



EXERCISES FOR BETTER BREATHING

Breathing exercises help your lungs work more efficiently by removing stale air and increasing oxygen levels in your blood. These exercises can help improve lung capacity, reduce blood pressure, and make breathing easier.

Chest breathing involves taking short, shallow breaths, which only fills the top portion of your lungs. This type of breathing is less effective than belly breathing, which fills the lungs completely. Chest breathing can lead to heart palpitations, dizziness, and chest pain. Belly breathing and pursed-lip breathing are two breathing techniques that can help when you feel short of breath or anxious.

Belly Breathing

How it works: This type of breathing requires less effort to breathe because you're using your diaphragm to fill your lungs completely. Your diaphragm is a muscle positioned just below your lungs. When you inhale, your diaphragm contracts to allow fresh oxygen to enter your lungs. In individuals with healthy lungs, the diaphragm does 80% of the work of breathing.

How to do it: Lie down or sit up straight and place your hands on your belly. Close your mouth and take a slow, deep breath through your nose. As you breathe in push out with your stomach and allow your belly to expand as if you were filling a balloon. Then breathe out fully through your mouth as if you were blowing bubbles. Repeat for five to 10 minutes until you feel relaxed.

Pursed Lip Breathing

How it works: This type of breathing opens your airways, slows your breathing rate, and helps get more oxygen into your lungs.

How to do it: Sit down and relax your neck and shoulders. Breathe in slowly through your nose with your mouth closed. Then breathe out through your mouth with pursed lips (as if you were going to whistle). Try to breathe out longer than you inhale. For example, inhale for a count of three and exhale for a count of four.

IN THIS ISSUE:

Breathing Easier

- Exercises for Better Breathing
Page 1
- Nature Therapy
Page 2
- Quitting Tobacco
Page 3
- Mango Chicken Stir-Fry
Page 4
- Virgin Pulse Wellbeing Program Overview and Rewards
Pages 5-7

Sources
Cleveland Clinic. *Diaphragmatic Breathing*.
American Lung Association. *Breathing Exercises*.
American Lung Association. *Belly Breathing*.



NATURE THERAPY

The sound of moving water, chirping birds, and rustling leaves helps us reconnect with nature. In some ways, nature may even help us reconnect with ourselves. After all, we are nature.

Sometimes called ecotherapy, nature therapy includes outdoor activities like hiking, rock climbing, kayaking, gardening, swimming, or simply spending time in natural environments.

Nature therapy has been associated with a number of health benefits like the following:

- **Better lung function.** With each breath, your lungs remove carbon dioxide from your blood and resupply your body with life-giving oxygen. Spending time outdoors where there is less air pollution may offer respiratory benefits.
- **Reduced stress levels.** Studies have found that exposure to natural environments may help reduce cortisol levels, a hormone that increases with stress. Forest bathing can also lower blood pressure, which may be due to feeling more relaxed while spending time in nature.
- **Fewer symptoms of depression.** Being outdoors can be therapeutic for your emotional and physical wellbeing, too. Exposure to sunlight triggers your body to make vitamin D and may reduce symptoms of depression. Likewise, physical activity produces endorphins (your body's natural feel-good chemicals) which offer a distraction from negative thoughts.
- **Enhanced immune function.** Studies have linked nature exposure to enhanced immune function. One theory is that plants emit airborne phytoncides, which may offer benefits similar to phytonutrients that are found in fruit and vegetables. It is now understood that the lungs also contain beneficial microorganisms that support health, much like the gut microbiome. While research in this area is still in the early stages, researchers have uncovered several "microbial signatures" that are closely linked to the presence of certain types of respiratory disorders like asthma and COPD.

Taking a breath of fresh air can help put challenging moments into perspective. When life feels chaotic or stressful, step outside and let nature's calming energy help you breathe easier.

