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8 Powerful Ways High Blood Sugar Fuels Depression – And How to Break Free

6 Great Exercises for People With Type 2 High Blood Sugar

Breaking Free from Chronic Busyness: 8 Ways to Reduce Stress and Reclaim Your Life

The Power of Circadian Alignment: How Light, Food, and Sleep Impact Your Health Quality

Home Cures That Work

In today’s fast-paced world, many of us struggle to find balance—whether in our mental health, physical well-being, or daily routines. This month, we explore four critical topics that reveal how interconnected our health truly is.

Our lead article delves into the powerful link between high blood sugar and depression, showing how these conditions fuel each other in a vicious cycle. Insulin resistance, inflammation, and stress don’t just affect the body—they take a toll on the mind, making it crucial to address both conditions together through lifestyle changes like diet, exercise, and stress management.

One of the most effective ways to break this cycle is regular exercise, which plays a vital role in blood sugar control, weight management, and stress reduction. From tai chi and yoga to strength training and swimming, incorporating movement into your daily life can enhance insulin sensitivity and improve overall well-being.

But exercise alone isn’t enough if we’re trapped in the modern addiction of chronic busyness. Constant activity without rest leads to exhaustion, poor self-care, and serious health consequences. It’s time to shift our focus from endless productivity to intentional living—by setting boundaries, prioritizing rest, and embracing a more balanced approach to work and life.

Finally, we explore circadian health, the foundation of our body’s natural rhythm. Sleep, energy, digestion, and even blood sugar regulation are all influenced by this internal clock. Aligning with your circadian rhythm through consistent sleep, natural light exposure, and meal timing can transform your health in ways you never imagined.

This edition of Home Cures That Work is packed with practical insights to help you regain control of your health, energy, and happiness. Dive in and start making small changes today—your body and mind will thank you.

For your health,

Cheryl Ravey,
Editor, Home Cures That Work

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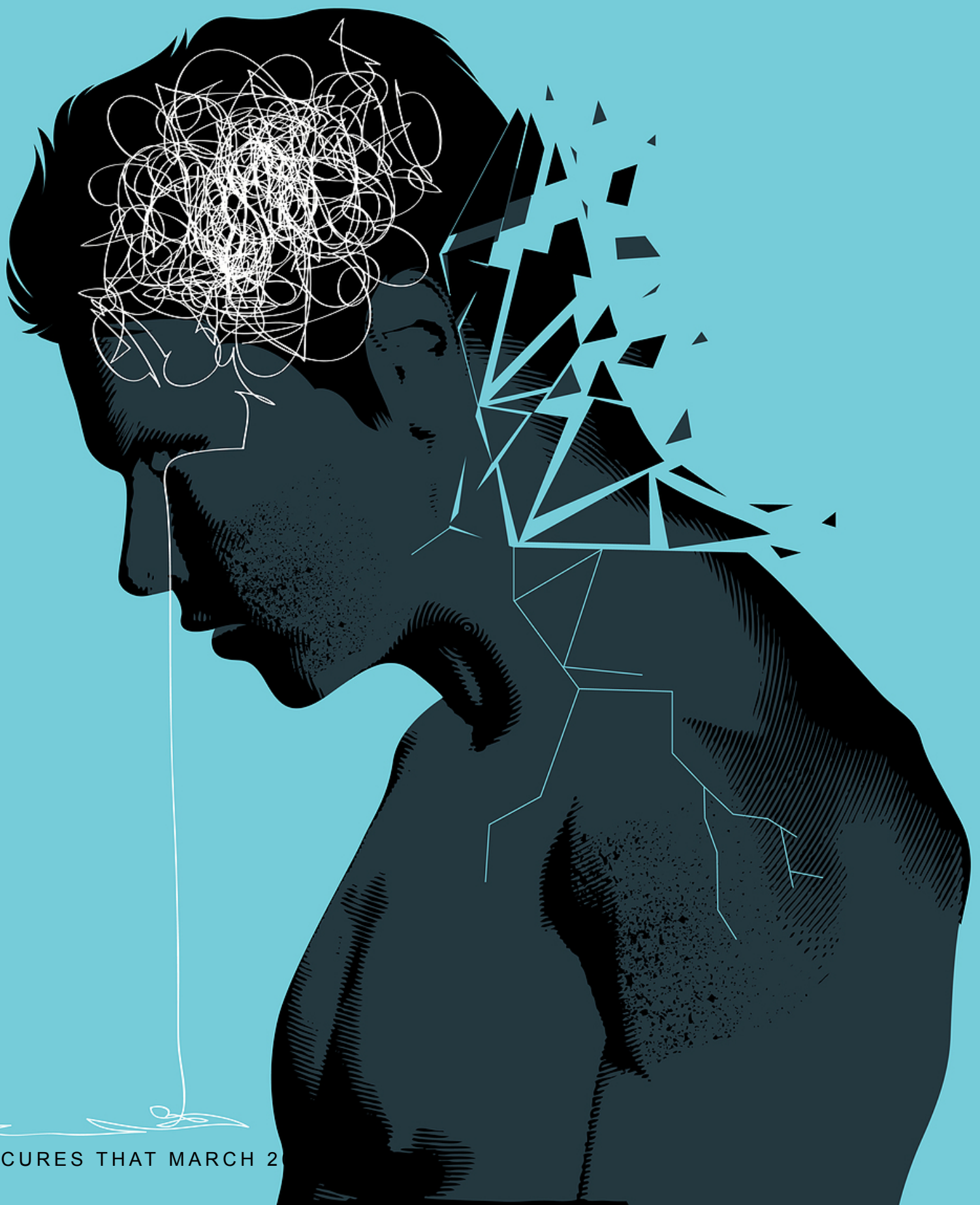
8 POWERFUL WAYS HIGH BLOOD SUGAR FUELS DEPRESSION – AND HOW TO BREAK FREE

