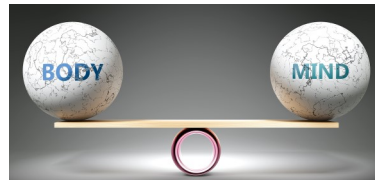


YOUR GAMEPLAN TO LIVE

Physical Exercise for Mental Fitness

It is no secret that exercise benefits us physically by improving our physical condition and fighting off disease and illness. Exercise is just as vital for achieving and maintaining mental fitness. It helps to reduce stress and fatigue, and it improves concentration and alertness – a significant enhancement of overall cognitive function.



When we are stressed, our whole body feels it. Physical activity produces endorphins, those feel-good chemicals in the brain that act as natural painkillers, make us feel better in general, and improve our sleep... and feeling better physically and mentally reduces stress.

Scientists have found that regular participation in aerobic exercise has been shown to decrease overall levels of tension, elevate and stabilize mood, improve sleep, and improve self-esteem. About five minutes of aerobic exercise can begin to stimulate anti-anxiety effects.

Psychologists studying how exercise relieves anxiety and depression suggest that even a 10-minute walk decreases overall levels of tension, elevates and stabilizes mood, and improves sleep and self-esteem. Although the effects may be temporary, they demonstrate that a brisk walk or other simple activity can make us feel better for hours and making it a habit is a win-win. Science has also provided evidence that physically active people have lower rates of anxiety and depression than sedentary people.

However, if you are feeling depressed and/or anxious, and it is affecting your everyday quality of life despite your efforts to exercise more often, please talk to your healthcare provider. There is lots of help out there, and depression and anxiety are very common ailments – you are not alone.

<https://adaa.org/living-with-anxiety/managing-anxiety/exercise-stress-and-anxiety>

A Positive Attitude Can Save Your Life

Is your glass half-empty or half-full?

How you honestly answer this age-old question has merit in the way you view your attitude and how you think. If you answer "half-empty," you are most likely a pessimist, and being a pessimist can adversely affect your health. Studies have shown that pessimists (people with negative attitudes - doom and gloomers) are more likely to develop heart disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, depression, smoke, and/or live an unhealthy lifestyle.

Positive thinkers, on the other hand, often have less stress (or at least deal with it far more effectively), sleep better, and are generally happier people. In fact, a positive person often enjoys a longer life, and most definitely, has a better *quality* of life. But... if you are one who's thoughts tend to run on the negative side, and your outlook on life isn't all that rosy, you can LEARN to be more positive.

Understanding positive thinking and self-talk: Positive thinking doesn't mean that you keep your head in the sand and ignore unpleasant situations. Positive thinking just means



Epic Roasted Broccoli

Ingredients:

- 1 ½ pounds fresh broccoli, stem on (about 3 large heads or 6 heaping cups florets)
- 3 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- Fresh ground pepper
- 1 medium garlic clove
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 450 degrees Fahrenheit. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Chop the broccoli into medium-sized florets, leaving a good amount of the stem for a nice shape (see the photo). Mix the broccoli florets with 2 tablespoons olive oil and the kosher salt. Roast for 20 to 25 minutes, until tender and slightly browned (no need to stir!).
3. When the broccoli is done, remove the pan from the oven. Grate the garlic onto the pan, and add the remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil and the lemon juice. Use a spoon to gently toss it all together (separating any grated garlic that clumps together). Serve immediately.

<https://www.acouplecooks.com/roasted-broccoli/>

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that you approach the unpleasantness in a more positive and productive way. You think the best is going to happen, not the worst.

Positive thinking often starts with self-talk. Self-talk is the endless stream of unspoken thoughts that run through your head every day. These automatic thoughts can be positive or negative. Some of your self-talk comes from logic and reason. Other self-talk may arise from misconceptions that you create because of lack of information.



