

HealthyLife[®]

LETTER



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2023

Embrace the holiday spirit

Holiday spirit is something you create by embracing joy, making memories, and taking part in cherished traditions. Try these holiday activities to cultivate a spirit that spreads happiness and warmth to everyone around you:

- Decorate your home with festive lights, ornaments, and meaningful heirlooms.
- Engage your senses by baking cookies or simmering holiday spices like cinnamon, cloves, and allspice.
- Make time for family traditions like watching classic movies, crafting homemade ornaments, or singing carols.
- Reach out to your community by volunteering or organizing a charity drive to spread goodwill.
- Host a holiday gathering with friends and loved ones to share stories and traditions.
- Embrace the spirit of giving by exchanging thoughtful gifts and personalized cards.
- Emphasize gratitude by reflecting on positive memories and expressing appreciation for the people in your life.
- Attend local holiday events or markets to enjoy the festive atmosphere.
- Savor the season by enjoying your favorite holiday foods and drinks (in moderation)!

Caring for Arthritis

Arthritis is a degenerative condition that affects joints and connective tissues. This causes pain, swelling and restricted movement. It is the most common cause of work disability among adults. While there is no cure for arthritis, there are effective ways to treat and manage the symptoms.



BE ACTIVE

Physical activity is one of the best ways to manage arthritis symptoms. A safe exercise program can:

- Reduce joint pain
- Decrease stiffness
- Build strength
- Improve flexibility
- Increase endurance

Talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program. To protect joints, choose low-impact activities such as:

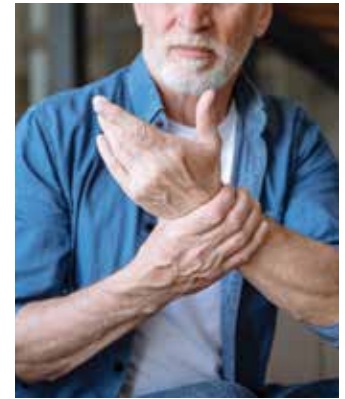
- Swimming
- Cycling
- Brisk walking
- Tai chi or yoga
- Strength training



WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

Maintaining a healthy weight reduces stress on your joints. If you are overweight, losing some weight can decrease pain and stiffness from arthritis. Achieving a healthy weight protects the weight-bearing joints, such as the hips and knees, as well as prevents injuries and improves mobility.

- Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity each week. Remember, it should be low-impact.
- Increase your intake of high-fiber, plant-based foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, and legumes.
- Decrease your intake of highly processed foods such as cakes, candies, cookies, chips, fries, fast food, and sugary beverages.
- Manage stress by making time for relaxation. Yoga, meditation, exercise, and time in nature are all ways to reduce stress.

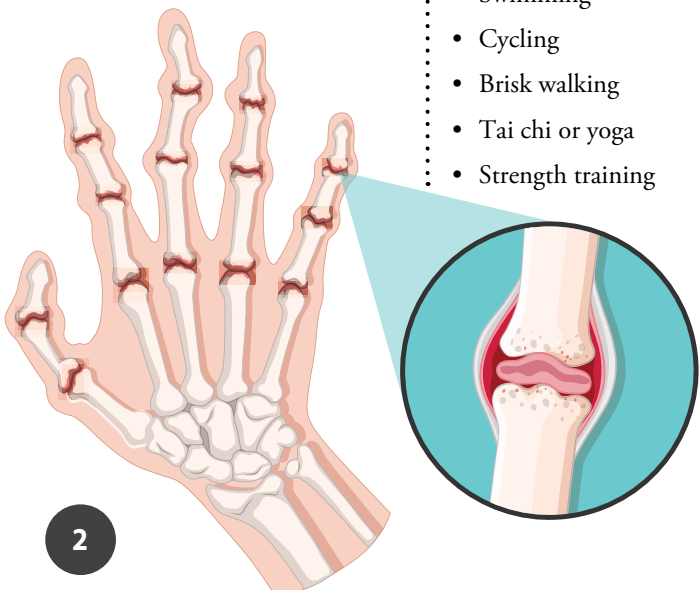


TREATMENT

There are over 100 different types of arthritis. Proper diagnosis by a doctor ensures you receive the best treatment. Early medical treatment of arthritis protects the long-term health of your joints and reduces symptoms.

