



AUGUST



Ability to show students the monthly video ([www.everymondaymatters.org](http://www.everymondaymatters.org)), if appropriate.

Prep time: 5 mins.



As this is the first Monday of the month, we recommend presenting this Monthly Kick-Off activity and if appropriate, the monthly video. Or, at a minimum, offer highlights from this activity plan.

## MONTHLY KICK-OFF

### 1) SHARE THIS MONTH'S THEME WITH STUDENTS: **"MONDAY GETS BALANCED"**

### 2) SHOW STUDENTS THE "MONDAY GETS BALANCED" VIDEO.

- The "MONDAY GETS BALANCED" video can be found at [www.everymondaymatters.org](http://www.everymondaymatters.org). Click on "MONTHLY VIDEOS" on the homepage.

### 3) ASK A FEW OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS TO WARM STUDENTS UP ON THIS MONTH'S FOCUS:

**\*NOTE:** *Choose questions appropriate to your students' ages, grades, ability levels, and classroom goals. Students may share their answers in pairs, small groups, or as a large group.*

- **What does the word "BALANCE" mean to you?**
  - Possible answers: A way of living that brings harmony and peace; mental or emotional stability
- **What do you think it means to "GET BALANCED"?**
  - Answer: To find a way to bring balance, joy, and harmony into your life
- **What are some ways that you can "GET BALANCED"?**
- **How "BALANCED" do you think your life is right now?**
- **Has there ever been a time when you felt "UNBALANCED"?**
  - What was that like?
- **Have you ever felt like your life was actually super "BALANCED" and harmonious?**
  - What did that feel like?
- **How easy do you think it is to "GET BALANCED"?**
- **Do you think that "GETTING BALANCED" is a one-time thing, or do you think that it's a life-long journey?**

- Does everyone “GET BALANCED” in the same way, or do you think people have different versions and ways of living “BALANCED” lives?
- Have you ever met anyone who seemed like they had a really “BALANCED” life?
  - What were they like?
  - Is there anything you admired or learned from that person?
- How do you think simplifying your life ties into “GETTING BALANCED”?
- Do you think that you can still go after the things you’re passionate about when you live a “BALANCED” life?
- How is your breath, breathing, or meditating a part of living in a “BALANCED” way?
- Why might integrating physical activity into your life be a part of being “BALANCED”?
- What are some of the benefits of living a “BALANCED” life?
- How might “GETTING BALANCED” help your relationships grow even stronger?
- Do you think living a “BALANCED” life can help you focus on building a stronger community with those around you?
- How can “GETTING BALANCED” remind you that YOU MATTER?
  - How can it show others that they MATTER, too?
- What would the world be like if we all realized that WE MATTER and remembered to “GET BALANCED” more often?

**4) SHARE THE MONTHLY SITUATION AND CHALLENGE (PAGE 3) WITH STUDENTS BY READING IT OUT LOUD OR ASKING A STUDENT TO DO SO:**

- Consider having students use this information as the foundation for a writing prompt. Let them form their own questions or provide them one or two to answer, using the challenge that lies ahead of them for the month

**5) CONSIDER SHARING THE MONTHLY FACTS (PAGES 4-7) WITH STUDENTS.**

- This can be done now or throughout the month
- The MONTHLY FACTS are an integrated learning tool for you to use, as desired and appropriate

**6) SHARE THE UPCOMING WEEKLY THEMES WITH STUDENTS.**

- Monday, August 5 - “SIMPLIFY YOUR LIFE”
- Monday, August 12 - “FUEL YOUR PASSIONS”
- Monday, August 19 - “TAKE A BREATH”
- Monday, August 26 - “MIND YOUR MOVEMENT”

**7) GET STUDENTS EXCITED ABOUT MAKING AUGUST ALL ABOUT “MONDAY GETS BALANCED” AND SEEING HOW A LITTLE SPACE, MOVEMENT, AND “BALANCE” CAN MAKE A HUGE DIFFERENCE IN THEIR LIVES AND THE LIVES OF OTHERS, BOTH NOW AND IN THE FUTURE.**

