

Ten Nourishing Activities for Clinician Wellness

- 1. Journaling:** Expressing emotions has many health benefits. Commit to writing for 15 minutes per day. Write about what you are feeling, reasons you may be feeling it, where you think these feelings are coming from, and what you can do to feel better. You can write about relationships, roles you are in, or experiences you have.
- 2. Gratitude journaling:** Write what you are thankful for every day for three consecutive weeks. Gratitude journaling has long-lasting mood-boosting effects.
- 3. Deep breathing:** Pause and notice your breath as many times per day as you can. Purposely slow down your breathing and take deep breaths, allowing your relaxation response to begin. Read *The Relaxation Revolution* by Dr. Herbert Benson if you want to learn more about this response.
- 4. Walk mindfully:** Notice what is around you as you walk. Use all of your senses as you are walking. Feel your feet grounded to the earth. Pay attention to colors, objects, and nature. Pay attention to your posture, your breath, and any tension in your body. (I use mindful walking as I get each patient from the waiting room.)
- 5. Eat mindfully:** Notice the texture of your food — the way it looks, its scents, and its flavors. Try to label the different flavors you taste. Chew your food well.
- 6. Drink water:** Your body and brain need a lot of water. If you drink coffee, make sure you have an extra glass of water for each cup of coffee you drink. Try to replace coffee with herbal teas.
- 7. Stretch:** Stretching is especially important if you have a job that requires you to sit all day. Get your body moving at least once per hour, if only for a minute or two.
- 8. Connect:** Connecting with others plays a huge role in our overall wellness. Send an email or text. Better yet, sneak in a quick call. Write a letter and send it in the mail. Go see a colleague in person. (This idea also gets you moving physically.) Spend a few minutes with your loved ones and really listen to what they have to ask. Ask them what they need. Make connecting a regular part of every day.
- 9. Snacks:** Keep a ready supply of healthy snacks that do not contain excessive sugar or preservatives, such as fruits, nuts, granola, veggies, hummus, teas, and plain Greek yogurt. Pay attention to how different foods affect your energy and mood.
- 10. Walk outside:** Getting outside for as little as five minutes at a time can help you increase your energy and improve your mood. Throw on your shoes and walk around the block a couple of times. Bonus points if you have a pet to walk.