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How to combat seasonal affective disorder

Therapy is a treatment option for individuals diagnosed with SAD.

The common cold is synonymous with times of year when temperatures dip. When people spend more time indoors, they're more vulnerable to contagious cold viruses. But the common cold is not the only health issue that presents itself most often when the mercury drops.

Seasonal affective disorder, also known as "SAD," affects millions of people every year. The National Institute of Mental Health notes that SAD is a type of depression characterized by its recurrent seasonal pattern. Symptoms of SAD, which can include nearly daily and day-long feelings of depression, changes in appetite or weight and feelings of lower energy, last around four to five months. Researchers are unsure about the exact cause of SAD, but in most people, its onset is believed to be connected to the reduction in hours of sunlight during the winter. (WebMD notes that around 10 percent of people with SAD get it in the reverse, experiencing symptoms of depression at the



onset of summer as opposed to winter.) Despite uncertainty about the causes of SAD, the NIMH notes there are ways to treat the condition. And it might benefit people who have experienced SAD to begin treat-

ment prior to winter, as NIMH notes treatments that begin before fall could help to prevent or reduce the depression associated with the condition.

Individuals who suspect they have SAD should relay

their concerns to their health care provider, who will then ask patients to fill out a questionnaire to determine if symptoms meet the criteria for SAD. If such a diagnosis is confirmed, individuals may be

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presented with any of the following treatment options.

Light therapy

The NIMH notes that light therapy has been used to treat SAD since the 1980s. The crux of light therapy is to expose individuals with SAD to bright light every day with the hope that such exposure can serve as a stand-in for natural sunlight.

Individuals undergoing light therapy typically begin their day sitting in front of a very bright light box for around 30 to 45 minutes. The boxes filter out potentially harmful UV light, but alternative therapies may be recommended for individuals with certain eye diseases or those taking particular medications.

Psychotherapy

According to the NIMH, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) has been adapted to help treat people with SAD. CBT is a type of talk therapy, and CBT-SAD typically entails two weekly group sessions for six weeks. These sessions focus on replacing negative thoughts related to winter with more positive thoughts. The therapy also tries to help individuals identi-

fy and schedule pleasant, engaging indoor or outdoor activities. The NIMH notes that researchers' comparison of CBT-SAD with light therapy found both treatments were effective at improving SAD symptoms.

Medications

Doctors may recommend patients with SAD take medications known as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, or SSRIs. Various types of depression have been found to disturb serotonin activity, and SAD is no exception. SSRIs have been proven to effectively improve patients' moods, but it's important that individuals discuss the side effects of SSRIs with their physicians prior to taking medication.

Vitamin D has been linked to improving symptoms of SAD, but the NIMH notes this is a misconception, as the research regarding vitamin D supplementation as a treatment for SAD has thus far produced mixed results. Individuals who suspect they may have SAD are urged to speak with their physicians so they can overcome this often treatable condition.



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Dos and don'ts of healthy weight loss

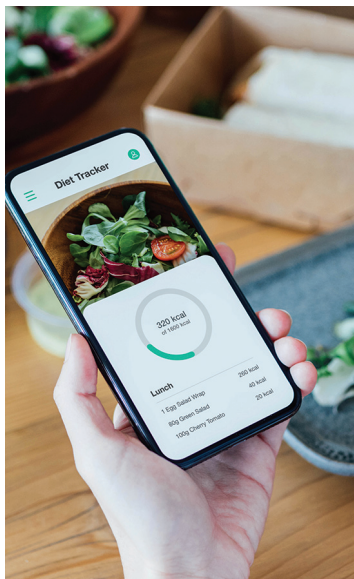
The World Health Organization reports that the worldwide obesity rate has tripled since 1975.

Maintaining a healthy weight promotes long-term health. Being overweight or obese are risk factors for various conditions, including type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease. The World Health Organization reports that the worldwide obesity rate has tripled since 1975. In 2016, more than 1.9 billion adults were overweight. Of these, more than 650 million were obese.

