

# 6 WAYS TO FEEL BETTER

Your brain needs consistent messages to function properly.

Research shows that combining good nutrition with time for mental and physical activities will have improvements in brain function and reduce symptoms of “dizziness”: foggy headedness, vision/hearing changes, imbalance, cognitive limitations, fatigue, vertigo, rocking, fullness in head/ear, headaches, etc.

Your brain uses two systems to find equilibrium: Fight or Flight and Rest & Digest

If you are in too much of one, you need to focus on the other to find balance and feel better:

## FIGHT OR FLIGHT



When “stressors” are always present and your body constantly feels under attack, your Fight or Flight reaction stays turned on. This can happen after an injury/medical condition or with life stress:

- Hard to get a deep breath
- Rapid/erratic heart rate
- Difficulty sleeping (brain always on)
- Aversion to light and/or vision changes
- Poor digestive process
- Muscle/neck tension

## REST & DIGEST

If your body is in a constant state of Fight or Flight, it does not allow your body to Rest & Digest properly. If you focus on Rest & Digest this will improve equilibrium and help you feel better.

Relax  
- and -  
Recharge

- Full, deep breaths (belly breathing)
- Heart rate slow, rhythmic pattern
- Improve sleep hygiene
- Reduce visual irritants during the day
- Improve nutrition, hydrate
- Get moving more

1. **FIND TRIGGERS: Keep a symptom diary.** Record time of day and which symptoms occur as well as possible triggers (*lack of sleep, weather, food, yes/no for exercise or breaks*). Too many triggers added up may cause symptoms so be aware of them. Also record what does work for you!
2. **TAKE BREAKS: Every 1 hour, sit or stand tall and close your eyes for 1 minute**
  - BREATHE in a deep rhythmic pattern through your belly to increase oxygen, reduce tension and promote relaxation. With this mindfulness check, see what your body needs (*stretch, move, etc.*)
  - Schedule in activities that you enjoy doing to release happy hormones
  - Reduce “Tunneling”: Look up and around you often to appreciate what surrounds you

### 3. **IMPROVE SLEEP:** The brain requires periods of deep sleep to rejuvenate

- Go to bed and wake up at the same time, try to be as consistent as possible
- Start a pre-sleep ritual at least 1-2 hours before desired bedtime. AVOID VISUAL IRRITANTS: turn off TV, computer, phone, etc. Do not look at phone/TV if you wake up in the night. *Listen* to calming music, audiobook, podcasts, read a book or meditate. Focus on slow, calm breaths
- Do not drink caffeine (soda, coffee, tea, chocolate) 8 hours before your desired bedtime

### 4. **GET MOVING:** Aim for 20 minutes of physical activity *at least 4 times a week*

- Physical activity keeps muscles and joints strong, provides natural energy and neuromuscular stimulation, promotes blood flow and has evidence to improve cognitive function. It is safe to stay active and can help with many of your symptoms. Get outside for fresh air often. Short walks are just as beneficial. Do not sit more than 30 minutes without getting up to move around

### 5. **MANAGE STRESS:** Long-term stress causes health issues

- If you need resources to manage stress, ask for help to make these changes. Do not wait!
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Mindfulness show good results on managing stress/anxiety

### 6. **IMPROVE NUTRITION:** Think of food as fuel for your brain & body

The digestive system is the body's first line of defense against infection and disease.

A poor diet does not fuel the brain and body to allow for proper repair and protection.

Here are some considerations:

DO MORE	DO LESS OR DO NOT
Aim to have consistent meal and snack times where you are eating every 2-4 hours. This keeps blood glucose levels from dropping	Skip Meals or have too much time in between meals (no longer than 4 hours)
DRINK WATER! Aim for half of your body weight in fluid ounces	Do not exercise if you are not properly fueled and hydrated before/after
Watch your salt intake: Aim for < 2000-2200mg. Also monitor fluctuations in sodium intake	Eat foods that may be a trigger for you or that you are intolerant to. This causes inflammation
Eat a variety of fruits and veggies, the more color the better!  Opt for whole grain versus refined carbohydrates for more fiber and nutrients  Eat sources of healthy fat & Omega 3 Fatty Acids  Eat lean protein sources	Eat processed/fried foods. Not only do these have no nutritional benefit, they are also high in sodium  Eat artificial sugars (aspartame)  Eat aged cheese & sliced deli meats may contain histamines and nitrates that can increase inflammation and cause headaches
Add foods that are rich in Magnesium, Vitamin B2 and CoQ10	Consume nicotine, marijuana, THC
Monitor caffeine intake. It is a stimulant & increases glucose & insulin levels. Be consistent with your intake to know if this is a factor contributing to increase of symptoms.	Drink alcohol: red wine, beer and sugary cocktails are common migraine triggers. Alcohol leads to dehydration and can change the fluid composition in the inner ear and body

