



{ PEACE OUT }

Your Guide TO Finding Calm IN Colorado THIS Year

BY JULIE DUGDALE
ILLUSTRATIONS BY DANTE TERZIGNI

Every January, we all recite “New year, new me!” Sometimes that means dropping a few pounds or sticking to a budget or bagging a couple more fourteeners. But we’re guessing that this year, you might be angling for less stress and more contentment. We know there are circumstances under which no amount of sage advice or mental TLC will soothe the soul. For many of us, though, feeling unsettled, disgruntled, or burnt out is the result of multiple ongoing factors we can address. So we sought the guidance of professionals *and* everyday people who’ve carved their own paths to healing or fulfillment. Our hope is that the following pages might be a toolbox of sorts, stocked with ideas to grab when you need ‘em. Here, our guide to de-stressing, simplifying, and living a more peaceful life.

REVITALIZING YOUR BODY

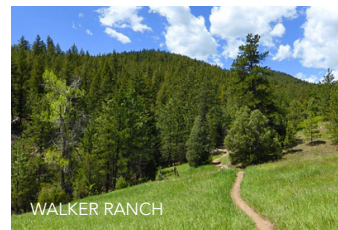
Happy Trails

When I need a quick escape to unwind, get the juices flowing, and re-energize, I hit the trail for a run. Something about the wildness and unpredictability of a dirt path up a mountain or through a forest resets me. Here, a few close-to-home favorites (hint: go early to avoid the crowds).

BY SARAH BOYUM

1. Bergen Peak

This steady climb starts at the Elk Meadow Park trailhead (easily reached by a quick zip up I-70 to Evergreen) and is a bit challenging, but it offers killer views the higher you go. Lose yourself in thick ponderosa and lodgepole forests and keep an eye out for deer and elk.



2. Walker Ranch Loop

You have to drive up the Flagstaff Mountain road to access this trail above Boulder. But the variation in trail (high singletrack all the way down to South Boulder Creek and back up into the trees) is worth the slight haul from Denver. It's fairly popular, but it has two access points, which alleviates congestion.

3. Centennial Cone Park

This loop in Clear Creek Canyon feels a bit more remote than most foothill trails. With multiple parking lot access points, it's great for a variety of intensities and distances (up to 17 miles). Start from the Mayhem Gulch lot to get in a nice beginning climb.



The Yoga Virgin Struggle Is Real

Five ways first-timers can beat the intimidation factor.

Devoted yogis swear their practices do wonders for their energy levels, core strength, mental clarity, and detox goals... but what if you're late to the proverbial party? You've never been to a class, you don't know a downward dog from a happy baby, and vinyasa... wasn't that something in your carton of Indian takeout last night? Besides, you're not bendy. You're just not a yoga person, right? But, *psst*: You could be.

We asked Denver-based yoga teacher and wellness event coordinator Addison Gumbert, founder of mindful meetup organization Karma Kosha, for some 101 advice to get you in the door and onto the mat.



1. Pay attention to class descriptions. "Focus on 'beginner' language as opposed to 'all levels,'" Gumbert says. Plus: "Power classes will be faster than a slow flow or hatha class; note whether it mentions heat, which can make it more overwhelming or frustrating for a first-timer."

2. Don't be shy. "Talk to your instructor before class," Gumbert says. "Alerting the teacher will help them offer more cues into the poses; they might help demonstrate poses they wouldn't normally show a more advanced practitioner."

From left: Courtesy of Pro Trails; iStock



3. Laugh it off. You'll probably mess up, and that's OK. Even seasoned yogis are still evolving—there's no such thing as a perfected pose. "They call it a 'practice' for a reason," Gumbert says. "You might accidentally graze your neighbor's foot, fart out loud, or lose your balance in a one-footed pose." Chuckle about it and keep going.

4. Center yourself—literally. Your first inclination might be to hide out in the back; instead, set up your mat in the middle of the room. Why? Certain poses may alter the class positioning 180 degrees, turning the back row into the front. Translation: There's nowhere left to hide... and no one to watch when you have no idea what the instructor's words mean. "Looking around the room to understand the shapes is not a bad thing," Gumbert says.

