



# Balanced Living – February 2018

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## Give Your Diet a Nutritional Tune-up



Between spending long days at work and evenings and weekends attending to personal and family concerns, few Americans have time to eat right. But you don't have to remodel your diet to improve its healthfulness.

"There are easy and delicious ways to regularly add healthful foods to your diet," says Evelyn Tribole, M.S., R.D., dietitian and author of several nutrition books, including "Intuitive Eating."

Ms. Tribole suggests the following tips for tuning up your diet.

### Fruits and vegetables

Eating five to thirteen servings (or 2½ to 6½ cups) of fruits and vegetables each day can help you prevent cancer, heart disease and other health problems.

To sneak more fruits and vegetables into your diet:

- Add finely grated carrots to spaghetti sauce. Carrots are loaded with beta carotene, an antioxidant. You can also add kale or spinach to the sauce.
- Fortify your salad. "A salad is a great place to add other vegetables," says Ms. Tribble. Top Boston lettuce with chopped bell peppers, onions, carrots and tomatoes. Remember that what goes into a salad depends on your taste. Some suggestions are jalapeno peppers, baby green peas, cauliflower, thinly slice purple cabbage, onion, cucumber, beans, sprouts (barley, bean, radish), mushrooms, oriental vegetables and other exotic vegetables. In addition some fruits make great additions for a slightly sweeter flavor. Raspberries, blueberries, Mandarin orange, mango, papaya and Kiwi make flavorful and nutritious additions. Remember to use a fat-free or low fat dressing.

## Low-fat dairy products

Low-fat dairy products are high in calcium, which helps prevent bone-weakening osteoporosis.

To sneak in at least three servings of calcium-rich foods a day:

- Switch to skinny lattes (2/3 skim milk to 1/3 strong coffee) instead of regular coffee.
- Drink calcium-fortified orange juice instead of the regular kind. You'll get as much calcium as if you drank a glass of milk.
- Cook oatmeal and other hot cereals with low-fat milk instead of water.
- Choose yogurt for a snack.

## Iron

Iron deficiency can be caused by too little iron in your diet. (Other reasons for iron deficiency are inadequate absorption of iron and excessive blood loss.) Because iron helps carry oxygen to the blood and deliver it to cells, you may feel sluggish and fatigued without enough of it. Women of childbearing age (especially those who have heavy menstrual periods), pregnant women, preterm and low-birth-weight infants, older infants and toddlers, and teenage girls are at greatest risk for developing iron deficiency anemia because they have the greatest need for iron. For these people, iron supplements may be necessary to prevent iron deficiency anemia.

To add more iron to your diet, include red meats, fish and poultry. Plant foods such as lentils and beans and iron-enriched and iron-fortified foods are also common sources of dietary iron.

## Fiber

A high-fiber diet reduces the risk of heart disease.

To sneak more fiber into your diet:

- Toss beans into salads and soups.

- Try hummus, black-bean or pinto-bean dip with crudites and chips.
- Sprinkle wheat germ on yogurt or into a cobbler or a crust.
- Serve brown rice or wild rice instead of white rice.
- Buy bread and crackers with "whole wheat" listed as the first ingredient. "If the label just says 'wheat,' the product probably contains white flour, which is low in fiber," says Ms. Tribble.

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## What Will You do When You Retire?

For most people, the key to a happy and fulfilling retirement is simple: staying busy. Unfortunately, when planning for retirement, a lot of folks focus only on finances, and fail to think about, or plan for, how they will spend their time.

Why worry about retirement activities now, when retirement is years, or even decades, away? Because, put bluntly, people who count on developing new interests and involvements after 65 often don't. And that makes for a bored, depressed old age.

### Start Planning Now

It's never too early to plan for what you will do in your golden years. To start, take a few minutes to write down the things you expect to be actively involved in. Don't count solo activities such as reading, watching TV, or jogging. While fine in themselves, they are not likely to keep you energized and interesting for long. Be as specific as you can. For example, if you plan to participate in charitable activities aimed at helping educate Third World children, who will you work with and what will you do?

Keep in mind that participating in just a few activities won't keep you interested in life and interesting to others. So if your list consists of travel, adult education courses, and golf, you'll need to do more planning. Here are some other activities to consider -- and how to plan for them:

### Working Part-Time

Many people who enjoy the bustle and creativity of the workplace find that working at least part-time after retirement age offers the best opportunity to stay busily involved in life. And, of course, working a few extra years can go a long way toward helping solve money problems.

If you hope to establish a new career, turn a hobby into a business or find a part-time job more challenging than flipping burgers, it's important to plan ahead. Investigate whether you'll need more education, experience or skills in order to execute your plans. Then, take the time before you retire to develop the tools you'll need.

For example, if you'd like to convert your passion for gardening into a landscaping business, you may need to take courses in marketing and accounting, learn how and where to buy wholesale plants and begin developing a customer base. This may mean cutting back on current work and making some short-term financial sacrifices.