Health issues related to obesity are largely preventable. Losing weight in a healthy manner is essential for safe and lasting results. Individuals aspiring to lose weight can follow these guidelines on what to do and what not to do.

DO add lean protein sources to your diet. Healthline indicates the body burns calories when digesting and metabolizing protein, so a high-protein diet can help to shed up to 80 to 100 calories per day. Protein also helps you to feel full, reducing the propensity to overeat.

DON'T get hung up on numbers early on. The Centers



for Disease Control and Prevention advises that even modest weight loss of 5 to 10 percent of your total body weight is bound to produce health benefits, such as improvements in blood sugar levels, cholesterol and blood pressure. Start small and gradually build up.

DO eat at least four servings of vegetables and three servings of fruits daily. Produce contains an abundance of vital nutrients and is often fiber-rich and low in calories, which helps you to feel full.

DON'T overlook the impact of beverages on weight loss. The calories in sugary beverages, including some all-natural fruit juices, can add up quickly. Stick to water, tea or other unsweetened beverages to help with weight loss.

DO get moving more. The Mayo Clinic notes that while it is possible to lose weight without exercise, getting moving can help burn off the excess calories you can't cut through diet alone. Exercise boosts metabolism and benefits mood and strengthens muscles and the cardiovascular system as well.

DON'T go shopping while hungry. If you do, you may make impulse buys that compromise healthy eating plans.

DO speak with a doctor if you are vetting diet and exer-

cise plans. A healthcare professional can assist you by indicating if a particular diet or fitness routine is acceptable for your age, goals and current health status.

DON'T forget to track eating. Most healthy diets involve some sort of calorie-counting, whether they actually require you to document your intake or use a formula to attribute "points" or another measure related to what you eat. Writing or tracking the foods and beverages you consume will provide the most honest assessment of habits that could affect weight loss.

DO include foods you enjoy. Completely restricting access to occasional treats may cause you to resent healthy eating, which can derail weight loss goals. The principle of moderation can apply to healthy weight loss as long as you account for the more calorie-dense foods. Losing weight in a healthy manner is achievable when you seek guidance and follow some time-tested techniques.

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Tips to tame daily anxiety

The ADAA indicates anxiety disorders affect 40 million adults 18 and older every year.

Anxiety affects millions of people worldwide. The Anxiety & Depression Association of America indicates anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness in the United States, affecting 40 million adults age 18 and older every year, which equates to around 19.1 percent of the population.

What is an anxiety disorder?

The National Institute of Mental Health says anxiety disorders include panic disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, agoraphobia, specific phobia, social anxiety disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and separation anxiety disorder. Though the causes of these anxiety disorders may differ, each is characterized by excessive anxiety and related behavioral disturbances.

Anxiety disorders can range from mild to severe, and could affect daily life in various ways. Those with anxiety disorders are three to five times more likely to visit the doctor and six times more likely to be hospitalized for psychiatric disorders than those who do not have anxiety disorders, states the ADAA.

Who gets anxiety?

Factors such as genetics,



personality and lifestyle can determine if a person is likely to develop an anxiety disorder.

According to Healthline, those in professions such as healthcare and social work, people of color and members of the LGBTQIA+ community are more likely to experience anxiety and elevated stress levels.

Addressing anxiety

There are several steps people can take to alleviate anxiety every day.

- **Exercise:** Moving more may help to relieve stress that can lead to anxiety. Study par-

ticipants who engaged in exercise two days per week reduced overall perceived stress. Physical activity also can improve mood.

- **Sleep:** Quality and quantity of sleep can affect mental health. Doctors recommend around eight hours of sleep each night. If anxiety is affecting sleep, try to establish a healthy sleep routine. Turn off screens a few hours before attempting to retire. Be sure the bed is comfortable. Keep the room's temperature on the cool side. Also, stick to a schedule.

- **Supplementation:**

Healthline notes that some studies have found that certain dietary supplements may help with stress and anxiety. An eight-week study of 264 people with low magnesium levels found that taking 300 mg of this mineral daily helped reduce stress levels. Combining magnesium with vitamin B6 was even more effective.