"It might take a few tries to find the class that resonates with you the most."





— Addison Gumbert

5. Try, try again. Go into your first class already planning to go to a second class—even if you don't like it. "There are so many styles of yoga and teachers out there," Gumbert says. "Some offer anecdotal stories, while some blast music without much talking—that it might take a few tries to find the class that resonates with you the most."

Clickwise from top: iStock (4); Andrew Cebulka, Courtesy of Meredith Cameron

Body Work

In the Centennial State, we tend to address our angst by pursuing physical health and fitness. Here's how a few Coloradans centered themselves, relieved their stress, and improved their day-to-day lives by focusing on their physiological needs.

Who	The Stressors	The Solution	How It Helps
Chris Van Dusen , chief marketing officer of a CBD company; founder and managing partner of a media agency	Professional commitments and executive travel that result in a feeling of being spread thin 	Brazilian jiu-jitsu, a martial art based on grappling or ground-fighting that demands instinctive and consequential decision-making	"It's the only thing I do in my life where I can detach 100 percent. It provides mental clarity. Afterward, I'm ready to attack the workday. Someone comes at me with a decision, and I don't freak out. As someone with ADHD who has anxiety about things, it takes away that layer for me."
Meredith Cameron , traveling yoga teacher 	Debilitating Lyme disease symptoms that are an obstacle to work success	A sabbatical in New York City to receive medical "qigong"—an ancient Chinese healing practice that blends breathing techniques, cupping, and bodywork	"As a yoga teacher, you give what you are. Having pain and feeling bad? People see and feel that, and it's not good for anybody. [Putting my life on pause] was a challenge, and I resisted it. But surrendering is when the healing starts. [My qigong teacher] works the organs and tissue; it's like he's using a typewriter on your back."
Aaron Bible , creative director/editor/content creator in the outdoor industry	The industry (think: ski and bike) has a tendency to breed a culture of hard partying and après indulgence, which led Bible to questions about addiction and identity 	Quit drinking and became (mostly) vegetarian	"To be able to take joy from life without adding alcohol is really different and special. You reinvent yourself. You wake up in the morning with limitless potential."
Courtney Sheldon , marketing manager for an international e-learning company	Grief from the sudden loss of her husband in an accident 	Running, marathon training	"It lets me talk to [my husband]. It lets me scream and release so much of the bad stuff inside me. When you run, you feel your emotions; you let your body hold the weight of what you're going through."

QUIETING YOUR MIND

Slow It Down

Denver-based life coach Michael Kass of Life Mastery Coaching talks tech overload, staying in the moment, and shifting your focus.

5280 Health: What are the biggest hurdles to achieving some form of inner peace?

Michael Kass: Our minds are like runaway trains. We're moving so fast in this high-tech world of smartphones and social media; the average person reaches for their phone 80 times a day [according to global tech support company Asurion]. And that actually causes a sense of loneliness and isolation. We think we're connecting, but the real intimacy gets dumbed down.

We've all been told to "be more present." Got any tips?

Start with a mindfulness or meditation practice. People cringe at that suggestion, but just take five minutes during the day. Sit and feel your breath in your belly. When you're showering in the morning, feel the water. Be there. When you're driving, pay attention to the steering wheel under your hands. Come back from one step ahead.

Ambition and achievement: These are important drivers of success, but are they tripping up my quest for calm?

Ambition is not the problem. It's the attachment to achievement. We focus on results; instead, we can focus on the locus of control. A salesman fixates on making a certain number of sales every day, but he has no control over that; if he focuses on making 100 sales calls, that's totally within his control.

How do I avoid burnout?

It's about reclaiming your time, behavior, and actions from everyone else's agenda. The key is learning to say no and to resist the impulse to respond to emails and texts immediately. We all get 24 hours a day. Really consider how you use them.