by Dr. Scott Saunders, M.D.



THE LINK BETWEEN DEPRESSION AND HIGH BLOOD SUGAR

I see many patients struggling with both high blood sugar and depression. High blood sugar limits the energy available in the brain, causing fatigue, inactivity, slowness, and a lack of desire to do things – all signs of depression. On the other hand, being depressed causes stress in ways that increase insulin resistance. This puts a patient in a terrible bind that prevents them from solving either problem.

This "Catch-22" means high blood sugar and depression are two prevalent and serious health conditions that not only coexist, but feed upon each other.[1] Individuals with type 2 high blood sugar are at a higher risk of developing depression, and those with depression are more likely to develop type 2 high blood sugar.[2] This relationship can significantly impact the physical and mental well-being of those with high blood sugar, making it crucial to understand the connection between the two conditions.

Type 2 High Blood Sugar:

For our discussion of high blood sugar, insulin is the problem. Here we are talking about type 2 high blood sugar, metabolic syndrome, or insulin resistance. The key to this illness is not elevated blood glucose or obesity, but rather insulin resistance, which can happen many years before glucose levels are elevated.

Depression

Depression is a feeling or sense of inability to reach your goals, or hopelessness. Clinical depression, or major depression, means someone feels that life is not worthwhile, which makes everything hard. Change is especially hard, and that is what is needed to get well. Hopelessness prevents people from making changes that could help them feel better and even reverse their illness.

How High Blood Sugar Increases the Risk of Depression

High blood sugar significantly increases depression in a correlated manner – worse blood sugar is associated with worse depression. An interesting study showed that among people who all had high blood sugar, those with poor blood sugar control had much more depression than those with good control.[3] Moreover, there is a correlation between sugar consumption and major depressive disorders in whole populations.[4] It is not easy to know whether depression caused the high blood glucose levels, or the high glucose caused depression, but we do have some clues.