Identifying negative thinking: Not sure if your self-talk is positive or negative? Here are some common forms of negative self-talk:

- **Filtering.** You *magnify* the negative aspects of a situation and *filter out* all of the positive ones. For example, say you had a great day at work. You completed your tasks ahead of time and were complimented for doing a speedy and thorough job. But you forgot one minor step. That evening, you focus only on your oversight and forget about the compliments you received.
- **Personalizing.** When something bad occurs, you automatically blame yourself. *Your friends cancel a night out, and you assume that the change in plans is because no one wanted to be around you.*
- **Catastrophizing.** You automatically see things worst case scenario. Small things become huge in your head. *Your waiter spills your coffee, and your whole day is ruined...*
- **Polarizing.** You see things *only* as good or bad, black or white. There is no middle ground. *You feel that you have to be perfect or that you're a total failure. You tend to think the same about others as well.*

Focusing on positive thinking: You can learn to turn negative thinking into positive thinking. The process is simple, but it does take time and practice — you're creating a new habit.

- **Identify areas to change.** If you want to become more optimistic and engage in more positive thinking, first identify areas of your life that you typically think negatively about, whether it's work, your daily commute, or a relationship, for example. You can start small by focusing on one area to approach in a more positive way.
- **Check yourself.** Periodically during the day, stop and evaluate what you're thinking. If you find that your thoughts are mainly negative, try to find a way to put a positive spin on them.
- **Be open to humor.** Give yourself permission to smile or laugh, especially during difficult times. Seek humor in everyday happenings. When you can laugh at life, you feel less stressed.
- **Follow a healthy lifestyle.** Exercise at least three times a week to positively affect mood and reduce stress. Follow a healthy diet to fuel your mind and body. And learn to manage stress.
- **Surround yourself with positive people.** Make sure those in your life are positive, supportive people you can depend on to give helpful advice and feedback. Negative people may increase your stress level.
- **Practice positive self-talk.** Start by following one simple rule: Don't say anything to yourself that you wouldn't say to other people. Be gentle and encouraging with yourself.

Practicing positive thinking every day: If you tend to have a negative outlook, don't expect to become an optimist overnight. But with practice, eventually your self-talk will contain less self-criticism and more self-acceptance. You may also become less critical of the world around you. Plus, when you share your positive mood and positive experience, both you and those around you enjoy an emotional boost.

Practicing positive self-talk will improve your outlook. When your state of mind is generally optimistic, you're able to handle everyday stress in a more constructive way. That ability may contribute to the widely observed health benefits of positive thinking.

Adapted from *Positive Thinking: Reduce Stress by Eliminating Negative Self-Talk*, The Mayo Clinic



Winter Salad with Maple Dijon Vinaigrette

Ingredients:

- 1 large sweet potato peeled and diced
- 2 beets quartered
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- ½ cup pomegranate arils
- ½ cup pecans toasted
- 4 ounces goat cheese
- 8 cups kale

Dressing:

- ¼ cup cider vinegar
- 3 tablespoons maple syrup
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon each salt and pepper
- ½ cup vegetable oil

Directions:

Preheat oven to 425°F. Toss sweet potatoes with 1 tablespoon olive oil and place on baking sheet. Toss beets with remaining olive oil and place on baking sheet also. Season sweet potatoes and beets with salt and pepper. Roast 35-40 minutes or until tender. Remove from the oven and cool. Rub the skin of the beets to remove.

Combine all dressing ingredients in a small jar and shake well. Add salad ingredients to a large bowl, including cooled beets and sweet potatoes. Drizzle with dressing and serve.

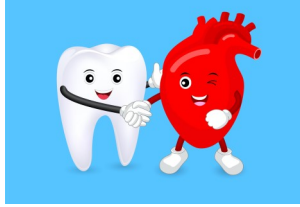
Recipe and photo by: <https://www.spendwithpennies.com/winter-salad-with-maple-dijon-vinaigrette/>

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Poor Oral Hygiene Can Affect Your Overall Health

Did you know your oral hygiene could affect the health of the rest of your body? It's a mouth-body connection. If your teeth are covered in plaque, gums are inflamed, and mouth is full of bacteria it triggers the immune system to attack because you're at risk for infection. Poor oral health has also been linked to serious disease such as diabetes and heart disease. Here are some tips to keep your oral health in tiptop shape.



