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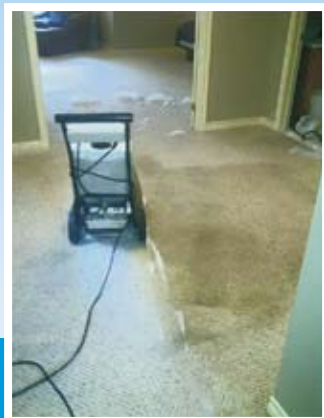
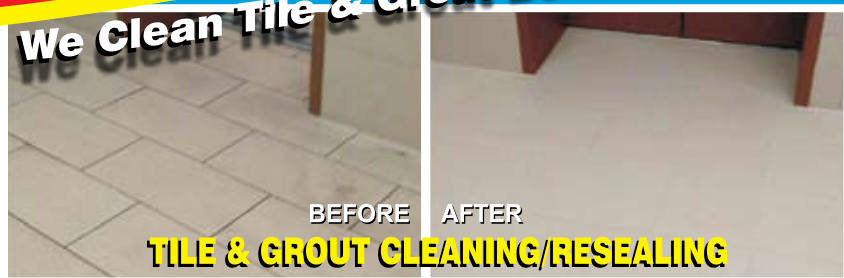
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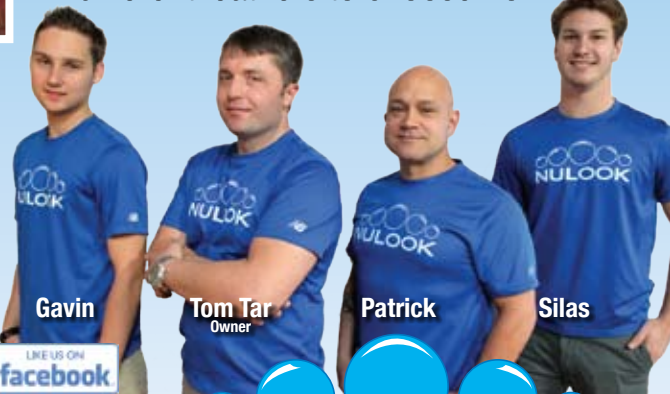
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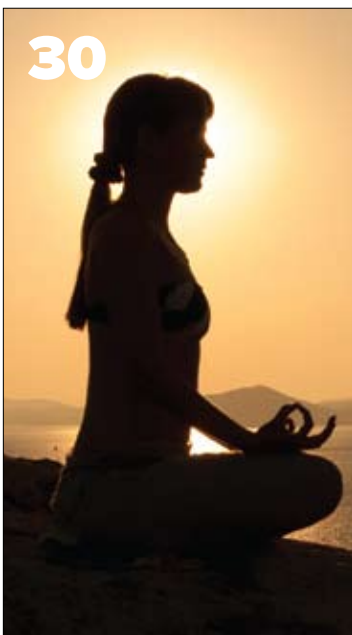
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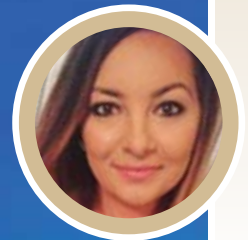
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Vision and Dental UNDER ONE ROOF



by Lina Stoyanova
Editor



The team at Eye Smile Vision and Eye Smile Dental has one goal and that one goal is to ensure your visits are comfortable and informational. Eye Smile is a full-service dental and optometry office with great staff that provides patient-centric education and treatment. The dentists and optometrists at Eye Smile believe in ensuring their patients are number one priority as both care and comfort are found under one roof. The collaborative venture is located behind Windsor Crossing Premium Outlets at 2055 Sandwich West Parkway. This location allows patients from South Windsor and LaSalle to visit with ease, not to mention patients working in the U.S. since it's a short trip from the Ambassador Bridge. The growing population of the Windsor-Essex area is also welcomed to visit Eye Smile (as it is off one of the main highways), knowing their every need will be met.



Dentists Dr. Christopher DiPonio, Dr. Dolly Gharib and Dr. Anda Necula practice dentistry and can answer all questions pertaining to your dental health and appearance. Knowing the importance of oral hygiene, the dental staff is more than happy to guide you to a healthier smile. Parents can also rest easy knowing there's Netflix available for the kids to keep them comfortable and happy.

"Partnering with a full-service optometric center has been great. We try to ensure that every patient's oral health and vision needs are met," says dentist Christopher DiPonio. "I have been working at Eye Smile since 2015. We have excellent and knowledgeable staff who have been working in the dental field for many years. We strive to make every appointment comfortable and convenient for our patients. Our patients really appreciate the improvements we continue to make to the office and equipment. Patients can relax in our brand new operator, equipped with a very comfortable dental chair, while enjoying their favorite program as every dental treatment room is equipped with an LCD TV and Netflix."

This full-service dental office provides comprehensive dental care with services including:

- **Cosmetic**
- **Restorative (fillings)**
- **Pediatrics**
- **Endodontics (Root Canal Therapy)**
- **Prosthodontics (crowns, bridges, and dentures)**
- **Invisalign Clear Aligners**
- **Oral Surgery (including implants and extractions)**
- **Oral and Nitrous Oxide (Laughing Gas) Sedation**

"Our team of professionals and staff tries to serve and accommodate families and patients of all ages. Whether you're a new patient or have been with us for years, we keep your comfort in mind as we provide you with the oral care you need to stay healthy," says Dr. Anda Necula. "With two disciplines under one roof, your eyes and teeth can really benefit. We strive to provide a calm and friendly atmosphere even for the little ones who come to see us for the first time."

"The thought of a dental visit can bring anxiety, which is why at Eye Smile Dental we can provide different dental treatments under nitrous sedation for children and adults. Our dental team can assist you and your family with a wide range of dental treatments and services. We are happy to treat patients in our mint condition and cozy clinic and assist them with their questions and dental problems. We hope to build relationships that last generations and set the foundation for a lifetime of happy, healthy smiles," adds Dr. Necula.

When it comes to missing teeth, denturist Christina Mallet offers a variety of options. During the free consultation,

patients are able to discuss their expectations and any problems they may be experiencing. This information will allow for a customized treatment plan that will get patients to enjoy their favorite meal again; all while showing off their new smile.



