



Why routines work for you

Routines can sometimes sound boring or repetitive. But for everyday tasks like walking the dog, preparing meals or getting children to school, they can make busy days easier to manage. A routine is a set of actions you repeat in the same order or at the same time.

When part of your day feels familiar, you have fewer small choices to make. This can help you save time, remember important tasks, and feel less stressed.

Free your mind

We make thousands of decisions a day. If it was possible to free yourself from even a few of these, wouldn't it be a relief?

By repeating the same steps, you can spend less mental energy deciding what to do next. This leaves more focus for other priorities.



Relying on routines can:

-  **Increase productivity**
-  **Improve sleep**
-  **Lower feelings of stress and anxiety**
-  **Reduce decision fatigue**

Routines can reduce your mental load and support your mental health.¹

How to build routines

Choosing to follow routines is a little more deliberate than building a habit, which is done automatically. That's why when people talk about routines, they are tied to specific actions—morning routines, workout routines, bedtime routines, etc. But how do we get there? **With intention.**

Pick an area of focus

Such as bedtime, healthy eating, managing stress or exercise.

Stack small actions

Choose what actions will go into your routine. For example, if you're managing stress, your routine's actions may include finding a quiet space, practicing breathing exercises, listening to soothing music, and writing yourself words of encouragement.

Trust the process

With practice, the routine may begin to feel easier and more natural.



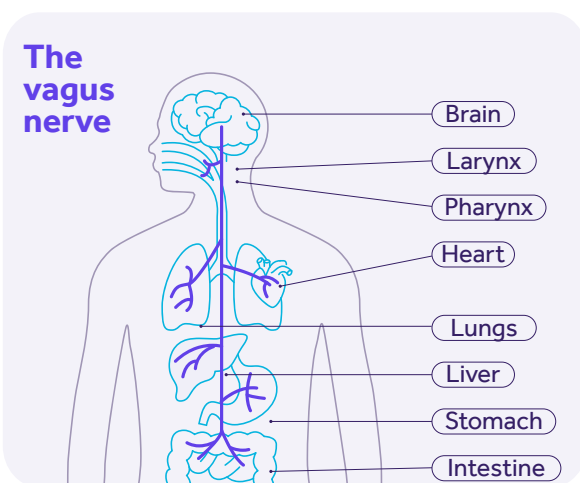
Small, consistent steps can reduce your mental load and support your physical and mental wellbeing.

¹<https://www.psych.on.ca/Public/Blog/2025/The-Power-of-Routine-How-Establishing-Daily-Habits>



The vagus nerve: How your brain and body communicate

Have you ever wondered how your brain stays in touch with your heart and other organs, like your digestive system? Meet the vagus nerve. This long, winding nerve carries signals between your brain and many organs. It plays a role in digestion, heart rate and your body's "rest and digest" response. Because it travels through the neck, chest and abdomen, it is often called the "wandering nerve."¹



Your vagus nerve affects many of your body's cardiovascular, digestive and immune functions:



Heart rate



Blood pressure



Inflammation



The release of digestive enzymes, gastric acid and bile



Contractions of the stomach and intestines

The vagus nerve plays a role in immune responses and inflammation. Ongoing inflammation is associated with a range of health conditions.

Acid
reflux

Delayed
stomach
emptying

Irritable
bowel
syndrome

Autoimmune
disorders

Metabolic
syndromes

You may see products or activities that claim to “reset” the vagus nerve. There is no simple at-home method proven to do this.

Slow breathing, regular activity, sleep and mindfulness can support relaxation and overall health, but they do not repair an injured or damaged nerve.



Deep breathing

Deep belly breathing promotes relaxation. Step away to a quiet space and try 4-7-8 breathing. Inhale through your nose for four counts, hold your breath for seven counts and exhale through your nose for eight counts.

Regular physical activity

Aim for 150 minutes per week of moderate exercise. Take a brisk walk, cycle or dance. Or spend some time in the gym for a strength-training session.

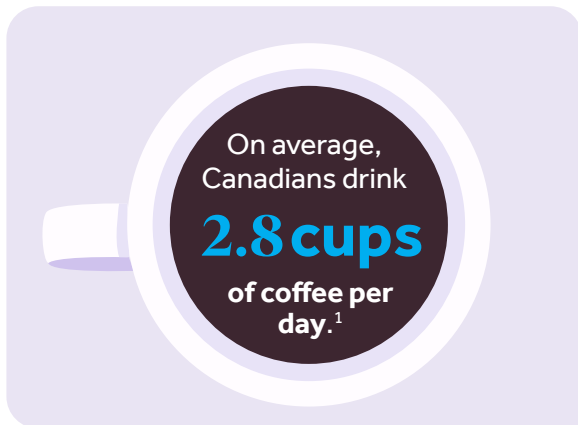
Take a mindful break

Spend a few minutes noticing what you can see, hear and feel. This can help bring your attention back to the present moment.

Simple habits such as breathing slowly, moving regularly and taking mindful breaks can help you manage everyday stress.

Before starting any new exercise routine, talk to your healthcare provider to make sure it's safe.
¹<https://www.mcgill.ca/oss/article/critical-thinking/resetting-hype-around-vagus-nerve>

Coffee: Is it good for you?



Coffee can be part of a healthy diet for many adults. It contains antioxidants, and studies have found an association between moderate coffee intake and a lower risk of some health conditions.² However, this does not mean that coffee prevents illness.

Coffee affects everyone differently. The amount you drink, what you add and how it is brewed can all make a difference. Some people may also be more sensitive to its effects.

Watch your caffeine

An 8 oz (237 mL) cup of brewed coffee has about 135 mg of caffeine on average. The amount can vary by drink and serving size. Health Canada recommends no more than 400 mg of caffeine a day for most adults.³

Caffeine may affect your sleep or make you feel nervous, irritable or unwell. If you are sensitive to caffeine, try a smaller serving, half-caf or decaf.

Watch what you add

Flavoured syrups, whipped cream and sweetened creamers can add a lot of sugar. Try a smaller size, fewer pumps of syrup, or plain milk. Check the nutrition information when it is available.

Watch how it is brewed

Unfiltered coffee, such as French press or Turkish coffee, contains oils and compounds that may raise LDL, or "bad," cholesterol. Paper filters remove much of these compounds.⁴

By choosing a serving and preparation method that works for you, coffee can remain an enjoyable part of your routine.

Try this recipe for one of the trendiest ways to drink coffee.

Magical cold-brew coffee

Serves 2 | Prep: 8-12 hours

Cold brew is steeped in cold water for several hours. It often tastes smoother and less bitter than coffee that is brewed hot and poured over ice.

Ingredients

- 3 cups water
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup coarsely ground coffee
- 3 Tbsp dark brown sugar
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon

Nutrition (for coffee brew alone)

Per serving

Preparation

In a 1 L jar, stir together the water, coffee, brown sugar and cinnamon. Cover and refrigerate for 8 to 12 hours. Strain the mixture through a fine-mesh sieve into a bowl, then pour it back into the jar for storage. To serve, fill a tall glass halfway with ice. Add the coffee until the glass is about three-quarters full, then add milk or creamer to taste.



Calories: 70 | total fat: 0 g | saturated fat: 0 g | sodium: 5 mg | cholesterol: 0 mg
total carbs: 18 g | fibre: 0 g | sugars: 18 g | protein: 0 g | potassium: 24 mg

¹<https://www.coffeeassoc.com/coffee-by-the-numbers-countdown-to-national-coffee-day/>

²<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12348139/>

³<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/food-nutrition/food-safety/food-additives/caffeine-foods.html>

⁴<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12283274/>

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