



THE Y AXIS



Tune Into This

Attention all reality-TV baking junkies, streaming-service binge-watchers, and sit-in-front-of-a-screen-after-work people...



Too much screen time can tip the scale in the wrong direction.

Your choice of snacks and drinks are only part of the problem when you're in couch-potato mode.

Grab the remote and tune in to this.

You burn more calories standing or even reading and sitting in a chair than you do in front of a screen, according to a recent study.⁴

Do yourself a favor. Stand up more. Read a book. Or turn off the screen and go for a walk.

COMMENTS?

Send comments to the editor:

evan@thehealthycopywriter.com

Bottom's Up: Do THIS to Beat the COVID Blues

Physical activity dropped by 32 percent during pandemic

You've had a long day. You're tired. And it seems like no matter what you do, you're in a perpetual state of unhappiness.

That ever happen? Mild depression can show up in many different ways, including:

- Feelings of sadness
- Changes in appetite (eating too much or not enough)
- Trouble sleeping
- Fatigue
- Irritability
- Difficulty concentrating, and more.

Here's a quick fix to improve your mood:
Bottom's up.

No. It's not what you think. You don't need to head to the bar or pour yourself a drink.

If you've been feeling depressed during the global pandemic, your bottom may have a lot to do with it, according to a recent study.¹

Researchers found that since the start of the pandemic, sedentary behaviors have increased with:

- Work-from-home arrangements
- Less commute time
- Virtual meetings
- Less physical activity
- More screen time

They found that during the peak of the pandemic, physical activity dropped by 32 percent for many adults.

Lack of exercise took a toll on mental health and happiness, leading to an increase in depression, anxiety, and loneliness.

Bottom's up to improve your mood

In the study, participants who reported feeling depressed were invited to participate in an 8-week challenge to be more active. And something interesting happened...

"We found that, on average, people saw their mental health improve over the eight-week period," says lead researcher Dr. Jacob Meyer, a kinesiology professor at Iowa State University. "...But for people whose sitting times stayed high, their depressive symptoms, on average, didn't recover in the same way as everyone else's."

Here's the quick fix to improve your mood:

- Get up and go for a walk. Do something active. And make physical activity a regular part of your day.

Want to improve your mood? Bottom's up.

MORE

30 ways to be more active
<https://tinyurl.com/brm4fsyy>

This is Your Brain on Stress...Any Questions?

Chronic stress impairs memory and brain function

Remember the anti-drug commercial from the 80s? It could have been about stress.

Actor John Roselius holds up an uncooked egg in an empty-looking kitchen. "This is your brain." Then he points to a sizzling pat of butter in a hot frying pan.

"This is drugs." He cracks the egg and drops it into the frying pan.

It sizzles and pops, and then Roselius delivers the message in dramatic fashion.

"This is your brain on drugs. Any questions?" (Watch the video: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8a5ndx>)
It's no secret illegal drugs are bad for your brain.



But if you let chronic stress simmer on the back burner for weeks, months, or years, it can be just as bad.

Too much stress is a brain drain

New research suggests that chronic stress can impair memory, reduce brain function, and lead to cognitive decline over time.³

Researchers found that people living with chronic stress tend to have higher levels of the stress hormone cortisol.



Breakfast Burrito

Hungry for a healthy breakfast that's packed with protein and tastes great? Give this recipe a try:⁵

Ingredients

- 1 can vegetarian refried beans
- 4 tortillas, corn
- 2 T red onion (chopped)
- 1/2 C tomatoes (chopped)
- 1/2 C salsa, low-sodium
- 4 T yogurt, non-fat plain
- 2 T cilantro (chopped)

Directions

1. Mix beans with onion and tomatoes.
2. Microwave tortillas between two sheets of damp white paper towels on high for 15 seconds.
3. Divide bean mixture between the tortillas.
4. Fold each tortilla to enclose filling.
5. Place on microwave-safe dish, and spoon salsa over each burrito.
6. Microwave on high for 15 seconds.
7. Serve topped with yogurt and cilantro.

Serves: 4.
146 calories per serving.

Trying to Eat Healthier? Beware of Restaurant Meals

Study: 70% of all restaurant meals aren't healthy

When your stomach tells you it's feeding time, how do you respond?

- Grab your healthy brown-bag lunch and bottle of water.
- Whip up a meal in the kitchen made from fresh ingredients.
- Hit the nearest restaurant or drive-thru and munch your way through an entrée, sides, and a drink.

If your diet looks anything like the typical American's (fast food, burgers, fries, pizza, fried chicken, soda, etc.) **1 out of every 5 calories you eat** comes from restaurant food.²

Yes. It's possible to order healthy food from the menu. You know...

- The leafy-green salad
- The soup of the day
- Sans-bun with burger + lettuce wrap
- Vegetables instead of fries
- The fruit parfait, or...
- Water instead of soda, milkshakes, or sugary coffee drinks



But guess what? Most people don't. In the study, researchers found that:

- **70% of all fast-food meals** are of poor dietary quality
- **50% of all full-service restaurant meals** ordered are of poor nutritional quality
- **The typical fast food or restaurant entree** contains 1,200 to 1,500 calories. And that doesn't include drinks, sides, or desserts!

Dining out? 6 ways to eat healthier

Pay attention to your food choices and calories, and you can still eat healthy at a restaurant. Here's how:

1. Find out how many calories are in a meal, before you order.
2. Place half your meal in a to-go box before you start eating.
3. Split a meal with someone else.
4. Order from the kid's or senior's menu.
5. Pick a side dish as your main course.
6. Ask the restaurant staff to make you a smaller portion.

MORE

How to make restaurant meals healthier
<https://tinyurl.com/2amijzf7>

This is Your Brain on Stress...Any Questions? (continued from page 1)

"The faster pace of life today probably means more stress," says lead researcher Dr. Sudha Seshadri. "When we are afraid, when we are threatened in any way, our cortisol levels go up ... It's never too early to be mindful of reducing stress."

Feeling stressed out? Take a deep breath. Go for a walk. Talk things out with someone you trust. Laugh more. And get professional help if you need to. You'll feel better and live longer.

MORE

7 ways to reduce stress
<https://tinyurl.com/2p8dj53p>

References

1. Meyer, J., et al. (2021). High sitting time is a behavioral risk factor for blunted improvement in depression across 8 weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic in April-May 2020. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*. From: <https://tinyurl.com/yue5w39p>
2. Liu, J., et al. (2020). Quality of meals consumed by US adults at full-service and fast-food restaurants: Persistent low quality and widening disparities. *The Journal of Nutrition*, 150(4): 873-883. From: <https://tinyurl.com/2p978wzy>
3. Echo-Tcheugui, J., et al. (2018). Circulating cortisol and cognitive and structural brain measures. *Neurology*, 91:2. From: <https://tinyurl.com/mtskfknm>
4. Amaro-Gahete, F., et al. (2019). Energy expenditure differences across lying, sitting, and standing positions in young healthy adults. *PLOS ONE*, 14(7): e0219372. From: <https://tinyurl.com/3ncmr2ph>
5. U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2020). Breakfast burrito. Michigan Department of Community Health. From: <https://tinyurl.com/ywtsh39h>



Take the March Health Challenge!

Read Food Labels: Take time to learn about what you're eating

Ask the Wellness Doctor:

This month Dr. Don Hall answers the question:

Can exercise help treat depression?