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## THE BENEFITS OF MINDFULNESS AND MEDITATION

### SUPPORT FROM ABLETO BY OPTUM

The term “mindfulness” is defined by the [American Psychological Association](#) as an awareness of one’s internal states and surroundings. Mindfulness is awareness of one’s internal states and surroundings. Mindfulness can help people avoid destructive or automatic habits and responses by learning to observe their thoughts, emotions, and other present-moment experiences without judging or reacting to them. This state of being is effective in several therapeutic interventions, including mindfulness-based cognitive behavioral therapy. Mindfulness can also be cultivated in many different practices such as yoga or tai chi but much [research](#) has focused on mindfulness meditation.

The goal of mindful meditation is to improve mental well-being by training attention and awareness. This practice helps you gain more control over your thoughts and feelings, promoting overall mental health and specific abilities like calmness, clarity, and concentration. There are key benefits from utilizing mindful meditation including, reduced rumination (cycling thought patterns that cause worrying), reduced stress, a boost to working memory functions, and less emotional reactivity. The [Mayo Clinic](#) has found that mindful meditation can be used to help individuals who struggle with stress, anxiety, pain, depression, insomnia, and high blood pressure.

### WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF MINDFULNESS EXERCISES?

There are many simple ways to practice mindfulness. Some examples include:

- **Pay attention.** It’s hard to slow down and notice things in a busy world. Try to take the time to experience your environment with all of your senses – touch, sound, sight, smell and taste. For example, when you eat a favorite food, take the time to smell, taste and truly enjoy it.
- **Live in the moment.** Try to intentionally bring an open, accepting, and discerning attention to everything you do. Find joy in simple pleasures.
- **Accept yourself.** Treat yourself the way you would treat a good friend.
- **Focus on your breathing.** When you have negative thoughts, try to sit down, take a deep breath, and close your eyes. Focus on your breath as it moves in and out of your body. Sitting and breathing for even just a minute can help.

You can also try more structured mindfulness exercises, such as:

- **Body scan meditation.** Lie on your back with your legs extended and arms at your sides, palms facing up. Focus your attention slowly and deliberately on each part of your body, in order,

from toe to head or head to toe. Be aware of any sensations, emotions or thoughts associated with each part of your body. To try this technique, listen to this [30-Minute Body Scan for Beginners](#).

- **Sitting meditation.** Sit comfortably with your back straight, feet flat on the floor and hands in your lap. Breathing through your nose, focus on your breath moving in and out of your body. If physical sensations or thoughts interrupt your meditation, note the experience, and then return your focus to your breath. To try this technique, listen to this [Guided Sitting Meditation \(20 min.\)](#).
- **Walking meditation.** Find a quiet place 10 to 20 feet in length and begin to walk slowly. Focus on the experience of walking, being aware of the sensations of standing and the subtle movements that keep your balance. When you reach the end of your path, turn, and continue walking, maintaining awareness of your sensations. To try this technique, listen to this [Guided Walking Meditation for Daily Life](#).

ThriveOn's Emotional Wellbeing Solutions provide personalized support options for you and your family. These solutions include a comprehensive digital suite of tools and resources such as [Talkspace](#) and the [Self Care by AbleTo](#) app through [liveandworkwell.com](#). To view all available Emotional Wellbeing Solutions resources head to [BeWell.franklincountyohio.gov](#).

For parents and caregivers, ThriveOn and the Franklin County Cooperative are excited to offer access to [Bloom: Supporting You in Growing Kids' Mental Well-Being](#). This free and confidential resource is specifically designed for busy working parents and caregivers. Bloom includes a series of digital courses and videos aimed at helping you foster mental well-being in the children in your care. To begin your journey with Bloom [CLICK HERE](#) and register your account using code **BLFC01**.



## COOKING FOR MENTAL WELL-BEING

### FOODS THAT BOOST MOOD

It's widely recognized that nutrition plays a crucial role in physical health, but it also significantly impacts our mental and emotional well-being. [Studies](#) show that a diet rich in fruits and vegetables can support a positive mood. Additionally, omega-3 rich fats, fiber-rich whole grains, fermented foods, proteins, and dark green vegetables are notable for promoting mood balance and well-being.

Below, you'll find five mood-boosting recipes to get you started:

1. [Blueberry baked oats](#) - Blueberries are rich in antioxidants and folate, which support the production of serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine—key brain chemicals involved in mood regulation. Oats provide a steady source of energy, helping stabilize mood and blood sugar levels throughout the day.
2. [Green smoothie](#) - Bananas offer tryptophan, an amino acid necessary for creating serotonin, often called the "happy chemical." They also provide vitamin B6, which helps convert tryptophan into serotonin.
3. [Avocado & black bean eggs](#) - Eggs are rich in protein, vitamin D, and B12, and contain choline, which supports the nervous system and mood-regulating brain chemicals. Avocados provide healthy fats and vitamin B5, which supports the adrenal glands, especially beneficial during stress.
4. [Stir-fried broccoli with coconut](#) - Magnesium, found in abundance in dark green vegetables like broccoli, is known as the "calming mineral." It nourishes the nervous system and supports brain chemicals like GABA, crucial for sleep and relaxation. Magnesium also aids energy creation, bone health, and the immune system.

