

EMPOWERING HEALTH & WELLBEING
FOR WOMEN IN SELF-CARE

PREVIEW

Here are excerpts to help sustain energy, focus, and engagement during the afternoon. From exercises, stretches, nutritious and cost-effective lunch recipes and ideas to ways of de-stressing before transitioning into the evening.

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**A
SHORT
GUIDE
TO
HEALTHY
LIVING**

**AFTERNOON
BOOST & BALANCE TO
POWER THROUGH YOUR DAY
EMPOWERING HEALTH & WELL-BEING
FOR WOMEN IN SELF-CARE**

DOLLY JAMES



This second series focuses on adopting specific routines in the afternoon which can significantly enhance productivity and overall well-being.

You will have information on scheduling and organising tasks to keep the mind engaged and productive, tips for implementing structured physical activities and practising meditation and deep breathing and stretching exercises to help counteract the decline in focus and energy.

There will be information on the importance of having a nutritious and energy-giving lunch inclusive of recipes which can help reduce stress, enhance mental clarity and improve your mood.

Having a consistent afternoon routine will provide structure, help to manage your time more efficiently and maintain a balanced work-life dynamic. This approach supports sustained productivity and contributes to a more fulfilling and less stressful day.



Content and design created by D. James.

Note: The graphic images included in this book are for guidance purposes only. They are intended to provide visual support and enhance understanding of the exercises, recipes, and lifestyle choices described.

The content in this book primarily serves informative purposes based on personal knowledge, experiences, and scientific and analytical research.

If you are following a prescribed diet or medication, it is recommended to seek advice before applying the methods outlined in this book.

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1 ORGANISE & PLAN



Transitioning smoothly from morning to afternoon routines can help maintain productivity and energy levels throughout the day.

Let's consider a scenario where you might have experienced a busy morning, facing challenges in achieving your resolutions and maybe feeling a little stressed that you might not have accomplished what you have set out to do. The one thing you need to remind yourself is that being fallible is part of our everyday existence and the stress and frustrations can be avoided when we understand that perfectionism is unattainable.

What you need is to focus on the progression that you are making each day and to celebrate the little victories along the way. It is achieving a feeling of inner peace and calm and accepting that no matter how good you are in your job and exceptionally skilled in your designated field of work, there will be times when you won't get it right.

It's life and accepting this philosophy that we are allowed to make mistakes, have some failings and will have occasional 'off-day moments', will make you even stronger and more resilient in progressing in the day ahead with new ideas, strategies and mainly, being kind to yourself and know that it is going to be all right.

How do you transition from, a probably not-so-good morning to a productive and fruitful afternoon?

Working At Home



The Pomodoro Technique can be a fantastic tool for a mum working from home to manage her time effectively while balancing work and family responsibilities. Here's how it can be adapted:

1. Create a Schedule:

Determine Work and Break Intervals: Decide on the length of your work intervals (standard is 25 minutes) and break times (5 minutes for short breaks, 15-30 minutes for longer breaks after a few intervals).

Align with Family Needs: Schedule your Pomodoros around family routines, such as nap times, meal times, or playtimes.

2. Set Clear Goals:

Task List: At the beginning of each day, write down the tasks you want to accomplish during your Pomodoros.

Prioritise: Focus on high-priority tasks during your most productive Pomodoros.

3. Use Breaks Wisely:

Quick Family Check-Ins: Use short breaks to check in with your kids, address any immediate needs, or just take a moment to connect.

Self-Care: Longer breaks can be used for self-care activities like stretching, a quick walk, or a healthy snack.

4. Stay Flexible:

Adapt as Needed: Understand that your schedule might need to change based on your family's needs. Be flexible and ready to adjust your Pomodoros.

2

TAKE A BREAK



Once you've completed your scheduled plans for the afternoon, grab your jacket, coat, or sunglasses if it's warm and sunny, and head out.

Don't let the weather dictate your plans, as we often adjust our activities based on whether it's sunny, rainy, snowy, or overcast. Be prepared for any weather changes by keeping a waterproof coat or umbrella handy for rainy days. On colder days, bundle up with a scarf, hat, warm coat, and appropriate footwear. Alternatively, if it's a sunny summer day, dress comfortably and enjoy a pleasant walk during your lunch break.



If your lunch break is only thirty minutes, try dividing it into two fifteen-minute sections. You can spend the first fifteen minutes either having your lunch or stepping away from your desk to get some fresh air.

Your choice will depend on how you feel: if you're hungry, go ahead and eat. If you need a mental break, take a walk or relax outside, then return to enjoy your lunch. Whether it is a lunch that you prepared the night before or one that you bought, dividing your break this way, you can spend enjoying your lunch making the most of the remaining time without feeling rushed.

