

WELCOA\* | AUGUST 2022

# WELL BALANCED<sup>o</sup>

RE-PRIORITIZING

*Self-Care &  
Community  
Care*

**HOW TO  
GAUGE YOUR  
FITNESS LEVEL**

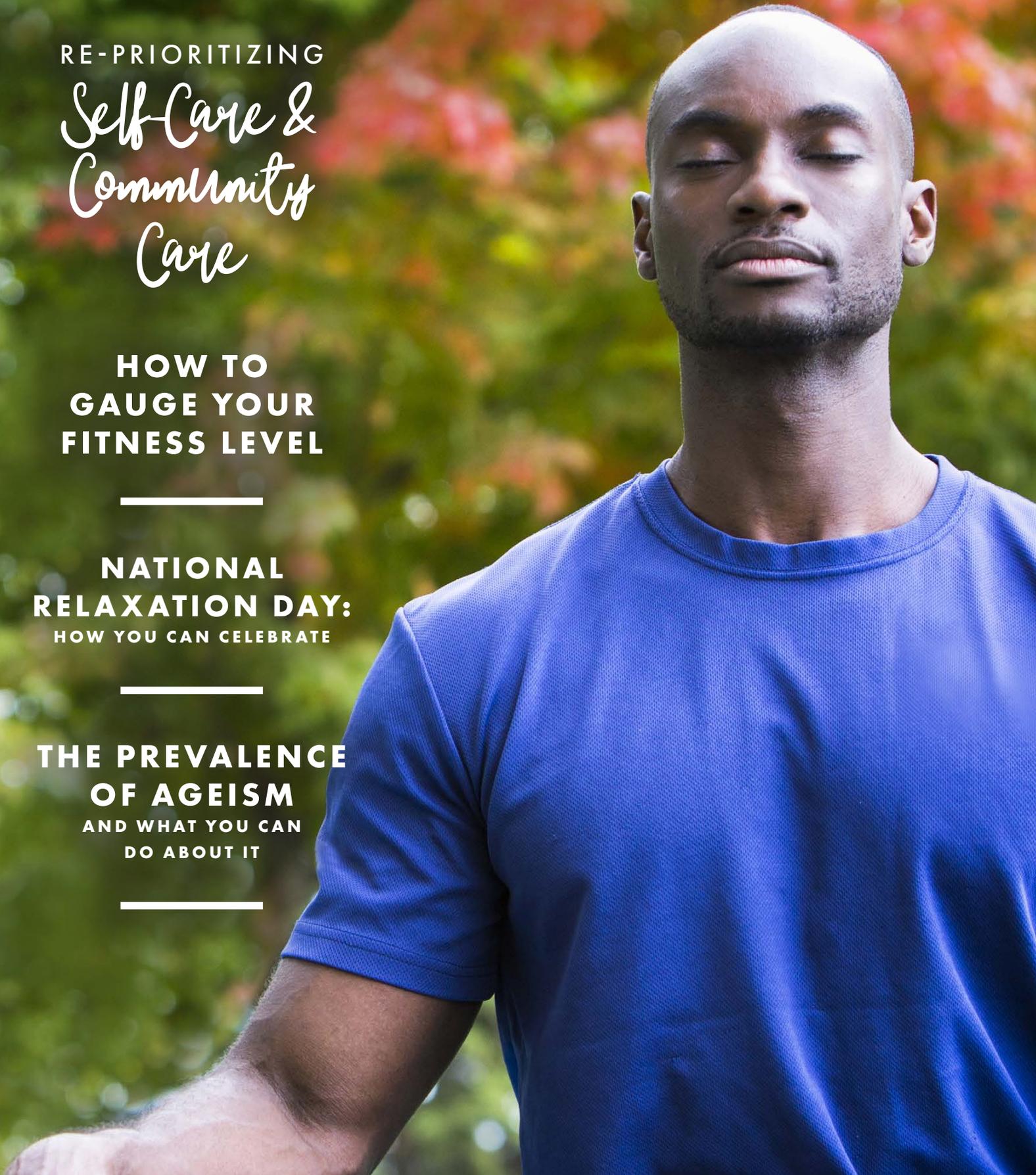
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**NATIONAL  
RELAXATION DAY:  
HOW YOU CAN CELEBRATE**

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**THE PREVALENCE  
OF AGEISM  
AND WHAT YOU CAN  
DO ABOUT IT**

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# Easy Pickled Red Onions

Is your garden overflowing with red onions? Quick pickle them! Pop these tangy, bright pink onions onto sandwiches, salads, bowls, or tacos. They add a delicious, vinegary crunch to everything they touch.