LOW ENERGY

High blood sugar affects the body's ability to regulate blood sugar levels, which is the primary energy supply of the brain. Persistent high or low blood glucose levels can lead to biochemical changes in the brain, influencing mood and cognitive function. Insulin resistance affects the available energy, leading to fatigue, and a sense of hopelessness.

INFLAMMATION

Chronic high blood sugar increases oxygen free radicals which cause inflammation in the brain[5]. Inflammation changes the way the cells of the brain communicate, creating insulin resistance, less energy, and signs of depression.[6]

NEUROTRANSMITTER IMBALANCES

Insulin resistance can affect the regulation of serotonin and dopamine, neurotransmitters associated with mood regulation.

ADRENAL DYSREGULATION

High blood sugar can alter the body's stress-response system, making individuals more prone to depression.

MEDICATION SIDE EFFECTS

Those who take medications for high blood sugar generally increase insulin resistance, making the brain function worse and contributing to depression.

PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS

It is hard to have to think about what your pancreas normally does automatically – maintain blood sugar at normal levels. Living with high blood sugar requires constant monitoring of blood sugar levels, adherence to dietary restrictions, and management of medication or insulin therapy. This long-term stress can contribute to feelings of frustration and helplessness, which may lead to depression.

POOR NUTRITION

Since type 2 high blood sugar is related to eating processed foods, carbohydrates, and restaurant meals, it is associated with nutrient depletion. Nutritional deficiencies of any kind contribute to depression because the brain is very sensitive to any lack of nutrients.

REDUCED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

People get type 2 high blood sugar partly from a lack of physical activity. Exercise is like a shot of insulin to bring glucose into the muscle cells. It also helps the brain to make neurotransmitters like dopamine and enkephalins to feel good.

How Depression Increases the Risk of High Blood Sugar

High blood sugar causes depression, but depression also interferes with the control of blood glucose, worsening, or causing high blood sugar.[7]

FOOD CHOICES

People who are depressed feel hopeless and often seek comfort in temporary pleasures such as “comfort foods” which are often sweet and highly processed. Moreover, sweet, fat, and salty foods release dopamine which makes them feel better so they can’t stop eating, leading to insulin resistance.

EXERCISE

Depression also brings with it a lack of motivation to do physical activity. Some may call it laziness, but there is a lack of motivation to do many things. For some it’s a struggle to just get out of bed in the morning.

STRESS

Depression is directly related to stress,[8] leading to increased production of cortisol, the stress hormone. Elevated cortisol levels contribute to insulin resistance, higher blood glucose, and abdominal fat accumulation, all of which are risk factors for high blood sugar.

SLEEP DISTURBANCES

Lack of sleep also increases the stress hormone cortisol which causes insulin resistance. Those who don’t sleep early and get up early are much more likely to get T2D.[9] The sleep problems associated with high blood sugar, are also risk factors for depression.[10] People with depression commonly suffer from sleep disorders, such as insomnia or excessive sleepiness, which are linked to impaired glucose metabolism and an increased risk of T2D.

MEDICATIONS

While most doctors will give medication to help people feel better, it doesn’t lower their risk of high blood sugar. There is evidence that controlling depression with medications does not improve blood glucose levels. However, controlling blood glucose does improve depression.[11]

Managing Both Conditions Simultaneously

Since high blood sugar and depression are closely linked, managing both conditions is essential for overall health. Some effective strategies include:

REGULAR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Exercise improves insulin sensitivity and boosts mood by increasing endorphin levels. The ideal forms of exercise push the limits of what you can do. High-intensity interval training (HIIT exercises) is a great way to take care of both problems. This is where you push your exercise as hard as you can for ten seconds, and then do light, easy exercise for thirty seconds. Only 15 minutes a day of HIIT

can make a big difference in both depression and blood glucose.[12]

KETOGENIC DIET

There has been a lot of research recently about mental illness and the ketogenic diet. Christopher Palmer, MD, a psychiatrist at Harvard Medical School wrote a book called Brain Energy.[13] There has also been recent research at Stanford University about using the ketogenic diet for depression and bipolar disorder.[14]

The ketogenic diet is simple: Eat less than 20 grams of net carbohydrates in a day. “Net carbs” means you take the total carbs and subtract the fiber. You don’t digest fiber and make it into sugar, so it doesn’t count in your carb content. This means that you can eat all the lettuce, broccoli, spinach, and other non-starchy vegetables you want. A simple plan is found in the Diabetes Solution Kit which has a complete outline and explanation of how to get started. It reverses both high blood sugar and depression.

