



Re-Awaken

Thrive

MARCH TOOLKIT



Re-Awaken

“It is possible to experience an awakening in this life through realizing just how precious each moment, each mental process, and each breath truly is.”

– Christy Turlington

March is the beginning of spring!

Take time this month to realize the growth of new life and ideas around you. Remember the word re-awaken as a reminder that each day is new and different than the last. It is your responsibility to appreciate each day as it comes. So enjoy today! Can you think of some ways to release the old and outdated while bringing in the new?



Re-Awaken Your Positive Thinking:

Positive thinking is a well-known concept and can sometimes feel cliché. However, numerous scientific studies show physical and mental benefits of positive thinking. A positive mindset can lower the risk of hypertension, depression and other stress-related disorders.

- **Start the day with positive affirmations** – Positive self-talk is an important part of positive thinking. It's the easiest thing you can do to improve your mood.
- **Focus on the good things** – Have you ever let one bad thing ruin your whole day? Instead, try to focus on good things, no matter how small they might be.
- **Turn failures into lessons** – Failing is a part of life. Rather than beat yourself up for a mistake, appreciate the fact you're still learning and growing.
- **Don't hold on to resentment** – Learn to let things go. Staying angry or upset about something will only hurt you and your health.
- **Learn to say no** – No one knows your schedule or abilities better than you do. If your plate is too full, then it is okay to say no; it is not your personal responsibility to make everyone happy.



Re-Awaken your senses for National Nutrition Month!

In this age of technology, life is filled with constant distractions. With continual drain on your body and energy, it's no wonder the following statement is true:

Your senses are lazy. Don't take that too personally – it's just a sentence, after all. And you're hardly to blame. One can only spend so much time being 100 percent present in everything.

Think about it, when was the last time you had a meal that you really enjoyed? Did you appreciate the presentation, the atmosphere, the smells? Or do you just eat without really thinking?

It is so easy to do the latter; in fact, it's typically what's expected of us nowadays. However, there is a benefit in eating with all of your senses: food tastes better, conversation is more enjoyable and we actually may eat less.

How do you re-awaken your senses and start really enjoying your foods? Here are a few simple activities to start making this practice a habit.

1. Table time. When was the last time you actually ate your meal at a dinner/breakfast table with proper utensils? It's been ages, right? Make it a habit to eat at least one meal a day (or week) at the table with a proper set up. Include your family in this tradition as well. This helps to make eating an event versus just an activity to accomplish as fast as possible.

2. What's your flavor? Many of us eat our foods without actually tasting them. This activity helps to make that mental connection between food and flavor. Next time you're eating a meal, physically write down all of the tastes you're experiencing. Remember the six tastes are salty, sweet, bitter, sour, umami (savory) flavor and fat. Be aware of what is actually present versus what you remember. Memories play a HUGE part in overall taste, and sometimes our memories override what is actually there.

3. Proper plating. Did you know that we eat with our eyes as much as we do our stomachs? Unfortunately, if we eat a lot of fast food, the overall presentation actually isn't very pleasing. The fast food color palate is known for its brown, beige and yellow colorings... not very appetizing, if you ask me. Next time you eat, plate like an artist. What colors would you like to have on your plate? What looks pretty or nice next to each other? Maybe a nice green salad with some bright blue blueberries, and some rosy-red flank steak? Food is as much an art as it is sustenance, so have fun with it.

4. Hold your nose. Flavors are 80 percent smell, while only 20 percent is actually taste. It is possible to truly enjoy the taste of foods by doing something really simple – just hold your nose! Try it for a few meals and see what tastes stand out that you did not expect; is this food as tasty as you thought? Are there other undertones of flavor you weren't expecting? Become aware.

5. Play with your food. Textures are very apparent in all of our foods – from the crispiness of iceberg lettuce, an apple or chips to the chewiness of meat. And not all textures are the same. Think of the crisp texture as an example – the wet crisp you get from an apple is different than the dry crisp you get from chips or potatoes. Experiment with your food; touch it, what is apparent prior to preparing the food versus after you prepare the food? What mouth-feels do you like or not like?



There are many other exercises for you to do to become more aware, these are just a start. Now, put a fork in it and start waking up your senses!

Sleep Awareness Week: March 8-14

Do you excessively yawn during the day? Do you need two or more cups of coffee to get through your day? You might be suffering from a lack of sleep. During March 8-14, try these tips for better sleep in honor of National Sleep Awareness month.

1. **Stick to a sleep schedule of the same bedtime and wake-up time, even on the weekends.** This helps regulate your body's sleep pattern; you will have much easier and deeper sleep.
2. **Practice a relaxing bedtime ritual.** This routine will let your body know it is time to start winding down to go to sleep. Get away from sounds and bright lights, including electronic light. This can help you fall asleep faster and sleep deeper.
3. **Exercise daily.** If you mostly sit at a desk all day, your body is not going to feel tired because it didn't have enough activity during the day. A little exercise can boost your energy throughout the day and make it easier to fall asleep at night. Try walking around the office at lunch or while you're on the phone. Even a little bit helps!
4. **Avoid alcohol, cigarettes and heavy meals in the evening.** Alcohol, cigarettes and caffeine can disrupt sleep. Eating big or spicy meals can cause indigestion, making it hard to sleep. If you can, avoid eating large meals for two to three hours before bedtime. Try a light snack 45 minutes before bed if you're still hungry.
5. **If you can't sleep, go into another room and do something relaxing until you feel tired.** Scientific studies show limiting activities in the bedroom strengthens the association between sleep and bed.

