



April

Member Newsletter



Building your self-care toolbox

When feeling stressed, anxious, disconnected, or unable to cope, it's common to turn to distractions like snacking, endless scrolling or mindless TV watching. A better alternative is to create a “self-care toolbox” made up of *healthy* strategies and resources that you can easily access whenever you need to relax, spark your energy, or boost your mood, as well as support your overall well-being. Try some of the toolkit items mentioned here that help in the following key ways:

Calms your mind, eases worries. Use meditation apps or create a soothing music playlist. Keep a journal of your daily thoughts, including issues that worry you (and any possible solutions)—jot them down before bed so they don't keep you awake! Write down three things you are grateful for each day—expressing gratitude can help reduce depression and increase happiness.

Moves your body, boosts your energy. Whether you take a half-hour walk on your lunch hour or dance to lively music, you'll be stoking up the feel-good brain hormones, and helping your heart, muscles, digestion and more. Post the motto “Sit less, move more” by your desk. Set a timer to help you get up and move every 30 to 60 minutes—stretch, walk around during calls, etc.

Increases connection. Opt for in-person experiences as much as possible. One idea: try prepping and cooking a new healthy recipe with family or friends. Or, pick a buddy for a weekly walk through the park or woods. Even if you just go alone, just being in nature is restorative and connects you to the outside world and yourself in immeasurable ways.

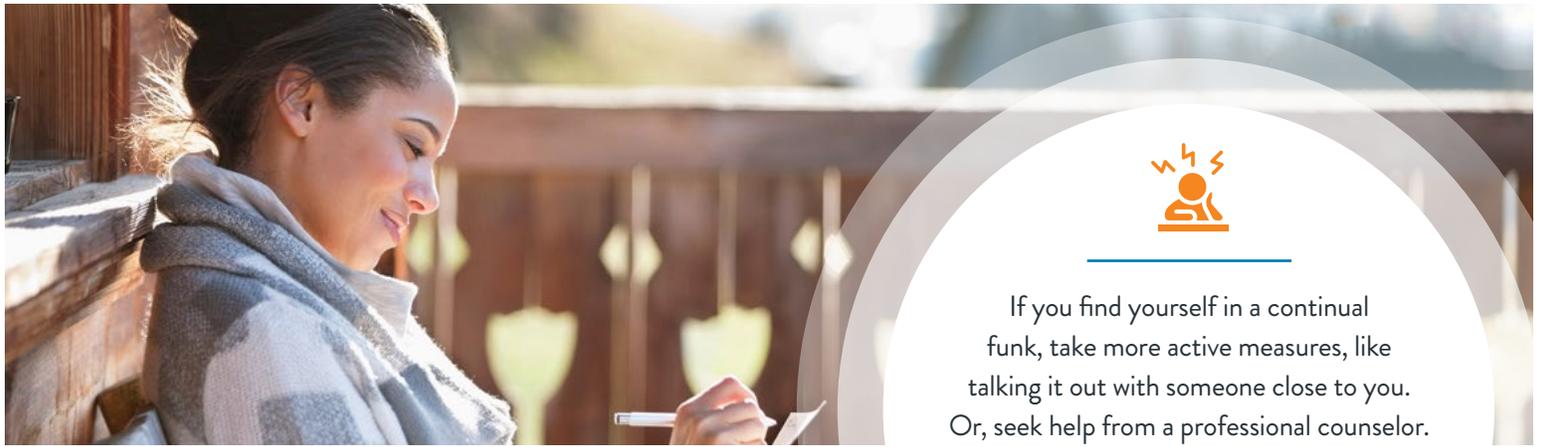
Stimulates your mind, sparks imagination. Keep a list of things you'd like to explore or experience—whether new farmer's markets, unique sites nearby (check out **Atlas Obscura**), intriguing podcasts, upcoming events, or classes/courses to attend (browse the free courses offered through **Coursera**, your community college, or high school).

Keeps your thinking focused and positive. Post sayings or reminders on your mirror, computer monitor, or dashboard that can help you switch to a positive mindset, such as: **I CAN** do this, this **WILL** get better, **I CAN** work through this, etc.

