

NEW YORK TIMES HEALTHY HABITS WELL CHALLENGE - 28 DAYS

Below are 2 days from the NY Times challenge. Is there a group of people in the Fitness and Aging workshop who would like to try the full challenge as a group?

DAY 1 - REFRESH

Coffee or Tea Meditation

Use your daily coffee or tea habit as a daily opportunity to practice mindfulness. Start by clearing your mind and focusing on the sensations coming from your coffee or tea. Notice the warmth of the cup in your hand and the rising steam. Pay attention to the aroma. Take a sip and be mindful of the taste and the warm liquid as you swallow. The basic premise of mindfulness meditation is to pay attention to the present moment — especially your own thoughts, emotions and sensations.



Why Am I Doing This?

You are more likely to form a new habit when you connect it with a habit you already have. For many people, a hot cup of coffee or tea is a regular part of their morning routine, so it's a great place to start a morning mindfulness routine. A daily mindfulness meditation routine can reduce stress, increase calmness, help you sleep, give you mental clarity and leave you feeling happier and more relaxed.

DAY 2 - MOVE - Organize your Fitness Habit

Take four simple steps to start forming a daily fitness habit.

1. **Organize your gear.** Put your shoes, workout clothes, sports bra, socks and other clothes in one place ready to go. Consider sleeping in your workout clothes if you want to roll out of bed to work out each morning or pack your gym bag every night before bed and leave it by the door.

2. **Pick a time.** Choose a time every day when you can squeeze in just 5 to 10 minutes of exercise. Set your phone alarm as a daily reminder.
3. **Pick a small amount of exercise:** It can be a walk, some morning push-ups, a trip to the gym or the Well 6-minute video workout. It doesn't matter what you do; it just matters that you do something physical every day to form a habit. Starting small will increase the chance that you'll keep doing it.
4. **Plan a reward:** Habits are formed when we are quickly rewarded for our actions. Choose a playlist or a book on tape that you will listen to only during exercise. Plan for a smoothie or a delicious coffee to reward yourself after every workout.



Why Am I Doing This?

Remember, habits are formed by daily reinforcement and by removing obstacles that get in the way. Organizing your fitness gear and setting daily reminders are the first steps to forming a fitness habit. British researchers studied how people form habits in the real world, asking participants to take on a healthy eating, healthy drinking or 15-minute exercise habit. The study, published in the European Journal of Social Psychology, showed that the amount of time it took for the task to become automatic -- a habit -- ranged from 18 to 254 days. The median time was 66 days! Daily repetition is key to forming habits, so make sure you start with just a small amount of exercise to increase your chance of success.

The 6-Minute Workout

Want a great workout, but don't have any time? You surely have six minutes to spare. The 6-Minute Workout will get your heart pumping and your muscles toned in the time it takes you to make your coffee every morning. You can find the workouts online.