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RELAXNOMIKS



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Dear Reader,

Welcome to the **Fall edition of Relaxnomiks!**

The IMF has projected that Nigeria's economy will contract by 1.7% in 2016. You can be forgiven for wanting to see the end of a tumultuous year in a hurry. As difficult as it may seem, we believe that we can pull through this together.



With the following relaxing pages, you are likely to find some respite, as you ponder over your New Year resolution. Please remember that in two weeks, there would be a historic U.S. election that could put a woman in the Oval office for the first time.

We offer you meditation techniques to ease your mind, body and soul, and provide a diet challenge to keep you fit and strong. We also suggest a break from social media to allow you unwind, and recommend useful advice for your work-life balance. How's that for some recession-proof reading?

Hang in there. Brighter days are ahead. We will see you on the other side in a more positive 2017.

Do enjoy your read!

As always, your readership is very much appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

Bismarck J. Rewane

(For and behalf of the publisher)

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MEDITATION 101



Let's face it, the world is moving at 150 kmph. From 9 to 5 jobs that turn to 5 to 9 because of traffic, to family and friends desiring to be made priority, there are a million and one things competing for your attention. In the end, you find yourself tired and fagged out with little time to meditate.

'Medi-kini?' the Nigerian in you probably snorted. 'I might as well wear a hoola-skirt and burn my national passport while I am it'. Fair enough. Meditation seems almost un-Nigerian, like something the "oyinbos" coined on one boring rainy day. But the truth is, it has tremendous positive effects on your mind and body.

What is it, and what are its benefits?'

In the simplest terms, meditation is a form of exercise for your mind. Just like running and skipping will help build physical fitness, meditation will help develop mental health and agility. It involves training the mind to concentrate on one single thing for a prolonged time. It is an avenue to exercise self discipline and control your thoughts. This makes it easier to manage unexpected events and disruptions to your emotional state.

¹ The Art of Living. "Benefits of Meditation". <http://www.artofliving.org/meditation/meditation-for-you/benefits-of-meditation>. Accessed 17/10/16



Although mostly associated with Hinduism, the act of meditation is mentioned in several religions, even Christianity. So feel free to keep a scripture at the back of your thoughts, while you attempt to suspend your mind from physical realities.

How does one go about meditating?

The truth is meditation can be done anywhere but you have to make sure you are alone and the environment is extremely quiet with no distractions. Here are a few tips that could help you start off your journey into the realm of meditation.

Comfort is key

When it comes to meditation, comfort is key. You can stand, sit, kneel or lie down. Yet, that doesn't mean you should turn on the air conditioning and cozy up under your duvet, claiming to be meditating. The key is to be comfortable enough to take your mind off your posture or body, but not so comfortable that you drift off into the dreamland.

Eliminate distractions

For this, you need to know what works best for you. Some people prefer to play soothing music in the background to help them relax and remain in a position for a long

time. For others, playing music might be distracting. Likewise, the use of perfumes and scents work for some and not for others. So minimize sources of distraction and enhance anything that will aid concentration. It is also best to close your eyes.

Focus

This is by far the most difficult step of the meditation process. This involves extensive control over your mind. To do this, it is best to start by focusing on the pace and intensity of your breathing. Your mind may wander off at some point but you will have to exercise self control over your mind and redirect thoughts. Observe the movement of your belly, chest, rib cage and shoulders.



Afterwards, allow your mind to focus on personal issues such as your core values, your most important goals and your emotions in that moment. If possible, trace the emotion back to its cause.

In summary, meditation is just as important as food to the body. It energizes the soul and builds the muscle of self control. It may be difficult at first, but with perseverance and consistence, it will become a walk in the park.

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WHAT'S THE REAL SIZE OF AFRICA? - CULLED FROM CNN²

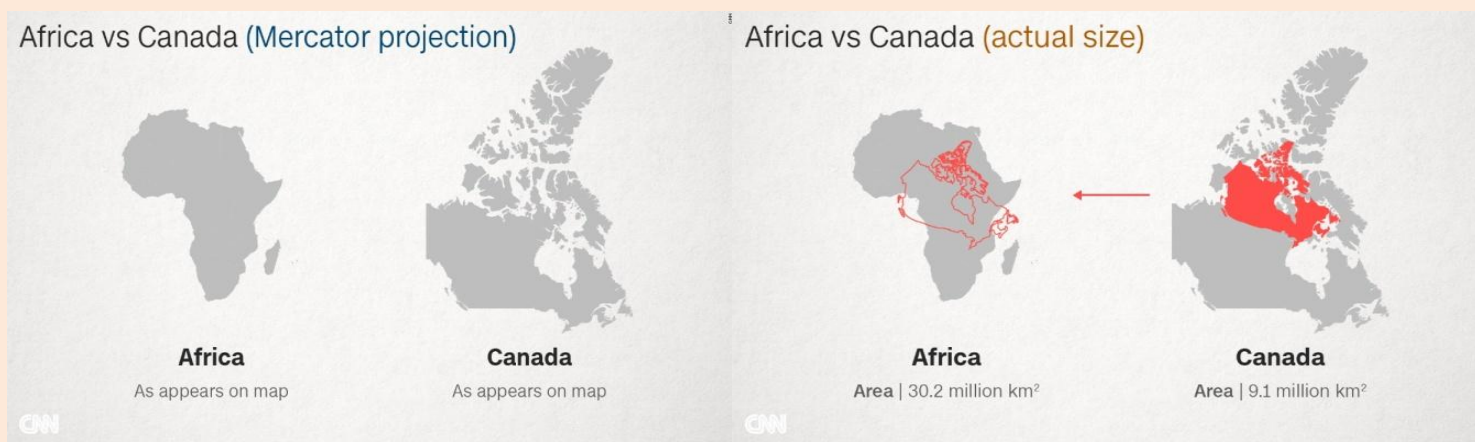
Story highlights

- The Mercator projection has been used as a template for world maps since its creation in 1569
- The projection shows Africa as being smaller than it is
- It has had a digital boost, and continues to shape people's image of the world

On a typical world map, Canada is a vast nation.

Home to six time zones, its endless plains spread from ocean to ocean, dominating great swathes of the northern half of the globe.

But, in reality, three Canadas would comfortably fit inside Africa.



Our world map is wildly misleading.

It's all down to the European cartographer Geert de Kremer, better known as Mercator, and his 16th century map projection.

² 'What is the Real Size of Africa' <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/08/18/africa/real-size-of-africa/> Accessed on: 17/10/16

While a convenient way to chart the world, the map distorts the true size of countries.

"Somehow this map projection came to be used on most world maps, especially those produced for classrooms since the beginning of the 1900s," says Menno-Jan Kraak,



president of the International Cartographic Association and professor of cartography at the University of Twente, Netherlands.

