HEALTHY You!

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THIS EDITION FEATURES:

Overcoming Barriers to Exercise

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Being Kind

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OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO EXERCISE

Exercise is a vital component of well-being, but barriers can sometimes get in the way. If you are looking to incorporate exercise into your daily routine, think about what your personal barriers could be. Common barriers and solutions for overcoming them include:

- **Lack of time.** Identify three, 30-minute slots you can use each day for physical activity. Every morning, pick the time that works best for you. Examples can include walking in your neighborhood early in the morning, working out during a lunch break, or visiting the gym after dinner.
- **Family obligations.** It's great to spend time with your family, but it's also important to prioritize your health. Think of physical activity as something you do for yourself.
- **Motivation.** Explore activities you may enjoy such as group exercise classes that offer a sense of community. To keep yourself on track, recruit a workout buddy who shares your fitness goals.
- **Lack of resources or equipment.** You can bargain shop for equipment, visit recreation parks, watch free online exercise videos, or use your body weight for resistance exercises such as squats, lunges, push-ups, planks, or sit-ups.

Rather than focus on *why* you can't do something, spend your energy on creating solutions for *how* you can do it.

Source:
heart.org/en/healthy-living/fitness/getting-active/breaking-down-barriers-to-fitness

SIMPLE WAYS TO EAT HEALTHIER

You don't have to give up your favorite foods to eat healthier. Here are a few realistic, small, and gradual adjustments that can improve your eating habits:

- Plan your meals in advance, including snacks.
- Prepare meals at home to control ingredients and portion sizes.
- Balance your diet with fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats.
- Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water throughout the day.
- Choose whole, minimally processed foods to maximize nutritional value.
- Read food labels and look for products with simple, recognizable ingredients.

Moderation is key. Enjoy an occasional treat. Depriving yourself of your favorite foods may lead to feelings of restriction, which can sabotage the good habits you're trying to develop.

Source:
healthline.com/nutrition/14-ways-to-stick-to-a-diet

METABOLISM MAKEOVER

Many people blame their metabolism for weight gain or unsuccessful efforts at weight loss. But what is this mysterious process? Metabolism refers to the complex chemical reactions that take place when your body converts food and drinks into energy for essential body functions such as breathing, digesting food, circulating blood, and growing and repairing cells.

You may be able to boost your metabolism with lifestyle choices that support your body's natural process of energy expenditure. This can include exercising regularly, getting enough sleep, managing stress, and eating a well-balanced diet.

To improve your metabolism, try incorporating these dietary changes:

Eat more protein.
Protein requires more energy for digestion and can help maintain muscle mass. Aim for at least one source of protein with each meal. Common sources of protein include:

Food	Protein, in grams
Eggs (1 large)	6
Tofu (3.5 oz)	7
Greek yogurt (5 oz)	14
Lentils (1 cup)	18
Chicken (3 oz)	25

Drink more water. When your body is dehydrated, your metabolism slows down.

Choose fiber-rich foods.
The body burns a lot of energy trying to digest high-fiber foods like fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.

Eat regularly. Skipping meals or following restrictive, low-calorie diets can slow down your metabolism.

Sources:
my.clevelandclinic.org/health/body/21893-metabolism
ramphealth.com

Balsamic-Salmon Spinach Salad for Two

1 6-oz salmon fillet
2 tablespoons balsamic vinaigrette, divided
3 cups baby spinach
¼ cup cubed avocado
1 tablespoon chopped walnuts
1 tablespoon dried cranberries

Drizzle salmon with 1 tablespoon vinaigrette. Broil or grill for 10 – 15 minutes and cut into two pieces. In a large bowl, toss spinach with the remaining vinaigrette. Divide between two plates. Top with salmon, avocado, walnuts, and cranberries.

Social Self-Care

In our busy lives, it can be difficult to make time for friends and family, but social self-care is important for our well-being. Social self-care refers to activities that create and maintain positive relationships with others. Some ways to build a social support network include:

- **Invest in relationships.** Spend time and energy in nurturing connections with friends, family, and loved ones.
- **Schedule quality time.** Plan face-to-face events that are free from distractions. Use the time to focus on your relationship.
- **Practice active listening.** Be present during conversations and demonstrate empathy towards others.
- **Focus on fun.** Socialize with others by playing board games, going on a date night, or enjoying hobbies together.

Tending to your relationships is a form of self-care. Make time for connections that count.

Sources:
iowaaeamentalhealth.org/self-care/strategies-for-social-self-care/
familyaware.org/social-self-care-ideas-to-prevent-feeling-isolated/

UNDERSTANDING BLOOD PRESSURE

Just as water flows through a garden hose, blood circulates through our arteries. If pressure in the hose becomes too high, it might start to bulge, leak, or burst. In the same way, high blood pressure can damage artery walls over time.

High blood pressure has no signs or obvious symptoms to indicate that something is wrong. The best way to protect yourself is to know the risks and make lifestyle changes that matter.

Controllable risk factors are risk factors you can change to help prevent or manage high blood pressure, including:

- **Physical activity.** Exercise is great for your heart and circulatory system.
- **Nutrition.** A diet that is high in salt, calories, fat, and sugar increases the risk of high blood pressure.
- **Weight.** Extra weight strains your heart and circulatory system. It also increases your risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and high blood pressure.
- **Alcohol.** Drinking can cause many health problems, including increased blood pressure.
- **Tobacco.** Smoking can increase blood pressure and contribute to damaged arteries.
- **Stress.** Too much stress can lead to unhealthy coping behaviors such as poor diet, physical inactivity, and use of tobacco or alcohol, all of which can increase blood pressure.

