**3 secrets to boost your willpower**

Nearly every adult in the United States resolved to change some behavior in 2012, according to a survey by the American Psychological Association. However, people consistently reported that a lack of willpower was the top reason they fell short of losing weight, saving more money, exercising, or making other lifestyle changes.

What’s the secret to willpower? Just as you build muscles with consistent exercise, regularly practicing self-control may improve willpower strength over time, recent studies suggest.

- **Avoid situations where you’ll be tempted.** If you’re likely to give in to treats near the office coffee station, take your break somewhere else.
- **Plan ahead.** If you want to exercise after work, schedule a *specific time* instead of telling yourself you’ll do it *sometime* that night. Put that specific time on your calendar.
- **Try not to take on too much at once.** Research shows that using willpower in one area may drain self-control in other areas of your life where you will need willpower soon. Focus on one goal, strengthen your willpower, and then take on more goals.

*Source: American Psychological Association*
Say Cheese

Whether you choose Cheddar or usually select Swiss, eating cheese can fit into almost any eating plan.

Cheese provides calcium, phosphorus, zinc, vitamin A, and protein. If you’re thinking, “But what about the fat?” or “Won’t the sodium be bad for my blood pressure?” here is what you need to know:

• cheeses contain fat, but only accounts for 9% of the total fat and 16% of the saturated fat in a typical U.S. diet. If fat is a concern, there are low-fat versions of many cheese types.

• salt/sodium controls cheese’s moisture, texture, taste, and food safety. Cheese contributes 8% of the sodium most people consume in the U.S. Worried about sodium? Look for varieties labeled low-sodium.

Studies have shown countries where people consume more cheese have lower rates of obesity. For instance:

• People in Greece each eat an average of 68 pounds of cheese annually. The country’s rate of obese individuals is 18%.

• In the United States, people eat an average of 33 pounds of cheese annually; the U.S. obesity rate is 34%.

For a chart of cheeses for different dietary needs, visit Aug.HopeHealth.com

Storing cheese

• Storage temperature range should be 35° to 45° F with high humidity (refrigerator vegetable/fruit bin).

• Double wrap and/or put strong, pungent cheese in airtight containers to help keep aromas from getting into other foods.

Source: American Cheese Society

Yo, go for yogurt — as a snack or with a meal

• For the greatest health benefit, select plain, low-fat yogurt; add your own fresh fruit.

• Look for the “Live & Active Cultures” seal. Consuming these high culture levels can help make the immune system more resilient, and may ward off some health conditions, particularly gastrointestinal infection. In one study, consuming yogurt containing live and active cultures led to a three-fold decrease in yeast infections.

Source: National Yogurt Association

Remove fruit and vegetable stains from your hands by washing them with vinegar.

Greek-inspired, Guilt-free Salad

• 1½ cups cucumbers, peeled and diced
• 1 cup fresh tomato, diced
• ½ cup plain, nonfat yogurt
• ¼ cup feta cheese
• 2 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar
• 2 tsp. sugar

Place cucumbers and tomato in a medium bowl. In a separate bowl, mix yogurt, cheese, vinegar, and sugar. Pour mixture over vegetables; toss until mixed thoroughly.

Serves 4. Per serving: 66 calories, 2.2 g fat, 9 mg cholesterol, 8.5 g carbohydrates, 3.4 g protein
(For more protein, use Greek yogurt)

“Age is not important unless you’re a cheese.” — Helen Hayes
GetMoving:

TV commercial workout

According to estimates, each hour of network television includes between 12 and 18 minutes of commercials. The average American spends almost 35 hours a week watching television.

Let's take a 15-minute/hour average for commercial time and multiply the minutes by 35 hours. That's 525 minutes — or 8.75 hours — of commercials each week.

