

April 2021

*Live. Life. Well.*

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# MANAGING ENERGY LEVELS

## Less Screen Time, More Energy



Do you experience brain drain after spending several hours behind a digital screen? You are not alone.

Research has shown that high levels of screen time can have a negative impact on **brain function**<sup>1</sup>. Spending more than six hours watching TV or using a computer has been linked to weight gain, and those who watch more than four hours of screen time each day are more likely to regain weight after achieving successful weight loss. Higher screen time rates have also been associated with lower levels of physical activity and higher rates of depression.

Some experts recommend limiting screen time to two hours each day. While two hours might not be realistic depending on the type of work you do, it might still be possible to set some limits.

### Here are a few ways to reduce screen time while boosting your energy levels

#### Reconsider video meetings

Reassess how often you need to meet by video conference. Could the same objectives be met with a simple phone call or email exchange instead? Reducing the time you spend in front of a screen might be achievable simply by changing some daily routines.

#### Make your meetings active

If possible, take your phone meetings for a walk, or schedule active in-person meetings and walk together. Movement can also boost creativity.

#### Limit your scrolling

The fewer hours you spend scrolling the web, the more time you have to strengthen meaningful relationships and complete important projects.



*Devoting less energy to screen time also means you will have more energy for the things that matter most.*

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/mental-wealth/201704/10-ways-protect-the-brain-screen-time>





## How to Recharge Your Body and Mind

Do you feel overwhelmed? It may be a sign that you need to recharge. Endless to do lists, double-booked calendars, and ongoing family responsibilities can leave you feeling depleted. Burnout can creep up quickly, and often at the most inconvenient times. That is why it is essential to create space to recharge your body and mind on a regular basis.

Here are some things you can try when you need to recharge:

### Do therapeutic yoga

**Therapeutic yoga**<sup>2</sup> has been shown to improve flexibility, strength, and even lung function. The movements commonly associated with yoga also help relieve muscle tension.



### Take a cold shower

Being immersed in cold water causes blood vessels to constrict, thereby increasing blood flow. This increases the amount of oxygen that gets supplied to your cells, and helps remove toxins more quickly. Athletes are known to use ice baths and cold showers as a way to speed up the post-workout recovery process.



### Get some nature therapy

Spending time outside in nature, sometimes referred to as forest bathing, has **shown**<sup>3</sup> promising results with reducing depression, anxiety, and fatigue. The simple act of taking a walk outside can be an effective way to clear your mind and find creative solutions to problems.



### Sleep

Getting at least seven hours of restful sleep each day is essential for good health. Sleep enhances cognitive function, which is essential for good problem-solving and reasoning skills.

*Take some time to experiment with different recharging strategies to see which ones are the most effective for you.*

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/how-healing-works/201905/how-recharge-your-mind-and-body-therapeutic-yoga>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/spend-time-in-nature-to-reduce-stress-and-anxiety>



## Protect Your Energy with Healthy Boundaries

Boundaries protect your energy. They represent your limits and communicate to others what is and what is not okay. Healthy boundaries can improve your relationships, and they can also preserve your energy for the things you value most.

Even so, boundary-setting can be awkward. Saying no means you might end up disappointing some people you care about, but it also makes it possible for you to allocate your energy more effectively and efficiently.

### Here are three easy steps for setting healthy boundaries:

#### Define your boundaries.

Get clear about what is acceptable and what is not. For example, is it okay for your friend to call you in the middle of the night with a non-emergency issue? Is it okay for a colleague to demand something at the last minute? Knowing your limits is the first step to setting a boundary.

#### Communicate your boundaries.

Next, you will need to communicate your boundary. While it would be nice if others could read your mind, they cannot. You have to be clear about your boundaries if you expect others to respect them.

#### Honor your boundaries.

Boundaries are nothing more than ideas, unless you honor and enforce them. You must be willing to vocalize when someone violates a boundary, and take necessary action to correct the situation when possible and appropriate.

Declining unreasonable requests, suggesting alternative solutions, and having honest, uncomfortable conversations are all forms of enforcing boundaries.

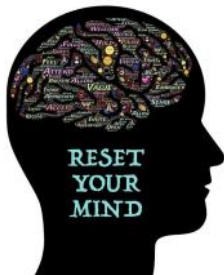


*Boundary-setting is a delicate art that requires practice. It can take time to build skills in this area. It is not necessary to be curt or abrasive when setting boundaries. In fact, you will be much more effective when you do it with grace and kindness.*



## Mindfulness Exercises: See how mindfulness helps you live in the moment

What is mindfulness?



