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## **Bring it on ... Strategies for Balance and Resilience**



### **2019 Provincial Acquired Brain Injury Conference**

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## Nutrition and Exercise

Eating well and moving your body are two of the best defenses towards managing stress.

It can take 21 days to form a habit.

If you do want to make a change...do it for 21 days consecutively...it will start to feel like a new habit.

Applying ONE good habit such as WALKING regularly or crowding out something in your diet can lessen disease risk and improve our health.

Research indicates after the age of 40 our metabolism rate slows down and we lose ½ pound of muscle a year.

Taking 30 minutes a day to move around or better yet...get outside and move around you will notice a difference with how you feel. When we put ourselves on our 'Priority List' it is amazing to see the changes that might unfold. Take on the challenge and then add in the foods that you want to keep in your life.

As a result of taking on this eating challenge I now reduce my dairy and gluten intake. I can notice a difference when I get off track. The food we eat makes a major difference in how we feel!

We get stuck doing the same thing. Be bold and make a change...we can always do it better...

### The Eating Challenge (follows the Paleo "Caveman Diet")

1. No Dairy. This includes milk, butter, cream, yogurt, ice cream, and cheese. This is just for 21 days. Slowly bring them back into your diet as your digestive system adjusts. Try Oat Milk or Almond Milk an alternative.
2. No Starches, corn products, white potatoes, rice, breads. Try cauliflower – Process it and spice it up.
3. No Processed Foods. If it comes in the freezer section or in a box...don't eat it. Whenever a food is refined or processed ... the natural fiber is taken out of it. Fiber is the part of any plant including sugar cane. Fiber is what balances our blood sugar. Avoid all nitrates ... especially in bacon and sausage. Grass fed and without nitrates is best.
4. No Grains. Not even corn. Wheat has gluten and all grains have a very high glycemic index – which means that these foods carry sugar too rapidly into the bloodstream, causing a spike and a crash.
5. No Alcohol. Avoid booze completely during the challenge. Beer and wine will taste that much better after 21 days. (Alternatively...have alcohol one night a week only and aim for organic beer or wine if possible)
6. Eat Meat. Try to focus on moderate to high animal protein. Eat a variety of poultry, seafood, red meats and eggs...grass fed if possible.
7. Eat Vegetables. Eat as many and as much fresh or frozen vegetables you want. Go organic if you can.
8. Eat Fruit and Fruit Juices. If you are trying to lose weight...limit your intake. Go for organic juices. Non blends with no added sugars. It's better if you juice it yourself.
9. Cook with high quality oils. Good oils are coconut and organic olive oil. Avoid corn, cottonseed, peanut, soybean, rice bran, and wheat germ oils. Avoid any foods made with these oils.
10. Sea Salt. Do not use iodized salt. Go for unrefined sea salt. A good sea salt should be coarse and grey in color.



## **Alkaline versus Acidic**

The body tries to maintain a healthy blood pH between 7.35 – 7.45. Stress, toxins and diet can affect that. An acidic pH can occur from an acid forming diet, emotional stress, toxic overload, and/or immune reactions or any process that deprives the cells of oxygen and other nutrients.

We are far more susceptible to fatigue and illness in an acidic environment.

To maintain health, the diet should consist of 60-70% alkaline forming foods and 30-40% acid forming foods.

To restore health, the diet should consist of 80% alkaline forming foods and 20% acid forming foods.

### **An example of Foods that are Alkaline:**

Vegetables

Most Fruits

Some legumes – peas, beans, lentils

Herbs and Seasoning

Almonds

Sunflower Seeds

Organic Yogurt (with live bacterial enzymes – probiotics)

Most Herbal Tea

### **An example of Foods that are Acidic:**

Red Meat

Fish

Eggs

Poultry

Wheat and Grains

Milk – Dairy

Processed Foods

Black Tea

Coffee

Alcohol

Studies show that it takes 3 servings of vegetables and fruit to neutralize one serving of animal food.

We can be mindful of balancing our plate with foods from both categories but aim for more alkaline.

## **HEALTHY SNACKS**

Unsalted Nuts

Raw Veggies (with hummus or nut butters)

Fresh Fruit

Kale Chips

Cheese with Gluten free crackers

Small tin of tuna

Hummus Devilled Egg

Almonds

Sunflower Seeds

## Examples of ANTIOXIDANT FOODS – Slow down cellular aging...try to work them into your diet

- Green Tea
- Blueberries
- Cranberries
- Broccoli
- Chia Seeds
- Almonds
- Walnuts
- Kale
- Tomatoes
- Garlic
- Fish

*After taking on the 21 Day Challenge...I changed many of my eating habits and incorporated a greater variety of vegetables like kale and spinach into my diet. It is helpful to keep track of how you feel with regards to the food you eat and be mindful of when you get off track. Often we reach for that extra cookie for a reason other than hunger. Some things I could not give up on a permanent basis were chocolate and wine...life didn't seem as much fun without them.*

### **BOOST YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM** - This drink will give your immune system a kick start!

