

EMPLOYEE WELLNESS TIPS

Wellness Tips from the Health & Wellness
Coaches, EAP Clinicians and Others

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Volume 41

SEPTEMBER
&
OCTOBER

EMPLOYEE WELLNESS
LIFESTYLE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM



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[Employee Wellness Services](#)

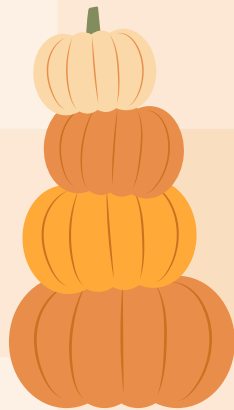
SHARE YOUR
FEEDBACK!



The mission of Healthy Aging Month is to encourage local events that promote personal responsibility for one's health be it physically, socially, mentally or financially.

Positive aging traits are characteristics and behaviors that contribute to a healthy, fulfilling, and vibrant later life ([Beverly Beuermann-King, Work Smart, Live Smart](#)). Research on positive aging identifies several key traits that are associated with overall well-being and successful aging, such as:

- Resilience
- Optimism
- Adaptability
- Self-Efficacy
- Social Engagement
- Purpose and Meaning
- Emotional Well-being
- Physical Health and Wellness
- Cognitive Vitality
- Spirituality and Meaning-Making



Ms. Beuermann-King, a leading expert on building resilience through stress and mental health strategies in organizations, suggests these “easy-to-implement” tips which aim to help you have a healthier fall overall.

Try incorporating one or two tips. Ask a colleague to join you in exploring tips, too; or consider making it a mini fall challenge for the whole team.

- Dine with your family and/or friends
- Do smart swaps on comfort foods
- Consume immunity-boosting foods
- Munch on in-season foods
- Get in on the pumpkin trend!
- Get enough vitamin D
- Drink up your H2O
- Minimize your sugar intake
- Watch those tailgate party calories
- Switch up your fitness routines
- Enjoy the cooler weather outdoors (hiking, apple picking, corn mazes, festivals)
- Get your flu shot
- Keep hand sanitizer nearby
- Plan ahead for Daylight Savings Time 11/3
- Rise and shine at the same time each day
- Take an Epsom salt bath
- Sanitize your most-touched items
- Schedule your annual check-up



FALL HEALTHY AGING TIPS

From: *Marion Cate, M.Ed, MCHES®, ACE-CPT, CHC*

Quick Links to Find Out More

- [10 Tips for Reinventing Yourself during Healthy Aging Month](#)
- [17 Fall Wellness Tips to Keep You Healthy This Season \(totalwellnesshealth.com\)](#)
- [Appropriate Vitamin D Levels](#)
- [Boosting Your Health](#)
- [Epsom salts](#)
- [Five Wellness Tips for a Vibrant October – Motivate Health \(assethealth.com\)](#)
- [Healthy Aging: The Art Of Thriving - Work Smart. Live Smart. \(worksmartlivesmart.com\)](#)
- [Protect Yourself Against Flu, COVID-19 & Influenza](#)
- [September Wellness Focus: Fruits & Veggies, Yoga, Health Aging & More - ESI Group \(theeap.com\)](#) ~ great tips from 2016
- For a list of recommended annual health screenings, use [My Health Finder](#).





Pumpkin, a favorite fall decoration, is a nutritious vegetable rich in vitamin A and vitamin C and a good source of potassium, vitamin E, fiber and many other nutrients.

Makes: 6 cups; **Serving Size:** 1 1/2 cups

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 small onion, minced
- 1 carrot, chopped
- 1 celery rib, chopped
- 3 cups other veggies (such as a combination of mushrooms, broccoli, zucchini)
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup spinach, baby or mature chopped
- 1 tomato, chopped
- 1 (15-ounce) can or 1 1/2 cups plain pumpkin puree
- 4 cups vegetable broth, reduced sodium preferred
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/8 teaspoon salt, or to taste
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper, or to taste
- Optional garnish: pumpkin seeds



Instructions:

1. Heat oil in a large saucepot over medium heat. Add onion, carrot, and celery. Sauté for about 5 minutes, until tender.
2. Add the 3 cups of other vegetables and cook 3 to 4 minutes more.
3. Add garlic, spinach, and tomato. Stir for about 30 seconds.
4. Add in pumpkin puree, broth, oregano, salt, and pepper. Stir until puree has combined evenly into the broth.
5. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for about 10 minutes.
6. Garnish with pumpkin seeds if desired.
Enjoy!