"Most of us have grown up with this world image."

Made for captains

The 1569 Mercator projection was made for navigating the seas -- drawing the meridians and parallels as straight lines that cross at right angles helped sailors to navigate some of their first treacherous voyages around the world.

Mercator initially made globes. Later transferring his map from a three-dimensional curved surface to a flat sheet of paper was problematic.

Mercator's solution was to stretch out the northern and southern extremities of the globe to fill those gaps, producing an elegant and usable map.

While a revolutionary tool for captains and explorers, the projection distorts the relative size of the continents, to the advantage of the West.

The repercussions of this are still being felt today.

A map made by Europe for Europe

On the Mercator map, Africa -- sitting on the equator, reasonably undistorted -- is left looking much smaller than it really is.

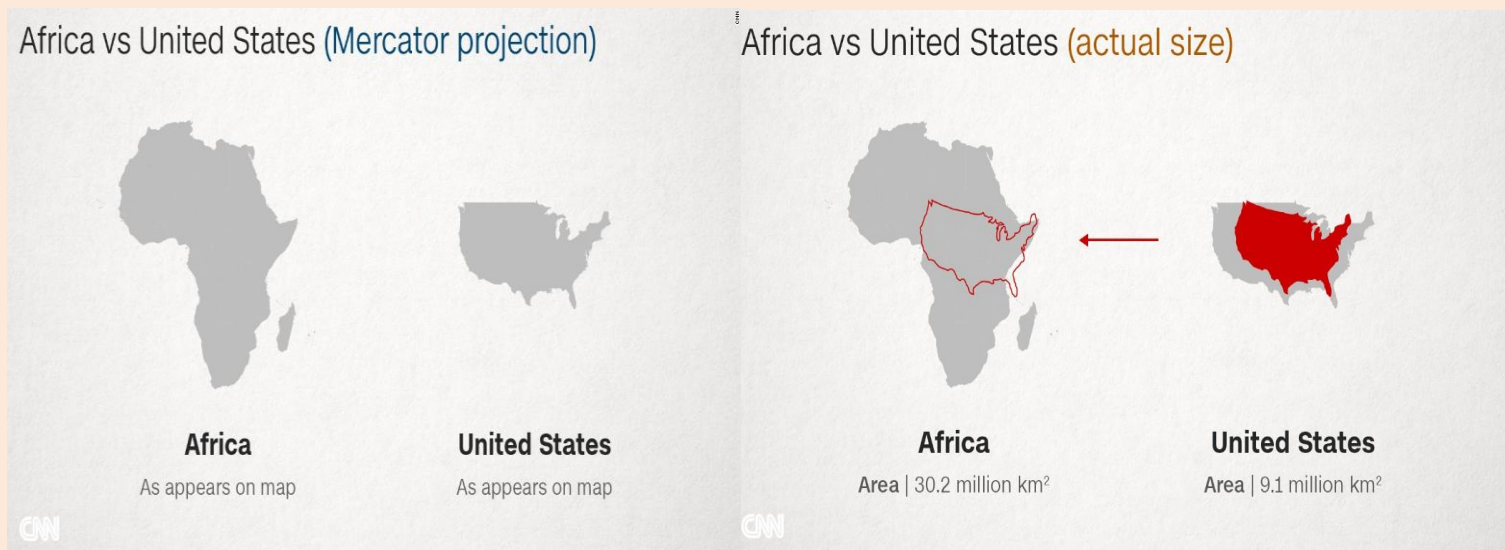
But Canada, Russia, the United States and Europe are greatly enlarged.

The distortion is largest near the poles: Greenland, which looks about the same size as the whole of Africa on the Mercator, is a classic example. In truth, it is no bigger than the Democratic Republic of Congo.

That European and North American countries are enlarged is no accident. This system provided more space for Western cartographers to mark towns, cities, roads etc in their part of the world, Kraak says.

"If you would take a map projection with equal areas then there is almost no space on the map to display all [these details]."

There was, of course, much to map in Africa, too, but that mattered less to the cartographers up north, he adds.



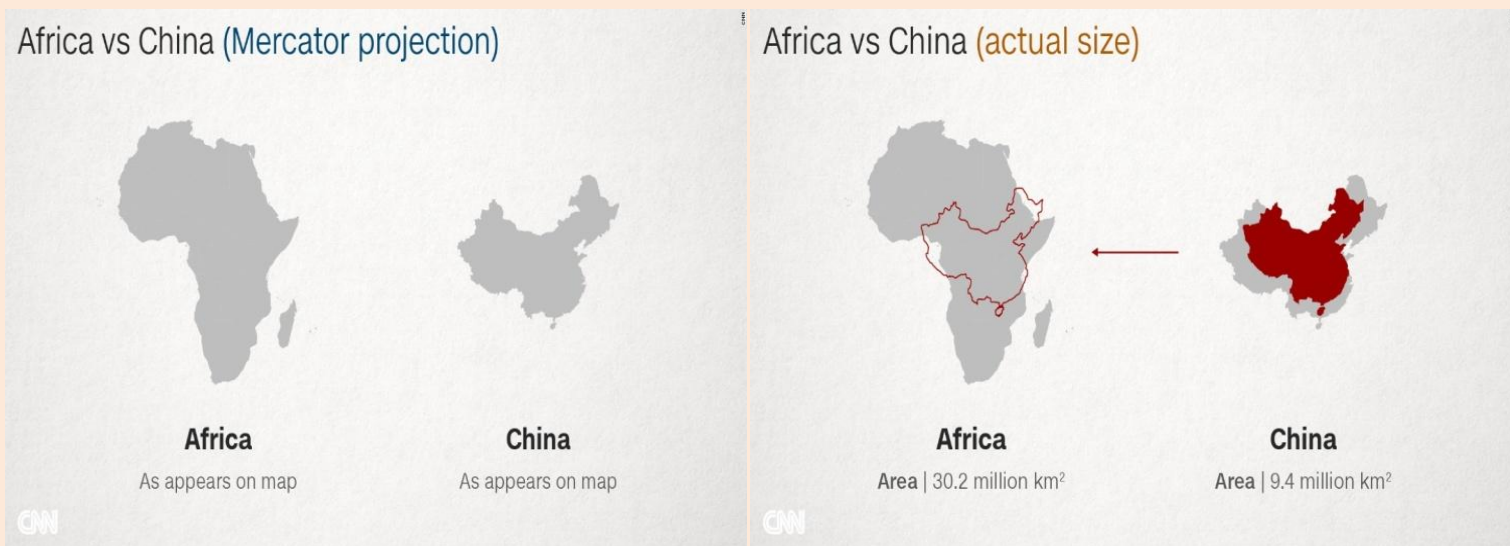
A political tool?

