Live Well, Work Well

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Prioritizing Your Emotional Well-being During the Holidays

While the holiday season and end-of-year parties can be full of festive fun, they can also be stressful and take a toll on your emotional well-being. Putting your emotional wellness on the backburner may cause mood changes and feelings of irritability, hopelessness and isolation.

The holidays can be a stressful time due to the intensified focus on family, work and money.

As holiday celebrations pick up, consider the following tips to help prioritize your emotional well-being:

- **Practice healthy habits.** Maintaining a consistent sleep schedule and eating a balanced diet will help ensure you have enough physical and mental energy to tackle responsibilities and challenges.
- **Stick to a routine.** It's important to keep a daily schedule for both work and personal time. Checking items off your to-do list can also help you feel accomplished on a daily basis.
- **Decrease caffeine and alcohol use.** Although alcohol and caffeine often appear at celebrations, these substances can provoke feelings of depression, anxiety or other mental health challenges.
- **Maintain your boundaries.** Your calendar may quickly fill up with work, personal and social events. Get comfortable saying "no" and reducing extra activities or tasks so you aren't overloaded.
- **Incorporate positive activities.** Get into the habit of taking care of yourself and doing activities that make you happy. During a fast-paced month, it's vital to slow down and prioritize self-care.
- **Recognize your holiday stress triggers and relievers.** Financial pressures and personal demands are common triggers. Stress may cause you to lean on harmful stress relievers and fall into unhealthy habits like smoking or drinking.

It's essential to stay in tune with your feelings and care for yourself. If you have concerns about your emotional well-being, contact a mental health professional or call the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Helpline at 800-662-HELP (4357).

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Giving Your Favorite Recipes a Healthy Makeover

Food is part of holiday traditions, and your family may look forward to certain recipes. Luckily, there are some ways to make your favorite holiday recipes a bit healthier. Consider the following tips to transform your holiday recipes:

- **Fat**—For baked goods, use half the butter or oil and replace the other half with unsweetened applesauce, mashed banana or Greek yogurt.
- **Salt**—Gradually cut back the salt to see if you can taste the difference. You can reduce salt by half if baked goods don't require yeast.
- **Sugar**—Reduce the amount of sugar by one-third to one-half. Instead, add spices like cinnamon, cloves, allspice and nutmeg, or flavorings such as vanilla or almond extract to boost sweetness.

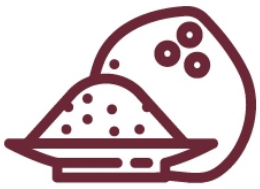
Healthy swaps can also increase the nutritional value of your classics. Get creative and experiment with other ways of creating healthy recipes for your most beloved holiday traditions.

Sweet Alternatives

Using less sugar doesn't mean you have to compromise on the taste of your holiday classics. Consider the following sugar substitutes:

Stevia
Swap out 1 cup of sugar for 1 teaspoon of stevia.

Honey
Add in a quarter of the amount of sugar listed.



Coconut sugar
Use an unrefined sugar cup for cup.

Walk to Lower Your Risk of Chronic Disease

You likely already know that walking is good for your health, but how much do you need to walk daily to produce health benefits? You've also probably heard that a 10,000 steps-per-day goal is good for you. However, that number originated from a Japanese marketing campaign rather than health research.

A new study from Vanderbilt University Medical Center explored how many daily steps a person should take to promote good health. The research studied fitness trackers and revealed that walking 8,200 steps a day was the threshold at which a person begins to significantly lower their risk of developing various chronic diseases. Specific chronic conditions noted included obesity, sleep apnea, gastroesophageal reflux disease, major depressive disorder, diabetes and high blood pressure. The study also concluded that walking more steps than the threshold continues to increase the proven benefits of walking.

Roast Turkey Breast With Rosemary, Sage and Thyme

Makes: 8 servings

Ingredients

3 pounds turkey half-breast (with skin and bones)
1 large onion (quartered)
1 large carrot (quartered)
1 tsp. dried sage
1 tsp. dried thyme
1 tsp. rosemary
3 Tbsp. olive oil
Salt and pepper (to taste)
Chicken broth for basting (optional)

Preparations

1) Preheat oven to 400 F.
2) Place the turkey breast in a roasting pan with the onion and carrot.
3) Mix the spices with olive oil. Rub the turkey with the olive oil mixture.
4) Roast turkey at 400 F for 15 minutes. Baste with chicken broth (optional).
5) Reduce the turkey temperature to 350 F and roast turkey, basting every 20 minutes with pan juices. Roast for 1 hour and 15 minutes or until a meat thermometer registers 165 F.
6) Place the turkey on a carving board and let rest for 10 minutes.

Nutritional Information (per serving)

Total calories	213
Total fat	6 g
Protein	35 g
Sodium	67 mg
Carbohydrate	3 g
Dietary fiber	1 g
Saturated fat	1 g
Total sugars	1 g

Source: MyPlate