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Wise & Well

Welcome to the Wise & Well newsletter, where we promote whole-person well-being each month and highlight health-related topics to help you be your best.



Heart Health Month

February is Heart Health Month and an excellent time to start thinking about taking better care of your ticker. Even if you're in the best shape of your life, there are so many risk factors that can impact your overall heart health. Fortunately, making moderate lifestyle changes to the basics, like diet and exercise, can go a long way toward promoting cardiovascular wellness. But you don't have to overdo it! Even incorporating small efforts can do your heart some good.

Given that prolonged sitting is considered nearly as dangerous as smoking a pack of cigarettes, taking short breaks to move around regularly throughout the day is one of the best things you can do for your heart. Studies show that sitting for extended periods can contribute to plaque buildup in arteries, insulin resistance and other cardiovascular risk factors. Simply standing up, stretching or taking a quick walk every 30-60 minutes allows blood to circulate more actively through the body and brings instant cardiovascular benefits.

The Benefits of Simple Cardio and Strength Training

In addition to taking standing and movement breaks, focusing on building more physical activity into your weekly routine can reap even more sustainable benefits. As the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends, getting 150 minutes per week of moderate cardiovascular exercise, things like jogging, swimming, dancing or riding a bike can make a heartfelt difference. To simplify it even further, consciously parking further away from your destination, taking the stairs versus the elevator or going for an evening stroll around the neighborhood are easy ways to rack up heart-healthy activity minutes without overexerting yourself or making huge new-years-resolution-like commitments.

The CDC further recommends that adults get some strength training for healthy muscles and bones at least two days per week. Strength training builds muscle, improves joint stability, helps maintain bone density and burns calories long after your workout is over. And the great thing is that you don't need expensive equipment

or a fancy gym membership to benefit. Bodyweight exercises like pushups, lunges, planks and squats can be extremely effective at building strength if done properly. Furthermore, when you consider that just two or three sets of 10-15 reps a few times a week is enough, lifting cans of food, bottles of water, or even the laundry basket can result in a pretty good workout. Just don't forget to stretch before and after.

Remember that it's not the destination but the journey that matters. With that in mind, let's use Heart Health Month as motivation to begin building more movement, activity and exercise into your routine at whatever level feels doable. If you can remember that consistency with small, sustainable changes is key, your heart will surely thank you. By simply committing to sitting less and moving more, you'll be well on your way to better cardiovascular health this year and beyond.

References:

[cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)



Additional Resources

Upcoming Wise & Well Webinar — Register Now!

Fueling Well-Being: Optimizing Your Life through Performance Nutrition

When: Tuesday, March 12 | Noon – 1:00 p.m. ET

Welcome to our exclusive webinar, “Fueling Well-Being: Optimizing Your Life through Performance Nutrition,” where we unlock the secrets behind enhancing overall health and vitality. Executive performance chef for the New York Jets, Jessica Giglia, will reveal how similar strategies employed by elite athletes can be adapted to optimize the well-being of everyone. Whether you’re a busy professional, fitness enthusiast, or someone on a journey toward a healthier lifestyle, this webinar will provide practical tips and valuable knowledge to maximize your potential through the power of nutrition. Get ready to embark on a transformative journey towards optimizing your overall well-being, guided by the same principles that fuel the success of professional athletes.

In this session, you will gain valuable insights into:

- Optimal food and nutrient choices that empower you to excel in various activities.
- Easy and healthy substitutions that elevate your culinary experience and delight your taste buds.
- The pivotal role of certain foods in fostering a strong connection between the gut and brain.
- Strategies for navigating the intricacies of dining out, coupled with a mindful approach to celebratory occasions.
- Exploration of how seasonality impacts the nutritional profile of the foods we enjoy.

And more!

To register, [click here](#) or scan the QR code below.



Monthly Moves

Water Bottle Overhead Shoulder Presses

The shoulder press is a vital exercise that strengthens the shoulders, improves posture and prevents injury. This movement works the deltoids, trapezius, triceps and other smaller stabilizing muscles in the shoulders and upper back. Performing shoulder presses not only builds muscle but also bulletproofs the shoulder joint through a full range of motion.

To perform the exercise:

- 01 Holding a water bottle in each hand, stand straight with your feet shoulder-width apart.
- 02 Raise the water bottles to head height by rotating your arms forward and up.
- 03 Your triceps should be parallel to the floor, and your elbows should be bent at 90 degrees. This is the starting position.
- 04 Keeping your back straight and using only your arms, extend through your shoulders and elbows to drive the water bottles straight up, exhaling as you do so.
- 05 Hold for a count of one while squeezing your shoulder muscles.
- 06 In a controlled movement, return to the starting position, inhaling as you do so. Repeat for three sets of 12-15 reps.

Tap [here](#) for a video demo.

Source: [workoutlabs.com](https://www.workoutlabs.com)



Chickpea Pasta with Mushrooms and Kale

Loading up your pasta with vegetables like the kale and mushrooms here is not only delicious, but it also makes the meal more satisfying and heart-healthy.

Ingredients

- 8 ounces chickpea rotini or penne (see Tip)
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 large cloves garlic, sliced
- Pinch of crushed red pepper
- 8 cups chopped kale
- 8 ounces cremini mushrooms, quartered
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- Grated Parmesan cheese for serving (optional)

Directions

1. Cook pasta according to package directions. Reserve 1 cup of the cooking water, then drain.
2. Meanwhile, heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add garlic and crushed red pepper; cook, stirring once, until fragrant, about one minute. Add kale, mushrooms, thyme and salt; cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables are soft, about five minutes.
3. Stir in the pasta and enough of the reserved water to coat; cook, stirring, until combined and hot, about one minute more. Serve topped with Parmesan, if desired.

Tip: Chickpea pasta was chosen for this dish instead of whole-wheat because it's packed with tons of fiber, protein and nutrients. Some brands provide more than 40% of your daily recommended fiber, plus 20 grams of protein per serving. Look for it with other gluten-free pastas.

Source: [eatingwell.com](https://www.eatingwell.com)