DENTAL TEAM



Top Left to Right: Dr. Dolly Gharib, Dentist, Dr. Anda Necula, Dentist, Adina Bartos, Dental Office Manager, Dr. Christopher DiPonio, Dentist.

Bottom: Lindsay Tapak, Certified level 2 Dental Assistant, Jennifer Schaly, Registered Dental Hygienist, Christina Mallet, Denturist.

When it comes to Eye Smile Vision, the ultimate goal has always been to exceed expectations by providing exceptional products and legendary service. With an on-site lab, prescription lenses for glasses and sunglasses are made with a quicker production time.

Optometrists Dr. Melissa Dattilo-Kidd, Dr. Scott Mayer, Dr. Victoria Rosati and Dr. Britney Hewitt practice a full scope of optometry (eye examinations), and have glasses and contact lenses to meet the patients needs. The doctors can correct a wide variety of vision problems and can change the way patients see the world.

With innovative technology, Eye Smile Vision has the ability to keep everything paperless and on file for future visits. Being so green works in everyone's favor, especially when it comes to corresponding with other specialists. It makes sending and receiving information pertaining to patient files that much easier and faster.

Eye Smile Vision understands that some of the best practice techniques can be improved by technological advances. This can be key in detecting the early onset of a variety of eye conditions and eye diseases such as macular degeneration, glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy, which are the top three diseases known to cause blindness. This is why the team uses innovative technology and machines that can improve eye-care such as:

1- Auto Refractor:

Eye Smile Vision uses this machine to measure an objective refraction, or theoretical refraction, of what lens powers patients may need to see well. The machine looks to see where light focuses on the back of the eye and what lenses it would take to make the image focus in the right area. It measures sphere, cylinder and axis for each eye, as well as radius of curvatures and axis for the cornea of each eye.

2- Digital Retinal Imaging:

A picture is taken of the back of the patient's eye as well as the optic nerve. This tool is used to check for tears, bleeding or any other abnormalities. It's especially important as it is used to detect diseases such as diabetes and macular degeneration. It is critical to confirming the health of the retina, optic nerve and other retinal structures.

3- Non-Contact Tonometer (NCT):

Commonly called "the puff of air machine," by optometry patients, a tiny puff of air is released and a camera gauges the indentation of the cornea as the air hits. This is important for optical health.

4- Visual Field Analyzer:

This tool can gauge what is going on if patients are suffering from headaches, visual disturbances, decreased vision, blind spots, or any other discomforts. Also known as a peripheral or side vision test, it allows the optometrists at Eye Smile Vision to evaluate any changes to the sensitivity of different parts of the retina.



Left to Right: Auto Refractor, Digital Retinal Imaging, Non-Contact Tonometer (NCT)

Below: Digital Retinal Imaging





VISION TEAM



*Top Left to Right: Lexi Franzoso, Optometric Assistant,
Dr. Scott Mayer, Optometrist, Dr. Melissa Dattilo-Kidd, Optometrist.*

Eye Smile Vision offers many different services. One of the most common is a comprehensive eye exam which is used to spot any problems that can arise which makes it very useful as a preventative measure. A few of the special services that Eye Smile Vision offers are age related macular degeneration screenings, help with red eye, pink eye and even sore eyes, as well as glaucoma testing, management of different ocular diseases and dry eye treatments. Dry eyes

in particular can result from the chronic lack of lubrication and moisture on the surface of the eye, which can cause minor irritations, an inability to wear contact lenses and an increased risk of corneal inflammation and eye infections. Patients can also visit Eye Smile Vision's additional location that is located in the heart of Amherstburg.

Eye Smile Vision also has a wide selection of glasses and contacts for kids as well as specialty sports. If patients need contacts or glasses for golfing, archery, cycling, scuba or any other sport, Eye Smile Vision has got those covered.

"Eye Smile is unique in having vision and dental services under one roof. This allows patients and families to save time by seeing their dentist and optometrist in a single office visit," says optometrist Melissa Dattilo-Kidd.

"In 2008, I started working at the Eye Smile Vision location in Amherstburg, and joined Dr. Scott Mayer at the Lasalle Vision and Dental location in 2015. Our knowledgeable and charismatic staff help choose the right style of eyewear for each patient and they make the experience enjoyable. To better serve our patients we now have an additional exam room. Digital eye charts are used for all eye exams, which can even show videos during a child's exam. We just renovated our optical boutique in with a modern, fresh feel and have many new eyewear brands including Prada, Kate Spade, Tom Ford, Oakley, Evatik, Valentino, Rayban, Michael Kors, and Kendall + Kylie, just to name a few," she adds.

Whether you are visiting Eye Smile for your vision needs, dental needs, or even both, patients can rest assured they will have a comfortable visit as well as being treated with utmost care.

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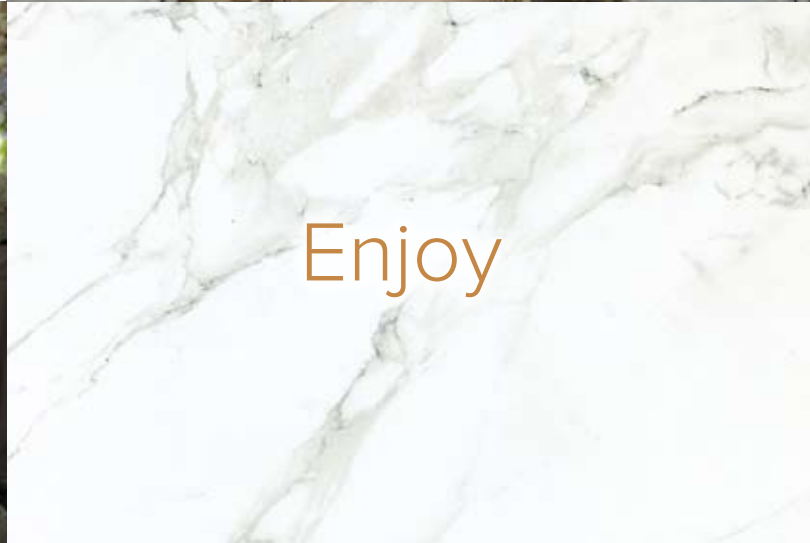
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by Griffin Handsor

GET MOVIN'

The constant chirping of birds as they soar from tree to tree. The mowers buzzing while they finely trim each and every lawn. The fresh aroma of blossoming flowers that engulf the air around us. These signs can only mean one thing. Spring has arrived and it's time to get outdoors. As most of us have been stuck indoors on the treadmill, or even just hibernating during the frigid winter, getting the body moving again can be a task.



