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Routines: Little Changes That Make a Big Impact

TAKE CHARGE on 01.09.13



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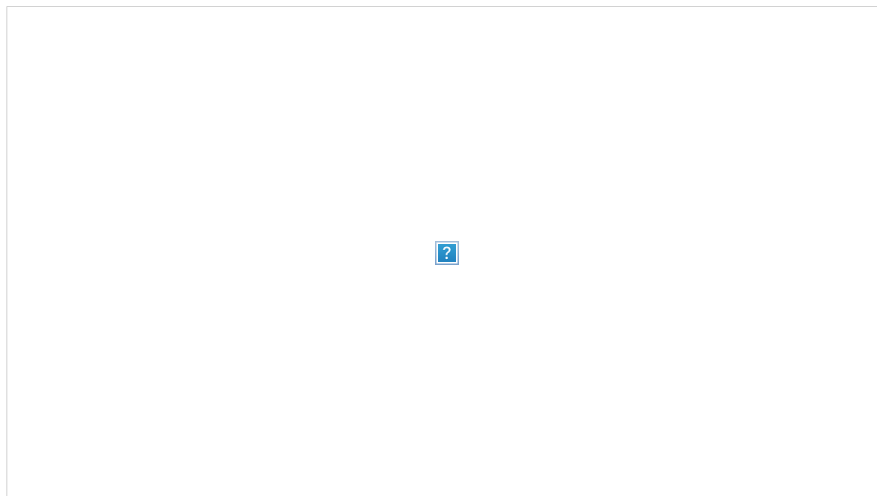


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As kids returned to school this week from **winter break**, I'm certain I heard a collective--and quite possible a celebratory--sigh from parents across the globe. My winter break was fantastic and I loved having my boys home, but we all were ready to get back to our **daily routines**.

Re-entry isn't easy, and it highlights all the kinks in your daily life that stress you out! But it's also a perfect time to look at those stress points and find ways to make life run more smoothly.

Little changes in your daily routine can have a significant positive impact in your life. Check out these simple ways to shake up your day and, hopefully, alleviate some stress:

Prep for breakfast the night before. You don't need to set the table. Just put bowls/plates, glasses and breakfast cereals out on the kitchen counter the night before. It takes less than five minutes to do. And if your kids happen to wake up before you, they might even be inspired to make breakfast on their own.

Set your alarm 15 minutes earlier than normal. Even if you don't pop out of bed right away, you'll still have time to ease yourself awake before your kids do it for you. (P.S. A **recent study** showed that early risers are happier and more successful than night owls!)

Eat breakfast. Most of the moms I know skip breakfast because they're too busy getting their kids ready school or they, themselves, or prepping for work. But just like you tell your kids, breakfast is the **most important meal** of the day. It fuels your morning. Also? It sets a good example for your kids

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when they see you leading the charge. Even if you just have a piece of toast or a smoothie, **make time for breakfast.**

Do one load of laundry every day. Don't wait until the weekend or until your laundry baskets are overflowing. Tackle a load of laundry a day (assuming you have enough for a decent load of clothes) to make the process more manageable. While your at it, if you have preschool-aged kids, start teaching them how to put their clothes away.

Take 10. Minutes, that is. Can you make 10 minutes of time for yourself? Get to car line 10 minutes early so you can just sit and chill. Take a 10-minute walk. Read your favorite blogs. Meditate. Just 10 minutes. Just for you.

Tidy up in 5 minutes. Get the whole family to take five minutes of every day to tidy up your living space. Find the room that causes you the most heartburn and straighten it up. No sweeping or vacuuming, just putting things away.

Slow down. Seriously? I'm telling you to block things in 5- and 10-minute increments and now I'm telling you to slow down? Yes. Things manage to fall into place on their own. There's only so much you can control. Learn to let some things go.

What little changes have you made that have had a big impact in your life?

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