

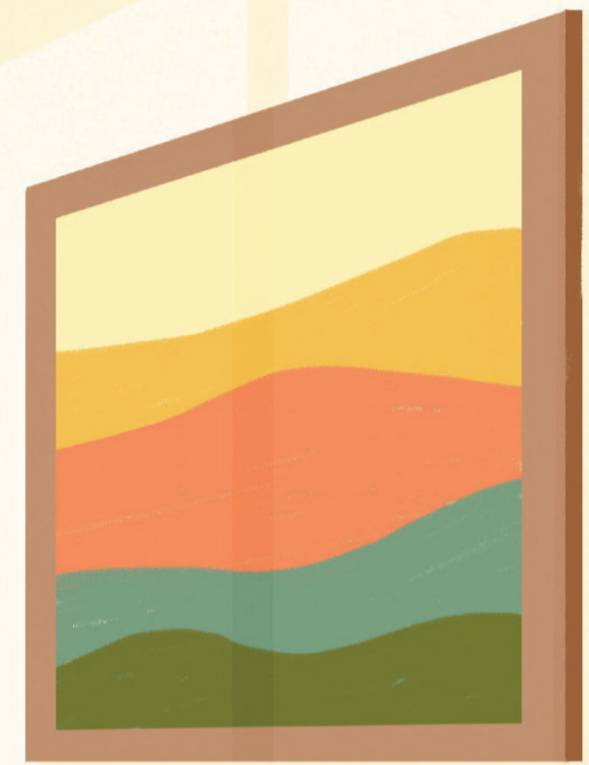
15 Little Ways to Reset Yourself This Fall

Some say September is the *other* January—it's just as good a time as the new year for a clean slate. Girding for school to start again, for work to pick up? We have ideas to boost your energy, shake up your routine, and get you sparkling. Ready, set, reset!

BY SARAH Z. WEXLER

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ABBEY LOSSING





1

Add more nature to your decor.

What makes a home feel homey? A 2021 study in the *Journal of Environmental Psychology* tried to pin down those subjective factors. A major commonality was “greater naturalness.” (Maybe that explains why December’s holly and Christmas trees give us all the cozy feels.) As summer fades and we stay inside more, harness the power of nature by bringing the outdoors in— with houseplants, a bowl of river rocks on the table, dried flower arrangements, or a stack of wood next to the fireplace. For even more *ahhh*, don’t forget throw blankets, says Breegan Jane, an interior designer in Los Angeles and HGTV host. “If you’re looking to give your home an extra dose of autumn goodness, one of the easiest things to do is incorporate fall colors from nature,” she says. “Put away the bright, summery hues and bring out those thick knitted throw blankets in earthy sienna, green, and auburn.”

2

Switch up your apple game.

We're serious! See, there are more than 100 apple varieties in U.S. grocery stores, and around a dozen new ones are introduced every year—many bred specifically to beat the classics (sorry not sorry, mealy Red Delicious). So drop the McIntosh (OK, just gently put it down) and mix things up!

For a greater balance of sweetness, acidity, crispness, and juiciness, try Cosmic Crisp, developed at Washington State University, and SnapDragon and RubyFrost, bred at Cornell University, suggests Lane Selman, a professor at Oregon State University and the director of the Culinary Breeding Network, which includes plant breeders, farmers, and culinary pros. Or go to usapple.org to see what's available in an orchard near you. Once you stock up, store the apples in a paper bag in your fridge's crisper drawer. They should last for weeks, even months.



3

Seek out more help at work.

If job-related stress is keeping you up at night, consider it your cue to get some help. A two-year study found that workers who received more support from their peers were significantly less likely to have sleep issues. To get more, try giving more, suggests Kristi Leimgruber, PhD, a behavioral scientist at BetterUp, a career and leadership training platform. “Offer to join brainstorming sessions or act as a sounding board for ideas. When you show an interest in helping others, they will return the favor.”



4

Listen to a sad song.

There's just something about a peppy song that gets us smiling and tapping our toes. Turns out, *sad* songs can boost our mood too, according to new research. Why? Maybe because they offer us a genuine sense of connectedness, says study coauthor Mario Attie-Picker, PhD, assistant professor of philosophy at Loyola University Chicago. “The connection that music creates is similar to the connection we get from a heartfelt conversation.” So go ahead and wallow a little in Olivia Rodrigo or the *Les Misérables* soundtrack.

5

Use an app to see what Future You will look like.

In the name of fun—and money!—download a free app like AgingBooth or FaceLab to see what you'll look like in 20 or 30 years. Financial decisions involve trade-offs between our present and future selves, says Hal Hershfield, PhD, a marketing and behavioral decision-making professor at UCLA's Anderson School of Management and the author of the new book *Your Future Self: How to Make Tomorrow Better Today*. "The present self gets prioritized because we tend to think of our future self almost as a different person altogether." Check yourself out and you could be more likely to save instead of spend.

6

Think of your weekends as mini vacations.

Here's a bit of mind trickery for you: Simply telling yourself to treat the weekend as a vacation before Saturday begins can increase your happiness levels once Monday comes back around, according to a study in the journal *Social Psychological and Personality Science*. You don't even have to plan anything out of the ordinary, says study coauthor Colin West, PhD, a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Toronto. "This intervention works because it breaks the routine mindset," he explains. "It's just enough to nudge people to pay more attention to the present moment." Be sure to still take real vacays, though!



