

AUGUST WELLNESS

THE FRESH START CHALLENGE



As we enjoy the last month of summer, thoughts and preparations may be beginning to turn towards the fall and the beginning of a new school year. A “fresh start” sounds enlightening and invigorating around this time of year.

An article in The New York Times by Tara Parker-Pope, “*Try the Fresh Start Challenge*”, suggests a 10-day challenge which can help you reset. You may even find that picking one or two of the challenges is a good place to begin. For the full “refresh”, click the link below. Here is a brief outline of each of the 10 challenges.

The Fresh Start Challenge:

Day 1: “*How Are You Really?*” Take a moment to really think about how you are doing. Find a word that describes how you are feeling. Labeling emotions has shown to be good for your health.

Day 2: “*Let’s Have an Exercise Snack!*” Take a few minutes for a quick burst of exercise, such as 10 pushups, 20 jumping jacks, a few minutes to jump rope, or anything you enjoy.

Day 3: “*Try a Fierce Meditation.*” Try the 4-minute meditation by Kyodo Williams, which is a meditation that allows you to show up with whatever is happening in the present.

Day 4: “*Ask a Connection Question!*” In a conversation with someone today, reveal an opinion, feeling or experience that you have emotions about. This form of self-disclosure can help you build stronger bonds with others.

Day 5: “*Resist Your Tech.*” Try to separate from your phone through steps such as not checking it for the first half-hour you are awake, leaving it at home while you take a walk during lunch, or by not having it near you at the table during dinner.

Day 6: “*Meditate On the Go!*” Try a meditation technique of tracing your hand with your other hand. (Click on the link below to the article below to find an instructional video of this technique.)

Day 7: “*Brush Your Way to a New Habit.*” Add a touch of wellness into your tooth-brushing routine. Try scheduling yoga after you finish, do calf raises while you are brushing your teeth or use the time to stay in the moment by focusing and meditating while you brush.

Day 8: “*Take a Gratitude Photo.*” Pick something or someone from your surroundings to take a “mindful” photo of: a pet, a tree, a flower or an object that intrigues you. Take time to really look at and appreciate the object or person in the photo.

Day 9: “*Hug (Just a Little) Longer!*” Really hug someone. Stay present in the hug, and just when you are ready to let go of the embrace, stay close for just five seconds longer.

Day 10: “*Give Yourself a Break!*” Ask yourself what you need at this moment. Take time to be as nice to yourself as you are to others. Practice self-compassion.

To learn about each challenge in depth, click here to reach the article from The New York Times:

[**The Fresh Start Challenge**](#)