Stressful Day?
Take A Walk

- Eating Habits that Can Change Your Life
- Are You an Emotional Eater?
- Networking: Face to Face vs. Online
- Coping With Chronic Pain
We all know that our eating habits have an effect on our health and how we feel, but breaking unhealthy eating habits can change your life! Changing your diet doesn’t have to be focused on weight loss alone. Your energy levels, moods, and emotional health can change along with your meals if you make healthier choices. Start with these small changes:

• **Opt for healthier foods.** Eat more fruits, vegetables, nuts, whole-grain breads, seafood, lean meats, and beans. Whenever you think about snacking, reach for a handful of almonds or dried fruit instead of chips or candy. It’s important to note that some dried fruits have more sugar than candy, so choose wisely. Avoid refined sugars and grains, and foods that are high in saturated fats, trans fats, and sodium. Reading the labels on foods will help you to limit calorie, fat, and sugar intake.

• **Create a meal plan.** Planning and preparing your own meals for the week is a great way to ensure that you eat healthy meals every day. Involve the entire family in choosing and preparing healthier meals so that everyone becomes more aware of what they are eating, how it is prepared, and the health benefits.

• **Keep it simple.** Tracking calories alone will not make your diet healthy. Focus on filling your plate with fresh vegetables that add a variety of color to your plate. Choose simple, fresh snacks such as sliced fruits and vegetables.

---

**Stressful Day? Take A Walk**

After a stressful day at work, you may just want to curl up with a book or take a relaxing bubble bath. Although these two activities can be great stress relivers, taking a walk has tremendous benefits, both physical and mental. As with any exercise, you’ll release endorphins, which can help to control mood, appetite, and immunity, and can decrease stress and feelings of pain. Here are some tips for getting the most out of your jaunt:

**Go outside.** When you’re outdoors, nature, fresh air, and visual stimulation can lift your spirits. A colorful garden, a passing hello, or a happy dog can provide an uplifting diversion from what stresses you.

**Pick up the pace.** When we walk briskly, we release endorphins, which create happy feelings. It also increases norepinephrine, a chemical that moderates our stress response.

**Take a friend.** Simply being with a friend can make us feel better, and talking out our problems can help us to get clarity. Why not combine the two?

**Recharge your brain.** A walk can act as a form of meditation, which has been proven to reduce stress, improve memory, and increase productivity. In addition, cardiovascular exercise can help to create new brain cells and improve brain performance.

---

*Check with a health care professional before starting any new exercise routine.*
Are You an Emotional Eater?

Do you snack when you are bored or restless? Are your food choices based on your mood? Is eating your favorite way to celebrate? If you answered yes to two or more these questions, you may be an emotional eater.

Filling up on sugary and fatty foods can make you feel better in the short term, but in the long term, they only make you feel worse. It’s not easy to learn new ways to cope with the emotions that cause you to head to the fridge, but it can be done. Learn to identify which emotions cause you to comfort yourself with food, and try responding with these healthier behaviors:

- **Listen to music.** During your commute, while working, cleaning, or preparing meals — music provides benefits any time.
- **Do breathing exercises.** Deep breathing oxygenates the blood, relaxes your muscles, and quiets the mind.
- **Practice visualization.** Imagine yourself achieving goals.
- **Get some exercise.** It’s an outlet for frustration, a diversion from stress, and it gives you a boost from endorphins.
- **Call someone.** Talking it out with a friend or health care professional is a healthy way to work through your stress.

Networking:
Face to Face vs. Online

In this digital age of online social networking, face-to-face interactions are becoming less common. However, there are plenty of benefits to networking in person that cannot be replaced by a computer screen.

- **Show off your personality.** Meeting someone in person allows you to show off your interests and social skills in the most authentic way. Face time with clients, coworkers, and friends cannot be replaced by social media. It allows for an irreplaceable connection to form.
- **Get away from the computer.** In-person events get you out of the house and allow you to maintain social skills. The more time you spend in front of the screen, the weaker your communication skills and confidence become. Getting off of the computer also keeps you active. So, instead of using social media, go to that party!
- **Avoid arguments and misunderstandings.** Online conversations are often left open for interpretation from lack of tone of voice and body language. Although we live in the digital age, it is important that our communication skills do not go out of practice. Maintain relationships with clients, friends, and family by engaging in some real face time!
Coping with Chronic Pain

Chronic pain can be stressful, both physically and emotionally. Pain is typically considered chronic when it lasts more than six months and affects your daily life. You want to ensure that you meet with your health care provider so they can get you the proper diagnosis and treatment to address your pain. Once you have a program in place, there are a few things that can help you cope with your condition:

• Do not dwell on your symptoms. As long as you’ve taken the necessary steps to share your symptoms with a health care provider, you should avoid worrying. When you focus on your limitations, it is easy to forget about your abilities. Dwelling on the symptoms can lead down a path of negative thinking that will contribute to your pain.

• Relax. Meditating and other relaxation exercises ease tension and pain — they also help with managing stress. Since chronic pain can be the source of increased stress, relaxation techniques and getting plenty of sleep may help you feel better.

• Speak freely to a trusted person. Whether it is a support group, a therapist, or a friend, speak about your chronic pain. Simply having someone who is there to listen is a great thing, but having someone who can relate is even better! Chronic pain groups are an excellent place to speak in an honest, judgment-free zone. You don’t have to do it alone!

• Stay active. Stretching exercises or an active hobby can keep you moving and provide an outlet and distraction from pain. Work with your health care provider to find a program that will work for you. Keeping a positive outlook and seeking support can change how you feel both emotionally and physically.

Recipe of the Month:

Baked Apples

Ingredients:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2 fresh Granny Smith apples</th>
<th>1 teaspoon sugar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 tablespoon unsalted butter</td>
<td>2 teaspoons cinnamon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instructions:

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Peel apples and remove cores and stems. Mix the sugar and cinnamon together in a small bowl. Place apples in a baking dish. Add half a tablespoon of the butter into the center of each apple. Then sprinkle both apples with the sugar and cinnamon mixture. Bake for 10 – 15 minutes and enjoy!
Monthly Quiz:

1. Which of the choices below is the best example of how walking helps to reduce stress?
   a. By helping to release mood-boosting endorphins
   b. By massaging your feet
   c. By looking at flowers

2. Why is face-to-face networking important for your well-being?
   a. People will remember your name
   b. It helps you take a break from your computer to stretch, refresh, and recharge
   c. It gets more accomplished

3. When is pain considered to be chronic?
   a. Pain that lasts longer than six months
   b. Pain that affects your daily life
   c. Both a and b