

Setting goals while keeping reality checks in mind

Goal setting is a fundamental aspect of personal and professional development, providing direction, motivation, and clarity. By setting specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals, we can stay focused on what matters most.

But setting goals that are not realistic may not be the smartest way to achieve your objectives.

While goals provide structure and direction, rigid adherence to predetermined objectives can lead to tunnel vision. We may become so focused on achieving our goals we overlook alternative opportunities or fail to adapt to changing circumstances. We might even forget what is really important; our health and well-being.

Setting overly ambitious or unrealistic goals can set us up for disappointment and frustration. Unrealistic goals may demotivate, leading to feelings of failure or inadequacy when objectives are not met.



Pursuing multiple goals simultaneously or setting excessively challenging deadlines can contribute to stress and burnout. High levels of stress may compromise well-being, productivity, and overall performance.

That's not to say goal setting is not good for us. We just have to be smart to stay focused. Before setting goals, take some time to reflect on your values, priorities, and aspirations. Consider what

truly matters to you and what you want to achieve in various areas of your life, such as career, health, relationships, and personal growth.

Break down larger, long-term goals into smaller, manageable steps or milestones. This approach makes your goals less overwhelming and allows you to track progress more effectively. Focus on taking consistent, incremental actions that move you closer to your objectives.

Share your goals with trusted friends, family members, mentors, or colleagues and seek their feedback and support. Surround yourself with individuals who can provide encouragement, accountability, and constructive advice to help you stay on track and navigate challenges effectively.

Above all, be kind to yourself and practice self-compassion throughout the goal-setting process. Understand that setbacks and obstacles are a natural part of any journey, and it's okay to experience delays or challenges along the way. Cultivate patience and resilience and remember that progress takes time.

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Thinking of trying yoga? Start with Hatha

Hatha yoga is widely regarded as the most accessible and beginner-friendly form of yoga. Rooted in ancient Indian traditions, Hatha yoga focuses on the practice of physical postures (asanas) and breath control (pranayama) to promote physical and mental well-being.

What sets Hatha yoga apart is its gentle approach, making it suitable for practitioners of all fitness levels and ages. Beginners are introduced to foundational yoga poses that emphasize proper alignment, balance, and flexibility. These poses are typically held for several breaths, allowing practitioners to build strength and deepen their awareness of their bodies.

In addition to asana practice, Hatha yoga incorporates breathwork techniques to enhance relaxation and reduce stress. Controlled breathing exercises help beginners cultivate mindfulness and connect with the present moment, fostering a sense of inner calm and tranquility.

Another hallmark of Hatha yoga is its emphasis on holding poses for longer durations, allowing beginners to explore

their range of motion and gradually increase flexibility over time. Props such as blocks, straps, and blankets may be used to support beginners as they build strength and flexibility.

Ultimately, Hatha yoga provides a solid foundation for beginners to establish a regular yoga practice and explore other yoga styles as they progress on their journey. With its gentle approach, focus on alignment, and emphasis on breath awareness, Hatha yoga offers beginners a welcoming entry point into the transformative world of yoga.

Before starting yoga, it's important to approach the practice with a mindset of self-acceptance and compassion, especially regarding your physical health or shape. Yoga is not about conforming to a certain ideal of fitness or appearance; rather, it's about honouring and nurturing your body as it is in the present moment. Regardless of your current level of physical fitness or body shape, yoga offers a welcoming space for individuals of all backgrounds and abilities to explore movement, breath, and mindfulness.

Ways to incorporate yoga into your daily routine

When dealing with today's fast-paced world, incorporating yoga into your daily routine can provide a much-needed respite from the stresses of life. Yoga is an ancient practice that not only enhances physical strength and flexibility but also cultivates mental clarity and emotional well-being.

Here are several tips on creating a harmonious balance between your mind, body, and spirit:

1. Start with small steps

If you're new to yoga, it's essential to start slowly and gradually build your practice. Begin with short sessions, perhaps 10-15 minutes each day, and gradually increase the duration as you become more comfortable. Consistency is key, so aim to practice yoga daily, even if it's only for a few minutes. By starting small, you'll establish a habit that can be sustained over the long term.

