It's Time to Get Your Routine Back

Barix Clinics Healthful Habits   **September 2020**

For most, COVID 19 has brought major changes to our daily lives--working from home, children at home learning remotely, being out of work or working more hours, cooking at home more, fewer activities, and often less social interaction. The routines we had set up (good or bad) have for most been disrupted. We all function better with routines. They ease our days and give us fewer decisions to make. During this time of change, be sure to intentionally set up a daily routine that best serves your health and wellness goals. Below is an outline of habits to consider including; choose those that are most important to you.

Rise and Shine
Have a consistent wake up time each day. Start the day with 15 minutes or so of intention setting, gratitude or meditation. This focus at the beginning of the day can ease anxiety and start the day on a positive note.

Morning Movement
A fitness routine first thing in the morning helps you to be more consistent, boosts mood and energy throughout the day, and improves cognitive function. To get even more out of this time, pair morning exercise with something inspiring, uplifting, or educational--music, motivational videos, learning videos, books on tape, or documentaries.

Breakfast Fuel
A high-protein breakfast starts your day on the fast track. If you are just not a breakfast person—this is a great time for a protein drink. Take a minute to track food intake throughout the day—a proven success habit.

Morning Snack
Keep this snack small—about 100 calories with 4-10 grams of protein. Some ideas include cottage cheese, yogurt, string cheese, rolled up deli meat, or a little chicken salad on a cracker. Take a short walk if you are able and get your muscles moving.

Lunch Break

Dig into the healthy meal brought from home. When you're done, get in a little movement if possible. This is a great time to connect socially--take a walk with a co-worker in person or virtually.

Afternoon Pick-Me-Up

Get up and move--take a stroll, stand up and stretch, or do a few squats. Any type of movement will get blood flowing and boost energy. It's time for a small protein-rich snack as well.

End of the Workday

Tidy your workspace, turn off your computer and transition from work life to private life. You've worked hard and had some stressors—take a few minutes to intentionally relax. A little quiet time, a quick walk, a phone call with a friend, 10 minutes with a good book, deep breathing, or stretching along with a calorie-free beverage can help you rejuvenate.

Dinner

Connect with family and friends over a healthy meal. A positive aspect to the pandemic is that people are preparing more food at home. Studies show that home cooked meals contain more veggies and fewer calories than those eaten out.

Prep for the Following Day

Before you turn off the kitchen lights, pack your lunch and snacks for the next day. Cut veggies, set out the crock pot and prep tomorrow's dinner. Then set out work-out clothes and make a "to do" list. Working ahead helps to set the stage for better habits.

Family Time / Me Time

If you have young children, this may be the time for evening bath and book time or game time with older kids. At least a few days a week, be sure to carve out time for doing something you love—read, paint, write, watch a fun show, or go for an evening stroll.

Bedtime

Shoot for a consistent bedtime. Turn off TV and computers at least an hour before to help you fall asleep more easily. Take a few minutes to reflect on the day, express gratitude, and set intentions for the next day. A good night's sleep (7-8 hours for most) is essential for a healthy weight. A lack of sleep can increase appetite, lower impulse control, and reduce exercise.

The Bottom Line

It all works together, a good night's sleep, a positive morning attitude, and good a structure throughout the day. It's time to get back to a healthy routine allowing you to stress less, accomplish more and reach your health and fitness goals.