7

Restore your hair's glory.

Throughout the summer, your hair can accumulate minerals (from swimming) and develop buildup (from antihumidity products) that mess with your color or leave your strands dull. Try a chelating agent, a powder containing vitamin C that you make into a paste and apply between shampooing and conditioning, suggests Noëlle Sherber, MD, clinical associate professor of dermatology at the George Washington University School of Medicine & Health Sciences. "Chelating agents have a low pH to bind to minerals and deposits and pull them out," Sherber explains. She likes Brightening Powder (\$32; dphue.com) and Hard Water Wellness Hair Remedy (\$4; malibuc.com). Use one at home for softer, shinier, and brighter hair.



8

Get a little uncomfortable.

Rather than trying to avoid discomfort because it feels icky, it's worth chasing that feeling—especially when it comes to our hobbies and media consumption. In a 2022 study, researchers at Cornell University and the University of Chicago had more than 2,000 participants do things to make themselves immediately uncomfortable, like take an improv class (cringe!), listen to an opposing political view (tough!), and hear tragic stories about gun violence (important!). The result: Participants who were asked to "seek discomfort" while engaging in these activities reported more personal growth than the control group, who got to read soothing stories about travel. If you want to evolve rather than calcify, push yourself out of your comfort zone to stretch, learn, and grow.



9 Adjust your makeup.

Even though you use sunscreen dutifully, your skin tone may get darker by a shade or two during the summer. So as we move indoors and our coloring shifts, early fall is a great time to check that your foundation and concealer match your current skin tone, says Bobbi Brown, founder of the beauty brand Jones Road. “You may need to switch between a few shades, depending on the season.” (To avoid buying all new stuff, try blending lighter and darker shades you already have. Adjust as needed.) Once you’ve found your match, meaning the color “disappears on your skin,” Brown says, extend your summer glow by layering on bronzer. “Sweep a powder formula or tinted balm across your cheekbones to look like you’ve just come back from vacation.”



10

Drink more water.

With cooler weather, we don’t usually get as thirsty as we do during warmer months. Maya Feller, a registered dietitian in Brooklyn, New York, says we therefore aren’t as naturally cued to drink water, and we can end up dehydrated. While the old way was to prescribe by sex (92 ounces of water per day for women and 124 ounces for men), the new thinking takes into account several factors, mainly the climate, your movement level, your current health, and your diet (e.g., are you eating a bunch of watermelon, which is hydrating, or fries, which are dehydrating?). It’s a complicated algorithm, but Feller says a simple way to estimate your H₂O needs is to divide your weight by two—that’s how many ounces a day to hit. Also: woo-hoo to the fact that experts say coffee, tea, and sparkling water count toward your total!



11

Try a warming wine.

Stuck on merlot on repeat? May we suggest a California zinfandel? This often overlooked varietal (which has been made in the state since the mid-1800s!) is a full-bodied, purple-tinged, ruby red marvel that Robin McBride, cofounder and president of the McBride Sisters Wine Company, calls “autumn in a bottle.” She adds that zinfandel’s notes of spice, plum, and dried cherry complement fall’s heartier, richer foods. It also goes nicely with a fire and a cable-knit blanket (see item number 1). And researchers recently confirmed what you already knew: Drinking light to moderate amounts of alcohol on a regular basis is associated with reduced stress signaling in the brain.



14

Start checking in on yourself more often.

Yet another reason not to let things fester: A new study by investigators from Brigham and Women's Hospital found that women who suppressed their emotions had a less diverse gut microbiome. (Less diverse microbiomes have been linked to chronic conditions like obesity and type 2 diabetes.) So, um, how do you let those emotions out? Make it a habit to ask yourself a few questions, says Rachel Goldman, PhD, a licensed psychologist and review board member at Verywell Mind, a mental health news site and one of our sister brands. "We have to take moments throughout the day, because our needs change," she says. "Ask yourself, 'How am I feeling? What do I need right now?' The key is that we acknowledge what's happening and look to see what can help."

12

Consider buying a new mattress.

After seven years, or sooner if you wake up with aches and pains, it may be time for a new mattress, says Mary Helen Rogers, a vice president with the Better Sleep Council. And September can be one of the best times to nab a deal. "Since most brands debut new offerings in the first half of the year, the later in the year we get, the more likely you are to see a sale," she says. Think: percentages off, free frames, or both. Here's to a comfier sleep situation just in time for hibernation season.

13

And new sneakers.

To help prevent injuries, it's best to swap out your sneakers every year, as some materials can degrade even if they've just been sitting in your closet, according to the American Academy of Podiatric Sports Medicine (AAPSM). You'll need to get new kicks more often if you've logged more than 300 miles of running or walking, or more than 60 hours of other exercise. For new running shoes, go to a specialty running-shoe store, where the pros have the knowledge to assess and fit you properly, says podiatrist, former president of the AAPSM, and 32-time marathoner Jay Spector. If they're casual sneaks, go for a pair that has a cushy, marshmallowy feel. "Either way, try on shoes at the end of the day, when your feet are more likely to swell," Spector says. "Sneakers should feel comfortable right from the try-on, because modern materials don't require any breaking-in period."

15

Read this magazine from cover to cover.

In case you didn't notice, this month's issue theme is "hit reset." Which means we have lots of stories about this exact idea! Plus, reading is restorative. It gives you some well-earned me time. If you haven't soaked in every page up until now, go back and take a closer look. Fall will wait.