2. Create a dedicated space

Designate a specific area in your home for your yoga practice. It doesn't have to be a large space; a quiet corner will do. Decorate it with inspiring items, such as candles, plants, or meaningful quotes. Having a dedicated space will create a sense of sacredness and make it easier for you to focus and relax during your practice.

3. Set a schedule

Just as you have fixed times for meals or work, establishing a regular yoga schedule will make it easier to incorporate it into your daily routine. Determine a time of day that works best for you, whether early morning, during lunch breaks, or in the evening. Consistency will help reinforce your practice and make it a normal routine.

4. Integrate yoga into daily activities

Incorporate yoga into your daily activities to maximize its benefits. Begin with simple stretches or breathing exercises in the morning before getting out of bed. Throughout the day, take short breaks to do a few yoga poses or practice mindful breathing. These small moments of yoga will help relieve tension, improve focus, and enhance overall well-being.

5. Embrace mindfulness and meditation

Yoga is not just about physical postures; it also emphasizes meditation and mindfulness. Incorporate mindfulness techniques, such as deep breathing, or mindful walking into your daily routine. Set aside a few minutes daily for meditation to cultivate inner peace and mental clarity.



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Exploring the current trends in fitness

Fitness is a dynamic and evolving industry, with new trends and innovations constantly emerging to meet our needs and preferences, from immersive virtual reality workouts to primal movement classes.

Here are some of the fitness trends that are dominating today:

1. Virtual reality workouts: Imagine being able to work out in any environment you choose, from a tropical island to a futuristic city. With virtual reality headsets, you can do just that. Virtual reality workouts offer a fun and engaging way to exercise, with interactive games and challenges that keep you motivated and entertained. You can also join online communities and socialize with other VR users, making fitness more accessible and enjoyable.

2. Primal movement: If you want to unleash your inner animal, primal movement is the workout for you. Primal movement involves mimicking the natural movements of animals, such as crawling, kicking, crouching, and squatting. It's a great way to build strength and agility, especially if you're new to fitness or recovering from an injury.

3. Wearable tech: Wearable tech is not a new trend, but it's one that keeps evolving and improving. Right now, we can see more advanced and personalized wearable devices that track your health and fitness data, such as heart rate, calories burned, sleep quality and stress levels. Wearable tech can also provide feedback

and coaching, helping you optimize your performance and reach your goals. Some examples of wearable tech include smartwatches, fitness trackers, smart glasses and earbuds.

4. Boxing: Boxing is a classic sport that never goes out of style. Right now, boxing is a popular choice for fitness enthusiasts who want to challenge themselves physically and mentally. Boxing is a high-intensity workout that burns calories, builds muscle, improves coordination and boosts confidence. It's also a great way to relieve stress and release endorphins. You can join a boxing gym or club or try online classes or apps that teach you the basics of boxing.

5. Train like a celebrity: If you've ever wondered how celebrities get in shape for their roles, you'll be happy to know that you can train like them right now. Thanks to expert-created apps and programs that reveal the secrets of celebrity fitness routines, you can follow the same workouts and diets that your favourite stars use to achieve their stunning results. Whether you want to tone up, lose weight or gain muscle, there's a celebrity-inspired fitness plan for you.

These are just some of the fitness trends that are shaping the way we move today. Whether you're looking for something new or something tried and true, there's a fitness trend for everyone. The most important thing is to find something that suits your lifestyle, preferences, and goals, and have fun with it.

Basic warm-ups before a workout

Warming up before a workout is essential for preparing your body and reducing the risk of injury. A good warm-up increases blood flow to your muscles, improves flexibility, and enhances overall performance.

Here are some exercises to incorporate into your pre-workout routine:

1. Cardiovascular exercise: Start your warm-up with light cardiovascular activity to increase your heart rate and blood flow. This can include jogging in place, jumping jacks, or brisk walking for 5-10 minutes. Gradually increase the intensity to get your body moving and ready for the workout ahead.

2. Dynamic stretching: Dynamic stretching involves moving your muscles and joints through a full range of motion to improve flexibility and mobility. Perform dynamic stretches such as arm circles, leg swings, hip rotations, and trunk twists. Focus on areas that will be targeted during your workout, such as the shoulders, hamstrings, quadriceps, and calves.

