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**HEALTH & SAFETY
NEWSLETTER**

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January 2019

How to bounce back

We've all seen news images of people faced with severe adversity displaying astonishing resilience, with some appearing to cope, survive, even thrive, following a period of great trauma.

This may cause us to question our own ability to cope with major loss, as sometimes even smaller everyday setbacks such as a reprimand from the boss or criticism from a work colleague can send us reeling.

Yet research has shown that resilience, or the ability to 'bounce back', is ordinary, not extraordinary. Yes, some people seem to have resilience in bucket-loads, but it also involves behaviours, thoughts and actions that can be learned and nurtured.

When you show resilience it doesn't mean that you won't experience any distress, but the following everyday strategies will help buffer you against the inevitable setbacks in life.

7 steps to improve your resilience

1. Be happy with imperfection. Striving for perfection can lead to stress, so instead aim for 'not bad at all' or 'really quite good'.

2. Take time out. Even if it's just for 10 to 20 minutes in your frantic day, allow yourself time to do something that's just for you. Maybe read a chapter from a book, take a leisurely bath, or get out and exercise.

3. Get involved. Sign up for a course or join a club – getting involved in the community will help develop connections with others, as well as boost your physical and mental wellbeing.

4. Spend time with people who make you feel good. Some people have the ability to leave you feeling drained of energy after being in their company. They have been nicknamed 'energy vampires' by US psychiatrist Dr Judith

Orloff. So seek out supportive friends, with whom you can talk, and who can help build your confidence and belief in yourself.

5. Stay active. Good health is an important foundation for resilience, so aim for 30 minutes of moderate activity a day, even if it's cumulative.

6. Learn to listen, and be heard. Positive relationships are key to resilience, and your communication skills affect the quality of all your relationships.

7. Remember, this too shall pass. You can help build resilience by keeping things in perspective. Even during the toughest times, try to keep an eye to the future and the likelihood that circumstances will change for the better.

If you are experiencing great distress on an ongoing basis, seek professional help. ✕

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Drink more water

In air conditioning all day? This increases your risk of dehydration. Being hydrated will boost your energy and brainpower and make your workouts more effective, while a glass of water before meals will make weight loss easier.

All about **gout**



We usually associate gout with 18th century kings and port-sipping elderly gentlemen but the incidence is rising in all age groups.

Imagine waking in the night with pain in your big toe so severe that even the weight of a sheet is unbearable. This is how you might first experience an attack of gout.

"The pain felt like the worst sunburn you've ever had in your life combined with the sort of explosion of agony you feel when you bang your shin on a stone coffee table," writes gout sufferer Josh Max in the *New York Times*.

The incidence of gout has been rising since the 1960s and now affects close to 35 million people worldwide. It's most common in elderly and middle-aged men and post-menopausal women but can affect people of any age.

What is gout?

Gout is a type of arthritis caused by the build-up of uric acid, a normal waste product mostly excreted by your kidneys. We all produce uric acid but people with gout can't remove it efficiently. This means it can build up, forming needle-like crystals that accumulate in joints. Gout occurs when these crystals cause sudden and severe inflammation of the joint.

People with gout experience recurrent attacks of extreme pain, swelling and redness,

most often in the big toe joint but also in the feet, ankles and knees, and less often in the elbows, hands and other joints. Medication helps to control attacks of gout.

Is lifestyle important?

If you have gout you must pay close attention to what you eat. Certain foods are high in purines, compounds found naturally in foods that during digestion break down to form uric acid. Foods high in purines include organ meats, red meat, shellfish, some fish species and alcohol (particularly beer). Some vegetables are also high in purines but these don't seem to trigger gout attacks.

Even though it's not rich in purines, fructose (found in table sugar and high-fructose corn syrup) can increase the risk of gout flare-ups. The fructose in fruit doesn't have this effect.

Other lifestyle triggers include dehydration, too much caffeine, excessive stress, certain medications and being overweight.

Gout has a poor public image. We tend to assume that anyone with gout must gorge on rich food and alcohol but this is far from the case – even vegans get gout. While lifestyle plays a role, so too do age and genetics. ✕

To reduce your risk of developing gout:

1. **Limit alcohol (particularly beer) to one or two drinks per day, with two alcohol-free days per week.**
2. **Cut right back on sugar and refined carbohydrates.**
3. **Make sure you are always well hydrated.**
4. **Stay within a healthy weight.**
5. **Exercise at least four times a week.**



**Close to
35 million**
people worldwide are
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Make the **pool** your **training tool**

Far more than a workout for seniors and swimming groups, water workouts build muscle and increase fitness.