**8) ENJOY THE FIRST WEEK’S THEME AND ACTIVITIES: “SIMPLIFY YOUR LIFE”**

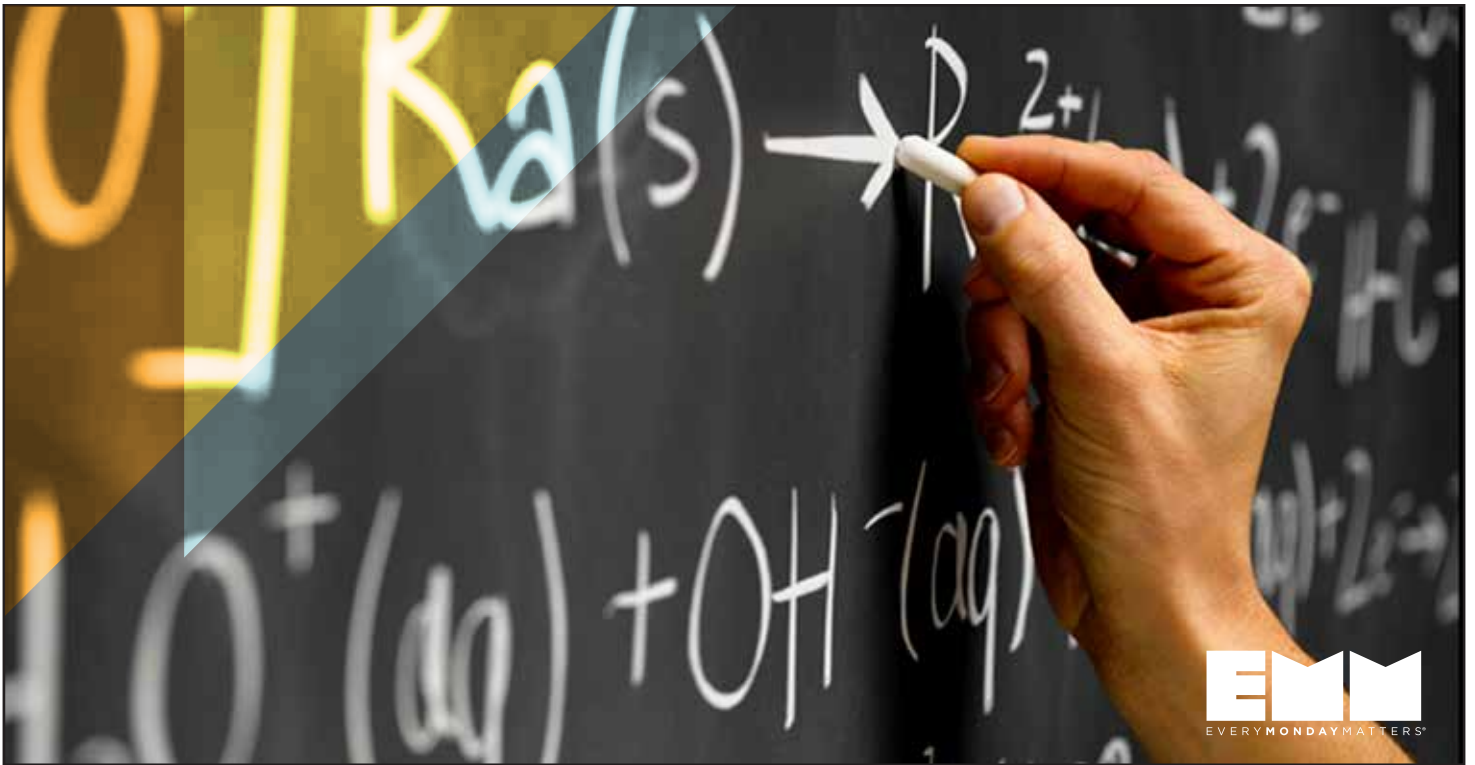


## THE SITUATION

Balance is a big word, and an even bigger life goal. There are so many benefits to living a balanced life. When we have balance, we get more quality rest, we're generally healthier, we're more open to exciting and new things, and we have less stress in our lives. But balance is tricky—we can feel totally balanced one day, and the next day, feel completely the opposite. And, balance might look different from day to day and month to month and even from person to person. Some of us might meditate for 30 minutes each day to get balanced. Others of us might take care of plants or animals as a part of our balanced lives. And still others might just need to put their phones down and engage with other people. Whatever it is, this month, we're going to start discovering how we can find balance in our lives and what it takes to make that balance stick, even when it gets tough. Because we all deserve balance, and it's possible for every one of us.

