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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.



## Holiday Presence: Increasing Connection

The holiday season is often a whirlwind of activity. With the chilly nights and glitter and glow of seasonal lights, it's a festive time that brings people together. While this time of year is renowned for renewing connections and sharing experiences, the truth of the matter is that for many of us, the hustle and bustle of the holidays can leave us feeling, isolated, overwhelmed and detached from the very experiences we hope to cherish.

Throughout the course of checking off endless to-do lists and running rampant trying to prep for the perfect holiday experience, we put ourselves at risk of missing the true meaning of the season: genuine connection and presence. As Ferris Bueller famously said, "Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it." Isn't it ironic that the very occasion meant to bring us closer together often leaves us feeling more disconnected than ever?

To avoid this feeling, we may need to review that our time and attention are precious commodities and the primary vehicle we use to connect with others. When we offer our undivided attention, we're giving a gift far more valuable than any wrapped package. Such a mindset allows for transforming the simplest interactions into meaningful exchanges, fostering deeper connections with those around us.

These connections are not just feel-good moments; they are fundamental to our social well-being. As research has consistently shown that strong social bonds contribute significantly to our mental and physical health, prioritizing genuine interactions during the holiday season actively supports our social well-being and that of those around us. These types of meaningful connections can reduce stress, increase happiness and even boost our immune systems. In essence, by being present and fostering genuine connections, we're giving ourselves and others the gift of improved overall well-being.

One powerful way to cultivate presence is to create opportunities for authentic sharing. Instead of superficial small talk at gatherings, consider introducing activities that encourage more meaningful conversations. For instance, you might ask each person to share a recent highlight of something they're thankful for this year or create a jar filled with thought-provoking questions that run the gamut from the sincere to the silly for guests to draw from during meals. These kinds of practices can help break down barriers and create an environment where people feel truly seen and heard.

Equally important is being mindful of our commitments during this busy season. Learning to say "nope" graciously to invitations or requests that don't align with what we've got going on can be liberating. Such a selective approach allows us to fully engage in the events and relationships that matter most to us rather than spreading ourselves too thin across numerous obligations.

For example, consider choosing one-holiday event where you commit to being fully present. Put away your devices, engage your senses in the surroundings and focus on the faces and words of your loved ones. You might be surprised at how this simple act can transform an ordinary gathering into a cherished memory.



Also — never underestimate the power of slowing down and spreading kindness. Make a conscious effort to offer a genuine smile or kind word to each person you encounter. Crack that joke, comment on the weather or simply ask how someone's day is going. The holidays can be hard for some, so invite a friend, colleague or neighbor to join your celebration. Make this a time of inclusivity. Even these small acts of connection can brighten not only the recipient's day but yours as well, creating a ripple effect of positivity and warmth that embodies the true spirit of the season.

Perhaps above all, it's crucial to remember that perfection is not the goal. The beauty of genuine connection often lies in the imperfect moments — the slightly burnt cookies, the awkward conversations with distant relatives or the last-minute gift-wrapping sessions. By embracing these instances with grace and humor, we open ourselves to the authentic magic of the season.

By focusing on meaningful connections, practicing mindfulness and embracing the beautiful chaos of imperfect moments, we can create a holiday experience rich in warmth and genuine human connection. This approach not only enhances our own enjoyment of the season but also touches the lives of those around us in profound ways. As we move through this festive time, let's remember that our very presence, offered with intention and kindness, can be the most meaningful gift of all.



## Additional Resources

Upcoming Wise & Well Webinar — Register Now!

**Holiday Presence: Increasing Connection while Prioritizing Self-Care**

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



To register, [click here](#) or scan the QR code. For more information, view the [Employee Flyer](#).

# Monthly Moves

## SuperSlow Strength Training: Build Strength with Less Time

SuperSlow is a weight training technique that can dramatically improve strength with just one or two workouts per week. This method focuses on slow, controlled movements to maximize muscle engagement and minimize the risk of injury.

### The SuperSlow Technique

1. Choose a weight that allows you to perform 4-6 repetitions.
2. Perform each repetition with a 10-second lifting phase and a 10-second lowering phase.
3. Continue until muscle failure (unable to complete another repetition with proper form).

### Sample SuperSlow Workout

Perform one set of each exercise until muscle failure:

#### 1. Chest Press

- Sit at a chest press machine with proper posture.
- Push the handles forward for 10 seconds.
- Slowly return to the starting position for 10 seconds.
- Repeat for 4-6 reps or until muscle failure.

# Monthly Moves

## SuperSlow Strength Training: Build Strength with Less Time

### 2. Leg Press

- Sit in the leg press machine with feet shoulder-width apart.
- Push the platform away for 10 seconds.
- Slowly bend your knees, lowering the weight for 10 seconds.
- Repeat for 4-6 reps or until muscle failure.

### 3. Seated Row

- Sit at a rowing machine with a straight back.
- Pull the handle towards your abdomen for 10 seconds.
- Slowly extend your arms back to the starting position for 10 seconds.
- Repeat for 4-6 reps or until muscle failure.

The SuperSlow technique can be applied to a wide variety of exercises, including squats, shoulder presses, bicep curls, triceps extensions and lateral pulldowns. Incorporating different exercises into your routine not only targets various muscle groups but also keeps your workouts engaging and challenging. Remember, mixing up your weight training routine can help prevent plateaus and stimulate continuous muscle growth and strength gains.

**Note:** This workout should be performed once or twice a week, allowing at least 3-4 days between sessions for proper muscle recovery.

Sources: [web.md](https://www.webmd.com)



# Bacon-Wrapped Dates

Ah, the grand feast of Thanksgiving approaches, and amidst the whirlwind of turkey-basting and pie-crimping, let's not forget the unsung heroes of the holiday spread — the appetizers! These little morsels of joy not only keep hungry guests at bay but also serve as delightful conversation starters. For a stress-free yet impressive option, check out these bacon-wrapped dates. These little nuggets of sweet-and-salty perfection are sure to dazzle taste buds and spark jovial banter around the appetizer table. So, while the bird roasts and the potatoes mash, let's dive into a recipe that'll have your guests gobbling with delight before the main event even begins!

## Ingredients

- 24 large Medjool dates, pitted
- 4 oz. crumbled goat cheese
- 12 slices bacon, halved
- 1/4 cup maple syrup
- 3/4 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
- 1 tsp. finely chopped rosemary
- 3/4 tsp. freshly ground black pepper

## Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400°. Line a baking sheet with parchment and fit with a wire rack; set aside.
2. Halve dates lengthwise, being careful not to cut all the way through. Place a small amount of cheese in the center of each date. Wrap a piece of bacon around each date, making sure the ends meet underneath the date.
3. Place dates, seam side down, on prepared baking sheet. Bake until bacon fat is beginning to render out, about 15 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, in a small bowl, mix together maple syrup, red pepper flakes, rosemary and black pepper. Brush each date with maple syrup mixture.
5. Continue to bake brushed dates until bacon is crispy, 15 to 20 minutes more.

Sources: [delish.com](https://www.delish.com)