STRESS

Joining support groups can reduce feelings of isolation and stress. You may also consider psychotherapy, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy, to help you to deal with stress and manage depression. The best way to manage stress is by connecting with others

SLEEP

Sleep is an important way to manage stress. Sometimes people stress about not sleeping and make their problem worse. Start with a regular sleep schedule, where you go to sleep and wake up at the same time every day. It seems like the best sleep schedule is 10 PM to 6 AM. This gives you good restorative sleep. Even if you are awake at night, just relax and lie there, meditating on happy things. As you lie there, your body will start to get the idea that it’s time to rest, and you will get restorative sleep. This does not mean you need to be unconscious for eight hours, because restorative sleep comes in ten- to thirty-minute intervals. During the time you are awake and resting, you will periodically have REM sleep for ten or twenty minutes. That’s restorative.

Conclusion

The relationship between high blood sugar and depression is complex and multidirectional. Understanding this connection is essential for effective management and prevention. By addressing both physical and mental health through lifestyle changes, and psychological support, individuals can improve their overall quality of life and reduce the risk of complications associated with both conditions.

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6 Great Exercises for People With Type 2 High Blood Sugar

If you have type 2 high blood sugar, regular exercise can help you manage your blood sugar, reduce stress, build muscle, and improve balance. It may even reduce the need for injectable insulin. Yet, many people with type 2 high blood sugar don't get enough physical activity. According to the World Journal of Diabetes, only about 40% of individuals with type 2 high blood sugar engage in regular exercise.

That's unfortunate, because physical activity plays a crucial role in increasing insulin action, helping with weight management, and strengthening the immune system. Exercise can also improve balance, which is important since individuals with type 2 high blood sugar and a higher body mass index (BMI) are at increased risk of falling.

Adults with type 2 high blood sugar should aim for 150 to 300 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise per week, as recommended by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Resistance training at least twice per week is also beneficial, as it helps with blood sugar control, weight loss, and heart health.

If you're looking for safe and effective ways to stay active, here are six great exercises to consider. Be sure to check with your healthcare provider before starting a new routine and increase the intensity gradually.

1. Brisk Walking for a Simple and Effective Workout

Walking is one of the easiest and most

effective forms of exercise for people with type 2 high blood sugar. It requires no special equipment beyond a good pair of shoes and a safe place to walk. A brisk pace that raises your heart rate qualifies as moderate-intensity exercise, and just 30 minutes per day, five days a week, can help you reach the recommended fitness goals.

2. Tai Chi for Balance and Stress Reduction

Tai chi, an ancient Chinese practice, involves slow, flowing movements and deep breathing. Studies show it can help improve balance, flexibility, and strength—especially important for individuals at risk of neuropathy, a common type 2 high blood sugar complication. While tai chi may not reverse nerve damage, it does enhance coordination and stability, reducing the risk of falls. Additionally, tai chi promotes relaxation, which can help lower stress-related blood sugar spikes.

3. Strength Training for Muscle and Blood Sugar Control

“I can’t say enough about the benefits of weight training, not just for people with type 2 high blood sugar but for everyone.” Resistance training is essential for maintaining muscle mass, which helps regulate blood sugar levels. Without enough muscle, blood sugar control becomes more difficult.

