

SEPTEMBER
2024

The power of self- affirmations

These are short positive and powerful statements you repeat to yourself that challenge negative thoughts and build confidence. Here's how self-affirmations work:

- **Challenge negativity:** Replace self-critical thoughts with positive beliefs in your abilities.
- **Boost self-esteem:** By repeating affirmations, you start to believe them, leading to greater confidence.
- **Improve performance:** Positive self-talk can help you stay focused and motivated, leading to better outcomes or results.
- **Reduce stress and anxiety:** Positive affirmations can help reframe stressful situations and promote a sense of calm and control.

Repeat your affirmations regularly to experience the positive impact on your mindset and overall well-being.

Try these simple affirmations:

- "I am capable and worthy."
- "I can overcome challenges."
- "I am learning and growing every day."
- "I deserve happiness and success."



A balanced look at seed oils

Seed oils, like canola and sunflower have become a staple in our kitchens. They're praised for their neutral taste, high smoke points, and affordability. However, conflicting information can leave you wondering if seed oils are healthy or harmful.

WHAT ARE SEED OILS?

Seed oils are extracted from the seeds of various plants, like canola and sunflower. Soybean oil, while not technically a seed oil, has some similar properties. These oils are a popular choice in kitchens worldwide for several reasons. They're generally high in unsaturated fats, considered heart-healthy in moderation.

Seed oils also have a neutral flavor profile, making them versatile for various food preparations. For example, their high smoke point makes them suitable for high-heat cooking methods like frying while remaining affordable compared to some other cooking fats.

THE DEBATE

Seed oils aren't without controversy. Some concerns surround their processing and fatty acid profile:

- Seed oils are naturally rich in omega-6 fatty acids, which are essential for our bodies. However, the modern diet often leans heavily toward omega-6s compared to omega-3s. An imbalanced omega-6 to omega-3 ratio might contribute to inflammation in the body.
- Highly refined seed oils may have fewer nutrients than unrefined options. Additionally, some argue that high-heat processing can lead to oxidation, potentially forming harmful compounds in the oil.

FINDING BALANCE

Prioritize whole foods and choose cooking methods that minimize potential drawbacks.

- Include healthy fats like olive oil, avocado oil, nuts, and fatty fish in your diet. This helps ensure a balanced omega-3 to omega-6 ratio.
- Opt for unrefined options like cold-pressed olive oil. These may offer potentially higher beneficial nutrients than highly refined seed oils.
- Explore healthier cooking methods like baking, steaming, or stir-frying to preserve the nutritional value of your food.
- Be mindful of added sugars and unhealthy fats in processed foods that often contain seed oils.



Carpal tunnel syndrome

Carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS) is a common hand and wrist condition that causes numbness, tingling, and weakness. It occurs when the median nerve, responsible for feeling and movement in these areas, is compressed within the carpal tunnel, a narrow passageway in your wrist.



FACTORS THAT CAN CONTRIBUTE TO CTS

- Activities that involve repetitive gripping, bending, or twisting of the wrist can irritate the tendons and put pressure on the median nerve. Examples include typing, using a computer mouse, or playing specific instruments.
- Some people are naturally predisposed due to a smaller carpal tunnel or thicker tendons.
- CTS can be associated with underlying health issues like diabetes, obesity, rheumatoid arthritis, and pregnancy.
- Fractures or sprains can also contribute to CTS by causing inflammation and swelling in the carpal tunnel.

SYMPTOMS

- Numbness, tingling, or burning sensation in the thumb, index, middle, and half of the ring finger. This often occurs at night or during sleep.
- Weakness in the hand, making it difficult to grasp or hold objects
- Pain or a dull ache in the wrist or palm
- Difficulty coordinating fine motor skills like buttoning clothes or writing



TREATMENT

Consult your doctor for a proper diagnosis and treatment plan to manage carpal tunnel syndrome. Treatment options vary depending on the severity and may include:

- Avoiding activities that aggravate symptoms. Wrist braces can also help immobilize the wrist and reduce pressure on the nerve.
- Over-the-counter pain relievers like ibuprofen can help reduce inflammation and pain.
- Corticosteroid injections can provide relief by reducing inflammation around the median nerve.
- In severe cases, surgery may be necessary to create more space for the median nerve in the carpal tunnel.

PREVENTION

While not always preventable, some practices can help reduce your risk of CTS:

- Maintain good posture. Keep your wrists straight while working at a desk or using electronic devices.
- Take frequent breaks. Stretch your hands and wrists regularly to improve circulation and prevent stiffness.
- Strengthen hand and forearm muscles. This can help support your wrists and reduce strain.
- Maintain a healthy weight. Excess weight can contribute to CTS by putting extra pressure on the median nerve.

Weather the storm

Life's surprises don't have to derail your finances. Unexpected expenses can quickly disrupt that feeling. An emergency fund acts as a safety net, catching you when life throws financial curveballs.



TIPS TO BUILD A PEACE-OF-MIND BUFFER

- **Set a SMART goal:** Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound. Aim for 3-6 months of living expenses, but a smaller starting goal is OK.
- **Automate savings:** Set up automatic transfers from your checking to your savings account. This “set it and forget it” approach ensures steady progress toward your goal.
- **Review your budget:** Trim unnecessary expenses like subscriptions or dining out.
- **Channel windfalls:** Allocate a portion of your tax return, bonus, or birthday gift toward your emergency fund.
- **Choose the right account:** A high-yield savings account offers easy access to your funds while providing a bit of a return on your investment.
- **Celebrate milestones:** Reaching savings milestones is a cause for celebration! Reward yourself modestly to stay motivated and on track. Building an emergency fund takes time and discipline, but it's an investment in your financial security and peace of mind.