## THE CHALLENGE

The world is a big place and we all have dreams, goals, and wants. Balance may not be first on our list of goals, but it is super important. This month, we're going to discover why balance is a good thing to strive for in our lives, and we'll explore how each and every one of us can find balance. Balance looks different to each of us, but we can start getting balanced by discovering what our priorities are in life and how we can support those priorities, our purpose, and the people and relationships we care about. We'll discover why the breath is so important to balance and how we can make movement a part of our daily routine. So this month, get ready to try and try again to get balanced, and have fun doing it. Getting balanced matters.



## **MONTHLY FACTS**

**BALANCED (ADJECTIVE): BEING IN A STATE OF BALANCE (MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL STEADINESS); HAVING DIFFERENT PARTS OR ELEMENTS PROPERLY OR EFFECTIVELY ARRANGED, PROPORTIONED, REGULATED, CONSIDERED, ETC.**

*-www.merriam-webster.com*

**BALANCED (ADJECTIVE): BEING IN HARMONIOUS OR PROPER ARRANGEMENT OR ADJUSTMENT, PROPORTION, ETC.**

*-www.dictionary.com*

**BALANCED LIVING MEANS CONSIDERING ALL ASPECTS OF YOUR LIFE: RELATIONSHIPS, WORK, FITNESS AND HEALTH, AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING. WE ALL GET BOGGED DOWN WITH WORK AND FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES FROM TIME TO TIME, BUT MAKING TIME FOR YOURSELF IS NECESSARY SO THAT YOU CAN KEEP UP WITH ALL YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES. ALL BATTERIES GET RUN DOWN, EVEN YOURS. SO RECHARGE YOUR BODY PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY AND MAKE THE COMMITMENT TO ENJOY SOME "YOU TIME" EVERY DAY.**

*-Rodriguez, Diana; How To Lead a Well-Balanced Life; Everyday Health; May 2009*

**SIMPLIFYING IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE OF THE TOLL THAT CLUTTER TAKES ON OUR MINDS, AND EVEN ON OUR BODIES. WHEN WE HAVE TO WADE THROUGH THE PHYSICAL CLUTTER TO FIND WHAT WE NEED, IT DRAINS US OF TIME AS WELL AS ENERGY. ALL THAT DRAINED ENERGY ADDS UP TO ADDITIONAL STRAIN ON YOUR RESOURCES AND, ULTIMATELY, ADDITIONAL STRESS. CLUTTER CAN ALSO BE PSYCHOLOGICALLY DRAINING; THE MENTAL CLUTTER OF PLANNING OUR NEXT MOVE WHEN WE'RE NOT SURE WHAT OUR RESOURCES ARE, OF FEELING OVERWHELMED AND NEEDING TO THINK ABOUT WHERE OUR PRIORITIES LIE FROM MOMENT TO MOMENT ("SHOULD I SPEND THESE SPARE FEW MINUTES IN MEDITATION OR BY CLEANING UP THAT MESS THAT'S**

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**BEEN STRESSING ME FOR DAYS?"), AND OF NOT KNOWING WHEN WE'LL BE ABLE TO SIMPLY RELAX--THESE FEELINGS TRIGGER THE BODY'S STRESS RESPONSE... WHEN OUR FIGHT-OR-FLIGHT RESPONSE IS TRIGGERED, THE PSYCHOLOGICAL TOLL OF CLUTTER BECOMES PHYSICAL IN MANY WAYS. WE ALSO BECOME LESS ABLE TO MAKE DECISIONS FROM A PROACTIVE STATE OF MIND AND ARE MORE LIKELY TO CREATE ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS FOR OURSELVES. IF SIMPLICITY CAN TAME SOME OF THIS STRESS, ISN'T IT WORTH TAKING A LITTLE TIME TO PROACTIVELY CULL THE CLUTTER OF OUR HOMES, OUR SCHEDULES, AND OUR MINDS?**