Avoid looking at your work screen, using your mobile to catch up with messages or scrolling through social media. Having a book to read would be a better option or take the time to savour every bit of your lunch as you have only fifteen minutes to eat and digest it.

You don't have to think of what you have to do for the rest of the afternoon whilst eating your lunch as you have already set out your work plan earlier.

In the following pages are suggestions for either of your thirty or sixty-minute breaks that can be wonderful additions to your daily routine, especially during breaks or moments when you need to relax and reset.

You can do a lot in sixty minutes whether at home or at work. However, if time is of the essence using it wisely to include activities inclusive of having your lunch should be a smooth operation without too much fuss or decisions.

This will have to be based on the nature of your work, what is involved and your family commitments, say picking up your child or children from school mid-afternoon or working on a part-remote basis where you will be required to travel for your work.

There are a few suggestions to help keep you feeling in control and having all the right ‘tools’ to support you and make your time between work and your break a smooth transition without feeling rushed, stressed or worn out before the day is through.

I collated some tips together as a guideline for you to implement with the option to change the activities in the time allocated within the 60 minutes. Sometimes you just have to go with the flow based on how you are feeling at the time and change of events.

Here’s how to effectively use a 60-minute lunch break to fit in exercise, reflection, meditation, and lunch:

3

Exercise



Engaging in exercise, whether it's a leisurely walk in the park, a focused gym session, a refreshing swim or a quick four-minute workout, can significantly boost your energy levels and help maintain focus throughout the afternoon. By incorporating physical activity into your daily routine, you not only enhance your physical health but also sharpen your mental clarity, making it easier to tackle the rest of your day with vigour and concentration.

Let's look at the different activities to include as part of your exercise within the allocated time that you have in your lunch break. If you have an hour's lunch break, you can choose your activity to suit your mood, and needs and as a stress and anxiety diffuser. In the following pages are a few suggestions that might be suitable for you.

Why not take a walk in the park or green spaces, or anywhere that is nearby that has high vegetation such as trees and plants which are beneficial for our health and well-being?

Regardless of whether it's snowing, raining, or the sun is shining, it's vital to make an effort to spend time outside in the fresh air, especially if much of your day is spent working in an office or at home. Stepping outside helps rejuvenate the mind and body, providing a much-needed break from the confines of indoor environments.



*A Walk
in the Park
Come Snow....*



*A Walk
in the Park
Come Rain.....*



*A Walk
in the Park
Come Shine...*

4 STRETCH & BREATHE



As you will have gathered now stretching and breathing exercises are essential practices that offer a multitude of physical and mental benefits.

Wherever you are, work or home, regular stretching can enhance flexibility, improve posture, and reduce muscle stiffness, which helps prevent injuries and alleviate chronic pain.

On the other hand, breathing exercises, such as diaphragmatic breathing, sip and breathe, can significantly reduce stress, lower blood pressure, and improve lung function.

I have included some stretching and breathing exercises from the Morning series as they are simple yet mindful and effective you can incorporate them into your afternoon routines whether at work or home.

When the afternoon feels like it's dragging and your energy wanes, these exercises can boost your overall well-being by promoting relaxation, increasing oxygen flow, and enhancing mental clarity. They can rejuvenate you, providing a fresh surge of energy and focus to tackle tasks, improve problem-solving skills, and enhance communication, helping you navigate the rest of the afternoon with renewed vigour, no matter what challenges come your way.

As it is often the time of day when our energy levels can dip after a busy morning, it's crucial to make lunchtime a nutritious and rejuvenating break. I want to share some healthy and easy ways to create a lunch that not only nourishes your body but also supports your gut health. A well-balanced lunch can enhance focus and clarity, and contribute to emotional and mental well-being, helping you tackle the afternoon's challenges effectively.

One key aspect is to avoid processed foods, which are often high in unhealthy fats, sugars, and artificial additives. These can lead to energy crashes and negatively impact your overall health. Instead, opt for whole, unprocessed foods that provide natural nutrients and sustained energy.

Here are some tips to make your lunch healthier:

- 1. Include Fresh Vegetables:** Fresh vegetables are packed with vitamins, minerals, and fibre. They can be easily incorporated into salads, wraps, or side dishes. Vegetables like spinach, kale, bell peppers, and carrots are great options.
- 2. Choose Whole Grains:** Whole grains like quinoa, brown rice, and whole wheat bread are excellent sources of sustained energy. They are more nutritious and filling compared to refined grains.