Water workouts don't just benefit swimmers. Athletes from runners and basketballers to boxers and tennis players are now reaping the benefits of training in water, regularly swapping gym sessions for the pool.

Exercising in water can be way more challenging than working out on land. Ever compared running through water to running through air? Water provides resistance from all angles. Being in water allows you to work on strength, speed, balance and coordination, while at the same time the water's buoyancy provides your muscles and joints with support, helping prevent injury. You can also add resistance such as aqua dumbbells and other water workout tools to increase the challenge.

Some simple water exercises you can try:

High knees sideways march

Stand in chest-high water. March your left knee up and swing your right arm forward at the same time. As your left knee comes down, march your right knee up and swing

your left arm forward. As you do this, move sideways through the water. Continue for 30 seconds in one direction, break for 15 seconds, then reverse the direction.

Rotational wake

In chest-high water, take a wide stance with your arms extended forward and palms flat together. Using your legs and hips to drive the movement, twist at your waist and drive your arms through the water, rotating right and left about 180 degrees. Continue twisting back and forth, alternating sides. Do four 30-second sets, with a 10-second break between each.

Dumbbell flies

Place your arms in front with elbows slightly bent, your palms facing each other, holding two aqua dumbbells. Squeeze your shoulder blades together while opening up your arms to the side until your palms are facing forward. Bring the arms back to starting position. Do one to two sets of 12-15 repetitions.

Swap the gym for a swim

You'll never reach optimal fitness if you just stick to a favourite activity. Doing a variety of movements that work your body in different ways is a must.

Swimming is an ideal no-impact, full-body exercise that complements almost any activity. Your muscles stretch out and elongate, whereas other sports tend to shorten muscles and collapse the skeletal system, says swim coach Steve Tarpinian. And if you're recovering from injury, water pressure forces blood deeper into muscles helping them recover, explains Tarpinian. ✕

**"Ever compared running through water to running through air?
Water provides resistance from all angles."**

Don't go breaking your **resolution**

Do you make resolutions each New Year only to abandon them soon after? You're not alone!

You promise to exercise more, drink less, lose weight, eat healthily, pay off your debt and quit smoking. All good things, but how many of us keep those promises to ourselves? It's estimated that by the second week of February, over 80% of New Years resolutions have been dropped.

5 most common reasons for giving up on resolutions:

25%

Didn't keep track of my progress.

22%

Made too many resolutions.

15%

Forgot about it.

12%

It was too unrealistic.

26%

Other reasons.

Why do some people have success?

What are their secrets? In a survey by finder.com.au, it was discovered that they:

Only make one resolution. Having too many resolutions is why 21 per cent of us fail to keep them. So pick one you feel confident about and stick with it. It's much better to stick to one than to fail at two or three because it all gets too hard.

Be specific. For example, if you want to lose weight, set yourself a target. 10kg, 5kg - set your goal and aim for it. Once you've reached your target, you can always set another if you're feeling inspired.

Keep track of progress with an app. Not keeping track of your progress can jeopardise your goals. An app can help you monitor yourself and serve as a reminder that you need to work at keeping your resolution.

Share it with friends. Once it's on social media, it's harder for you to back out. Research shows that those who keep their resolutions to themselves are more likely to fail.

Don't sweat it. Had a setback? Don't give up, simply take a break and then try again. Remember, you can set a goal at any time, not just during New Year.



The behaviour challenge

Mostly what holds us back from achieving our goals is the automatic behaviour that we've developed over time. Here are six tricks you can try to help you break unhelpful patterns:

1 You need to form a habit. "Habit formation is a behaviour change process – replacing certain behaviours with new ones," says Professor Clayton Cook from the University of Minnesota. "To do that you need to set up cues in your environment to help trigger the new behaviour." For instance, if your resolution is to make healthier snack choices, keep junk foods out of sight and leave a fruit bowl within reach – that's your cue to trigger the new healthy habit.

2 Put yourself on repeat. You might start off on the right foot at the beginning of the year but soon slip into bad habits again. The trick is to engage in the new behaviour long enough to form a healthy habit.

Repetition is an essential part of the habit-forming process.

3 Get back on your horse. It's important to remember that "relapse or going back to the old habit is a normal part of the behaviour change process," says Cook. Don't let setbacks steer you away from your path; simply tell yourself that it's a normal part of the process, then get back on track.

4 Be kind to yourself. It's time to treat yourself as you would others. Think of the kind words you use with someone you love when they make mistakes and give yourself the same treatment. Forget about self-criticism or judgement.

5 Bite size it. If you stick to one big resolution, the trick is to break it up into smaller more manageable pieces. Allow yourself plenty of time to reach each small milestone. For example, start with a brisk walk and work up to a run over time if that's your goal.

