

Live Well, Work Well



June 2026

Explore the Great Outdoors



Spending even a few moments outside daily can significantly improve your physical health by reducing muscle tension, regulating sleep and improving your work performance. Experiencing the outdoors—specifically, green spaces—can also provide some mental health benefits, including reduced anxiety and depression symptoms, decreased stress levels and improved overall mood.

The Environmental Protection Agency reports that the average American spends only 7% of their life outdoors, leaving 93% spent indoors.

It may seem difficult to incorporate fresh air into your daily routine, so here are a few tips to spend more time in the great outdoors this summer:

- **Find time throughout the day to be outside.** Try walking or doing a similar activity before or after your workday. Alternatively, enjoy lunch outside instead of eating at your desk during the workweek. If working remotely, you could join virtual meetings outside in a quiet place with little background noise or try “walking meetings” with teammates. Focus on finding small ways to incorporate fresh air each day.
- **Move your workout outside.** If you usually run on the treadmill, consider jogging around your neighborhood instead. Additionally, doing bodyweight or free-weight exercises in your backyard or at a park can give you the same workout you get in the gym while letting you spend more time outside.
- **Focus on the quality—not quantity—of your time outdoors.** While outside, try to really listen to and look at what’s around you. Are there birds chirping? What color are the flowers? An intentional presence outdoors can help you feel more connected to nature and increase the benefits you receive from the fresh air.
- **Find someone to explore with.** It can be much easier to start a new habit when you have someone to do it with. As such, consider getting together with a partner or a group of friends to participate in outdoor activities.
- **Bring nature indoors.** Even when you can’t get outside for very long, you can still bring in little pieces of the outdoors. Consider purchasing a few houseplants to place around your home or starting an indoor herb garden.

Spending time outdoors can improve your physical and mental health, so take advantage of the longer summer days and get outside.

When’s the Best Time to Eat Protein?

Protein is important for overall health. Health experts note that there isn't one perfect time of day to eat protein. What matters most is how evenly you include it throughout the day. Instead of saving most of your protein for dinner, spreading it across meals and snacks allows your body to use it more efficiently for energy, fullness and muscle repair.

The 2025-2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans prioritize protein at every meal, aiming for 1.2 to 1.6 grams per kilogram of body weight daily.

Eating protein at different times of the day has certain advantages. For example, protein in the morning after an overnight fast supports steady energy, sharper focus and improved appetite control, which may reduce overeating later in the day. Adding protein to snacks also plays a key role, helping stabilize blood sugar and prevent afternoon energy crashes. Similarly, protein is useful after workouts, as it helps muscles recover and grow stronger. Dinner protein remains important, but loading most of the day's intake into a single meal isn't ideal, since the body can only use so much at once. Most people don't need excessive protein supplements, as regular meals often provide enough.

In the end, a practical approach is to include protein at every meal, aim for moderate portions, and balance it with carbohydrates and healthy fats. Consistency delivers the biggest benefits.

Summer Medicine Cabinet Checklist

Summer brings more time outdoors, and with it, a higher chance of sunburns, bug bites, minor injuries, allergies and heat-related issues. Medications can also lose effectiveness or even become unsafe after expiration, and heat and humidity can further degrade products that are already past their prime. When summer ailments or accidents strike, you want relief that works quickly and safely.

The average American opens their medicine cabinet 468 times each year. However, nearly 3 in 4 people admit they often forget to replace their expired products.

A cabinet check today ensures you're prepared for common summer needs without last-minute store runs. Consider these 10 summer essentials:

1. Pain reliever and fever reducer
2. Antihistamines, nasal sprays and eye drops
3. Hydrocortisone cream for rashes and bug bites
4. Broad-spectrum sunscreen
5. Aloe vera or after-sun gel
6. Insect repellent
7. Oral rehydration packets or electrolyte drinks
8. Bandages and basic first-aid supplies
9. Antibiotic ointment for minor cuts
10. Instant cold packs

Refreshing your medicine cabinet is a small task that can make a big difference, allowing more time for fun in the sun. Make it a habit to check expiration dates every six months so you're always prepared.

Trail Mix Bars

Makes: 28 servings

Ingredients

- 3 cups crispy rice cereal
- 3 cups toasted oat cereal
- 1 ½ cups raisins
- ½ cup no-salt sunflower seeds

- 1 cup honey
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar
- 16 oz. chunky peanut butter
- 1 tsp. vanilla

Preparations

1. Combine dry ingredients in a bowl.
2. Combine honey and sugar in a pan and bring to a boil.
3. Add the peanut butter and vanilla. Stir until the peanut butter melts.
4. Pour the mixture over the cereal and mix well.
5. Press into a 13-by-9-inch pan and cool.

