

THE SEVEN DAY PLAN

*Stress Less and
Boost Your Energy
In Just 10 Minutes Per Day*



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Introduction to The Seven Day Plan

Want to live to one hundred, and feel more energetic, vibrant and happy?

Stress less. Eat more plants. Breathe deeply. Move more.

Cherish your loved ones.

Meditation, yoga and deep breathing turn down the genes that produce stress hormones. Gratitude helps you to cherish and appreciate the people in your life. Coupled with a diet that supports your health, this plan puts you on the road to better health.

The recipes and meal plan are plant-based, because people who eat more plants live longer and have lower rates of heart attacks, cancer diabetes and obesity. Plant-based eating includes vegetables, beans, nuts, fruits, and whole grains. It's easier than you think.

GETTING STARTED

These simple methods cost nothing, can be done anywhere and anytime and won't disturb anyone else.

Try one each day. Doing them all produces a synergy effect. What do I mean? You'll notice that when you eat well you'll feel more energetic and vibrant. You'll want to move more each day. If one exercise resonates strongly with you, pursue it first.

I hope that this plan sparks your interest for healthy living. Keep your eyes on stopfeelingcrappy.com for more ideas, recipes and tips.

I am including a bonus seven day meal plan and a few extra recipes to help you find a better diet.

Here's to your health!

And don't miss your bonus at the end.

Jessica Blanchard, Registered Dietitian, Yoga Teacher, Ayurvedic Practitioner

“the biggest health and wellness nerd you'll ever meet”

Contact me with your feedback and questions — jessica@stopfeelingcrappy.com

Day 1: Plan A Week of Healthy Breakfasts

Want to start your day out right?

Begin with a healthy boost with just five minutes of preparation.

These two oatmeal recipes take less than five minutes to prepare, cost very little, can be prepped the night before, and made in larger batches.

And they are packed with whole grains, antioxidants, healthy fibers, protein and fats....This is all that you need to start your day with a boost of energy. Okay, maybe a latte will help too.

Oatmeal lowers your cholesterol and blood pressure, normalizes blood sugar, and improves intestinal problems like IBS. The high fiber content can help with long term weight control.

If you want to save time during your busy week, triple this recipe to make enough for six days.

POWER PORRIDGE (2 SERVINGS)

ingredients

- 1 cup whole oats
 - 1 cup milk (your favorite nut milk - soy, almond, coconut, hazelnut)
 - 1 cup water
 - 1 chopped apple
 - 2 tablespoons chia seeds
 - 1 teaspoon cinnamon powder
 - 2 tablespoons ground flax seeds
- Choose a few toppings: blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, walnuts, almonds

preparation

1. Mix the first six ingredients (up to flax seeds) in a medium sized saucepan. Heat on medium until the mixture boils gently, then turn to low heat and let simmer 5-10 minutes.
2. Turn off heat, transfer to two bowls. Top each with one tablespoon of flax seeds, a handful of fruits and a handful of nuts.



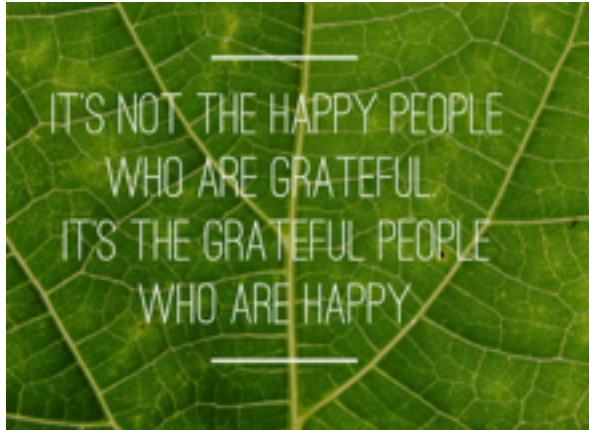
EASY OVERNIGHT OATS (2 SERVINGS)

Mix the ingredients listed above except for the fresh fruit (apples, berries, etc.) into a large mason jar. Shake well. Refrigerate overnight. In the morning top with fresh fruit. Divide it into two small (12oz) jars for portability.

Your healthy breakfast is ready. And you can roll with your day!

Day 2: Start Your Gratitude Practice

Start your day with acceptance, thanks and gratitude.



You'll see how this one change in your thinking will impact your day. And your life.