- **Psychotherapy:** The Mayo Clinic indicates counseling or psychotherapy, such as cognitive behavioral therapy, can effectively address anxiety. CBT often includes exposure therapy, in which a person is gradually exposed to the object or situation that triggers the anxiety to eventually build confidence that he or she can manage the situation and anxiety symptoms.

- **Medication:** Used in conjunction with other techniques, medications may help address severe anxiety conditions. Certain antidepressants and a medication called buspirone are used to treat anxiety disorders. In limited circumstances, sedatives may be utilized, but long-term use is not recommended. Anxiety disorders can affect anyone. Various techniques could be used to alleviate anxiety.

Signs you or a loved one could be dealing with depression

Depression is among the most common mental disorders in the world. According to a 2019 report from the Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation, roughly 3.8 percent of the world's population is affected by depression. That percentage is higher among adults (5 percent) and even more so among adults 60 and over (5.7 percent).

Despite its prevalence, depression still carries a stigma, leaving many people to confront it in silence. However, over the last several years, public attitudes toward mental health have shifted, compelling millions of people to recognize the severity of the threat posed by mental health disorders like depression. That recognition has led various prominent public figures, such as comedian Jim Carrey, athlete Kevin Love and singer/actress Lady Gaga,

to publicly acknowledge their own battles with depression.

Depression is nothing to be ashamed of, and recognition of that reality may compel millions of people to seek the help they need. One of the first steps toward overcoming depression is to learn how it can manifest itself. Though feelings of sadness are common in people with depression, according to ADA Health, depression is much more than a feeling of sadness, and its symptoms may be masked by physical complaints or substance abuse. That can make it hard to identify signs of depression, which underscores the significance of learning to spot its symptoms. The National Institute of Mental Health notes that the following signs and symptoms could be indicative of depression if individuals have been

experiencing them most of the day, nearly every day, for at least two weeks.

- **Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" mood**
- **Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism**
- **Feelings of irritability, frustration or restlessness**
- **Feelings of guilt, worthlessness or helplessness**
- **Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies or activities**
- **Decreased energy, fatigue or feeling "slowed down"**
- **Difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions**
- **Difficulty sleeping, early morning awakening or oversleeping**
- **Changes in appetite or**

unplanned weight changes

- **Thoughts of death or suicide, or attempts at suicide**
- **Aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems without a clear physical cause that do not ease with treatment**

It's important that individuals experiencing these symptoms or those who witness them in loved ones avoid self-diagnosing their conditions or the condition of friends or family members. If any of these symptoms are present for two weeks or more, contact a physician immediately or urge a loved one to do so. More information about depression can be found at www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression.

Common respiratory ailments

Oxygen is essential to life. The respiratory system works tirelessly to provide fresh oxygen to the body and ensure that all metabolic activities can occur unhindered. The respiratory system is what makes the inhalation and exhalation of air possible, and it's a responsible for the distribution of oxygen throughout the body.

The respiratory system is a network of organs and tissues that help a person breathe. In addition to facilitating the absorption of oxygen from the air, the respiratory system cleans out waste gases like carbon dioxide. In a healthy person, the respiratory system functions like a well-oiled machine. But that same system is sometimes hampered by illness, allergies and infections, according to the Cleveland Clinic. With so much riding on a healthy respiratory system, it can help to learn about some of the more common conditions that can affect it.

- **Asthma:** Asthma is a chronic inflammatory disease caused by narrowed airways affected by inflammation. Asthma causes breathing diffi-

culties, coughing, wheezing, and other symptoms. Most people need to take preventive medicines to control symptoms.

- **COPD:** Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease is comprised of chronic bronchitis and emphysema. Bronchitis is when the lining of the bronchial tubes become inflamed and irritated. Swelling may cause an abundance of mucus. Emphysema occurs when the tiny air sacs (alveoli) become damaged and less flexible. This reduces the alveoli's ability to move oxygen and other gases, which adversely affects breathing, according to Verywell Health.

