



# Healthy Coping Strategies for Life's Unexpected Changes

Life does not always play out the way we thought it would, but how we respond in these transitional moments matters when it comes to our health.

Coping is the active process of managing stressful situations. Similarly, resilience is how we adapt to change.<sup>1,2</sup> Coping and resilience go hand in hand, and together these skills can help you move through tough times more easily.

Unhealthy coping strategies include emotional eating, misuse of alcohol or other substances, and overspending, also known as “retail therapy.” Unfortunately, these often lead to even more problems and stress.

By choosing healthier coping mechanisms, you can move forward feeling calm and empowered, even when life's heavy moments arrive without notice.

Establishing a self-care routine can make it easier to manage difficult times. Here are some self-care strategies to consider when you are facing a life change:<sup>1,2,3</sup>

- **Move your body.** Physical activity can help defuse emotional energy and relieve stress.
- **Cry.** Crying is a natural, healthy outlet for strong emotions.
- **Look for creative solutions.** Make a list of all the possible ways you could manage the situation. Then choose one and take action to move forward.



- **Create distance.** If possible, distance yourself from the source of stress, even if you can only take short breaks. Your body needs time to recover from physical and emotional stress.
- **Prioritize sleep.** Getting enough restful sleep can help you process disappointments and find solutions.
- **Ask for help.** Ask a trusted friend for support when you are struggling. Remember that seeking help when you are not able to manage your situation alone is a sign of strength.

Even in life's most challenging moments, there is always something to look forward to. How you manage stressful situations can directly impact your health. Learning healthy coping strategies can help you build resilience to move through life's unexpected changes more easily.

1. Cleveland Clinic. [Stress: Coping With Life's Stressors](#). Nov 24, 2020. Accessed Sept 29, 2023.  
2. Everyday Health. [What Is Resilience? Your Guide to Facing Life's Challenges, Adversities, and Crises](#). Jul 14, 2022. Accessed Sept 28, 2023.  
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). [Coping with Stress](#). Reviewed Nov 30, 2021. Accessed Sept 5, 2023.



## Sober October

Elective sobriety, the conscious choice to abstain from alcohol, has become popular among people looking for ways to live a healthier lifestyle. Dry January, Sober October, and similar challenges that include foregoing alcohol are popping up on social media feeds around the globe.<sup>1</sup>

Many health organizations consider drinking in moderation to be up to 1 drink per day for women and up to 2 drinks per day for men – a drink being one 5-oz glass of wine, 1 ½-oz shot of spirits, or 12-oz serving of beer. Even the Mediterranean diet, considered to be among the healthiest eating patterns, allows for the occasional glass of wine with meals.

But some experts disagree with including alcohol as part of a healthy lifestyle, citing that any amount poses a danger to health. Alcohol consumption is closely linked to other unhealthy behaviors like smoking, unhealthy food choices, physical inactivity, and poor sleep. Regular consumption of alcohol can also lead to other health problems like liver failure, heart disease, and cancer.<sup>2,3</sup>

Nevertheless, the sober-curious crowd is growing. Mocktails, kombucha, and other non-alcoholic beverages are making their way to local restaurants and bars to accommodate sober lifestyles.<sup>3</sup>

Temporary temperance may or may not lead to permanent abstinence from alcohol, but it is certainly a worthwhile act of self-care to explore. Changing your daily habits, even in small ways, can have a lasting, positive effect on the quality of your life.

If someone you know is exploring a sober lifestyle, here is how you can help support them:

- Do not offer them an alcoholic drink
- Do not ask them why they are not drinking
- Provide non-alcoholic beverage options at gatherings
- Ask how you can help support them

If you are concerned that you may be drinking too much and elective sobriety has not been successful, call **1-800-662-HELP (4357)** in the U.S. or **1-877-254-3348** in Canada to get additional support. It is free, confidential, and open 24/7.

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1. Healthline. [Trying to Have a 'Sober October'? Here's What You Need to Know](#). Oct 14, 2020. Accessed Sept 28, 2023.

2. American Association for Cancer Research (AACR). [From Dry January to Sober October: Cutting Back on Alcohol](#). Jan 23, 2023. Accessed Sept 5, 2023.

3. Verywell Health. [What Is the Sober Curious Movement?](#) Oct 3, 2022. Accessed Sept 5, 2023.



# Beyond Positive Thinking: How to Manage Your Mindset

Positive thinking has been endorsed by personal growth gurus for decades, but how exactly does your mindset play a role in your physical wellbeing?

According to Martin Seligman, the director of the Positive Psychology Center at the University of Pennsylvania and the father of the positive psychology movement, positive psychology is “the scientific study of the strengths that enable individuals and communities to thrive.” In other words, positive thinking involves a focus on what is good, or what is going well.

From a wellbeing standpoint, there are many benefits that come with positivity. Researchers<sup>1</sup> have found that positive thinking is protective against cardiovascular disease. For example, the more optimistic you are, the less likely you are to have a heart attack. It has also been linked<sup>2</sup> to reduced rates of depression and improved immune function.

To manage your mindset, remember these two simple tips: Observe and choose again.

## Observe

Pay attention to how you respond to the things that happen around you. In his book *A Complaint Free World: How to Stop Complaining and Start Enjoying the Life You Always Wanted*, author Will Bowen suggests using visual cues to acknowledge your thoughts. For example, move a bracelet from one wrist to the other whenever you notice yourself complaining. You can also create a journaling



practice or use a habit tracker to identify patterns in your thinking.

## Choose again

Whenever you do happen to catch yourself in a negative thinking pattern, think of it as an opportunity to choose differently. Thoughts and words are powerful. In the moment, reframe your thoughts, or rephrase your words, to make the correction. Managing a healthy mindset<sup>3</sup> is not only about positive thinking. It goes much deeper than that. Since your thoughts ultimately drive your actions, do your best to focus on the positive results you want. That is where your energy will go.

1. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/can-positive-thinking-be-negative/>

2. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/22506752/>

3. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/positive-thinking/art-20043950>

# CUCUMBER BASIL MOSCOW MULE MOCKTAIL

## Ingredients

- 12 cucumber slices
- 8 large basil leaves, plus more for garnish
- ¼ cup fresh lime juice (about 4 limes)
- 16 ounces ginger beer (may substitute ginger kombucha\*)
- 16 ounces sparkling water
- Ice cubes

## Instructions

Place 2 cucumber slices, and 2 basil leaves in the bottom of each of four copper mugs or other short glasses.

Using a cocktail muddler or the handle of a wooden spoon gently muddle the ingredients together. Tip: You just want to bruise them up a bit, not make a mash.

Fill each mug ½ full with ice. Add 1 tablespoon lime juice to each mug.

Add 4 ounces ginger beer to each mug then top each one with sparkling water. Stir gently. Garnish each mug with a cucumber slice and basil leaves.

### Servings

1 mule



### Nutrition Facts

Calories	94
Total Fat	0g
Sodium	11mg
Carbohydrate	9g
Dietary Fiber	0g
Protein	0g