Water 6 – 8 oz  
Lemon (1/4 – 1/2 squeezed)  
Ginger (1 – 2 tbsp.)  
Cayenne (sprinkle)  
Agave or Honey (1 tsp)

### **IMMUNE BOOST SMOOTHIE** – To help curb hunger at any time of day

1 cup Almond Milk  
¼ cup water (add if it is too thick)  
1 cup packed baby spinach or kale  
1 tbsp. hemp seeds (energizing protein, iron and magnesium)  
½ cup frozen or fresh berries  
½ banana  
¼ tsp Cinnamon (antioxidant)  
¼ tsp Ginger (antiviral and antibacterial)  
¼ tsp Turmeric (Inflammation and disease fighter)  
2- 4 ice cubes

**Method:** Add all ingredients in the order they are listed into a high speed blender and blend until smooth.

## TIPS TO POWER UP

1. Be mindful of getting 5 different colours of vegetables a day.
2. Aim for 10 hours without food or alcohol between finishing dinner and having breakfast.
3. Be present when you are eating. Pay attention. Chew well. Digestion starts in the mouth and your stomach does not have teeth.
4. If there is something in your diet that you are willing to let go of... consider “crowding” it out with something else. It is small changes ... try one less a day and it will become a habit.

### Some take-aways to Remember...

THE BETTER WE ARE AT MANAGING OUR STRESS LEVEL ... THE MORE PRODUCTIVE WE WILL BE

IT IS SMALL STEPS TO SUSTAINABLE CHANGE. THINK BIG ... START SMALL ... ACT FAST

STRESS AND PRODUCTIVITY RARELY GO HAND IN HAND

KEEP A SMILE FILE TO LIFT YOU UP ON THE DAYS YOU GET KNOCKED OFF BALANCE

CATCH YOURSELF WHEN YOU GET STUCK IN YOUR CIRCLE OF CONCERN

ASK YOURSELF... WHAT CAN I DO TO MOVE THIS IT TO MY CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE

GIVE YOUR BRAIN A BOOST WITH THE MINI MINDFUL BREAKS

THOUGHTS ARE NOT FACTS

WE CAN OWN OUR OWN GROWTH - OYOG

WE HAVE A CHOICE ABOUT WHICH THOUGHTS WE PAY ATTENTION TO

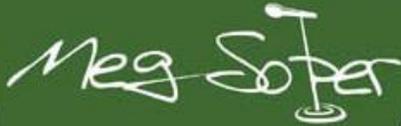
SHIFT YOUR PERSPECTIVE WHEN YOU GET STUCK IN A NEGATIVE THOUGHT LOOP

BE MINDFUL OF WHERE YOU FOCUS YOUR ENERGY

MINDFULNESS CAN HELP CALM OUR AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM.

IF IT DOESN'T LIFT YOU UP ... LET IT GO. IF IT DOESN'T HELP YOU GROW ... LET IT GO!

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## Mini Mindfulness Break Challenge

*Steps to bolster your Resilience and to enhance your Focus and Awareness.*

### Start your day the right way

We release stress hormones within minutes after waking so take ONE minute to take some mindful breaths before your head lifts off the pillow in the morning. Pay attention to your breath and let the thoughts that come up pass by you.

### Stretch with Awareness

When you get out of bed take a moment to inhale with awareness ... stretch your arms up over your head and exhale with a deep breath. Think of 3 thoughts. Think of something you are grateful for...something you are willing to let go and what you are focused on that day. This will set YOUR intention for the day.

### Kick Start your digestive tract

Your body can get dehydrated through the night so give it the lift it needs by having a glass of water (you can also add a squeeze of lemon) before you eat any breakfast. Pay attention to the food you take in for those first few bites and chew slowly. Take your time ... your stomach doesn't have teeth.

### Boost your Brain

When you get to work and before you open your email or answer a text message, do your best to create a quiet space and take ONE minute to take some mindful breaths. In a seated position ... assume a relaxed but alert posture with hands on your thighs and feet grounded on the floor. Take deep breaths. Notice your inhalation and exhalation with each breath. Notice your thoughts going by you as if you were standing on the street corner watching cars go by. Those are your thoughts going by. Gently bring your attention back to your breath.

### Brain needs a break

In order for our brain to function optimally our brain needs a break every 90 minutes to 2 hours. Our instinct is to reach for caffeine, sugar or carbohydrate. Get up and move. Roll out your shoulders and relax your arms and hands. Stress can drip right out of your fingertips. Be conscious of moving your shoulder blades back. With relaxed attention breath in and out while counting in for 4 counts and exhale for 7 counts.

### Commute home

Take 5 minutes on your commute to let go of the day by taking some mindful breaths with relaxed attention. Turn off the radio or music. Just be. Roll out your neck and shoulders. Bring your attention back to your breath as you let any thoughts that come up go by. If your mind wanders bring it back to your breath gently with patience.

### End your day

Set yourself up for success with sleep by turning it off and tuning it out. Take an awareness stretch and think about ONE THING that lifted you up during the day. Think about your favourite part of the day ... FPOD. You will bolster your positive neural pathway when you focus on what that positive experience felt like. What we think about before bed we marinate in for the next 7 – 8 hours. Make it positive.