

[IMAGE]

## A Better Way to a Better Day

By Dr. Perry Nickelston

Day not going right? Stressed from the hectic routine of daily life? Feeling as if your life is spiraling out of control? Oftentimes we get so caught up in simply trying to make it through each day, that we don't take time to appreciate the *here and now*. Living in the moment is a foreign concept in this fast-paced digital world that constantly bombards us with information. We lose sight of maximizing the joy of today and instead focus on what we have to do tomorrow. Years go by in the blink of an eye and one day, you realize just how much happiness you missed out on.

Now is the time to take back control and optimize the joy and energy of each day. The things in life we did *not* do are often what we regret the most. Once a day passes it is gone forever. Here are some easy ways to improve your day, your health and your life. Make every day a better day.

### The Power of Thought

Abraham Lincoln once said, "People are about as happy as they make up their minds to be." A very profound statement that is 100 percent true, but difficult for some people to accept. The initial reaction goes something like, "How can I be happy with so much stress in my life?" Stressed-out individuals have reaction-based emotions; they unknowingly give others power and control over how they feel. It is a vicious up-and-down emotional cycle of reacting to a specific event, often with anger.

better day - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark For example, someone cuts you off on the highway and your reaction is to get angry because you take it personally. You can feel the stress and tension building up in an instant. You may even go back to that moment several times during the day and begin feeling the same negative emotions. Your mind does not know the difference between a real event and an imaginary one. The exact same physical reaction occurs. Instead of reacting to an event, try to respond instead. What's the difference?

Responding is where *you choose* the emotional outcome. It takes a moment of thought before your gut reaction takes over. This can be difficult to achieve in the beginning, but once you master this process you will gain incredible control over your life. Go back to the highway example. You may get angry initially,

but then you can choose to let it go, realizing that this person is not worth making your day miserable. *You* have taken control, not them!

### **Plan Your Day**

Take time in the morning to map out your day. Being disorganized raises your stress level, and your sense of direction and purpose is decreased. Unclutter your life and get organized to take back control. Where do you start? Start with creating a "Top 5 List." Create a list of the five most important tasks you need to complete for the day. Put the one you want to do the *least* at the *top* of the list to help prevent procrastination. It is human nature to delay things that make you feel uncomfortable. By accomplishing the difficult task first, you set the tone for positive action and motivation the rest of the day. You can always add more numbers to the list when you get better at the system.

### **Morning Relaxation**

Take time every morning to reflect on yesterday and plan out today's events. (This is a good time to make up your Top 5 List.) With the barrage of nonstop information overload in today's society, it's more important than ever to take quiet moments. Set your alarm 15 minutes early and wake up to silence. Do not turn on the television or open the newspaper. You may find that problems that previously plagued you suddenly become more manageable and fall into perspective.

When was the last time you sat in a room without white noise all around? Try it and see what happens. I have a feeling you will find it to be one of the most enjoyable moments of your day.

### **The Joy of Music**

Music soothes the soul. It can trigger so many emotions and senses, transporting you to another time and place of memories gone by. Know any songs that make you smile or remember a special moment? Make a special collection of your favorite songs and play them whenever you need to escape. Close your eyes and take yourself back to a place that left a cherished impression on your heart. It will help give you a renewed perspective on your current situation.

### **Lift Someone Up**

The act of giving your time, energy, expertise, companionship, friendship and energy to helping others will change you forever! By taking attention off of yourself and devoting it to others, you will experience more joy. Invest in taking a moment to improve the lives of others. It can be the simplest acts of kindness that make all the difference for someone.

Here are just a few examples that make a big difference: holding the door open for another person, complimenting someone who is having a stressful day, smiling, telling a loved one that you value and appreciate them, calling a long-lost friend, or sincerely thanking someone who helps you. The list goes on and on. It's the little things that matter most. Transform yourself and others in the process. Can there be any greater gift than that?

### **Exercise Your Stress Away**

The mind-body connection is undeniable. How you feel is directly related to how well you take care of your body. It does not take much effort to make a positive impact on your body. People often feel that if they cannot devote hours a week at the gym, then it is not worth exercising. Wrong! Any movement is good movement. Your metabolism and hormone systems are optimized through exercise, resulting in more vitality. Your overall energy and mental clarity will improve.

kids jumping - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark Whenever you are feeling low on energy or stressed out, you can do simple movements to revitalize yourself. For example, you can drop down and do as many push-ups as you can; make a tight fist with both hands and squeeze as long as you can (remember to breathe); clap your hands together vigorously for 10 seconds; take 10 long, deep, slow breaths; tap your sternum for 30 seconds; or reach your hands over your head 10 times. Get the blood flow going and feel your state of mind improve.

### **Healthy Snacks**

Maintain proper blood sugar levels by snacking on a regular basis. Dips and spikes in insulin levels set the stage for stress and energy fatigue. Prolonged periods of not eating makes your body prone to mood swings and decreased mental clarity.

Take time to snack and eat during the day. One of the best snacks to have is nuts. Nearly all nuts are a great health food. A handful of nuts will energize you and are power-packed with nutrients. Nuts in general, and peanuts in particular, are high in the bioflavonoid resveratrol. This bioflavonoid has a number of beneficial

health effects, including anti-cancer, antiviral and anti-aging, and is believed to help prevent the formation of arterial plaques. That means adding nuts to a balanced, healthful diet can aid in the prevention of heart disease.

A little goes a long way. The key to deriving the most heart-healthy benefits from nuts is to create ways to incorporate a variety of nuts into a low-fat diet. Substitute nuts for other high-calorie, often less-nutritious foods instead of just adding additional calories. Eating a variety of nuts is a sure way to add many health benefits to your diet and feel a *whole* lot better in the process.

It takes 30 days to form a new habit. Try these strategies for just one month and I'll bet your life will be changed for the better. Even if you can't do all of them, start with a few and infuse more energy and joy into your life. There seems to be no end to the amount of stressful situations we encounter, but taking simple steps to ease the burden can go a long way toward making every day count. Welcome to a better day.

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## **10 More Better Day Quick Fixes**

1. *Drink more water.* Proper hydration helps the body function better and aids in the detoxification process, promoting cellular recovery.
2. breakfast - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark *Replace morning coffee with tea.* Too much caffeine stresses your adrenal glands, which may lead to overall decreased energy levels.
3. *Eat a good breakfast.* Skip the simple carbohydrates like bagels, white breads, and processed foods. Eat fruit and protein.
4. *Eat more bags than barcodes.* In general, keep away from processed foods in boxes with barcodes and go with more natural food in bags. Eliminate the unnecessary food additives.
5. kid reading - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark *Take the stairs instead of the elevator.* Use your body. Get moving. You burn more calories, helping fat loss. Plus, it is actually a little fun when you see people stare in amazement that you actually use the stairs.
6. *Read more books.* Turn off the television and stimulate your mind with a good book.
7. *Be grateful.* Take 60 seconds and write down three things you are grateful for in your life. For example: your health, children, spouse, job, family, etc.
8. *Use your third eye.* Apply light, sustained pressure for 60 seconds to the point above your nose and between your eyes. This is the "third eye" energy chakra point in acupuncture and is known for

revitalizing energy.

9. stress ball - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark *Golf without leaving home*. Roll a golf ball on the bottom of both bare feet for 2-3 minutes and release the soft-tissue fascia. You will release tension and increase blood flow as well as stimulate reflexology points.
  10. *Squeeze a stress ball for 60 seconds*. Strong grip reduces neck tension and upper-back stress. Feel an immediate rush of energy. Make sure you do both hands and maintain breathing patterns.
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