One of the dangers of the Mercator map is that it can make enlarged countries seem unnaturally powerful and intimidating.

"The term 'power of representation and representation of power' sums up quite well how maps and the rise of the Western nation-state system -- and with that, empire and colonialism -- are linked," says Marianne Franklin, professor of Global Media and Politics at Goldsmiths, University of London.

Was subsequent European imperialism perhaps spurred on by a map projection that reinforced the notions of self-importance held by those nations?

"The world maps that prevail today have been embedded in Western imaginations since the British empire. They continue (to prevail) despite many challenges to their fairness and accuracy because they underpin the ongoing Anglo-Euro-American presumption that the world belongs to them, and pivots around these geo-cultural axes," Franklin says.



In more recent times, maps have been used for propaganda, adds Kraak.

Take Russia, for example.

"If you take the Mercator projection, where Russia looks huge, give it a bright red color and then compare it to the rest of Europe, you see how dangerous it can look," says Kraak.

No perfect map

Chart of the world as per Mercator's projection, circa 1798, with the most recent discoveries.

Sadly, there is no such thing as a perfect map. Because the earth is a sphere -- more of a potato-shape, in fact -- it is impossible to map it on a flat surface without errors in proportion, explains Kraak.

Some schools have begun to use a number of alternative projections. In the US and Germany, for example, maps based on the so-called Winkel Tripel projection, which has a smaller skewness, started to replace the Mercator from the 1920s until the 1980s.

But it has never achieved the dominance of the Mercator.

A digital boost

The digital revolution has further strengthened the Mercator's dominance.

Today the Mercator projection is being used as a template at Google Maps, OpenStreetMap and Bing, says Kraak.

From guiding 16th century explorers on the high seas to helping people find Pokemons on their smartphones, Mercator's work continues to influence how people see the world centuries after his death.





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ENJOYING A VACATION WITHIN AFRICA

The Nigerian aviation sector has been negatively impacted by the illiquid foreign exchange market. Backlogs of remittances which were approximately \$600mn were only settled recently. Domestic and International air carriers have suspended operations or reduced frequency in response to the slowing demand. Emirates and Kenya Airways recently suspended Abuja operations in effort to reduce the cost implications of the lower load factor. The shrinking supply outlets of air travel coupled with the weak currency has resulted in a hike in the price of air tickets.

In spite of many carriers reducing their flight frequency to Nigeria, the appetite for vacations outside the borders of the country remains stubbornly high. At the current price levels for air tickets, it is imperative for tourists to look inwards into cheaper African destinations where the impact of the weaker naira is not as severe as travel expenses incurred during trips to western destinations.

ARIK Airlines to Dakar, Senegal

Arik Air is Nigeria's largest airline after and flag carrier. It has been in operation for 10 years, with a domestic, regional and international flight network. It has a weekly flight frequency of 4 into the attractive city of Dakar in Senegal. It is only 5 hours away from Lagos. Return flights to Dakar cost an average of N250, 000, making the price cheap and attractive given the current recession Nigeria is in. This is in comparison to return flights to London which cost an average of N500, 000.

Senegal is a major hub for travel and business in West Africa. Dakar is one of the country's most visited cities outside of Marrakech (Morocco), Johannesburg (South Africa) and Cairo (Egypt), which are also considered to be part of the top 5 tourist destinations in Africa. The city is enriched with cheap hotels with high standards. Nigeria's richest man and founder of the Dangote Group has a massive cement manufacturing operation in Senegal.



The city's vibrant nightlife is inspired by the local mbalax music. Dakar's Place de l'Indépendance is a central hub overlooked by grand colonial buildings. One of the colonial buildings, which is a popular tourist destination, is the Maison des Esclaves museum; also known as the house of slaves, which traces the history of the African slave trade. The museum was opened in 1962 and is said to memorialize the final exit point of slaves from Africa earning the title the door of no return.



Surfing is possible at northern beaches like Yoff, and diving around the offshore Île de Ngor Island. Northeast of the city, Lake Retba (or Lac Rose) is known for its pink-tinted water.

Details of Trip to Dakar

	Trip to Dakar
Flight	Arik Air- Lagos to Dakar(Return flight)
Average return ticket price	N250,000
Average flight time	5hr 30mins
Average Price of 3-star hotel	N23,000 per night
Places to Visit	Gorée Island Maison des Esclaves museum Yoff beach Lake Retba The Marché des HLM market Place de l'Indépendance

Ethiopian Airlines to Libreville, Gabon

Libreville is the capital and largest city of Gabon in west central Africa, making it home to a third of Gabon's population, which is estimated at 1.7 million. Libreville is located near the Gulf of Guinea and is popular for its French colonial architecture and relaxing beach getaways. The city's seafront has a range of chic restaurants and luxury hotels, as well as culptures overlooking the beaches.



A popular tourist attraction in the city is Pointe Denis Beach, which is on a near-by island fronting Libreville City. It takes a 30-minutes boat ride to arrive at this destination, where you get to enjoy the sun and sands of Pointe Denis. It is also popular for water activities like snorkelling and gives an unobstructed view of Libreville's fascinating coastal structure.

Details of Trip to Libreville

	Trip to Libreville
Flight	Ethiopian Air- Lagos to Libreville (Return flight)
Average return ticket price	N315,000
Average flight time	3hr 5mins
Average Price of 3-star hotel	N31,000 per night
Places to Visit	Musee des Arts et Traditions du Gabon Pointe Denis Beach Palais Presidentiel

Ethiopian Airlines to Douala, Cameroon

Douala is a lively port city which is devoted more to business than pleasure as it happens to be Cameroon's economic powerhouse. Nonetheless, the city remains a tourist destination as it has some fascinating attractions within the city. The Doual'art, the non profit organisation which happens to be a preferred destination by tourists as it highlights contribution of art to urban transformation in African cities.

Other tourist destinations include Musee Maritime de Doula, Black Lotus and Marche des Fleurs Memorials and Water Park, are also well worth a visit. Beach lovers should head to the city of Limbe in the South West, which enjoys some glorious stretches of sand fronting azure ocean.



Details of Trip to Douala

	Trip to Douala
Flight	Ethiopian Air- Lagos to Doula (Return flight)
Average return ticket price	N301,000
Average flight time	1 hr 45mins
Average Price of 3-star hotel	N23,000 per night
Places to Visit	Doual'art Marchedes Fleurs Black Lotus

Kenya Airways to Zanzibar, Tanzania

Zanzibar is a Tanzanian archipelago off the coast of East Africa. On its main island, Unguja, familiarly called Zanzibar, is Stone Town, a historic trade center. Its winding lanes present minarets, carved doorways and 19th-century landmarks such as the House of Wonders, a former sultan's palace. Most travellers visit primarily for a beach vacation and Zanzibar's beaches alone more than justify the trip.

