



30-Day Wellness Challenge





The 30-Day Wellness Challenge is a month-long opportunity to try new things and enhance your overall well-being. Over the next four weeks, focus on yourself and get healthy.

If you think the first step to this challenge will be to “hit the ground running” and start a strict diet and overwhelming exercise routine, think again. Changing everything at once can be very overwhelming and can lead us back to old habits. So instead of focusing on the destination, this challenge will focus on the journey. While exercise and a healthy diet are indeed part of this month’s challenge, we’re looking to take a far more holistic approach to things.

The 30-Day Wellness Challenge will include potlucks in pursuit of friendship, cat naps in pursuit of relaxation, and flossing in pursuit of a healthy smile. Each day will spotlight a specific task that can help you make an incremental change to improve your health and well-being. Think of this challenge as an all-encompassing effort to pick up healthy habits and leave behind unhealthy ones.

After completing each daily challenge, track your progress on your personal calendar located in the back of this packet and the large clinic calendar as well. Your wellness coordinator will hang the large clinic calendar in a common area for all employees to use. Try to join co-workers when possible and tackle tasks together. This will help you build peer support and make each challenge more fun.

After completing the 30-Day Wellness Challenge, channel your inner wellness champion and pledge to continue one or several healthy habits throughout the year. Use your personal Wellness Challenge Pledge Sheet, located at the back of this packet, to pick a healthy habit you vow to continue well beyond the 30-day challenge. Don’t forget to hang your personal pledge in a common area, like your office or on your refrigerator at home, to remind yourself that you are a Challenge Champ! Have fun and good luck!

Daily Challenge



day 1

Be Grateful

Use a blank notebook or a journal and create a gratitude journal. For this challenge, start off by writing down 20 things you are grateful for. For the Wellness champion in you, each night write down everything you are grateful for that day. This can be as small as noticing flowers in bloom or exchanging smiles with a stranger.

Recognizing and acknowledging what we are grateful for can help to relieve stress and increase our overall emotional well-being. By calling attention to thankfulness you will be more likely to focus on the positive and notice the small pleasures of everyday life.



day 2

Schedule Your Next Doctor Appointment

Today annual visits to a primary care physician are generally recommended for all adults. For most people, an annual visit is a preventive measure. By having a visit every year, certain problems can be caught at an early stage when treatment is easier. So don't delay, schedule your next doctor appointment today!



day 3

Meditate

Does the 15 minutes or half-hour that you try to allocate to sit in silence and "listen to your thoughts" always get bumped to the bottom of your priority list? If so, for this month's challenge, try to give it another shot. When you get home after a hectic day clear a space, take a deep breath, and try to clear your mind. Your mind might wander or entertain random racing thoughts but even so when you open your eyes you'll feel refreshed and surprisingly rested. The 15 minutes will give you a moment to stop, breathe, and take it all in. Meditation is not about creating a perfectly blank mind, but about creating 15 minutes of time just for you.



day 4

Plant A Little Positivity

Bring a green plant into the office and place it in the break room. Plants in the office can decrease stress and increase productivity. Also, research shows that plant-filled rooms can contain 50-60% fewer airborne molds and bacteria than rooms without plants. Breathe easier and brighten the office space with a nice cactus or herb!



day 5

Take a Walk Outside

The most important thing about taking a walk break is to do it every day. It doesn't matter how busy you are or how much you don't think you need it. For your next meeting, try to walk and talk with co-workers instead of sitting in a conference room. Walks are particularly crucial on those days when you have deadlines but they're refreshing on the calm days too.



day 6

Cook Dinner for Someone

Cooking for someone is a beautiful act of generosity. It's a gift of your time and attention, even if it's as simple as a grilled cheese sandwich and tomato soup. Sharing a meal in someone's home is intimate. You aren't surrounded by strangers in a restaurant and paced by a waiter who decides when to take your order and when to drop the bill. Sure, there's great takeout food, but it can be expensive and fattening — and it removes an element of connection to your meal. You don't get the pleasure of making something exactly the way you like it, and in your mealtime experience. Cooking for guests can show them the pleasure of a shared, homecooked meal.



day 7

Floss

We often ask questions such as how often should I floss, is flossing necessary, and what teeth should I floss? The cliché response is the one used by dentists time and time again. *You should only floss the teeth you want to keep!* Next to brushing, flossing is the most important thing that you can do to ensure good oral health. The purpose of both brushing and flossing is to reduce the number of bacteria which inhabit our mouths. Did you know that tartar build up between teeth from lack of flossing can actually prevent our teeth from being their whitest and brightest? By brushing **and** flossing we help to eliminate the bacteria which can lead to bad breath, gingivitis, and periodontal disease thus creating smiles which last a lifetime. Flossing for half a minute a day could save you years of dentures later. Try to make this task a daily one.