Study after study has proven how gratitude makes us happier, less depressed, optimistic, and more connected to others around us. It even makes us more likely to perform healthy activities and acts of generosity. (page 153).

Gratitude makes us more joyful, enthusiastic and physically healthier while reducing destructive impulses like greed, envy resentment and bitterness.

Gratitude even makes us live longer. It's true. A study at Yale published in 2002 found that those with the most positive attitudes lived an average of 7.5 years longer than those with the most negative attitudes.

HOW TO DO IT

Find a quiet, comfortable place to sit.

Think for a moment about your life and what you have to be grateful for. Focusing on both the good and the more challenging aspects of your life. What is one thing that you are most grateful for? It can be a person, pet, or a group of people.

Some days, challenge yourself to focus on something troubling. Look for some aspect of good or potential future learning from this person or situation.

Try to think of things that have happened over the past day or week. If you always think about the same thing like your mom or child, over time it will have less impact. You can think of an aspect of a loved one from the past twenty four hours.

The challenge is to keep new feelings of gratitude pouring out.

Or think of different people who have helped you. Spend time considering how they've contributed to your life and well being. When you've finished, try this exercise with people who have hurt you.

Pay attention to the small things. It helps you to develop a greater sense of appreciation and present moment awareness. Over time you'll notice how this simple daily practice transforms your perspective.

Write down your gratitude list each day.

Day 3: Learn to Breathe Deeply

Your simple tool for releasing stress. It costs nothing and you are always doing it. When you breathe deeply, you change your body from fight or flight stress response to rest-and-digest response. You'll feel more relaxed and clear headed.

Breathing deeply through the nose increases nitric oxide levels. Nitric oxide expands our blood vessels, increasing blood flow and decreasing arterial plaque growth. Deep breathing also activates the vagus nerve and is a simple way to slow down aging and prevent damage to the heart (page 47, See Why Kindness Is Good For You by David Hamilton PhD for a detailed discussion of the proven benefits of deep breathing, meditation, compassion and kindness). IT also reduces levels of inflammation, increased our immunity thus protecting us from disease.

BREATHING PRACTICE

Find your comfortable, quiet place. Start with your gratitude practice from Day 2.

Position

Use a cushion under your hips so that you can let them relax.

Note: If your knees are higher than your hip bones, you should elevate your pelvis/hips until they are higher than your knees.



Close your eyes.

1. Body awareness. Notice how your body feels. Do a mental scan, starting with the top of your head, down your neck, your shoulders, arms, back, hips, legs, and feet. First experience what your body feels, then try to release any areas of tension.

2. Breath awareness Notice your breath. Trace the feeling of the air as it first touches your nostrils, tracing it down into your lungs, then trace it as it leaves. Do this five times.

3. Breath exercise. Then place your hands at the sides of your ribs. Your pinky will touch your bottom rib. Breathe into your hands, so that they spread out to the side.

Then place one hand on your heart center (sternum) and one at the bottom of your rib cage. Breathe into both your hands slowly, tracing your breath. Do this five times.

Rest your hands on your thighs.

4. Equal breathing. Count your inhale for four to five seconds. Count your exhale for four to five seconds. Repeat ten times.

5. Extended exhale. Inhale for four seconds and exhale for eight seconds (or counts). Repeat this fifteen times.

If you'd like to have something to regulate your counts, there are many metronome apps online.

Day 4: Start A Meditation Practice

Meditation is more powerful than you think. Meditation, yoga and deep breathing turn down the genes that produce stress hormones.

Do you think mediation is painfully hard? And that your mind is too busy to try?

Meditation is like learning any new activity - learning to ride a bike, swim, paint or sew. In the beginning it is a struggle. You fight your mind. You want to jump out of your skin.

With practice, you'll notice changes. Your mind won't rebel as much. You might even look forward to sitting. And outside of meditation, you'll find it easier to think before you react. You feel less stressed, more relaxed and happier.

MEDITATION PRACTICES

There are many ways to practice meditation. We'll start simply. Using the breath as the focal point for mediation is a method that bridges many different disciplines.



Start with the gratitude and deep breathing practices from days 2 and 3. These practices prepare your mind and body for a short sitting practice.

Meditation

Have a timer or a clock nearby. You can set the timer on your phone so you don't have to think about how long it will take you.

Set your timer for five minutes. Press start.

Focus on your breath. Follow each inhale and follow each exhale. You can count each inhale and count each exhale.

When you notice that your mind has wandered off, bring it back to your breath. Without judging or condemning yourself.

