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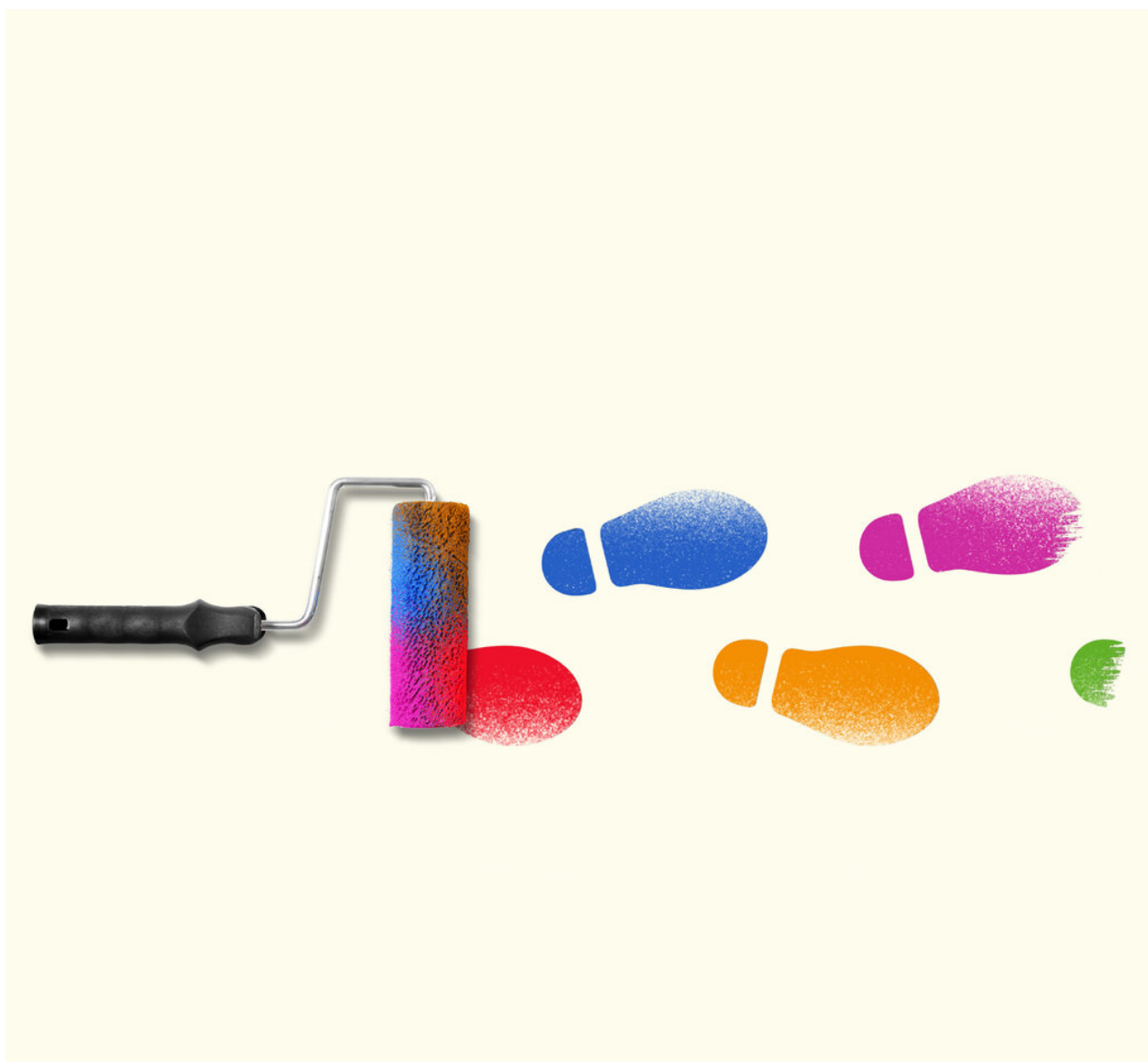


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The New York Times

Well

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4 ways to trick yourself into taking a walk



By Jancee Dunn

I love a meandering walk, but sometimes I need a little motivation to get up and go. Lately, I've been tempting myself outside by visiting a dove that's nesting in my yard: Every morning, I check to see if her eggs have hatched. Once I've got my sneakers on and left the house, I tend to keep walking.

Rob Walker, author of "The Art of Noticing," said that when he walks, he likes to impose a mission or build a framework around it to add a little novelty and engagement to an activity that is "literally pedestrian."

"Otherwise, you can easily end up on your phone, or in your head where all you do is ruminate over the deadline that you're missing or the smartass remark that someone made to you," he said. "And there could be dragons walking around and you wouldn't notice them."