To incorporate strength training into your routine, aim for at least two sessions per week. This can include exercises with free weights, resistance bands, or machines. A good goal is two to three sets of 8 to 12 repetitions for each exercise, using a resistance level that challenges you.

4. Yoga for Stress Relief and Blood Sugar Management

Like tai chi, yoga is an excellent exercise for reducing stress, which is closely linked to blood sugar fluctuations. “When stress levels go higher, so do your blood sugar levels.” Yoga promotes relaxation, flexibility, and mindfulness—all of which contribute to better type 2 high blood sugar management.

The best part? Yoga can be practiced as often as you like, and research shows it may also help reduce symptoms of depression in people with type 2 high blood sugar.

5. Swimming for a Joint-Friendly Cardio Workout

Swimming is a fantastic low-impact aerobic exercise, making it ideal for people with type 2 high blood sugar — especially those with joint pain or mobility issues. The buoyancy of water reduces stress on the body while still providing an excellent workout.

For those with diabetic neuropathy, which can cause a loss of sensation in the feet, wearing water shoes can offer extra protection while swimming.

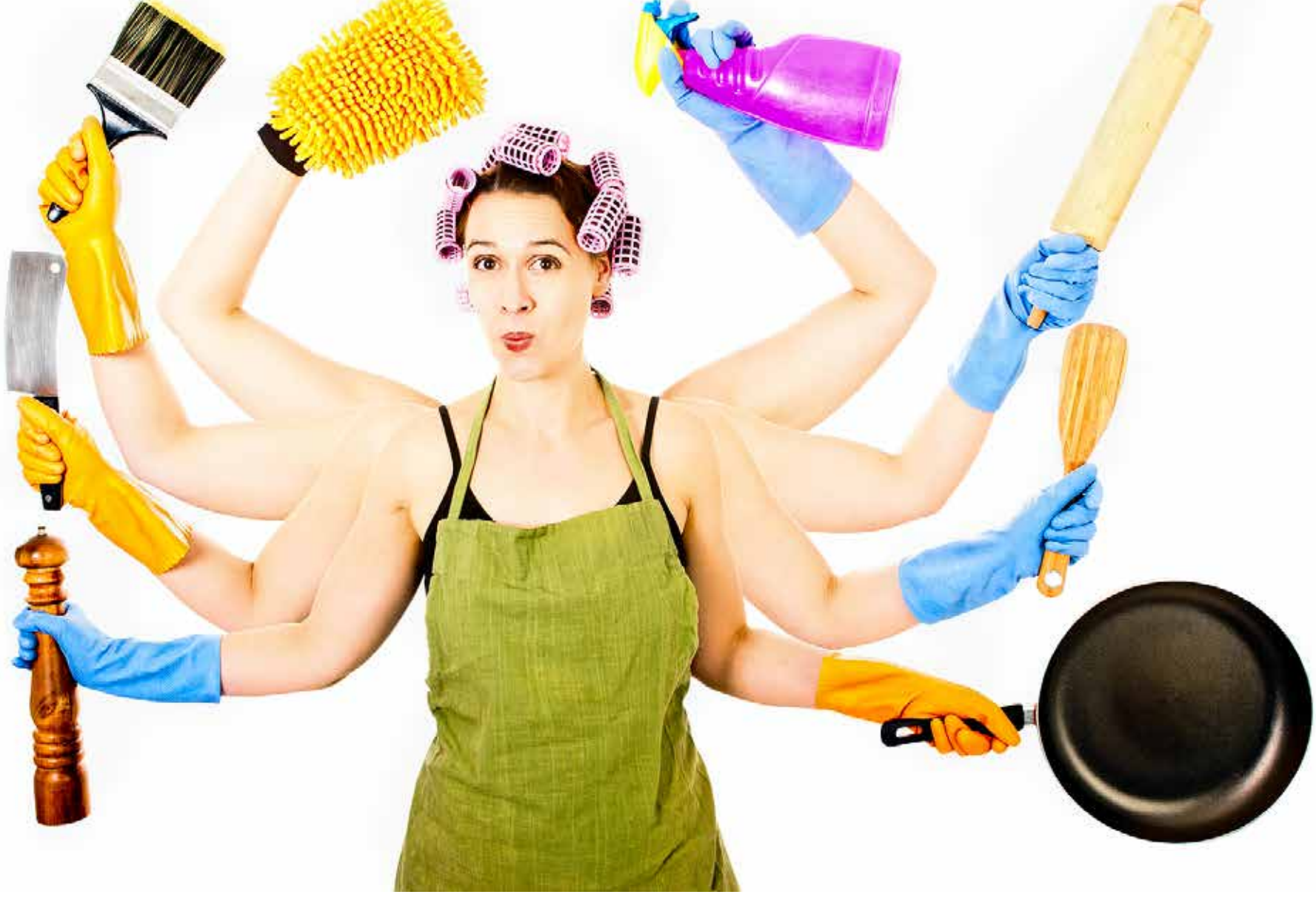
6. Cycling for Heart Health and Weight Management

