

May/June 2017

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In this Issue...

The Power of
Thought

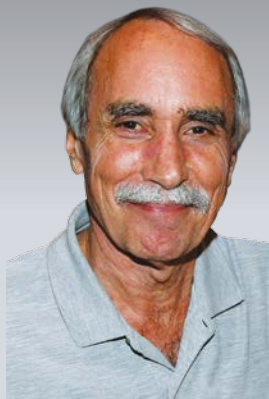
Are We Happier in
the Summer?

Getting Kids More
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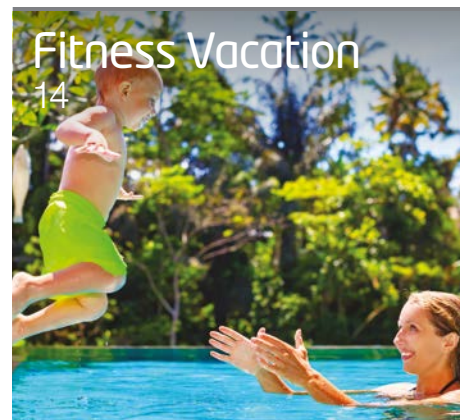
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Make It Easy for Yourself

The road to wellness doesn't need to be a challenge. With so much information available, and so many options for applying that information to our lives, often the only reason living a healthy lifestyle feels challenging is because we make it that way ourselves.

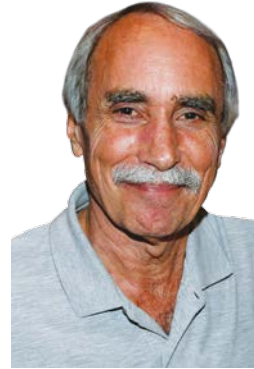
Judging our own lives against those we see on social media has become a major cause of dissatisfaction for people around the world—so much so that researchers are studying the link between social media use and rates of depression. When people present only their best selves online, we look at them and think, “I wish my life was like that.” The same thing occurs when we see models and celebrities with perfectly sculpted bodies (often photo-edited) on the covers of magazines.

We see these images and try to do what these people do in order to be healthy, regardless of what we actually want to be doing. We mimic their diets and their exercise routines even if we hate the food and the activities. That sets us up for failure because it's almost impossible to make a healthy routine out of something you don't like. It's time we start making our lives easier by doing the things we want to do and eating the foods we want to eat.

Of course, there will be times when it will be tough. There will be unexpected twists and turns on your path. Injuries, dietary changes, colds and flu—there will be bumps in the road that will present temporary challenges. But the vast majority of the time, living a healthy lifestyle shouldn't feel like a challenge, so don't turn it into one.

If you don't enjoy running, don't run. Swim, bike or do any of the other countless healthy activities you enjoy. If you just can't stand the taste of carrots, don't eat them. There are so many vegetables available at your grocery store, so you can find the missing nutrients in other foods.

As long as you are eating a healthy diet (which includes 5-9 servings of fresh, brightly colored fruits and vegetables), regularly engaging in some sort of physical fitness activity and staying focused on the positive aspects of life, you will be on the path to wellness. It doesn't matter exactly which whole foods you choose to eat or which activities you engage in. Do yourself a huge favor and pick the ones you love.



Dwight L. McKee M.D.

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Scientific Director

Nutritional News

Eat out less

New research suggests people who eat out less reduce their risk of developing type 2 diabetes by 15 percent. Researchers at Harvard University followed the health and eating habits of nearly 100,000 people for 25 years. Their findings showed that packing your lunch or eating lunch at home instead of purchasing it can cut the chances of developing diabetes by 9 percent. Those who ate most of their lunches and dinners at home experienced even better results.



Whole foods

Shoppers who purchase from the produce section and butcher counter may be healthier than those who purchase mainly premade and packaged foods. Per the World Health Organization, processed meats such as bacon and sausage might be responsible for an increased rate of death due to preservatives that may be carcinogenic. Additionally, highly processed junk food and refined carbs found in processed foods are associated with increased rates of heart disease. To avoid these health concerns, purchase whole foods in their natural states, such as fresh produce, whole grains and uncured cuts of meat.

Sugary snacks

Help prevent inflammation-related problems by avoiding unhealthy sugary snacks. While a small amount of sugar in the diet can be healthy, when we consume massive quantities of sugar (from snacks such as candy bars or flavored coffee drinks) in a short time, our bodies suffer. These snacks cause quick spikes and drops in blood sugar, which can create system-wide inflammation. Regularly eating these snacks can then lead to chronic inflammation, which has been linked to a variety of ailments, including heart disease.

