



Maximize Exercise with Food

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Being physically active is wonderful for overall health. Benefits include improved mood, more energy, better sleep, stronger muscles and a decreased risk of developing heart disease and cancer.

Pairing exercise with the right dietary pattern is even more beneficial than exercise alone. To maximize the benefits of exercise, ensure that you fuel your body with the nutrients it needs before, during and after your activity. Your exact nutrient needs will depend on the type and duration of exercise, but these tips should be top of mind:

- **Carbohydrates provide energy during exercise.** Foods, such as whole-grain bread, pasta and rice, as well as fruit, provide carbs and can be eaten before a workout to fuel up, and after a workout to replenish what's been used.
- **Muscles are broken down during exercise, so protein is vital after exercise to repair muscles and body tissues.** You probably don't need protein powders or bars after basic exercise. Instead, choose a post-workout meal with protein-containing foods, such as milk, eggs, chicken, tofu or cheese.
- **Staying hydrated with water is vital.** When you exercise, water is lost through sweat, and it needs to be replenished. Keep a water bottle handy and sip before, during and after exercising.

Do I need a sports beverage? Sports drinks contain water, sugar and electrolytes, such as sodium and potassium. They are recommended when you lose fluid and electrolytes via sweat. This happens only when you exercise at a vigorous intensity for more than one hour and you are sweating heavily — for example, after a hockey game, hour-long run or intense spin class. Plain water is all you need after moderate activity with minimal sweat.

Everyday Relaxation Guide

Mind-body workouts involve a combination of movement, meditation and breathwork.

The physical aspects of this practice can produce a mental focus that may help distract you from negative, bothersome thoughts while enhancing your body's flexibility and balance. Mind-body therapies have become increasingly popular in the past two decades. In brief, they include:

Mindfulness meditation: This is designed to calm mind and body by reducing negative thoughts that can feel overwhelming. It involves sitting comfortably and focusing on breathing. It may be helpful for people with anxiety, depression or pain.

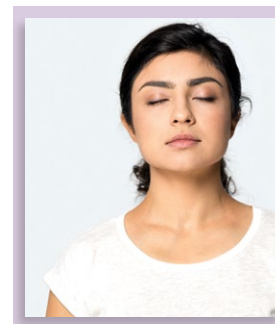
Breath focus meditation: Start by focusing on your breath, silently counting inhalations and exhalations — in (*one*), out (*two*), in (*three*) and so on. This can help you focus on something besides troublesome thoughts. **Suggestion:** Practice at the same time each day.

Repetitive prayer: For this technique, you silently repeat a short prayer, or a phrase from a prayer, while practicing breath focus — a method that may be especially appealing if religion or spirituality is meaningful to you.

Body scan: This technique blends focused breathing with progressive muscle relaxation. Start with a few minutes of deep breathing. Then focus on one part of your body or group of muscles at a time as you mentally release any physical tension you feel there.

Yoga and tai chi: These ancient practices combine rhythmic breathing with a series of postures and flowing movements. Yoga involves holding poses and postures. Tai chi is performed in a dance-like, martial arts form.

Note: If you are not normally physically active, have chronic health problems or a painful or disabling condition, you may find these relaxation techniques too challenging. Check with your health care provider before increasing your physical activity.



Prescription for Exercise

Exercise is good for you; you know that. Everybody does. It helps trim your waistline, helps your heart, helps keep your blood pressure down and even helps your memory. Recent research published in *BMJ* shows it also helps treat depression and anxiety. If you don't exercise, start today (first check with your health care provider if you're unaccustomed to exercise). The CDC recommends 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise every week, but studies show as little as ten minutes twice a day is a good way to start. And any amount of movement, even walking around for a few minutes every hour, washing windows or vacuuming, is beneficial. — Zorba Paster, MD



Online Pharmacies

There's no doubt that prescription drugs can be costly. Sometimes, insurance may not cover medications prescribed by your health care provider, or you may have a high copay.

Many people save money on prescription drug expenses by using online pharmacies. With much less overhead than traditional pharmacies, web-based stores can typically offer lower prices on prescription drugs and deliver them by mail.

But are all online pharmacies safe? Unfortunately, the answer is no. There are fraudulent online pharmacies selling fake versions of medications and/or selling expired or damaged drugs that have been stored improperly.

If you are considering using an online pharmacy, take these steps to protect yourself:

Never use a medicine from an online pharmacy that looks different from what you receive at your usual pharmacy.

Never take ordered drugs that arrive in damaged packaging, have an expired date or no expiration date and have only foreign language instructions.

Only use an online pharmacy that requires a health care provider's prescription.

Verify that an online pharmacy is a legitimate U.S. company. Check the pharmacy's license in the state's board of pharmacy license database by using the location tool at [fda.gov/drugs/besafexr-your-source-online-pharmacy-information/besafexr-resources-consumers](https://www.fda.gov/drugs/besafexr-your-source-online-pharmacy-information/besafexr-resources-consumers). Only use online pharmacies on the list.

The Art of Delegating

Learning how to delegate successfully is the key to achieving more. Whether you lead a team at work or need your kids to help with a list of holiday chores, delegating can give you energy and time for matters that need your specific attention.

But how do you delegate without being overly bossy or seeming demanding?

Try these tips for delegating successfully:

Start with your reasons about what needs to be done. People are more likely to care about performing specific assigned tasks well if they understand why the work you are delegating to them matters. So, explain why you think they will do a good job. Show enthusiasm for their ability to succeed and explain the task clearly.

Don't micromanage. It's fine to check how a task is going now and then, but constantly asking for updates can frustrate the person you delegated a task to and waste your time, too. In fact, sometimes the hardest part of delegating work to others is letting go of at least some control.

Provide deadlines. If a task or project has a short turnaround time, make sure you've made it clear and check in once or twice — but not constantly — before the task must be completed. If the task has a longer time frame until it must be completed, be specific about when you'll need brief updates as work progresses.



December is Safe Toys and Gifts Month.

Annual Safety Gift Guide

'Tis the season for giving with safety in mind. There may be something for everyone on your list with these innovative gift ideas:

For the traveler: There are many options, such as portable door locks, door stop alarms, portable safes, RFID wallets or purses and travel money belts.

For the fashionista: Wearable safety jewelry is all the rage. Check out necklaces, fitness bands, bracelets and even hair scrunchies that have safety features with buttons and apps designed to send alerts.

For the adventure seeker: GPS satellite messengers are great for when people are off the grid (out of cell phone reach). And you can also tuck a hybrid flashlight into their stocking.

For the DIYer: Protective gear, such as gloves or goggles, are thoughtful and practical.

For the runner or biker: LED flashlight gloves can come in handy when running or biking at dusk. Portable keychain alarms are also a great gift for the athlete on your list.



The **Smart Moves Toolkit**, including this issue's printable download, **Give Yourself the Gift of Health**, is at personalbest.com/extras/23V12tools.

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