



MAKE HEALTH AND WELLNESS A PART OF THE JOB HUNT

Being a Human First and Job Seeker Second

Introduction p. 1

Care for your mind p. 2

Set strong boundaries p. 2

Prepare for information overload p. 4

Learn stress management p. 5

Treat your body with kindness p. 6

Adopt healthy eating habits p. 6

Keep your body moving p. 7

Prioritize sleep p. 8

Keep your spirit alive p. 9

Practice mindfulness p. 9

Spend quality time with loved ones p. 11

Make time for creative hobbies p. 11

Be honest with yourself. You're under a lot of pressure. (Cue Queen's opening to 'Under Pressure.') You devote hours and hours of your time to the job search, you panic about interviews that you've scheduled, and you get frustrated when you never hear back at all from companies you were excited to apply to.

But it's important to remember that, no matter how much stress you're facing, your health and wellness must come first.

According to [Gallup research](#) from early 2020, 76% of employees experience burnout on the job at least sometimes, and 28% say they are burned out "very often" or "always." That could be your future.



As much as the job hunt may drive you insane, the reality is that there are stressors on the job too. And if you don't learn how to cope with your burnout now, it'll likely continue to be a problem moving forward.

The truth is, your health and wellness are more important than whatever pressure you're experiencing. You're allowed to be a human first, prioritize those needs above all else, and be a job seeker second.

Here are the tips and tools you need to care for your mind, body, and spirit throughout the job hunt process:

Care for your mind

The mind is a marvel. It receives so much input throughout the day of things you've learned and emotions to process, and it manages to keep you functioning through it all. Keeping it healthy is essential to everything.

But in times of high stress and uncertainty, mental health becomes challenging to maintain. [Research](#) has proven that extended unemployment takes a toll on a job seeker's mental health. And [studies at Gallup](#) demonstrate that only 34% of American adults in 2020 said their mental health was excellent, down from 43% in 2019.



Those are bleak stats, but they don't have to apply to you if you learn to take proactive steps to look after your mental health.

Here are three tips to make caring for your health and wellness easier and more effective:

Set strong boundaries

You know going in that at some point, you'll encounter [job search stress](#). So the first step in taking care of your mental health and wellness is to be proactive.

Setting boundaries for yourself and communicating your boundaries with others is a crucial preventative measure to ensure you prioritize your health.

One of the biggest culprits to sabotage the job search process is distractions. In 2018, a [Udemy survey](#) asked [millennials and Gen Z](#) about the impact of distractions. Of those struggling with distractions, 46% said distraction made them feel unmotivated, and 41% admitted they stress them out.

Additionally, 78% said personal activities were more distracting than work-related intrusions like interruptions from co-workers and background noise. Another 69% acknowledged that checking their phone interfered with their concentration, and yet 36% said they spend two hours or more distracted by their phones during the workday.



What does that mean for you during the job search? Ask other members of your household to be mindful of interruptions and distracting noise, yes. But also practice self-control with how much you check your phone or open irrelevant tabs on the computer.

Put it into practice:

Use these prompts to communicate boundaries with others politely:

- *I won't be available to talk between ____ and ____ today, but I look forward to connecting after I wrap up my goals for the day.*
- *I love that you stop by and share about your day, but I need to keep the door closed today for my [virtual interviews](#).*
- *I'm putting my phone away so I can focus. If you need to reach me, I'll keep an eye on my email.*

Decide 'work' hours that you'll commit to the job search. Put your phone on silent and hide it away on the other side of the room. If you can't hear it and can't see it, you'll be less likely to grab it when you don't need to.



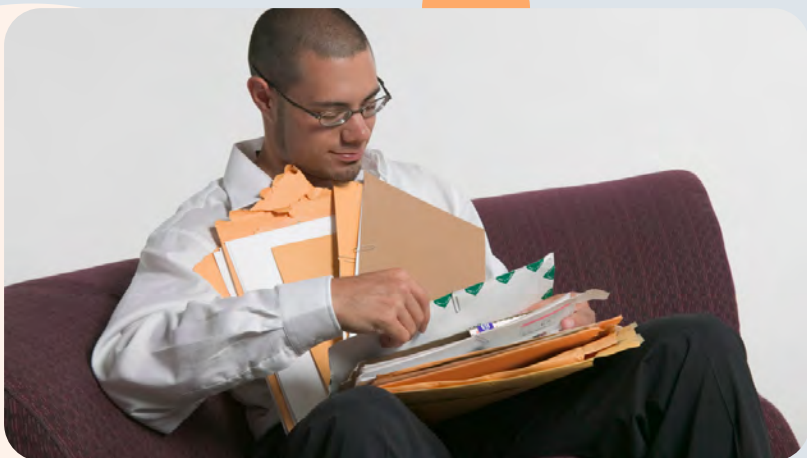
Prepare for information overload

Standing out as a top-tier candidate takes a lot of work. You have to analyze job postings, research the company, hone your technical and soft skills, and beef up your digital presence. Through it all, you get bombarded with new trends to learn and facts to memorize. Without a good strategy in place, it's easy to get overwhelmed.