Nutritional Information

(per serving)

- Total calories: 225
- Total fat: 10 g
- Protein: 5 g
- Sodium: 106 mg
- Carbohydrate: 31 g
- Dietary fiber: 2 g
- Saturated fat: 2 g
- Total sugars: 23 g

Source: MyPlate

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MENTAL HEALTH MINUTE



June 2026

5 Ways to Manage Summer Stress



Summer is often portrayed as carefree and relaxing, but for many people, it brings its own set of stressors. Changes in routine, packed schedules, family obligations, extreme heat and the pressure to “make the most” of the season can all contribute to feeling overwhelmed. However, with a few intentional strategies, summer stress can be managed.

To help you enjoy the season to the fullest and manage your mental well-being, the following five tips can help ease summertime stress:

1. **Acknowledge that summer can be stressful.** Give yourself permission to admit that summer isn't automatically relaxing. Recognizing stress is the first step to managing it, rather than ignoring or minimizing how you feel.
2. **Protect your sleep.** Longer daylight hours and late-night activities can lead to sleep deprivation. Set a regular bedtime, limit evening screen time, and keep your bedroom cool and dark to support quality rest.
3. **Manage heat-related stress.** Hot weather can increase irritability and fatigue. Stay hydrated, wear lightweight clothing, take cooling breaks and avoid strenuous activity during peak heat hours.
4. **Watch spending to reduce financial pressure.** Summer costs can add up quickly. Create a simple budget for travel, activities and entertainment, and look for free or low-cost options like parks, libraries and community events.
5. **Limit social comparison.** Social media often highlights picture-perfect vacations and experiences. Remember that everyone's summer looks different, and what you see online is not the full story.

Summer doesn't have to be perfect to be meaningful. By recognizing common summer stressors and choosing practical, manageable coping strategies, you can create a season that feels more balanced, present and restorative on your own terms.

If you have concerns about your mental health or overall well-being, it's important to seek help from a trained health care provider.

Protecting Mental Health Through Better Sleep in the Summer

Sleep and mental health are closely connected. Quality sleep helps regulate mood, manage stress and support emotional resilience, while poor sleep can worsen symptoms of anxiety, depression and irritability. When we don't get enough rest, the brain struggles to process emotions and respond calmly to challenges.

Summer can make maintaining this balance harder. Longer daylight hours, warmer nights, travel and changing schedules can disrupt sleep routines, making it more difficult to fall asleep or stay asleep when mental well-being depends on consistent rest. As such, consider these tips for a better night's sleep during the summer:

- **Keep a consistent sleep schedule.** Even with vacations, social events and later sunsets, try to go to bed and wake up within the same one-hour window each day. Consistency helps regulate your internal clock, which supports deeper sleep and steadier mood.
- **Manage light exposure in the evening.** Extended daylight can delay your body's natural release of melatonin, the hormone that signals sleep. In the evening, dim indoor lights, limit screen use at least an hour before bed, and consider

blackout curtains or a sleep mask to create a darker sleep environment.

- **Stay cool at night.** Warm temperatures can interfere with deep, restorative sleep. Use fans, lightweight bedding, breathable pajamas and keep your bedroom as cool as possible. A cool room helps your body naturally transition into sleep.
- **Get morning sunlight.** Spending time in natural sunlight earlier in the day, such as a morning walk or having coffee outside, helps regulate circadian rhythms. This makes it easier to feel alert during the day and sleepy at night, improving both sleep quality and overall mood.

Sleep is a powerful form of mental health care, not an optional luxury. By adjusting habits to fit summer's unique challenges, you can protect your sleep and, in turn, support better mood, focus and emotional well-being all season long.

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– Take Charge of Your Health –



Get a Better Night's Sleep



According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 1 in 3 U.S. adults don't get the sleep they need. Ongoing sleep deprivation doesn't just leave you tired; it can affect focus, slow reaction time and reduce performance at work. The CDC also links chronic sleep loss to long-term health risks, including diabetes, heart disease and depression.

If better sleep feels out of reach, these habits may help reset your routine:

- **Stick to a consistent sleep schedule.** Your body's internal clock thrives on routine. Try to go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, even on weekends or flexible workdays, to keep your circadian rhythm on track.
- **Design a sleep-friendly space.** A calm bedroom matters. Lower noise levels, keep the room comfortably cool and reduce light from screens and electronics, including phones, smart displays and illuminated alarm clocks.
- **Watch stimulants late in the day.** Caffeine and nicotine can linger in your system longer than you think. Cutting them off at least three to four hours before bed gives your body time to wind down.
- **Move your body earlier rather than later.** Regular exercise supports better sleep quality and higher daytime energy. Aim for workouts earlier in the day or afternoon so your body can fully relax by bedtime.
- **Be mindful of evening drinks.** Alcohol and excessive fluid intake can interfere with sleep quality and increase the likelihood of waking up during the night. Try to limit drinks in the last one to two hours before bed and use the bathroom right before turning in.

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