Cycling, whether outdoors or on a stationary bike, is another great aerobic exercise. It strengthens the heart, improves lung function, and burns calories—helping with weight management.

Even moderate cycling a few times per week can reduce the risk of obesity, high blood pressure, and high triglycerides. If outdoor cycling isn’t an option, a stationary bike is a convenient way to stay active regardless of the weather.

Final Thoughts

Exercise is one of the most powerful tools for managing type 2 high blood sugar. Whether you choose walking, tai chi, weight training, yoga, swimming, or cycling, staying active can help you maintain balanced blood sugar levels, reduce stress, and improve overall health. Start slowly, listen to your body, and gradually increase your activity levels to find a routine that works for you.



BREAKING FREE FROM CHRONIC BUSYNESS: 8 WAYS TO REDUCE STRESS AND RECLAIM YOUR LIFE

Are You Addicted to Being Busy?

HOW OFTEN DO you respond to the question, “How are you?” with “Busy”? In today’s fast-paced world, busyness has become a status symbol, a sign of productivity and success. However, constantly being on the go without taking time to recharge can lead to elevated stress hormone levels, which increase the risk of anxiety, depression, headaches, insomnia, and even heart disease. This cycle of perpetual motion can leave you feeling drained, unable to fully experience joy or be present in the moment.

When we’re too busy, we neglect essential self-care practices like exercise, nutrition, and sleep, trapping ourselves in a cycle of exhaustion. So why do so many people, especially women, continue to

overextend themselves to the point of burnout?

The Addiction to Busyness

Busyness can be as addictive as alcohol, shopping, or work itself. It provides an escape from deeper emotions, and society often rewards it with praise and validation. Many people have been conditioned from a young age to believe that constant activity equals worthiness and success. If slowing down makes you feel guilty or unproductive, it may be time to reevaluate your relationship with busyness. Here are eight ways to break free from the stress cycle and find balance in your life.

8 Ways to Reduce Stress and Reclaim Balance

1. STOP SAYING “I’M SO BUSY”

The words we speak shape our reality. Repeatedly saying you’re busy reinforces the habit of over committing and feeling overwhelmed. Instead, be intentional about how you frame your time. Likewise, practice saying “no” when necessary, without excuses or guilt.

2. DITCH THE WATCH (OR SMARTWATCH)

Constantly checking the time can make you feel rushed and anxious. By removing the artificial pressure of the clock, you can tune into your body’s natural rhythms and prioritize what truly matters. Be especially mindful of smartwatches, which often become distractions rather than helpful tools.

3. LIMIT UNNECESSARY MEETINGS

Not all meetings are productive. If a meeting lacks clear objectives or decision-making outcomes, reconsider your attendance. Streamline your commitments and encourage efficiency in workplace discussions to free up valuable time.