*-Scott, Elizabeth; Simplify Your Life This Week; Very Well Mind; February 2018*

**OUR LIVES CAN GET HECTIC. LOTS OF COMMITMENTS, LOTS OF THINGS WE WANT TO DO AND LOTS TO KEEP UP WITH. IT'S NO WONDER MANY OF US BECOME OVERWHELMED. SIMPLIFYING OUR LIVES CAN HELP US COMBAT THESE FEELINGS. HOWEVER, LIVING A SIMPLER LIFE IN, WHAT CAN BE, A COMPLEX WORLD TAKES SOME GUILF. WITH THIS IN MIND, HERE ARE SOME IDEAS TO HELP YOU ON YOUR OWN JOURNEY TO SIMPLER.**

- 1. SLOW DOWN**
- 2. DECLUTTER**
- 3. FORGET THE SMALL STUFF**
- 4. OWN LESS**
- 5. LEAVE MULTITASKING TO SOMEONE ELSE (FOCUS SIMPLY ON ONE THING AT A TIME)**
- 6. MAKE TIME**
- 7. SPEND TIME DISCONNECTED**
- 8. SPEND TIME WITH THOSE YOU CARE ABOUT**
- 9. LIMIT NEGATIVITY**
- 10. EAT WELL AND MOVE**
- 11. GIVE BACK**

*-Phillips, Carl; 16 Ways to Simplify Your Life; Huffington Post; June 2015*

**BEFORE WE ARE EMPLOYEES, PARENTS, SPOUSES AND FRIENDS, WE ARE INDIVIDUALS. OUR GIFTS AND TALENTS, THE ONES WE REVELED IN EXPLORING AS A CHILD, ARE STILL AS PRESENT AS THEY EVER WERE. THEY JUST LIE DORMANT WITHIN US HOPING FOR RELEASE. IT IS OUR OBLIGATION TO MAKE THEM A PRIORITY LIKE WE DO OUR WORKOUTS, OUR CAREERS AND THE PEOPLE WE LOVE. OUR PASSION IS A GIFT TO BE TREASURED. SOME OF US ARE LUCKY ENOUGH TO HAVE JOBS THAT ALLOW US TO LIVE OUR PASSION -- I KNOW A FEW -- A DESIGNER, A JOURNALIST AND A MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL. A LOT OF US HOWEVER, DO NOT. THESE TIPS ARE PARTICULARLY FOR THE MAJORITY OF US WHOSE PASSIONS MAKE A RARE APPEARANCE IN OUR FRANTIC LIVES.**

- 1. GET REAL ABOUT YOUR TIME: LOOK AT TIME METHODICALLY HERE -- IF YOU JUST WATCH YOUR FAVORITE SHOWS (TWO TO THREE, MAXIMUM), ONLY GO TO THE SOCIAL STUFF YOU REALLY CARE ABOUT AND LIMIT FACEBOOK AND TWITTER TO 10 MINUTES A DAY. HOW MANY HOURS HAVE YOU SAVED? THE ANSWER IS LIKELY TO SURPRISE YOU.**
- 2. DOUBLE UP: SAY YOUR PASSION IS SOMETHING ARTISTIC LIKE POTTERY. WHY NOT TAKE A CLASS WITH YOUR FRIEND OR SPOUSE? THIS COUNTS AS CREATIVE TIME AND AN AWESOME, DIFFERENT WAY TO SPEND TIME WITH SOMEONE YOU LOVE.**

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- 3. USE YOUR WAIT TIME WISELY: COMMUTES, WAITING IN LINE, ANY TIME YOU MIGHT BE EARLY FOR AN ENGAGEMENT (OR SOMEONE ELSE IS RUNNING LATE) ALL ADDS UP TIME WISE.**
  - 4. SAY NO: IF YOU ARE UNCERTAIN AS TO WHETHER OR NOT TO ATTEND SOMETHING, CHANCES ARE YOUR TIME COULD BEST BE SPENT DOING SOMETHING ELSE.**
  - 5. ENJOY AND HONOR THE PROCESS: THIS IS ALL MEANT TO BE FUN! RECONNECTING WITH OUR PASSIONS CAN BE OUR GREATEST SOURCE OF JOY. APPROACH MAKING TIME FOR THEM WITH THE RIGHT ATTITUDE AND YOU WILL MAXIMIZE THE RESULTS AND ENJOYMENT OF IT ALL.**

*-Moore, Susie; 5 Ways to Make Time for Your Passion; Huffington Post; March 2014*

**THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF STUDIES THAT HAVE SHOWN MINDFULNESS MEDITATION CAN POSITIVELY IMPACT MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH. WHETHER IT'S BY REDUCING STRESS, IMPROVING SLEEP, INCREASING FOCUS, OR IMPROVING RELATIONSHIPS, RESEARCH SHOWS MINDFULNESS WORKS. WHILE THE RESEARCH ON MINDFULNESS, ESPECIALLY DIGITAL MINDFULNESS PROGRAMS, IS STILL GROWING, THERE IS EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE USE OF MINDFULNESS TRAINING FOR MANY OUTCOMES.**

*-The Benefits of Meditation; www.headspace.com*

**THE TERM "FIGHT OR FLIGHT" IS ALSO KNOWN AS THE STRESS RESPONSE. IT'S WHAT THE BODY DOES AS IT PREPARES TO CONFRONT OR AVOID DANGER. WHEN APPROPRIATELY INVOKED, THE STRESS RESPONSE HELPS US RISE TO MANY CHALLENGES. BUT TROUBLE STARTS WHEN THIS RESPONSE IS CONSTANTLY PROVOKED BY LESS MOMENTOUS, DAY-TO-DAY EVENTS, SUCH AS MONEY WOES, TRAFFIC JAMS, JOB WORRIES, OR RELATIONSHIP PROBLEMS... BREATH FOCUS IS A COMMON FEATURE OF SEVERAL TECHNIQUES THAT EVOKE THE RELAXATION RESPONSE. THE FIRST STEP IS LEARNING TO BREATHE DEEPLY... DEEP BREATHING ALSO GOES BY THE NAMES OF DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING, ABDOMINAL BREATHING, BELLY BREATHING, AND PACED RESPIRATION. WHEN YOU BREATHE DEEPLY, THE AIR COMING IN THROUGH YOUR NOSE FULLY FILLS YOUR LUNGS, AND THE LOWER BELLY RISES... DEEP ABDOMINAL BREATHING ENCOURAGES FULL OXYGEN EXCHANGE – THAT IS, THE BENEFICIAL TRADE OF INCOMING OXYGEN FOR OUTGOING CARBON DIOXIDE. NOT SURPRISINGLY, IT CAN SLOW THE HEARTBEAT AND LOWER OR STABILIZE BLOOD PRESSURE.**

*- Relaxation Techniques: Breath Control Helps Quell Errant Stress Response; Harvard Health Publishing, Harvard Medical School; January 2015*

**REGULAR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS HAS BIG BENEFITS. IT NOT ONLY MAKES THEM HEALTHIER AND FIT NOW, BUT IT LOWERS THEIR RISK OF CHRONIC DISEASES AND IMPROVES THEIR CHANCES OF BECOMING HEALTHY ADULTS. THE GUIDELINES RECOMMEND THAT CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS AGES 6 TO 17 DO 60 MINUTES (1 HOUR) OR MORE OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY EACH DAY. THAT INCLUDES: AEROBIC ACTIVITY, MUSCLE-STRENGTHENING, AND BONE-STRENGTHENING. IT'S IMPORTANT TO ENCOURAGE YOUNG PEOPLE TO TRY A VARIETY OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES. HELP THEM FIND ACTIVITIES THAT THEY ENJOY AND THAT ARE RIGHT FOR THEIR AGE.**

*-Physical Activity Guidelines: Children and Adolescents; www.health.gov; February 2018*

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**HOW EXERCISE HELPS CHILDREN'S PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT:**

- **DEVELOPS MUSCLE STRENGTH**
- **IMPROVES CARDIOVASCULAR CAPACITY**
- **KEEPS BONES STRONG**
- **DECREASES BODY FAT**
- **MAINTAINS A STEADY, HEALTHY WEIGHT**

**HOW EXERCISE HELPS CHILDREN'S PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING:**

- **ENHANCES SELF-ESTEEM**
- **REDUCES SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY**
- **INCREASES CONCENTRATION AND ALERTNESS**
- **BOOSTS ENERGY LEVELS**
- **CONTROLS MOOD SWINGS**
- **FOSTERS FEELINGS OF HAPPINESS**

*-Etra, Anne and Jerriann Sullivan; The Guide to Children's Exercise: Why Kids Need Exercise; www.care.com; June 2017*