Almonds

A small handful of almonds may help protect your skin. Almonds are rich in vitamin E, which acts as an antioxidant by protecting your skin from free radical damage caused by exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light from the sun. Without regular intake, vitamin E levels in the skin tend to decrease as we age. The next time you need an energy boost and want to help protect your healthy skin, reach for a handful of almonds.



Positive thinking

A positive attitude can add years to your life, according to a new study. After following 3,000 people for 11 years, Finnish researchers found that the most pessimistic people were twice as likely to die from heart disease as the least pessimistic people in the study. Other studies have shown perpetually pessimistic attitudes can lead to higher blood pressure, diabetes and other maladies. This news is just the latest in a series of studies that show how a positive outlook in life can help protect our physical bodies.



Exercise and Asthma

Asthma is a common chronic disease that affects the lungs and breathing passages in as many as 334 million people around the world. Characterized by wheezing and breathing difficulties, asthma can cause reduced quality of life, not just because of the physical limitations it may create but also because of psychological and social effects.¹

Asthma causes inflamed airways that make it difficult for air to move in and out of the lungs, sometimes dangerously so. Symptoms include coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath and chest tightness. Many people living with the chronic condition avoid strenuous exercise because they are worried that it might trigger an asthma attack. However, new research shows that maintaining an active lifestyle may be beneficial for asthmatics.

Regular physical activity strengthens the lungs and cardiovascular system.

This is no different for people living with asthma. It may be even more beneficial for asthmatics, as multiple studies have shown people who have asthma may be able to reduce their symptoms through regular exercise and sports.

It's true that exercise may help people with asthma, but extra care should be taken, especially if a person has been avoiding physical activity for some time. Because asthma symptoms can also be triggered by physical exertion, anyone with asthma should consult with their doctor before beginning a new exercise regimen.

Caution should be exercised until you are sure that your asthma is under control and not exacerbated by any particular activity.

When guided by common sense and appropriate medical supervision, people with asthma can enjoy the same fitness activities as people without asthma.

Wanting to know whether exercise was indeed good for people living with asthma, an international network of researchers analyzed 19 studies, involving nearly 700 participants, that examined whether sports and exercise affect asthma symptoms. In each study, participants took part in exercise programs that lasted at least six weeks. The longest studies ran for 16 weeks.



The various physical activities in the studies included bicycling, swimming, brisk walking and similar exercise. They were conducted two or three times a week and lasted at least 20 minutes at a time. In short, they closely matched a typical workout routine.

The results showed consistently that participants who exercised regularly experienced asthma symptoms less often afterward than did people who did not take part in regular physical activity.

Moreover, the researchers found that none of the studies contained evidence that regular exercise led to any negative effects feared by many asthmatics, such as increased severity or frequency of asthma attacks.²

¹ Global Asthma Report. http://www.globalasthmareport.org/resources/Global_Asthma_Report_2014.pdf.

² Chandratilleke MG, Carson KV, Picot J, Brinn MP, et al. Physical training for asthma. *Cochrane Database Sys Rev* 2012; (5): CD001116.



An unrelated study on asthma and swimming found that swimming increases lung function and cardiopulmonary fitness in children and teenagers under 18 years old.

Much like the large-scale meta-study, this one also found no evidence that swimming caused adverse effects on asthma. Because many children and young adults enjoy the novelty of being in the water, swimming and other water sports may be an especially good option for youth with asthma.³



Study after study has shown regular physical activity can safely help improve cardiopulmonary fitness for people with asthma. The resounding consensus seems to be that people of all ages with asthma should find an exercise routine that they enjoy and make it a regular part of their life, as long as they first talk to their doctor.

³ Beggs S, Foong YC, Le HC, et al. Swimming training for asthma in children and adolescents aged 18 years and under. Cochrane Database Syst Rev, 2013, 4: CD009607.

Energy Generation

With today's busy modern lifestyles, pressures from work and constant comparisons to our friends on social media, having enough energy to get everything done can sometimes seem like the holy grail of modern life. Proper diet, exercise, nutrition and a few simple life strategies can help ensure you have enough energy to reach all your goals.





It's easy to recognize when an especially hard workout or unusually taxing day at the office drains you of energy. It's less easy to pinpoint the causes of life's constant slow drain of energy. Low energy, less patience, irritability, taking less pleasure from life and feeling pressure to do more in less time are all signs that modern living has depleted your energy reserves.