3. Add Lean Proteins: Incorporate lean proteins such as grilled chicken, turkey, tofu, or legumes. These proteins can help keep you full and provide the necessary amino acids for muscle repair and growth.

4. Use Healthy Fats: Healthy fats like avocados, nuts, seeds, and olive oil can enhance the flavour of your meals and provide essential fatty acids that support brain function.

5. Prepare Homemade Meals: Preparing meals at home allows you to control the ingredients and avoid added sugars, preservatives, and unhealthy fats found in many processed foods. Simple recipes like quinoa bowls, vegetable stir-fries, and homemade soups can be both delicious and nutritious.

6. Stay Hydrated: Drink plenty of water throughout the day to stay hydrated. Proper hydration is essential for maintaining energy levels and supporting overall health.

Recipes



In this section, you will have recipe ideas for sandwiches, lettuce wraps, soups, savoury snacks and healthy sweet treats, all quite easy to prepare with some of them ideal to prepare the previous evening.

It occurred to me that when creating meals within a short space of time, it would be wise to see what appliances and tools you might have in your kitchen to help quicken the process. I rely on some of these stock tools in my kitchen to prepare some of my meals.

A hand-held or a stick blender is useful just as those mini-blenders that you can use to make a quick smoothie or dressing. Sometimes, a manual whisk may just do the trick but if you need prolonged whisking for smoothing out sauces and soups, it would be good to invest in a blender, the bullet type or a hand-held.

I will include links in the reference and links page at the end of this book where you can choose a selection of hand-held or stick blenders to a motorised version with its jug to suit your needs.

Then the next few stock tools would be a medium-sized non-stick pan with a lid, a stainless-steel saucepan with a slightly thick base, mixing bowls and ladles spatulas and spoons that are either silicone or wooden. Silicone spatulas or spoons are great for scrapping every bit of sauce, batter or dressings and dips in a mixing bowl or jug without waste. I hope this will help you in your preparations for making meals to savoury snacks and sweet treats easier.

In the last series, you will find more ideas for useful kitchen tools.*



6

**KEEP
HYDRATED**

Staying hydrated at work, especially in the afternoon, is crucial for maintaining optimal productivity and overall well-being. As the day progresses, it's common to experience a dip in energy levels and concentration. Drinking enough water helps combat this by keeping your brain and body functioning efficiently.

Proper hydration supports cognitive functions, reduces fatigue, and prevents headaches, ensuring you stay focused and alert. Additionally, it aids in regulating body temperature and maintaining healthy digestion, which are essential for staying comfortable and productive throughout the workday. So, make it a habit to keep a water bottle handy, or a couple more so you can take regular sips to stay refreshed and energised.

Here are some tips in staying hydrated:

Carry a Water Bottle: Keep a reusable water bottle with you and sip throughout the day.

Set Reminders: Use phone alarms or apps to remind you to drink water regularly.

Infuse with flavour: If plain water is not to your liking, add slices of fruit, herbs, or cucumber for a refreshing twist.

See for more information in the next page.

Eat Hydrating Foods: Include water-rich foods in your diet, such as cucumbers, watermelon, and oranges.

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REFLECTION & MEDITATION





When faced with life's demands and challenges, being centred in our mental and emotional health is essential for resilience and clarity.

It allows us to approach problems with a calm, balanced mindset, reducing the impact of stress and anxiety. By nurturing our emotional well-being, we can make more thoughtful decisions, communicate effectively, and maintain healthy relationships.

Prioritising self-care, mindfulness, and emotional awareness equips us with the inner strength to navigate difficulties with grace and perseverance, ultimately leading to a more fulfilling and balanced life.

By incorporating these affirmations into our daily routine, we can create a mental and emotional foundation that promotes well-being and resilience. They help us to stay focused on our strengths and to approach each day with a renewed sense of purpose and determination.



Establishing a healthy afternoon routine can significantly enhance your overall well-being and productivity. You can combat the common afternoon slump and maintain high energy levels by incorporating structured activities such as short breaks, physical exercise, mindfulness practices, and a nutritious lunch or afternoon snack. These routines not only help manage stress and improve focus but also contribute to better time management and work-life balance. Ultimately, a well-planned afternoon routine can lead to increased productivity, reduced feelings of overwhelm, and a more balanced, fulfilling day.



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PREVIEW

In the following pages, you'll find the Happy List, which serves as the Table of Contents for this book. This series focuses on the Afternoon and includes topics such as the Pomodoro technique to boost productivity, healthy lunch recipes for balanced nutrition, and reflection and meditation practices to wind down your afternoon. Some of these topics and chapters also appear in the Morning and Evening series, providing you with a holistic approach to self-care and a variety of options for your daily routines.

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