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HealthyLife[®] Letter

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Promoting Health. Enhancing Life. Reducing Costs.

Is yoga for you?

Yoga is an ancient Indian practice that engages the mind and body. There are many different forms of yoga, and the type you choose should suit your health and fitness goals. Check out these more popular types of yoga.



Hatha

Hatha yoga is a general term for any type of yoga. But in general, hatha classes focus on perfecting and holding yoga poses and proper breathing. It can be relaxing, as it is generally slower paced. You may not get an aerobic workout from hatha yoga, but it can improve your strength, balance and flexibility. Hatha classes are usually geared towards beginners.

Vinyasa

This is a faster-paced style of yoga that moves quickly from pose to pose, sometimes with upbeat music. You may work up a sweat and get a good cardiovascular workout. Before trying vinyasa, be sure you are familiar with basic yoga poses so you can follow along. It is often suitable for all skill levels, as the poses can be modified to fit your comfort and ability.

Bikram

Bikram yoga, sometimes called hot yoga, is done in a heated room and is designed to make participants sweat heavily during the class. Bikram involves a set of 26 poses and two breathing exercises during a 90-minute class. Though it's a predictable sequence, the heat makes it a strenuous activity. Though studies haven't proven its safety or risks for sure, it is not right for everyone. Always ask your doctor before trying any kind of hot yoga. The excess heat may cause heat-related illnesses in some people.

Ashtanga

This style uses the same six poses in an identical order or sequence. It can be repetitive, but allows people to follow a set routine. This tends to be a more fast-paced and vigorous style of yoga. You may get hot and will need to drink plenty of fluids.

Banish biting bugs



Insects like mosquitoes and ticks may annoy you during a summer barbecue or camping trip. But an effective bug repellent does more than avoid an itchy inconvenience. It may help prevent you from getting sick. Mosquitoes and ticks may carry diseases that are dangerous to humans. Many ticks carry Lyme disease and mosquitoes may spread the West Nile and Zika viruses.

To help keep mosquitoes away, use a repellent that's been proven safe and effective by the CDC. Look at the label and choose a repellent with one of these active ingredients:

- DEET
- Picaridin
- IR3535
- Oil of lemon eucalyptus
- Para-menthane-diol

The CDC recommends tick repellents that have one of the following active ingredients:

- DEET (20 to 30 percent): use on skin and clothing, but not under clothing.
- Permethrin: use on clothing and gear only.

In addition to a repellent, there are other ways to avoid bugs:

- Avoid wooded and brushy areas when possible.
- Walk in the center of trails.
- Wear clothing that covers arms and legs.
- Minimize time outside at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active.
- Throw out standing water in tires, buckets, birdbaths or other outdoor items at least once a week.
- Do a full-body check for ticks after spending time outside.

What to do if you spot a tick

If you find a tick on your skin, it should be removed as soon as possible. Here's what to do:

- Don't panic.
- Use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible.
- Pull upward on the tick slowly and evenly. Don't twist the tick or try to yank it out quickly.
- If parts of the mouth remain after you've tried to remove it, use the tweezers to try and get them out. If you can't get them out, leave it alone so the skin can heal.
- After you've removed the tick, clean the bite area and your hands with soap and water, rubbing alcohol or an iodine scrub.
- If the tick is alive, don't try to crush it. Instead, put it in alcohol or an airtight bag or container. You can also wrap it tightly in tape or flush it down the toilet.
- Ticks can also be removed by your doctor if you can't get it out yourself.
- If you've been bitten by a tick, contact your doctor for follow-up care.



Busting myths about Alzheimer's

June is Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month. And though more than 5 million Americans are living with this fatal disease, many myths still exist about it.



MYTH: Alzheimer's and dementia mean the same thing.

FACT: Dementia is a group of symptoms that can be caused by Alzheimer's and other diseases. Up to 80 percent of dementia cases are caused by Alzheimer's disease. But, dementia can be caused by other conditions, such as Parkinson's disease.

MYTH: Everyone gets forgetful with age, so Alzheimer's is no big deal.

FACT: Alzheimer's is not a normal part of aging. Alzheimer's gets worse over time. Eventually, someone with Alzheimer's will be unable to have a conversation or do normal everyday tasks. The earlier Alzheimer's is diagnosed, the sooner treatment can start. This may help delay the disease's progression.