Instead of heading to the refrigerator during commercials or fast-forwarding through them on recorded shows, use the time to get in short workouts. You don't even have to do it with every break for your body to benefit.*

Reap what you sow

Active gardening and yard work (sitting on a riding lawn mower doesn't count) can burn an average of 300 calories an hour and is an effective form of resistance training. That's not all. According to experts, moderate-intensity exercise such as gardening and yard work most days of the week can provide enough physical activity to lower your risk for heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and high blood pressure.*

- Wear proper clothing — a loose-fitting top and bottoms, gloves, and a hat for sun protection.
- Start slowly.
- To work your upper body, try pulling weeds by hand, raking, or hoeing.
- To work your thighs and glutes, find a digging project. When digging with a shovel, avoid twisting your back.
- To work your heart, cut grass using a push mower.
- Keep abdominal muscles tight, no matter what task you're doing.
- Focus on breathing. Exhale as you use force.

Source: American Council on Exercise

*With any physical activity, be sure you recognize your limits and do not overexert yourself. You may want to speak with your physician/health-care provider if you are uncertain of what those limits are/should be.

A vote for health — Is all of the political campaigning driving you crazy?

The federal government (with your tax dollars) created a contest to help you add physical activity to your life, as well as improve eating habits. You paid for the program; you may as well use it.

After a successful eight weeks, you earn the Presidential Active Lifestyle Award (regardless of who occupies the Oval Office). Although the challenge goes for eight weeks, the goal is for the changes to become lifelong habits.

For a link to sign up for the challenge, visit Aug.HopeHealth.com

If the shoe fits...

Wear it, right? But for how long? When do you need to replace athletic shoes?

As a general rule:

- Replace running or walking shoes when you've logged 300 to 500 miles; replace basketball, aerobic, or tennis shoes once you've hit 45 to 60 hours of use.
- Consider replacing shoes earlier if the middle of the sole or heel area shows signs of unevenness when placed on a flat surface or soles have noticeable creasing on their sides.

Source: American Academy of Podiatric Sports Medicine

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Migraine in the middle

What some people dismiss as a stomachache might actually be a migraine — even if a person has no symptoms in the head at all. This is particularly true for children between the ages of 5 and 9.

A person is diagnosed with an abdominal migraine after having five attacks.

Each attack can last up to 72 hours, and is characterized by:

- A moderate to severe pain in the abdomen.
- At least two of the following: no appetite, nausea, vomiting, or a pale appearance.
- Symptoms not attributed to another diagnosis such as stomach issues and other digestive system problems.

Once an attack starts, little seems to relieve pain except for time.

Most children grow out of abdominal migraines, but usually develop head migraine issues as adults.

Sources: National Headache Foundation, International Headache Society

Getting rid of gout

An estimated 2.1 million Americans have gout, a form of arthritis in which crystals form and lodge in joints — most often the large joint on the big toe — causing pain and inflammation.

Gout results from too much uric acid in the blood. Uric acid forms when the body breaks down purines found in animal and plant sources of food.

To help prevent attacks, make lifestyle changes, such as eating fewer foods high in purines. For a list of foods to avoid and foods that are safe, go to Aug.HopeHealth.com. If lifestyle changes aren’t adequate, there are anti-gout medications available to treat attacks. Check with your health-care provider.

Sources: Arthritis Foundation, American College of Rheumatology

READER REQUEST: Answering health questions from people like you. If you have a topic you’d like covered, send an e-mail to info@hopehealth.com.

3 ways to help kids build character and confidence

1. Communicate openly. When kids have questions, answer them. If you catch yourself taking out frustrations on your children, tell them you’re feeling crummy and just need (fill in the blank — time alone, for them to be quiet, help picking up toys, a hug, etc.).

2. Compliment. If kids made their beds, tell them, “Good job!” Praise may give them confidence to try more things and work harder.

3. Know who your kids’ friends are and how they interact. Ask specific questions about what happens on the playground, in the classroom, or at lunch.

Before throwing away medication, toss in coffee grounds or kitty litter

Mixing unused or expired over-the-counter and/or prescription medications with used coffee grounds can make the discarded drugs less appealing to children, pets, and people who may rummage through your trash.