½ cup water

1 Tablespoon sea salt

1 Tablespoon sugar

½ cup white vinegar

1 medium red onion

## DIRECTIONS:

Fill a small to medium-sized pot with water, salt, and sugar. Bring to medium heat and stir until the salt and sugar dissolves, about 2 or 3 minutes. Once they have fully dissolved, turn off the heat. Add white vinegar to the pot, and stir to combine. Set aside and let cool.

Cut the ends off of a red onion, and remove the peel. Cut the onion in half from top to bottom. Then slice the halves into very thin half-moons.

Add the sliced onion to a clean glass jar. Use your fingers to really press all of the onion inside. Then carefully pour the cooled vinegar solution over the sliced onions in the jar. Make sure the onions are totally submerged.

Cover with a lid and refrigerate. The pickled onions will be ready to eat in about an hour, but they taste best after at least four hours. Store in the refrigerator until you're ready to enjoy them.

**SERVINGS:** Serves 10 people. Makes about 2 cups of pickled red onions.

## NUTRITION INFO:

Calories 11, Fat 1g, Carbs 2g, Protein 1g, Sodium 699mg

## Did You Know?

Red onions contain twice as many antioxidants as any other type of onion. They are high in flavor and low in calories.

The sulfur compounds in red onions have been shown to be protective against certain cancers. Plus, these antioxidants and compounds fight against inflammation, which can help to decrease triglycerides and reduce cholesterol. That is helpful in warding off heart disease.



*From the Kitchen of* **CADRY NELSON** // Cadry is the writer, photographer, and recipe creator at Cadry's Kitchen, a vegan food & lifestyle blog. She shares plant-based comfort food classics that are ready in about 30 minutes. Cadry has been featured on Today, NBC News, Mashable, Reader's Digest, Shape, and Huffington Post. For more, visit [cadryskitchen.com](http://cadryskitchen.com).

# No-Cook Meal Ideas

## WHEN IT'S JUST TOO HOT FOR THE STOVE

Phew! The summer heat can be downright blistering this time of year. When the humidity is so thick you could cut it with a knife, the last thing you want to do is turn on the stove.

Here are some of my favorite no-cook meal ideas for when it's simply too hot for the oven. No fire required!

By the way, these dishes are also handy to remember if the power goes out, because of a late summer thunderstorm.

### TORTILLA PINWHEELS

Tortilla pinwheels are similar to a wrap, but rolled up like sushi and sliced.

Slather homemade or store-bought hummus onto tortillas. Not a fan of hummus? Use pesto instead. Then top it with chopped lettuce, shredded carrots, diced bell pepper, or any veggies you like.

Roll it up tightly. Then cut it into even, circular bites. You can enjoy them right away, or store them in a container in the fridge for quick lunches.

### CHICKPEA SALAD

Chickpea salad is similar to tuna salad, but meatless.

Drain a can of chickpeas (also known as garbanzo beans). Then break them up with a food processor or fork. You want them to have a rough, flaky texture.

### Make a Caprese-Inspired Salad

Tomatoes don't get better than they are right now!

Slice them in wedges to enjoy in a salad along with cubed avocado, torn basil, and a pinch of salt. Dress with balsamic vinaigrette.

The flavor profile is similar to a Caprese salad, but creamy avocado replaces mozzarella for a bump of potassium, fiber, and folate.



Add diced celery, pickles, a spoonful of vegan mayo, a dab of stone-ground mustard, and a pinch of celery seed, dried dill, and salt.

Serve it on bread or crackers. Or wrap it up in a romaine leaf.

### SPRING ROLLS

Spring rolls are so fun to make and eat! Plus, the filling options are rife with possibilities.