Notice "Oh I was thinking." Then come back to your breath.

Keep doing this, even if in five minutes you bring it back five hundred times.

Over time it gets easier.

Day 5: Try These Simple Yoga Moves

For the rest of the week, we will build up a very simple yoga practice. This will allow you to move a little bit without a class or even a yoga mat.

Stand with your hand by your sides, your shoulders relaxed, and your feet together.

Inhale and raise your arms



As you slowly inhale, raise your arms above your head, so they are level with your sternum, and tilt your head back without jamming your neck.

Think of lengthening your arms to your fingertips and growing from the top of your head.

Try to inhale so that when you finish inhaling, you are just finishing reaching up with your hands.

Exhale as you fold forward towards your legs.



Start to exhale, and slowly bend forward. Try to hinge at your hips and keep your spine lengthened. Bend your knees if you feel any pressure in your lower back.

Think of bringing your ribs towards your thighs to get your hips to hinge.

When you are folded as far as you can, relax your neck.



Inhale and return to an upright position with your arms lifted above your sternum.



As you start to inhale, lengthen from the top of your head and open your arms to the side.

Pull your belly button towards your spine as you return to an upright position.

Exhale and lower your arms to your side.



Repeat this sequence five times. Move with the pace of your breath, trying to breathe slowly.

Day 6: Practice Your Downward Dog

You've seen your dog do it. This simple move called Downward-facing dogs does wonders for your back, shoulders, and legs. We'll add Downward Facing Dog into the routine we started yesterday.

You don't need a yoga mat, but you should be on a wood or tile floor. Carpets can be slippery on your hands or feet.



How to do Downward-facing dog



Place your hands shoulder-width apart. Your middle finger should point straight forward and all your knuckles should touch the floor.

Step one foot and then the other back (about 3-4 feet). Your heels should be slightly lifted, and your knees may be slightly bent. The important part is for your butt to be in the air and your spine to lengthen. It will help to imagine your lower belly getting hollowed out towards your spine. And think of lifting your hips (or butt) diagonally up and away from your hands. This helps to lengthen your spine (follow the direction of the arrow).

Take five breaths.

Child's Pose



Next put your knees down and rest your hips back on your knees. This is called child's pose. Take five breaths in child's pose, then return to downward-facing dog. Place your hands next to your shoulders, press into your hands, lift your hips by first coming onto your knees, then lifting your hips.

Day 7: Put It All Together

Imagine a string of beads. There are individual beads which are the postures, and your breath is the string that unites the postures. Focus on breathing deeply through your nose with each move. Today we add one simple move that is an extension of your spine.



We'll introduce one simple move to get you to extend and open your spine when you inhale. To do this you lift your head thinking of a string pulling you forward from the top of your head. As you lengthen your head, draw your shoulders in the opposite direction, towards your hips. Then draw your belly in to help to lengthen your spine. Activate your legs by lifting up on your kneecaps.

FOLLOW THESE STEPS



1. *Inhale* - Raise your arms.
2. *Exhale* - Bend forward.
3. *Inhale* - Lift your head and lengthen your spine.
4. *Exhale* - flatten your hands, step both feet three to four feet back, as you lift your hips up and back. Take five breaths in down dog.
5. *Inhale* - Step your feet forward towards your hands, then lift your head and lengthen your spine, coming to your fingertips or put your hand on your shins.
6. *Exhale* - Fold forward into your legs.
7. *Inhale* - Raise your head and torso, reach up through your fingertips.
8. *Exhale* - lower your hands to your side.

Repeat this sequence five times.

Establish Your Routine

Now you have a simple set of practices which will help you to be healthier and happier. None are big changes. But it is important to start to make a few small additions to your lifestyle. These are proven to help you to live longer and happier.

Make this a community effort by getting your friends and family on board.

Don't you want all your loved ones to thrive?

Decide on a time and a place to practice them.

Take your list to the grocery store. Prepare your healthy breakfasts.

Make an appointment in your schedule for your practices.

Respect your limits. Treat your self-care time as sacred.

Your health and happiness are waiting for you.

P.S. If you want more plant-based meal ideas keep reading for your *Bonus Seven Day Meal Plan*.

