

## Breaking Yourself Out of a Rut

You've eaten the same things for breakfast every day for three years, then taken the same car pool to the same job. Your life is more of the same after work. It's time to break out of your rut.

"If you feel like you're stuck in a routine, you probably are," says Kenneth A. Wallston, Ph.D., professor of psychology at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn.

A routine isn't necessarily bad; it can be comforting because it adds structure to your life and it isn't stressful. But Dr. Wallston says dissatisfaction may start to gnaw at you and erode your self-esteem if you believe you want something more in your life.

Recognizing you're in a rut is the first step toward making a change. Taking action is the next step. Making small, easy changes that show quick, positive results is the best way to start. "Add one new thing every day and choose things you like to do or expect to enjoy," Dr. Wallston says.

Taking any of the following small steps can lead to big changes in your life.



### **Personal Development**

Reduce the amount of time you spend watching television by an hour a day. Use the extra time for something special, such as reading a book, taking a class, visiting a friend or pursuing a hobby.

Initiate a family project, such as planning your next vacation or planting a backyard garden.

Fulfill a fantasy. For example, take tap-dancing lessons, perform at an "open-mike" club or join a neighborhood chess club or baseball team.

### **Better Health**

Take a walk. Use your lunch break to explore the neighborhood near your workplace, or use the weekend to visit local parks and scenic areas on foot.

Vary your workout. Add new challenges by making your workout more interesting, not longer or harder. Alternate activities that complement each other, such as swimming and cycling or aerobic dance and strength training.

Explore a new cuisine. Sample local ethnic restaurants. Learn to make low-fat versions of your favorite dishes.

Take a healthful vacation. Attend a sports camp or sign up for a bike tour of a national park.

## At Leisure

Play tourist in your own town. Check out a guidebook or ask your visitors bureau for information on local tourist attractions, walking tours and events.

Take your camera with you on daily activities. Look for scenes that would make interesting pictures. It will give you a different eye on your world.

Write a letter to someone you haven't heard from in a while. It might revive a friendship. Writing the letter can also help you clarify your thoughts about your life and work.

## Family and Community

Ask your children, spouse or friends to suggest their favorite things to do, then join in, enthusiastically.

Volunteer at a nearby hospital, library or theater group. Start by committing yourself to a single event or project. If you enjoy the work, you can build a long-term relationship.

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## Signs of Eye Problems in Children



Children's eyes change rapidly, and problems can occur at any age. It's important to observe your child's eyes and to pay attention to how your child acts and what he or she says. Read on to see how you can keep an eye on potential issues.

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## Ways to Enhance Your Self Esteem



Feeling good about yourself is an essential element to living a healthy, happy life. Unfortunately, we are often our own worst enemy. The good news is self-esteem is something you can work on and change for the better. Keep reading to find how you can increase your self-esteem and enhance your life.

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