4. PRIORITIZE AND SIMPLIFY YOUR TO-DO LIST

A never-ending to-do list can be overwhelming. Keep your daily list to ten essential tasks and differentiate between immediate priorities and long-term goals. Completing high-impact tasks first prevents stress from mounting unnecessarily.

5. MAKE TIME FOR FUN AND PLAY

Laughter and play aren’t just for kids—they’re essential for stress relief and creativity. Engaging in activities that bring joy improves cognitive function, strengthens relationships, and makes you more productive. As George Bernard Shaw said, “We don’t stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing.”

6. IMPROVE SLEEP QUALITY

Sleep isn’t just about quantity; quality matters too. Set a consistent bedtime, avoid screens before sleep, and limit caffeine, sugar, and alcohol in the evening. Restful sleep enhances mood, energy levels, and productivity.

7. LEARN TO ACCEPT PRAISE AND ACKNOWLEDGE SUCCESS

Breaking the cycle of busyness means recognizing your achievements instead of constantly chasing the next task. Take time to celebrate accomplishments and remind yourself that you are enough—right now, as you are.

8. CONNECT WITH YOURSELF THROUGH REFLECTION AND CREATIVITY

Reconnecting with your inner self can help break the habit of stress-induced busyness. Set aside time for quiet reflection, creative pursuits, or mindfulness practices. Whether it’s walking in nature, journaling, or playing music, these moments of presence can shift your mindset and restore balance.

Final Thoughts

Letting go of chronic busyness doesn’t mean becoming unproductive—it means being intentional about where you invest your time and energy. By incorporating these practices, you can reduce stress, improve well-being, and live a more fulfilling, balanced life.

THE POWER OF CIRCADIAN ALIGNMENT: HOW LIGHT, FOOD, AND SLEEP IMPACT YOUR HEALTH QUALITY

TODAY, I'M EXCITED to dive into the topic of circadian alignment, including circadian fasting and how light, food, and sleep act as major circadian signaling cues.

"Underrated health tip: stop eating when the sun goes down and watch your sleep transform."

This simple yet powerful concept has been life-changing for me. While it may not work for everyone in the exact same way, circadian alignment has helped me develop a healthier relationship with food, improve my sleep, and enhance overall well-being. By shifting eating habits to align with natural body rhythms, we can support metabolic health, digestion, and energy levels.

Circadian Fasting

Circadian fasting is a time-restricted eating plan that aligns food intake with the body's internal clock. This approach recognizes that our metabolism and digestive system are most active during daylight hours and begin to slow down in the evening.

Here are the core principles of a circadian diet:

- Eat during daylight hours when the digestive system and metabolism are most active.
- Stop eating after 7 p.m. to allow internal processes to wind down before sleep.
- Consume larger meals earlier in the day, with a lighter evening meal to prevent blood sugar spikes and support weight management.

This method naturally boosts metabolism, strengthens immunity, enhances sleep quality, and reduces the risk of diabetes. It's an intuitive way of eating that follows the body's natural cycles rather than imposing strict dietary rules.

For years, I did the opposite—skipping breakfast and eating heavily at night. Through trial and error, I discovered a rhythm that works better for my body, leading to improved energy, digestion, and overall well-being.

Addressing Misconceptions

Some people argue that circadian eating could be classified as an eating disorder. However, labeling any deviation from the standard American diet as disordered eating isn't accurate or helpful. While certain restrictive eating patterns can become unhealthy, intermittent fasting, when done mindfully, can be a sustainable and beneficial practice.

Previously, I practiced intermittent fasting by skipping breakfast and waiting until lunch to eat. Now, I simply shift my eating window earlier in the day while still consuming more food overall. In the past, chronic undereating negatively impacted my health. Today, I eat double the calories, prioritize micronutrients, and have a much healthier relationship with food.

Seasonal Considerations

One challenge with circadian fasting is adjusting for seasonal variations in daylight. During winter, the sun sets as early as 5 p.m., while in summer, it may remain bright well into the evening. The key takeaway isn't to eat strictly by the sunset but rather to stop eating a few hours before bedtime to allow for better digestion and deeper sleep.