Blood Pressure Category	Systolic mm Hg (upper number)	Diastolic mm Hg (lower number)
Normal	Less than 120	and less than 80
Elevated	120-129	and less than 80
High blood pressure (hypertension) stage 1	130-139	or 80-89
High blood pressure (hypertension) stage 2	140 or higher	90 or higher
Hypertensive crisis (consult your doctor immediately)	Higher than 180	and/or higher than 120

Source:
heart.org/en/health-topics/high-blood-pressure/understanding-blood-pressure-readings

BEING KIND

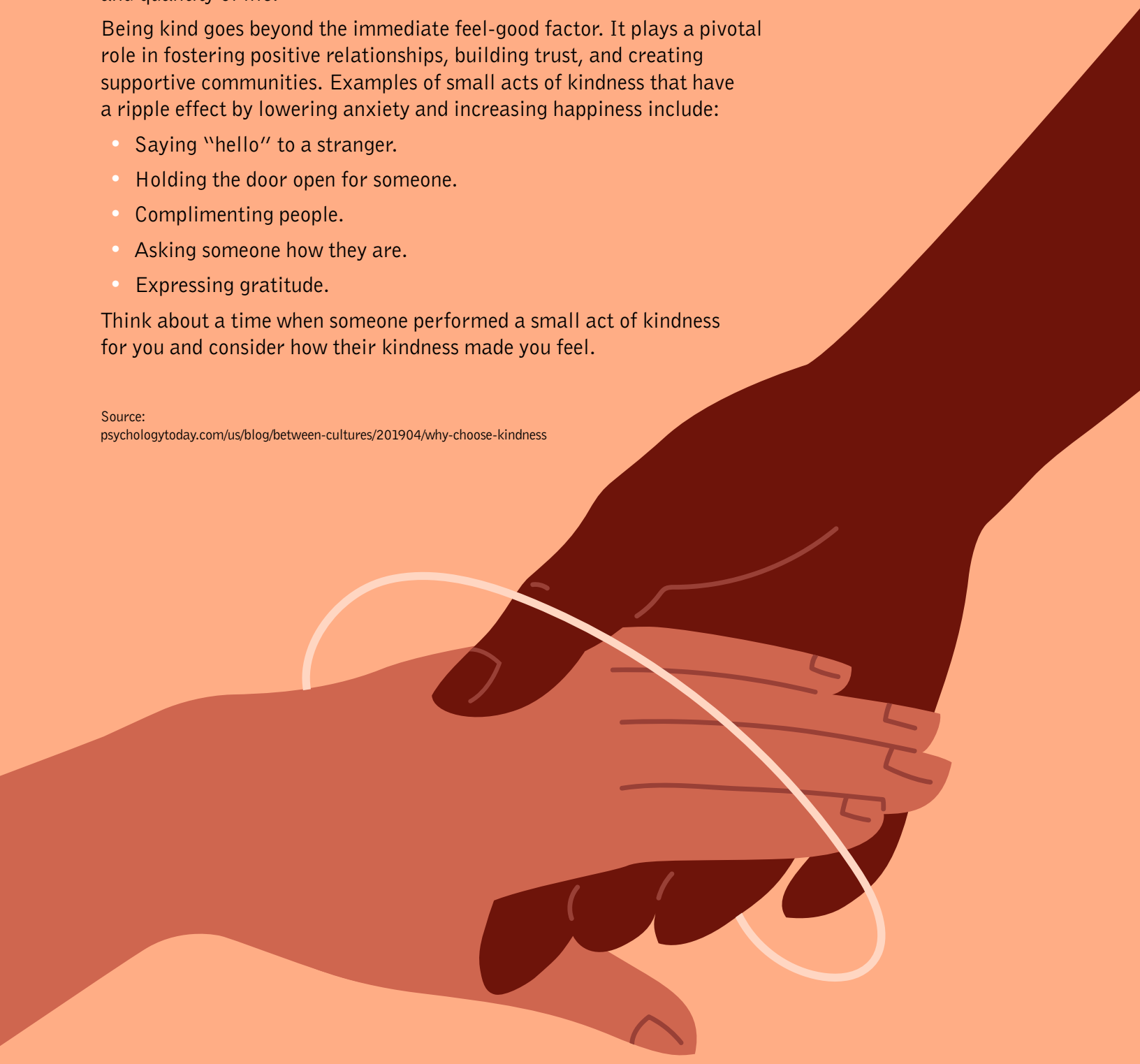
In today's fast-paced world, showing kindness can sometimes be overlooked, yet its impact is profound and far-reaching. Kindness releases feel-good hormones, reduces stress, and has the potential to increase your quality and quantity of life.

Being kind goes beyond the immediate feel-good factor. It plays a pivotal role in fostering positive relationships, building trust, and creating supportive communities. Examples of small acts of kindness that have a ripple effect by lowering anxiety and increasing happiness include:

- Saying "hello" to a stranger.
- Holding the door open for someone.
- Complimenting people.
- Asking someone how they are.
- Expressing gratitude.

Think about a time when someone performed a small act of kindness for you and consider how their kindness made you feel.

Source:
psychologytoday.com/us/blog/between-cultures/201904/why-choose-kindness



MONTHLY QUIZ

1. Which of the following can overcome a barrier to exercise?

A. Walking in your neighborhood or at work during a break

B. Exploring physical activities you may enjoy

C. Bargain shopping for exercise equipment

D. All of the above

2. Which of the following is NOT a simple way to eat healthier?

A. Plan meals in advance.

B. Drink plenty of water.

C. Eat whatever is available.

D. Read food labels.

3. Which of the following best describes social self-care?

A. Partying on the weekends

B. Nurturing connections with friends, family, and loved ones

C. Scheduling back-to-back meetings

D. Being well-liked

1. D, 2. C, 3. B

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