Heather's Healthy Hints:

How to pumpkin puree: Cut pumpkin into chunks, remove seeds, boil until soft, scoop out the flesh, mash or blend it. Bonus- you can save the nutritious seeds to roast up as a snack or garnish: rinse and pat them dry, coat lightly with oil and salt, roast at 350°F about 20 minutes until starting to brown.



Nutrition (per serving): Calories 110, Total Fat 4g, Saturated Fat 0.5g, Carbohydrate 18g, Fiber 7.5g, Protein 4g, Sodium 255mg



Balance exercises can benefit people of all ages. They can help a person improve their body equilibrium, reducing the risk of falls. They are also beneficial to improving athletic performance, increase coordination and strength which can allow you to move freely and steadily.

Adding in daily balance exercises makes it easier to perform your daily tasks and activities such as walking up and down stairs, carrying heavy items, or suddenly changing directions.

Execution:

- Stand with your feet hip-width distance apart and press your weight into both feet firmly and evenly (1).
- Shift your weight onto your left foot and lift your right foot a few inches off the ground (2).
- Hold for up to 5-10 seconds (2).
- Slowly lower your left foot to the floor and repeat on the other side (3).
- Try each side 5 to 10 times.



Regression:

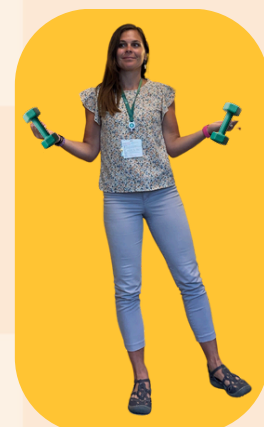
- For extra support, hold onto a chair, countertop or table as you extend your legs.



For more support around the Rock The Boat balance exercise or bicep curls, contact [Kara Maville](#).

Progression:

- Grab a pair of dumbbells or soup cans and try some bicep curls.



Muscles used: Glutes, tensor fasciae latae, biceps femoris, quads, gastrocnemius, tibialis anterior, soleus, extensor digitorum longus, peroneus longus, peroneus brevis

What do Oprah, Walt Disney, Lady Gaga, and Michael Jordan all have in common? Wild success in their field? Yes. A legacy of impacting their industry in ways that changed the world? Definitely. That they continuously appear to be at the top of their game, for years, even decades? Surely.



THE BRILLIANCE OF AN INTERN: STEPPING INTO YOUR COURAGE ZONE

From: Karyn D. Chylewski, Organizational Effectiveness Consultant, Organization & Employee Development

Besides their very apparent success, they all faced significant challenges, including at least one major setback that put them at a crossroads:

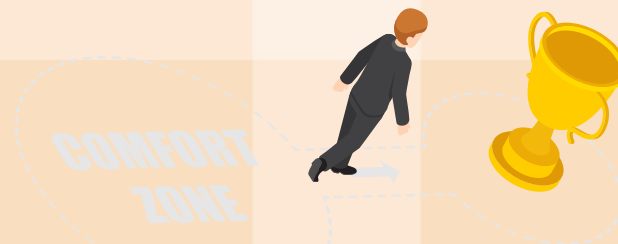
- Oprah, thrilled to earn a coveted spot as a local news reporter in Baltimore, was told she was unfit for television.
- Gaga couldn't believe her luck when Def Jam Records signed her on, then dropped her unceremoniously before her first album's release.
- Disney landing his dream job in the limited world of illustration in the 1920s, to be told he lacked creativity.
- Before Michael Jordan was Air Jordan? He was cut from his high school basketball team.

I shared these success stories with 50 of our new interns who started in June, to instill in them that we never know the pain endured or the effort needed in someone's success. During the journey, Michael Jordan, Oprah, Walt Disney, Lady Gaga, all of us, often come to realize or be reminded: **"You must step out of your comfort zone."** Sometimes, that's simply taking the risk of trying again.

Such true advice. When I think about stepping outside of my comfort zone, there comes a sense of... dread? Not exactly, but one trepidation: I know this isn't going to be all puppies and rainbows. This, I know, is the cost of admission. As is the embarrassment I may feel when stepping out of my comfort zone doesn't go as planned. I feel tentative. It's part of the deal, but it doesn't excite me to do it.