Don't get me wrong, the budding spring weather is something we can all agree is much needed. Commonly, this is a time where we decide to get into shape and work towards implementing a healthier and more active schedule. But sometimes this is easier said than done. With little knowledge, how on earth do you create a plan of action? What is it that you really want to achieve? All these questions can be frustrating and overwhelming, right off the bat.

A PLAN OF ACTION

Breathe. It will get easier. No matter where you stand with your current physique and where it is you'd like to be, remember the phrase, "Rome wasn't built in a day." Give yourself time to reach the goal you have set. People who didn't reach their goals, most likely did not start with a realistic timetable. It is possible to get in shape fast but it's even more probable to give up once you have reached that goal. With any diet or training regime, it is important to pace yourself and not go overboard. Quick diets can also be very harmful and lead to lasting negative effects on your health. Crash diets commonly deprive the body of much needed nutrients and overdoing activities without giving the body time to recover can as well.

TAKE YOUR TIME

Be patient. Your goals should be realistic and not put you in danger along the way. Those who really wish to get in shape and sustain the shape they desire long-term, will see their diet and training as a lifestyle, rather than a quick and unhealthy approach. Although it is important to push yourself, don't overdo it.

ENJOY THE GREAT OUTDOORS

There are so many diets and ways to train to get into the best shape possible. With spring here, the best way (for most) is to get out of your comfort zone. Let's face it, most of us have been hibernating through the winter and although being covered under a pile of blankets sounds warm and cozy right now, it also doesn't get you up and moving. Get yourself outdoors and be active again. Why not go for a walk? Hike the many local trails around Windsor-Essex. Or, keep cool and active while swimming. All great options and often overlooked tools to get you in great shape. The treadmill or indoor equipment doesn't have hinder your plans.

VISUALIZE YOUR GOAL

Once you set a realistic plan, it may seem very far away. Most often, when beginning a program, you tend to start off on the right foot only to find yourself hitting a brick wall. Don't give in! It's very common to see results slowly and over a lengthy period of time opposed to a very short period. Everyone reacts differently to certain diets and training methods. Some may get there quicker but if you become discouraged by the "not so speedy" results, just know that it's a marathon, not a sprint. Keep visualizing the end result and you will without a doubt get there. The day-to-day patterns you set out for yourself is vital to your end goal. Your mindset in making it has to be just as prominent as your passion to achieve it.





Now's your time to shine. Keep the plan you have set for yourself and see it through to the end. Remember, results may not come overnight, but if you are consistent and you constantly visualize your goal, you should have no reason for setbacks. Take advantage of the great outdoors this spring and create a positive pattern to implement various activities to keep the experience enjoyable, rather than a painful task. Now, let's get that body moving again and create a positive approach to reach the finish line.

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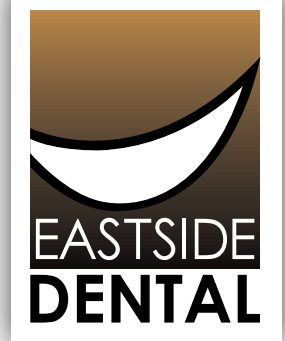
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by Lina Stoyanova
Editor

FIVE TIPS FOR FITNESS MOTIVATION

...and other health goals you may want to reach

Now, I'm no fitness expert, but I believe we ALL struggle with motivation; especially when it comes to fitness/health. I hope these five tips help motivate you to reach your goals and provide you with tools to succeed.

1. SET REASONABLE GOALS

We all have a different set of goals we'd like to accomplish. Yours may be "I need to lose 80 pounds," while mine may be "I want to drink more water." Whatever your goals, make sure you make them reasonable. Let me say it again, **REASONABLE**. This means not saying things like "I need to lose 80 pounds in two months." Although I applaud you for dreaming big, it's very unlikely that would happen (nor should you want it to, that's not healthy, girl). So, set your weight loss goals or your fitness goals ("I want to go to the gym at least twice a week"), but make sure they fit your personality and schedule. If I hate the gym saying I want to go to the gym twice a week won't mean much. Once you've set your **REASONABLE** goals, break them down.

Let's go with my example "I want to drink more water." That goal doesn't say much, does it? Am I cutting out pop? Am I not drinking juice? Am I **ONLY** drinking water? How much water? So, once you set your goal, break it down as much as you can. Step one is the most time consuming since

you're taking so many things into account (your budget, schedule, likes, dislikes) but it's highly beneficial and must be done.

So, my new goal can be something like this: "For the next thirty days, I want to drink 1L of water **PER** day. If I drink more, great, but if I don't meet my 1L requirement, I have to do 20 push-ups. I will also avoid pop and juice, but won't limit tea. I will also aim to decrease coffee to twice per week as to not further dehydrate myself." It doesn't have to be perfect "I'm never, ever drinking coffee again, just water," you can allow yourself a little wiggle room, just make sure it's reasonable and that it's broken down.

2. SET A REALISTIC TIMELINE

So, you want to lose 80 pounds, or get to the gym three times per week. Great! Make yourself a reasonable timeline. Although you **CAN** lose 80 pounds, saying things like "I want to lose 80 pounds in two months" is very unhealthy and not realistic. That doesn't mean you won't lose 80 pounds, you can easily lose 80 pounds in say two years, it just shouldn't be done in two months. So, whatever goals you set, make sure your timeline reflects reality. Remember, dream big but start small (pretty sure I just made that up, but you get the idea).



3. HAVE A DREAM BOARD

Although we aren't all creative, we are all VISUAL. As such, create yourself a little dream board to help motivate you to go to the gym or eat better (or both). It can be as simple or as detailed as you'd like. A dream board is pretty much something that has your likes visually represented. Put it someplace where you will see it every single day. You can even take a picture of your dream board and set it as your computer's wallpaper (or even your phone)—double whammy.

