

# Resilience & Well-being Tips Summary

## Stocking a healthy pantry to fuel the immune system

Filling your body with nutrients like vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and phytochemicals from healthy food can help keep your immune system strong. Consider these options when grocery shopping:

- Grains are a great source of fiber including bread, pasta, rice, oatmeal, whole grain cereals, granola and crackers
- Canned fruits and vegetables, dried and canned beans, lentils and tomatoes
- Dried fruits, nuts, peanut butters and other nut butters
- Meat and dairy staples such as milk, cheese, yogurt, eggs, fresh meat, poultry and fish



## Express gratitude

Scientific studies show that expressing gratitude daily increases happiness and resilience. Here are several effective ways to experience gratitude.

- Start your day by sending a gratitude email or text to someone you appreciate
- Regularly write down three things you're grateful for
- Thank and praise the important people in your life often
- Focus on your grateful emotions for 10 seconds to help the good feeling last longer



## Moving beyond negativity

During challenging times, it's hard not to focus on the negative, but we can train our brains to focus on the positive instead. When you experience good feelings be sure to savor them. When done repeatedly, this creates a positive neuropathway in your brain that competes with any negativity bias. Here's why training yourself to focus on the positive is so important:

- The brain defaults to whatever we pay most attention to
- We typically do not feel positive and negative emotions at the same moment. So, when you can, stay connected to the positive side of things
- When you savor the good feeling for 10 seconds, you enjoy it longer and your brain actually retains that positivity
- When you share your good feelings, it multiplies the goodness



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## Overcoming Loneliness

### Signs and symptoms of loneliness

- Increased feelings of sadness, anxiety, worry or depression
- Increased binge-watching on TV
- Increased alcohol consumption
- Feelings of loss when you have no new calls, texts or social media likes



### Suggested solutions

- Set up a regular zoom call to get together with family or friends
- Adopt a pet in need of a home
- Get outside for safe social distancing meet ups

## Relax: Be aware of our senses

With so many things to do, we often don't take the time to see what's happening around us. Taking time to utilize your 5 senses helps you ground yourself in the present moment and promote relaxation.



- **What do you see?** Find 5 things that you had not noticed before - a pattern on the wall or an object in the room.
- **What can you feel?** It may be the pressure of your feet on the floor, the weight of your shirt on your shoulders, or the temperature of your skin.
- **What can you hear?** Notice the background noises - the hum of an air conditioner, chirping of a bird or cars passing by outside.
- **What do you smell?** Bring your attention to two things you can smell — morning cup of coffee, freshly cleaned house, fragrant flowers, etc.
- **What is one thing you can taste?** Pop a piece of gum in your mouth or take a sip of a beverage.

## Relaxing: Slowing your breathing

Controlling our breath brings a sense of calm and relaxation to our bodies and minds. Take a slow, deep breath in through your nose. Exhale deeply and slowly through your mouth. Repeat and on the third breath focus on slowing your breathing. Inhale in for 4 counts... and exhale for 4 counts.

- Focus on the feeling of relaxation coming to your body, your heart rate slowing to match your breath. Visualize inhaling calm and exhaling worry and stress.
- Finish with another slow deep breath in through your nose for 4 counts... and slowly exhale through your mouth for 4 counts... allowing the breath to move through your body.

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## Remember to hydrate

Staying hydrated increases energy, boosts cognitive functioning, improves sleep, and has positive effects on your mood. Here are a few tips to remind yourself to stay hydrated:

- Drink a glass of water first thing in the morning and schedule regular water breaks throughout the day
- Keep a reusable water bottle near as a visual reminder to hydrate; fill up your bottle as soon as it's empty
- Choose hydrating snacks such as fresh fruits and vegetables
- Use an app to set reminders and track your water intake



*\*Those who have kidney disease, congestive heart failure or who take diuretics should be cautious about dramatically increasing their water consumption.*

## Struggling to fall asleep at night?

Consider trying these ways to wind down:

- Take a hot bath or shower – the warm water helps relax sore and tight muscles and raises your core body temperature. When you get out, your temperature will begin to drop, signaling the production of melatonin, a naturally occurring hormone that helps regulate your sleep cycle.
- Read a book – enjoying a book before bed can reduce stress and calm your mind.
- Write a list of what you need to do tomorrow - getting those thoughts on paper can help get them off your mind.



## 5 Mental health practices to make each day a little easier:

1. Sleep 8-10 hours per day
2. Eat 3 nutritious meals per day
3. Get up and move 1+ hours a day
4. Take breaks from watching, reading or listening to news stories
5. Maintain a schedule during the day



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## Don't forget to play

Play is often overlooked as a way to unwind – but it can be exactly what you need. Here are just a few ideas you can try:

- Play board games with your kids
- Practice a musical instrument, or simply listen to music
- Cook your favorite meal or treat
- Take a walk or hike
- Whatever it is, just remember to do things



## Practicing mindfulness

Mindful meditation has been shown to help lower stress and improve focus. Try these meditation tips:

- **Find a quiet, comfortable spot and sit still for a few minutes.** Close your eyes and be present; try to slow down your thoughts.
- **Focus on your breath.** Take a deep inhale, expanding your belly and then exhale slowly, elongating the outbreath as your belly contracts.
- **Imagine a favorite place or soothing time in your life.** Try to imagine the details around that place or time in life. Close your eyes and visualize, while you breathe in and out. Do this for several minutes.



## 4 beverages to help you unwind

Taking some quiet time to sip and enjoy a beverage can be a calming experience. Some drinks have nutritional value that could add to the relaxation. Here are 4 beverages that may help you unwind after a long day:



- **Green tea:** Contains the amino acid theanine which is thought to promote relaxation.
- **Valerian root tea:** This herb – often found in bedtime tea blends – has been credited with reducing nervousness, anxiety and sleeplessness.
- **Chamomile tea:** Contains certain compounds that can ease stress and anxiety.
- **Cherry juice:** Research shows that 1 ounce of tart cherry juice twice a day may help improve the duration and quality of your sleep.