- **Influenza:** Influenza, also known as the flu, is a viral illness that can produce a number of symptoms. The flu viruses can be inhaled or brought into the body by touching items that contain the virus. Mild fever, runny nose, cough, fatigue, and sore throat are common symptoms of influenza. While most people recover, the Mayo Clinic warns that flu complications can be deadly.

- **COVID-19:** SARS-CoV-2 is



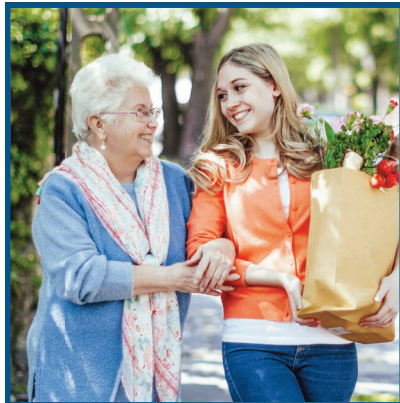
the virus responsible for causing COVID-19, which was discovered in the winter of 2019. It is a highly infectious illness caused by a coronavirus. It is spread from person to person, and has caused millions of deaths around the world as well as lasting health problems, according to Johns Hopkins Medicine. Depending on the individual, the effects of COVID-19 can be mild or severe. Because the virus mutates easily, researchers continue to develop new vaccines to help boost defense against it. Symptoms appear within two to 14 days of exposure to the virus. A person infected with the coronavirus is contagious to others for up to

two days before symptoms appear, and they remain contagious to others for 10 to 20 days, depending on their immune system and the severity of their illness.

- **Tuberculosis:** TB is a contagious and potentially life-threatening infectious disease caused by the bacterium mycobacterium tuberculosis, which is spread through the air. The CDC says TB is preventable and treatable in most cases. Infection control practices can help reduce TB transmission.

- **Pneumonia:** With pneumonia, a virus, bacteria or another infectious agent causes alveoli to fill with fluid or pus, affecting breathing and gas exchange. Pneumonia symptoms may be mild and not affect daily activities, while others can be severe and require hospitalization.

- **Cystic fibrosis:** This is a genetic condition that creates very thick mucus in the body, which can cause both breathing and digestive problems. Blockages from thick mucus can trap harmful bacteria and lead to infections, says the Mayo Clinic.



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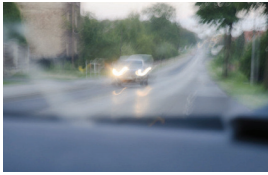


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Do you know your risks for vision loss?



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Glaucoma



Macular Degeneration

By Cheryl L. Dejewski

"Up to 50% of all blindness in the U.S. is preventable—if people pursue prompt diagnosis and treatment," says Brett Rhode, MD, of Eye Care Specialists, one of the state's leading ophthalmology practices. "However, people are often hesitant to make an appointment to have their eyes checked—even when it's obvious that they have a problem."

"Loss of vision can have serious consequences that affect quality of life and independence, including an increased risk for falling, car accidents, depression, isolation, and nursing home placement," says former engineer turned eye surgeon Daniel Ferguson, MD. Daniel Paskowitz, MD, PhD, an ophthalmologist with credentials from Harvard and Johns Hopkins adds, "Poor vision, is not a fact of aging. It's important to discover what's behind any changes or symptoms—

whether it's simply the need for a new glasses prescription or something more serious like a sight-threatening disease."

"There are two reasons why you should see a professional rather than rely on your own perception," says Michael Raciti, MD, a frequent continuing education lecturer for local eye care providers. "First, problems in one eye can be masked by the other's ability to compensate. Second, changes can occur so gradually that they go unnoticed. For example, patients with cataracts often have no idea how much light, color, and clarity they've lost until they are diagnosed and the cloudy lens inside their eye is removed and replaced with an implant. And, patients with glaucoma can lose side vision so slowly that they don't realize it's like looking through a tunnel—with no chance of turning around and coming back out."