4. TREAT YOURSELF

Let's be honest. Working out is hard. Eating right is hard. But is it impossible? No, it's not. Don't assume that now that you have some motivation to eat better or work out that you have to be perfect—you don't (and you won't be). Remind yourself as you reach your goals to eat better or get to the gym more that you are doing the best you can. Once you hit major milestones (according to yourself and step one and two), you can TREAT YO' SELF!

However, this step is where people mess up and slip into old habits. I highly, highly recommend and urge you to treat yourself but NOT WITH FOOD. I repeat, NOT WITH FOOD. Say you've gone to the gym for a whole month and haven't missed a workout, or you haven't had chocolate in two weeks—it's time to reward yourself for your efforts and motivate yourself to keep going, right? Right. However, if you want to reward yourself by accomplishing these amazing things by having a huge pizza to yourself, or having a weekend of feasting until you can't move, girl, no. Next thing you know, you'll be in a food coma. No bueno. Now, don't get me wrong. I'm not saying don't have a cheat snack or a cheat meal, ever, you can—and you should, just try to reward your big milestones with other things.

For example, for every ten pounds lost you can buy yourself a new book. For every 30 days you don't miss a workout, you can get your nails done. For your 50 pound weight loss mark, you can go buy new clothes, or get a facial, whatever your vice.

You can make your rewards as frequent, big, or small as you'd like. However, avoid making your rewards/treats food. Seems counterproductive to treat yourself for eating spinach for two weeks with a brownie, no?

5. GET A SQUAD

Okay, it doesn't have to be a squad, it can be ONE person, but they can be your motivation squad. This squad can be a few people close to you (or one person) that will motivate you no matter what. You can explain to the squad what your goals are and have them provide emotional support when needed (because you will need it) and motivation when yours lacks. We aren't perfect. Sometimes, we will want to sleep in and miss a workout. Sometimes, we will want that 8th slice of pizza. However, if you set a squad in place, they can help guide you to the light. As an example, your squad can text you every morning to touch base with you and see if you've gone to the gym, along with providing motivational, even corny, fitness quotes. At first, it may seem silly to let others help you and guide you to your goals, but in the end, as long as you get there, who cares?

Remember, whatever your goals are for trying to get motivated to get to the gym, or to eat better, know that you won't be perfect. Remember to seek improvement, not perfection (I think I just made that up too). You've got this!

Thug Kitchen's:

LENTIL TACOS

with Carrot-Jicama Slaw

A little sweet and a little savory, this recipe breaks all the taco rules. Serve them up with a side of slaw and blow your taste buds away. This recipe makes six to eight tacos and here's what you'll need.

LENTILS:

3 cups water
 1 cup black lentils (rinsed)
 ½ teaspoon olive oil
 ½ onion (chopped)
 8 ounces mushrooms (cut into bite-size pieces)
 1 tablespoon soy sauce or tamari
 2-3 cloves of minced garlic
 2 tablespoons apple juice
 1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil

CARROT-JICAMA SLAW:

½ pound jicama
 1 small cucumber
 1 carrot
 2 tablespoons rice vinegar
 1 tablespoon lime juice
 ¼ teaspoon salt

SALSA OF YOUR CHOICE

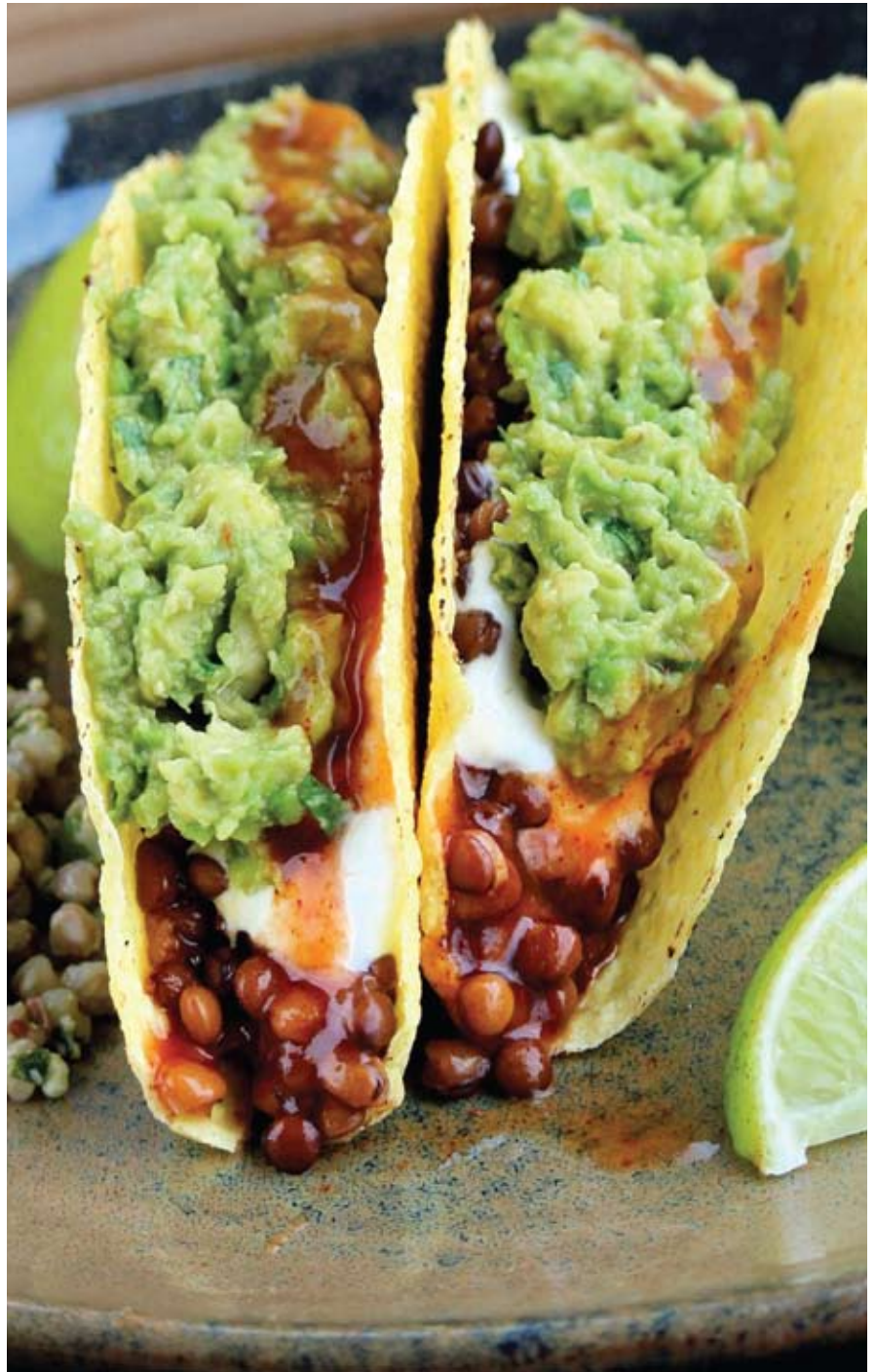
1. For the lentils: Bring the water to a boil in a medium saucepot over high heat and add the lentils. Turn the heat to low and simmer until tender (about 30 minutes). Drain the excess water and set aside.