Quickly dampen a rice paper wrapper with water. Then load it up with slices of bell pepper, shredded cabbage, bean sprouts, lettuce, cucumbers, fresh mint, and/or cilantro. For protein, add Teriyaki-style baked tofu. Fold the sides around the fillings, and roll it up like a mini burrito.

Serve with a peanut sauce for dipping.

### LEAFY GREEN SALAD

While produce is at its yearly best, take advantage of it with a dinner-sized salad.

Fill a bowl with romaine, sugar snap peas, carrots, cucumbers, cauliflower, broccoli, or whatever veggies strike your fancy.

Finish with your favorite salad dressing.

### EGGY TOFU SALAD SANDWICH

You won't believe how tofu can taste like an egg salad sandwich. And unlike eggs, no boiling is required.

Simply crumble vacuum-packed tofu in a bowl. Mix it with a dollop of vegan mayo, a squeeze of mustard, diced onion, pepper, and a tiny pinch of turmeric for color.

Finish with a sprinkling of black salt, also known as kala namak. (It's a sulfurous salt that lends an eggy flavor. Look for it in Indian grocery stores.)

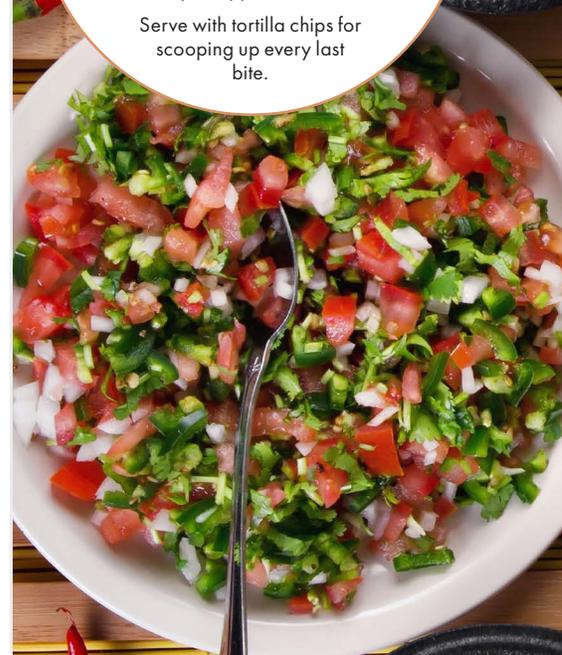
Scoop the tofu salad onto bread for sandwiches or stuff it in a pita.

### No-Cook Appetizers

Feeling snacky? There are a whole lot of no-cook appetizers that are great for noshing too!

Think pico de gallo, guacamole, olive tapenade, cowboy caviar, or salsa. You can choose to make a tomato-based salsa, or get sweet on fruit with mango, peach, or pineapple salsa.

Serve with tortilla chips for scooping up every last bite.



**About CADRY NELSON** // Cadry is the writer, photographer, and recipe creator at Cadry's Kitchen, a vegan food & lifestyle blog. She shares plant based comfort food classics that are ready in about 30 minutes. Cadry has been featured on Today, NBC News, Mashable, Reader's Digest, Shape, and Huffington Post. For more, visit [cadryskitchen.com](http://cadryskitchen.com).

# HOW TO FIND A PRIMARY CARE DOCTOR THAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU

Do you only visit the doctor or a healthcare professional when you're sick? Do you often skip or completely neglect regular screenings and check-ups? If so, you're not alone. Before the pandemic, about 40 percent of Americans reported skipping a recommended medical test or treatment<sup>1</sup>, and since the pandemic, that number has increased to 47 percent.<sup>2</sup>

Proper self-care means taking care of yourself every day, not just when you get sick. To be sure, annual check-ups and preventive care are essential components to staying healthy throughout your life. Preventive care includes health services like screenings, check-ups, and patient counseling that are used to prevent illnesses, diseases, and other health problems, or to detect illness at an early stage when treatment is likely to work most effectively.

You and your doctor should work together to determine your best check-up and screening plan. You don't have a primary doctor?

Not to worry! In fact, you can take this as

an opportunity to find a doctor that best fits your situation and needs. Here are some considerations when selecting a new doctor.