Mindfulness is a type of meditation in which you focus on being intensely aware of what you're sensing and feeling in the moment, without interpretation or judgment. Practicing mindfulness involves breathing methods, guided imagery, and other practices to relax the body and mind. It also helps reduce stress.

Spending too much time planning, problem-solving, daydreaming, or thinking negative or random thoughts can be draining. It can also make you more likely to experience stress, anxiety and symptoms of depression. Practicing mindfulness exercises can help you direct your attention away from this kind of unhealthy thinking and engage with the world around you.

What are the benefits of meditation?

Meditation has been studied in many clinical trials. The overall evidence supports the effectiveness of meditation for various conditions, including: stress, anxiety, pain, depression, insomnia and high blood pressure (hypertension).

Preliminary research indicates that meditation can also help people with asthma and fibromyalgia.

Meditation can assist individuals experience thoughts and emotions with greater balance and acceptance. Meditation also has been shown to: improve attention, decrease job burnout, improve sleep and Improve diabetes control.

What are some examples of mindfulness exercises?

There are many simple ways to practice mindfulness. Some examples include:

- **Pay attention.** It is hard to slow down and notice things in a busy world. Try to take the time to experience your environment with all of your senses — touch, sound, sight, smell and taste. For example, when you eat a favorite food, take the time to smell, taste and truly enjoy it.
- **Live in the moment.** Try to intentionally bring an open, accepting and discerning attention to everything you do. Find joy in simple pleasures.
- **Accept yourself.** Treat yourself the way you would treat a good friend.
- **Focus on your breathing.** When you have negative thoughts, try to sit down, take a deep breath and close your eyes. Focus on your breath as it moves in and out of your body. Sitting and breathing for even just a minute can help.

You can also try more structured mindfulness exercises, such as:

**Body scan meditation.** Lie on your back with your legs extended and arms at your sides, palms facing up. Focus your attention slowly and deliberately on each part of your body, in order, from toe to head or head to toe. Be aware of any sensations, emotions or thoughts associated with each part of your body.

- **Sitting meditation.** Sit comfortably with your back straight, feet flat on the floor and hands in your lap. Breathing through your nose, focus on your breath moving in and out of your body. If physical sensations or thoughts interrupt your meditation, note the experience and then return your focus to your breath.
- **Walking meditation.** Find a quiet place 10 to 20 feet in length, and begin to walk slowly. Focus on the experience of walking, being aware of the sensations of standing and the subtle movements that keep your balance. When you reach the end of your path, turn and continue walking, maintaining awareness of your sensations.



# HOW DO YOU SPELL BURN OUT...

# S-T-R-E-S-S



As the end of another fiscal year approaches, many may be experiencing what is referred to as “Burn Out.” Burn Out is defined as emotional and physical exhaustion resulting from a combination of exposure to environmental and internal stressors and inadequate coping and adaptive skills. (<http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/burnout>)

## SIGNS OF BURN OUT

- Increase in isolation
- Decrease in work performance
- Increase in forgetfulness
- Decrease in self-esteem and sense of competence
- Paranoia
- Increase in absenteeism
- Increase in visits to doctors

Decreasing your stress level can reduce the likelihood of burn out. One quick and easy way to reduce stress levels is “breathing”. Breathing is the ultimate anytime stress reliever - if you do it right. Shallow breathing increases the heart rate, creating a feeling of anxiety.

To shift from anxiety breathing to relaxation, use this easy “Belly Breathing” technique

**1**



Start by blowing out all the breath in your lungs (like a big sigh).

**2**



Inhale, pushing your belly all the way out.

**3**

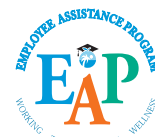


Let the air out slowly until your belly is flattening again.

**4**

**REPEAT!**

If stress gets serious, you could be in trouble. Make time to change your habits. To consult a professional counselor contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at 754-322-9900.





## Key Lime Pie Energy Bars

### INGREDIENTS

- 20 pitted deglet dates (or 10 medjool dates, pitted)
- 3/4 cup whole almonds
- 3/4 cup raw cashews
- 1/4 cup unsweetened shredded coconut
- Zest of 2 limes
- Juice of 1 lime
- Pinch of sea salt

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place all ingredients into the bowl of a food processor.
2. Process until mixture is crumbly, yet still holds together when pinched between your fingers. If mixture is too dry, add another date and process again or add a splash of water. If mixture is too wet, add a few more nuts and process again until crumbly.
3. Press mixture onto a parchment paper-lined baking sheet forming a square about 9 x 9 inches (or roll them between your hands to form them into 16 balls). Place bars in the fridge to chill if they seem sticky.
4. Cut into 12 bars. Wrap in parchment paper and store in a covered container in the fridge for up to 1 week.