To manage it all, you must filter through which pieces of information are necessary and adopt a system to keep track of it without getting bogged down in the details.

Try out these approaches and see what works for you:

- *Stop falling for clickbait that won't give you quality advice.*
- *Build a spreadsheet to organize info that you'd like to remember.*
- *Set a timer when you start going down a research rabbit hole so you don't spend all day stuck in there.*
- *Make goals for each day and stick to them.*
- *If you're hemming and hawing on whether you like a job posting for more than ten minutes, move on.*



Learn stress management

Regardless of the boundaries you establish and strategies you adopt for processing information, some stress is unavoidable in a prolonged job hunt.

While many job seekers know which activities help them relieve stress after the moment has passed, do you know how to work with it at the moment?

It's time to learn.

A lot of stress management is more about self-talk and self-regulation than anything else. It's getting into the practice of saying, "Task A is a priority, and I am capable of getting it done. Task B will happen at some point, and I can trust my future self to take care of it and do it well."

Find a tool or mental practice you'd like to learn about, and get in the habit of using it to control your thought process in stressful moments.

Put it into practice:

The Eisenhower matrix is a tool for time and stress management:

Q1 - "DO" *This is essential, and I need to get it done right now.*

Q2 - "DECIDE" *This is essential to happen at some point, but I can schedule a time for it later.*

Q3 - "DELEGATE" *This needs to happen soon, but I don't have to be the one to do it.*

Q4 - "DELETE" *This is something I'd like to do, but I can ignore it for now and get around to it when I have time.*



Treat your body with kindness

Every once in a while, there's a passing wish we could plop our brains and personalities into robots and never have to worry about taking care of our bodies. But until that very distant future becomes reality, you owe it to yourself to respect your body.

After all, so many physical systems are tied together. And when you start to tend to them with healthy habits, you'll notice your quality of life improves as well.

Here are three ways to take care of your physical health and wellness to improve your well-being as a job seeker:

Adopt healthy eating habits

It feels good at the moment to eat that entire family-sized bag of potato chips in ten minutes. And [researchers](#) recently found that our brains are hard-wired to recall the location of high-calorie foods better than other food options. But reaching for the junk food on instinct isn't doing your body any favors in the long-run.



While it's not as fun to maintain a healthy diet, the advantages are undeniable. Just a quick look at [Harvard Health's healthy eating articles](#) will show you how many studies prove why various diet choices are great or disastrous for your health.

And as we've previously shared in our [ten eating habits](#) for stamina, hydration and a well-balanced diet are crucial for maintaining energy in the job search.

Keep your body moving

As you probably already know, your health and wellness also depend on physical activity.

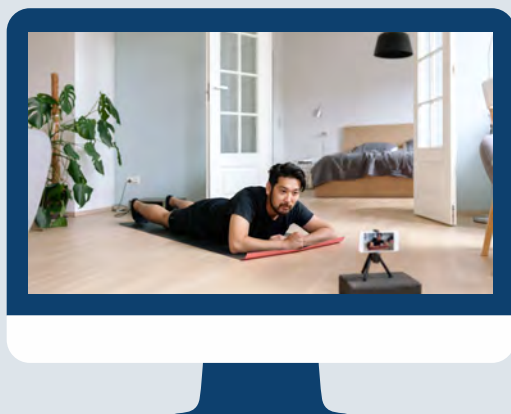
It's OK to indulge in a couch potato, binge-watching day every once in a while. But, when you don't get your body moving regularly, you trap yourself in that sluggish state of low energy. It can be difficult to get moving after you've been sedentary for so long. But it is crucial to improving your mental and physical well-being to make you an even better candidate.

And it doesn't have to be brutal amounts of running to count as activity. Step challenges are just as practical, and so is yoga! Testimonies and studies consistently demonstrate that practicing yoga helps reduce stress. One study from [Penn Medicine](#) even revealed that yogic breathing helps fight major depression.

Put it into practice:

Following videos from these fitness YouTubers is a great way to get started with being active. And they're free!

- Yoga with Adriene
- Fitness Blender
- POPSUGAR Fitness
- The Body Coach
- Madfit



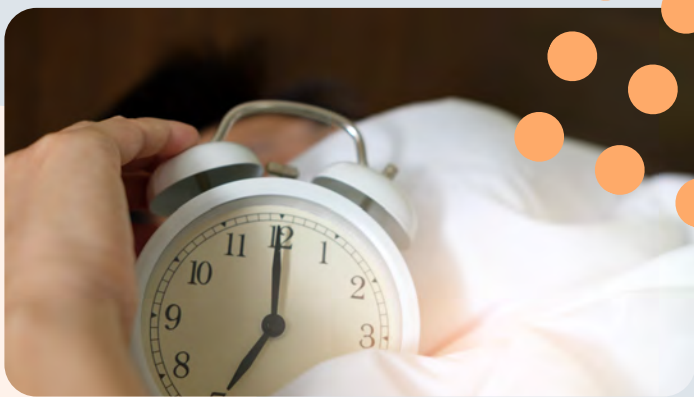
Prioritize sleep

Arguably the worst people to work with are grouches who complain all the time, never get their work done, tune out during every critical conversation, and quickly lose their temper with team members. Unfortunately, that's what you turn into when you don't get enough sleep.