### 5. [Salsa verde salmon with smashed chickpea salad](#)

- Fatty fish like salmon are rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which have anti-inflammatory properties and may help improve mood and reduce depression. This dish also provides protein and fiber from chickpeas.

### 6. [Lean turkey burger with sweet potato wedges](#)

- Turkey is rich in tryptophan, which supports mood, while sweet potatoes are a great source of fiber and B6, aiding digestion and brain function.

### WANT TO TRY A MOOD BOOSTING RECIPE FOR FREE?

ThriveOn has partnered with YellowBird Food Shed to offer a unique meal kit and cooking demonstration experience, completely free! Join Maddie Bidwell, Registered Dietitian, and Benji Ballmer, Owner of YBFS, to learn how to make asparagus pasta with fresh spring alliums and a savory cannellini bean sauce.

- **Sign up by TOMORROW, May 24th** to receive a free meal kit with the ingredients to make asparagus pasta.
- Receive your free meal kit the week of May 29th.
- Watch the pre-recorded cooking demo that will be sent out on May 29th.
- Cook along and enjoy a delicious and healthy meal with your family!

**Cost:** \$0.00 (Enter coupon code **THRIVEON2024** at checkout)

- One recipe box is provided per household each year.
- Watch the cooking demo and complete the feedback survey to receive a code for a second free box in 2024.

**Delivery Dates:** Meal kits will be delivered on May 29th, 30th, and 31st. You will receive an email the week of deliveries with more information, including your delivery date. The pre-recorded cooking demo link will be shared with you on May 29th, 2024. Your meal kit will contain all the necessary ingredients and a recipe card for easy reference. Prepare your produce, click the demo link, and create a wonderful meal!

[Order Meal Kit](#)

[Registration Instructions](#)

# ATTEND AN UPCOMING WEBINAR

Join us every month for a series of engaging educational webinars brought to you by Franklin County Cooperative and ThriveOn, featuring a diverse range of topics including nutrition, financial support, health-related discussions, and much more from our trusted vendors.

EAP Grp. Sessions

### How to Simplify Your Life

*Friday, May 31 from 1-2pm*

Explore personal barriers to simplicity by examining inner beliefs, pressures, and excuse-making. Learning includes defining values, decluttering, streamlining, fostering supportive relationships, and creating an action plan.

[CLICK TO JOIN >](#)

[DOWNLOAD THE WORKBOOK >](#)

SWACO

### Recycle Right at Home

*Wednesday, May 29 at 12pm*

We understand the confusion that recycling can bring. Fear not! We're here to provide you with the answers you need to feel confident when recycling. By taking just a few minutes to recycle the right way, you help reduce pollution, contribute to cleaner water, conserve limited natural resources, support our economy, and reduce central Ohio's reliance on landfills.

[REGISTER NOW >](#)

CancerBridge

### Staying Food Safe at Summer Parties

*Thursday, June 6th at 11am*

Join Chef Michael Carnahan and Registered Dietitian Cameron Stauffer in their presentation as they discuss essential food safety practices to ensure your summer gatherings are not only fun but also free from any potential health risks, so you can savor every moment with peace of mind.

[REGISTER NOW >](#)



## 5 Tips to Meal Prep For Success

*These 5 simple tips can be achieved in just a few minutes to [set your week up for success!](#)*

### 1. Cook your [grains](#) ahead of time

Prep grains for the week in 30 minutes, boiling quinoa or brown rice and storing in an air-tight container in the fridge for added heart-healthy whole grains to your meals.

### 2. Wash and prep produce

Cut and wash veggies like bell peppers, snap peas and carrots, placing them in Ziploc containers for easy grab-and-go lunch fillers. Wash and cut berries like strawberries for another quick grab!

### 3. Create grab-and-go breakfasts

[Overnight oats](#) and [smoothies](#) are easy for grab-and-go breakfasts! Prep fruits and veggies in airtight bags in the freezer for a smoothie that you can drop in your blender or freeze your smoothies and thaw them in the fridge overnight!

### 4. Prep proteins in bulk

Choose 1 or 2 proteins for the week and cook right away. Chicken breasts can be shredded, cubed or left whole for different dishes while ground turkey can be used in tacos, soups, or pasta dishes. Store in the fridge until ready to use.

### 5. Craft nutritious snacks

On a cookie sheet lined with wax paper, add circles of melted semi-sweet chocolate and top with nuts, berries, seeds or any other ingredients you fancy. Pop in the freezer and pull one out for a nutritious and satisfying snack during the day.

## Upcoming Events

- May Yellowbird [registration](#) closes May 24<sup>th</sup>
- [Register](#) now for the Non-Diet Approach to Health Healthy Lifestyle Program. A 3-week class running Thursdays, July 11-25 from 5-5:45PM

## May Recipe [Meal Prep Chipotle Bowls](#)



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Schedule a nutrition counseling session with Maddie by visiting [this link](#).