3. Joint mobility exercises: Incorporate joint mobility exercises to lubricate your joints and improve their range of motion. Perform movements such as wrist circles, ankle circles, shoulder rolls, and neck rotations. Pay attention to any areas of stiffness or tightness and gently work through them to increase mobility.

4. Activation exercises: Activation exercises target specific muscle groups to wake them up and prepare them for the workout. This can include exercises like bodyweight squats, lunges, push-ups, and planks. Focus on engaging the muscles and maintaining proper form throughout each movement.

5. Plyometric exercises: Plyometric exercises involve explosive movements that help activate fast-twitch muscle fibres and improve power and speed. Incorporate exercises like jump squats, burpees, and high knees into your warm-up routine. Start with low-intensity variations and gradually increase the intensity as you progress.

6. Mind-Body connection: Use your warm-up as an opportunity to focus your mind and mentally prepare for the workout ahead. Take deep breaths, visualize your movements, and tune in to how your body feels. Establishing a strong mind-body connection can help optimize your performance and prevent injury.



Lesser-known ways to stop panic attacks

If there's one thing you don't need to be told during a panic attack, it's to "just breathe".

Though it nearly always comes with good intentions, this isn't helpful advice when you're in the grips of anxiety. But if you've tried all the well-known methods - from touching something solid to focusing on an object - what can you do when the panic sets in? Fortunately, there are alternatives to the mainstream methods that might just do the trick.

Here are a few techniques to help anxiety that you might not have heard about.

Try a Vitamin B and Iron supplement

There's plenty of research out there showing the links between iron deficiency anemia and anxiety. There's also an interesting British study conducted by the University of Reading, in which students taking a daily high-dose vitamin B supplement reported lower levels of anxiety after just one month.

If you suffer from panic attacks, it's well worth having a blood test to double-check that your panic isn't caused by a deficiency. For those who are low on iron or vitamin B, look into vitamin-rich foods including leafy greens, nuts and seeds, and red meat to give your body (and mind) a boost.

Go to your happy place

Guided imagery is a technique that's been shown to reduce anxiety and, essentially it means going to your happy place. This method involves picturing somewhere that brings you peace or joy in your mind. Picture everything in

as much detail as you can, immersing yourself in the sounds, sights, and smells of your happy place.

The idea here is that when you picture a situation closely, your body responds in the same way as if you were really there. You're tricking your brain into believing you're in a place that makes you feel calm and safe.

Lemons, chilli, and ice cubes

Have you heard of the man who uses lemons to get through a panic attack? Eric Zinc, a 39-year-old Californian, says that during a panic attack, he bites into a lemon. The bitter, tangy takes takes over the intense anxiety to ground him back in the moment, sort of like a kinder, gentler slap in the face.

There are other tales of people doing similar techniques, with some using chilli sauce or ice cubes. The key here is to find something that causes an overwhelming sensation when eaten, be it spicy, sour, or extremely cold, and use it to override your attack.

Though it may not completely calm you down, it could be enough to give you room to breathe so that you can regain control. So, the next time you feel a panic attack coming on, try popping an ice cube into your mouth. It might just do the trick.

Remember that the best thing you can do for your anxiety is speak to a professional. By working with a certified therapist, you can create positive routines to help lower your panic and find coping mechanisms that keep you calm.

Belly breathing benefits and considerations

Diaphragmatic breathing, also known as belly breathing or deep breathing, is a breathing technique that engages the diaphragm, a large muscle located below the lungs. When practiced correctly, diaphragmatic breathing can have numerous benefits for both physical and mental well-being.

Here are a few benefits of practicing belly breathing:

1. Stress reduction: Diaphragmatic breathing is often used as a relaxation technique to reduce stress and anxiety. By engaging the diaphragm and taking slow, deep breaths, individuals can activate the body's relaxation response, leading to decreased heart rate, lowered blood pressure, and reduced levels of stress hormones like cortisol.

2. Improved oxygenation: Deep breathing allows for more efficient oxygen exchange in the lungs, leading to better oxygenation of the blood. This can enhance overall respiratory function, increase energy levels, and improve cognitive performance.

3. Enhanced lung capacity: Practicing diaphragmatic breathing can strengthen the diaphragm and respiratory muscles, leading to increased lung capacity and improved respiratory efficiency. This can be particularly beneficial for individuals with respiratory conditions such as asthma or COPD.

