



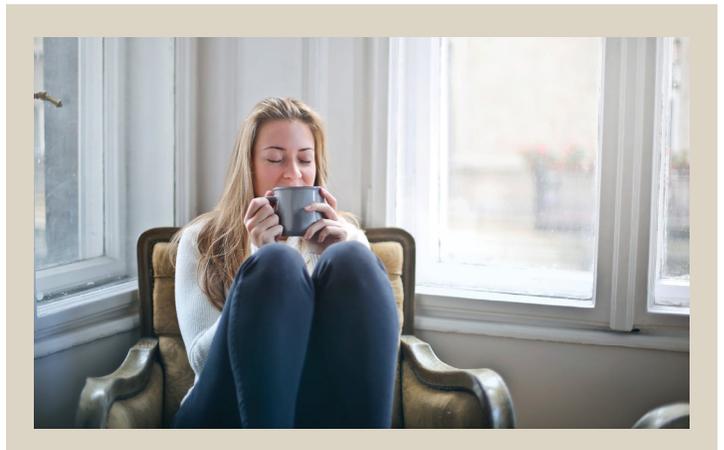
April 18, 2018

Wellness Wednesday

Five ways to make your home peaceful during National Stress Awareness Month

For Americans working hard to perform well at their jobs, the cost of success may come in the form of poor health, stress and burnout, an issue many can tackle during National Stress Awareness month in April. Roughly 63 percent of U.S. workers said they regularly engage in unhealthy behaviors, such as drinking, to combat work-related stress, according to a Statista survey of over 17,000 adults.

Though leaving stress behind at work may seem difficult, happiness expert and Fortune 100 adviser Michelle Gielan says having a more positive and optimistic life at home only requires minor tweaks to your day-to-day habits.



"I don't think you need a major overhaul in your life. You just need consistent, small habit changes to make a difference," Gielan tells CNBC Make It. "If we don't stop to think about the culture at home, there is a chance we're not creating an environment that is actually the best it can be and make us the happiest possible."

Gielan founded the Institute for Applied Positive Research along with her husband Shawn Achor, a former Harvard University lecturer and fellow researcher on positive psychology. Over the past 11 years, they've trained companies and schools to be more positive through their work as consultants at GoodThink. In addition to writing several of their own books, they have also worked with Oprah Winfrey for an OWN Lifeclass course on happiness. Even as renowned happiness experts, Gielan says she and her husband recently felt stressed at home because of work.

"It was hard to watch him be stressed and under the pressure of deadlines while also keeping up with things he had going on in his life both professionally and personally," Gielan says. "And then me as a spouse, to watch him feeling stressed, I felt helpless oftentimes."

Here are the five simple steps Gielan says they followed to create a stress-free environment at home:

Discuss the issue with those you live with

Whether you, your partner or someone you share a home with is stressed, Gielan recommends getting everyone together over dinner or beers to sit and talk. "This is a really important first step because, through this conversation, you're identifying a challenge that everyone is experiencing," Gielan says. Today, 51 percent of Americans turn to their family or friends when they feel stressed, while 38 percent try to withstand the stress alone, according to another 2017 Statista survey.

This conversation will help those living together create a new culture at home. For example, Gielan and her husband decided there would be no more work talk after 5 p.m. or over the weekends. "Talking through what that new culture would look like can involve everyone in the process and invest them more deeply in creating a more positive outcome," Gielan adds.

Use positive visual cues

Whether it's the photos by your desk or an inspiring quote by your nightstand, Gielan notes that visual cues are a low-effort way to cheer yourself up. "We often underestimate the value that visual reminders can play in our lives," Gielan says.

These cues trigger your brain to think of a good memory, she explains, which then elicits a positive emotion. The practice can also help you form positive habits through anchoring, or creating an automatic connection between two pieces of information. For example, Gielan wanted her son to think "I love reading," so she posted photos around the house of him smiling while reading books. This eventually helped her son visually reinforce the thought "I like to read." Visual reminders can also show that you've accomplished a goal in the past and are capable of doing so again.

Put the tech away

Gielan's favorite step in decreasing stress at home was putting tech away. "Shawn and I both realized we unconsciously grabbed our phones and were checking our email or social media, which we didn't need to be doing at that moment," Gielan says.