Sources
Healthline. 8 Health Benefits of Getting Back to Nature and Spending Time Outside. Accessed Aug 21, 2023.
Natalini JG, Singh S, Segal LN. The dynamic lung microbiome in health and disease. *Nat Rev Microbiol.* 2023 Apr;21(4):222-235. doi: 10.1038/s41579-022-00821-x. Epub 2022 Nov 16. PMID: 36385637; PMCID: PMC9668228.
Jimenez MP, DeVille NV, Elliott EG, Schiff JE, Wilt GE, Hart JE, James P. Associations between Nature Exposure and Health: A Review of the Evidence. *Int J Environ Res Public Health.* 2021 Apr 30;18(9):4790. doi: 10.3390/ijerph18094790. PMID: 33946197; PMCID: PMC8125471.

QUITTING TOBACCO

Nicotine is a highly addictive stimulant drug that is linked to many health issues. Cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco, smokeless tobacco, chewing tobacco, snuff, and e-cigarettes all contain nicotine. The long-term effects of using tobacco can lead to serious lung diseases like emphysema, chronic bronchitis, and cancer. It is also associated with higher risks of type 2 diabetes. **Fortunately, quitting tobacco comes with a whole host of health benefits.**



Here are a few tips to help you quit tobacco for good:

Set a quit date

Choose a quit date and mark it on your calendar. Then, share your plans openly with friends and family who can support and encourage you. Setting a quit date helps strengthen your commitment to quitting.

Create a tobacco-free environment

Remove all tobacco products from your home, car, and any spaces where you keep supplies. It may also be helpful to stay away from places or people that make you want to smoke until you've had time to create new routines.

Talk with your healthcare provider

Quitting tobacco can result in irritability, anxiety, changes in sleep patterns, increased appetite, and weight gain. That is why it is important to get the support you need in advance to help minimize side effects. Discuss your quit plans with your healthcare provider and ask for guidance on how to deal with withdrawal symptoms.

You may also want to ask your doctor about nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), which can help reduce cravings and make it easier for you to quit. Currently, there are seven FDA-approved NRT medications: nicotine patches, gum, lozenges, inhaler, nasal spray, varenicline (Chantix), and bupropion (Zyban). Check your benefits to see if NRT medications are covered under your plan, or if there are community resources in your area. Other non-prescription quit aids, such as sugarless gum, straws, and toothpicks, may also be helpful for some people.

The most important thing to know is that every tobacco user can quit.

If you use tobacco, you can take action right now by calling 1-800-QUIT-NOW or visiting www.smokefree.gov.



Sources

1. U.S. Food & Drug Administration. *Nicotine Is Why Tobacco Products Are Addictive.*
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). *Quitting Starts Now. Make Your Quit Plan.*
3. American Lung Association. *How to Quit Smoking.*

Recipe



MANGO CHICKEN STIR FRY

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp coconut oil or olive oil, divided
- 1 lb boneless skinless chicken breast, diced into bite-sized pieces
- 1 clove garlic
- 1 red onion, diced
- 8 oz snap or snow peas (or sub chopped broccoli)
- 1 red bell pepper, sliced
- 1 large ripe mango, diced
- Optional: Cashews and Cilantro, for garnish

For the Sauce:

- 2 tbsp gluten free soy sauce or coconut aminos
- 2 tbsp cashew butter (or peanut butter)
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 tbsp freshly grated ginger
- 1 tsp honey
- 1 tbsp warm water, to thin
- 1 tsp red pepper flakes
- 1/2 tsp tapioca flour, arrowroot flour, or cornstarch



Time:

- Prep: 15 minutes
- Cook: 15 minutes
- Total: 30 minutes

Servings:

Serves 4

Nutrition:

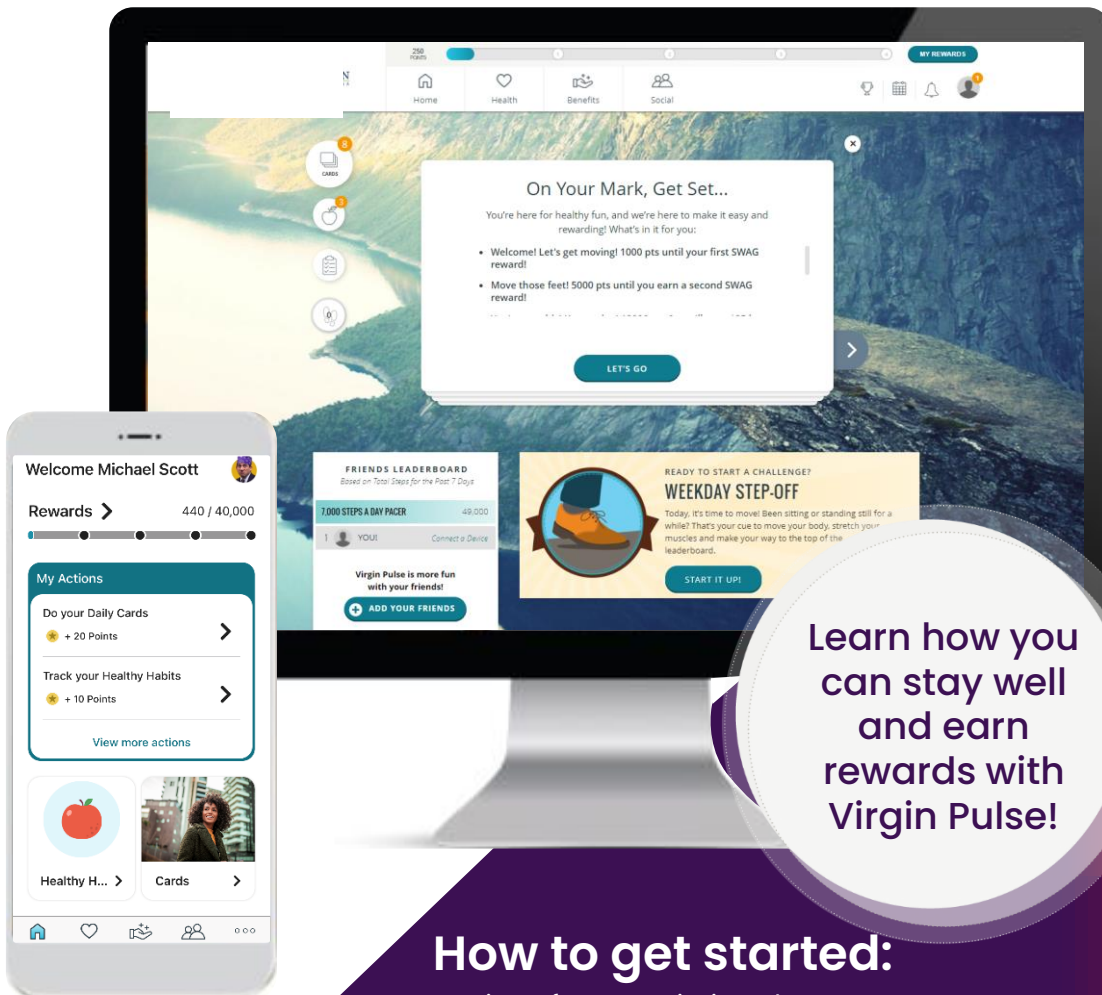
- Calories: 236
- Carbohydrates: 19.6g
- Protein: 26.6g
- Total Fat: 6.5g
- Fiber: 3g

Instructions

- First prepare your stir fry sauce: In a medium bowl, whisk together the soy sauce, cashew butter, garlic, ginger, honey, warm water, red pepper flakes and tapioca flour. Set aside.
- Now you're ready to cook your stir fry: Add coconut oil to a large wok or pot and place over medium high heat. Once oil is hot, add chicken and generously sprinkle with salt and pepper. Cook chicken for 5-6 minutes or until fully cooked and no longer pink. Once chicken is cooked, transfer to a bowl.
- Add in the other 1/2 tablespoon of coconut oil to the skillet and reduce heat to medium. Add minced garlic and cook for 30 seconds or until fragrant, then chopped red onion, snap peas and red bell pepper. Stir-fry for 5 minutes or until onions cook down and bell pepper becomes a little tender. Reduce heat to low, add in chicken, mango and your sauce, gently stirring to coat veggies and cook for another few minutes.
- Consider serving with brown rice or quinoa. Enjoy!

