

JIF NEWS

A Quarterly Newsletter from the Somerset County Joint Insurance Fund featuring Safety, Health & Wellness



5 EASY WAYS TO Spring Clean YOUR LIFE FOR HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

ONE SPRING WEEKEND every year as a young child, my extended family met at Grandma's house to help "spring clean." This wasn't any old cleaning – it involved the adults washing down walls and baseboards, repainting ceilings and trim, and washing windows and all of the window treatments. It was an intense cleaning from floor to ceiling.

And I liked it. Afterward, the whole house had a fresher, lighter, brighter feel. I loved the smell of the clean house, the breeze of the spring air and the sun shining through clear windows.

Now as an adult, I think of those weekends when I'm struggling to find the time to wash my floors once a week – let alone to scrub them down from top to bottom. (Besides, what's the point when I've found that a vase full of pretty flowers feels just as fresh as an immaculate house and keeps eyes off the dirty floors?) These days, "spring cleaning" for me usually means cleaning up my life – the behaviors, habits and routines that could use a good dusting off – rather than my home. If you, too, want a brighter perspective on your life, consider freshening up these five areas:

1. Your Thoughts

We all experience thousands of thoughts every day. With life's daily hassles, it can become easy to get caught up in negative thinking such as pessimism, cynicism and comparison. When we view life with a negative filter, it becomes easier and easier to attach to those thoughts and ruminate on what's wrong – instead of all that's right.

The cleanup: Find the joy. Make a list of things that you enjoy doing and can easily fit into your life each week. This may include scheduling a manicure, hitting up the driving range, going to see a movie or meeting a friend for coffee. It can be anything, as long as it brings you happiness and is something you can do easily. When we attend to the things that make us happy and bring them into our lives, we can begin to see things in a more positive light.

2. Your Habits

Everything we do in life works for us in one way or another – even the behaviors and habits we say we want to ditch. That's what makes them tricky to change.

The cleanup: Take some time to do a review of your day. Write down everything you do from the time the alarm goes off in the morning until you lay down at night. Record how you're spending your time, what you're focusing on, your thoughts, feelings and everything else. Next, pick one thing to change. Maybe it's never looking at Facebook on your phone. Or perhaps you decide you don't need to watch two hours of television at night. Eliminate one habit in your day that doesn't serve you and replace it with one that does.

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National Work Zone Awareness Week GO ORANGE DAY 2020

All roadway safety professionals across the country are encouraged to wear orange to proudly show their support of work zone safety. Go Orange Day and NWZAW is an important time to show your support of the roadway safety industry, especially to the families of victims who have lost their lives in work zones.

APRIL 6-10TH NATIONAL WINDOW SAFETY WEEK

SPRING CLEAN (CONT.)

3. Your Pantry

The problem with most pantries is like any good closet or catchall: It can become a place where items – like that jar of mango chutney you bought for a recipe (and never made) or the items from the gift basket Aunt Vera gave you for Christmas in 1996 – get stored, never to emerge again.

The cleanup: Quickly scan your pantry and toss any item that has been there for more than one year. Next, sort like foods with like foods, be they breakfast foods, snack foods, canned goods, grains and rice, condiments and dressings, or baking items. Once it's organized, take a hard look at the quality of the foods in your pantry. Is it stocked with convenient lean protein options such as canned tuna, salmon and beans? Do you have healthy breakfast choices like old-fashioned rolled oats? Let's talk grains: Packaged brown rice options in microwaveable pouches (I like Uncle Ben's) are fantastic for quick dinners. Prepare frozen vegetables and serve them with canned protein, and you can always have a meal on hand that's ready in minutes.

4. Your Diet

Most of us know the area of our diets that could use the most work. If you don't, ask yourself: What's the one aspect of your eating that you wish you could improve? Maybe it's to eat less fast food, eat more fruits and veggies, snack less or eat more mindfully.

The cleanup: Set a goal for yourself around that behavior. Keep the goal simple, actionable and totally reasonable. If you currently eat fast food five days a week, cut it down to four. If you're eating zero vegetables, plan to eat just one a day. Each week you hit your daily goal, reward yourself – just not with a type of unhealthy food or drink you're trying to limit.

5. Your Workouts

It's too easy to get into the indoor exercise equipment rut during the early, dark winter days. While that routine is convenient when it's snowy or cold outside, many of us end up carrying the same workout program into the spring – and don't see the results we could.

The cleanup: Lose the treadmill and elliptical machines and take your workout outdoors. Change it up and try fartlek training. Fartlek is a German word that means "speed play," and it can be a great tool for increasing your speed and endurance. Using random objects in your environment, decide to push yourself a little harder in your running workouts. You may choose to sprint between lampposts at the park or pick up your pace until you get to the next fire hydrant. Return to a normal pace until you feel recovered, and then pick the next landmark. The number of intervals and distance apart is entirely up to you. Adding speed intervals is a great way to get more work done in less time – and in a more playful way. Just like your house, you don't need to overhaul everything to see a brighter picture in your health and your choices. Simple tweaks in your habits can bring a fresher, lighter feel to your life.

EVERY KID HEALTHY WEEK 2020 SCHEDULE



Action for Healthy Kids.org

HOW TO MAKE SALSA... EASY AND DELICIOUS!



PREP TIME: 5 MINUTES
COOK TIME: 5 MINUTES
TOTAL TIME: 10 MINUTES
YIELD: 3.5 CUPS

Ingredients

- 1 large clove garlic, grated or finely chopped
- 1 small white onion, peeled and cut into quarters
- 1 large handful fresh cilantro (about 1 cup loosely packed)
- 1 small jalapeño, stemmed and seeded depending on your heat preference (omit for a very mild salsa)
- ¼ teaspoon lime zest (zest the lime before you juice it)
- the juice of 2 small limes (about 3 tablespoons fresh lime juice)
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin powder
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- 2 (14-ounce cans) or boxes of diced tomatoes (look for no sugar added), OR, 3 cups roughly chopped fresh tomatoes

Instructions

- 1) Add all of the ingredients except the tomatoes to the bowl of a food processor or blender. Pulse 10-15 times to roughly chop all ingredients; if using a blender blend on low for 5-10 seconds. Scape down the sides.
- 2) Add the tomatoes and pulse them in until well incorporated but still chunky with texture. Pulse until your desired texture is reached; about 8 pulses. Adjust the salt to taste.
- 3) You can enjoy your salsa right away, and it gets even better the longer it sits. Store in an airtight glass container up to 5 days in the refrigerator.