No More Excuses

I subscribe to the "I don't have time for self-care" self-care routine. Here's what happened when I made time. BY JULIE DUGDALE

This past year has turned my schedule and my brain upside down. The challenges are nothing more than the everyday life stuff that most of us experience—my husband and I moved (twice), we had a baby, we started new jobs, and so on—but I struggled with the constant ticker tape of to-do lists and feeling unsettled. I waffled over commitments and stressed over not-even-real problems. ¶ So, after one too many "How does this not bother you?!" jabs at my husband—and his subsequent suggestion that my occasional freakouts weren't actually helping us maneuver through life—I decided to experiment with finding ways to chill out. I didn't want anything that demanded a regular, regimented schedule. Instead, I simply embraced opportunities that felt conducive to detaching from the grind: wellness activities I'd dismissed in the past for (perceived) lack of time or, frankly, because I felt like they just weren't my thing. ¶ Did it work? Here's the rundown.

What I tried: Drop-in guided meditation

Where: Mayu Meditation Co-Op, 1804 S. Pearl St.

What I experienced: Situated on a corner across from a

school and a coffeeshop, the building doesn't exactly scream Zen. But inside, everything from the front desk to the cavernous back rooms was inviting in a homey kind of way. Meditation cushions and blankets made for

a comfortable space to let the "beginner's meditation" audio stream through the provided iPod and headphones while the faint sound of a trickling fountain bubbled soothingly in the background.

Tip: Look forward to the center's nearly complete garden for reflection and healing—basically an outdoor meditation space adjacent to the building—to open in the spring.

Verdict: It took a while to settle into a position (lying flat) and a voice track that worked to mellow my tired Friday mental game, and I can't say I had any revelatory moments or left with a new outlook. But it was refreshing to just pause, without expectation.



What I tried: Walking a labyrinth

Where: A Sanctuary Center, 3720 W. Wolfensberger Road, Sedalia

What I experienced: A completely solo exploration of a circular stone maze hidden in a sun-dappled grove of trees.

Tip: Don't put a time limit on your walk. It may take much longer than you think.

Verdict: Despite the muted noise of a busy road in the distance, I enjoyed the solitude of the surroundings, and my mind wandered in a very calming way as I walked—though I can see how the presence of others, more likely on a weekend, would dilute the chill effect.

What I tried: A private, in-home group yoga session

Where: Meta Yoga Studios, Breckenridge

What I experienced: Surrounded by a group of longtime friends, I liked the instructor's nonjudgmental vibe, which she tailored to the varying abilities in our group. She gave lots of verbal guidance for not only body positioning but also how and where to channel thoughts and energy—in this case, toward the decadeslong friendship our group shared.

Tip: In such an intimate setting, it's helpful if members of the group know one another well.

Verdict: Despite the distraction of my clunky movements, my emotional purge was real—though it didn't so much relax my mind as flood it with positive energy.

What I tried: Halotherapy, also known as salt therapy

Where: 5 Star Salt Caves, 722 S. Pearl St.

What I experienced: 50 minutes of contemplative lounging (a reclined chair with a cozy blanket) in an indoor grotto made of 13,000 pounds of luminous pink Himalayan rock salt, which proponents claim detoxifies the air and cleanses your respiratory system.

Tip: Make sure to use the restroom before the doors close; getting up and crunching through the salt is, uh, disruptive.

Verdict: Was it relaxing? Mildly. Did I leave feeling rejuvenated and clearheaded? Not quite. The benefit possibly lies in regular sessions.

What I tried: Sensory deprivation, also known as flotation therapy

Where: Samana Float Center, 1307 26th St.

What I experienced: 90 minutes in a soundproof space, floating in 10 inches of a dense, body-temperature saline solution meant to induce a feeling of weightlessness, mentally and physically. Lights and soothing sounds optional.



Tip: Wear the earplugs—and make sure they're in properly. Water in the ear for three days afterward is unpleasant.

Verdict: It was a bit like a lukewarm bath: not exactly uncomfortable, but not quite utterly relaxing. My mental ticker tape kept right on ticking.

