

Don't Let Your Health Take a Holiday

The busy season ahead can quickly lead to a hectic schedule. To lessen your stress, maintain energy and avoid getting sick, treat yourself well:

Take time for basic needs. That means 7 to 9 hours of quality sleep and 3 balanced meals every day, plus 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise (e.g., brisk walking) weekly — the best Rx for sustaining energy and feeling positive.

Watch for opportune exercise. Park in the back 40 of the shopping mall and walk to it.

Keep your hands clean. And keep your distance from sick coworkers and family members.

You don't have to do it all. You're not being a Grinch if you need to say NO to family and friends to relieve stress and recharge.

Snack for energy. Have some fruit, nuts and seeds with you when working or traveling.

Quiet your mind. Check out meditation apps to create mindfulness and help you to relieve stress or pain or quit smoking.

Relax in the moment. Open your mind and your eyes to the warmth of your surroundings — listen to music or enjoy a wintry walk followed by a cup of hot tea.

Encourage others. Wear a smile, offer compliments, and be patient with those who appear stressed. When a friend seems upset or blue, lend an ear and just listen.

That's the spirit!

“Nothing's better than the wind to your back, the sun in front of you, and your friends beside you.”
— Aaron Douglas Trimble

Safety Corner: Prepare to Drive Safely in Winter Conditions

Driving in winter presents a host of challenges, not the least of which is remembering how tricky it is to drive in slick conditions. So, it's good to begin your safe winter driving practices before you even leave your driveway. Winter's snow, ice, and cold temperatures pose a unique set of challenges that interfere with your vehicle's performance, creating a hazard for you, your passengers, and other drivers on the road.

Before you get on the road, it is important to have your vehicle in good condition and equipped for winter driving. Begin by inspecting or having your mechanic inspect the following items:

Tire pressure. Make sure your tires are inflated to the correct air pressure, as cold weather can cause tire pressure to drop. Check your tire pressure frequently.

Tire tread and traction. Check the tread on your tires, and replace them if the tread is worn. If you live in an area where snowy roads are a frequent concern, snow tires or properly installed tire chains are other options.

Fluids. Check the levels of your windshield washer fluid, oil, antifreeze (coolant), brake fluid, and power steering fluid.

Gas. Keeping your gas tank at least half full will prevent your gas line from freezing.

>> Continued on page 4

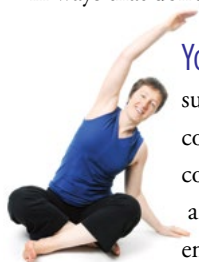


PAIN RELIEF: Drug-Free Strategies

Chronic pain can interfere with all aspects of life. It can lead to insomnia, impaired physical activity, isolation and depression. The most common chronic pain conditions are arthritis, back of neck, joint and nerve pain, and migraine. **Fortunately, we now have several strategies for relieving chronic pain, such as the following:**

Physical and occupational therapies

can be great allies in fighting your pain. Physical therapists guide you through mild exercise routines that help improve your strength and mobility. Occupational therapists teach you how to perform everyday activities in ways that don't aggravate your pain.



Yoga and tai chi have been successful in reducing or controlling pain from many conditions, including backache, headache, arthritis and lingering injuries. Movements emphasize strengthening the back and core muscles.

Massage therapy is especially effective for reducing muscular backache and pain from surgeries and injuries as it relieves stress and anxiety.

Mind-body techniques, such as meditation and breathing exercises, can help you manage how you perceive your pain. Negative thoughts and stress aggravate pain. Learning to regard your pain in a calmer way can reduce anxiety that otherwise would increase pain.



PRACTICAL HABITS for Chronic Pain

Gentle cardio exercise can boost endorphin brain chemicals that help block pain signals.

Protect your sleep quality (e.g., alcohol and stress aggravate sleep problems).

Quit smoking as it can cause circulation problems and worsen your pain.

You can learn pain-reducing techniques from a support group.

Track your pain level and activities every day.

Eat a well-balanced diet.

It's essential to feeling stronger.



Pain researchers see the best results when treatments are prescribed after a thorough evaluation of each individual, often using a combination of therapies that can lead to improving your day-to-day quality of life.