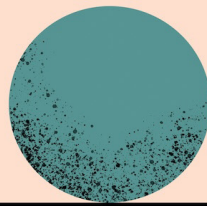
4. Improved posture: Proper diaphragmatic breathing encourages correct posture by engaging the diaphragm and supporting the spine. Over time, practicing this technique could help alleviate tension in the neck, shoulders, and back associated with poor posture.

However, like any technique, belly breathing also has potential drawbacks. Some individuals may find it challenging to master diaphragmatic breathing, especially if they are accustomed to shallow chest breathing. It can take time and practice to learn how to engage the diaphragm fully and coordinate breathing with movement effectively.

While diaphragmatic breathing is generally safe for most people, it may not be suitable for individuals with certain medical conditions, such as hernias, abdominal surgery, or certain respiratory disorders. It's essential to consult with a healthcare professional before starting any new breathing practice, especially if you have underlying health concerns.



FACT



MYTH



Common myths about wellness

Whether people spread these myths online or talk about it “what they heard” during the office coffee break, there’s a lack of science to support them. Let’s separate fact from fiction, so you can develop healthy habits that science supports and avoid fad advice that is useless or harmful.

Myth 1: Detox diets cleanse toxins from your body

The concept of detoxification is popular but using detox concoctions to “cleanse” toxins from your body isn’t backed by science. Your body already has effective systems to eliminate waste and toxins. The liver, kidneys, lungs, skin, and gastrointestinal system work together to remove unwanted substances without the need for juice cleanses, restrictive diets, or colonics. Stop wasting money on the hype. Keep your body’s internal detox system healthy by eating a healthy diet, staying active, managing stress, and getting enough sleep.

Myth 2: You have to exercise at least 30 minutes a day to get benefits

While regular physical activity provides undisputed health benefits, more is not necessarily better. The optimal “dose” depends on your fitness level, goals, and risk factors. Listening to your body is key. Excessive exercise can increase injury risk and stress without added benefits.

Studies show that even short periods of exercise throughout the day lowers mortality and offers mental and physical health benefits. So, you don’t need to exhaust yourself to get the health rewards of exercise. Plus, short exercise “snacks” are easier to fit into your schedule, meaning you’re more likely to do them.

Myth 3: You can spot reduce fat

Genetics and hormones dictate where your body stores fat, not specific exercises. Spot reduction focuses muscle-building efforts on one area but does not eliminate fat you’ve already stored there. The best approach to fat loss and improving your body composition is to pair full body strength training with a healthy lifestyle and diet. Aerobic exercise also burns calories, which aids fat loss all over your body, not just in one spot.

Myth 4: You shouldn’t exercise after eating

For most healthy adults, moderate walking after a meal doesn’t cause indigestion or other issues. High-intensity exercise can be uncomfortable directly after eating a large meal, but this temporary discomfort rarely causes actual harm. Listen to your body and adjust the timing of exercise based on what feels best. In support of exercising after a meal, research shows that taking a 10-minute walk after every meal is more beneficial for blood sugar control than a 30-minute workout at other times of the day. The reason? Exercise increases insulin sensitivity, so your body takes up glucose from your bloodstream easier.

Myth 5: Drinking extra water significantly impacts weight loss

Water is essential for health, but simply drinking more does not directly result in substantial weight reduction for most people. However, replacing high-calorie or sugary beverages with water can promote weight loss through reduced liquid calorie intake. Additionally, drinking cold water may slightly boost metabolism. However, you’ll get the most benefits by adopting a nutrient-dense diet and consuming it mindfully.

Think twice before engaging in social media platform trends

While social media can be a valuable tool for sharing information and connecting with others, it’s crucial to approach trends with caution and skepticism.

Health trends on social media often gain traction quickly, driven by viral videos and influencer endorsements. However, what may seem harmless or beneficial at first glance could have unforeseen consequences. Without proper research, individuals risk falling victim to misinformation or engaging in activities that could compromise their health and well-being.

One compelling example involves the phenomenon of viral challenges or dares. These challenges, often initiated and spread on social media platforms, can range from harmless pranks to potentially dangerous stunts. In some cases, individuals have suffered serious injuries or even death after attempting these challenges without fully understanding the risks involved.