Seven Day Meal Plan

Meal	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Breakfast	Power Porridge apple and walnuts	Power Porridge blueberries and pumpkin seeds	Power Porridge banana and berries	Power Porridge berries and almonds	Power Porridge with berries and pecans	Blueberry pancakes	Pancakes topped with berries
Lunch	Whole grain pitta or tortilla, hummus, side salad	leftover Soulful Greens with rice and beans	leftover Pasta with Marinara & Vegetables, salad	Big salad with leftover rice, avocado, nuts	Tortilla, black beans, salsa, arugula	Big Salad with whole grain toast & hummus	Slice of veggie pizza with goat's cheese, salad
Dinner	Soulful Greens brown or basmati rice, fish or beans	Pasta with marinara and steamed vegetables	Quick Thai Curry with tofu & vegetables	Soulful greens with rice & canned white beans	Thai Green Curry with rice, green salad	Dinner out sushi: veg or salmon rolls, miso soup, salad	Dinner out Mexican: burrito or tacos with veg & beans
Snack	Avocado on small slice of bread	Rice crackers with hummus	Handful of corn chips and salsa	Handful of raw almonds and walnuts	Couple squares of dark chocolate	Handful of almonds and walnuts	Dark chocolate
Do Ahead							
Grocery shopping	Pack lunch of leftover asian saute	Pack lunch of leftover pasta	Make salad for lunch	Make wrap for lunch	Make salad	Plan next week meals	Shopping for next week

Bonus Recipes

QUICK THAI CURRY

You can find thai curry paste in most groceries. If not, add extra ginger, lime zest and lime juice.

ingredients

- 1 tablespoon peanut, coconut or olive oil
- 1/2 tablespoon Thai Green Curry Paste (can add more if you like)
- 1 clove garlic chopped finely
- 1 tablespoon ginger chopped finely or grated
- 1 teaspoon cumin powder
- 1 teaspoon turmeric powder
- 1 can coconut milk (full fat)
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 4 cups chopped vegetables - zucchini, broccoli, cauliflower, sweet potato, eggplant, red or yellow peppers...
- water or vegetable broth (around 2 cups)
- salt to taste
- optional: 1/2 lb tofu drained, dried with towels, chopped into 1" squares (1/2 of large block sold in stores)
- 1/4 cup chopped cilantro for garnish

preparation

1. Heat oil in large pot, add the onion, garlic and ginger. Stir frequently until soft, around 5 minutes.
2. Add the curry paste, cumin and turmeric and continue to saute. Add the coconut milk and sugar and stir to distribute. Add salt to your taste.
3. Add 2 cups of water or vegetable broth. Add the vegetables and tofu. Bring to a boil, then turn heat to simmer and cover. Cook 15 minutes or until the vegetables are soft.
4. Serve over brown or basmati rice. Garnish with chopped cilantro.

SOULFUL SAUTEED GREENS

I love the flavor that Cast Iron cookware gives greens, and it gives the food a boost of iron.

ingredients

1 tablespoon olive oil

Optional: 1 tablespoon fresh rosemary

chopped

1 large bunch collard greens or kale

2 cups brussels sprouts

salt and pepper to taste, red chile flakes also add flavor if you like spicy

preparation

1. Heat the oil in the skillet on medium high heat.
2. While the oil is heating wash and chop the brussels sprouts. Chop off the stem, then cut into 2-3 slices depending on their size.
3. Add brussels sprouts to the skillet (with the optional rosemary) and stir swiftly. Stir every couple minutes while you are preparing the greens.
4. De-stem the greens: Hold the stalk in your left hand and pull the leaf from the stem with your right hand. Ball the torn greens up and coarsely chop.
5. Wash well, keeping a bit of water on the greens.
6. Add the greens to the pan with the brussels sprouts, stir well. Continue to stir until the greens are wilted. I usually cook an additional 5 minutes. Serve with beans and rice.

WORLD'S TASTIEST HOMEMADE HUMMUS

Hummus is a great staple to have in the fridge. You can easily put it into a whole grain wrap with veggies for a healthy lunch. It is also great on a salad or with steamed vegetables.

ingredients

1 large can of organic chick peas or 2 cups of cooked chick peas. If using cooked, preserve the cooking liquid.

2 tablespoons tahini

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon cumin

1 tablespoon olive oil

juice of 1/2 lemon

preparation

1. If using canned chick peas, drain and rinse well.
2. Heat chick peas in a small pot until warm.
3. Blend with tahini, salt, cumin lemon juice in a food processor. Add a little water or chick pea cooking liquid if the hummus is too thick. With the motor running, drizzle the olive oil into the hummus.