MYTH: Alzheimer's won't hurt you physically. You can live with the memory loss and other symptoms.

FACT: Alzheimer's is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States. Some people may live up to 20 years after diagnosis, but there are no survivors.

MYTH: Medicine can cure Alzheimer's.

FACT: Treatments can help slow down the disease, but there is no cure. Alzheimer's will eventually progress, even with treatment. The treatments may help improve quality of life for those with Alzheimer's and their caregivers. Research is underway to find ways to prevent the disease and hopefully cure it.

Source: Alzheimer's Association

Look for early signs of Alzheimer's

Detecting Alzheimer's early is important. Since everyone forgets things from time to time, it can be hard to know what's normal forgetfulness and what's something more serious. People in the early stages may still work, drive and do daily tasks. They may think they are fine, and deny they have any memory issues.

Look for these signs as possible flags that could mean early Alzheimer's and talk to a doctor if you notice them:

- Problems coming up with the right word for something
- Can't remember names when introduced to new people
- Trouble performing tasks at work or home
- Forgetting something that was just read or told
- Losing a valuable or important item
- Having trouble planning or organizing

Though these signs don't mean a person has Alzheimer's for sure, it's best to see a doctor.



PROTEIN — find the right balance



Protein is an essential part of any diet. Your body needs it to build tissues and cells.

Some sources of protein are not as healthy as others. Animal sources, such as beef, pork and eggs, may contain saturated fat and/or cholesterol. The American Heart Association says saturated fats should make up less than 7 percent of your total daily calories. This means you should eat 16 grams or less of saturated fats if you eat 2,000 calories per day. Animal proteins also contain no fiber, and most Americans fall short of the recommended 25 to 35 grams of fiber needed per day.

On the other hand, plant, nut and seed proteins often have little to no saturated fat and cholesterol and usually contain fiber and valuable nutrients. Check out this “Vegan Sources of Protein” diagram for a list of good non-animal protein sources. Try replacing some of your animal proteins with these vegan-friendly sources.



FEATURED RECIPE: Black Bean Burgers



Ingredients

- 1 can of 15.5 ounce low-sodium black beans (drained and rinsed with cold water)
- 1 large egg
- 1/2 cup cooked brown rice*
- 2 scallions (green and white minced, about 1/4 cup)
- 2 Tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro (or basil leaves or a combination)
- 1 garlic clove (peeled and minced)
- 1/4 teaspoon dried oregano or basil
- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 4 whole-wheat buns

Directions

1. Add beans to a bowl and mash with a fork until chunky. Add the egg and mix well.
2. Add precooked rice*, scallions, cilantro, garlic and oregano, salt and pepper and mix until well combined.
3. Divide the mixture into 4 portions and form each portion into a patty about 3/4 to 1 inch thick.
4. Place a large skillet on the stove on high heat. When the skillet is hot, add oil. Add burgers and cook 4 to 5 minutes per side until browned on both sides and heated throughout. Place on a whole-wheat bun.

*Try using old-fashioned rolled oats, leftover cooked barley or Panko breadcrumbs instead of prepared rice.

Serve with your favorite toppings, such as lettuce, tomato, guacamole, salsa, low-fat cheese or low-fat yogurt.

Easy protein snacks

A great way to get healthy protein throughout the day is to make snacks with protein. The protein can help you feel fuller, holding you over until your next meal. These snacks may also help avoid a blood sugar crash that leaves you feeling sluggish and even hungrier than before. Try these ideas for tasty and easy-to-pack snacks:



Hummus with sliced peppers, carrots, celery or cucumbers



Peanut butter or almond butter with a banana



1/4 cup of nuts, such as almonds, walnuts or pistachios with fresh fruit



Roasted pumpkin seeds (buy them roasted or bake on a cookie sheet at 300° for 20 minutes)



Tortilla with black beans, salsa and a sprinkle of low-fat cheese



Roasted soy nuts (available at many supermarkets)



A hard-boiled egg with leafy greens



Low-fat string cheese with an apple or pistachios

Serves 4. Per serving: Calories: 274; Total Fat: 5 g; Saturated Fat: 1 g, Sodium: 668 mg; Total Carbohydrate: 47 g; Dietary Fiber: 12 g; Protein: 13 g

Source: *What's Cooking? USDA Mixing Bowl*

6 tips to become more productive at work

Productivity means you make the most of your time. You may get more done with less time or with fewer people. But it's not just about being fast, it's about maintaining quality too. Learning to be productive means you can showcase your talents and abilities by doing a great job with the resources and skills you have.