Give Me Strength

A silent meditation retreat brought my life, and the path ahead, into focus. BY RYAN PEACOCK

The 6 a.m. wake-up call from an oversize bell isn't nearly as jarring as I thought it would be. It's the first morning of my three-day silent meditation retreat at Tara Mandala—a 700-acre Buddhist center in Pagosa Springs—and I feel surprisingly awake. The smell of peppermint tea leads me to a group gathered on cushions for our morning session. Awkwardly, I simultaneously try to avoid eye contact and keep my eyes fixed on the others to figure out what I should be doing. The instructor arrives, offers a brief welcome, tells us to close our eyes, and suggests that we "let go and begin again."

I manage to follow her voice for about five minutes before I drift. My shoulders and neck begin to tighten, and I am bothered by the woman next to me who keeps coughing. Instead of thinking blissful thoughts, I go to places I want to avoid: my decadelong struggle with depression, the toxic job that saps my energy, and anger from a breakup a year ago. I don't want to be where I am in my life, and oftentimes I don't want to be me. I've turned to numerous "prescriptions" in an attempt to fix myself—an ever-changing mix of antidepressants, talk therapy, self-help books, and a high-fiber diet. Nothing seems to have a sustained, positive impact. Which brought me here.

Our schedule is simple: sitting meditation, eating, free time, instructor discussion, and yoga (repeated in the afternoon, followed by dinner and an evening talk). We are encouraged to be silent as much as possible, even during meals. Instead of being secluded in a dark, one-bedroom apartment, I find myself surrounded by strangers in a bright, open meditation temple. Healthy vegetarian meals put my Chipotle habit to shame. I am not confined by daily obligations, and this sharpens my awareness. Washing dishes becomes a purposeful task, and observing the flight patterns of hummingbirds doesn't seem like wasted time. When you have no emails to answer or relationships to navigate, you're free to just...feel.

Don't get me wrong; trying to sit still and quiet my mind is a maddening experience. The frustrations of urban living and an always-on mental grind don't just evaporate the second you pull up a cushion. But, slowly, the repetitive mindfulness begins to crack my everyday perceptions. I start to uncoil from my fixation on being a failure, and meaningful moments come back into focus—the feeling of well-used muscles after yoga, the joy of writing in a moleskin journal, the excitement of stealing a smile from a cute girl.

As I pack up at the end of the retreat, I start to cry. I feel a mix of not wanting to leave the comfort around me and not wanting to return to the things I was trying to escape. The clouds never parted to bestow enlightenment, and that's OK. Instead of transforming me, the self-reflection helped me see the years of negative residue I'd accumulated and ultimately reawakened a strength I feel good about.

A week later, I quit my job, a decision that set off a positive change in direction. Since then, I have done two more retreats, and during each one, I stumbled through my mind, smiled at unforeseen insights, and was reminded why I need to "let go and begin again."

I don't want to be where I am in my life, and oftentimes I don't want to be me.

Clockwise from top: Courtesy of A Sanctuary Center; Courtesy of Epsom Athletics

RENEWING YOUR SPIRIT

A Pilgrim's Path

A real estate agent walked 20 miles in a week to visit 16 spiritual centers outside Crestone. Here's her takeaway.

Resting at the foot of the dramatic Sangre de Cristo Mountains, the town of Crestone is considered by many a spiritual mecca; it's home to some two dozen centers representing most of the world's major wisdom traditions, including Buddhism and Hinduism. But resident Vivia Lawson, who owns a real estate company, had been too busy to explore the depths of the town's outdoor beauty and spiritual resources—until she hit pause and made time to travel the Camino de Crestone. Billed as an "interspiritual pilgrimage," the Camino takes travelers from temples to stupas to sweat lodges to ashrams on a seven-day,



YURT LODGING AT THE CRESTONE MOUNTAIN ZEN CENTER

20-mile walkabout. "Being a businessperson, I don't often get to stop and appreciate my environment," Lawson says. "Walking from place to place creates a meditative space. It's a wonderful thing—being present in your own community."