IT'S YOUR TIME TO THRIVE.

The Virgin Pulse wellbeing program gives you the tools to get active, get healthy, and get rewarded.



Learn how you can stay well and earn rewards with Virgin Pulse!

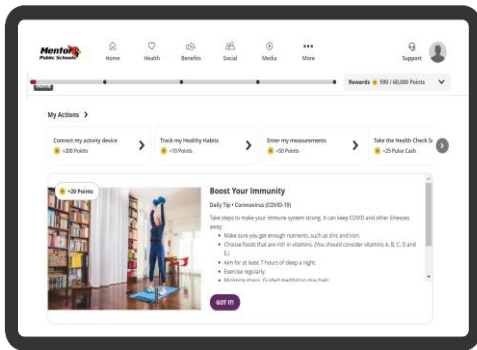
How to get started:

- ➔ Register for your Virgin Pulse account at join.virginpulse.com/mentorschools
- ➔ **Download the Virgin Pulse mobile app** for iOS and Android. Plus, the first time you log in you'll earn bonus points!
- ➔ **Connect an activity tracker** to get credit for your steps, active minutes, and sleep. We sync with many devices and apps (Max Buzz, Fitbit, Apple Health, S Health, etc.)
- ➔ **Upload a profile picture and add friends.**
- ➔ **Set your interests** to get personalized daily tips to help you eat healthy, get active, reduce stress, sleep well, and more.

YOUR HUB FOR HOLISTIC WELLNESS

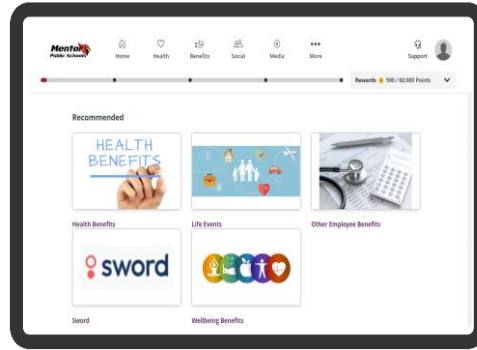
Virgin Pulse is a dynamic platform built to deconstruct every form of wellbeing – physical, mental, spiritual, financial, and more! Here are just a few of the tools at your fingertips!

Daily Tip Cards



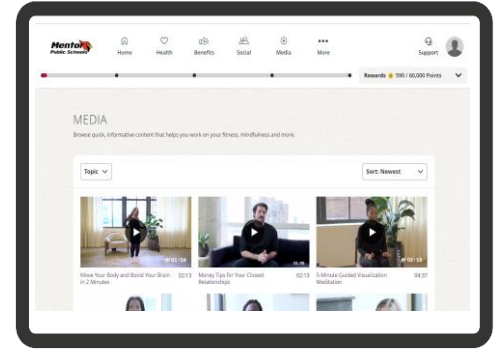
Quick tips to keep you at your best

Benefits Hub



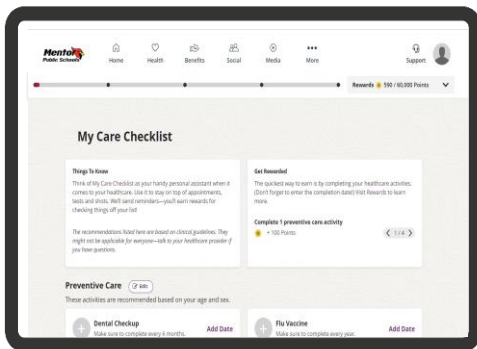
Home to information on more of Mentor School's benefits

