

Healthier Living

CREATE A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE THROUGH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, NUTRITION, AND LIFE BALANCE



Simplify the Season

From overspending on gifts, the pressure of gathering in groups, indulging in holiday treats, or hosting family meals, the holiday season can take a toll on your mental health. To keep the festivities fun, here are a few tips and tricks to stay healthy and happy throughout the holiday season.

Keep your healthy habits. *There's nothing wrong with indulging around this time of year but overindulgence can lead to anxiety and guilt. Maintaining your already healthy habits like keeping a decent bedtime, drinking plenty of water, and staying active can help keep you centered. Throw in a healthy snack before meals for good measure.*



Be a savvy shopper. *Spending can be a source of stress, but good things can come in small packages. Try combining a bunch of small items together into a thoughtful gift basket. If your price limit is tight, homemade desserts are always a safe and sentimental option.*

Add a little sunshine. *The days are growing shorter, which means getting your vitamin D through the sun is more challenging and your mood might take the hit. Taking a vitamin D supplement in the winter can be a good way to ensure you're not deficient and improve feelings of depression.*

Phone a friend. *Getting together with friends and family can help brighten up a lonely day, even if it's as simple as seeing a movie. Strengthening your connections can eliminate feelings of isolation and help the holidays feel a little happier.*

Reality Check. *The expectations you have for yourself, and your holiday season might be pushing you too far. Make your goals a little more achievable by creating a list of all the things you'd like to do. This can help you prioritize what is most important and let you release the tasks or traditions that don't fit anymore. ♦*

QUICK CLICK

AllRecipes



www.allrecipes.com

Stress less in the kitchen this holiday season with AllRecipes. This tried-and-true website and app is built upon recipes created, shared, and rated by home cooks. Use the easy search feature to find recipes with ingredients you have on hand. It's both a website and an app, so use whichever is most convenient for you. ♦

FEATURED RECIPE

PORTOBELLO PIZZAS



INGREDIENTS:

3 large portobello mushrooms (wiped clean)
Olive oil
1/2 tsp. Italian seasoning (garlic powder, basil, oregano)
1 cup pizza sauce
1/2 cup chopped veggies (onion, tomato, green pepper, etc.)
Mozzarella cheese

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Place mushrooms on a baking sheet. Drizzle both sides with olive oil. Sprinkle with Italian seasoning. Bake for 5 minutes. Top mushrooms with desired pizza sauce, cheese, and veggies. Bake for an additional 15-20 minutes.

SWWC
LIVE WELL



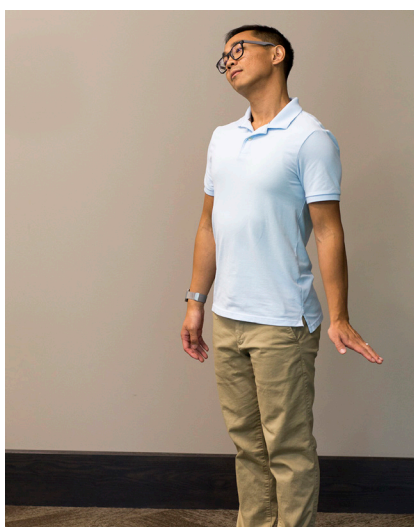
FOOD FOR THOUGHT Just Another MEATLESS MONDAY

Reducing meat in your diet can mean cheaper grocery runs and healthier recipes. People who don't eat meat generally eat fewer calories and less fat, weigh less, and have a lower risk of heart disease. Beginning your week with a MEATLESS MONDAY is an excellent way to start making a conscious decision to minimize meat in your meals. For inspiration, try some of these contenders for your meatless menu:

Jackfruit. Commonly used in South and Southeast Asian cuisines, jackfruit may be boiled, baked, or roasted. When shredded and seasoned, jackfruit can be a convincing meat alternative. Whether it's for tacos, burgers, gyros, or even pizza, jackfruit is packed with nutrients and makes for a delicious substitute.

Mushrooms. From portobello to shiitake, faking meat with fungi is easier than you think. Portobello mushrooms are large, making them perfect for mimicking burgers. Smaller mushrooms soak up flavor and make excellent toppings for pasta, pizza, stir-fry, and tacos. Loaded with many health-boosting vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, mushrooms are a great addition to any diet.

Tofu & Tempeh. These nutrient rich meat alternatives are also complete proteins. Tofu is made from soybean milk that is thickened into block form. Firm tofu can be cut up to effectively imitate chicken. Tempeh is also soy-based, but is made with whole soybeans rather than the milk. Tempeh can be cut into cubes, crumbled into "ground meat," or seared in strips to make "bacon." ♦



Neck Stretch

Pressing palm toward floor, slowly drop ear toward opposite shoulder. Hold for a count of 6 - 10 on each side.

Regular movement is fundamental to good health. Moving or changing postures every 30 minutes is recommended.

Challenge of the Month:



Tofu Tacos!

This month, practice **Meatless Monday**. Plan your Monday meals around vegetables as the main course and sprinkle in fruit, whole-grains, and low-fat dairy.

MIND MATTERS

KEEP CALM & CARRY ON

The immune system is comprised of organs, cells, and proteins that work to fight off infection.

When we're stressed, our immune system struggles to fight off germs and we tend to get sick more often.



The presence of stress hormones signals your body to direct resources away from your immune system. These resources include white blood cells that normally defend your body from outside infections, making it much easier for them to enter, and much harder for the body to fight them off. Prolonged stress can also affect your sleep, digestive system, and mental health.

Here are a few ways you can reduce stress and in turn strengthen your immune system:

1. Practice deep breathing to help trigger your body's relaxation response.
2. Decrease your screen time, especially before bed, so you can sleep soundly and reduce the stimulation that makes it difficult for you to fully relax.
3. Learn to meditate to help reduce the amount of *cortisol* (the stress hormone) that is released.
4. Talk to a mental health professional to identify your stressors and more targeted coping skills.
5. Designate part of your day for hobbies you enjoy.