

BRIGHTER TOGETHER

Your health & wellness matters!

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THE AWE EFFECT

Why Small Moments of Wonder Are Good for You

Think about the last time something stopped you in your tracks - a sky full of stars, a piece of music that gave you chills, or the golden light of a September evening. That feeling has a name: “**awe**”.

Researchers describe awe as experiencing something vast - something that, for a moment, feels bigger than our usual way of seeing the world. While we often associate it with rare or dramatic experiences, awe is more accessible than we realize.

And it does more than feel good. Research has linked awe with lower stress, greater connection, and markers of physical well-being. Wonder may be more than a pleasant distraction - it can be a small, renewable resource for our health.

Part of the reason may be where awe directs our attention. Much of the day is spent focused inward - on to-do lists, worries, and our thoughts. Awe shifts that focus outward. Everyday concerns can feel smaller, time more spacious, and we may feel more connected to others. Researchers call this the “small self” - not smaller in a diminishing way, but in a freeing one.

The encouraging part is how little it takes. In one study, older adults who took a short weekly walk while looking for things that inspired awe reported more positive emotions and less daily distress than those who walked the same route. The difference wasn't the walk - it was the attention. Awe may be less about where we are and more about how we choose to see.

September offers plenty of opportunities to notice it. Golden evening light, cooler mornings, and subtle changes in the air remind us that the season is shifting. Even as routines return, taking a moment to notice wonder can help us feel grounded, refreshed, and connected.

Ways to Invite More Awe

Awe doesn't require a grand adventure. It often lives in small moments - try these ways to find it:

TAKE A WONDER WALK

Slow down and notice something you'd normally miss - the texture of bark, a shift of light, or a pattern in the leaves. Seeing a familiar route with fresh eyes can change it.



LOOK UP

Spend a few minutes watching the clouds, stars, or the changing sky. It can offer a reset when life feels busy.



LET MUSIC MOVE YOU

A song that gives you chills can be an easy source of awe. Make a short playlist of pieces that lift or stir you and give them your full attention.



SEEK OUT BEAUTY & CRAFT

Art, architecture, a beautiful object, or a striking photograph can spark wonder. Notice what draws you in and linger there.



NOTICE THE GOOD IN PEOPLE

Awe isn't found only in nature. Acts of kindness, courage, or generosity can move us deeply, too. Shared moments, from a concert to a friendly gathering, can be especially powerful.





THE JAPANESE WALKING METHOD

A Simple Twist That Makes Every Step Count

Walking is one of the easiest ways to stay active. Interval walking training, or "Japanese walking," alternates 3 brisk minutes with 3 easy minutes for about 30 minutes. Research from Japan has linked it with improved fitness, blood pressure, and blood sugar.

September's milder weather makes it a good time to try outdoors. A few pointers to get started:

- **Find your two paces:** During brisk intervals, aim for a pace where you're breathing harder but could still speak in short sentences. Recovery intervals should feel comfortable.
- **Use a timer:** A simple watch or phone timer takes the guesswork out of switching between paces.
- **Start where you are:** Fewer intervals or shorter sessions make a good beginning. Consistency matters more than intensity.
- **Keep it well-rounded:** Walking is excellent for heart health, but pairing it with strength and mobility work over time supports a more complete routine.

As with any new form of exercise, it's a good idea to check with a healthcare professional before starting!

BUILDING SEASONAL RESILIENCE

Everyday Habits That Support Your Immune Health

As summer winds down and the days grow shorter, seasonal colds tend to circulate more widely. While no habit can guarantee you won't get sick, a few everyday choices can help support a healthy immune system. A few worth prioritizing:

- **Protect your sleep:** Aim for seven to nine hours a night and keep your schedule as consistent as possible.
- **Eat with colour and variety:** Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, protein, and fermented foods provide nutrients that support overall health.
- **Keep moving:** Regular, moderate activity supports circulation, energy, and general well-being.
- **Manage everyday stress:** Movement, downtime, and connection can help reduce its effects over time.
- **Don't overlook the basics:** Staying hydrated and washing your hands well are simple ways to support your health.

For vaccinations, supplements, or specific health concerns, speak with your healthcare provider for guidance that's right for you.

BBQ Chicken Drumsticks



Makes 5 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tsp vegetable oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh thyme
- 2 tsp chili powder
- ¼ tsp ground pepper
- 2 cups passata (strained crushed tomatoes)
- ¾ cup chopped pitted Medjool dates
- ¼ cup cider vinegar
- 1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tsp hot pepper sauce
- 10 skinless chicken drumsticks (about 900g)

DIRECTIONS

1. In a saucepan, heat oil over medium heat and cook onion, garlic, thyme, chili powder and pepper for 3 minutes or until softened. Stir in passata, dates, vinegar, Worcestershire and hot pepper sauce and bring to a simmer for 5 minutes. Remove from heat and let cool slightly. Scrape into a blender and purée until smooth.. Makes about 2 ½ cups of sauce.

2. Place drumsticks on greased grill over medium heat for 10 minutes. Turn and grill for 5 minutes more. Start brushing with about 1 cup of sauce, turning often and basting for about 10 more minutes. Use a digital thermometer to check that the chicken has reached an internal temperature of 165°F.

3. Serve with some of the remaining sauce.

"The smallest habits, repeated often, become the foundation of how we feel!"