Treatment your doctor may recommend includes:

- Medication to manage pain and prevent joint damage
- Physical therapy to improve joint function and reduce pain
- Surgery if there is joint damage. This may include repair or replacement of the joint.
- Self-management education programs to teach you how best to manage your arthritis. Ask your doctor about available programs.



Preventing SIDS

With sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), though rare, a baby dies unexpectedly in their sleep, and no cause can be determined. The death is classified as SIDS.

CAUSES

The exact cause of SIDS is unknown, though researchers have identified risk factors that may contribute. While some risk factors, such as genetics or underlying health conditions, are outside your control, there are steps parents can take to create a safe environment for their babies and reduce the risk of SIDS.



RISK FACTORS

- Placing a baby to sleep on their tummy
- Babies born before 37 weeks gestation or born at a low birth weight
- Smoking, drug, or alcohol use during pregnancy
- Blankets, pillows, a soft squishy sleep surface, or stuffed animals in the baby's sleep area
- Babies who have a fever or have recently been sick with a fever have a higher risk for several weeks
- Babies who become overheated when they are over-bundled or dressed in too many layers

REDUCE RISK

- Place babies on their back to sleep.
- Keep baby's head and face uncovered while sleeping and don't let them get too hot.
- Babies who are breastfed, even for a short length of time after birth, have a lower risk of SIDS.
- Place baby on a firm sleep surface, free of blankets, pillows, or other objects.
- Keep baby in the parent's room for their first 6 months of life. Make sure they have their own safe sleeping area.
- Follow your doctor's advice on vaccines, checkups, and other health concerns.
- Give baby plenty of tummy time when they are awake and an adult is there to supervise.

Tackle food shaming

No one should be shamed for what they choose to eat. Yet, the current food climate is full of subtle or not-so-subtle messages that promote shame and guilt. How we talk to both ourselves and others about food choices can contribute to food shaming or stop it in its tracks.



WHAT FOOD SHAMING LOOKS LIKE

Food shaming involves criticizing or judging people or ourselves based on food choices, eating habits, or body size. This can come in the form of comments, thoughts, or being influenced in our food choices due to feelings of shame.

Comments

- “I can’t believe you ate that much pizza.”
- “Is that all you’re eating? You’re already too thin.”
- “Those fries have a lot of fat in them. You shouldn’t eat them.”

Thoughts

- “I’ve been really lazy and haven’t gone to the gym, so I should skip breakfast.”
- “I wish I had their metabolism.”
- “If I looked like them, I’d eat whatever I wanted, too.”

Choices

- Choosing to order a salad instead of the entree you want because you worry what others will think.
- Limiting your choices around people who tend to comment on your eating.
- Hiding what you eat so no one will notice.



BREAK THE CYCLE

With a new mindset and approach to eating you can break the cycle of food shaming.

- No food is good or bad. Instead, think about foods as those you should eat more often (fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, whole grains, etc.) and those you enjoy in moderation (cookies, candies, sugary beverages, etc.). All foods have a place!
- Everyone has different body types and nutrient needs, and what works for you might not be right for someone else.
- Avoid commenting on others’ food choices. What sounds like an innocent comment to you could carry a different meaning for someone else.
- Speak up or change the subject if someone makes shaming food comments. If you feel you can calmly address the comment, do so; otherwise, shift the topic to something else.
- Be kind to yourself. Our relationships with food can be complicated. Give yourself grace and focus on the positive ways food nourishes your body and mind every day.



Put down the phone

Reducing how often you look at your phone can significantly improve your productivity, mental well-being, and overall quality of life. While smartphones have a lot of useful features, they are also designed to grab your attention as often as possible. Take back your attention by putting down the phone.



USE TECHNOLOGY TO MANAGE TECHNOLOGY

There are apps available to help you reduce screen time. Apple's Screen Time and Android's Digital Wellbeing are two examples of apps that allow you to monitor and limit your phone usage. Use these tools to set app-specific limits.



PHONE-FREE ZONES

Designate certain areas in your house or times in your day as phone-free zones. These might include the dinner table, your bedroom, or the first hour after waking up and the hour before bed. You can set do-not-disturb hours on your phone so only specific emergency calls or texts can get through.



REDUCE NOTIFICATIONS

Apps on your phone want to notify you in an effort to gain your attention. You should be able to turn off notifications in the settings for each app. You may choose to leave notifications on for some apps, or selectively choose the notifications you want to receive.