Winterize Your Exercise

Don't let chilly, dark days dampen your fitness goals. Your body needs year-round exercise, so start booking activities on your calendar every week. Try something new and have fun:

Pool classes provide a perfect warm-up plus excellent exercise routines, including lap swimming, shallow or deep-water muscle workouts, and yoga routines for improved flexibility, strength and vitality.

Indoors? You can't beat the convenience of at-home exercise to save time, money and fuss — and you're more likely to stick with it. Get a floor mat for core exercises and yoga. Try tai chi workouts. Include strength-training options. Add some music.

Outdoors? Cold weather can pose risks, including darkness, frostbite and icy pavement, but exercisers can usually avoid trouble: Check the forecast. Warm up first indoors. Cover your head and hands and bundle up in windproof, layered clothing to combat wind chill. Use reflective tape for visibility.

Partner up. Walk your dog, play soccer or ice skate with the kids. Ride a bike when the sun shines, or try snowshoeing, Nordic skiing or enjoy an invigorating jog.


Added benefit: Exercise boosts your immunity during cold and flu season. Just a few minutes a day can help prevent simple bacterial and viral infections, according to the CDC.




Why Are You So Tired?


If you're walking around fatigued, you're not alone. The CDC notes more than 15% of women and more than 10% of men in the U.S. regularly feel tired.


Fatigue can be a symptom of several medical conditions, including anemia, depression, seasonal affective disorder (SAD), underactive thyroid, infections, sleep apnea and heart disease. Contact your health care provider if you're consistently tired or have new, unexplained fatigue.

 **However, ongoing fatigue is most often due to our everyday lifestyle.**

Inadequate sleep is a leading cause — the CDC reports that 1 in 3 American adults is regularly sleep deprived. To boost your energy and health, get 7 to 9 hours of slumber nightly, or daily if you're working night shifts. Maintaining a consistent sleep routine — going to bed and getting up at the same times — is most helpful.

Dehydration causes fatigue,  so drink adequate water throughout the day. **Note:** Coffee drinks can increase urination and dehydration.

 **Skipping meals and eating sweets** to temporarily boost energy can lead to fatigue when the sugar's high wears off. Eat healthy, regular meals for steady energy.

Feeling tired makes exercise seem unappealing,  but physical activity offers several benefits. It can lower stress and depression, strengthen muscles and promote sound sleep. If you're sedentary, increase physical activity slowly but consistently — and enjoy added energy.

TIP of the MONTH

Give Yourself the Gift of Better Health

Whether it's the home, workplace or seasonal parties, treats are more abundant at the holidays. **Remember:** It is fine to indulge in treats, but they should not be the main part of your diet. Eat only what you enjoy the most, and savor every bite. If you have trouble negotiating treats or feel guilty about indulging (which you shouldn't), speak with a dietitian or therapist about finding balance.



DR. ZORBA'S corner

Sitting is the new smoking —

a thought I agree wholeheartedly with, but a recent study from Columbia University shows that **not all sitting is equal.**

Research following 3,500 people for nearly 9 years showed that sitting in front of the TV increased the risk of a heart attack and death by nearly 50%. By contrast, those who had sedentary jobs didn't have this same risk. What does this mean? Too much time in front of the tube is especially harmful to your health. Get up and move as often as possible. Set your phone to remind you every 20 minutes.

— Zorba
Paster, MD



5 COOKING TIPS You May Not Know

eating smart

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD



Bring some chef-inspired knowledge into your kitchen with these 5 culinary tips:

