

# HEALTHeLIFESTYLE



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 **Franciscan**  
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# The Four A's of Stress Relief

Acronyms and abbreviations can be helpful and at times confusing. However, this time could be helpful. When thinking about stress relief and how one can cope and or reduce their feelings of stress and being overwhelmed, four simple steps can be suggested.

## ***Avoid***

This seems like it might be interpreted as an excuse or a put off though it can actually be quite helpful. **AVOID** is learning to say no. First off do not be afraid to say no. Sometimes, it is needed. In the event you are facing an unpleasant task, see if you can postpone the task to another day or replace the task with another easier version like instead of waiting in a traffic jam, take an alternate scenic route.

## ***Alter***

Try to be more efficient with your time. Use transition time productively like scheduling an appointment while driving to the office. Stating your limits in advance with others while using "I" statements can be helpful. This takes away blaming others and assists you in expressing your feelings. For example, when asked to talk or beginning a conversation say, "I only have five minutes." Also, whenever possible, delegate work to others when appropriate.

## ***Adapt***

Changing your expectations and attitudes is at the core of this option. When you **ADAPT** you are looking for reasonable substitutions. Choose to focus on the positive aspects of what you are exploring. Ask yourself the question, "Will this matter in five years?" Reframe your situation. Instead of feeling frustrated look at the potential positives to the situation. Adopt a mantra of "you got this!"

## ***Accept***

**ACCEPTING** may be your choice when the other three options will not work. Let others know how you are feeling though. Do not dwell on it. Rehearse positive self-talk. It is easy to spiral down into negativity when you feel overwhelmed. Instead of saying, "I am so bad at this"... say "I am going to get through this." Perhaps if you find yourself dwelling you can consider scheduling time with a therapist.

Stress is a part of our lives and integrating these 4 A's when you can may help you to be happier and provide balance. - **Mayo Clinic Health System**

*For more information, join our webinar on  
The Four A's of Stress Relief & Midday Chair Mobility Break  
on Wednesday, July 17th, 2024 at 11:30AM CDT/12:30PM EDT*

**Northern & Western Indiana Region, Illinois Region CALL 1-800-747-7262  
Central (Indianapolis) Region CALL 1-800-963-0060**

# Know Your Numbers:

## What are Hormones and What Do They Do?

Hormones are chemical messengers produced by glands in the endocrine system and released into the bloodstream. Your pituitary gland is the control center that is responsible for communicating with your other glands to tell them what hormones to make.

Glands play a crucial role regulating your bodily processes and helping to support the equilibrium between all of your body's functions. They coordinate and control functions of organs and tissues in the body.

Hormones are typically produced by specialized glands such as the pituitary gland, thyroid gland, adrenal glands, pancreas, and reproductive organs. The levels of certain substances in the blood trigger the release or inhibition of specific hormones. Once produced, hormones are released into the bloodstream and travel to target cells or organs throughout the body.

### Why are hormones so important?

- Hormones like insulin and glucagon regulate blood sugar levels and energy.
- Growth hormone, thyroid hormones, and sex hormones influence growth, development, and maturation of the body.
- Estrogen and testosterone are essential for the development and function of reproductive organs.
- Hormones such as cortisol and adrenaline are involved in the body's response to stress and help prepare the body for a "fight or flight" response.
- The balance of water in the body, electrolyte levels, and body temperature are all maintained by hormones.
- Some hormones play a role in modulating the immune response and inflammation.

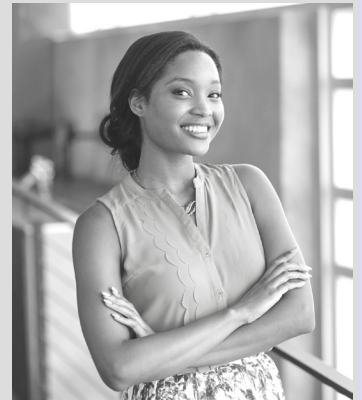
Hormones serve as the vital messengers that enable communication between different parts of the body, and healthy levels of hormones are essential for overall health and well-being.

## Estrogen and Testosterone

**Estrogen** is a hormone primarily associated with female reproductive functions, although it's also present in males in lower levels.

