

[IMAGE]

Lessons From the Lockdown

By Editorial Staff

Depending on which state (and in some cases, which county within that state) you live in, you may be experiencing a tremendous sense of freedom compared to the past two months, or little at all. Regardless, in most areas of the country, things certainly aren't back to normal. *And maybe that's the way it should be.*

While the average person would say they've missed the lifestyle they enjoyed before COVID-19 came into town, they would probably also readily admit that the "lockdown" has opened their eyes to aspects of their day-to-day life that needed to change, and should continue to be in effect post-COVID. Lessons from the lockdown, if you will. Here are a few to consider:

It's OK to Eat Out Less and Cook More: The restaurant industry doesn't want to hear this, but you might have realized cooking your own food is actually enjoyable, less expensive and healthier than eating out. Restaurants have added certain low-calorie, low-fat items to their menus, but when you prepare your own food at home, the world is at your fingertips. Every meal can be a healthy meal because you're the one designing the menu.

You Don't Need the Gym: Or at least you don't need it all the time. When gyms closed down, you panicked, right? How do I stay in shape without my favorite equipment, my favorite elliptical, my "comfort zone"? Then you probably realized, like many others, that staying in shape is a mindset, not a location; and that you actually have more options outside of the gym than any gym can offer. So, you started mixing things up, because you had to: light weights, body weight, bands and balls; plyometrics, outdoor interval sprints, and myriad other exercises you'd ignored in favor of your "go-to" gym equipment. Mixing things up works wonders for two reasons: it shows you that exercise never has to get boring; and it makes your body, your muscles, react to new stimuli, spurring growth and progress.

Sleep Really Does Make a Difference: Sure, you've always known it, somewhere deep down inside; but for years, you – like millions of others – haven't accepted it. So, you've burned the perpetual "midnight oil," getting too little sleep and never making it up; or sleeping poorly, meaning you constantly wake up in the middle of the night, toss and turn; and wake up feeling, well, as if you didn't sleep at all. During the

pandemic, sleep patterns have been disrupted to an unprecedented degree by stress, worry and other factors. It's impacting your health, just like it always has been, but now, maybe you appreciate the power of sleep enough to ensure you get it. (See "It's Time for Better Sleep" in this issue for tips.)

We Need More Than Screen Time: Media overload, misinformation, social media gone wild; we've seen and heard it all over the past few months. But more than anything, we've all spent far more time without the social interaction we all truly need – *the non-digital variety*. Just ask a teen with a smartphone how they've felt lately; after all, isolating themselves and only communicating via social media should be right up their alley. And it is ... usually. But reports suggest an increasing number of teens have realized what we all should realize: Technology has its limits when it come to social interaction. *We need more.* We need the face-to-face (no, not just Zoom or FaceTime); we need to laugh, cry, embrace and share our lives beyond the screen.

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