"Most sight-threatening conditions will eventually present

symptoms. But, do you really want to wait until whatever is wrong causes permanent damage or leads to something serious like falling and breaking a hip or having a car accident?" asks medical optometrist David Scheidt, OD. "That's why it's vital to have a comprehensive dilated eye exam (which is typically covered by Medicare and/or insurance) at least every two years. At our offices, that exam may also include a diagnostic OCT laser scan, which enables us to catch diseases even earlier."

If your eye care specialist determines that you do have a cataract, macular degeneration (AMD), glaucoma, diabetic eye disease, or other condition, you can plan a course of treatment to protect and preserve your vision. But, that plan can't start until you take the first step to call and schedule an exam. Rhode advises, "Don't wait until it's too late. If it's been more than two years, call and make

WARNING SIGNS



Poor vision or changes should not be dismissed. Schedule an appointment ASAP if you notice:

- Foggy, double or blurred vision
- Sensitivity to light and glare
- "Starbursts" around lights
- Holding items closer to view
- Needing brighter light to read
- Fading or yellowing of colors
- Difficulty judging stairs/curbs
- Difficulty with driving at night
- Vertical lines appear wavy
- Dark or blind spots in vision
- New lens prescriptions don't help

an appointment today to ensure you can see life to the fullest today AND tomorrow."

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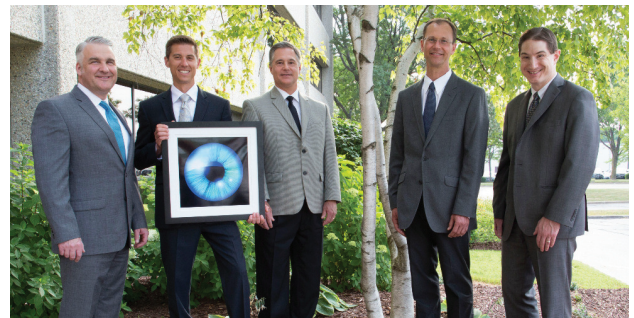
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Test your knowledge of the common cold

Sniffles, cough, sore throat ... these can be symptoms of any number of conditions, but are often a byproduct of the common cold.

Colds are the result of more than 200 different viruses, according to Johns Hopkins Medicine. Adults experience an average of two to three colds per year, and rhinoviruses cause most of them. The American Lung Association states that colds are minor infections of the nose and throat. Despite typically producing only mild illness, colds account for more visits to the doctor than any other condition in the United States.

People will experience many colds in their lifetimes, and this true or false quiz can test their knowledge about them.

1. Colds are highly contagious.

True: Colds most often spread when droplets of fluid that contain the cold virus are transferred by touch or inhaled.

2. Cold weather or being chilled causes colds.

False: While many colds



occur during seasons when the weather is cold, transmission is likely higher than due to people staying indoors, and thus closer to one another, when temperatures dip. But the cold air itself has nothing to do with the cold.

3. Antibiotics are a known remedy for a cold.

False: Antibiotics treat bacterial infections, while colds are viral. That means antibiotics will be ineffective at helping a person recover from a cold.

4. Rhinoviruses that

cause colds also can trigger asthma attacks.

True: These rhinoviruses also have been linked to sinus and ear infections.

5. Colds are sometimes serious for people.

True: People with weakened immune systems, asthma or conditions that affect the lungs and breathing passages may develop serious conditions, even pneumonia, from colds that linger.

6. Colds can't be caught from shaking hands.

False: Colds can be trans-

ferred through touch, including shaking hands. It's recommended to wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or to use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol.

7. You feed a cold and starve a fever.

False: Harvard Medical School says there is no need to eat more or less than usual if you have a cold or flu. However it is important to increase fluid intake to avoid dehydration. Fluids also help keep the lining of the nose and throat from drying out.

8. Vitamin C, zinc, eucalyptus, garlic, and others are not proven cold remedies.

True: Various herbs, minerals and other products have gained a reputation as cold remedies but there are no scientific studies that support such assertions.

