at high risk of exposure, including healthcare workers.
- Avoid close contact with individuals and animals who have mpox symptoms.
- Practice good hygiene by washing your hands frequently with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

If you think you might be sick with mpox, see your doctor as soon as you can. Treatment will depend on how sick you are.

For more information on Mpox, visit: [cdc.gov/mpox](https://www.cdc.gov/mpox).



# Brewing up mushroom coffee

Mushroom coffee has become a trendy beverage, promising a healthy twist on your morning cup. Is it all hype or are there real benefits to this fungi-infused brew? Let's explore the potential advantages and drawbacks of mushroom coffee to help you decide if it's right for you.

## POTENTIAL BENEFITS

- Mushroom coffee typically contains less caffeine as the mushroom powder dilutes the coffee grounds. This can be a great option for those sensitive to caffeine or seeking a more sustained energy lift.
- Certain mushrooms, like Lion's Mane and Reishi, have been used in traditional medicine for centuries. They may enhance immune function, though further research is needed.
- Lion's Mane mushroom shows promise in promoting cognitive health and focus. However, most studies are preliminary, and more trials are necessary to confirm these benefits.
- Adaptogenic mushrooms, like Chaga and Reishi, are believed to help the body manage stress. Some studies suggest they may have mood-regulating properties.

## THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Many health claims associated with mushroom coffee lack strong scientific backing. More research is needed to determine the effectiveness and optimal dosages of these mushrooms in coffee form.
- Some people may experience digestive discomfort, such as bloating or gas, after consuming coffee with added mushroom powder. This is especially true for those with sensitive stomachs or pre-existing digestive conditions.
- Mushrooms can interact with certain medications. If you take any medications, consult your doctor before trying mushroom coffee.
- Certain mushrooms like Chaga can be high in oxalates, which can contribute to kidney stones in susceptible individuals.
- Mushroom coffee can be significantly more expensive than regular coffee due to the added ingredients.



# Kindness in every breath

Loving-kindness meditation, also known as metta meditation, is a form of mindfulness practice that focuses on developing feelings of kindness and goodwill. This ancient technique may have positive effects on mental and emotional well-being. By directing positive thoughts and intentions towards ourselves and others, we can cultivate a sense of peace and connection.



## BENEFITS

- Activates areas of the brain associated with positive emotions and reward, leading to a decrease in stress hormones like cortisol. This can manifest as feelings of calm, relaxation, and reduced anxiety.
- Encourages a more accepting and understanding attitude toward oneself, fostering self-worth and reducing self-criticism. Individuals can become more resilient to setbacks and challenges, leading to greater emotional well-being.
- Can strengthen our connections with others and promote more positive interactions, reduce conflict, and enhance overall relationship satisfaction.
- Fosters greater feelings of happiness, contentment, and overall emotional well-being. It may also help cultivate positive emotions and reduce negative ones, leading to a more balanced and fulfilling emotional life.



## HOW TO PRACTICE

1. Find a quiet and comfortable place to sit or lie down. Close your eyes or soften your gaze. Take a few deep breaths to relax and center yourself.
2. Begin by focusing on yourself. Silently repeat a phrase of loving-kindness towards yourself, such as "May I be happy," "May I be healthy," or "May I be safe." You can also visualize yourself surrounded by a warm, comforting light.
3. Once you feel a sense of genuine well-wishing for yourself, move on to someone you care about. This could be a friend, family member, or even a pet. Silently repeat phrases of loving-kindness directed toward them.
4. Gradually expand your circle of compassion. Consider sending loving-kindness to someone you are neutral towards, then to someone you may find challenging.
5. Continue for 10-20 minutes. If your mind wanders, gently bring your attention back to the practice. Don't be discouraged if your mind wanders; it's a natural part of meditation.
6. End your meditation by taking a few deep breaths and slowly opening your eyes. Take a moment to reflect on the feelings of peace and well-being that may have arisen during your practice.



# Storm proof finances

Life is full of surprises and sometimes those surprises come with a hefty price tag. A car repair, medical bill, or job loss can throw your finances into disarray. That's where an emergency fund comes in – a financial safety net that helps you weather unexpected expenses without going into debt.



## CONSIDERATIONS

- Knowing you have a financial safety net can boost your confidence and self-esteem. It can give you a sense of control over your financial situation and reduce feelings of uncertainty.
- Unexpected expenses can lead to increased credit card debt if you don't have a financial cushion. This can negatively impact your credit score, making it more difficult to obtain loans or credit cards in the future.
- An emergency fund can give you the flexibility to make unexpected career changes or seize new opportunities without financial constraints.
- Having a solid emergency fund is a sign of financial discipline and can contribute to a stronger overall financial foundation.