The northern villages Nungwi and Kendwa have wide beaches lined with hotels. Other tourist attractions include the Uroa Bay, in the middle of the East Coast, Paje Beach and the beaches of Changuu Island (Prison Island).³



Details of Trip to Zanzibar

	Trip to Zanzibar
Flight	Kenya Airways- Lagos to Zanzibar (Return flight)
Average return ticket price	N280,000
Average flight time	5hr 44mins
Average Price of 3-star hotel	N23,000 per night
Places to Visit	Uroa Bay, Paje Beach, Changuu Island

South African Airways to Mauritius

Mauritius is an Indian Ocean island nation, known for its beaches, lagoons and reefs. The mountainous interior includes Black River Gorges National Park, with rainforests, waterfalls, hiking trails and wildlife like the flying fox. Capital Port Louis has sites such as the Champs de Mars horse track, Eureka plantation house and 18th-century Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Botanical Gardens.⁴



³ Wikipedia. (2016) *Zanzibar*. Retrieved from: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zanzibar>

⁴ Wikipedia. (2016) *Mauritius*. Retrieved from: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mauritius>

Details of Trip to Mauritius

	Trip to Mauritius
Flight	South African Airways- Lagos to Mauritius (Return flight)
Average return ticket price	N319, 600
Average flight time	14hr 55mins
Average Price of 3-star hotel	N25, 000per night
Places to Visit	Grand Baie, Chamarel Coloured Earth, Casela Nature Park

In summary, a plane ticket to destinations within Africa is 20% -50% cheaper than western destinations. Accommodation is substantially cheaper, 3 star hotels at western destinations are almost twice the price of a 3 star hotel in the African destinations listed above. A vacation need not be eliminated from the budget; we just need to be a bit more thrifty with our choice of holiday destinations.



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THE NO RICE, NO BREAD CHALLENGE

DOES IT **WORK** ?



There's an unwritten rule in the fitness community that says the blueprint to a fit life is 30% exercise, and 70% diet. Essentially, more focus should be placed on what and when you eat than how much exercise is done in a typical week. The summer holidays are over and it's time to engage in an effective diet and exercise program that will shed the pounds off your frame. The emphasis here is on the diet, since "you are what you eat." An effective way to improve your diet for weight loss is to reduce the intake of carbohydrates and increase the intake of protein.

Here, we will look at a diet plan that eliminates white rice and white bread for at least a month. But why eliminate them completely? First, it's a challenge which, within the context of dieting, is a fun task that you can partake in on your own or turn into a group activity with others seeking the same goal as you. Second, at the end of 30 days, you would have built a resistance level of Will power that you can look back on with pride at your accomplishment. Third, making you seek alternatives to white rice and white bread broadens your healthy food choices. But why white rice and white bread? White rice and white bread are high on the Glycemic index (GI). The GI is a number that

measures the effect of food on blood sugar levels. The scale of measurement is from 0-100. The higher the index, the higher the spike in blood sugar levels after consuming the particular food. Excess blood sugar is converted to stored fat which leads to weight gain. A G.I of 55 and below is considered low. 70 or above is considered high. Below is a list of select food items and beverages and their corresponding G.I numbers.

Food	Glycemic index	Serving Size (Grams)
Bakery items		
White wheat flour bread	75	30
Hamburger bun	61	30
Waffles	76	35
Whole Wheat bread	69	30
Beverages		
Coca Cola	63	250ML
Fanta	68	250ML
Lucozade	95	250ML
Unsweetened Apple Juice	41	250ML
Unsweetened Orange Juice	50	250ML
Cereals		
Quaker Oats	55	250
Cornflakes	81	30
Kellogg's Special K	69	30
Grains		
Quinoa	53	150
White Rice	72	150
Brown Rice	50	150
Fruits		
Apple	36	120
Banana	48	120
Grapefruit	25	120
Oranges	45	120

Source: Harvard Medical School Health Publications

It should be noticed that Whole wheat bread, also known as Brown bread, and Brown rice, are lower on the Glycemic index. They are perfect substitutes for their white counterparts and you can eat them during the 30 day challenge. But if you wish to make things more challenging, which is the point of this article, then you can avoid rice and bread altogether for the full month. Below are two options you can follow closely or tinker with.

Option 1		
Meal 1	Golden Morn with Honey and sliced bananas or strawberries	7am
Meal 2	Fruit Smoothie (minimum 3 fruits)	10am
Meal 3	Boiled Plantains with stew and Chicken/Beef/Fish	1pm
Meal 4	One to two Cup of Moi Moi with Chicken/Beef/Fish	4pm
Meal 5	Steamed vegetables with Chicken/Beef/Fish	7pm
Option 2		
Meal 1	Quaker Oats with Honey and sliced bananas or strawberries	7am
Meal 2	Grilled Fish and 3 boiled eggs	10am
Meal 3	One boiled sweet potato with stew and Chicken/Beef/Fish	1pm
Meal 4	Grilled Plantain (Boli) with Chicken/Beef/Fish	4pm
Meal 5	Boiled Corn and Coconut	7pm

Notice the meals are spaced out by 3 hours and are light. Relatively frequent, small meals are a better alternative to heavy meals that can leave you bloated and sluggish. It is also advised to drink water with each meal and also in between each meal. Water keeps you full and can reduce food cravings late at night. Having your last meal by 7pm ensures your dinner is well on its way to being fully digested if bedtime is by 9 or 10pm. Planning ahead and preparing these meals the night before will keep you on schedule and ensure you are not tempted by bad food choices during the day as a result of not having your pre-planned meals. As you can see, there is life beyond white rice and white bread. You can even avoid heavy “swallow” foods like Eba and Pounded yam by replacing them with lighter options in the table above. Combining this meal plan with exercise 3 to 4 times a week will leave you feeling nimble and strong after a month of not eating heavy carbohydrates. The following month, you can introduce brown rice and brown bread into your diet on a gradual basis. Best of luck with the program and have fun with your attempt. Happy dieting!



THE FALLACY OF CARBS: THE PATH TOWARDS LONG-LASTING WEIGHT LOSS⁵

Drastic diet and exercise decisions do produce results however, more often than not, weight gain is inevitable. When you reach your ideal weight, there is the psychological temptation to reward yourself. In most cases it is impossible to appropriately regulate these 'rewards' and we revert back to heavier, unhealthy versions of ourselves. The belief that you have to give up everything to achieve your ideal weight and not necessarily the willpower to get on a diet-exercise plan, is what makes some people see unsatisfactory results. Here are a few steps to achieve and keep your desired body, effortlessly and effectively.

The fallacy of carbs – 'carb good!'