It's tempting to miss out on sleep when you can instead check out just one more job posting (or watching one more episode). Sometimes, merely resting in a dark room without really falling asleep feels like it would be just as effective. Well, it's not.

Nothing beats sleep. Recent research published by the [Sleep Research Society](#) found that a group who slept for an hour performed better than a group that stayed awake and did activities, and they performed significantly better than a group that stayed awake in a dark room for the same amount of time without external stimuli.

That means [performing well in interviews](#) relies heavily on getting a great night of sleep beforehand.



Put it into practice:

For better sleep habits, check out [sleepyti.me](#), a website to calculate the best times to sleep and wake up in the morning based on the average length of REM cycles.

Keep your spirit alive

Appropriately handling stress and making sure your body is “happy” are critical for your health and wellness. But that which keeps you sane isn’t composure or physicality; it’s the strength of your spirit.

Denying yourself opportunities to take deep breaths, spend time with others, and do the things you love isn’t discipline. And the job hunt isn’t worth losing yourself to unhealthy restrictions.

Besides, doing activities that make you happy in your off time make you more productive overall. According to the [University of Oxford's Saïd Business School](#), happy employees use their time more productively and work faster than unhappy colleagues. So it’s a worthwhile investment to make choices that make you feel good.



These are just three of many ways to keep your spirit alive during the job search:

Practice mindfulness

Researchers and religious leaders alike have celebrated the benefits of mindfulness, and the practice has become more mainstream in recent years. It’s not some transient habit for hippies and monks. It is a beneficial skill for everyone as it helps with grounding, self-awareness, reflection, spiritual connection, and living in the present.

In a [study](#) published in JAMA Network in 2020, researchers found that participants in a seven and a half hour course over five weeks experienced significantly lower stress and anxiety levels. They also reported feeling more positive emotions than before the program and felt inclined to continue with mindfulness in their daily lives after it ended.

While it may feel scary to step into something foreign, trust that this habit will do wonders for your job search.

Put it into practice:

To hit pause in the middle of a chaotic day or soothe your worries at night to reduce trouble sleeping, try a quick visual meditation.

Find a comfortable position, and gradually begin to deepen your breathing. Take a few moments to be aware of your breath. At this point, you may choose to close your eyes. Now, envision yourself in your favorite spot in nature -- an empty desert, the warm sand of the beach, a forest -- and picture each passing thought as something you can release. Maybe they're balloons, paper airplanes, or leaves that can flutter away in the wind. As thoughts come in, visualize yourself acknowledging them and letting them go.



Spend quality time with loved ones

No matter how introverted you are, you will always need human connection. When that doesn't happen, loneliness and negative self-talk can take hold and drag you down.

According to [Cigna's 2020 Loneliness Index](#), 61% of Americans are lonely. And lonely workers say they are less engaged, less productive, and are less likely to stay in a job.



The Index also points out that heavy [social media](#) use significantly increases one's sense of loneliness, isolation, and feeling without companionship. So if the first choice after an exhausting day is to grab your phone and scroll through Instagram, you might want to try something different.

There is nothing better for your spirit in times of a tough job search than spending time with your favorite people. It can be a tricky balancing act when you also want to devote yourself to the job search. But keep in mind that the best choice for your health and wellness is to take breaks and let those who love you remind you that you are more than your career.

Make time for creative hobbies

Another key part of your humanity is having fun. Just because you're an adult looking for a grown-up job that doesn't mean you don't get to play.

Seizing the opportunity to let loose and get creative is the perfect outlet for stress from long days sitting in front of the computer. (Hint: It also gives you more depth, which appeals to hiring pros. Finding passions, taking breaks, and celebrating creativity are all healthy habits that show recruiters your maturity and love for life.

A [study](#) published in the American Journal of Public Health confirmed that imaginative pursuits are vital to mental health. And there are tons of other benefits, too. [Research](#) from San Francisco State University found that creative activities improve an individual's performance rankings by 15% to 30% and make them more likely to find innovative solutions on the job.

Playing guitar as a creative hobby, for instance, increases patience, confidence in self and skills, work ethic, and persistence, according to a [survey](#) by Fender.



Put it into practice:

- Download free adult coloring pages from [Crayola](#).
- You can visit your local library to print them if you don't have a printer at home.
- Visit a DIY crafts and projects website to find creative ways to repurpose objects you have around your home.
- Start a bullet journal.
- Try some new recipes in the kitchen.
- Explore more creative hobbies to try on a budget [HERE](#).



It is perfectly normal to feel stressed out during your job search, especially when it grows long, and you become frustrated by silence or rejection. But you can't let it consume your whole life. Your health and wellness are dependent on you being kind to yourself. So you must remember to care for your mind, body, and spirit throughout the job search and beyond.