



MINDFULNESS AND SLEEP.... ZZZZ

What is mindfulness?

It is a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations--often used as a therapeutic technique.

We can't make ourselves sleep; we can only allow sleep to occur. To do that, we have to relax and let go of the day's stress and tension. Trying to sleep only results in greater difficulty falling asleep and when this becomes a nightly pattern, contributes to insomnia. Insomnia results in daytime symptoms like low work performance, irritability and poor memory.

Mindfulness practice is not about avoiding negative thoughts, but consists of being aware of their presence in a curious and compassionate way. By doing this, one gets greater awareness of habitual thought processes and can respond more effectively to the stresses and challenges of day-to-day life. Not avoiding challenging or frightening situations allows people to be open to a wider range of more fulfilling experiences and, as a bonus, lets sleep occur naturally.

Preparing for sleep

Prepare to sleep by settling into a comfy position on your bed, close your eyes and relax. Then, inhale through your nose for four seconds, hold your breath for seven seconds, and then exhale slowly through your mouth for eight more seconds. Be aware of any body sensations. Do not fight them or hold on to any judgments you may have about what you are experiencing in body and mind. Repeat this process until you fall asleep.

The benefits of a good night's sleep:

Revitalized skin—Collagen production occurs during sleep, so if you are not getting enough sleep, you may notice an increase in fine lines and wrinkles.

Weight control—Sleep deprived/people experience as much as 50% less fat loss than those people who are well-rested. Your metabolism does not work as well when you are not getting enough sleep.

Lower Stress—Poor sleep can cause stress. This stress leads to poor sleep (again), and the cycle repeats itself.

Better mood—Lack of sleep can cause anger, sadness, and mental exhaustion.

Better Memory— During sleep we use the three faces of sleep: acquisition (learning something new), consolidation (committing it to memory), and recall (accessing that information).

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Get ready for better sleep:

- Eliminate caffeinated drinks after noon for better quality sleep. It can take up to seven hours for caffeine to wear off.
- Turn off the computer and television at least an hour before bed. Bright screens keep you alert instead of letting you relax.
- Keep your bedroom at a comfortable temperature. 65–67 degrees is ideal.

Notes: Sleep loss and pain both increase levels of inflammatory markers, but getting more sleep may help decrease this inflammation.

Breath count is not as important as breath awareness. Start with what is comfortable to you.

Cheat Sleep!

https://medical.mit.edu/sites/default/files/Cheat_Sleep.pdf

MAY IS COMING — 15TH ANNUAL MAY IS BIKE MONTH

May is coming — and with it, the Sacramento region's **15th Annual May is Bike Month** campaign. Take advantage of the beautiful spring weather and longer days, and join your friends, neighbors, and co-workers in their commitment to bicycling to work, school, errands, or for recreation or training this May. People throughout the Sacramento region are working together to opt for their bike pedals over the gas pedal, get some fresh air and exercise, and take cars off the road for all kinds of trips.

May is Bike Month "To-Do" List:

1. **Register** during April to get your Early Bird badge and then be sure to ride and log every week in May to be entered into weekly drawings.
2. Invite friends to join the fun using the **Invite a Friend tool** and share it with all of your friends.
3. Like our **Facebook** page to get daily info on upcoming events, local biking info and tips on businesses that are offering a discount to cyclists. If you want the super insider tidbits follow us on **Twitter**, **Instagram**, and Snapchat too.
4. Spread the word about Bike Month by bragging about your badges on Facebook (we've made it easy to do).

SUN SAFETY

The days are longer, the sun is shining and we are spending more and more time outside during this time of the year. Here are some safety tips on sun exposure.

1. Wear sunscreen every day, in all weather and in every season. It should have a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 and say "broad-spectrum" on the label, which means it protects against the sun's UVA and UVB rays. Put it on at least 15 minutes before going outside. Use 1 ounce, which would fill a shot glass.
2. Reapply sunscreen at least every 80 minutes, or more often if you're sweating or swimming.
3. Wear sunglasses with total UV protection.
4. Wear wide-brimmed hats, and long-sleeved shirts and pants.
5. Avoid being out in the sun as much as possible from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
6. Check your skin regularly so you know what's normal for you and to notice any changes or new growths.
7. Choose cosmetics and contact lenses that offer UV protection. You still need to use sunscreen and wear sunglasses with broad-spectrum sun protection.
8. If you're a parent, protect your child's skin and practice those habits together.
9. Don't use tanning beds.