- 1 Use the right cutting board:** Choose a non-porous board made from resin, marble or glass for cutting meat, poultry and seafood. They are easier to clean, and bacteria from raw meat won't get trapped in the grooves. Porous wood boards absorb everything, so they are best for cutting bread, vegetables and fruit — not for raw meat.
- 2 Invest in good-quality knives.** You don't need many — just a chef's knife, paring knife and bread knife. And get a knife sharpener, too — sharp knives are key to making food prep easier. Avoid putting knives in the dishwasher; detergent is abrasive and damages the sharp edge.
- 3 No more tears:** If chopping onions makes you cry, try chilling them in the freezer for 10 minutes before slicing. The cold reduces the amount of sulfenic acids released into the air by the onion, thus reducing tears. Or, use a pair of onion goggles to stop the fumes from reaching your eyes.
- 4 Buy and freeze:** Enjoy a bounty of your favorite fruits and vegetables when they are in season, and freeze them for winter. You'll save money, enjoy the variety and reap health benefits, too. Frozen vegetables and fruits have just as many vitamins and minerals as fresh versions.
- 5 Keep lemons handy:** If you're not getting the best flavor from a dish, try adding a sprinkle of salt and some acid — grated lemon or lime zest, a squeeze of citrus juice or a splash of vinegar can make a dish sing.



Simple Holiday Shrimp Bake

1 lb shrimp, peeled and deveined
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 tbsp lemon juice
1 tbsp olive oil
1 tbsp unsalted butter, broken into small pieces
Pinch each salt and pepper
3 tbsp whole-grain panko bread crumbs
1 tbsp Parmesan cheese
1 tbsp chopped fresh parsley

Preheat oven to 400°F.

In a baking dish, combine shrimp, garlic, lemon juice, oil, butter, salt and pepper. **Mix** to coat shrimp. **In** a small bowl, combine bread crumbs and cheese.

Sprinkle bread crumb mixture over shrimp. **Bake** until shrimp turn pink and opaque, about 8-12 minutes.

Sprinkle with parsley and serve with lemon wedges.

Makes 4. Per serving:

194 calories | 24g protein | 8g total fat | 3g saturated fat | 4g mono fat | 1g poly fat
| 4g carbohydrate | 0g sugar | 0g fiber | 298mg sodium



Stay in Touch

Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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EXPERT advice



Q: Vitamin D test?

A: Blood tests can measure your recent

vitamin D levels from foods, supplements and sunlight exposure on your skin.

Routine testing is not usually necessary in adults at normal risk. But if you have factors that raise your risk for vitamin D deficiency, your health care provider may order testing to ensure you are getting enough.

Deficiency risks: Limited sun exposure is a common cause of low vitamin D.

Older age or not regularly going outdoors often limits sun exposure. Other risks for D deficiency include dark skin, obesity and osteoporosis. Unhealthy diet or poor absorption of nutrients — as occurs in those with celiac disease or inflammatory bowel disease — can also make low vitamin D more likely. If in doubt, ask your provider if you need the test.

— Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP



Safety Corner:

Prepare to Drive Safely in Winter Conditions

>> Continued from page 1

Brakes. Test them to ensure they are in working order. If possible, practice stopping on snow and ice in a safe place to become familiar with how your vehicle performs.

Lights and signals. Check that your headlights, high beams, taillights, brake lights, turn signals, and hazard lights are functioning properly. Clean exterior lights if they are dirty.

Windshield wipers. Make sure your front and rear windshield wipers are in good working condition. Replace the wiper blades if they are worn.

Heater/defroster. Make sure the heater is functioning properly and that the defroster removes condensation and frost from your windshield.

Battery. Have your mechanic check your battery for sufficient voltage, and inspect the charging system, belts, and cable connections.

You should assemble an emergency kit to keep in your vehicle in case you become stranded or experience mechanical difficulty. This is a good idea year-round, but it is very important in winter because of the increased chance that you could get stranded in hazardous weather conditions.

Your winter emergency kit should include:

- Blankets and warm, dry extra clothes
- Water and nonperishable food
- Essential medications
- Ice scraper, snow brush, and small snow shovel
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First-aid kit
- Jumper cables
- Container of sand or kitty litter for traction if you get stuck in snow or ice
- Emergency flares or triangles
- Inflated spare tire, tire jack, and tools
- Cell phone and car charger
- Extra windshield washer fluid



Helping others can help you.

Research shows volunteering is linked to multiple health benefits, including depression relief, a lower risk for high blood pressure, and memory help. The NIH's Longitudinal Study of Aging suggests that volunteering may help you live longer, too. Ready to volunteer? Look for opportunities fitting your talents and interests through community centers, religious groups and many nonprofit organizations.