Brushing:

- **Yes- 2 minutes.** The ideal amount of time to brush to get all the bacteria-packed plaque off is at least two minutes. Use your watch or keep a timer in the bathroom and set it for two minutes. Do this 2-3 times a day.
- **Not too hard!** Are the bristles of your toothbrush bent over? If so, you're probably brushing too hard. Brushing with force is not the best way to remove plaque. The best way is to place your toothbrush at a slight angle — aiming the bristles toward the area where your tooth meets your gum angle and gently move it in a circular motion, rather than a back-and-forth motion. Choose a soft brush vs. hard.
- **Use an electric toothbrush** — they clean teeth and gums much better than a manual toothbrush, according to the findings of several studies. Scientists found that people who use an electric toothbrush have healthier gums, less tooth decay and also keep their teeth for longer compared with those who use a manual toothbrush.
- **Throw it away.** About every 2-3 months get a new toothbrush or change the head of your electric toothbrush. Otherwise, you're just transferring bacteria to your mouth and the bristles don't work as well.
- **Clean your tongue!** Use a tongue scraper to remove bacteria on your tongue. A major cause of bad breath and poor oral health is the build-up of bacteria on the tongue. Using a tongue scraper is more effective than brushing your tongue with a toothbrush.

Flossing:

- Take an 18-inch length of floss and wrap most of it around the index finger of one hand. Next, wrap all but about 4 inches around the index finger of the other hand.
- Gripping the floss between the thumb and bent forefinger, slowly work the floss between two teeth with a gentle sawing motion. Never snap or force the floss in. As with brushing, start in the same place each time you floss (the rear molars are a good place to begin).
- Gently scrape the floss around the tooth, going up into the gum line until you meet resistance. Work systematically in a C shape around each tooth.
- Using your fingers like spools, unwrap a clean section of floss from the hand with unused floss, and spin the used portion onto the other finger. Move on to the next space.
- Continue all the way around your mouth, using the same technique.

Additional Care:

- Consider *oil pulling* for added oral health. We have found that about a teaspoon of coconut oil dissolved in the mouth and then swished around and pulled through the teeth for 5-15 minutes does wonders for healthy teeth and gums. Make sure that you spit the oil out in a container and not in your sink as it can clog your drain. Rinse with water or brush and rinse after.
- In addition to daily brushing and flossing, consider using an antimicrobial mouth rinse to promote oral health at the end of your routine.
- To remove food particles from your teeth that aren't dislodged by flossing or brushing, you might try an oral irrigator — a device that aims a stream of water and/or air in-between your teeth.
- To prevent gum disease and other oral health problems, schedule regular dental checkups.

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/dental/ART-20045536?pg=1>
<http://www.besthealthmag.ca/get-healthy/oral-health/13-tricks-to-keep-your-gums-and-teeth-clean>



Grass Fed Beef & Zucchini Skillet Supper

Ingredients:

- 1 pound grass fed ground beef ideally organic
- 1 ½ cups zucchini large chop
- 1 cup red bell pepper large chop
- ½ large white onion chopped
- 4 cloves garlic chopped
- 1 cup adzuki beans or black beans
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- ½ cup water

Optional, for serving:

- Steamed kale
- Salsa

Directions:

In a large skillet (ideally a cast iron skillet) over medium high heat, brown ground beef. Stir until you no longer see pink - this should take about 7-10 minutes. Continue stirring and breaking apart with a wooden spoon so beef cooks evenly. Season with half the amount of salt and pepper. Stir well.

Remove beef with a slotted spoon and set aside. Drain fat from skillet.

Add 1 teaspoon olive oil to skillet - add zucchini, red pepper, onion and garlic. Sauté for 3 minutes or until slightly tender. I like the veggies to have some texture in this dish - a little bite - if you prefer veggies super soft then cook for a bit longer at this stage.

Add beef back to the skillet, add beans, add remaining salt and pepper, chili powder, and tomato paste. Stir well to break up tomato paste. Add water, scraping the bottom of the skillet to release flavor bits.

Cook for 8 more minutes. Remove from heat and serve with your choice of salsa's perhaps on a large bed of steamed kale.