To combat the slow energy drain of daily living, start every morning right by opening your curtains as soon as your alarm goes off.

If you don't have a good natural light source in your bedroom—or if you wake before the sun rises—turn on the lights (preferably with bulbs labeled “cool white” or “daylight”) to brighten the room artificially. Light helps optimize your body's internal wakeup routine. When the sun is out, take the first possible opportunity to get outside, with nothing between you and sunshine—this is an important part of setting our biological clock (circadian rhythm).¹

Don't hit snooze but don't jump out of bed either. Once you get out of bed, ease into your morning rituals. Sometimes when you start the day at too fast of a pace, you will end up feeling burned out long before bedtime. Similarly, avoid the temptation to check your email as soon as you wake up. Getting hit with a big list of daily to-dos can zap energy before you've even fully woken up.

To slow the pace of your morning, wake up at least 15 minutes before the rest of the family. That way you can be showered and dressed before anyone else is awake. You can move on to other morning tasks while everyone else is still getting ready.²

Your energy levels may be even better if you are able to get up with enough time to take a walk before your day starts. Studies have shown that low-intensity aerobic exercise such as walking, done just three mornings a week, increases energy levels. It's also been shown that low-intensity exercises produce greater fatigue reduction than do higher-intensity ones.³

Once you're showered and ready for the day, eat a healthy breakfast. Skipping breakfast is a surefire way to end up fatigued later in the day. Avoid sugary breakfast cereals and pastries. Instead, opt for sources of complex carbohydrates, protein and healthy fats for long-lasting energy. Good breakfast combinations are scrambled eggs served in a whole wheat tortilla or a bowl of oatmeal topped with fruit and nuts.⁴

All of these morning tips will help you get through the day without crashing. But energy-boosting activities don't stop when you leave the house. For many people working in modern offices, the day is spent primarily sitting at a desk, staring at a computer monitor. Our bodies are not built for this kind of low-energy lifestyle. To keep your energy levels high, your body needs occasional movement. Get up and stretch at least once an hour. Once every 30 minutes is even better. Whenever possible, stand up and walk to the person you need to talk to instead of picking up the phone or sending an email. Visit the restroom, walk to the watercooler, take a trip to the printer, walk on your lunch break—stand up as often as you can throughout the day. Standing desks are becoming more and more popular as well. These desks adjust between sitting and standing heights. When your feet get tired, sit for a while and then stand again. People who stand during work at least part of the day use more energy, and this contributes to weight loss—as much as 12 pounds a year.⁵

Work is one of the biggest stresses people face today, and stress is one of the biggest energy drains we have to deal with. Stress, anxiety, fear, uncertainty and other negative emotions that are common in the workplace all lower energy levels and leave people feeling mentally and physically exhausted.

Chronic stress can become a chronic energy drain. To avoid this common problem, make sure you are taking care of yourself emotionally and physically. From meditation to exercise, yoga to football, there are many ways to beat stress. Pick one or two that work for you and incorporate them into your daily life.

You can also beat stress by fostering a positive attitude; don't let the small things get to you.

Be grateful for everything you have in your life already. When things feel like they're getting tough, remind yourself that you are a wonderful being with the potential to do anything you want. That should put a smile on your face and a little extra lift in your step.

As the day rolls on, it's common to experience an afternoon slump. The spike of hormones that gets us up and moving in the morning begins to level off around this time. That combined with less-than-healthy lunches and busy schedules naturally creates another energy drain. Combat afternoon slumps by eating healthy, reasonably sized lunches that provide protein and fiber to keep your blood sugar levels where you want them.





While at lunch—and during the rest of the day—drink water. One of the body's ways of telling you it needs water is to feel fatigued. The next time you feel a little tired and you're not sure why, try drinking a large glass of water—within an hour you're likely to get a little extra activity with a trip to the restroom!

If you've eaten a healthy lunch, consumed enough water and made an effort to break up the amount of time you spend sitting, and you still feel the afternoon slump coming on, try snacking on a handful of nuts.

Rich in protein and healthy fats, nuts are packed full with energy reserves to get you back on track.

If most of your meals are rich in fruits and vegetables, and contain the right amount of fat for your activity level, your body should be getting the nutritional support it needs to maintain energy levels.