What did she learn? Lawson says the Camino helped open her view of herself and others. "Spirituality is wandering into the unknown," she says, "and looking into all those windows to get perspectives on things we don't necessarily understand."



Soul Searching

Four retreats in Colorado where you can escape the daily grind in order to reflect, replenish, and regroup.

Crestone Mountain Zen Center

SAN LUIS VALLEY
crestoneretreats.org

Good for: Solitude and contemplation. Those in need of a remote hideaway can focus on distraction-free work, deep healing, or spiritual exploration by tailoring an individual stay in the shadow of the Sangre de Cristos. Your time can be silent if requested, and meditation with the monastic Zen community is welcomed but not required.

Accommodations: Cabins, private rooms, yurts, and camping; vegetarian meals in a gorgeous atrium

If you go: Spend an afternoon ogling the vastness of Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve, an hour south.

Shoshoni Yoga Retreat

ROLLINSVILLE
shoshoni.org
Good for: A yoga-centric quick escape. Book an overnight getaway just 40 minutes outside Boulder and unwind with two yoga classes, two meditation classes, a creative art program, and free time to indulge in the hot tub and sauna, explore hiking trails, or take a kayak out for a spin on the pond—all in just 24 hours.

Accommodations: Dorm rooms, cabins, cottages, huts, and camping; vegetarian meals at family-style picnic tables in the dining center

If you go: Swing through Nederland, about 10 minutes north, and check out the restored Carousel of Happiness for a dose of feel-good nostalgia.



THE CAROUSEL OF HAPPINESS

Sacred Heart Jesuit

SEDALIA
sacredheartretreat.org
Good for: Spiritual reflection through a Roman Catholic lens. Enjoy 280 acres of tranquil grounds near the foothills that host guided retreats with a spiritual director as well as silent weekend stays with structured prayers. The programs are all aimed at deepening one's knowledge of and relationship with Jesus Christ.

Accommodations: Single, private rooms (with sinks) and shared bathrooms
If you go: Pop over to A Sanctuary Center, just a few miles south, for a different kind of reflective experience along a nature path that connects a labyrinth (see page 47), some gardens, and a meditative chapel and library.

Impermanent Sangha Retreats

WARD
impermanentsangha.com
Good for: Eco-conscious nature lovers. Surrounded by meadows, forests, a river, and stunning views of the Indian Peaks Wilderness, the venue—the Rocky Mountain Ecodharma



Retreat Center—lends itself to an immersive outdoor experience that includes meditating outside at sunrise and sunset and hiking nearby trails.

Accommodations: Dorm rooms, private rooms, and camping; vegetarian meals
If you go: Stop at the Jamestown Mercantile Co. Cafe (aka "the Merc") on the way there or back (or both!) for tasty fare, a local brew, and live music on Main Street in Jamestown.

Starry-Eyed

Replenish your soul under the brilliance of an unfettered night sky.

Few experiences are as awe-inspiring as staring up into an endless blanket of glowing stars on a clear night. Maybe it's the heightened awareness of your own smallness in the grand scheme of the universe or the wonder of considering how all those stars came to be. "Preserving our dark skies is important to feeling at peace as a human," says Andrew Miller, board member of Dark Skies of the Wet Mountain Valley, a nonprofit that worked to make Custer County a certified Dark Sky Community. "Connecting with the night sky above us is one of the oldest human activities. In fact, some of the oldest art in the world depicts the night sky."

The bad news: 99 percent of Americans can't even see the Milky Way because of light pollution. Commercial lights, highway lights, city lights...

they all trespass into our viewing fields, even in wide-open spaces. And that means most of us don't get the benefits of a full night sky. "There's always been a correlation between exposure to light at night and your stress level," says Dr. Robert Stencel, University of Denver astronomy professor, director of DU Observatories, and member of the Colorado chapter of the International Dark-Sky Association, which advocates for protecting our natural night skies from light pollution. The good news is that the association has preserved two officially certified International Dark Sky Places in Colorado: the adjacent towns of Westcliffe and Silver Cliff in Custer County and Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park. These are sites where visitors can experience a truly dark night sky awash in a canvas of stars. "As people stare into the billions and billions of stars, just from our own galaxy—which is just one of hundreds of billions of galaxies estimated in the universe—they can [easily feel] overwhelmed," Miller says. "However, in this moment of being humbled by the infinite expanse above us, we can find a sense of peace and calm."