At this point in the conversation, one of the interns offered a twist on that sage advice. She had a coach that encouraged her student-athletes to: **"Step into (your) courage zone."**

Mic drop (do we still say that?). So much more compelling! No longer do I feel trepidation about moving forward, now it's bravery and empowerment coursing through my veins! To grow, we can't stay stagnant, in our bubble, in our comfort zones. Stepping into the courage zone puts tentativeness in the backseat and has empowerment riding shotgun. Thank you, Summer Intern Class 2024 and well done.



Continual learning is a great way to grow your career as a Dartmouth Health professional. To View and Register for Other Professional Skills Courses, Visit the [OED's Skills Course Page on the Intranet](#).

BOOST YOUR MOOD NATURALLY*

From: *Shiri Macri, MA, LCMHC,*
EAP Clinician *Employee Assistance Program*

Stress, anxiety and depression affect many people and can be quite difficult to deal with. Medication is often necessary and helpful for finding relief from symptoms. In addition to medication, there are natural ways to improve mood, alleviate symptoms and enhance overall well-being. The following strategies can be used to boost neurochemicals in the brain to improve well-being and potentially relieve symptoms of stress, anxiety and depression*:

- **Exercise:** Physical activity is one of the most powerful ways to improve mood and manage symptoms. During physical activity, there is a release of endorphins and serotonin, which are neurotransmitters that can act as natural painkillers and mood elevators. Movement has been shown to increase the volume of certain brain regions, such as the hippocampus, which helps with emotion regulation.
- **Mindfulness:** Mindfulness practices, like meditation, help reduce symptoms and improve mood. Mindfulness can increase GABA (Gamma-aminobutyric acid), which has a calming effect. It can also decrease activity in the amygdala, the brain's fear and stress center.
- **Yoga:** Yoga increases levels of GABA and serotonin, promoting feelings of happiness and well-being and has been found to decrease activity in the default mode network (DMN). The DMN is a brain network associated with mind-wandering which activates stress and negative thought patterns.
- **Social connection:** Research has found that having social connectedness influences our minds and bodies by releasing positive neurochemicals such as oxytocin, also known as the 'love' hormone or bonding hormone, promoting positive feelings. This in turn can help reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression, improve the ability to recover from stress and improve overall physical health.



- **Healthy Foods:** The gut-brain axis is a communication system between the gut and the brain. Including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins and fermented food in our diet improves the health of the gut, where we produce many of the 'feel good' neurotransmitters. This positively impacts brain function, mood, and overall health.
- **Supplements**:** Some supplements, like omega-3 fatty acids (found in fish oil), vitamin B and D, have been found to have mood-boosting effects by increasing the same neurotransmitters. It's important to consult with a healthcare provider before starting any supplement regimen.
- **Light Box:** Studies have found that spending 20-30 minutes with a 10,000-lux light box aimed indirectly toward the eyes (16-24" away from the face) within the first hour of waking up in the morning can help with improving your mood. A light box mimics outdoor light and can cause changes in the brain, like increasing serotonin, thus lifting mood and easing symptoms of depression, particularly SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder).
- **Cold Exposure:** Exposure to cold water (fully submerging, cold showers, splashing cold water on the face, or even a cold pack on the back of the neck) has been shown to boost mood-enhancing neurochemicals like serotonin and dopamine and activating the body's relaxation response.

By incorporating these strategies into your day, symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression can improve. If you're dealing with anxiety or depression, it's very important to reach out and seek support from a mental health professional. *

When considering supplements, please seek professional guidance, as they may interact with other medications.**

DAILY ROUTINE: Strategies to pick from* **

• **Morning:**

- On waking, do a few quick stretches while waiting for coffee/tea to brew to awaken the body from rest.
- Sip coffee/tea (or other beverage) quietly for a few minutes.
- Turn on a light box while exercising or sitting and enjoying your morning refreshment.
- Engage in 10 minutes of physical activity that works for your body – short strength routine, HIIT, sun-salutations, a few push-ups, sit-ups and squats, short walk around the block, etc.
- 2–5-minute meditation.
- Get ready for the day.



- Breakfast – include several nutrients like fiber/plants, protein, carb, healthy fat for sustenance. Ex: yogurt with granola and fruit; avocado toast with pickled onions and arugula, etc. Take supplements** and medications, as prescribed from a reputable professional. Continue to take as prescribed throughout day.
- Make 30-60 seconds of your shower as cold as you can tolerate.

• **Commute:**

- Bring 16oz water or herbal tea to continue hydrating.
- Listen to music or a podcast that prepares you for the day.
- If able, park farther away, and walk slightly faster into the office.