- Contrary to popular belief, carbs are essential to an individual's metabolism.
- Separate the days in the week to low-carb and carb-good days.
- Carb-good days can entail a diet of grains, cereals, fruits, complex carbs and less of simple ones such as those in fast food, bread, etc.
- This would accelerate the metabolic system
- Low carb days should be more vegetable inclined and can account for 3 days a week.
- The consumption of starchy root vegetables should be monitored as they are so easily transformed into sugar.

⁵ Heidi Powell is fitness expert and trainer, who along with her husband Chris Powell have provided advice to help maintain healthy, lean and full lifestyles. Here are some of her insights into maintaining weight loss. Heidi Powell, health coach for the Redbook magazine, October 2016.

Eat round the clock – have 6 small-portioned meals a day

- It keeps your metabolic system on its toes.
- Drink a bottle of water within minutes of waking up and eat breakfast within 30minutes to an hour of waking up.
- Have a small, healthy, nutritious meal within 3-4hr intervals for the rest of the day.
- Close up shop at roughly 7p.m. to give your digestive system time to work before you go to bed.
- On carb-good days, support meals with high-level protein; mostly lean meat, Greek yoghurt, eggs etc.

Give yourself a treat, but just a treat

- As we have all tasted the goodness of cakes, bread, cookies and their cohorts, it is impossible to cut them completely out of our lives, for me at least.
- Diets that ask you to do this, create the anticipation to indulge once the ideal body has been achieved.
- However, over-indulging is a risk that is prominent in these instances.
- Therefore, exposing yourself to these little temptations, curbs the sense of lack attributed to extreme diets, and prevents a drop in leptin levels.
- Leptin is the hormone that gives the sensation of being full.

- Try to restrict these treats to daytime consumption.

Exercise! Exercise! Exercise!

As important as what goes into your body, is what leaves. Therefore by means of exercise we are able to relieve our bodies of unnecessary toxins and fat. The release of endorphins during exercise helps curb stress eating. A 20-minute brisk walk everyday could go a long way to not only boost the metabolic system but also restrict chances of diseases such as cancer, diabetes etc. I know it sounds like something you've read countless times but you do so because it is true! Factor in physical activities in your day for long lasting weight loss.

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THE SOCIAL MEDIA FAST

Social media, the platform that connects us to friends and strangers alike, makes the world a virtual village. Yet these days, it seems as though we spend more time in our virtual village than our real village (or city). The addiction is associated with the fear of missing out (FOMO), where you feel like you need to constantly be connected because everyone is. But trust us, the world won't stop moving if you didn't check up on it, and your life won't be any less amazing if you didn't know which celebrity was recently robbed in Paris.

It's time for you to look up from your smart phone and explore the world that we live in. Take our diagnosis test and find out if you are a social media addict, and if you are, we have a few tips to get over it!

P.S. Social media as used in this article refers (but is not excluded) to Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Youtube, Twitter, Whatsapp, Blackberry Messenger, Tumblr, LinkedIn, Gossip Blogs such as Linda Ikeji, Nairaland and Daily Mail.

Test

Answer these questions truthfully

- Do you turn to social media platforms on your phone as soon as you wake up in the morning, or even during the course of the night?
- Do you regularly spend minutes (or hours) looking at nonsense, where nonsense is defined as something irrelevant, with little to no direct impact on your intellect, wellbeing or health?
- Does your social media profile feature any or all of the following: a mirror selfie of you, a picture of a meal or other random items such as your shoes/bag, a car or the sunset?
- Do you sometimes turn to your phone thinking you heard the notification ring?
- Do you scroll through your notifications to make sure you didn't miss any alert while you were yawning or say, breathing heavily?
- Do your friends often use social media to contact you?

- Does the thought of no or slow internet connection frustrate, upset or anger you?
- Do you quickly incorporate social media lingo (e.g. 'shade', 'Yasss', 'slay' and acronyms such as MVP, LOL or OMG) into your vocabulary?
- Is your social media profile a mini-documentary of every important event in your life? From your graduation or birthday, to that time you found a strand of hair in your food?
- Is it the first thing you turn to when you're bored?
- Do you believe you can multitask while scanning through social media? For example, cook, drive, walk, or have a conversation while scrolling through your newsfeed?
- Does the attention social media brings you, build your self-esteem and confidence?
- Do you often get carried away on social media, logging on to check out something specific only to find yourself stalking a perfect stranger's profile?

Diagnosis

If you answered 'Yes' to less than 5 of these questions, you have nothing to worry about. If you had positive answers to 5-9 answers, then you're Type 1 addiction, which is mild, but potentially serious. If you answered yes to 9-12 of these questions, then you my friend are a confirmed social media addict!



Treatment

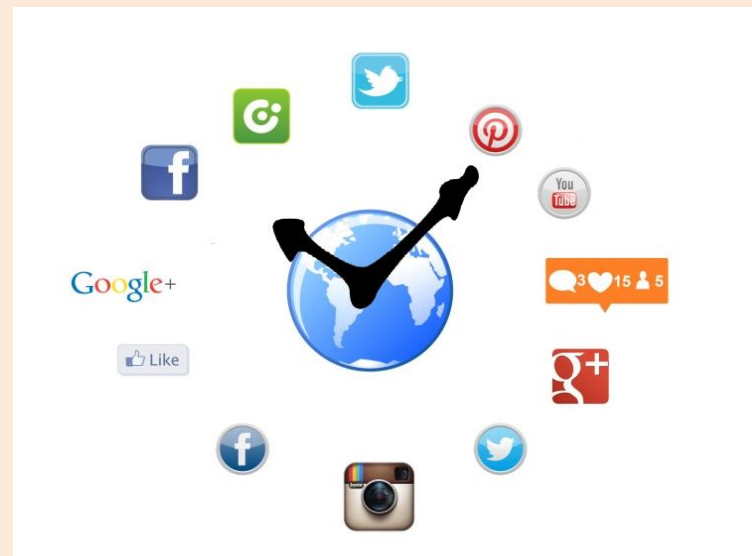
Cold Turkey

After a bad breakup, it's at most times best to go cold turkey. Delete the person's number, unfollow them on social media, and resist the urge to check up on them. After you do this, you will have withdrawal symptoms, especially in those moments when you search for 'bae' in your contacts, only to find, bae has left the building. You will gradually discipline yourself and get over it.

You should take the same approach with social media. The best way to get over the addiction is to cut it off totally. Delete social media apps and log off for a period. If you're brave enough, take a deep breath and suspend or permanently delete accounts. Again, there will be withdrawal symptoms. There will be times the selfie gods will smile favourably on you and you will take a beautiful selfie that you feel the world needs to see. Just admire it on your own, and put down your phone. And for those times everyone around you is discussing the latest trend or gossip, plug in your music remembering that it has little impact on you. For starters, do this for one day, and then upgrade to one week. When you become a pro, you can choose to go at least three days a month without social media.

