



Fall into a healthy routine this month

The weather is changing, daylight hours are shortening and holiday planning is right around the corner. This time of year, it's easy to put your wellness on the side due to busy schedules. However, by sticking to your healthy routines, or making time for a few new ones, you might find that you have more energy to get everything done and enjoy these next few months even more.

Healthy habits to make a priority:

- **Sleep health is key.** Sleep impacts our physical and mental health in so many ways, from giving our muscles and minds time to reset and recharge, to allowing our digestive system to slow down and rebuild. Studies show that getting a solid seven to nine hours of sleep every night can have big health benefits. Take this month not only to plan a good bedtime routine but also prepare for daylight saving time next month. If you can get to bed 10 to 15 minutes earlier leading up to the time change, you'll have an easier time adjusting.
- **Prioritizing protein and produce in your diet.** Fall is no time to slack on your nutrition, even though the farmers markets are dwindling down. October is peak season for butternut squash, apples and everyone's favorite, brussels sprouts! These items are a great way to incorporate numerous vitamins, fiber and antioxidants into your diet. While preparing your favorite fall veggie, don't forget to add a good dose of healthy protein to each meal as well to support muscle mass, reduce appetite and strengthen your immune system. Some healthy examples include white meat turkey, fish, nuts and legumes like beans, peas or lentils.
- **Sticking to or adding in physical activity sessions.** As the weather cools, it's tempting to go into hibernation until the spring. But keeping up with your exercise routine or starting a new one can help you maintain or improve your weight, especially around the holidays. Exercise also has mood boosting magic. So, when the hectic days begin to pile up, save time for a sweat session. Your mental health will thank you for it.
- **Finding time for self-care.** As we move toward the end of the year, it's a good time to look back and be sure you have checked off your medical to-do list (e.g., well visit, preventive services, lab work, etc.). Keeping up to date on routine and recommended doctor visits, tests and immunizations will help you stay on track for a healthy life ahead. Be sure to add in time for stress reducing activities too, such as journaling, meditation or a mindful fall walk.

By incorporating healthy habits into your routine, you'll help to boost your immune system, lower stress and stay on top of your overall well-being, allowing you to fully appreciate this wonderful season.