If your diet does not contain the necessary nutrients, you may benefit from either changing your diet or supplementing. Magnesium is one nutrient that can be especially beneficial when a person wants to boost energy. The body uses magnesium in

more than 300 biochemical reactions, including turning glucose into energy.

A study performed at the Department of Agriculture's Human Nutrition Research Center in Grand Forks, N.D., found when women experience magnesium deficiencies they had higher heart rates and required more oxygen to perform physical tasks. In other words, their bodies had to work harder to get things done. It's no secret that the harder you work, the quicker fatigue can set in.^{6,7}

When you're back at home after a long day of work, practice good sleep hygiene to ensure your energy reserves are fully restored by morning. As the evening progresses, slow down both physically and mentally. Try to be ready and organized for tomorrow at least two hours before bedtime so you can stop worrying and relax. Skip the nightcap for better sleep. Even though you think it helps you unwind after a hard day, alcohol can cause restless sleep. Avoid drinking alcohol for two hours before bed if you want a good night's rest, because alcohol, although it makes getting to sleep easier, disturbs sleep architecture and results in overall less restorative sleep.⁸

One hour before bedtime, stop any activities that require a great deal of concentration and turn off all electronic devices.

The blue LED light emitted from many screens (TVs, computers, tablets, smartphones) blocks melatonin production by the pineal gland, therefore inhibiting your ability to fall asleep.⁹

When it's finally time to turn out the lights and go to bed, make your room as dark as possible with no brightly lit clocks. As mentioned previously in relation to blue light from electronic screens, melatonin, the primary hormone that regulates sleep, is secreted by the pineal gland in response to darkness. Even a tiny nightlight can emit enough light to disturb melatonin secretion. Many parents use nightlights in their children's rooms to make them feel more secure, but this practice actually reduces the quality of sleep.¹⁰

If you eat well, exercise regularly and practice good sleep hygiene habits, you will find you're able to wake up feeling well-rested and ready to start the energy-boosting habits all over again!

¹ Warman, V.L., D.J. Dijk, et al. (2003). "Phase advancing human circadian rhythms with short wavelength light." *Neuroscience Letters* 342(1-2): 37-40.
² Sole-Smith, Virginia. "How to Get More Energy." *Health.com*. Health.com, 30 May 2014. Web. 28 Mar. 2017.
³ Puetz T W, Flowers S.S, O'Connor P.J. A Randomized Controlled Trial of the Effect of Aerobic Exercise Training on Feelings of Energy and Fatigue in Sedentary Young Adults with Persistent Fatigue. *Psychother Psychosom* 2008;77:167-174.
⁴ Betts, James A., et al. "The Causal Role of Breakfast in

Energy Balance and Health: A Randomized Controlled Trial in Lean Adults." *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 100.2 (2014): 539-547. PMC. Web. 28 Mar. 2017.
⁵ Griswold, Alison. "To Work Better, Just Get Up From Your Desk." *Forbes*. *Forbes Magazine*, 01 July 2012. Web. 28 Mar. 2017.
⁶ Henry C. Lukaski, Forrest H. Nielsen. "Dietary Magnesium Depletion Affects Metabolic Responses during Submaximal Exercise in Postmenopausal Women." *Human Nutrition and Metabolism*. <https://naldc.nal.usda.gov/download/46490/PDF>.

⁷ Leslie M. Klevay and David B. Milne. "Low Dietary Magnesium Increases Supraventricular Ectopy." *Am J Clin Nutr* 2002 75: 3 550-554.
⁸ National Institutes of Health. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, n.d. Web. 28 Mar. 2017.
⁹ Tosini, Gianluca, Ian Ferguson, and Kazuo Tsubota. "Effects of Blue Light on the Circadian System and Eye Physiology." *Molecular Vision* 22 (2016): 61-72. Print.
¹⁰ "Do You Need a Nightlight." *Sleep.org*. N.p., n.d. Web. 28 Mar. 2017.

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The Power of Thought

For those of us who deal with Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), spring and summer offer relief from the low-energy cold months spent struggling with depression and sadness. With longer, warmer days here to stay for a while, it is a good time to learn how to change your life through mental focus so that when winter comes around again, you will be prepared.

In terms of maintaining your health (both mental and physical), one of the most powerful tools you have available is your own mind. Your mind's ability to affect your well-being simply by focusing on the positive aspects of life can be life-changing. Despite this knowledge, many people still tend to focus on the negative (disease) over the positive (health). After generations of thinking this way, we must all break out of the old habit and make a conscious effort to shift our thinking!