day 8

Word of the Day

Look up a “word of the day” and write it down then share it! Learning vocabulary is a very important part of learning a language. The more words you know, the more you will be able to understand others’ ideas and you will be able to communicate your thoughts and ideas more effectively. Just 15 minutes a day of concentrated study can greatly improve your vocabulary skills. Look up the Word of the Day at <http://www.merriam-webster.com/word-of-the-day/>. Try to use the new word three or four times throughout your day. Also, try the following tip to help increase your vocabulary. Put a tick mark in your dictionary next to every word you look up. The next time you turn to a page with a marked word, quickly check to see if you remember the meaning of that word.



day 9

Ask for Advice

Having trouble getting motivated to work out? Having second thoughts about your work project? Having problems managing family time and personal time? Sympathetic advice from your friend, co-worker or relative might help solve the problem. The idea of asking for advice can often be daunting when living in a society that prides itself on self-sufficiency. We would all like to handle everything that comes our way but the ability to ask for advice or help can sometimes be lifesaving. It might be difficult as in the beginning, but the more you practice, the less difficult it will be to ask. Also, remember that everyone needs help. Perhaps through your courage to ask, you will help someone else have the courage to ask for advice.



day 10

Turn Up the Music and Dance

“Those who danced were thought to be quite insane by those who could not hear the music.”— Angela Monet

It is a common misconception that you have to leave your house to go dancing. Most of the best dance parties take place in kitchens or living rooms. Or dance by yourself, while trying on a new outfit, waiting for the kettle to boil, or cooking dinner. So don’t waste another minute, turn up the radio and get up and get moving. Share a dance move with your co-workers and have a dance party at work or feel the beat with your family and friends.



day 11

Drink 8 Glasses of Water

We all know how important it is to stay hydrated but the catch with this task is that we don't often focus on this habit. We end up drinking coffee, and lots of soda, and alcohol, not to mention fruit juices and teas and milk. There are a bunch of other possibilities. Or just as often, we don't drink enough fluids, and we become dehydrated -- and that isn't good for our health. By following these few tips below you can form the water habit.

Carry a Bottle: A lot of people find it useful to get a big plastic drinking bottle. Fill it with water and carry it around all day.

Set a Reminder: Set your watch to beep at the top of each hour, or set a periodic computer reminder, so that you don't forget to drink water.

Substitute Water: If you would normally get a soda, or any other high calorie beverage, get a glass of water instead.

Filter: Instead of spending a fortune on bottled water, invest in a filter for your home faucet. It'll make tap water taste like bottled, at a fraction of the price.

Exercise: Exercising can help make you want to drink water more.

Track it: When forming a new habit it often helps to keep track of it. It increases awareness and helps you ensure that you're staying on track. Keep a little log. It can be done on an index card or in a notebook. You can simply make a tick mark for each glass of water you drink.

day 12

Move While you Work

Sitting at our desks all day is killing us and causing tremendous back pain. Luckily there is something to be done about the problem and it doesn't require leaving your desk job for manual labor. Try to walk in place or do calf raises while you talk on the phone or hold a short meeting standing up. Next time you drive to work consider parking a little farther and taking the stairs if possible. You can also work standing up. Here are a couple of steps on how to convert your desk into a standing one.

- 1) Scour your office for old books that no one looks at.
- 2) Stack them on top of your current desk.
- 3) Put your computer on top of the pile.
- 4) Stand up.

You are now working at a standing desk. Enjoy the health benefits and the decrease in back pain!





day 13

Wear Sunscreen

Keep your skin healthy and protected from harmful UV rays by wearing sunscreen every day. Many people retire their sunscreen for the season as soon as the sun sets on summer. Think again: Although UVB rays — those that cause sunburns and skin cancer — aren't as strong during winter, UVA rays stay the same, contributing to both aging and skin cancer. Today, challenge yourself to apply an appropriate sunscreen or sunblock regardless of the season.



day 14

Get a Good Night's Rest

From learning and memory to metabolism and weight there are many areas that benefit from sleep. Sleep can also contribute to your mood and even your cardiovascular health. It's too important to shortchange, so follow these tips to help you get a good night's rest.

