

6 simple ways to boost your wellbeing this fall

Start a gratitude journal

With back-to-school, shorter days, and more indoor time, being a parent in the fall can feel stressful and overwhelming.

But taking just a few minutes a day to write in a gratitude journal can make a big difference for your body and mind.¹ Studies show that people who focus on gratitude tend to:

- Have fewer aches and pains and feel healthier
- Be happier and experience less depression
- Sleep better

Make a plan to stay healthy

We all know that fall is flu season, but there's a lot you can do to help keep your family healthy:

- Get your flu shots. The CDC recommends yearly flu shots for people over 6 months old²
- Teach kids good handwashing skills, including lathering up for as long as it takes to sing the whole ABC song
- Keep family members home when they're sick so they can get well quicker, and keep the germs from spreading

Build a bedtime routine

Have you and the kids slipped into a summer sleep schedule? Try getting bedtime back into shape early, so everyone will be in the groove when school starts. Plan calm activities in the evening, and set bedtimes so that everyone (even you!) can get enough rest.

Here's how much sleep the CDC recommends for the whole family:³

- Infants (4-12 months): 12-16 hours per day, including naps
- Toddlers (1-2 years): 11-14 hours per day, including naps
- Preschoolers (3-5 years): 10-13 hours per day, including naps
- School age children (6-12 years): 9-12 hours per night
- Teenagers (13-18 years) 8-10 hours per night
- Adults (18-60 years): 7 hours or more per night



Plan healthy lunches for everyone

Packing lunches for school and work can give your whole family a great mid-day boost. To ease stress and make the packing simple, grab your ingredients before the week starts. Here's a strategy to try: shop for your favorite veggies, fruits, grains, and protein. Then keep it interesting with a different mix-and-match combination each day:

- **Veggies:** spinach, carrots, peppers, cucumbers, kale, broccoli
- **Fruits:** apples, bananas, clementines, berries, grapes, melon, avocado
- **Grains:** quinoa, brown rice, whole-grain bread or crackers, whole-wheat pasta
- **Protein:** tofu, chickpeas, chicken, almonds, veggie burgers, hard-boiled eggs, cheese, yogurt, edamame

bonus tip

For a fun lunch that keeps food from touching (for those picky eaters among us) try a Bento box! They're handy for planning portions for grownups, too.



Try going device-free in the evenings

With busier schedules and earlier bedtimes, it can be hard to really connect and be present with your family in the fall. But turning off your devices in the evening—even if it's just for a little while—can help. Going device-free can lower stress and let you really focus on each other. And cutting out the blue light from screens in the evening can even help you sleep better!⁴

Take a deep breath

New schedules and activities can make this time of year stressful. Remember to pause, take a deep breath, and soak in the best things about fall. Take the opportunity to discover the season all over again, through your kids' eyes.

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of parenting

1. Psychology Today: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/what-mentally-strong-people-dont-do/201504/7-scientificall-proven-benefits-gratitude>

2. Centers for Disease Control: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/diseases/flu.html>

3. Centers for Disease Control: https://www.cdc.gov/sleep/about_sleep/how_much_sleep.html

4. The Greater Good Science Center, UC Berkeley: https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/five_reasons_to_take_a_break_from_screens

7 tips for working from home with kids

As another school year begins, it's a good time for work-from-home (WFH) parents to refine their strategy. While remote work offers certain benefits, it's no cakewalk when there are kids involved—no matter what age they are. Here are some tips for staying sane and making the workday a little easier.

Work in bursts, followed by play

For more efficiency—and less multitasking—set a timer for a work sprint of say 60 or 90 minutes. Let your kids know that if they don't disturb you before the timer goes off, you'll then do something fun together.

Set up new activity boxes

Variety is the enemy of boredom. Look for new art supplies or self-supervised projects that match your kids' latest interests. Or if pressed for time, sign up for subscription boxes of books, stickers, or whatever else your kids love.

Make plans for nap time

If you have an infant or toddler at home, this is when you want to schedule important calls or block out time for tasks that require serious concentration. It may be the most uninterrupted window you'll get!

Arrange playdates and swap childcare

Team up with other WFH parents to make playdates and trade off watching the kids. Your broods will be excited and distracted, and you'll have some predictable slots for getting down to business.

Go blurry and exercise that mute button

Sick of always having to make sure your video call background is cleared of toys or mess? Most videoconferencing platforms now allow you to blur what's behind you. Plus, mute is always your friend.

Establish better ground rules

Think about your biggest WFH issues and what new rules or tools might help. For example: a sign on your door that says "Open" or "Closed," or a drawer of snack packs that your kids can hit up without having to bother you.

Get help after school

Consider hiring a responsible teenager to babysit for a few hours each week. They can keep your kids entertained, and the cost is typically less than an adult sitter or daycare center. Another option is after-school programs.

Looking for more parenting support? Download the Ovia™ Parenting app today.

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