• **At work:**

- Physical - Stand at your desk as you're able; find a restroom further away for extra steps, walk slightly faster; take a short walking break as you're able.
- Mindfulness - find time for a 2-5-minute meditation.
- Social - connect with a coworker for lunch/coffee/walk.
- Allow yourself a 'treat' as desired, consider adding a 'whole' food (ex. some fruit instead of a cookie).



Resources:

[Exercise in the treatment of clinical anxiety in general practice - a systematic review and meta-analysis - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#)
[Omega-3s for anxiety? - Harvard Health](#)
[The role of probiotics and prebiotics in modulating of the gut-brain axis - PMC\(nih.gov\)](#)
[Seasonal affective disorder treatment: Choosing a light box - Mayo Clinic](#)
[Social Connection | Social Connection | CDC](#)
[Serotonin: The natural mood booster - Harvard Health](#)
[7 daily habits can cut the risk of depression by 57%, a new study finds : Shots - Health News : NPR](#)
[Natural Relief for Depression | Johns Hopkins Medicine](#)
[Autonomic nervous function during whole-body cold exposure before and after cold acclimation - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#)

BOOST YOUR MOOD NATURALLY CONTINUED*



• **At work continued:**

- Nourishment - Drink water/herbal tea to hydrate. Sip ice cold water for an internal cold exposure. Have a nourishing and pleasurable lunch, ideally with all the nutrients (ex: a 'bowl' with greens/veggies, beans/lentils, healthy grain such as quinoa or rice).

• **Commute:**

- Bring another 16oz water or herbal tea to continue hydrating.



• **Dinner:**

- Have a nourishing and pleasurable meal. Rather than removing foods that are 'unhealthy', add foods that are healthy, such as adding a salad or grilled/steamed vegetable to any meal to make it more complete (ex: pizza with Caesar salad).

• **Evening:**

- Take a short after-dinner stroll, or as it's known in Italy, a passeggiata, to help with digestion.
- Divide the rest of your evening in 'have-to' tasks, as well as 'want-to' self-care.

• **Bedtime:**

- Wind down before bed – play an instrument, draw/paint/doodle, read. Take any supplements** recommended for you by a healthcare professional.

• **Sleep:**

- 6-8 hours on average.

*If you're experiencing symptoms of anxiety and depression, it's important to consult with a physician or psychologist about whether medication would be helpful or important for you.

** Please consult with a physician, naturopath, or another licensed or certified specialist who can advise about supplements for you.



PREVENTIVE CARE: SUPPORTING WELLNESS THROUGH THE DARTMOUTH HEALTH MEDICAL PLANS



From: Lisa A. Mitchell Benefits Analyst -
Sr, Human Resources

Did you know that preventive care is covered at 100% under all Dartmouth Health Medical Plans? If you are enrolled in a Dartmouth Health medical plan, take charge of the physical health for you and your covered family members by scheduling your routine care. Some examples of these preventive services include:



- Annual physical exams
- Well Child visits
- Routine immunizations
- Screenings: colonoscopies after age 45, mammograms, pap tests and prostate exams
- 100% reimbursement for Tobacco Cessation medications
- Annual routine eye exams

These regular exams and screenings can identify medical problems before symptoms develop to allow for timely intervention and better outcomes.

In addition to preventive care, regular exercise contributes to overall health, reduces stress, and improves mental wellbeing. By participating in fitness programs, employees can maintain a healthier lifestyle.

Do you have a gym membership or are you considering joining a fitness club? All Dartmouth Health medical plans offer a Fitness Reimbursement benefit of up to \$200 per calendar year per covered person (dependents must be age 14 or older to be eligible). To qualify you must join, or be a member of, a qualified health club or participate in fitness activities and attend at least two sessions per week for 11 out of 13 consecutive weeks during the calendar year. For more information, visit the [MyBenefits Portal](#) or click this link [2024 Fitness Reimbursement](#).

Please see the [MyBenefits](#) portal for discounts at local health clubs as well other discounts for your summer and year-round fun and savings opportunities --> In the MyBenefits portal go to **My Well Being > Family Benefits > Discount Programs**.

[Mt. Ascutney Hospital and Health Center \(MAHHC\) employees](#) can access the Fitness Reimbursement Form on the MAHHC benefit portal under *Other Medical Forms and Documents*. Discounts may be accessed via the MAHHC Benefits Guide.