6 Write it down. Keeping a record of your resolutions, your expectations and your progress will go some way to helping you realise them, with studies showing that doing so increases the odds of achieving goals. ✕

HabitBull habit tracker

Start by setting up a 'habit' on the app. It can be anything you like, for example to drink more water, floss or eat a piece of fruit every day. You then tell HabitBull how you went and it keeps track of your progress for you. There are graphs to show you how long you keep the streak alive. Cost: Free.

"My greatest hope regarding the future rests on the mistakes I've made in the past, for those are the most effective things I've got to build with."

Counsellor Craig Lounsbrough

Desk stretches to improve posture

Sitting all day wreaks havoc on our backs and can lead to posture problems and pain – but there is a solution.

There's plenty of advice about sitting being the new smoking and the associated health perils but people in certain occupations, for example office workers or drivers, have no choice but to spend most of their day sitting down.

The importance of getting up and moving regularly is undeniable but the reality for many is that we just don't have time to do that. There is another way that you can work on posture and prevent pain and you don't even need to leave your spot. You can do this at your desk or sitting in a stationary vehicle. Dell-Maree Day, a biomechanics and posture expert and founder of *The Invisible Exercise* has devised this technique.

1 Move your back off the seat back and sit on the front half instead. Your feet should be flat on the floor and directly under your knees.

2 Look straight ahead and sit up tall with relaxed arms to restore the natural curve of your spine. In this position, you should find your eyes level with the top third of your monitor.

3 Practise Day's invisible breathing technique. Breathe in and as you breathe out think 'sternum through towards your spine'. (Your sternum is the long flat bone in the centre of your chest.) As you think this thought you will feel your deep abdominal muscles doing their job, flattening and narrowing your waist. Repeat this five to six times every hour. "Within days you will feel your abs strengthen and your posture will already have improved," says Day.

"These postures will activate every one of your muscles so you will breathe, sit, stand, move and exercise better, transforming your posture and body shape," Day says.



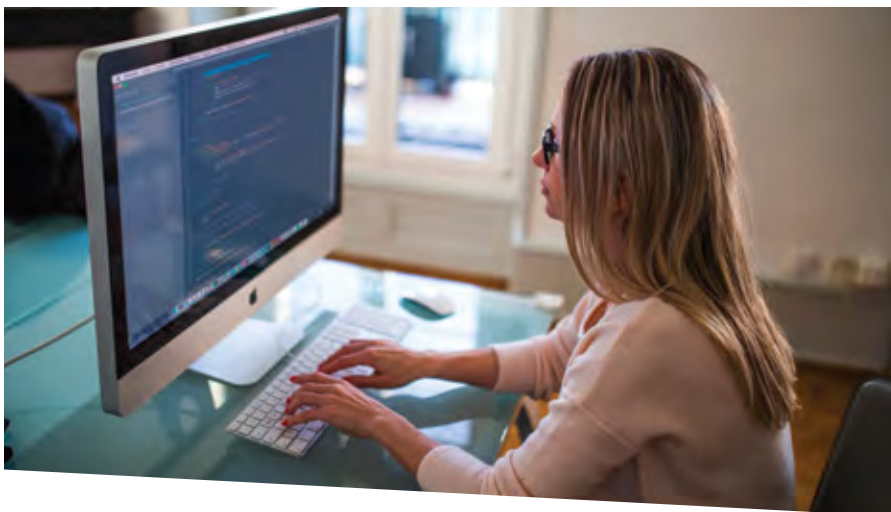
Posture work

Alexander Technique

With the help of an Alexander Technique practitioner, you learn to be aware of your posture, and to change poor habits into good ones, in order to improve movement. This technique is effective in improving lower back pain, too. To find a practitioner, go to austat.org.au

The Feldenkrais Method

Learn to improve the efficiency of your body's movement and posture, and to increase your consciousness of how it works. Feldenkrais helps to decrease pain, and improve wellbeing and physical functioning. Go to feldenkrais.org.au ✕



Ask an expert about ...

82%

of us who use plastic over Christmas can take up to six months to pay it off.

Your financial health

Q I spent more than I expected to this Christmas. Are there any good tips to bring down my credit card debt quickly?

A It can happen to the best of us, says Maria Bekiaris, deputy editor of *Money* magazine. If it's any comfort, 82 per cent of us who use plastic over Christmas can take up to six months to pay it off, according to *MoneySmart*.

To pay your debt off as quickly as possible you need to pay above and beyond your minimum repayments. Cut back any unnecessary spending and even sell any unwanted gifts or other things you no longer need, and direct every spare cent towards that debt so you're not paying a fortune in interest.