Schedule it

We admit, the cold turkey treatment might be too extreme for some. So, why not paddle in the kiddie pool, before you dive into the deep sea? Start with scheduling your social media time. For example, give yourself 30 minutes every day (15 in the morning and 15 at night) to surf all media platforms. This way, you'll be forced to check out only relevant and important posts.



Remember to inform your friends and family of your decision, and if possible get an accountability partner. These tips will help reprioritize on more important things like your

goals, and the people around you. No more wondering how your day went by so quickly, as you reclaim your precious time.

You're welcome!

Who We Are



Avant-garde
Academia
Limited



Avant-garde Academia Limited (AAL) is an education advisory and counseling service organization that was incorporated in July of 2013. AAL was incorporated as an educational aggregator in grooming candidates to be potential global citizens who will reinvest their acquired skills in Nigeria in future. It is positioned to provide support, assistance and guidance to potential candidates and entrants to Ivy League, Elite and premium academic institutions in America. Our target market comprises parents of children in identified elite Nigerian secondary schools and/or top executives in the business community, who have a strong need for our services.

The market also extends to Nigerians resident in Diaspora, and expatriates resident in Nigeria. In Partnership with Ascent Education Advisors, a reputable Education Advisory Services firm, we have designed a range of admissions solutions to cater for children in different stages of secondary school education.

OUR STRATEGIC PARTNER – ASCENT EDUCATION ADVISORS

A reputable education advisory service firm, the lead consultant Ms. Peggy Hanefors has over 10 years experience in admissions; including a position as the Assistant Director of International and Transfer Admissions at the University of Pennsylvania. She was first reader and evaluator of about 3,000 applications for students from across the globe.

What We Offer

- Information and advice about the American University System and its application process.
- Evaluation of student's record prior to application.
- Assistance in selecting curriculum and summer activities that will match the student's desired course of study and also highlight his/her personality and interests.
- Development of personal application timeline, that includes standardized testing, college visits, application deadlines, etc.
- Help in selecting teachers for recommendations
- Guidance in presenting extracurricular record
- Guidance in putting together an overall great college application that highlights the unique attributes of the applicant
 - Essay topic brainstorming
 - Editing
 - Proof-reading
- Guidance in choosing the most suitable college among acceptances.
- Interview preparation

Our Packages

Package 1: 8th to 10th Grade (Final 3-5 Years)

This package is a program designed for candidates from as early as the 8th grade (Junior Secondary School - JSS 2) of high school. This is a full package with the benefits of all the services we offer in addition to education and assistance with entire college admission process, including an unlimited number of applications.

Package 2: 11th and 12th Grade (Final 1-2 Years)

This package is similar to Package 1 but is designed for students in the final two years of high school.

Package 3: (Per Application)

Unlike packages 1 and 2, package 3 only provides unlimited assistance with applications to pre-determined universities.

We host a Parents Admission Support Forum in Lagos bi-annually with the aim of giving parents the information they need to ensure their child(ren)/wards gain admission into reputable universities in United States of America.

To attend one of our events, kindly contact or visit us at
9a Idejo Street, Victoria Island Lagos.

For more information about Avant- Garde Academia Limited please go to our website: www.avant-gardeacademia.com

For enquiries or consultation E-mail us: info@avant-gardeacademia.com Or call Chinyere Ubani 08039238138 | Tope Vincent 08034017603

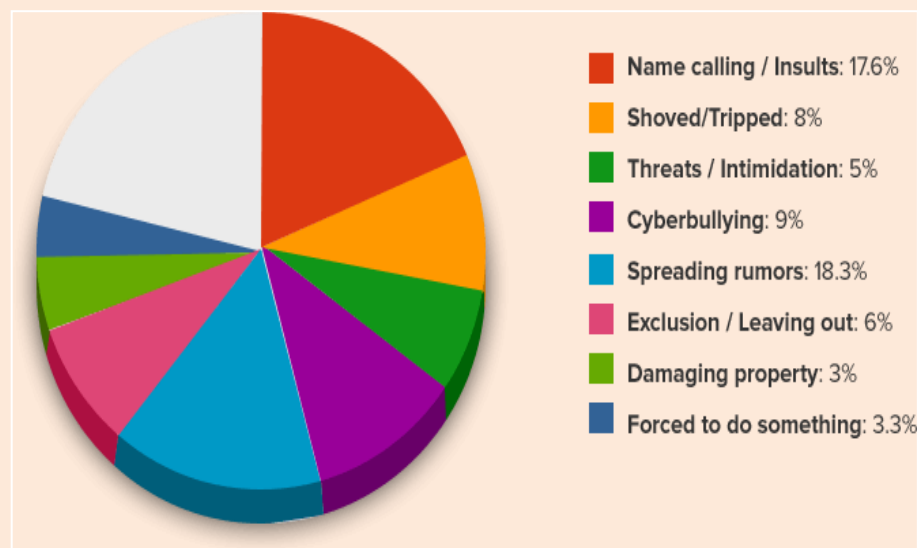
BULLY PROOF YOUR CHILD- CULLED FROM STRESSFREEKIDS.COM⁶

The bully gains power while crushing another human being's spirit. He or she increases his own self-value and satisfies his need to control others as he steals his victim's self-esteem rendering them with feelings of worthlessness. But contrary to popular belief, The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services states that children who bully actually have an average to above-average self-esteem.

This changes the old belief that bullies have low self-esteem and don't like themselves. Bullies are confident, have lots of friends, lack empathy, and have a positive attitude towards violence. Any child with less confidence and self-esteem than the bully becomes a potential target. Children that are bullied are facing a complicated multi-faceted dilemma that most adults are unable to unravel. Teachers, psychologists, and bullying experts all argue their various methods on how to stop bullying. Yet bullying incidents continue to rise.

The age of technology has introduced our children to a new age of bullies.

Cyberbullying has been added to the list of physical, emotional and mental harassment. Bill Belsey, teacher and creator of the award winning website Bullying.org offers the following definition: "Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile



behavior by an individual or group, that is intended to harm others."

Technology offer bullies a twenty-four hour hotline to their victims. If you think your child is safe because he is not the class nerd and he plays football, think again. Technology, desensitized youth, and confident bullies often choose victims that are

⁶ 'Bully Proof Your Child' <https://stressfreekids.com/5902/bully-proof-child/> Accessed on: 17/10/2016

good looking, athletic, smart, caring and creative. Teachers are often shocked when they hear this particular child is being bullied. Who is this child? Very often he or she is exactly the person the bully wishes they could be. So how do we as parents bully proof our children?

The best line of defense starts at home. In order to bully proof your child, take an honest look at your family dynamics.