**Confirm your insurance plan is accepted and learn the costs if it's not.** Most insurance plans cover the entire cost of procedures like immunizations, cancer screenings, and blood tests, however, it's still ideal to ensure your doctor is covered under your insurance provider's network. Visit your insurance provider's website to find a list of physicians and healthcare providers covered under your plan. If you can't find this information, contact your company's HR representative. Or, if you have a healthcare provider in mind you can always call them and ask (have your insurance card handy so you can provide your plan's details). Your health care insurance provider most likely has a function on their website listing all in-network physicians in your area.

If the provider you want to see is out of your plan's network, call or visit your insurance provider's website to get clarification on what will and won't be covered. You don't want to get hit with any unexpected bills.

**Consider your location and schedule.** Would you need evening or weekend appointments to accommodate your work schedule? If so, it's important to call and ask if the provider you have in mind offers appointments outside of the typical workweek. You'll also want to consider how long it takes to get to the office from your work or home. If it's an hour each way and you have a tight schedule you may want to look for something closer.

**"Interview" your list of candidates.** There are some basic questions you'll want to ask your list of potential healthcare providers. Create a list and document each provider's answers. This will help you gauge how they stack up. Your questions should include:

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.norc.org/NewsEventsPublications/PressReleases/Pages/survey-finds-large-number-of-people-skipping-necessary-medical-care-because-cost.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.singlecare.com/blog/news/healthcare-survey/>

- » How soon could I be seen for an appointment?
- » What's your rescheduling and cancellation policy?
- » Am I expected to pay anything at the time of my visit?
- » Do you offer evening or weekend appointments?

Also, take note of how the staff answers your questions. Are they friendly or do they seem irritated and rude? Do they answer your questions with enough detail or are they short and vague? The friendliness and thoroughness of the frontline staff is a good indicator that the entire healthcare team aims to serve their customers with best-in-class care.

### Investigate your list of candidates.

There's a lot you can quickly check online to ensure you're selecting the healthcare provider that's right for you. For one, you can check if a physician is board-certified by visiting [www.certificationmatters.org](http://www.certificationmatters.org). Unlike a medical license, board certification is a voluntary process. It demonstrates a physician's commitment to continually developing medical knowledge. You can also learn about licensing background and disciplinary information on the [DocFinder physician directory](#).

Even if you've been putting off regular check-ups, remember that it's never too late to start routine screenings and appointments. Healthcare visits combined with a healthy diet, regular exercise, and reducing stress can go a long way in maintaining and improving overall health.

## Ask the Expert...

**I know my doctor can tell me what screenings I need, but is there any other way to learn what types of preventive screenings I need?**

You can quickly learn what preventive services you need by visiting [healthfinder.gov/myHealthfinder](http://healthfinder.gov/myHealthfinder). Just enter your age, sex, and pregnancy status and the tool will tell you. You can also use My Healthfinder to find out about the services recommended for a loved one.

WELL BALANCED™ has an impeccable reputation for providing trustworthy information to improve your well-being and create healthier work cultures. Our network of physicians, dietitians, wellness professionals, and more are here to answer your crucial health questions.

*Have a question?* Ask our experts by going to [welcoa.org/expert](http://welcoa.org/expert). If your question is selected we will contact you directly with your answer and it will be featured in an upcoming issue.

*All questions are handled in confidence and will not, without prior consent, be disclosed or used by WELL BALANCED™ or its contributors.*



### YOU MUST COME FIRST!

In order to take care of others in your life, you must first take care of yourself, and that includes making that yearly appointment with your primary care doctor.



# RELAX

Well!

Fun & Easy Ways to Celebrate National Relaxation Day



August 15th is National Relaxation Day. You're probably familiar with the tried-and-true relaxation techniques like taking a bath, meditating, getting a massage, etc. These are indeed effective and healthy ways to relax. However, there are a variety of quick and straightforward ways you can enjoy some calm that you may have never heard of or considered. Here are a few to get you started:

**Find a quick and convenient "sanctuary."** Having a place you can quickly escape to for relaxation is critical when you're feeling the stress of everyday life. Good examples include your porch or patio, a garden, or a big tree you can sit under. Find a place that is quiet and calm and designate it as your sanctuary. Take at least five to 15 minutes every day to relax there—read, take some deep breaths, etc.