## GETTING STARTED

1. Set a realistic savings goal. Start small and gradually increase your contributions as your budget allows. Aim for a specific amount to save each month or paycheck.
2. Choose the right account. Consider a high-yield savings account for easy access while still earning some interest on your savings.
3. Automate your savings. Set up automatic transfers from your checking account to your emergency fund to ensure consistent and less-effort saving.
4. Review and adjust. Regularly review your emergency fund goals and adjust your savings plan as your income, expenses, or life circumstances change.



## ACCELERATE FUND GROWTH

- Use a budgeting app or spreadsheet to track your income and expenses. Identify areas where you can cut back, such as dining out, entertainment, or subscriptions.
- Declutter your home and identify items you no longer need or use. Sell these items online or hold a garage sale.
- Explore opportunities to earn extra income, such as freelance writing, tutoring, driving for a rideshare app, or selling crafts or handmade goods.
- Set small savings challenges to keep yourself motivated. For example, try a no-spend weekend, a "spare change jar" challenge, or a 30-day savings challenge.

# Embrace whole health

THE CONCEPT OF WHOLE HEALTH ENCOMPASSES A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO WELL-BEING, RECOGNIZING THE INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF OUR PHYSICAL, MENTAL, AND EMOTIONAL STATES.



Taking a whole-health approach allows us to address a more balanced and fulfilling life:

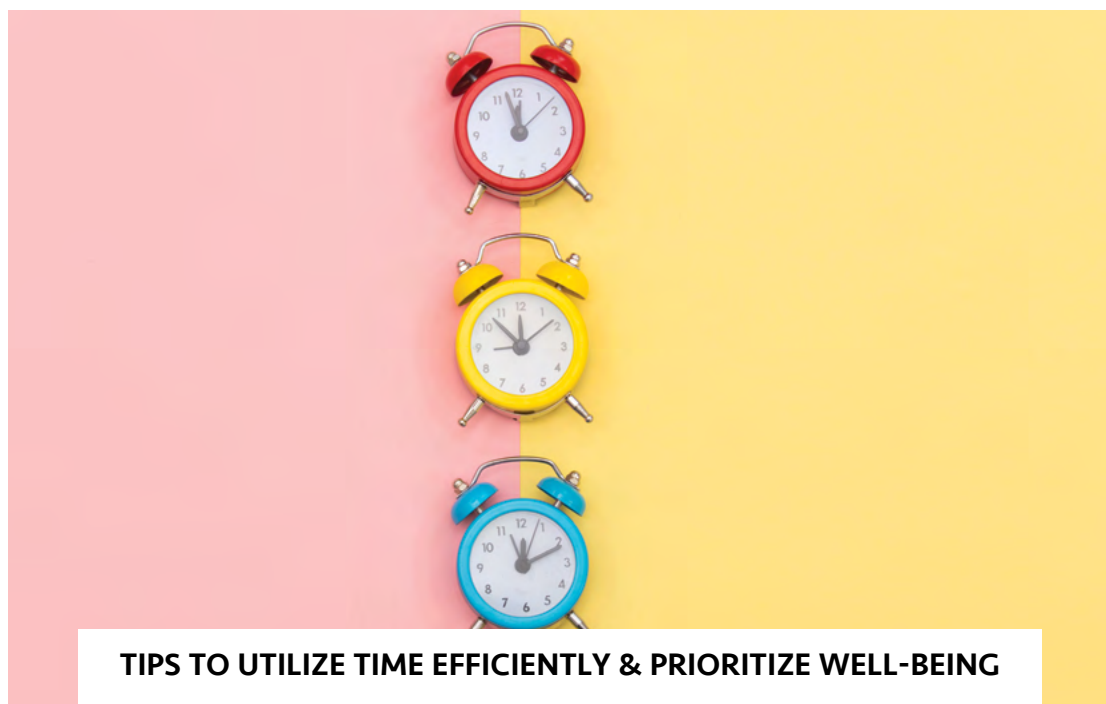
- By addressing all aspects of health, we can experience greater energy, resilience, and a sense of overall well-being.
- A healthy lifestyle that considers all dimensions of health can help prevent chronic diseases.
- Whole-health practices can support the management of existing health conditions, leading to improved quality of life.

## THE PRACTICE

- Eat a healthy, plant-focused diet and exercise regularly.
- Prioritize sleep hygiene and manage stress through relaxation techniques.
- Nurture healthy relationships and build a strong social support network.
- Schedule regular checkups with your doctor and mental health professional.
- Engage in activities you enjoy and that promote a sense of purpose.

# Master your time

Effective time management is a valuable skill that can benefit everyone, from busy professionals to students juggling school and work.



- Block out time in your calendar for activities that reduce stress and boost your energy levels. This could be anything from a relaxing bath to a brisk walk in nature.
- Identify the most important things you need to accomplish each day and focus on those first.
- Multitasking is often a myth that leads to decreased productivity. Group similar tasks together to improve focus and minimize context switching. For example, dedicate a specific time block to answering emails or returning phone calls.
- There are countless apps and tools available to help you manage your time effectively. Explore calendar apps, to-do list managers, and time tracking software to find what works best for you.