For instance, the “Tide Pod Challenge,” which gained popularity on platforms like YouTube and TikTok, involved participants filming themselves eating laundry detergent pods. Despite warnings from health experts about the dangers of ingesting toxic chemicals, some individuals attempted the challenge, resulting in cases of poisoning and severe gastrointestinal complications.



This example underscores the critical need for research and discernment when encountering trends on social media. Before jumping on the bandwagon of a viral challenge or adopting a new health trend, individuals should take the time to investigate the potential risks and benefits. Consulting credible sources such as healthcare professionals, scientific studies, and reputable health organizations can provide valuable insights and help individuals make informed decisions.

Recognizing the early signs of osteoarthritis

Osteoarthritis, the most common form of arthritis, gradually develops over time as the protective cartilage that cushions the ends of your bones wears down. While it primarily affects the joints of the hands, knees, hips, and spine, it can occur in any joint. Recognizing the early signs of osteoarthritis is crucial for early intervention and management.

Some common initial symptoms include:

Joint pain: Osteoarthritis often presents as pain or stiffness in the affected joint, especially after periods of inactivity or overuse. The pain may worsen with movement and improve with rest.

Stiffness: Individuals with osteoarthritis may experience stiffness in the affected joint, particularly in the morning or after prolonged periods of rest. This stiffness typically resolves within 30 minutes of movement.

Decreased range of motion: As osteoarthritis progresses, you may notice a decrease in the joint's range of motion. It may become challenging to fully bend, straighten, or rotate the affected joint.

Swelling: Osteoarthritis can cause swelling or tenderness in the affected joint. This swelling may be accompanied by warmth or redness around the joint.

If you experience any of these signs or symptoms, it's essential to consult a healthcare professional for a proper diagnosis and treatment plan. While osteoarthritis is a chronic condition with no cure, early intervention can help manage symptoms and slow its progression. Treatment options may include medications, physical therapy, and lifestyle modifications. In severe cases surgical options such as joint replacement surgery may be considered to alleviate pain and restore function.

energyzone

Kale

Kale is a leafy green vegetable that belongs to the Brassica family, which also includes broccoli, cabbage, and Brussels sprouts.

Kale is incredibly nutrient-dense, packed with vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. It is particularly rich in vitamin K, which plays a crucial role in bone health and blood clotting. Kale is also rich in vitamin C, vitamin A, and manganese, as well as containing significant amounts of vitamin B6, calcium, potassium, and magnesium.

Kale is low in calories and carbohydrates but high in fibre, making it a nutrient-dense addition



to any diet. It is incredibly versatile and can be enjoyed raw in salads, blended into smoothies, sautéed, roasted, or added to soups and stews. Its slightly bitter flavour pairs well with a variety of ingredients and cuisines, making it easy to incorporate into your meals.

What to do if the bully is you

Realizing that you engage in bullying behaviour at work can be a confronting and challenging realization. It takes courage and self-awareness to acknowledge such behaviour and take steps to address it. Here are some constructive steps you can take if you find yourself in this situation:

1. Acknowledge and accept responsibility:

The first step is to acknowledge and accept responsibility for your actions. Recognize that engaging in bullying behaviour is harmful not only to others but also to yourself and the overall work environment. Take ownership of your actions without making excuses.

2. Reflect on the root causes: Reflect on the underlying reasons for your behaviour. Are there unresolved personal issues, stressors, or triggers? Understanding the root causes can help you address them more effectively and prevent similar behaviour in the future.

3. Apologize and make amends: Apologize to those you have harmed through your actions. Offer a sincere apology, acknowledging the harm you caused and expressing your commitment to change. If appropriate, make amends by taking concrete steps to rectify the situation and repair any damage caused.

4. Seek feedback and support: Seek feedback from trusted colleagues, mentors, or supervisors to gain insight into your behaviour and its impact on others. Be open to constructive criticism and use it as an opportunity for growth and self-improvement. Consider seeking support from a therapist, counsellor, or workplace mediator to help you address underlying issues and develop healthier coping mechanisms.

5. Educate yourself: Educate yourself about bullying behaviour, its consequences, and strategies for prevention and intervention. Take advantage of resources such as books, articles, workshops, and training programs to deepen your understanding of the issue and learn how to cultivate a positive and respectful work environment.