2. In a large wok or skillet, heat the oil over medium heat and add the onion. Cook until the onion becomes translucent (about three minutes). Add the mushrooms and cook until they release some of their liquid (about three minutes). Add the soy sauce, stir and then add the lentils. Mix it up and add the garlic and apple juice. Cook until most of the liquids have evaporated about two minutes. Turn off the heat and stir in the toasted sesame oil.

3. Now, the slaw. Cut the jicama, cucumber and carrot into matchsticks no more than 1 inch long. Toss with the rest of the slaw ingredients and refrigerate until you serve.

4. To make the tacos, warm the tortillas and fill them with the lentil mix, some shredded cabbage or lettuce, the jicama slaw and top with salsa.

Enjoy!





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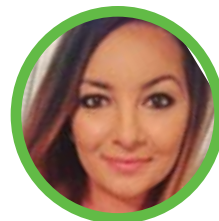
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M A T C H A

me a tea



by Lina Stoyanova
Editor

By now, you've probably heard about matcha, but in case you haven't, here's what you need to know.

Meet Matcha

Matcha is a finely milled green tea powder that has gained popularity thanks to its health benefits and tasty flavor. The green tea leaves that have been stone-ground into a powder can be grown in many places. However, the best matcha is said to come from Japan (the most popular growing regions are in the southern part of the country).

What distinguishes matcha from other green teas is that matcha bushes are covered up for about 20 days hiding the leaves from direct sunlight. This is done to boost the plants' chlorophyll levels (which turns the leaves a darker more vibrant shade of green), and increase the production of L-Theanine (an amino acid that occurs naturally in the tea plant and certain types of mushrooms). L-Theanine is the reason tea has a tendency to both calm and stimulate at the same time.

The Process

The green tea leaves that have been ground into a powder make all the difference. Once the buds are picked, the difference in the result of the tea are based on whether the leaves are rolled out flat before drying, or whether they are laid out to dry. If the leaves are rolled out they become a premium green tea named Gyokuro, while the leaves that are laid out to dry become Tencha. Tencha is the leaf used for making matcha. Once the leaf is de-veined, de-stemmed and stone-ground, it becomes the fine powder known as matcha.

The Benefits

Amongst its many health benefits, matcha is packed with antioxidants including the powerful EGCs, boosts metabolism and burns calories, detoxifies effectively and naturally, calms the mind and relaxes the body, is rich in fiber, chlorophyll and many other vitamins (including vitamin C, selenium, chromium, zinc and magnesium), enhances mood and aids in concentration, lowers cholesterol and blood sugar, and lastly, prevents disease.



1. High in Antioxidants

Antioxidants are the body's defense agents as they are chemical compounds that prevent aging and chronic diseases. The more antioxidants you get, the better equipped your body is in the fight against infections and disease. Matcha tea provides over five times as many antioxidants as any other food which makes it rated the highest by the ORAC (oxygen radical absorbance capacity) method.

2. Loaded with Catechin, EGCg

Green tea contains a specific set of organic compounds known as catechins. Since not all antioxidants are created equal, it's very important to note that catechins are the most potent and beneficial. One specific catechin called epigallocatechin gallate (EGCg) makes up 60% of the catechins in matcha tea. Out of all the antioxidants, EGCg is the most widely recognized for its cancer fighting properties. Scientists have found that Matcha tea contains over 100 times more EGCg than any other tea on the market.

3. Detoxifies the Body

As I mentioned previously, chlorophyll is a key component of matcha tea. The tremendous amount of chlorophyll that is in the leaves (of the plants that make matcha), make it a powerful detoxifier. This is why matcha tea is capable of naturally removing heavy metals and chemical toxins from the body.

4. Fights Free-Radicals

There's a lot of damage done to our body due to free-radicals. Since matcha is grown in the shade (away from pollution), it is super rich in chlorophyll and has 137 times more antioxidants (versus other teas). This allows matcha tea to do good for the body and helps the body rid itself of free-radicals and chemicals.

Experts at Tufts University found that its ORAC (oxygen radical absorbance capacity) reveals a phenomenal 1573 units per gram; which makes it an antioxidant gold mine in comparison to pomegranates (105 units per gram) and blueberries (93 units per gram).

5. Stabilizes Blood Sugar and Cholesterol

As mentioned earlier, Matcha has a high concentration of the substance EGCg (epigallocatechin gallate), which has been shown to influence the way glucose is absorbed. When matcha tea is consumed with a meal, the contents of catechins have been shown to reduce the amount of

glucose that filters through to the bloodstream. This in turn helps prevent blood sugar spikes. Many studies show evidence that EGCg also affects the metabolism, which in turn, lowers cholesterol and decreases your risk of a stroke.

6. Slows Down the Effects of Aging

By reducing inflammation and the free radicals in the body (which induce aging), the EGCg in matcha also has a positive effect on the membrane tissue in the body. This means your body's cell-walls are strengthened, by providing greater protection against toxins, and thus, results in having healthier, younger looking skin.



matcha tea smoothie

7. Matcha or Coffee

Matcha contains incredible immune-boosting properties in each cup. The catechins fight various bacterial, viral and fungal infections since matcha provides quantities of potassium, vitamins A and C, iron, enzymes and calcium. Matcha also contains L-theanine which assist in boosting alpha waves in the brain. These alpha waves promote mental relaxation and induce a feeling of mental clarity and a more alert state of mind. This makes it a healthier option since matcha gives both a calm feeling and mental alertness (not to mention all the other benefits mentioned in the above).