9. One should avoid caffeine or alcohol while experiencing a cold.

True: Alcoholic and caffeinated beverages can lead to dehydration, which is the opposite of what the body needs to recover.

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Habits that affect cognitive health

Various changes to appearance and health are associated with aging. Issues such as diminished vision, waning muscle strength and gray hairs are among the more common and noticeable side effects of aging. Cognitive decline is another symptom often associated with aging, even if that needn't be the case.

Certain lifestyle choices can protect against cognitive decline and dementias. While there is no surefire way to prevent dementias, here are some good habits for maintaining cognitive function well into your golden years.

Exercise frequently

Harvard Health reports that exercise, in addition to the many other benefits it provides, may help improve cognitive function in people who have already experienced memory issues. Exercise may be particularly advantageous to people who carry the APOE4 gene variant, which makes people more susceptible to Alzheimer's. Speak with a doctor about how much exercise is needed and what is safe for



your age.

Enjoy video games

Playing a favorite video game may improve long-term cognitive function. Researchers at Cambridge Brain Sciences found study participants who played non-cognitive-training video games were associated with better performance in several cognitive

domains, but only for younger (age 18 to 64) participants. Cognitive training games, on the other hand, were not associated with any cognitive improvement.

Stay socially engaged

According to a study published in the journal *Experimental Aging Research*, seniors who have high levels of

social engagement also have better cognitive function. Getting together with friends, participating in a club, attending religious studies, and any other activity that gets you out with other people can help with cognitive function.

Eat a healthy diet

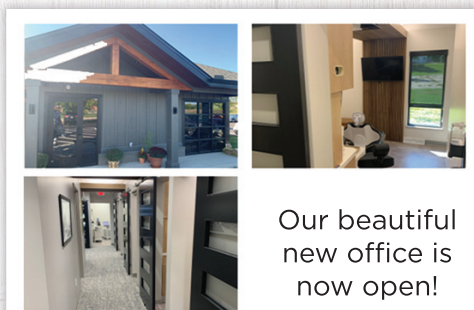
Eating a diverse array of healthy foods is beneficial. Nutritious diets can help reduce the risk for illnesses that may affect cognitive ability. Eating well also helps keep the brain healthy. A Mediterranean diet appears to lower the risk or slow the progression of dementia in people who have the condition.

Get help for sleep disorders

Lack of sleep can affect memory and learning. By getting help for sleep disorders, you may reduce your risk for cognitive issues. While it is not possible to prevent or cure cognitive conditions like dementias with lifestyle changes, certain behaviors can lower the risk of developing these illnesses or reduce their severity.



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Strategies to improve your ability to focus

The average household has 22 connected devices

Distractions have never been harder to resist. According to Deloitte's "2022 Connectivity and Mobile Trends Survey" (third edition), the average household in the United States now has a total of 22 connected devices. Things are a little less connected in Canada, where a J.D. Power survey of television service subscribers found that the average household has about 10 devices.

The prevalence and accessibility of devices can make it difficult to focus, but tablets, smartphones and other technologies are not the only culprits that can compromise the ability to concentrate. Harvard Medical School notes that underlying medical conditions, the side effects of medication and excessive alcohol consumption can each make it harder to focus. That's a significant detriment, as an ability to focus can help individuals be more efficient and perform better at work and in school.

Each individual is different, so efforts to improve focus



might require a little trial and error until a person finds what works for them. In the meantime, the following are some effective strategies that can help people sharpen their focus and reap all the rewards that a heightened ability to concentrate has to offer.

• **Turn notifications off.** Notifications are a bigger distraction than people may realize. A 2015 study from researchers at Florida State University found that simply hearing the ping of a notification was as distracting as taking a phone call.

Individuals may find the idea of answering as little as 20

or more phone calls per day unrealistic, but researchers have found that the average smartphone user receives around 80 push notifications per day. Such constant inflow of notifications is detrimental to smartphone users' ability to focus. Turning notifications off while in school or during the workday can help people avoid this seemingly endless stream of distractions, thus improving focus.