Not a coffee drinker? Ask a coffee shop for used grounds or find another undesirable substance such as kitty litter.

Put the medication-grounds/litter mixture in a sealable bag, empty can, or another container before tossing it into the garbage can.

Sources: U.S. Food and Drug Administration

“To succeed in life, you need three things: a wishbone, a backbone, and a funny bone.”

— Reba McEntire
Handing over the keys

Many older drivers view driving as their independence. Talking about driving abilities can make some people defensive, angry, or hurt.

If it’s time to have the talk about whether a loved one should still be driving, make sure you are caring, respectful, and non-confrontational. Be prepared with observations and questions, and listen with an open mind.

If you’re unsure of an aging loved one’s driving abilities, consider taking a ride with him or her to observe his or her driving skills.

Source: U.S. Administration on Aging

Don’t worry; be happy

Everyone wants to be happy, but not all people are as cheery as they could be.

• Learn new skills to counteract sources of unhappiness. If you’re a “glass is half empty” type, teach yourself to be more optimistic. If you’re a compulsive spender, turn to thrift and delayed gratification.

• Nurture your strengths. Achievement-oriented people might consider competitive sports. Creative individuals could spend time writing, painting, taking photographs, or engaging in other artistic activities.

• De-stress your life. Refuse additional activities if you’re already feeling maxed out. Every day, prioritize what you’re going to do and eliminate unnecessary activities.

The benefits are worth it. Happy people typically have a high energy level and a “can do” attitude. They also tend to:

• Spend time with family and friends
• Express gratitude
• Offer a helping hand
• Express optimism about their futures
• Savor life’s pleasures
• Make physical activity a daily habit
• Show commitment to lifelong goals

Source: Texas Medical Association

Goof-proof your grammar

Fitness for your mind

It’s easy to make mistakes when writing, especially if you’re unaware that what you’re writing is wrong in the first place.

Your grammar can have an affect on how others view you and your communication skills. Even if you think you have good grammar, it’s better to be safe than sorry. Go to Aug.HopeHealth.com for a cheat sheet on common mistakes so you can have less problems with your writing.

( NOTE: Did you catch the seven mistakes in the article above?)

Job health checkup

Ask yourself:

• Do I like going to work most days?
• Do I have a manageable workload at work?
• Do I feel I can talk to my supervisor and co-workers when problems arise?

If you answered “No” to any questions, it may indicate you need to improve your occupational wellness. Occupational wellness also means you:

• Have hobbies/interests/activities that bring you joy outside of work
• Are doing what you want to do
• Are happy with the direction of your future plans
• Know your strengths and weaknesses
• Believe you have the qualities of a valuable and valued employee

Sources: Santa Clara University; University of Maine

Source: Texas Medical Association
5 taboo money topics

If you’re getting together with family and friends socially, remember your money manners.

1. Salaries — Discussing how much you make could be awkward or cause hard feelings if there’s a difference between what you and the others earn.

2. Home values — It could make for hard feelings if you or others discover a large difference between what you each have paid for your home.

3. Failed investments — No one wants to be reminded of their financial worries. Don’t bring up how badly or how well your investments are doing.

4. Job status — People may or may not be hanging onto their jobs. It’s better to talk about sports scores than how your job is going.

5. Bargains — If someone comments on a shirt or handbag, don’t share the price — or the deal — unless specifically asked.

The time to be open about money topics is when you’re talking to your professional financial adviser or immediate family members.

3 ways to break bad spending habits so they don’t break the bank

1. Set limits. Tell yourself you will only spend $XX per week/month/year on your guilty pleasure.

2. Go public with your goal. Tell people you want to curb your spending habit. You will be creating a support network to cheer you on and/or hold you accountable.

3. Talk to yourself — Before you give in to your bad spending habit, take 10 seconds to close your eyes, breathe deeply, and remind yourself that the item tempting you is a want, not a need.

Source: Spendster.org

A deal too good to resist?