It's worthwhile to do whatever it takes to stay on the path, because the benefits of regular walks are [well-documented](#). Walking [lowers the risk of many health problems](#) including heart disease, anxiety and depression, and diabetes, said Stacy Imagbe, an assistant professor of kinesiology at Morehouse College.

And you don't need to do 10,000 steps a day, either; even 4,000 daily steps have been [shown to have benefits](#).

If you need some motivation, here are some of Walker's more creative ways to take a walk.

Sound Stroll

Get outside and tune into the sounds around you, Walker said. "We're so visually oriented that we miss a lot of things that are happening to our other senses," he said.

Go beyond bird calls and tease out some of your area's quirkier sounds, he added. In his neighborhood, which is in New Orleans near the Mississippi River, Walker said he hears the crowing of roosters, songs spilling out of car radios and "ship horns if it's foggy."

"If my neighborhood had an official sound, it would be the sound of the St. Claude Avenue Bridge," he said. "There's a honking sound when the drawbridge is about to go up or down."

Calendar Challenge

Walker likes to give himself creative challenges. Over the next few months, he suggested, try taking pictures around your neighborhood as if you were shooting a dozen photos for a wall calendar.

You can snap shots of landmarks that have meaning for you, or find a theme, such as "intriguing mailboxes," Walker said.

Walker told me he is drawn to "anything that's weird," so his "calendars" tend to feature objects like the bollards — vertical traffic barriers — in his neighborhood.

If you're feeling especially inspired, you can use a printing service to assemble the photos into a 2026 calendar at the end of the year.

Counting Walk

Pick something that's plentiful in your area and count it as you walk along, Walker said. You can total up dogs, tattoos, signs or plaques. "During football season, I count New Orleans Saints gear," he said. When he was in Manhattan recently, he counted car honks.

Counting something besides steps is an easy way to be mindful of your surroundings "but it does take some concentration," Walker said.

I've found that having a goal does keep me outside a little longer. On a recent afternoon, I told myself that I would walk until I spotted 20 baseball caps.

Color Circuit

Set out with the goal of focusing on one color during your stroll. If you decide on the color blue, for instance, pay attention to all the blue things that you see, Walker said.

That includes objects or areas you wouldn't normally notice. "Surprise yourself by finding beautiful colors in an unbeautiful context," Walker said. He'll take close-up photographs of a painted wall in an alley, or of a car hood, he said, "just trying to see interesting color regardless of its context."

He was so taken by a vivid blue portable toilet in his neighborhood that he snapped a few shots.

Walker inspired me to take a similar photo of a dark green patch that captivated me.

I emailed him the photo. "Lovely," he wrote. "What is it?"

"The dumpster near my Walgreens," I wrote back.

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Eric Helgas for The New York Times

How do you pick the best medication for your pain?

It can be hard to know which over the counter pain reliever is best for your aches and sprains. Here's how to choose the best drug for you.

Read the article: [What's Best for My Pain: Tylenol or Advil?](#)





Desiree Rios for The New York Times

Meet the powerlifter who became a professor.

Dr. Jan Todd has spent 50 years setting powerlifting records and turning strength into a field of study. Here's how she helped transform strength training from a fringe activity into the cornerstone of healthy living.

Read the article: [Jan Todd May Be the Reason You're Lifting Weights](#)

The Week in Well

Here are some stories you don't want to miss:

- **The C.D.C. says healthy kids no longer need Covid shots.** [Experts weigh in on if that's true.](#)
- **What can returning to an old therapist teach you?** [One writer shares her experience.](#)
- **Ready for a mental reboot?** Our 5-Day Creativity Challenge starts on Monday, June 2. You are already on the list, but you can [tell a friend to sign up here.](#)

- A large new study on maternal mental health published on Tuesday. [Here's what the researchers found.](#)

Let's keep the conversation going. Follow Well on [Instagram](#), or write to us at well_newsletter@nytimes.com. And check out last week's newsletter about [how to stop being so judgy](#).