**Try these quick wins for your hands and feet.** A little TLC for your hands and feet can go a long way in terms of relaxation. In fact, one recent study found that a five-minute hand massage coupled with aromatherapy could help relieve anxiety.<sup>(3)</sup> Try it: rub a scented cream (lavender, eucalyptus, or citrus are good options) into your palms. Then massage in between your fingers and into your palms, using your thumb and pointer finger to apply a little pressure.

You can also show your feet a little love and relieve some tension by simply rolling the balls of your feet under a tennis ball (or any small, firm ball will do). Apply gentle pressure where you find a tender or tense spot.

**Download an app.** Yes, it's true that most of us need to take a break from our phones, social media, and news feeds—too much time on our devices can increase stress and anxiety levels. However, there are some game apps that have been specifically designed to help reduce anxiety and promote relaxation, and better yet, you can have fun while doing it! SuperBetter, Personal Zen, and Colorfy are some popular science-back apps that can help you release stress at the tap of your finger.

**Give your pet a pat.** Researchers at Washington State University found that petting a dog or cat can relieve stress in just 10 minutes. Students in the study who interacted with cats and dogs had a significant reduction in cortisol, a major stress hormone.<sup>(4)</sup> Petting your furry friends is good for their health too. Bonus!

**Reach out to a friend.** Catching up with a friend can lift your spirits and provides an opportunity to seek and share advice, both of which can ease your mind. Schedule a lunch or dinner with a trusted friend.

Take time on August 15th to unwind and pamper yourself. And of course, keep the self-care and relaxation strategies going strong every day!

<sup>(3)</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6037090/>

<sup>(4)</sup> <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/2332858419852592>

# SUPER SIMPLE WAYS TO GAUGE YOUR *Fitness Level*

Many of us associate fitness with our weight or being able to run a race or complete some sort of physical challenge. However, there's much more to health and fitness than your physical appearance and what you see on the scale. Here are some key signs that can help you gauge your fitness level.

**You can do everyday activities with ease.** If you can take the stairs, carry groceries, do household chores, etc. with ease it's a good sign that you have a healthy level of fitness. On the other hand, if you're out of breath or feel extremely fatigued after performing these types of everyday activities, it could be an indicator that you need to increase your activity and/or visit your doctor.

**Your resting heart rate and other key health metrics are in a normal range.** Physical activity can help keep critical health indicators, such as your resting heart rate (RHR), in a healthy range. Your RHR is the number of times your heart beats in one minute while you're resting. For most adults, a RHR between 60 and 100 beats per minute is normal, but the lower end is better.<sup>(5)</sup> An

athlete or more active person may have a resting heart rate as low as 40 beats per minute. Moreover, a normal or low RHR is associated with lower or normal blood pressure while higher RHRs are associated with high blood pressure and higher body weight. You can check your RHR by placing your finger on your neck and counting how many pulses you have in one minute. Fitness watches are also great at measuring and tracking your RHR.

**You consistently exercise and can do a variety of workouts.** If have a healthy level of fitness, it's likely that you can exercise most days of the week—whether that means taking walks, swimming, doing yoga, etc. and that you don't need two or three days to recover from the previous day's activity (unless that activity was extremely rigorous). Further, people with a healthy fitness level can switch the type of workout they perform with relative ease. For example, you can swim one day and do weight training the next.

