

## The Best Healthy Habits of 2021

The folks over at The New York Times have provided many pieces of practical advice for getting and staying healthy this year. This week they provided a best-of their recommendations. Several are featured below; the full list is at [NYTimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com).

### Exercise Snacks



A number of studies show that short bursts of exercise several times a day led to meaningful gains in fitness and overall health. Just as snacks quell our need for food, an exercise “snack” is a quick movement break to meet your exercise need. Get up and pace when you’re on the phone; commit to 20 seconds on the stairs at work. Get creative!

### Gratitude Photos



If a gratitude journal isn’t your thing, plan to take one photo a day of something special in your life, then take a moment to study it, sit with your feelings of gratitude, and perhaps share it with a friend or post it on social media. This practice is called “savoring” and research suggests this can lead to meaningful gains in overall happiness and well-being.

### Feelings List



Studies show that when we label our feelings, it helps turn off the emotional alarm system in our brain and lowers our stress response. [Click the link for a list of words, from the Hoffman Institute, to describe how you’re feeling](#) and put it on your refrigerator or your bathroom. Ask your kids to pick a word from the list every day too. It can be a surprisingly fun family routine.

### The Fast Fiver Finger Meditation



Use the index finger of one hand to trace the outline of the opposite hand. As you trace up a finger, breathe in. As you trace down, breathe out. Continue finger by finger until you’ve traced your entire hand. Now reverse directions and do it again, making sure to inhale as you trace up, and exhale as you trace down.

### Watch Some Jellyfish



Cord Jefferson, a television writer who thanked his therapist on national television when he won an Emmy Award, shared he struggled with traditional meditation, but he enjoys watching the feed from a web camera showing the [jellyfish at the Monterey Bay Aquarium](#). Bookmark the jelly-cam on your phone or laptop browser and get lost in the gentle pulses of the jellyfish for a short mindfulness break during your workday.

### Find a Health Buddy



Choose a friend who shares your health goals and make a plan. Meet each other once or twice a week for a walking date. Or it could be a daily text check-in to see how you’re doing on a diet, or a Zoom call to work together on a decluttering project. Studies show we’re more likely to reach our goals when we bring a friend along for the journey.

