



Motivation for a Healthier Life

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***ALWAY FIND TIME FOR THE THINGS THAT MAKE YOU FEEL HAPPY TO BE
ALIVE***

—author unknown

What makes you feel alive? Make time for it, today!! It is not important for your health, it's ESSENTIAL for your health



Flax:

Flaxseeds are an excellent addition to the diet! They are an excellent source of omega-3 fatty acids, lignans, and both soluble and insoluble fiber. Both the fiber and the omega-3 fatty acids make this an excellent food for your heart, lowering cholesterol, promoting healthy digestion, reducing inflammation, aiding with fat loss, reducing sugar cravings and reducing dry skin, hair and eyes! One tablespoon of flaxseed contains approximately 5 grams of fiber! The dietary lignans are a natural antioxidant that help protect your body's cells from damage and there is some up and coming research which shows that it may help protect us from breast and prostate cancer. Flaxseeds have up to 700 times more lignans than legumes and whole grains! Flax can be purchased whole or ground and both have the same nutritional value, but our bodies absorb the ground version more readily. So either purchase it ground or buy it whole and grind it in a coffee grinder as needed. Store it in an air tight container in your refrigerator, as the oils in the seeds can spoil, for up to 60 days. Flaxseed can easily be added to meals. Add it to your oatmeal or breakfast cereal, sprinkle on top of peanut butter toast or salads, substitute it for some oil or an egg in a recipe, or add it to a smoothie. For a great recipe, see below.

Flax Smoothie Recipe:

1 cup almond milk	1/2 strawberries, raspberries or blueberries
1-2 tbsp ground flax seed	1-2 tbsp almond butter

Instructions: Put all the ingredients into a blender and blend on high for 30-40 seconds.

Valerian Root:

Are you struggling with insomnia or mild anxiety?? I may have just the herb for you. Valerian, *Valeriana officinalis*, is a mild non addictive sedative that has been used for years to promote sleep and a sense of calm.

Dosage: It comes in many forms; tinctures, liquids, capsules, teas, freeze dried roots, soft gel and tablets. I prefer a capsule containing a standardized dose. Look for a bottle that contains 0.8-1% valerenic (or valeric) acid, this way you know exactly how much of the herb you are getting. Standard



dose for sleep is 400-900mg 30-60mins prior to bed. For some people it may take 2-3 weeks of continual use before they see improvement. For anxiety, anywhere from 100-400mg 2-3 times a day. *Side Effects and Caution:* Valerian root is relatively safe and no significant side effects are known other than sedation. It should never be used if you are pregnant or breast feeding. It may interact with alcohol, some antihistamines, muscle relaxants, psychotropic drugs and narcotics. If you are taking any of these drugs, please consult with your health care provider before use.

Note: Valerian root has a VERY distinct smell, so if do not be concerned that the herb has spoiled, this is normal. Also, as with any sleep aid, use it for the shortest duration possible and rotate aids periodically.

4-7-8 Relaxation Breath Technique:

We all feel stressed and anxious at times. In these times of stress, our bodies get tense, our breathing gets short and shallow and our bellies tighten up. Taking a few minutes to pay attention to our breath can help to alleviate these symptoms. Seem too good to be true? Well it is not. When our breathing is slow and relaxed, tension and anxiety fade away. It turns down our sympathetic nervous system, our “flight or fight response” and revs up our parasympathetic nervous system, the part of our body that keeps us calm and our bodies running smoothly. This simple breathing exercise allows the mind to be present, not stewing on the past or worrying about the future and it can be done anywhere and anytime. Integrating this simple practice into our daily life is one of the best gifts we can give ourselves.

The 4-7-8 Relaxation Breath Instructions:

- Breathe in slowly and quietly through the nose for the count of 4, letting your belly expand outward, while your chest stays soft and relaxed
- Hold the breath for a count of 7
- Breathe out forcefully through your mouth for the count of 8
- This is one cycle, repeat 3 more times for a total of 4 cycles

Challenge: Practice this morning and night for 2 weeks!! Practice makes perfect and once you perfect it, you can call on it when you are stressed, angry, anxious, panicked, can't fall asleep, etc. Also teach your children this exercise so that they'll have a healthy coping strategy as they move through life!!



Know your environment.
Protect your health.

EWG dirty dozen

“The Dirty Dozen!” I knew that’d get your attention!! There is a non-profit organization called the Environmental Working Group, whose goal, through research, is to “empower people to live healthier lives in a healthier environment”. They have put out a list of foods called “The Dirty Dozen”, which contains the top twelve produce items containing the most pesticides!! EEEK. Right?! How is this list helpful to you? We all know that pesticides are bad and if we could all eat organic, all the time we would, but cost is often the limiting factor. If you are on a budget and want to eat as healthy as possible, you can use the dirty dozen list to choose the produce you should always buy organic. They also have put out a list called the “Clean 15”, this is a list of foods you can comfortably buy conventionally grown if organic is not available or in your budget. The cool thing is, there is a great app that can be downloaded onto your phone and easily accessed at the grocery store. For more information on these lists and other ways to keep your family healthy, check out the EWG's website!!