To keep her from automatically reaching for her phone, Gielan placed the device in a zip-top bag and tied a rubber band around it. "Every time I went for my phone, there was more activation energy needed to be able to look at it and it served as a reminder that hey, this isn't what you wanted to be doing, so just leave it in the bag," she says. On your laptop, you can put a sticky note on it that says, "How about journaling?" or "How about going for a run?" to put your mind toward that habit you want to create instead.

Take a break

Gielan says it's key to take some downtime when you get home from work. "Take a break — from the moment you walk in the door through dinner — and be fully present," Gielan says. "Engage in some rejuvenating activity because if you have to go back to work later in the day, you're going to go back with a better mindset."

For example, Gielan says to avoid complaining about work and recommends beginning a more positive conversation. Instead of asking, "How was your day?" where the response can head in any direction, Gielan says to ask a leading question such as, "What was the best part of your day?" or "What is the coolest thing you learned?"

"This prompts them to look for an answer to fit the kind of question you're asking," Gielan says. "It also encourages their brain to scan for the most positive or meaningful part of their day and doesn't result in what a lot of us do, which is starting off with the negative."

Get the right amount of sleep

Gielan says sleep is crucial to avoiding feeling stressed at home. By getting more sleep, "you're setting yourself up to have a better day," Gielan points out, given "the brain processes things differently when it's low on resources."

"Unfortunately, corporate America tells us that we need to work tons of hours all the time, but the reality is that our bodies need to rest and rejuvenate in order to perform at its best," she says.

Although getting seven to nine hours of sleep a night might lessen time spent on work, Gielan says it's actually an investment in our performance. Once Gielan made these small changes in her life, she says she experienced a greater sense of control over her life and connection to her husband.

"It did wonders all around," she says. "It led to an improvement in our relationship because his stress decreased and I felt like I was being helpful." Gielan adds, "He, in turn, helped me feel accountable when I was not bagging up my technology and I felt like it was good for our son as he watched the changes we were undergoing."

The changes may not have been huge, but "they had huge results. I wasn't just subject to the demands of the external world, I was more consciously creating the life that I wanted to live," she says.

Article source: <https://cnb.cx/2lmcUTM>



This Week's Exercise

ARM AND LEG SWITCH



Let's Get Started

If you've mastered your standard plank form, this variation is a great way to add an extra core challenge without any equipment.

To do it: Start in full plank position with your weight on your hands. Hold your right foot and your left arm (by your side) off the floor for 3 counts, then switch arms and legs and repeat. That's one rep. Do 10 reps total.

Source: <https://bit.ly/2qBFn1s>

Regular exercise can help you control your weight, reduce your risk of heart disease, and strengthen your bones and muscles. But if it's been awhile since you've exercised and you have health issues or concerns, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor before starting a new exercise routine.

AVOCADO FRIES WITH LIME DIPPING SAUCE



Ingredients

8 ounces (2 small) avocados, peeled, pitted and cut into 16 wedges
1 large egg, lightly beaten
3/4 cup panko breadcrumbs (I used gluten-free)
1 1/4 teaspoons lime chili seasoning salt, such as Tajin Classic

For the lime dipping sauce:

1/4 cup 0% Greek Yogurt
3 tablespoons light mayonnaise
2 teaspoons fresh lime juice
1/2 teaspoon lime chili seasoning salt, such as Tajin Classic
1/8 teaspoon kosher salt

Directions

Air Fryer Directions:

1. Preheat the air-fryer 390F degrees.
2. Place egg in a shallow bowl. On another plate, combine panko with 1 teaspoon Tajin.
3. Season avocado wedges with 1/4 teaspoon Tajin.
4. Dip each piece first in egg, and then in panko.
5. Spray both sides with oil then transfer to the air fryer and cook 7 to 8 minutes turning halfway.
6. Serve hot with dipping sauce.

Oven Directions:

Preheat the oven 425F, follow directions above and bake on a sheet pan until golden and crisp, 10 to 15 minutes.

Nutrition Information

Yield: 4 servings
Serving Size: 4 fries, 2 tbsp sauce

Amount Per Serving:
Freestyle Points: 6
Points +: 5
Calories: 197
Total Fat: 12.5g
Saturated Fat: 2g
Cholesterol: 94.5mg
Sodium: 521.5mg
Carbohydrates: 15g
Fiber: 4g
Sugar: 1.5g
Protein: 7g

Recipe source:

<https://bit.ly/2J3pWWs>