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## Meal Planning Will Save You Money

Do you wander the grocery store aisles wondering what you might need, or do you use a checklist from a well-thought-out meal plan? The latter can save you money and time, have you eating healthier, and possibly help you lose weight. It's not complicated. Simply write down the meals you want to make over the next week, identify ingredients, and create your list. Try the new approach this week, and then compare your food bill this week to the one from last week. You may be shocked at the savings, and more so with 52 weeks of savings! Meal planning can give you more discipline to eliminate impulse buying of foods you can do without. Hint: Design meals and list ingredients clearly on 3x5 index cards. Each week, choose seven cards and make a grocery list with those ingredients.

## Match Stress Management Techniques to Symptoms

Identify how your body responds to stress. Then use the stress management techniques most likely to help. Anger management techniques won't help you fall asleep if worry is what's keeping you awake at night. Instead, consider meditation or yoga. Keep a diary to track positive effects of stress management techniques you use, and if a technique works, don't stop using it. Make the stress management technique a regular part of your health practices.

## Do You Need a Social Media Break?

Could you stand to be away from all your social media apps for a week? You may reap positive mental health benefits that include less anxiety and depression and increased mental well-being. That's what 154 research participants experienced after abstaining from social media of any kind for seven days. Participants were randomly chosen, but each previously used social media an average of eight hours a day. How much time do you spend on social media? Another study identified 46 harms from social media use, most being some psychological harm or impact. The point of taking a week's break isn't quitting altogether but gaining awareness of the impact and the benefits that can come from moderation. Source: <https://www.bath.ac.uk/>.

## Grow Food for Fun and Savings

With the cost of food out of sight, can you possibly save money growing some of your own food? Any small space can help decrease your food bill, but some enthusiasts claim a 10-foot-by-10-foot plot (dirt or pots) can grow \$700 worth of fruits and vegetables over a season! With a bit of plastic (creating what's called a "hoop house"), you can extend the growing season. To give it a try, search for "small space gardening" information. Secondary benefits include teaching children self-reliance, eating healthier, saving money, family togetherness, and fun. Learn more: <https://www.motherearthnews.com/>.

# EAP

Employee Assistance Program

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