Boosting productivity is often easier said than done. When you're tired, distracted or simply don't know how to organize your day, it can be hard to stay productive. Try these tips to make the most of your workday — and get more satisfaction out of your career while doing it!

1. **Break down big tasks.** Large projects can be overwhelming, so we often put them off because we don't know where to start. Instead of letting a large project sit on your to-do list, write down the first step you need to do to get it done. Make it something you know you can do, and set a deadline for yourself. Once that's done, move on to the next step, and so on.
2. **Have real conversations instead of emailing.** Email chains can become time-wasters and often lead to misunderstandings or missing information. When possible, talk to someone in person or on the phone instead of starting an email trail.



3. **Check email at set times.** We can't avoid email completely, but constant inbox chimes can quickly diminish your productivity. Instead of reading every email as it comes in, turn off your email program and only check it two to three times a day.
4. **Take quick breaks when you can.** Back-to-back meetings or intense work sessions can drain you. But you don't need to wait until your lunch hour to energize yourself. If you can, take a few moments to get up and walk around. Stretch at your desk or try deep-breathing exercises.
5. **Tackle those little things to clean up your to-do list.** If you have a bunch of small, quick tasks nagging at you, set some time aside to get them done. Then you can focus on the bigger, more important things without other distractions.
6. **Set your own deadlines.** If a task or project doesn't have a due date, it's easier to put off. Even if a specific deadline hasn't been set, you can give yourself one. This helps you avoid hanging onto those things that sit undone for days or weeks.

Eat healthy & SAVE ON GROCERIES

Many people assume that healthy food, such as fresh fruit, costs more than processed and less nutritious foods like crackers and cookies. Although the best foods aren't always the cheapest, healthy foods are worth the money spent. A healthy diet can help you feel better physically and mentally, which could mean fewer doctor visits and a better quality of life.

If you'd like to eat healthier but are afraid it will hurt your budget, try these tips to get the most bang for your buck at the supermarket.



Plan your meals

Once or twice a week, sit down and write out the recipes you'd like to cook for the next few days. Write down the ingredients and shop for only those items. You'll be less likely to resort to takeout because you have "nothing to eat" and you can avoid unneeded purchases.



Buy what's in season

There's a reason strawberries cost more in the winter months. They become harder to grow, and they must be shipped to your store from greater distances. Instead of trying to eat "summer" foods year-round, find out what's freshest during each season. Citrus fruits and pears, for instance, are often best during the colder months.



Start a garden

You don't need a huge yard to take advantage of growing your own food. Even a few small pots on a back deck or porch can allow you to grow some of your favorite fruits or vegetables. They'll be fresh and delicious when you harvest them, and you won't have to buy them.



Stock up

Canned goods, packaged cereals and other nonperishable items can be bought in larger quantities when on sale and stored. If you're not a fan of clipping coupons, try buying them in bulk when possible.



Don't overlook store brands

Buying canned and frozen items of the generic or store brand could save you a few dollars each time you visit the grocery store. Also, consider store brand bread, pasta, juice and other items. You probably won't taste the difference.



Don't shop while hungry

Some studies suggest that shopping while hungry could lead you to purchase more food than you need. Uneaten food, even the healthy kind, is money wasted.

Why you should floss

According to a survey by the American Dental Association, only 4 in 10 Americans floss at least once a day. And, 20 percent of Americans don't do it at all.

Most dentists agree that everyone should floss daily. There are places between teeth that a brush simply can't reach. If you're wondering if it's worth spending the small amount of time each day, consider these benefits of flossing:

- **Less scraping at the dentist.** At your next checkup, the hygienist may spend less time removing tartar between your teeth and at the gum line. Flossing removes it from these hard-to-reach areas before it hardens on your teeth.
- **A lower risk of gum disease and cavities.** By removing plaque between your teeth, you remove bacteria that can lead to tooth decay and gum disease.
- **Fresher breath.** Small particles of food between the teeth, even if you can't see them, can make breath smell unpleasant.



The American Dental Association says you can floss any time of day. Pick the time when you're more likely to stick with it, whether it's morning, after lunch or before bed.