Lifts your spirits. Look for ways to do good for others. Volunteering for a cause, visiting an elderly or sick loved one, or helping a neighbor with chores can help boost your self-confidence, self-esteem, and life satisfaction.

Still feeling stressed, depressed and unable to cope?

Talk to your doctor about a referral to a qualified counselor, or contact a counselor yourself for help.



If you find yourself in a continual funk, take more active measures, like talking it out with someone close to you. Or, seek help from a professional counselor.

The whole-body effects of stress relief

Taking time each day to do simple activities that calm your body and mind is a powerful way to short-circuit stress, restore a sense of well-being, and protect your health! It's vital to know how your body indicates that you're stressed, and equally important to take measures to manage stress no matter how it shows up. When stress is ongoing, improperly managed, or uncontrolled, it can negatively affect your physical and mental health. Here are just a few ways that renewing your commitment to stress-busting activities may help keep you healthy:

Better managing stress and your lifestyle may help ward off colds and flu. Chronic stress lowers your body's ability to fight infections. Besides getting your flu and COVID-19 shots, washing your hands, and covering your mouth when you cough, practice stress management using mindfulness and other techniques. Bolster your immune system by getting enough sleep and physical activity, avoiding alcohol and tobacco, and eating highly nutritious foods.

Get better sleep. Track troubling thoughts in a worry journal, try a relaxing wind-down routine that includes focusing on pleasant thoughts to usher you into deep slumber, or read to escape to a whole new world.

Calm troubled skin. Getting proper sleep, exercising, and using relaxation techniques could help quell acne breakouts, rashes, and flare-ups of rosacea, eczema and other skin conditions.

Soothe stress-related achiness and pain. Stress prompts the output of adrenaline, which triggers ongoing tension, making your head, neck, or even your legs and other muscles rigid and sore. Manage it by getting up to stretch or walk periodically.

Better manage your weight. Brisk walking and cardiovascular activities may help counter stress' link to weight fluctuations. Additionally, by controlling your stress in healthier ways, you may find yourself reaching for your comfort foods less often.

Cancer Control Month: Tips to prevent cancer



Cancer: One small word can evoke so many feelings. It is almost impossible to go through life without knowing someone affected by this serious illness. The primary objectives of National Cancer Control Month is to prevent cancer, promote early detection, and support the needs of patients, survivors and caregivers. In recognition of this important month, we've prepared some important tips for you.

Cancer Prevention

- **Discuss your risks and genetics with your providers.** Certain cancers may be preventable through prophylactic surgery if you are at high risk of, for example, breast cancer, gastrointestinal cancers and ovarian cancer.
- **Make healthy lifestyle changes** such as maintaining a healthy weight, exercising regularly and eating nutritious foods such as fruits and vegetables, whole grains and lean proteins.
- **Limit alcohol and quit tobacco**—using these substances significantly increases your risk of developing many types of cancer.

Early Detection

- **Schedule regular exams** with your primary care doctor—they are your first line of defense against many preventable conditions!
- **Make appointments for cancer screenings** based on your age, risk factors and family history.
- **Perform regular self-checks**—for example, skin checks, breast self-exams and testicular self-exams.
- **Pay attention to any changes to your body**—when in doubt, get it checked out!

Offer Support

- **Stay in touch.** People diagnosed with cancer may feel very alone. Send emails, cards or text messages, or call them to let them know you're thinking of them.
- **Don't compare or scare.** Remember that each person's experience with cancer or other conditions will be different.
- **Find other ways to contribute.** Donate money or your time by volunteering. Find groups that put together care packages or make meals for people currently in treatment.

For more help, talk to Health Advocate, your health practitioner or a qualified counselor.

Alcohol Awareness Month



It's not always easy to tell if you have a drinking problem, but having just a couple symptoms can signal one. It helps to know the signs so you can make a change early. If you do not have any symptoms, then staying within the recommended limits could reduce your chances of injuries, health problems, worsening chronic conditions and other alcohol-related issues. For questions to ask yourself about your drinking habits and more, go to:

www.rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov/How-much-is-too-much/Whats-the-harm/What-Are-Symptoms-Of-Alcohol-Use-Disorder.aspx

Or take an assessment here:

www.healthadvocate.com/emails/awareness_email/2102019-AlcoholAwarenessAssessment-5FLY.pdf