Historically, humans ate more in the summer when food was abundant and naturally consumed fewer calories in the winter. Before the invention of artificial lighting, people slept longer in the colder months, aligning their habits with nature's rhythms. Today, with unlimited access to food and exposure to artificial light, maintaining these natural patterns is more challenging but still possible.

The Science Behind Circadian Fasting

Research supports the benefits of time-restricted eating, showing that consuming food earlier in the day improves insulin sensitivity and lowers the risk of diabetes. Studies indicate that glucose levels are more stable in the morning compared to the evening, meaning our metabolism functions optimally earlier in the day.

Eating with the body's natural rhythm also supports weight management. One study found that participants following a time-restricted eating plan unintentionally consumed 20% fewer calories, leading to effortless weight regulation. Additionally, aligning food intake with daylight can enhance digestion, improving nutrient absorption and reducing bloating or discomfort.

Additional Health Benefits of Circadian Alignment

Beyond metabolism and digestion, circadian fasting offers other health advantages:

LONGEVITY

Some studies suggest that fasting can promote a longer lifespan.

INFLAMMATION REDUCTION:

Research indicates that fasting from sunset to sunrise can lower blood pressure and inflammation.

HEART HEALTH:

Circadian alignment may improve cholesterol and blood pressure levels.

COGNITIVE FUNCTION:

A properly regulated circadian rhythm supports memory, concentration, and mental clarity.

The Role of Light in Circadian Health

Light exposure is one of the most powerful factors influencing our circadian rhythm. Morning sunlight exposure—without glasses or contacts—can significantly impact hormone balance and energy levels. At sunrise and sunset, we naturally receive red light exposure, which supports circadian health.

To mimic natural light cycles, I adjust my indoor lighting:

During the day, I use full-spectrum overhead lights to simulate sunlight.

After sunset, I switch to warm, amber-colored lights at eye level or lower to signal to my body that it's time to wind down.

For a complete circadian reset, spending time outdoors without screens or artificial light can be transformative. Research shows that camping for just one week can dramatically improve sleep and hormone health. While not everyone can

unplug completely, simply reducing blue light exposure at night can make a big difference.

Circadian-Aligned Nutrition

Another important factor in circadian alignment is food quality. I've shifted my habits to prioritize a nutrient-dense breakfast and lunch, providing my body with the fuel it needs earlier in the day. My meals include:

BREAKFAST

Protein-rich foods like eggs, sardines, soups, and fermented foods, plus healthy fats such as olive oil.

LUNCH

A substantial meal packed with micronutrients and protein to keep me energized.

DINNER

A light, early meal followed by hydration and herbal tea to support digestion and sleep.

This approach signals to my body that food is abundant, promoting fat-burning and muscle-building rather than fat storage.

Supporting the Nervous System

Circadian alignment isn't just about food and light—it also involves supporting the nervous system. A few simple habits that help regulate stress and promote relaxation include:

BREATHWORK:

Deep nasal breathing encourages a parasympathetic (rest-and-digest) state.

LEG ELEVATION:

Lying down with feet up against a wall for 10 minutes helps the body shift into relaxation mode.

POST-MEAL WALKS:

Walking for just 10 minutes after meals improves digestion and supports blood sugar balance.

PRIORITIZING SLEEP:

Getting enough rest prevents cravings and supports overall well-being.

Final Thoughts

Circadian alignment is a foundational aspect of health that integrates sleep, nutrition, and light exposure. By getting morning sunlight, eating nutrient-dense meals earlier in the day, and reducing artificial light at night, we can support our body's natural rhythms and enhance overall wellness.

While there's no one-size-fits-all approach, small changes can have a big impact. By reconnecting with nature's cycles, we create a lifestyle that supports better digestion, metabolism, sleep, and mental clarity. The more we align with these natural patterns, the more our bodies thrive.

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