We attract both positive and negative things, people, experiences and circumstances into our lives every day. Until we consciously stop to examine what we spend our mental energy focusing on, we have no control over what we bring into our lives and how it affects our health.

To create the life you want—health, happiness, security, friendships or anything else—you must pay attention to your thought processes.

You don't need to monitor every single thought you have throughout the day. Nobody could do that. We have too many! Instead, learn to pay attention to how you feel. Get in the habit of mentally checking in with yourself several times a day. You may need to do this practice more at the beginning, but as you get more accomplished, it will become second nature.

When you find yourself smiling, happy and not focused on worries, your emotions are telling you that you are focused on the positive aspects of your life. If you feel bad, anxious or stressed, your emotions are telling you that you are focused predominantly on negatives.

If, when you start monitoring your feelings, you realize that you are spending too much time focused on the negative side of life, it's time to change your focus. Start by purging your life of negative influences to the best of your ability. Distance yourself from people who do nothing but complain. Don't allow yourself to get sucked into meaningless, negative conversations at work or with your friends.

At the same time you distance yourself from negative influences, surround yourself with positive ones.



Listen to uplifting music, read inspiring books and connect with positive-minded people.



The more positive situations you cultivate, the more you will attract positivity into your life. Before long, you will find that your mood, health and overall happiness are all improved.

Finally, learn how to reshape your thoughts in order to avoid negative emotions that spiral out of control. Bad things can and do happen in life. This is natural, and having a positive outlook on life doesn't mean you ignore these things. Allow yourself to process and acknowledge the negative emotions for what they are. But instead of dwelling on them, shift your focus away from them.



Don't get upset with yourself when you find that you are dwelling on something negative! This is an especially hard habit to break, and it will only attract more negativity into your life. Again, acknowledge what is happening, because all your emotions are valid. But then make a conscious effort to focus on something else.

After a little practice, this will become second nature and you will do it without even realizing it.



If you spend all your time focusing on things that you don't want to do, wish didn't happen to you or hope won't happen to you, when will you ever be able to find time to focus on the life you do want? It isn't until we begin to focus on the things we want and the positive aspects of our health that it becomes possible to experience a new and exciting, truly healthy lifestyle. Practicing now, under the beautiful summer sun, will give you a set of tools that will make getting through the harder, colder times of life so much easier!



Are We Happier in the Summer?

As the weather warms up and the sun is out longer, many people will find their moods improving. Some of them may not even have realized how down they were feeling during the winter. Spring often lifts moods steadily until we are happiest in the summer.

If this sounds familiar, you may be one of the many people affected by lower vitamin D levels during the winter. Vitamin D is manufactured by the body in response to exposure to the sun's ultraviolet rays. During the winter months, there is less time spent outdoors, so our bodies are not able to manufacture as much of this critical vitamin. In addition, the sun is lower in the sky in the winter, so it travels through more of the atmosphere, which results in weaker ultraviolet rays when they reach us.

Vitamin D is well-known for its role in healthy bones

Lesser known but just as important are the ways in which vitamin D bolsters the immune system and affects mood while supporting a healthy brain and nervous system. The combined effects of all the ways vitamin D affects the body may mean that many people are truly happier in the summer. The importance of these effects even has some experts calling for increased vitamin D fortification of our foods.¹

As vitamin D relates to our happiness, many doctors believe that for some people reduced daylight causes a biochemical imbalance in the brain that affects two important neurochemicals: melatonin and serotonin. Both of these are hormones that work to regulate sleep cycles, energy levels and mood—three important factors in happiness.

Vitamin D deficiency has been shown to increase susceptibility to infection.² Studies have shown that populations in higher latitudes that experience even less sun tend to experience more cases of illness during the winter. The longer the winter, the more our bodies are affected by vitamin D deficiency.

Feeling sick more often during the winter can further impact mood. So too can feeling healthy during the summer, when increased levels of vitamin D are bolstering mood and the immune system. The relationship between mental state and physical health isn't a new revelation. Feelings of tension, frustration and sadness have been shown to cause negative physical reactions in the heart. Our emotions and physical health are tightly linked. For better or worse, vitamin D levels affect both.

All of these factors contribute to the idea that many of us find it easier to be happy during the summer than the winter.

The easiest way to ensure your body is supplied with ample amounts of vitamin D is to spend more time outdoors, without sunscreen for a specified time, as determined by the time of day and the skin type that you have.