<https://www.webmd.com/beauty/sun-safety-tips>



PROTECT ALL THE SKIN YOU'RE IN

Enjoy the Outdoors!
Being physically active outside is healthy and can help prevent conditions like obesity. But it's important to be sun smart when playing and working outdoors.

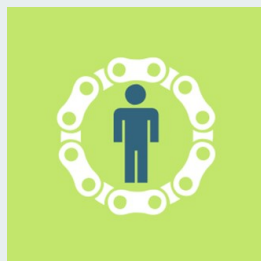
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Illustration of a man and a woman wearing hats and sunglasses, standing outdoors under a bright sun.



TOP 10 BENEFITS OF REPLACING A CAR TRIP ON YOUR BIKE

1. Avoid traffic congestion
2. Convenient and free parking
3. Exercise
4. Daily dose of Vitamin D
5. Listen to the birds sing
6. Digital break from devices
7. Save money on gas
8. Endorphin boost
9. Help reduce air pollution
10. Time to smell the roses



EASY MEALS

After a full day of work, cooking may be the last thing on your mind. However, fueling our bodies with healthy food options is a must. So here are a few quick and easy meal ideas, to stay on track.

Salads:

Kale Salad—Ingredients: Chopped kale, frozen diced mango, shredded coconut, cashew nuts, and coleslaw dressing.



Broccoli Salad—Ingredients: Chopped broccoli, dried cranberries and/or raisins, unshelled sunflower seeds, Asian toasted sesame or coleslaw dressing .

Directions: Most ingredients can be purchased pre-chopped or shredded. Both of these recipes are made according to your liking. A small amount of dressing is needed, just enough to lightly coat all the ingredients. These flavors all compliment each other, and it is easy to prepare. You may need to substitute some of the ingredients because of food allergies. You could always experiment and add chicken, other fruits and vegetables, or corn nuts as well. (Unknown Family Recipe)



Lime Chicken

This easy lime chicken takes a small amount of time to prepare

Yield: About 6-8 servings

-Total Time: 50 mins

-Prep Time: 5 mins

-Cook Time: 45 mins

Ingredients:

2 lbs. Just Bare chicken thighs (boneless or bone-in — or you can also substitute chicken breasts)
1/2 cup freshly-squeezed lime juice
1 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce
1 tsp. black pepper
1/2 cup chopped fresh cilantro (for garnish)
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 tsp. salt
2 Tbsp. melted butter
Zest of two limes

Directions: Add chicken thighs, lime juice, garlic, Worcestershire sauce, salt and pepper to a large zip lock bag. Seal and toss to combine ingredients until the chicken is evenly coated. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes or up to 8 hours. Preheat oven to 425 degrees F and grease a baking dish with cooking spray. Remove chicken from bag with a slotted spoon, reserving the marinade, and arrange in a single layer in the baking dish. Brush chicken with melted butter, and season with additional salt and pepper if desired. Bake for about 20 minutes, then remove and brush chicken with the reserved marinade. Bake for an additional 20-30 minutes, or until the chicken is cooked through and the juices run clear. (Baking times may shift for different types of chicken.) Remove and sprinkle chicken with lime zest and fresh cilantro. Serve over rice or quinoa garnished with lime wedges.

(Give Me Some Oven - <https://www.gimmesomeoven.com/easy-lime-chicken>)

Tamale Pie

-Prep 15 min -Total 55 min -Servings 6

1 lb lean (at least 80%) ground beef, turkey, or pork
2 can (10 oz.) Old El Paso™ medium red enchilada sauce
1 cans (4.5 oz. each) Old El Paso™ chopped green chilies
1 teaspoon chili powder
1 1/2 cups shredded Cheddar cheese (6 oz.)
1 box (8.5 oz.) corn muffin mix
Milk and egg called for on muffin mix box



Directions: Heat oven to 350°F. In 10-inch ovenproof skillet, cook beef over medium-high heat 5 to 7 minutes, stirring occasionally, until beef is thoroughly cooked; drain. Stir in enchilada sauce, 1 can of the green chilies and the chili powder. Remove from heat. Sprinkle with 1 cup of the Cheddar cheese. Meanwhile, make corn muffin batter as directed on box. Stir in remaining 1 can green chilies and remaining 1/2 cup cheese. Spoon batter evenly over beef mixture. Bake 35 to 40 minutes or until topping is golden brown. Cool 5 minutes.

(Pillsbury Kitchen- <https://www.pillsbury.com/recipes/easy-tamale-pie>)