How to Drink It

There are many ways to have matcha tea, however, I'll list the three most common.

The traditional way is to mix the powder with hot water and drink it that way. This way is the simplest, however, if you'd like to sweeten it, you can add a little bit of honey or agave syrup.

The second way to have matcha is to buy or make a matcha latte. This is done by frothing a milk of your choice (I like cashew) and mixing it in with the matcha. To sweeten, add honey or agave syrup. You can also take it up a notch and sprinkle some cinnamon.

Lastly, you can add a teaspoon or two of matcha in a smoothie or dish of your liking.

In conclusion, Matcha tea is an easy and simple way to add powerful health benefits to your daily diet.



matcha tea latte

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10

TIPS TO
HELP YOU
RELAX

by Lina Stoyanova
Editor

If you're feeling particularly stressed, here are some tips to help you unwind and relax. Since everyone is different try to pick the tips that best suit your personality type. As an example, I can't relax in the bath as I constantly need to do something, so that would not work for me. But if you find baths relaxing, go to Lush, buy a bath bomb, and have a relaxing time.

1. Take a Bath

Even if you don't need to bathe, turning on the bath seems to relax a lot of people. Get some bath bombs to create bubbles, light some candles (careful there though), and maybe even pour yourself a glass of wine. Sitting in the water and getting a moment to yourself may be what you need to relax.

2. Read a Book

Reading a book is good for many reasons. However, the main reason I suggest reading a book is because it will get you to focus on someplace else. Whether you get lost in the storyline of a romance, thriller, or lost in self-improvement, whatever book or genre you choose, it'll do wonders.

3. Go for a Walk

Maybe you're not into books (or baths). Maybe you prefer to be out in nature. Whether by yourself, with a pet, or a friend, I suggest going for a walk. Getting away for even ten minutes can do wonders not only for your physical health, but also your mental health. This will help relax you because you can sort through your thoughts in peace—or if you're with a friend, vent them out.

4. Make some Tea

Just the word tea alone is enough to relax me. Sitting by the fireplace in the winter with a hot cup of tea or in the backyard with a good book and some tea, ahh, that's life. If you enjoy the taste, grab some tea to help relax you. You can choose any flavor you like and have it cold or hot. I also recommend having a decaffeinated tea so you don't get jittery. The two best options for relaxation are Chamomile and Lavender.

5. Use some Essential Oils

Essential oils are highly beneficial (Google it). Grab some Lavender essential oil and rub it on your wrists, temples and watch yourself get soothed. You can also breathe in deeply while you sniff some from the bottle. Sounds whacky as I write it, but trust me, it works. If you are scent sensitive, don't worry.

Perfume smells have chemicals which is what causes migraines—pure essential oils do not. You can also add a few drops into your bath or a diffuser to really relax.

6. Breathe Deeply

Go in your room and lay on your bed, couch, wherever you'd like really. Take some time to either meditate or just simply breathe deeply. Breathe in and out slowly and focus on your breath. Make sure you're alone and have the T.V. and radio off.

7. Get a Stress Ball

If you can't find a stress ball in your area, just buy a small squishy ball (or item in general) that you can squeeze. When you're feeling sad, angry, or stressed, just squeeze it repeatedly for about one to two minutes straight. If you don't want to buy an item, simply clench both of your hands to make a fist (as hard as you can) hold for ten seconds and then release. Do as many sets as it takes until you feel relaxed.

8. Clean

It may seem counterproductive since the whole point of this article is to help you relax, but seriously, go clean something. Whether you dust, organize your makeup or decide to scrub your bedroom walls top to bottom, the energy you exert can be highly therapeutic. If you enjoy cleaning, once you've completed your tasks you'll feel much more relaxed, and hey, added bonus, your house is clean.

9. Focus on a Hobby

Do your favorite hobby to help you relax—everyone has one! Whether it's cooking, going for a drive, gardening, bathing your pet, playing tennis, going to the gym, or listening to music, everyone has their vice. Whatever your favorite hobby is go do it when you are feeling stressed to help relax you.

10. Watch Something

Last but not least, sometimes we don't feel like doing much at all. That's when movies, T.V. shows, YouTube, and Ellen DeGeneres come into play. Turn on a show or movie to get your mind off whatever it was that stressed you out in the first place and see yourself relax after the fact. I mean c'mon, Ellen is pretty funny. Just relax.

WHEN IT'S TIME TO UNWIND



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MEDITATION *for Beginners*





by Lina Stoyanova
Editor

Meditation can help you focus, relieve pain, improve sleep quality, reduce stress and multiple studies show that meditation can even reduce levels of anxiety and depression. There are many reasons why you should try meditation so if you're a beginner and would like to learn how to meditate, use these tips as a guide.

1. THERE IS NO WRONG WAY TO MEDITATE

First and foremost, know there is no wrong way to meditate. I mean it. No matter how you meditate, where, or how often, it cannot be done wrong. Meditation is about relaxing, clearing the mind and calming yourself. So, do your best during your meditation and know that there is no "right" or "perfect" way.

2. COMMIT

Once you've decided to try meditation, commit yourself fully. Schedule a set time you will meditate for. This could be as simple as "For the next 30 days, I will meditate every other day," or "For the next two weeks, I will meditate every day." Really stick to it. Give it a good go to reap the benefits and see if it's truly something you enjoy.

3. TIME AND PLACE

Pick the time and place where you'd like to meditate. Ideally, it's best to pick a place you can be alone. When you are alone (and comfortable), you are less likely to be distracted. If you are sitting uncomfortably in a hammock and you keep fidgeting or moving, it'll distract you and defeat the purpose of the calming meditation practice. As you become more and more experienced and comfortable with meditation, you'll find you can do it anywhere. Some people can meditate in the shower or even while they're sitting in their car while stuck in traffic (goals, eh?).