Estrogen has significant effects on various aspects of health and well-being in both men and women. Estrogen levels naturally decline as women age,

particularly during menopause, leading to symptoms like hot flashes, mood swings, and bone density loss.



**Testosterone** is a hormone primarily associated with

male characteristics, though it's also present in females in lower levels. Testosterone is a crucial hormone for both men and women, influencing various aspects of reproductive health, sexual function, and overall well-being. Both men and women can experience imbalances in testosterone levels. In men, low testosterone levels can cause decreased libido, erectile dysfunction, fatigue, and decreased muscle mass. In women, excess testosterone can lead to symptoms like irregular menstrual periods, acne, and excessive facial and body hair growth.



# No Excuses! Time To Start Moving!

Thinking about getting into a fitness routine but got that nagging excuse holding you back? Let's take a look at some common excuses and find some ways to make your fitness "wish list" a reality:

## **I don't like to work out alone.**

Just sign up! Lots of gyms, community groups, and clubs offer group fitness opportunities with everything from Yoga, cycling, running to Bootcamp. It's a great way to stay accountable, meet new people, and vibe with folks who share your goals.

## **I don't like to workout at the gym.**

No gym? No problem! Hit outdoor spaces like parks or trails. And hey, your own home can be your gym with DVDs, online workouts, or even video games that get you moving. Play catch with your family! Walk the dog!

## **I don't know what to do.**

Feeling lost? Consider personal training or small group sessions. They'll give you the confidence and know-how. Getting a good foundation and acclimating yourself to a fitness facility environment will help inspire you.

## **I'm afraid I'll stand out/don't belong.**

Trust me, everyone's there for the same reason: to get fit. And lots of folks are newbies, especially at certain times like January. Some gyms even have private areas if you're feeling a bit shy.

## **I don't like to "exercise".**

Who says exercise has to be boring? There are tons of fun activities to try: from pickleball to dancing, swimming to roller skating. It's all about finding what clicks for you.

Still feeling stuck? Why not buddy up with a friend who's already active? Sometimes trying out their favorite workout can surprise you. Who knows, you might find your new fitness passion!



## How Are Calories Calculated?



No matter what eating plan you're on, understanding the nutritional value of food and the calories you consume is key to good health.

What exactly are calories? They're units of energy, not indicators of weight or nutrients. On food labels, when you see "calories," it actually means kilocalories (kcal). One kcal is the amount of energy needed to heat 1 kilogram of water by 1 degree Celsius or 2.2 pounds of water by 1.8 degrees Fahrenheit.

"Burning off the calories" is a term best applied to the traditional method of figuring calories of a food item. A tool called a bomb calorimeter can be used to determine calories by placing the food in question in a sealed container surrounded by water. Heat is applied until the food is completely burned off and then the rise in the surrounding water's temperature is recorded. This is the number of calories in a food product.

Now though, we usually determine calories on food labels using the Atwater technique. This method, named after chemist Wilbur Atwater, calculates calories differently. Atwater realized that the traditional burning method didn't account for energy lost as heat or bodily waste. So, he came up with a more practical estimation by studying the calories in different foods and examining how many calories were expelled in fecal matter.

What he discovered was that proteins and carbohydrates each have roughly 4 calories per gram, fats have about 9 calories per gram, and alcohol contains about 7 calories per gram. While this method isn't perfect for all foods, and the FDA allows for some margin of error in labeling, it's still widely used in the food industry.

So, let's simplify: If your food serving has 5 grams of protein, 2 grams of carbs, and 8 grams of fat, it's approximately 100 calories. See? Calories aren't so scary after all!

# Wellness Briefs



## July 4th

Enjoy your July 4th celebrations while prioritizing safety for yourself and others.

**Here are some tips to ensure a joyful and secure Independence Day:**

**Practice Firework Safety:** If you're using fireworks, follow all safety instructions provided by the manufacturer. Keep a bucket of water nearby for

emergencies, never try to relight a dud firework, and ensure all spectators are at a safe distance. Better yet...enjoy professional fireworks displays organized by your community or city. These are often safer and more spectacular than private fireworks.