Want your own moment to reflect under a true night sky? Head to Colorado's darkest locales, or check the map and list below for more official International Dark Sky Places throughout the West.



BLACK CANYON OF THE GUNNISON NATIONAL PARK



Colorado

1. Westcliffe and Silver Cliff
2. Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park

Utah

3. Goblin Valley State Park
4. Natural Bridges National Monument
5. Canyonlands National Park
6. Capitol Reef National Park
7. Torrey
8. Rainbow Bridge National Monument
9. Cedar Breaks National Monument

New Mexico

10. Dead Horse Point State Park
11. Steinkaker State Park
12. Antelope Island State Park
13. Weber County North Fork Park
14. Capulin Volcano National Monument
15. Clayton Lake State Park
16. Chaco Culture National Historic Park
17. Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument
18. Cosmic Campground International Dark Sky Sanctuary

LOVING YOUR SPACE

#VanLife

This graphic designer packed up her life and built a new living space... on the road.

Take one look at Anne Williams' @inspirednomad Instagram account and you'll see why the moniker (also the name of her travel-journal-esque website) is fitting. The Denver-based graphic designer takes her followers on journeys through snowcapped mountains, mystical deserts, and glowing cityscapes via artful road-trip shots captioned with trendy hashtags like #vanlifers—as in, life in a van. Specifically, a decked-out Sprinter van furnished with bedding, wired with electricity, and ready to roam.

It's a lifestyle far different from the one Williams experienced growing up. In her small Missouri town—population: less than 4,000—it seemed that everyone followed a similar path to jobs, marriages, and mortgages. "But I always wanted to travel and do all the crazy things," Williams says. The opportunity came when her office closed its brick-and-mortar doors and told Williams she could work from home. "I realized home could be anywhere; all I needed was Wi-Fi."

One epic solo road trip and a lot of mountain vistas later, she had the bug. So she and her boyfriend scoured the internet for a road-trip-worthy vehicle, got a deal, packed it all up, headed toward Colorado, and began working



remotely. Are they traditional van-lifers? No. They live in the city and bust out the wheels when the mood strikes them; in 2018 they spent 136 days on the road. But having a home that moves with them does afford them a certain freedom. "Open spaces, parks, nature...getting there is all easier out West," Williams says. "It's better for my soul."



Good Vibes

Your home got you out of sorts? Bring on the feng shui.

Feng shui is the millennia-old Chinese practice of arranging your physical surroundings to create positive energy flow and well-being—in other words, designing your rooms to best meet your needs for success and contentment. "Feng shui is different for every person," says Lorrie Webb Grillo, certified feng shui practitioner and founder of Denver-based Thriving Spaces, which aims to help people experience joy and harmony when they walk in the door at the end of the day. "Some people think it's very esoteric, ancient, and philosophical, and I love those aspects of it. But I do feng shui because it's functional." Here, Grillo shares five easy strategies you can try for a more peaceful home environment.

1. Make your bed every day. It may seem trivial, but it "can make a world of difference when you walk into your bedroom—a place without chaos—at the end of a difficult day," Grillo says.

2. Consider your room usage. You don't have to

use your rooms like the architect planned. "This is your home; you make the rules," Grillo says. "If doing art at the end of the day relaxes and replenishes you and you don't have a studio—make one." In other words, out with the formal dining table, in with the pottery wheel.

3. Ditch anything dead. That goes for plants, food in the fridge, and even items you might consider sentimental. "Dried flowers invariably are dusty and usually not very attractive," Grillo says. "If you want to save a flower arrangement, press the flowers when they are fresh and create art."