- Keep a regular sleep/wake schedule.
- Don't drink or eat caffeine four to six hours before bed and minimize daytime use.
- Don't smoke, especially near bedtime or if you wake in the night.
- Avoid alcohol and heavy meals before sleep.
- Get regular exercise.
- Minimize noise, light and excessive hot and cold temperatures where you sleep.
- Develop a regular bed time and go to bed at the same time each night.
- Try and wake up without an alarm clock.
- Attempt to go to bed earlier every night for certain period; this will ensure that you're getting enough sleep.



day 15

Log your Day

Before you hit the print button for your outlook calendar or make a copy of your planner take a moment to think of all the other things you participate in each day. This would be a pretty boring log if it included: morning meeting, followed by phone meeting, counseled participant, sandwich during staff meeting, etc. So instead, log all those moments not on your calendar or schedule. This can include things like a chat with your co-worker regarding home life stuff, or a brisk walk between appointments, or even appreciating the weather. Jotting down these brief intermissions will make you feel better and bring attention to the little things. You never know, you might even catch yourself scheduling two walks a day.



day 16

Practice Forgiveness

Practicing forgiveness can free you from the enormous emotional drain caused by feeling wronged. It is one of the most freeing, positive things you can do for yourself. REACH is a method devised by Dr. Everett L. Worthington that helps you let go of negative emotions and replace them with positive ones. To practice **REACH**:

1. **R**eflect on the hurt, without blaming yourself or others, and try to be as objective as possible.
2. **E**mpathize by trying to imagine the viewpoint of the person who wronged you (consider what they were going through when they wronged you)
3. Practice **A**ltruism (selflessness), by thinking of a time you were forgiven and how that felt.
4. **C**ommit to forgiving someone and **H**old onto that forgiveness and do not let the negative emotions creep back in.



day 17

Top 10

Write down 10 things you feel a co-worker, friend or family does well. Often we get caught up in our everyday business and lose track of what is most important. Most people feel free to put themselves down when they've performed poorly. People put themselves down for many reasons: being late, ruining a homemade cake, scratching the car; even injuring themselves can provoke a reaction of, "I'm so clumsy." The opposite reactions can be experienced when you praise yourself and each other for a job well done. This shouldn't be reserved for big events only, acknowledge a co-worker's or family member's accomplishments and don't forget the little things — they mean the most.



day 18

Theme Day

What do big hats, silly costume jewelry, vibrant colors, and Funky Fridays all have in common? They are all options for your theme day! Why wait until Halloween or for some special event to dress up when you can have a theme day at your office just for the fun of it? Continue this throughout the year and have a "Funky Friday" for staff. Don't get caught ignoring the fun or you'll stick out more than the funky theme.



day 19

Work on a Hobby you Love

After working, sleeping, and socializing, you don't have a lot of hours left for hobbies, but with a little preparation we can dive back into any old hobby or start a new one. Even spending 15 minutes per day on a hobby will help you relax and break up the long work week. Check out this website for a list of fun hobbies <http://funhobbiesandrecreation.com/>.



day 20

How Hungry Are You?

To help you understand your appetite and your craving for various foods it is important to consider how much food you really need. Pause before the start of each meal and ask yourself how hungry you feel. Take time to enjoy each bite and chew thoroughly. When you have eaten half of your meal, pause for a couple of minutes and ask yourself again how hungry you feel? Do you feel full? Use your answer to determine how much more to eat. Did you finish your meal?



day 21

Be Thankful

"Many times a day I realize how much my own life is built on the labors of my fellow men, and how earnestly I must exert myself in order to give in return as much as I have received." — Albert Einstein

Take some time to show your gratitude to a person who has influenced your life in a positive way. Write a quick thank you note, or email the person who has impacted your life and tell them how much it meant to you. You will brighten the person's day and develop an expression of thankfulness that allows us to feel appreciative and satisfied with what you have.



day 22

Tea Time

Next time you grab your mug for a cup of coffee or search for change to buy a soda, try green or black tea instead. Several studies show an association between tea, both green and black, and reduction in your risk for cancer and heart disease. Green tea contains polyphenols, which are antioxidants that can help prevent cell damage and may help prevent formation of plaque in the arteries. While there may be health benefits tied to tea, remember tea is a source of caffeine and it is recommended not to exceed a daily intake of 300mg (2-3 cups/18 ounces).