FITNESS

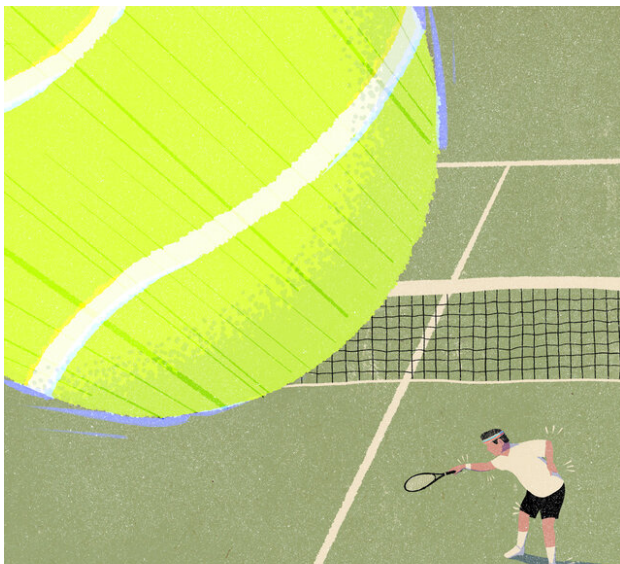


Theodore Tae/The New York Times

A 20-Minute Workout You Can Do on the Go

If you want to fit in some exercise on your next vacation, try these no-equipment moves.

By Alyssa Ages and Theodore Tae



How to Avoid Injuries on the Tennis Court

Racket sports are a great way to get a workout, but they're not without risk. Here's how to protect your muscles and joints.

By Jen Murphy



Lehel Kovács

HEALTHY EATING



Michelle McSwain for The New York Times

Inside the Arms Race to Create a Better Lactose Intolerance Pill

A new class of high-powered, slickly branded lactose intolerance treatments is targeting consumers. But do they actually work?

By T.M. Brown



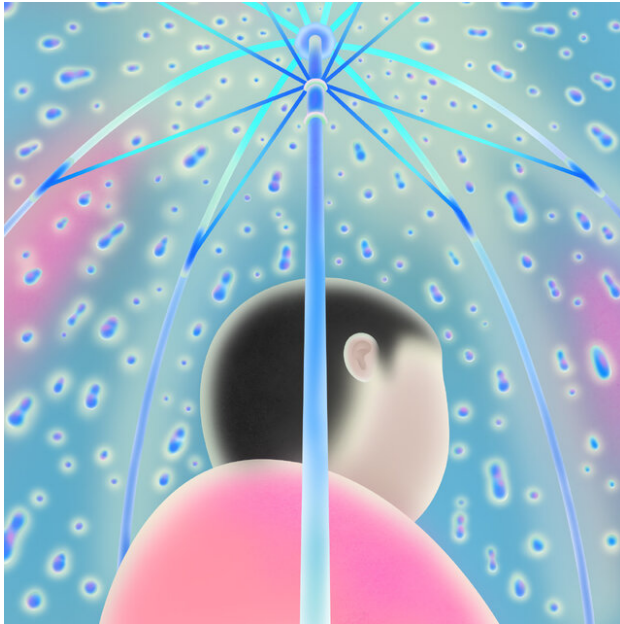
Jim Wilson/The New York Times

Is Red Meat Bad for Your Heart? It May Depend on Who Funded the Study.

A new analysis found that red meat studies with industry links were more likely to report favorable results than those without them.

By Caroline Hopkins Legaspi

MENTAL HEALTH

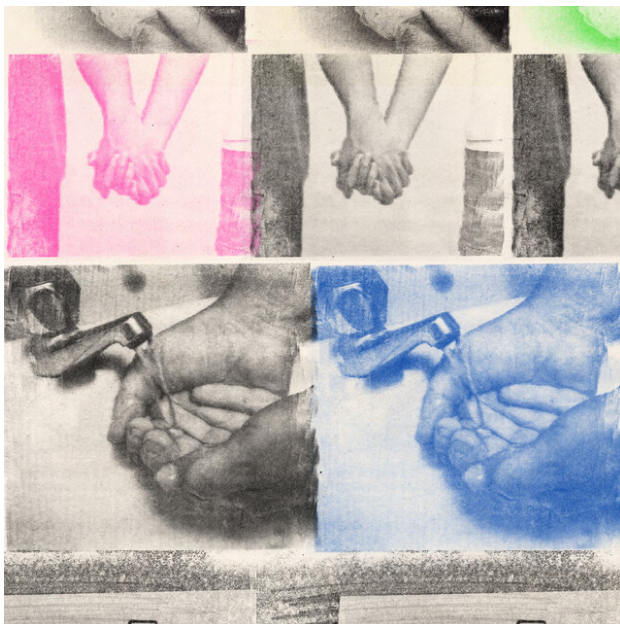


Hoi Chan

How to Stop Being So Hard on Yourself

Cultivating self-compassion can actually help you cope better with life's struggles.

By Christina Caron



Vanessa Saba

PSYCH 101

The Unexpected Symptoms of O.C.D.

Disturbing thoughts and social fixations are among the many manifestations of obsessive-compulsive disorder.

By Christina Caron

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