• **Establish a distraction-free workspace.** A survey from McKinsey & Company found that, after the acute phases of the COVID.19 pandemic, 58 percent of employed respondents have the option to work from home for all or part of the week. Remote working may be more convenient, but it also can compromise workers' focus in ways that are unique to working from home. For example, professionals' children cannot stroll into their offices when they aren't working from home, nor are distractions like television within arm's length in a traditional office setting.

Professionals who are finding it hard to focus when working from home can do more to make their home offices distraction-free. Make your home a television-free zone during traditional working hours and remove a television or non-work tablet from your office so you aren't tempted to watch a show or a sporting event when you're supposed to be working.

• **Adopt a healthier lifestyle.** The experts at Harvard Medical School note that many aspects of a healthy lifestyle can help people focus better. Researchers have discovered a direct link between exercise and a person's ability to pay attention, noting that exercise increases the availability of brain chemicals that reduce stress and improve sleep, among other things. Less stress and a good night's rest can make it easier to focus.

An ability to focus pays myriad dividends. Individuals can try various strategies to improve their concentration skills and reap the rewards that such improvement provides.



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The basics of meditation

Taking steps to safeguard mental health is a vital component of a healthy lifestyle. The National Institute of Mental Health notes that mental health affects how individuals think and feel, the choices they make, and how they relate to others, which underscores just how important it is to prioritize mental health.

Meditation is a popular practice with a history so lengthy it may surprise even its most devoted practitioners. According to Psychology Today, some archaeologists trace the origins of meditation all the way back to 5,000 BCE. The global spread of the practice is believed to have started around the fifth or sixth century BCD, when trading along Eurasia's famed Silk Road exposed the practice to various cultures.

The lengthy history of meditation is proof that the practice is no mere fad. In fact, people from all walks of life have much to gain from meditation. Novices can start their meditation journeys with this basic rundown of a practice that has inspired devotees for

thousands of years.

What is meditation?

The Mayo Clinic notes that meditation is considered a type of mind-body complementary medicine that intends to produce a tranquil, relaxed state of mind. When practicing meditation, individuals focus their attention and aspire to remove potentially stress-inducing, jumbled thoughts from their mind.

Are there different types of meditation?

The Mayo Clinic reports that there are various ways to meditate. Guided meditation is a popular form of the practice in which individuals form mental images of places or situations they find relaxing. Guided meditation practitioners employ their senses of smell, sight, sound, and touch during a session, which may be led by a guide or teacher.

Mantra meditation is another form of the practice in which individuals silently repeat a calming word, thought or phrase. The repetition is designed to block out distractions.

tions.

Mindfulness meditation is a popular form of the practice that emphasizes awareness, or mindfulness, and acceptance of living in the moment. The Mayo Clinic notes that individuals practicing mindfulness meditation will focus on what they experience during meditation, such as the flow of their breath, as they attempt to observe their thoughts and emotions.

How do I meditate?

Mindful Communications, which offers corporate training, practical advice and other insights regarding mindfulness and meditation, notes that meditation is both simpler and more complex than most people think. But the following seven-step prospectus can serve as a useful foundation for meditation novices.

1. Take a seat. Individuals are urged to find a calm, quiet place to sit.

2. Set a time limit. A short session between five and 10 minutes can help novices.

3. Notice your body. Individuals should be stable

and sit in a position they can maintain for a while.

4. Feel your breath. As you breath in and out, make an effort to feel the sensation of your breath.

5. Notice if your mind wanders. It's likely that your mind will wander to other places during your sessions. Pay attention to when it does and then refocus your attention to your breathing.

6. Don't judge yourself. Wandering thoughts during meditation are not deserving of scorn. When the mind wanders, simply return to meditating without obsessing over the thoughts that came into your head when your mind wandered off.

7. Close with kindness. As your session draws to a close, gently lift your gaze and take a moment to notice your surrounding environment, how your body feels and your thoughts and emotions.

Meditation can pay numerous dividends. More information about meditation can be found at mindful.org.

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