If the debt is just too big to handle and pay off quickly, you might consider a balance transfer offer. Once you check the balance transfer rate and period, make sure you find out if there is a balance transfer fee, what the annual fee is on the credit card, and what rate you'll be charged when the promotional period ends. These can all affect the cost of repaying your debt.

See moneymag.com.au for more tips on getting rid of debt. ✕

App of the month

Noisli

Block out annoying noises, get quickly into the zone and reduce stress, promises the *Noisli* app. This is a background noise generator for

working and relaxing. Ambient sounds can help relieve anxiety, increase productivity or relax you while reading or before going to sleep. *Noisli* has a variety of sounds to choose from and you can mix and match them as you like, such as steady rainfall with chirping birds, or a crackling fire with coffee shop chatter. Available for iOS and Android. ✕

Cute kittens improve work performance

Internet surfing isn't all bad news for work productivity.

Research from Japan has found that those people who habitually look at videos and photos of kittens, puppies and other cute animals fare better in tests of concentration and motor-skills.

The researchers concluded that it was seeing vulnerable creatures that led people to behave with more care, so maybe having a puppy picture handy can be beneficial to office performance? ✕

Tip: Avoid bright lights before sleep

Exposure to bright lights in the evening, whether from overhead lights or the light from your mobile or tablet, will disrupt production of the sleep hormone melatonin. One way to block blue light is by using a pair of amber-tinted glasses in the evening. This allows melatonin to be produced as if it were completely dark, helping you sleep better. Another way to block the blue light from your mobile or tablet is by using an app such as F.lux (for iOS) or Twilight (for Android). ✕

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News Bites



Even a 10-minute walk is good for the brain

Think it's not worth your while going for a 10-minute stroll? Think again.

A study published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* found that a single, brief spurt of very easy exercise can immediately alter how certain parts of the brain communicate and coordinate with one another, as well as improve memory function. The findings showed that exercise can change people's brains and minds right away, without requiring weeks of working out. ✕

Does creatine increase testosterone?

Creatine is a substance found naturally in muscle cells that helps your muscles produce energy during heavy lifting or high-intensity exercise.

Taking it as a supplement is very popular among athletes and bodybuilders and it is generally regarded as safe to use. Creatine is also marketed as a testosterone booster, a claim based on the results of three short studies. According to Examine.com, there are 10 other studies that reported creatine had no effect on testosterone levels, and these studies tended to last for far longer.

The verdict? Creatine may enhance athletic performance but is unlikely to affect testosterone. If you are concerned about your testosterone levels, says Examine.com, make sure you get enough sleep, exercise, kilojoules, vitamin D, magnesium and zinc. ✕

1

THING YOU CAN DO TODAY



Change the food you see first

If you've decided to eat healthier in 2019 and want to avoid the temptation of delicious treats, one simple step can shore up your resistance – making sure they are not readily visible.

When you come home from work starving, you're far more likely to eat the first thing you see on the counter, in the cupboard or in the fridge. Studies on healthy kitchen makeovers have found that when we make tempting foods less visible we eat far fewer of them.

If you have leftovers for instance, put the healthy leftovers in clear containers in the fridge and wrap the unhealthy ones (cake or last night's pizza) in aluminium foil. Doing so means you are three times more likely to choose the healthy option.

Hide the biscuit jar

Watching your weight but frustrated by the constant supply of tempting biscuits in the office? Make sure that any office biscuits, chocolates or lollies are kept out of sight, put away in a cupboard. Better still, make sure healthy treats like nuts and fruit are available and visible. ✕

EAT SMARTER

Mangoes

To many of us mangoes are a tasty treat but others might be wary of a fruit so sweet and delicious.

Surely mangoes can't be good for us, too?

One large mango has about 38g of sugar. Sounds a lot, but this isn't like processed sugar because the fibre in mangoes slows down the rate at which your body will absorb it. In fact, consuming mangoes has been shown to help regulate blood sugar.

You won't want to miss out on the mango's health benefits. Mangoes are packed full of over 20 essential nutrients and numerous beneficial phytochemicals (plant compounds), making them a valuable, nutrient-dense food.

Mangoes are particularly rich in vitamins A and C. Working together, these vitamins can boost your immune system, fight free radicals (which can damage your body's cells), and promote healthy skin.

High in water and fibre, mangoes can also help if you have a sluggish digestive system, particularly if you experience constipation. An average-sized mango can have up to 40 per cent of your daily fibre requirement.

Tip: A perfectly ripe mango should 'give' a little from the pressure of your fingertips. If it's still a bit unripe place it in a paper bag for a couple of days. ✕



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