Notes:

- Ground turkey or chicken could be subbed for the beef
- For a vegetarian version, you can eliminate the beef altogether
- This is super yummy stuffed into a sweet potato!!

<https://abraskitchen.com/grass-fed-beef-and-zucchini-skillet-supper/>

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Exercising Outside in Cold Weather

Cold weather can discourage outdoor activity, but it doesn't have to be that way. Since we are in a pandemic, being outdoors is a healthy place to be!

Exercise is safe for almost everyone – even in cold weather, but for some – being in the cold may not be the best idea. Check with your health care provider if you have asthma, heart problems, Raynaud's disease or other issues that you may be concerned about. Your doctor may have special precautions for you.



Try the following tips to enjoy the great outdoors and stay warm.

Check the forecast before heading outside. Temperature, wind and moisture, along with the length of time that you'll be outside, are key factors in planning a safe cold-weather workout. Wind chill can make temperatures extremely low and unsafe even for the heartiest of us.

If the temperature is zero F or below, or if the wind chill is extreme, it is probably better to choose an indoor activity. If the temperature dips below zero F (minus 18 C) or the wind chill is extreme, consider taking a break or choosing an indoor exercise instead. If it's raining or snowing, it is also wise to forgo outdoor activities unless you have waterproof gear.

Know the signs of Hypothermia, which is abnormally low body temperature. When exposed to cold temperatures (especially cold and wet weather), your body begins to lose heat faster than it can be produced.

Be aware of the signs of hypothermia

- Intense shivering
- Slurred speech
- Loss of coordination
- Fatigue

Seek emergency help right away for possible hypothermia.

Dress according to the weather.

- Dress in layers. Exercise in layers that you can remove as you start to sweat and put back on as needed.
- Protect your hands, feet, and ears. Make sure your extremities are warm and wear gloves, socks, and headbands to prevent frostbite.
- Choose appropriate gear. It gets dark earlier in the winter, so be sure to wear reflective clothing. Wear shoes with enough traction to prevent falls in snow or ice.
- Remember sunscreen. It's just as easy to get burned in the winter as in summer, so don't forget the SPF.
- Head into the wind. Plan your route so the wind is at your back toward the end of your workout to prevent getting a chill after working up a sweat.
- Drink plenty of fluids. It can be harder to notice the symptoms of dehydration in cold weather, so drink fluids before, during, and after a workout, even if you're not thirsty.

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/fitness/in-depth/fitness/art-20045626>

At the Gameplan for Living, we know that the future of healthcare is in the prevention of illness and injuries.

It is our mission to provide preventative care utilizing sports medicine principles and lifestyle modification training to create an atmosphere of health, safety, and performance to allow employees to enjoy an enhanced quality of life and reach their retirement—and beyond—SUCCESSFULLY!

www.gameplanforliving.com

Questions / Support:
info@gameplanforliving.com



Cherry Zucchini Bread

Wet Ingredients:

- 1 large egg
- 1/2 cup honey
- 3 tbsp. olive oil (or coconut oil)
- 1/2 cup almond milk
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

Dry Ingredients:

- 2 cups oat flour* (see note)
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1.5 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp sea salt

Add-ins:

- 1 cup diced fresh or frozen cherries
- 2 cups shredded zucchini (about 1 large zucchini)
- 1 cup walnuts, chopped
- 2 tbsp. chia seeds

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350°, prepare a loaf pan by lining with parchment paper. In a medium-size bowl whisk together egg, olive oil, honey, almond milk, and vanilla. In a large bowl combine oat flour, cinnamon, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Whisk together to combine. Add wet ingredients into dry ingredients and stir well to combine. Fold in walnuts, zucchini, rhubarb, and chia seeds. Do not over mix, oat flour will become quite gummy if over mixed. Pour batter into a loaf pan lined with parchment paper. Bake at 350° for 40-45 minutes. Or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. The top of the bread should be slightly brown. Allow to cool completely. Slice and serve.

Store in the refrigerator for 1 week or in the freezer in a glass container with a tight lid or wrapped in foil for up to 5 months.

***Note:**

You can easily make your own oat flour by blending rolled oats in a high-speed blender until it resembles flour.