

RELAXATION

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HEALTH COACHING HINTS



Health Coaching Hint #1: Get Outside!

empowered
HEALTH

Taking time to get outside and be in nature is a great way to reduce your stress, gain mental clarity, and rejuvenate your body and mind.

Why is this?

Time outside has been shown to:

- Help balance your circadian rhythm helping you get better sleep
- Provide an opportunity for you to unplug from the hustle and bustle of everyday life.
- Give your brain a break and allow it a chance to process and reset from perpetual stimulation.
- Help reduce cortisol levels by giving you time to pause and just be in the present moment.

Looking for a local place to get outside, here are some suggestions:

- Columbia Park
- Howard Amon Park
- Leslie Groves Park
- Sacajawea State Park
- Badger & Candy Mountain Trails

These are the big ones. There are many smaller parks throughout the Tri-Cities and the surrounding area. Do you have a favorite outdoor park that you use to unwind?

Health Coaching Hint #2: Get Social

Loneliness and social isolation have been shown to have negative effects on your health and may even lead to increased risk for certain medical conditions. If you are feeling a bit isolated or out of touch, it can feel challenging to know where to begin to look to find your people.

It may sound counter-intuitive to find relaxation through the social connections, but knowing you have people that have your back can be just what you need to reduce the anxieties that come with the uncertainty of our daily lives.

These options can help you reduce the stress of finding a group of people that you can connect with and begin to gain more diverse social network:

- Look online. Find local groups on meetup.com through social media platforms
- Take a class. Check out your local library or community center for classes or events
- Volunteer. Find a non-profit that supports a cause you care about and start helping out.
- Join a gym or fitness group. Find an activity you enjoy and then find a group or class that you can take with others.

Pick one or two that you find interesting and add them into your calendar. Before you know it, you'll be enjoying a good, stress-relieving belly laugh with new friends.

Health Coaching Hint #3: Get Creative

A fantastic way to relax from all the stresses in our lives is to find a way to stretch your creative muscles. The intention is to find something that causes you to lose track of time while you are doing it. This is known as being in a state of flow, and has been shown to help your body relax and let go of all the stress that has been accumulating over the day or week.

Not sure where to start or what activity you will find fun to add into your life? Try these suggestions: Channel your younger self. Think about what activities you enjoyed when you were a kid. It's likely that something similar will work well for you now that you are an adult.

Ask your friends and family. Finding a fun activity that you can do with someone else can be a great way to build your relationships and learn a new skill.

Re-examine your "someday" list. What have you always wanted to try? You may have to start small as many hobbies require practice to become skilled at. Simplify this by finding a course through your local parks and recreation department or through an online program that can help guide you through learning that new skill you've always wanted to try.

You may not find the perfect practice right away. Have fun with it, approach it with a beginner's mindset, and don't be afraid to laugh when it goes a bit awry the first few times you try.

Health Coaching Hint #4: Get Solitude

Social connection is an important part of a healthy lifestyle, but too much of anything can have a downside. Finding time to be alone, disconnected from electronics and even other people, for short periods of time can have many positive influences on your health and giving your body and mind time to relax:

- Allow your brain to take a break, reboot, and a chance for you to unwind and process your day.
- Gives you a chance to get to know yourself better.
- Allows you the time you need to think more deeply and be better able to work through problems you may be having.
- Can enhance the relationships you have by giving you time to check-in with yourself and evaluate which people you want to surround yourself with.

Making time for yourself could lead to feelings of guilt, as we have been taught to take care of others before ourselves. However, if we don't take time to make sure that we are doing well, it can make it challenging for us to be in a position to really take care of those we love and do our jobs to the best of our ability.

To help you create a strong foundation that will empower you to be the best version of yourself, try these tips for creating “me time”:

- **Disconnect.** Turn off your electronics and take time to unplug. Whether you decide to set aside time each day or choose one day each week, this can go a long way towards getting that much needed down time your body needs.
- **Take advantage of the morning.** Try waking up a bit earlier to get time alone before the rest of the house wakes up or getting into work early so you can have some quiet time before the rest of the office gets in.
- **Close your door.** Whether it's at home or at work, let others know that when your door is closed, you are not to be interrupted. It may not work everytime, but it can go a long way towards minimizing the distractions.
- **Use your lunchtime.** This is a time to break up the day and give your brain a chance to process the morning before tackling the afternoon.
- **Schedule Solitude.** Whether you take a book to read in the park or at a local coffee shop, wander through a nature trail near your home, or find a quiet place in your home to listen to music and enjoy a cup of tea, put it into your calendar and make it a priority.