Digital Media Library



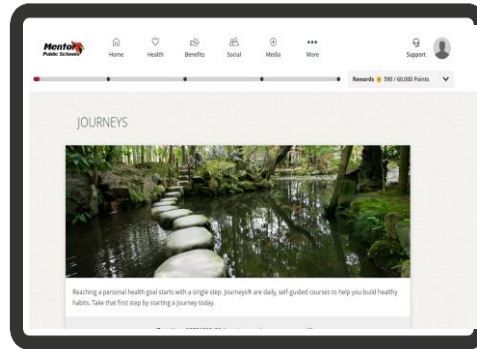
Resource for Quick & Informative Content

My Care Checklist



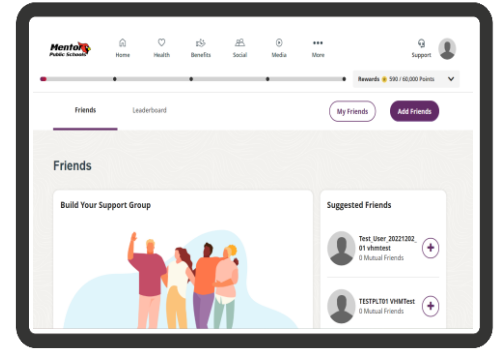
Recommended medical visits, dental visits, etc.

Journeys



Daily, self-guided courses for building healthy habits

Friends



Social page for building camaraderie & competition

Your Rewards

It's easy to earn points by making healthy decisions. You'll have the opportunity to earn a max of \$400 Pulse Cash by participating in the program, earning points, and achieving levels by 12/31!



Here is how your points will translate into rewards:

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
POINTS	7,000	25,000	40,000	60,000
REWARDS	\$50 Pulse Cash	\$50 Pulse Cash	\$110 Pulse Cash	\$140 Pulse Cash

Complete a biometric screening to include A1C and earn an additional \$50 Pulse Cash!

How to Earn Points		*go to your Reward page to see all of the ways to earn points*	
Activity Upload steps from your activity tracker (Max Buzz, Fitbit, Apple Health, S Health, Google Fit, etc.)	DAILY (up to 140 Points/day)	Per 1,000 steps 15 or more active minutes 30 or more active minutes 45 or more active minutes	10 Points 70 Points 100 Points 140 Points
	MONTHLY	20-Day Triple Tracker (moderate activity) 20-Day Triple Tracker (high activity)	400 Points 500 Points
Nutrition & Sleep	DAILY	Calorie Tracking Track sleep manually Track sleep nightly via a device Sleep > 7 hours in a night	20 Points 10 Points 20 Points 50 Points
	DAILY	Track your healthy habits (up to 30 Points/Day)	10 Points
Self Tracking	MONTHLY	Track healthy habits 10 days in a month Track healthy habits 20 days in a month	200 Points 300 Points
	DAILY	Complete daily tip card (2/day)	20 Points
Cards	MONTHLY	Complete 10 daily cards in a month Complete 20 daily cards in a month	100 Points 200 Points
	MONTHLY	Create a personal challenge Join a personal challenge Join the Company Challenge	50 Points 100 Points 100 Points
Journeys	DAILY	Complete a step	15 Points
	QUARTERLY	Complete a Journey	250 Points
More!	ONE-TIME	Complete registration Add a profile picture Connect activity device First 5 friends First login to mobile app	100 Points 100 Points 200 Points 250 Points 250 Points
	YEARLY	Complete the Health Check Survey Visit the Cardinal Clinic Visit the Health Coach Mentor Monthly Challenges Volunteer Hours (x8) In person coaching event Coaching webinar	500 Points 200 Points 125 Points 250 Points 100 Points 50 Points 50 Points



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