## Volunteering

Many older people gain satisfaction from an active involvement with good causes. Here's why:

- **A chance to do interesting work.** Many nonprofits are involved in work that is fascinating. For example, nonprofits preserve rain forests, record oral histories of elderly immigrants, and teach low-income children to read. If you check around, you'll be sure to find an organization that piques your interest or passion.
- **A way to add meaning to life.** Knowing that you are doing good and needed work can give your life far more meaning than it might otherwise have. Working to improve the quality of others' lives helps some people cope with the inevitability of their own death.
- **A way to pay one's karmic debts.** Helping others gives many older people the opportunity to pass on the love and support once given them.
- **An opportunity to meet interesting people.** Regular workplaces are great places to make friends, too, but nonprofit groups tend to attract like-minded people (such as people interested in adult literacy or bilingual education or reptiles). Finding people you can truly bond with may be easier.

Planning ahead is key to succeeding as a volunteer. At first you may think this is silly -- after all, you're not asking to be paid, only to help out. Think again. Increasingly, bigger nonprofits rely on paid staff and technology to accomplish many day-to-day tasks, using only a small group of knowledgeable volunteers to staff the board of directors and advisory committees. People who know the field and have up-to-date skills are in great demand, but those who have little to offer beyond a desire to help may have a hard time finding satisfying work.

The lesson is the same as it is in the profit-making sector: explore your hoped-for nonprofit career well before you retire and actually need it.

## Exploring Hobbies

Retirement is a great time to devote more time to your hobbies. But many people don't develop interests outside of work and family in their younger and middle years, thinking they'll do it after they retire.

If this is your plan, beware! Few people who have not cultivated authentic interests during their middle years are able to do so after age 65. Many of them end up bored and disappointed. So, take the time now to enjoy life, develop interests and pursue hobbies. When you retire, you can devote more time to your existing activities and add a few others.

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## 20 Ways to Reduce Stress

If your boss, coworker, or workload has you down in the dumps, try one of the proven relaxation methods below to blow off some steam in a healthy way:

1. **Concentrate on your breath.** Close your eyes and start breathing deeply and slowly. Let the breath out for a count of five. Repeat this practice ten times, focusing on the way the breath feels in the body. Feel the ribcage expand and relax, and feel your mind relax.
2. **Stretch the stress away.** Raise your arms above your head, then reach out to the right side of the room for four counts, and then to the left side of the room for four counts. Next, reach straight up. Reach all the way through your fingers to stretch your back and shoulder muscles. Then, take your arms back down and release your neck by moving your right ear toward your right shoulder. Then move your head back up to center, and move your left ear toward your left shoulder. Lastly, open your mouth as wide as you can and yawn.
3. **Walk it off.** Take a walk at lunch or during a break. Walk around the building or climb the stairs.
4. **Eat a healthy snack.** Keep fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole-grain foods on or around your desk. They contain stress-busting B and C vitamins.
5. **Visualization.** Put a flower or blade of grass on your desk and spend a few moments each hour contemplating it. Imagine the cells within it teeming with life, or imagine you are a ladybug climbing up the flower or the grass, taking in its color and smell.
6. **Drink healthy liquids.** Switch your regular coffee drink for some healthy fruit juice, low calorie vitamin water, or electrolyte-infused water.
7. **Treat yourself.** Enjoy a banana, orange, or tangerine. Peel it slowly and enjoy the fragrance. Allow your thoughts to focus on the way the fruit smells, tastes, looks, and feels. Savor each bite. Don't do anything else while you're eating the fruit.
8. **Take time to laugh.** Write down some funny jokes where you can see them or find humorous points of the present situation.
9. **Talk to your coworkers.** While on break, chat with colleagues about hobbies and activities outside of work.
10. **Imagine a peaceful place.** Close your eyes and think of yourself resting on a beach, in a meadow, or at a spa. Take in the scene completely, thinking about how it would feel if you really were there.
11. **Take a minute.** Look out a window and let your thoughts take flight.
12. **Break time.** Take a break from your work and think about your life outside of your job. Think about something enjoyable you will do when you get home.
13. **Journey outside during breaks.** Sit next to trees or flowers. Enjoy the way their leaves float in the breeze.
14. **Take a meditation break.** Close your eyes, deepen your breath, and focus on peaceful feelings for five or ten minutes. When you open your eyes, take the peaceful feelings with you as you go back to work.
15. **Make a cup of hot tea or broth.** Enjoy the smell and the warmth.
16. **Complete something you've been putting off.** Notice how good you feel having completed it.
17. **Make time for play.** Do a crossword, play solitaire, or another game during a break.
18. **Massage yourself.** Rub your shoulders, neck, and scalp. Close your eyes and imagine the muscles releasing.

19. **Release tension through movement.** Follow this exercise: Sit up straight, then drop your upper torso, arms, and head between your knees. Exhale and then inhale as you roll up, starting from the base of your spine.
20. **Adjust.** Focus on your posture and adjust it if necessary. Place your feet flat on the floor, lower back supported against the chair, shoulders moving down, chest moving up, and chin parallel with the floor. Breathe through this posture.

***Written by Life Advantages - Author Delvina Miremadi ©2018***