day 23

Practice Productivity

Your time is valuable. Keeping a schedule can help you stay organized. Whether your schedule is flexible or rigid, keeping it up to date will aid in your personal development and improve your productivity. So delay no more, take time and schedule your next dentist appointment, date night, or even a book club meeting and remember to jot it down in your planner or on a Post-it Note.



day 24

New Food = New Dish

If you're like most people, you probably stick with the same items for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks. In fact, week after week your meals may look very similar. Not only is this boring, but you miss out on the wonderful variety of different foods available. Eating a healthy diet isn't just about choosing healthy food, it's also about variety. A diet that's packed with different foods will ensure you're getting all the vitamins, minerals, fiber, and antioxidants you need for a healthy body. Besides, what's the worst that can happen? If you don't enjoy it you don't have to eat it again, but more than likely you'll enjoy something new and share it with your friends. Try a new fruit or swap your normal snack for a handful of healthy nuts. Your new food can even create a new dish for your potluck tomorrow!



day 25

Potluck

A potluck at the office may be the best way to celebrate a special occasion, hold a staff meeting, or just share some quality time with all of your co-workers or friends. Potlucks are a great way for workers to show off their culinary expertise and create friendship among staff. Since you never know what might show up at a potluck, have everyone sign up and write down what they will bring. Picking up ready-made vegetable platters and fruit plates can be a time-saving option for the busy co-worker or the person who doesn't like to cook. Make potlucks fun for everyone by having some healthier food choices available. Challenge co-workers to try new dishes with less calories and fat. Check out the lighter recipes at Cooking Light <http://www.cookinglight.com/cooking/>.



day 26

First Impressions

Answer the phone at your clinic with a smile. Even though the person on the other line cannot see you, your tone will be pleasant and welcoming. Create a fun greeting line for when you answer the phone at your clinic, try something like: "It's a great day at LA 101, how can we brighten your day?" Not only are you providing great customer service, but you will surely put a smile on someone's face — as well as your own.



day 27

Book Swap

Reading improves thinking and writing skills, memory, and vocabulary. Reading is also a great stress reducer. Recycle some of your favorite reads and start a book lending program at your clinic. Write reviews, recommendations, or give the books a rating. This is a great way to share your favorite literature with your co-workers.

Start a book club and hold meetings over your lunch break at work. This will motivate you to read and also allow you and your co-workers to take a break from work and discuss non-work related topics.



day 28

Cat Nap

You don't have to be in kindergarten to take a nap. Find some time to close your eyes and relax, clear your mind and allow yourself to have 20-30 minutes to get some rest. A short nap can help you feel refreshed and alert without leaving you groggy or disrupting your normal sleep pattern. If napping isn't for you, meditation can be just as beneficial. Take some time to quiet your mind, concentrate on your breathing, and relax. Check out this Web site: <http://www.sleepfoundation.org/article/sleep-topics/napping>.



day 29

Compliment

Whose day have you made lately? Think about how you interact with people every day and how many opportunities we have to make someone smile. Who doesn't love a compliment? It's the quickest and easiest way to make someone's day. When you pay someone a compliment, it makes you instantly likeable — and you never know what kind of impact you can have with just a few genuine words. Plus, giving compliments raises your self-esteem. It takes confidence and self-esteem to notice good things about others and to make the first caring move to tell them about it.

How to give a compliment:

Make your compliment specific: "That necklace looks really good on you," makes a bigger impact compared to "you look really good today." The more specific the better, it makes the person feel like you notice them.

Back up your compliment: Don't just stop at "that necklace looks really good on you." Your compliment becomes stronger when you say why you think so; "that necklace looks really good on you because it matches your eyes."

Ask a question with your compliment: And if you want to use it as a conversational starter, ask a question about the subject of your compliment; “that necklace looks really good on you because it matches your eyes. Where did you find it?”



day 30

Pick and Pledge

Channel your inner Wellness Challenge throughout the year. Use your personal Wellness Challenge Pledge Sheet, located at the back of this packet, to document a healthy habit you vow to continue well beyond the 30-day challenge. Hang your personal pledge in your office space or on your refrigerator at home to remind yourself that you are a Challenge Champ! Congratulations!

References and Additional Resources:

<http://www.dietrffic.com/2009/01/07/new-foods/>

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/002445.htm>

http://www.magicoflandscaping.com/Research/Plants_at_Work-Improving_Asset_Performance.pdf

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<http://www.good.is/post/the-good-30-day-challenge-get-healthy/http://www.good.is/post/the-good-30-day-challenge-get-healthy/>