



Take Charge of Your Health Care

21 tips and tools for
managing multiple
conditions



Master the Juggling Act

Handling more than one health condition doesn't have to be overwhelming. These 5 ideas can help keep you on track.



Set Micro Goals

Think details: You might want to take a daily walk without feeling exhausted, cut down on your medications, or get a better night's sleep. Discuss your goals with your health care team, who can offer doable ways to reach them. Then track your progress and pat yourself on the back for your achievements.

Simplify Your Refill Routine

Enjoy fewer trips to the pharmacy and lower the chance of running out of your maintenance medications when you get a 3-month supply delivered to your home.

Line Up Support

When you're navigating serious illness, having as much support as possible can make a huge difference in your quality of life. In addition to your primary care provider,

there's a host of others you can tap for support. Physical therapists, nutritionists, psychologists and other specialists can all play key roles in helping you feel your best. And don't forget about family and friends, as well as your spiritual adviser, fitness group and even online communities.

Use Tech Tools to Stay Organized

If available, sign up for your provider's online patient portal to access appointment reminders and other data. You can also use the portal to send messages to your health care team.

Make Simple Lifestyle Changes

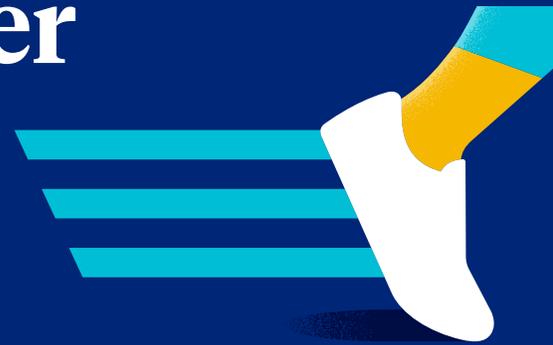
Little adjustments can help you feel better now and even slow the progression of your condition. Tweaks such as getting more sleep, eating more veggies or losing a few pounds can be just as important to your health as your medications.



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Work Out, Feel Better

One of the great things about exercise? It can help slow down many chronic diseases and disabling conditions. Any kind of movement is good, but for specific results, try to pair your fitness routine with your primary health issue. Safety first: Get the all-clear from your provider before starting any new exercise plan.



GOAL: LIFT YOUR MOOD

Go-To Moves: Walking and Yoga

Movement, whatever the intensity, is like mental medicine, releasing feel-good brain chemicals that help ease symptoms of depression and anxiety. Try a 20-minute daily walk and a few simple yoga poses, like this one.

HALF LORD OF THE FISHES WITH CHAIR

> Sit tall, feet flat on the floor. Exhale and gently rotate to the right, placing your right hand toward the back of the seat and your left hand on top of your right thigh.

> Inhale and press further into the twist until you feel a gentle stretch in your back.
> Hold this position for three to five slow breaths in and out.
> Return to the start, then switch sides and repeat.

GOAL: LOWER BLOOD PRESSURE

Go-To Moves: Cardio and Strength Training

Aim for 30 minutes of low-impact cardio workouts five days a week. Try climbing stairs, dancing or walking. And twice a week, fit in a strength workout. Do body weight exercises, like wall sits, planks or this squat variation.

SPLIT SQUAT

> Stand tall and step forward with your left foot, taking a larger-than-normal step. Place your hands on your hips for stability.
> Press your hips back, bend your knees, and lower yourself into a

squat position. Your torso should be upright and your hips should face forward.
> Pause at the bottom of the squat, and then return to standing.
> Do 10 repetitions, then switch legs and repeat.



GOAL: WRANGLE BLOOD SUGAR

Go-To Moves: Low-Impact Cardio and Strength Training

Swimming, bike riding, walking and other low-impact exercises help muscles better absorb glucose. And don't forget strength training. Increasing muscle mass also helps keep glucose levels in check. Try this exercise.

STEP-UP

> Place your right foot on a 6- to 12-inch-high stair step.
> Push through your right heel and rise until your left leg is even with your right.

You want your right leg to do all the work.
> Step down, keeping your right foot on the step.
> Do 10 to 15 repetitions, then switch legs and repeat.

6 Ways to Nurture Happiness

Living with chronic conditions can be stressful. Your first step: Address the stress. Your behaviors can have a positive impact on the way you feel. To help lift yourself up and handle your health, try these ideas.



1 Examine Your Feelings
Ask yourself if what you're feeling is spot-on, or an overreaction to a situation. Tuning into your emotions can help you calm fears and figure out next steps.

2 Spring Into Action
To cope with negative emotions, do something fun or productive. Play with your dog, listen to music, or tackle a closet that needs organizing.

3 Tap Your Inner Artist
Research shows that creative activities boost feelings of well-being. Some ideas: take an online sketch class, make a video on your smartphone, or try a new hobby.

4 Cite Your Successes
Think back on challenges you've met. Whatever the outcome was, you learned coping skills. Shore up your confidence by reflecting on past successes.

5 Go for a Walk
Exercise stimulates your muscles to generate endorphins, your body's mood boosters. And a daily dose of sunshine can reduce depression risk by 75%.

6 Connect in Any Way You Can
Friendship is the most powerful predictor of emotional well-being. So strategize to socialize: Plan a video chat with friends, make a phone call, write a letter.

Pain Relief Without a Prescription? It's Possible!

Whether you're living with chronic pain or your nagging aches are a symptom of another health problem, it's good to know that help doesn't have to come in a medicine vial. Here are 5 science-backed strategies to deliver the comfort you need.

Revamp Your Plate

Vegetables, fruits and whole grains are rich in antioxidants, which have been shown to help fight swelling and ease muscle and joint pain. Your best bets: Load up on broccoli, spinach and berries — and say “no thanks” to sugary, salty treats.

Try Physical Therapy

A physical therapist* can pull together a pain-busting treatment plan tailored to your individual health needs.

Consider Complementary Care

Acupuncture, massage therapy and chiropractic care have been found to be helpful with a number of different chronic health problems, including low back pain, anxiety, depression, frequent migraines and more. Ask your provider if you're a good candidate for these alternative therapies*.

Explore Meditation

Mindfulness-based meditation, which uses breathing techniques and guided imagery to help you focus on the moment, can help change the way your brain perceives pain, in turn reducing discomfort.

Take a Stretch Break

Stretching can reverse effects of past injuries and poor posture by gently lengthening the soft tissues around your joints, reducing pain. Try to stretch all major muscle groups a few times weekly.