Once you pick a certain place, try to figure out a time. It doesn't have to be super specific (unless you like that), but try to decide what time of day you'll meditate and

how often. This can be as simple as "For the next week, I will meditate every morning after my coffee and every evening after my shower." You can start off meditating every day, every other day, once a week, whatever you like. If you find it very helpful, try meditating several times a day (such as morning and night—or more if you can).

4. DURATION

You are your own person, so how long you choose to meditate for is entirely up to you. Ideally, for a beginner, it's best to try anywhere between one to five minutes. Set a timer on your phone (e.g. three minutes), that way as you're meditating, you aren't wondering about how long it's been or worrying that your time will be up. This will help put your mind at ease and help with the process. Once you feel comfortable with meditation, try to increase your daily meditation time to at least ten minutes (and go for longer if you're able).

5. FOCUS ON YOUR BREATH

When you start meditating, try to release all thoughts and worries from your mind. Meditation is not an easy thing to do. Our minds are constantly wandering, so to calm yourself and to get meditation down pat, focus on your breath. Take deep and long breaths, in and out. If your mind wanders that's okay. Gently refocus your thoughts back to your breath. This is a process that will be happening and this is what meditating is all about. Try to silence your thoughts as much as you can, but don't feel flustered if you can't quiet your mind for more than a few seconds. Even that in it of itself will benefit you in the long run. You've got this.

Meditating can help
you to relieve
yourself of any pain,
stress and potential
agitations that may
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6. COUNT YOUR BREATH

If focusing on your breath bores you, try counting your breath. Count each inhale and exhale to give your mind a task that will keep it from wandering.

7. YOUR PESKY THOUGHTS

If you are meditating and you remember that you need to sign your son's permission slip, don't worry. It happens and it will happen. Gently re-focus yourself back to your task: being calm and breathing. Focus on your breath and on remaining calm/still. If negative thoughts come up (or thoughts in general), you can do one of two things: you can acknowledge the thought and let it go by focusing on your breath or you can acknowledge the negative thought and refute it. Once you do, simply get back to trying to clear your mind. Focus on how calm you feel, how your body and mind are trying to rest and just move forward.

Don't linger on the thoughts that come up TOO much—since they will. The whole process of meditation is the 'trying' part. In the end, you'll feel more at ease and in the long run, relaxed.

8.) TRY GUIDED MEDITATION

The internet and YouTube have so much information about meditation and tons of videos. Try visiting YouTube and search 'guided meditation' in order to get some help. Some guided meditations take you step by step, while others tell you what to chant, and some others, just play harmonious music. Look some up if you'd like to try a different approach.

LASTLY:

Remember, you are meditating to relieve yourself of any pain, stress and potential agitations that may come your way. It's important we all take care of our mental and physical health. Take the time to meditate and see if you like it. If you do, know that you are doing something that is benefiting you and those around you.

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by Lina Stoyanova
Editor

A full-page background image showing the silhouette of a man and a woman dancing on a beach at sunset. The woman is being lifted by the man, and her arms are raised. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm glow. The ocean waves are visible in the background.

Beat the Blues.

A GUIDE TO GET YOU OUT OF YOUR FUNK

Whether you are feeling sad, down, depressed, or just simply would like to live life in a happier state, find below a comprehensive list of different ways to alleviate feeling blue.

1. Remove Toxic People

Tip number one to feeling better and curing yourself of any sad feelings, depression, anxiety and negativity is to remove all toxic people out of your life (and while you are at it, limit negative situations). This is THE most important tip I (or any professional) can probably give you. Let me explain.

I understand some toxic people may be hard to remove (a parent, cousin, co-worker), so if there's no way around it, limit your exposure to them. If it's a co-worker, keep it simple, short and professional each time you interact. Also note, emailing them and speaking over the phone (rather than physically walking over to them) will do wonders for you. If it's a family member, and again, if you can't remove them and cut all ties (I know, it sounds ruthless but it all depends on the severity of your situation/relationship), then limit contact with them by seeing them when it's absolutely necessary (an example could be a birthday). Removing the toxic people out of your life (or at the very least, dramatically decreasing their company), will ensure you reap the benefits, some of which include: improved mood, increased energy, better attitude, more time to spend with people you like/do things you like, less drama, less stress, and just overall, better mental health. In some cases, people even lose weight (since you become less stressed and less depressed).

***"Before you diagnose yourself with depression or low self-esteem, first make sure you are not, in fact, surrounded by assholes."* – Sigmund Freud**

2. Remove /Limit Social Media

You might wonder why this is one of the very first tips. If you are able to remove social media for a period of time, I say go for it. If not (say you work with social media), then at least try to limit it. Whether you are aware of it or not, you might be comparing yourself to numerous people (your daily life or people you haven't met such as Instagram models), which could be doing a lot more damage to your psyche than you may think.

By constantly comparing yourself to others, or your life to others ("Wow, it sucks I can't travel as much as Susan,") you start to think something is wrong with you/your life, even if that isn't the case. Say you see a friend post that her significant other bought her a trip to the Bahamas. Wouldn't you agree you most likely would have a negative thought? "Dave's never bought me a trip to the Bahamas and we've been together for 10 years." Thoughts as these can add up throughout the day, especially since we are always on social media. Now, I'm not saying you wouldn't be happy for that friend, but I do think the majority of people can get a bit down on themselves when they think everyone else has a picture perfect life.

So, I would recommend unfollowing/unfriending people who make you feel crummy about your looks, job, significant other, income, whatever it is, or limit your use so you don't constantly feel you aren't measuring up to other people (regardless if that's how that person is really living their life). Remember, social media only shows the positives.

3. Get a Pink Himalayan Salt Lamp

This tip is very important. Himalayan salt lamps have huge health benefits and promote a better mood in a natural way. The lamps work to release negative salt ions which boost blood flow, improve sleep and increase levels of serotonin in the brain.

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4. Make a List (or Two)

Make a list of all **activities** that make you happy and aim to do ONE a day. If that seems too ambitious (maybe you have four kids and run around all day), then tailor it to your schedule. You can check things off this list once a day, once a week, etc. Just try to do something that makes you happy daily (this could be as small as having your favorite flavor of tea or warming up your socks in the dryer because you like being warm, whatever floats your boat).