If you're barbecuing, keep the grill away from structures, bushes, and flammable materials. Never leave the grill unattended and keep children and pets away from the cooking area.

If you're swimming or boating, ensure everyone wears appropriate flotation devices, and never leave children unattended near water.

**Keep Pets Safe!** Independence Day festivities can be stressful for pets due to loud noises. Keep them indoors in a quiet, secure area to prevent them from escaping or becoming distressed.

**By following these tips, you can ensure a happy and safe July 4th for yourself, your loved ones, and your community. Enjoy the celebrations responsibly!**

## July is Social Wellness Month!

It's important to maintain healthy relationships for many reasons. They provide a support network during challenging times, provide outlets for expressing your emotions, and help your personal growth by providing diverse perspectives on the world.

Did you know that research also suggests that individuals with strong social connections tend to have better physical health outcomes, including lower rates of chronic diseases, improved immune function, and increased longevity.

Humans are inherently social beings, and relationships are integral to our well-being. Ultimately, maintaining healthy relationships leads to a higher quality of life. Sharing experiences, creating memories, and forming meaningful connections with others enriches your life and brings joy and fulfillment.



# What to Eat For Joint Health

If your joints are feeling stiff and achy, you may want to look to your diet for some help. Eat foods that have anti-inflammatory properties and have nutrients that support joint health.

Anti-inflammatory foods are foods that keep your body's immune system from getting too over-stimulated. Inflammation happens when your body responds to a wound and is part of the normal process for healing. Chronic inflammation is inflammation that sticks around after the initial need for protection is long gone.

## Here are some recommendations:

- Foods with omega-3 fatty acids such as fish (salmon, mackerel, and sardines) and nuts and seeds (almonds, walnuts, flaxseeds, and chia seeds) are all anti-inflammatory.
- Blueberries, strawberries, and raspberries are packed with antioxidants and anti-inflammatory compounds.
- Spinach, kale, and other leafy greens are rich in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants that can help reduce inflammation.
- Turmeric and ginger both have powerful anti-inflammatory properties.
- Extra virgin olive oil is rich in oleocanthal, which has anti-inflammatory effects similar to ibuprofen.
- Green tea is high in antioxidants called polyphenols, which have anti-inflammatory effects.
- Lean sources of protein such as chicken, turkey, tofu, and beans can help support muscle health, which in turn supports joint health.
- Yogurt and other fermented foods that help to keep your gut healthy. Stick with plain or unsweetened yogurt!

It's also important to drink plenty of water and to limit your intake of processed foods, sugary snacks, and foods high in saturated and trans fats, as these can contribute to inflammation.



# Trendy Supplement: Beet Powder



Beet powder has gained popularity due to its potential health benefits and versatility in various recipes. The powder, which is made from dehydrated beets that are ground to a fine powder, has a high nitrate content, which can potentially improve blood flow, lower blood pressure, and enhance exercise performance. One teaspoon of powder contains the same nutrients and fiber as eating one beet, and the powder can be made into a juice or added to smoothies, and sauces as well as other foods.

Beets are rich in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, which can help your body to lower cholesterol and reduce over inflammation which is linked to an increased risk of coronary disease. Beets are a great source of Folate, which is a form of vitamin B, which is especially important for the prevention of birth defects. Beets are also a good source of potassium, fiber, vitamin C and iron. Beet powder can be a convenient way to add color and flavor to your food.

However, whether beet powder is “worth the hype” depends on your individual needs and preferences. If you’re looking for a convenient way to boost your general

nutrition and nitrate intake or want to add a natural source of color and flavor to your dishes, beet powder can be a valuable addition to your diet.

On the other hand, if you already have a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and other whole foods, the benefits of beet powder may not be as significant. It’s essential to remember that while beet powder can complement a healthy lifestyle, it’s not a miracle cure-all. People who are prone to developing kidney stones will want to avoid beetroot as it can promote the formation of kidney stones.

Ultimately, whether beet powder is worth it for you depends on your specific health goals, dietary preferences, and budget. It’s always a good idea to consult with a healthcare professional or registered dietitian before adding any new supplement to your routine.

## Want to know more?

Connect with Working Well for more information on wellness programs and how they can help you reduce healthcare costs and improve employee well-being.



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