**You fall asleep easily and stay asleep.**

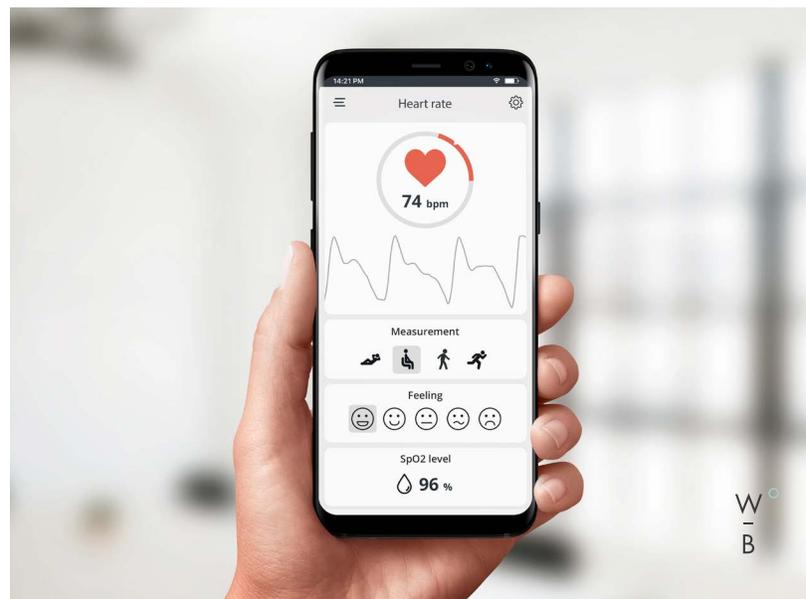
If you're regularly active, chances are that you sleep well. In fact, research from Johns Hopkins reveals that people who engage in at least 30 minutes of moderate aerobic exercise may see a difference in sleep quality that same night.<sup>(6)</sup>

**You're able to manage and cope with stress.** There's a clear connection between physical fitness and mental health. Exercise has been shown to help reduce anxiety, depression, and negative mood and by improving self-esteem and cognitive function.<sup>(7)</sup> If you're regularly exercising you may notice that you're able to manage stress and have a more positive outlook on life.

Remember, having a healthy level of fitness doesn't necessarily equate to being able to run a marathon or meeting societal body ideals. Rather, fitness can come in the form of being able to live a healthier life and being able to go about your regular daily activities with ease and confidence.

<sup>(5)</sup> <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/fitness/fitness-basics/target-heart-rates> <sup>(6)</sup> <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/exercising-for-better-sleep>

<sup>(7)</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1470658/#i1523-5998-8-2-106-b2>



# HOW YOU CAN AVOID & Stand Up to Ageism



Although we may perceive older adults as having it easy as they transition into retirement, the reality is that aging Americans face many challenges. Having enough money in retirement funds, physical limitations, and declining health are just a few examples of things many older Americans may face or think about. And on top of all these challenges, many older adults encounter prejudice and hurtful stereotypes.

Ageism is prejudice or discrimination on the grounds of a person's age. In fact, ageism has almost been normalized in American culture. You may not think twice about saying something like, "I'm having a senior moment" when you forget something or referring to complete strangers as "grandma" or "grandpa" because they're elderly.

## ACTING ON AGEISM

We should be doing all we can to eliminate ageism, as it only hurts an already vulnerable community. When you try to recognize and eliminate any of your own possible conscious or unconscious ageist behaviors, you're

enabling a better aging experience in your community. Indeed, we can all play a part in helping older adults continue to be valuable and active participants in their community.

Here are some practical ways you can stand up and combat ageism in your community:

- 1. Seek and spread awareness.** With any type of discrimination, it's critical to understand the problem and why it exists. An internet search for "why does ageism exist in America" or something similar can help you learn about the subject (stick with reputable sites like .orgs or .edus for your information). Share your knowledge with friends and family.
- 2. Point it out.** If you hear something ageist, consider speaking up. You don't have to be controversial or demeaning about it, either. Rather, you can say something like, "I used to say the same thing, but I didn't realize I was being ageist." This approach calls the behavior out without placing direct blame on the person.

- 3. Treat older adults with the respect you would want.** We're all getting older, so think about how you'd want to be treated in your 70s and 80s and beyond. You probably wouldn't want people talking to you like you are a child who doesn't understand things. Talk to older adults just like you would a co-worker or friend. They'll let you know if you need to repeat something or speak louder, but don't make assumptions straight out of the gate.

Addressing ageism can come down to small details that make the difference between an age-friendly community that promotes a positive perspective on aging, and one that doesn't. We are all aging, so take the time to recognize what can improve the lives of older populations today and for generations to come. The tips above are a great place to start.