Ask yourself:

- Do you bully yourself, beating yourself up for mistakes you make?
- Do you bully your children, over-criticizing them and correcting everything they do?
- Do you bully your spouse or does your spouse bully you? Do you treat each other disrespectfully?
- Do you accept bullying from your friends? Do you remain in unbalanced relationships?
- Do you forget to stand up for yourself?
- Do you ignore sibling rivalry that involves hitting, taunting and teasing?
- Do you model bullying behavior to your children? Making plans to exclude others? Gossip?
- Do you call your children names?
- Do you always intervene on the playground on behalf of your child?
- Do you always try to please others?
- Do you say yes to everything and everyone?



■ Do you forget to encourage emotional resilience?

If you have answered “yes” to any of the above questions be aware that this can set up a pattern for your child to either be bullied or become the bully. Like the attraction between negative and positive ions, the child with bullying capabilities will be drawn to the child that endures or witnesses the above behaviors. It is a familiar pattern. Izzy Kahlman author of *Bullies2Buddies* believes that we as a society are doing a lousy job of promoting resilience. “Rather than helping kids become people who can weather the slings and arrows of life, we are producing a generation of emotional marshmallows-kids who believe they are entitled to a life in which no one upsets them, and can't tolerate any insult to their mind and bodies.”

Raising children to be resilient is crucial in warding off a bully. The child that reacts emotionally distraught to a bully will only encourage the bully. So what can we do as parents to protect our children without turning them into marshmallows a bully will eat for dessert?



Tips:

- Raise confident children based on inner belief not false praise.
- Guide children, but allow them to handle normal playground conflicts.
- Socialize your children and seek social skills classes if needed.
- Expose your child to various groups and activities.
- Find groups or activities that support your child's uniqueness.

- Role-play laughing remarks off, banter, and creating comebacks.
- Introduce coping skills to release anger or hurt feelings.
- Empower children to manage anxiety.
- Maintain strong family connections with parents and siblings.
- Talk to your child about how they feel or the challenges they face.
- Help your child build relationships with peers by creating opportunities.
- Encourage your child to smile and laugh at their mistakes.

It is important for parents to observe their child with an objective eye. Notice the very things a bully would notice. Does your child walk with their head down? Does your child wear bright green fur socks? Does your daughter run over to you when the rest of the girls go to the break room? Does your son only sit with girls at lunch? Many parents believe that the above examples make their child oh so lovable.... But many of these behaviors are a giant welcome sign to bullies. I am an advocate of individuality and creativity, but be warned that it takes a strong and confident child to pull it off. So either make sure your child can rock those fuzzy green socks and stand up to teasing or leave them in the drawer for weekends! Thanks to School Days Magazine for posting this article on their site. A great resource for parents and educators.

5 HACKS EVERY LADY NEEDS TO KNOW

1

Chapped lips

With harmattan around the corner, your lips are prone to that chapped look. It's best to carry a small container of shea butter or Vaseline everywhere you go.

For more permanent results, apply a lip scrub. This is a mixture of oil and lots

Tough Stains

Lemon is not only good for your ice cold drink, its acidity makes it a remarkable natural bleaching agent. So it's perfect for stain removal. Wet the stained area, squeeze lemon juice, sprinkle salt and wash off. And tada!

2

3

Organizing Make-up

Organizing make up can be quite stressful and expensive. Reduce costs by recycling old jars or tins. Wash them, peel any stickers and wrap with pretty fabric or wallpaper to add an extra touch of femininity.

What's that smell?

No girl wants to be the one that everyone has to hold their breath around because of the odour coming from their weave/braids. Wash your hair and avoid having it for too long. Also, it doesn't hurt to spray a few puffs

4

5

Collars & Cuffs

Those annoying times your collars and cuffs would not stay straight, using a flat iron would fix it. Use your hair straightener to hold that area

TOP 6 TV SERIES YOU SHOULD BE WATCHING



For those nights when DSTV isn't showing anything you like, the internet is your best friend. With hundreds of websites compiling libraries of the old and latest in the TV space, you can find great entertainment in the hands of your laptop. So pour yourself a glass of your favorite, order some Chinese/pizza and get streaming!

Here are top 6 TV series we recommend:

Black-ish

This ABC sitcom starring Anthony Anderson and Tracee Ellis Ross is just what you need for some family bonding time. It tells the story of a black successful man who tries to teach his children about their African-American heritage. It is the perfect blend of humour and truth and often contains messages on black empowerment. After season 2 finale in May garnered over 5 million live views, it is now in its 3rd season. Just like most sitcoms, each episode tells a new story, so you don't have to worry about starting from the beginning. Rotten Tomatoes, the people's most trusted movie and TV critic, rated this series: 86%, our rating: 80%.

Jenifa's Diary

If you appreciate Nigerian comedy, you would love Jenifa's diary. The series follows the life of Suliat (played by Funke Akindele), a lousy but lovable school dropout who moves to the city to pursue career and possibly love. Rotten tomatoes has no rating for this Nigerian show, but we give it a commendable 65%.

Quantico

This action packed series follows the lives of a group of young people as they are trained to become world-class special agents in the U.S. The series, which the producers describe as 'Grey's Anatomy meets Homeland', premiered in 2015 and is on its 2nd season. The main character Alex Parrish, is played by Priyanka Chopra, a miss world winner 2000 turned award-winning actress. General reception for the series has been good, with season 1 finale pulling a total of 8 million live views. Rotten Tomatoes scored the thriller an exceptional 84%, and we give it a 75%!

How to get away with Murder

This one is no stranger, but the plot is so good, we just had to include it to this review! The show stars Viola Davis (the first African-American woman to win an Emmy in a lead category), who plays the role of a law professor and defense attorney. Watch the suspense build each time as one dark truth after another is revealed. Public reception for the movie has been exceptional. The series has won several awards including 'Television Program of the Year' and Outstanding Drama Series. We agree with Rotten Tomatoes rating and score it an exceptional 95%.

Blind spot

This increasingly popular series is also based on a US security Agency. In this case, the FBI has to work with a 'Jane Doe' that has no recollection of her past, to uncover clues in the

capture of some of the most notorious criminals. The portrayal of Jane Doe (played by Jamie Alexander who also starred in Thor) is ambivalent as it leaves the viewers suspicious of her true motives and character, Hero or Villain? That is one question you'll have to answer yourself. Rotten Tomatoes gives the first season of the series an average rating of 65%, our rating 70%.

Jane the Virgin

For the rom-com lover in you, this is definitely a go-to show. The series is a modern adaptation of the Venezuelan hit series *Juana la Virgen*. It portrays a 21st century woman who gets pregnant by unnatural means and seeks to find balance between romantic relationships and a burgeoning career. The show is sure to resonate with a majority of the women of Generation Y. Rotten Tomatoes rates it a remarkable 100%, we maintain a more modest rating of 90%.

