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Sprout support system

Learning to grow your own food is a rewarding and healthy experience. Here are a few tips to help new gardeners, including your children, succeed and develop a lasting love for fresh produce.

GARDENING HELPERS

- Begin with easy-to-grow plants like basil, cherry tomatoes, or lettuce. Let your child select a few things they are excited to eat.
- Use smaller, appropriately sized trowels and gloves for children's hands. Designate a specific container or small raised bed as "theirs" to foster ownership.
- Turn watering, weeding, and thinning into lessons about plant needs and life cycles rather than just chores. Discuss the health benefits of eating fresh produce.
- Make a big deal out of picking the first vegetable or herb. Use it immediately in a special meal or snack to connect the effort directly to the reward.

Stop the mental swivel

Modern work often feels like a constant juggle, but our brains aren't actually built for multitasking. By practicing task ergonomics, specifically batching, you can protect your mental energy. Grouping similar activities allows your brain to settle into a rhythm, reducing the "switching cost" that drains productivity.



STRATEGIES FOR FLOW & FOCUS

- Every time you jump from a complex report to a quick email, your brain suffers from "attention residue." Shifting between tasks can cost up to 40% of someone's productive time, making batching essential for efficiency.
- Dedicate specific blocks of time solely to high-concentration projects. By isolating these periods from interruptions, you allow your brain to reach a state of "flow." This allows complex problem-solving to become more intuitive and less exhausting.
- Moving from deep, concentrated work to lighter administrative tasks at the end of the day can reduce cognitive strain. This transition acts as a mental cool-down, preventing the burnout often associated with high-intensity cognitive demands.
- Constant multitasking is linked to increased levels of cortisol, a stress hormone. Organized workflows and task structures can help lower workplace anxiety by providing a sense of control.



THE BATCH EFFECT

- Instead of checking notifications as they arrive, batch your communication into three set periods per day. This prevents the constant "start-stop" cycle that disrupts focus and increases stress levels throughout the work week.
- When you batch similar tasks, your brain stays in the same "mode," which reduces the likelihood of errors.
- Batching leverages your brain's natural tendency to find patterns. When you perform similar actions in a row, your neural pathways prime themselves for that specific type of work, leading to a "momentum effect" that makes subsequent tasks in the batch feel easier than the first.

Dwelling well

YOUR LIVING SPACE IS MORE THAN JUST A SHELTER. IT IS A VITAL FOUNDATION FOR YOUR PHYSICAL HEALTH AND MENTAL CLARITY EVERY SINGLE DAY.



- Improve indoor air quality by opening windows and using HEPA filters to reduce allergens and pollutants that irritate the lungs.
- Test your home for radon, a colorless gas that is a leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers.
- Maximize natural sunlight during the day to regulate your circadian rhythm, which helps improve sleep quality and boosts your daily mood.
- Keep humidity levels low to prevent mold growth, as damp environments can trigger asthma attacks and other respiratory issues.
- Switch to natural or low-VOC (volatile organic compound) cleaning products to limit the chemical vapors that can linger in poorly ventilated rooms.
- Organize your physical space to reduce cortisol levels, as a tidy environment helps lower mental stress and improves focus.

Mood magic for kids

Big emotions can feel overwhelming for little ones. Teaching simple coping tools can help children navigate their feelings with confidence, resilience, and calm.



THE TOOLKIT



- **Belly breathing:** Encourage slow, deep breaths to signal the nervous system to relax, which helps lower immediate physical stress.
- **The counting reset:** Slowly counting to ten provides a mental “pause button,” allowing the brain to shift from reactive emotions to logical thinking.
- **Naming the feeling:** Helping children label emotions—like “sad” or “frustrated”—reduces the intensity of the feeling and promotes emotional intelligence and self-regulation.
- **Physical movement:** Stretching or taking a short walk releases pent-up energy, as active play is a proven way to improve a child’s mood.
- **Safe spaces:** Create a quiet “calm-down corner” with soft pillows where a child can retreat to process feelings safely without external pressure or distractions.
- **The grounding game:** Ask the child to name three things they see and hear. This sensory focus pulls them out of an emotional spiral.