



Sensible health and wellness concepts for employees



## Overwhelm Overload — Why You Are Feeling Depleted



It is month eight of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and many Americans feel distracted, exhausted, anxious, and depressed. Disappointment and frustration are added to the emotional pile as we judge ourselves for not rebounding quickly enough or performing at our full potential at work and home. In natural disasters, you can look outside and see the wreckage, but a pandemic does not show the same visible scars which can lead to further internal confusion. This is part of

what is called ambiguous loss – the full damage and resolution are unclear. This does not stop you from continuing to ask yourself, “why haven’t I adjusted to this “new normal” already?”

Cut yourself some slack! Your body is not made to perform under extreme levels of stress for extended period of times. [Tara Haele](#) says that “Surge capacity is a collection of adaptive systems — mental and physical — that humans draw on for short-term survival in acutely stressful situations, such as natural disasters.” In other words, your energy bank is likely depleted. You have been unable to refuel because the fight or flight period has turned chronic. And you may have a million good reasons why you haven’t been able to devote time to refuel...maybe your normal self-care routines are unavailable given restrictions in your area or your own health boundaries. Instead of focusing on what you cannot do, think of this as a chance to connect with your inner self and get in touch with what you can do to renew your resiliency bank.

Start by being gentle with yourself. Acknowledge the fact that your feelings are valid. You are living through a crisis and your body is expressing itself. When we are suffering, we often believe we are the only ones who feel this way. Normalizing your pain and emotions can help you feel less isolated and more open to sharing your thoughts with others. Humans as a species



are programmed for connection. Connecting with your community is important during times when we feel down or depressed, even if it is the last thing you want to do.

Next, toss your old self-care techniques out the window. Use this opportunity to explore where you get your energy. These activities may vary greatly from your preconceived notions. For example, we often choose to unwind with social media and end up with less energy (and less confidence) than when we started. What does this mean? It means the activity numbed your feelings for a period rather than renewing your energy source. The numbness is short-lived, and you are hit with the full emotional load after you stop this unfulfilling activity. As [Brene Brown](#) says, we cannot selectively numb feelings. We cannot numb sadness and feel happiness at the same time. It is all or nothing, so look for activities that are rejuvenating.

A good way to identify a replenishing activity is to take a beat to consider the following questions afterwards. Did it bring you joy? Did you feel more awake? Did it bring a sense of satisfaction? This last question is why you hear about your friends doing home projects. They are tapping into their natural reward system that triggers a boost of dopamine for completing a task. If your mind is drawing a blank on where to start, a pro tip is to reintroduce play into your life – these are activities that may not have a purpose, but are satisfying in themselves to the point where you may lose track of time. Whatever you choose, keep your energy pools front and center.

*References:*

Brown, B. (September 23, 2020). *On My Mind: RBG, Surge Capacity, and Play as an Energy Source*. In Cadence 13. Retrieved from <https://brenebrown.com/podcast/on-my-mind-rbg-surge-capacity-and-play-as-an-energy-source/>

Haelle, T. (August 17, 2020). *Your 'Surge Capacity' Is Depleted — It's Why You Feel Awful*. Elemental. <https://elemental.medium.com/your-surge-capacity-is-depleted-it-s-why-you-feel-awful-de285d542f4c>

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## Sausage, Apple and Herb Stuffing Makes 12 servings

Add savory sausage, sage and thyme to the traditional stuffing ingredients for a perfect pairing with your Thanksgiving turkey.

Prep time: 25 minutes

Cook time: 70 minutes

### INGREDIENTS

2 acorn squash, halved, seeded  
8 ounces sourdough bread, cut into 1-inch cubes  
6 ounces sweet Italian pork sausage  
1 tablespoon unsalted butter  
1 cup chopped yellow onion  
1 cup chopped celery stalks and leaves (about 3 stalks)  
2 medium Granny Smith apples, cut into 1-inch cubes (3 cups)  
1 tablespoon chopped fresh sage  
1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme  
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt  
1/2 teaspoon black pepper  
1 1/2 cups unsalted chicken stock, divided  
3 large eggs  
Thyme sprigs (optional) 2 acorn squash, halved, seeded



### NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

Serving: 2/3 cup  
Calories: 126  
Carbohydrates: 16g  
Protein: 7g  
Fat: 4g  
Saturated Fat: 2g  
Sodium: 318mg  
Fiber: 2g  
Sugar: 5g

### DIRECTIONS

#### Part 1

1. Preheat oven to 300°F.
2. Spread bread cubes in an even layer on a rimmed baking sheet.
3. Bake at 300°F until dry and slightly toasted (12-14 min.)
4. Remove from oven, transfer bread to a large bowl. Increase oven temperature to 350°F.

#### Part 2 (can start while bread cubes bake!)

1. Cook sausage in a large skillet over medium-high heat until browned, about 6 minutes, using a spoon to break sausage into small pieces.
2. Transfer sausage to bowl with bread cubes. (Do not wipe skillet clean.)
3. Reduce heat to medium. Add butter, onion, and celery to skillet; cook, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are tender and translucent (6-8 min.)
4. Add apples; cook until soft but not mushy (about 10 min.)
5. Stir in sage, thyme, salt, and pepper; cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant (about 1 min.)
6. Add 1 cup stock, stirring and scraping bottom of skillet to release browned bits. Transfer apple mixture to bowl with bread cubes and sausage.



### Part 3

1. Whisk together eggs and remaining 1/2 cup stock in a bowl until combined; stir into bread mixture.
2. Transfer mixture to a 2-quart glass or ceramic baking dish, cover with aluminum foil, and bake at 350°F for 15 minutes.
3. Remove foil, top with thyme sprigs, and continue to bake until stuffing is lightly browned on top and set, 15 to 20 more minutes.
4. Let stuffing stand 5 minutes before serving.

Source: <https://www.cookinglight.com/recipes/sausage-apple-and-herb-stuffing>