Make a separate list of all of the **things** that make you happy. This list can be as short or as long as you'd like and can include anything. For example: Dogs, kites, the sun, the ocean, boats, etc. Write out all of the things that make you happy and whenever you are feeling down pull it out and start reading it to yourself. As you are reading it, try to relax and visualize the things you enjoy. Picture cute dogs running around giving you wet kisses and chasing their tail—whatever makes you feel good when you think of your *thing*. This should help you feel a lot better and you can do it for as long as you'd like. If you'd like a preventative measure (say you are currently feeling pretty content), you could make these two lists and still implement them. With your “things” list, you can apply it by reading it and visualizing every night before bed. Try it, it'll make the world of a difference.

5. Vitamin D

There are two main ways to get vitamin D and those two ways are by exposing your skin to sunlight and/or by taking vitamin D supplements. Research has showed that there is a relationship between low levels of vitamin D in the blood and depression. A way to beat the blues would be to increase it by either going outside for about 20 minutes a day or supplementing if going outside isn't an option. Another way to increase vitamin D is to have foods that are fortified in vitamin D such as orange juice, soy milk and/or various cereals.

6. Volunteer

You might be wondering why I'm suggesting you volunteer when you are feeling like crap. Well, I'll tell you. When you volunteer, you stop focusing on yourself and your trauma, pain, blues, again, whatever you'd like to call it, and focus on someone else. According to research conducted by the Corporation for National and Community Service they state: “Over the past two decades we have seen a growing body of research that indicates volunteering provides individual health benefits in addition to social benefits. The research has established a strong relationship between volunteering and health: those who volunteer have lower mortality rates, greater functional ability, and lower rates of depression later in life than those who do not volunteer.”

7. St. John's Wort

There are people that swear by St. John's Wort but it's always best to do your research first. St. John's Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*) is a plant that grows in the wild and has been used for centuries for mental health conditions. The plant's flowers can be either dried or made into capsules, tea or pressed for use in oils and liquid extracts.



It's most commonly used to treat depression and is associated with conditions such as anxiety, sleep problems and seasonal affective disorder. The ingredients work similarly to antidepressants but without the nasty side effects. It's also important to note that St. John's Wort limits the effectiveness of other medications, so do your research thoroughly before picking this up over the counter.

8. Diet & Probiotics

Sometimes when someone is depressed they can under-eat, over-eat, or simply put, not eat altogether. Different moods and situations affect us all differently, so if you are feeling particularly down, try to clean up your diet (or if you aren't eating, start with eating). Focus on eating clean, nutritious food and try to add some healthy probiotics.

Research conducted by Science Daily in May 2017 states, “A new study is the first to show improved depression scores with a probiotic. It adds to the whole field of microbiota-gut-brain axis, providing evidence that bacteria affect behavior.”

Good gut health is important, so increase your intake of probiotic rich foods (fermented foods) such as kimchi, tempeh, miso, pickles, sauerkraut or even drinking Kombucha. There are a ton of different foods that are probiotic rich so pick ones you like. Or, if you'd rather, you can take a supplement.

9. Magnesium

Research has shown that magnesium helps ease anxiety, depression, headaches and even irritability (amongst much more). If you don't wish to take a magnesium supplement, you could always increase your intake of magnesium through magnesium rich foods. To name a few, you could eat some spinach, chard (really any leafy green), pumpkin seeds (really any seeds), black beans, almonds and yogurt or kefir. If you wish to learn more about magnesium rich foods, supplementation or just research about how it helps depression, feel free to conduct your own research outside of this article.

10. Frankie Says Relax

When we feel down, or unmotivated, we all process things differently. Sometimes it's best to take a step back and though we may not feel like it, take some time for ourselves. Try to plan a relaxing activity and do it (an example could be getting a massage or a facial). Before you say "Lina, I'm not made of money," let me finish. You don't have to spend the money to get pampered professionally (unless you'd like to), you can simply do it yourself. Get a face-mask from Walmart (or a facial scrub) and do one yourself. If you like being around others while being down (I personally don't), you could have a friend come over and you guys could have a spa day where you do facials for each other, your nails, etc. As for the massage part, you can have your significant other help you out with that part—even if he/she isn't an expert, I'm sure they'll help. "Lina I'm single." Enjoy being single and go back down to Walmart and get one of those hand-held massagers. The point is, whatever makes you relax, schedule some time for yourself and do it. Mandatory: Don't feel guilty taking time for yourself. By doing something for yourself you will feel better and you'll also be able take care of those closest to you better.

11. Binaural Beats

This recommendation should only be followed once you independently verify the information outside of this article. Binaural beats have been subject to numerous studies for depression, anxiety, stress and conditions related to the inability to relax. There are tons of studies conducted on the effect of binaural beats on the body so if you can't seem to get out of your funk, I'd highly recommend looking into this.

12. Journaling

Grab a journal and write it out. You can use your journal to vent, write your most vulnerable thoughts, write your goals, write daily affirmations or even make it as a daily gratitude journal.

You can have one journal or even several, but people who journal tend to be more relaxed and less likely to feel depressed.

13. Get Help

If all else fails (or you'd just prefer this route), seek professional help. If you think you are feeling depressed on a clinical scale, try to look up community mental health programs, set up chat sessions with a friend or pay a professional therapist. Many people also try hypnotherapy, so that's something worth mentioning. Remember, it's okay to feel down at times, but if you notice being down in the dumps for a significant period of time and you've tried the majority of the mentioned suggestions, maybe it's best to seek professional help.

A few Other Tips:

- **Take baths with Epsom Salt**
- **When you put on your face cream, lotion, or whatever else you apply daily, apply it slowly and give yourself little massages to help relax you**
- **Drink more water—H2O seems to help cure everything**
- **Listen to music you enjoy**
- **Vent to a friend**
- **Watch funny movies**
- **Get outside (even if it's gloomy) to get fresh air**
- **Get an essential oil such as lavender and put it in a diffuser (or apply to your wrists and the back of your ears), to get a calming, relaxing effect**
- **Try Yoga or Meditating**

In conclusion, you have to apply what works best for you and your lifestyle. Try any of the above recommendations or even combine a few of them if you are feeling really, really down. Always remember if your problem persists and you think you might be clinically depressed, look into getting professional help or even calling a helpline.



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