Courtesy of Anne Williams



"Our home reflects who we are and offers us a metaphor for our lives."

— Lorrie Webb Grillo

4. Fix broken things. "Our home reflects who we are and offers us a metaphor for our lives," Grillo says. "Feeling at peace at home starts with feeling safe." And that means changing light bulbs, replacing broken locks and latches on windows, patching a crumbling front step, and fixing that doorbell that's never worked.

5. Ensure all doors and windows open fully. That means no stacking boxes or furniture in front of nonessential doors and no painting over that one tiny window. "A door or window that opens freely, as far as it can go, represents your willingness to recognize and embrace new opportunities," Grillo says, "and helps to clear out old, musty air and thoughts."



istock (3)

Day In The Life

Sometimes even hanging around the house can leave us feeling...unrested. So we asked some experts how to live more intentionally at home to stress less and enjoy more.

7 a.m. Be kind to your internal clock. From the moment you wake up, your body is taking in signals from the outside world to set its circadian rhythm, and a lot of that has to do with light exposure, says Dr. Ellen Stothard, research and development director of the Colorado Sleep Institute. If your body is exposed to light too late or deprived of light in the morning, it can throw your system out of whack, creating a phenomenon called "social jet lag." In other words, don't down your morning cuppa under the covers in your dark bedroom. "We're lucky we have a lot of sunny days in Colorado," Stothard says. "Think about having your coffee or breakfast by a window or outside."

10 a.m. The to-do list...don't ignore it. Instead, export it from your mental space—yes, as in, create an actual written list—and celebrate small victories. "The more things you can dump out of your brain, the better," says professional declutterer Julie Gutman, founder of Simplify Me, a Denver-based organizing company. "And if it takes less than two minutes to put something away, do it now to avoid spending 30 minutes at the end of the day picking up and stressing out."

2 p.m. Whatever you're doing, take a break. Pause and dance around the kitchen for a minute. Stretch out on the floor and let your spine and shoulders relax. Leave your office for a 10-minute walk. Indulge in the tiniest luxuries while you eat, like berries in your sparkling water or a real napkin and a candle, especially if it's just you. "We have a go-big-or-go-home mentality," says Brit Stueven, creator of a self-care coaching business called the Break Changer. "It holds us back from taking those five minutes to recharge because we think we need to go to the spa or go on vacation [for the full effect]. Rest and renewal can happen in the thick of chaos if we choose to be present with what's going on in our lives."

4 p.m. Take a tech sabbath. Try designating a few hours each evening, or even a full 24 hours, sundown to sundown, as a screen-free period for everyone in the house. Lakewood mom Kaylyn Wilson has four teenagers and knows firsthand the benefits of such a rule. Never are there six people in six different rooms on six different devices. "The intention was creating space to be present and connected with each other by removing the distractions," Wilson says. "It's been a struggle, and the kids push back on it. But I'm grateful we do it."



7 p.m. Eat dinner at the table with your family. Creating a regular rhythm—even if it's just a specific time a few days a week to share a meal—will help make everyone feel prioritized and connected. "People know family, partner, and kids are most important...it's not rocket science," says Dr. Howard Markman, psychology professor and co-director of the Center for Marital and Family Studies at the University of Denver. "But we often don't make time for it." Markman attributes this to the slide-versus-decide theory he and his team developed: No one *decides* that eating on the couch in front of the TV is ideal. It's that "people slide into patterns that are not consistent with what's going to make them happy." So slide on back—to the dinner table.

10 p.m. Consciously wind down. "Don't sit with all the lights on in every room," Stothard says. "Start turning them off an hour or two before bed. And keep the lights dim around you. Create a routine where your body and brain disengage before bed." Translation: No scrolling through Insta on your phone before you drift off. In fact, Stothard suggests, keep all screen devices out of the bedroom at bedtime and focus on things that help you power down, like drinking hot herbal tea or reading a book. 📖

ON THE WEB Go to 5280.com for ideas about how to find peace at work.