More and more consumer companies are working with daily deal Websites to offer deeply discounted services and products. The “bargains” can be enticing, but are the offers worth it?

The upside

• Sample new things. Instead of paying full price, you can give something a try at a significant savings.

• Cut down on costs at places you already frequent. If you frequently use the company’s goods or services, you can save money and still enjoy the same amount of goods or services.

• Treat someone to a special outing. If the usual date night consists of swinging by a local fast-food joint, take it up a notch with an offer from the fancy restaurant.

The downside

• You’re still spending money. Before you click “Buy,” be sure you can afford the purchase, even if its price is drastically reduced.

• Be aware of expiration dates and other conditions. You must redeem most deal vouchers/coupons by a certain date or you end up paying for nothing (You pay for the deal when it’s offered, not when you use it). Other possible conditions: Only being able to use the coupon on certain products/service/food or on certain days at certain times.

Source: Spendster.org

Save hundreds of dollars annually on gasoline by making sure your vehicle’s engine is tuned regularly and your vehicle’s tires have enough pressure.
Getting a family portrait — a snapshot of your clan’s medical history

In addition to having a photograph taken of your entire clan, take time to create a family health portrait (AKA a Family Health History).

By knowing the health of your parents, siblings, grandparents, and other relatives, your doctor can provide better care for you because he or she can identify whether you have a higher risk for some diseases.

A family health history can help your health-care provider recommend steps to reduce your risk of disease and help in looking for early warning signs of disease.

The Internet is making it easier than ever to track your family’s health. Many insurance companies and wellness programs offer Web portals where you can create accounts. The U.S. Surgeon General’s office also has a free family health history tool.

To access the tool, go to Aug.HopeHealth.com

A look at kids’ eye troubles

August is Children’s Eye Health and Safety Month. Proper eye health should include routine eye exams.

If one or more of these signs appear, take your child to an eye doctor right away.

• Eyes are watery, red, and/or inflamed
• Eyelids are red-rimmed, crusted, or swollen
• Eyes don’t line up — One eye appears crossed or looks out
• Your child rubs eyes frequently
• Your child blinks more than usual or seems cranky when doing close-up work
• Your child says things are blurry, hard to see, or appear double
• Your child closes or covers one eye
• Your child tilts head or pushes head forward
• Your child has trouble reading or doing other close-up work, or holds objects close to eyes to see
• Your child complains of itchy, scratchy, or burning eyes
• Your child squints eyes or frowns

Source: Prevent Blindness America
Weight Control:
Snacks that don’t tip the scale on calories

Use snacks to support your weight-control efforts — not sabotage them.

Snacks with 100 calories or fewer:

- **Honey yogurt**: ½ cup nonfat, plain Greek yogurt, with 1 tsp. honey and a few sprinkles of cinnamon
- **Berries and cream**: 1 cup blueberries mixed with 2 Tbsp. whipped topping
- **Cinnamon applesauce**: 1 cup unsweetened applesauce sprinkled with cinnamon
- **Milk and cookies**: ½ cup skim milk and five animal crackers
- **Cucumber sandwich**: ½ English muffin topped with 2 Tbsp. cottage cheese and three cucumber slices
- **Greek tomatoes**: One tennis-ball sized tomato, diced and mixed with 1 Tbsp. feta cheese and a teaspoon of balsamic vinegar
- **Chips and salsa**: 10 baked tortilla chips and ¼ cup salsa
- **Pistachios**: About 25 nuts. Go for those still inside their shells. Cracking open the shells will take time, which may keep you from grabbing more.

“The difference between ordinary and extraordinary is that little extra.”
— Jimmy Johnson

“The food you eat can be either the safest and most powerful form of medicine or the slowest form of poison.”
— Ann Wigmore

“Don’t tempt me. I can resist anything but temptation.”
— Bob Hope

When cleaning, vacuum last. That way, you can vacuum any dust or crumbs you knocked onto the floor while you were decluttering and dusting.