Total Time (Cook and Prep):  
30 minutes

Servings: 16 balls or 12 bars

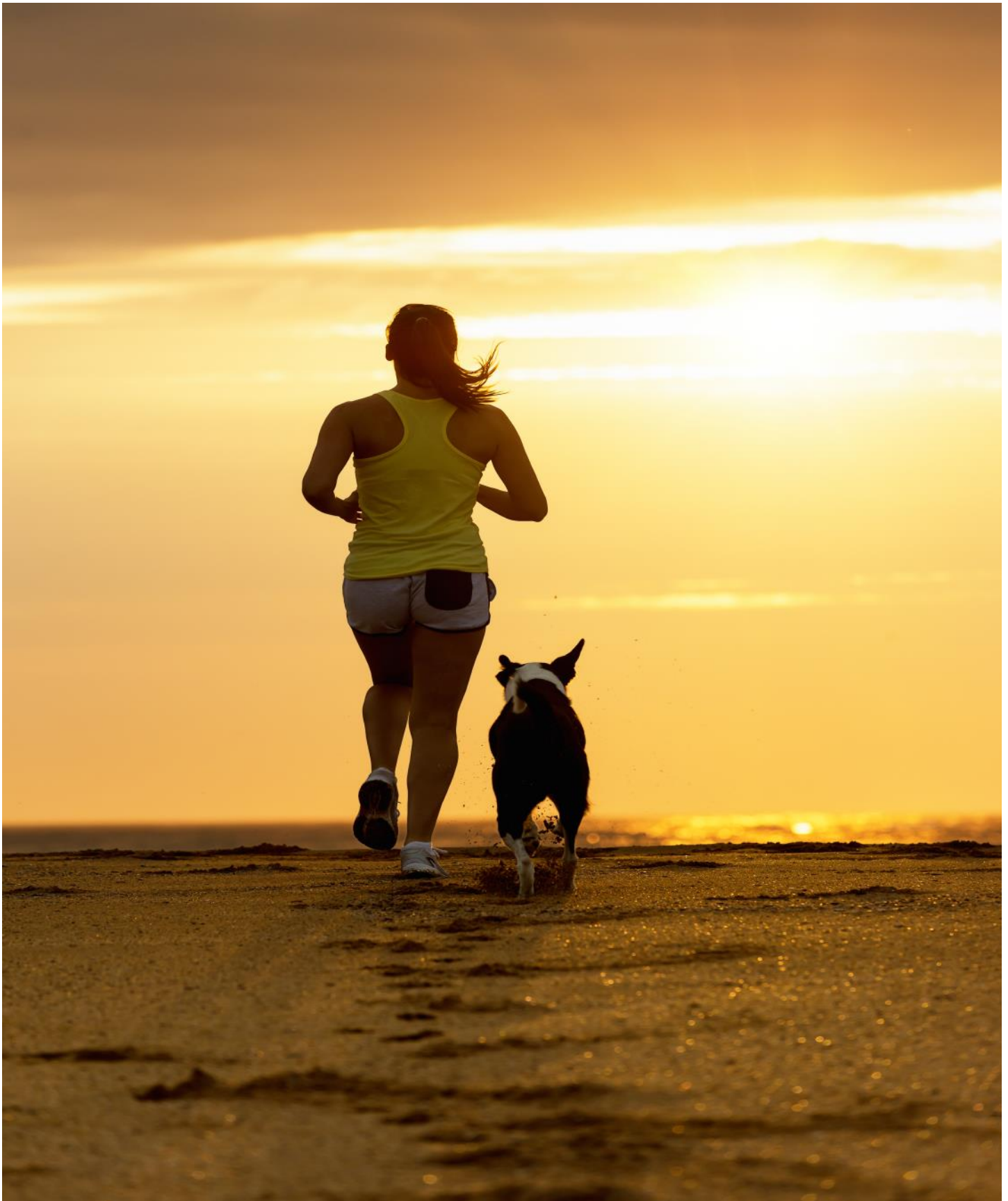


### NUTRITION INFO

*per serving / 2 bar or 2 balls*

Calories <i>kcal</i>	146
Carbs <i>g</i>	19
Fat <i>g</i>	8
Protein <i>g</i>	3
Sodium <i>mg</i>	14
Sugar <i>g</i>	14





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