TIPS FOR BETTER WORK-LIFE BALANCE- CULLED FROM FORBES.COM⁷

These days, work-life balance can seem like an impossible feat. Technology makes workers accessible around the clock. Fears of job loss incentivize longer hours. In fact, a whopping 94% of working professionals reported working more than 50 hours per week and nearly half said they worked more than 65 hours per week in a Harvard Business School survey. Experts agree: the compounding stress from the never-ending workday is damaging. It can hurt relationships, health and overall happiness.

Work-life balance means something different to every individual, but here health and career experts share tips to help you find the balance that's right for you.

1. Let go of perfectionism

A lot of overachievers develop perfectionist tendencies at a young age when demands on their time are limited to school, hobbies and maybe an after-school job. It's easier to maintain that perfectionist habit as a kid, but as you grow up, life gets more complicated. As you climb the ladder at work and as your family grows, your responsibilities mushroom. Perfectionism becomes out of reach, and if that habit is left unchecked, it can become destructive, says executive coach Marilyn Puder-York, PhD, who wrote *The Office Survival Guide*.

The key to avoid burning out is to let go of perfectionism, says Puder-York. "As life gets more expanded it's very hard, both neurologically and psychologically, to keep that habit of perfection going," she says, adding that the healthier option is to strive not for perfection, but for excellence.



⁷ 'Tips for better work life balance' <http://www.forbes.com/sites/deborahlee/2014/10/20/6-tips-for-better-work-life-balance/#2ee9cf00dbc9> Accessed on 17/10/2016

2. Unplug

From telecommuting to programs that make work easier, technology has helped our lives in many ways. But it has also created expectations of constant accessibility. The work day never seems to end. “There are times when you should just shut your phone off and enjoy the moment,” says Robert Brooks, a professor of psychology at Harvard Medical School and co-author of *The Power of Resilience: Achieving Balance, Confidence and Personal Strength in Your Life*. Brooks says that phone notifications interrupt your off time and inject an undercurrent of stress in your system. So don't text at your kid's soccer game and don't send work emails while you're hanging out with family, Brooks advises. Make quality time true quality time. By not reacting to the updates from work, you will develop a stronger habit of resilience. “Resilient people feel a greater sense of control over their lives,” says Brooks, while reactive people have less control and are more prone to stress.

3. Exercise and meditate

Even when we're busy, we make time for the crucial things in life. We eat. We go to the bathroom. We sleep. And yet one of our most crucial needs – exercise – is often the first thing to go when our calendars fill up. Exercise is an effective stress reducer. It pumps feel-good endorphins through your body. It helps lift your mood and can even serve a one-two punch by also putting you in a meditative state, according to the Mayo Clinic.

Puder-York recommends dedicating a few chunks of time each week to self-care, whether it's exercise, yoga or meditation. And if you're really pressed for time, start small with deep breathing exercises during your commute, a quick five minute meditation session morning and night, or replacing drinking alcohol with a healthier form of stress reduction.

“When I talk about balance, not everything has to be the completion and achievement of a task, it also has to include self-care so that your body, mind and soul are being refreshed,” says Puder-York.

These exercises require minor effort but offer major payoffs. Psychotherapist Bryan Robinson, who is also professor emeritus at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and author of the book *Chained to the Desk*, explains that our autonomic nervous system includes two branches: the sympathetic nervous system (our body's stress response) and the

parasympathetic nervous system (our body's rest and digest response). "The key is to find something that you can build into your life that will activate your parasympathetic nervous system," says Robinson. Short, meditative exercises like deep breathing or grounding your senses in your present surroundings, are great places to start. The more you do these, the more you activate your parasympathetic nervous system, which "calms everything down, (and) not just in the moment," says Robinson. "Over time you start to notice that in your life, your parasympathetic nervous system will start to trump your sympathetic nervous system."

4. Limit time-wasting activities and people

First, identify what's most important in your life. This list will differ for everyone, so make sure it truly reflects your priorities, not someone else's. Next, draw firm boundaries so you can devote quality time to these high-priority people and activities.

From there, it will be easier to determine what needs to be trimmed from the schedule. If email or internet surfing sends you into a time-wasting spiral, establish rules to keep you on task. That may mean turning off email notifications and replying in batches during limited times each day. If you're mindlessly surfing Facebook or cat blogs when you should be



getting work done, try using productivity software like Freedom, LeechBlock or RescueTime. And if you find your time being gobbled up by less constructive people, find ways to diplomatically limit these interactions. Cornered every morning by the office chatterbox? Politely excuse yourself. Drinks with the work gang the night before a busy, important day? Bow out and get a good night sleep. Focus on the people and activities that reward you the most.

To some, this may seem selfish. "But it isn't selfish," says Robinson. "It's that whole airplane metaphor. If you have a child, you put the oxygen mask on yourself first, not on the child." When it comes to being a good friend, spouse, parent or worker, "the better you are yourself, the better you are going to be in all those areas as well."

5. Change the structure of your life

Sometimes we fall into a rut and assume our habits are set in stone. Take a birds-eye view of your life and ask yourself: *What changes could make life easier?* Puder-York remembers meeting with a senior executive woman who, for 20 years of her marriage, arranged dinner for her husband every night. But as the higher earner with the more demanding job, the trips to the grocery store and daily meal preparations were adding too much stress to her life. “My response to her was, “maybe it’s time to change the habit,’” recalls Puder-York. The executive worried her husband might be upset, but Puder-York insisted that, if she wanted to reduce stress, this structural change could accomplish just that.

So instead of trying to do it all, focus on activities you specialize in and value most. Delegate or outsource everything else. Delegating can be a win-win situation, says Stewart Freidman, a management professor at the University of Pennsylvania Wharton School and author of *Leading the Life You Want: Skills for Integrating Work and Life*. Freidman recommends talking to the “key stakeholders” in different areas of your life, which could include employees or colleagues at work, a spouse or a partner in a community project. “Find out what you can do to let go in ways that benefit other people by giving them opportunities to grow,” he says. This will give them a chance to learn something new and free you up so you may devote attention to your higher priorities.

6. Start small. Build from there.

We’ve all been there: crash diets that fizzle out, New Year’s resolutions we forget by February. It’s the same with work-life balance when we take on too much too quickly, says Brooks. Many of his workaholic clients commit to drastic changes: cutting their hours from 80 hours a week to 40, bumping up their daily run from zero miles a day to five miles a day. It’s a recipe for failure, says Brooks. When one client, who was always absent from his family dinners, vowed to begin attending the meals nightly, Brooks urged him to start smaller. So he began with one evening a week. Eventually, he worked his way up to two to three dinners per week.

“If you’re trying to change a certain script in your life, start small and experience some success. Build from there,” says Brooks.