DIGITAL DETOX

Taking time to disconnect allows you to build new habits to fill the time you normally use to scroll on your phone. Read a book, go for a walk, or just be with friends and family. Observe how much more you may accomplish or how much more peaceful you may feel.



USE A TIMER

Set a timer when you pick up your phone for entertainment, such as to check social media or play a game. Give yourself a 5 to 10 minutes limit, and when the timer beeps, put your phone down. Notice how easy or hard it is to stick to a limit.



DO WHAT YOU LOVE

If you had an extra hour or two in your day, how would you spend it? When you cut back on phone usage, you'll likely find you DO have some extra time in your day. Reflect on how you can use the time you previously spent on your phone to do something you love.

Avoid role reversal

Your parents will always be your parents. But it's natural for relationship dynamics to change as their need for assistance increases with age. The feeling of "parenting" your parents, also known as role reversal, can create confusion and challenges for caregiving. It's essential to maintain a balanced relationship, respecting their autonomy and dignity as you support them in this stage of life.



COMMUNICATE

Encourage open and honest conversations with your parents about their wishes, preferences, and concerns as they age. Discuss topics such as health care, living arrangements, and financial planning.

RESPECT

Recognize and respect their independence. They are adults who can make their own decisions, even if you disagree with them.

BOUNDARIES

Establish clear boundaries with responsibilities. Determine what tasks they can manage independently, what they need assistance with, and where professional help might be necessary.

PRIORITIES

Maintaining a healthy, trusting relationship with your parents should always be the first priority. To be an effective caregiver, your parents need to know you will listen to them and take their concerns seriously. Sometimes, that will mean letting go of what you think they should do and supporting their decisions.

SELF-CARE

Caregiving can be challenging, emotionally and physically. Don't hesitate to seek support from friends, support groups, or professional counselors. To be the best caregiver for your parents, you must also care for yourself.

EMPATHY

Put yourself in your parents' shoes and try to understand their feelings and perspectives. Losing independence is frustrating, and it is naturally hard for your parents to rely on you for support. Have compassion for what they are going through.

PLAN

Be proactive in planning for your parents' future needs. This might involve exploring assisted living options, in-home care, or discussing legal and financial matters. Planning ahead can alleviate stress and ensure that you and your parents are on the same page as their needs change.

Save on car insurance

CAR INSURANCE CAN SAVE YOU A LOT OF MONEY IN THE CASE OF A CRASH OR CLAIM. HOWEVER, NO ONE WANTS TO PAY TOO MUCH FOR COVERAGE. HERE ARE SOME WAYS TO GET THE BEST RATE TO FIT YOUR BUDGET.



- **Shop around.** Compare rates from a wide range of insurance companies, as costs can vary greatly.
- **Consider a higher deductible.** While not right for everyone, carrying a higher deductible can significantly lower your rate.
- **Pay the premium in full if possible.** Some insurance companies offer a small discount if you pay the yearly costs all at once instead of in smaller chunks.
- **Bundle your insurance.** There is often a discount if you get car insurance from the same company as your home or renter's insurance.
- **Look into extra ways to save.** Some insurance companies offer discounts for things like driving a safer car, taking a defensive driving course, or parking in a garage.
- **Maintain a good credit score.** Insurance companies may use your credit score to determine your rate.

How to ask for a raise

When it's time to ask for a raise, approach the conversation with confidence, preparation, and professionalism. By presenting a well-researched case and demonstrating your value to the company, you increase your chances of getting the raise you deserve.



RESEARCH & PREPARE

Before asking for a raise, research the standards in your industry and the average salary ranges for your role and experience level. Use this information to guide your request.

HIGHLIGHT ACHIEVEMENTS

Prepare a list of projects, accomplishments, and contributions. Give specific examples of how your efforts add value to the organization. Showcase your skills, expertise, and willingness to take on additional responsibilities.

THE RIGHT TIME

A performance review is often an ideal time to ask for a raise or when you've accomplished something significant. Request a private meeting with your supervisor to ensure you have their undivided attention.

BE PROFESSIONAL

Be respectful and polite, regardless of the outcome. Be open to feedback and willing to discuss options other than a salary increase, such as additional benefits or professional development opportunities.

BE CONFIDENT

Approach the conversation with confidence and conviction. Clearly state your request and be specific with the amount you are seeking.

FOLLOW-UP

If you don't get the raise you asked for, it's appropriate to ask why and find out what factors influenced the decision. Learn what specific areas you can improve to merit a raise in the future.