

# Wellness Advocate

## Want to Be a Peak Performer? Learn How to Fight Fatigue!

Many of us regularly burn the candle at both ends. This includes working full-time, caring for family members and meeting countless other obligations. How many times have you said, "There's not enough time in the day!" Often, our "solution" is to reduce the amount of time we sleep. But that can cause fatigue. Broadly defined, fatigue is "a feeling of weariness, tiredness or lack of energy," according to the National Institutes of Health.

### Fatigue can be from mild to severe and has many causes:

- ▶ Self-imposed sleep deprivation
- ▶ Sleep disorders
- ▶ Working at night
- ▶ Insomnia



### When you are fatigued, you may experience:



- ▶ Daytime drowsiness
- ▶ Mood swings and increased irritability
- ▶ Stress, anxiety and loss of coping skills
- ▶ Lack of interest in socializing
- ▶ Weight gain
- ▶ Reduced immunity to disease
- ▶ Less ability to think creatively
- ▶ Reduced productivity

Much attention has been given to the safety consequences of fatigue, particularly in industries such as transportation. Research reveals that fatigue can impair performance consistent with being at or above legal blood alcohol content levels. In addition, fatigue can cause microsleeps. Microsleeps are brief episodes of sleep lasting only a few seconds at a time and can result in accidents and death.

HealthSmart's Wellness Coaches are available to help you develop a plan to fight fatigue. [Click here to learn more!](#)



### What you can do to fight fatigue:

- ▶ Keep track of your sleep and rest patterns
- ▶ Create a bedtime ritual that helps you to wind down
- ▶ Manage personal stress
- ▶ Exercise daily
- ▶ Eat a healthy diet
- ▶ Stop smoking
- ▶ Avoid alcohol near bedtime

The bottom line is that to be peak performers on the job and at home, we need 8-10 hours of sleep each night. The National Sleep Foundation has some great tips on getting a good night's rest. In addition, Dr. James Maas has written an excellent book on sleep called *Sleep for Success*. It discusses the power of sleep and how even getting one extra hour of sleep each night can positively impact your health. **Sweet dreams!** 

# Practice Yoga for a Better Night's Sleep!

If you have a hard time getting to sleep at night, incorporating yoga into your life can help, especially if your insomnia is stress-related. Yoga has proven to be a great stress buster and can offer you relaxation techniques, including breathing exercises and meditation. Yoga nidra is a deep relaxation methodology that can be particularly helpful for people who have trouble sleeping.

## Other Benefits of Yoga

Perhaps one of the most studied areas of the health benefits of yoga is its effect on heart disease. Yoga has long been known to lower blood pressure and slow the heart rate. A slower heart rate can benefit people with high blood pressure, heart disease, and stroke. Yoga was a key component to the heart disease program designed by Dean Ornish, MD. This was the first program to partly reverse heart disease through lifestyle and diet rather than surgery. On a biochemical level, studies point to a possible anti-oxidant effect of yoga. And yoga has been associated with decreased cholesterol and triglyceride levels, as well as a boost in immune system function.

Yoga has been practiced for more than 5,000 years, and currently, close to 11 million Americans are enjoying its health benefits. Most Westernized yoga classes focus on learning physical poses, which are called asanas. They also usually include some form of breathing technique and possibly a meditation technique as well.

Some yoga classes are designed purely for relaxation. But there are styles of yoga that teach you how to move your body in new ways. If you have never done yoga before, click here on how to get started.



## Recipe: Springtime Pasta



### Ingredients

- 3 carrots, peeled and cut into thin strips
- 2 medium zucchini or 1 large zucchini, cut into thin strips
- 2 yellow squash, cut into thin strips
- 1 onion, thinly sliced
- 1 yellow bell pepper, cut into thin strips
- 1 red bell pepper, cut into thin strips
- 1/2 cup black olives
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 1 tablespoon dried Italian herbs or herbes de Provence
- 1 pound whole-wheat farfalle (bowtie pasta)
- 15 cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese

### Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 450 degrees F.
2. On a large heavy baking sheet, toss all of the vegetables with the oil, salt, pepper, and dried herbs to coat. Transfer half of the vegetable mixture to another heavy large baking sheet and arrange evenly over the baking sheets. Bake until the carrots are tender and the vegetables begin to brown, stirring after the first 10 minutes, about 20 minutes total.
3. Meanwhile, cook the pasta in a large pot of boiling salted water until al dente, tender but still firm to the bite, about 8 minutes. Drain, reserving 1 cup of the cooking liquid.
4. Toss the pasta with the vegetable mixtures in a large bowl to combine. Toss with the cherry tomatoes and enough reserved cooking liquid to moisten. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Sprinkle with the Parmesan and serve immediately

(Makes six servings)

### Nutrition Information

Serving Size: 1 serving | Calories: 362 | Total Fat: 9.5 g | Sodium: 199.4 mg | Sugars: 4.7 g | Protein: 16.4 g | Total Carbohydrate: 53.5 g