This is easy during the summer, when the days are long and the weather is conducive to outdoor activities.



Certain groups, such as those that have a vitamin D deficiency, find it hard to get outdoors or have skin conditions (or take certain medications) that make them particularly sun-sensitive, may find supplementing with vitamin D beneficial.³

Our emotional state and physical health are deeply connected. A happier, sunnier disposition can help you live a healthier life. At the same time, chronic health problems can leave you feeling down and depressed, which can attract more negative experiences into your life. Elevated levels of vitamin D during the summer positively affect both mood and physical health, which may mean many of us are truly happier in the summer.

Anyone who feels that his or her happiness and health fluctuate greatly between the cold and warm seasons may benefit from talking to a doctor or nutritionist about supplementing with vitamin D during the colder months, when we all are less able to spend time in the sun.

¹ Martineau Adrian R, Jolliffe David A, Hooper Richard L, Greenberg Lauren, Aloia John F, Bergman Peter, et al. Vitamin D supplementation to prevent acute respiratory tract infections: systematic review and meta-analysis of individual participant data. *BMJ* 2017; 356: i6583.

² Aranow, Cynthia. "Vitamin D and the Immune System." *Journal of investigative medicine: the official publication of the*

American Federation for Clinical Research 59.6 (2011): 881-886. PMC. Web. 14 Mar. 2017.

³ Martineau Adrian R, Jolliffe David A, Hooper Richard L, Greenberg Lauren, Aloia John F, Bergman Peter, et al. Vitamin D supplementation to prevent acute respiratory tract infections: systematic review and meta-analysis of individual participant data. *BMJ* 2017; 356: i6583.

Fitness Vacation

Summer is almost here, and that means it's time to plan our annual summer vacations. If you're tired of the classic summer holiday spent lounging on the beach all day, maybe it's time to step out of your comfort zone and get active.





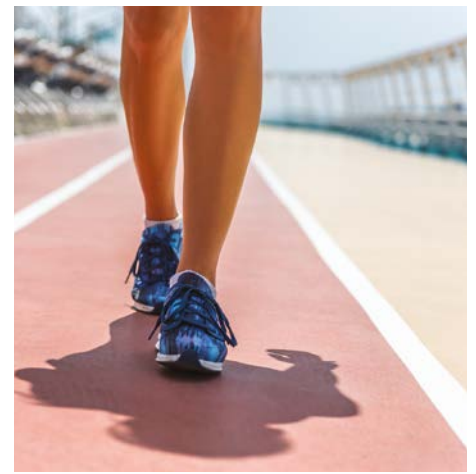
Whether you travel alone or with the whole family, fitness vacations will get your adrenaline pumping, leave you feeling energized and create memories that will last a lifetime. On the other hand, you just may want to lie around on a beach or some comfy place, which is cool.

Whether you're into running, cycling, hiking, skiing, snowboarding, swimming, CrossFit, Zumba, horseback riding, yoga or anything else, there is an adventure waiting for you.

Fitness vacation destinations are popping up all around the globe. Sign up for an all-inclusive destination getaway or plan your own adventure on the cheap. But you should be careful...remember, this is a vacation, not an attempt to look the greatest when you get home.

For the outdoors-oriented and history buffs, hiking across the Andes Mountains to the ancient city of Machu Picchu is a fitness vacation like no other. With a variety of paths and trail guide services to choose from, it's possible to find a trek that fits your fitness level. Be sure to do your research and be prepared a few days early so your body can adjust to the altitude. Hiking the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu will challenge your body physically while rewarding you with beautiful vistas, amazing food, unique experiences and wonderful memories.

If you're looking for a little glamour with your exercise, options like Camp Biche in France offer mousse au chocolat and a glass of champagne alongside yoga, Pilates and weight training classes. The perfect combination of a relaxing vacation and boot-camp fitness, Camp Biche offers tailor-made regimens to fit any fitness level.



If cruising is your preferred vacation method, there are options for you as well. For example, Norwegian Cruise Lines' Caribbean and European cruises have plenty of fitness options available for you to get into shape while sailing to your next destination.

Runners, walkers and joggers can use a running track set 10 stories above the ocean. Full-sized basketball courts and soccer fields are even available in the on-ship sports complex. For the more adventurous vacationers, some of the ships even have 24-foot climbing walls. Of course, there are also pools, elliptical machines, treadmills and stationary bikes. That's not to mention the yoga and Pilates classes you can take. Just watch how much you eat at dinner so you burn more calories than you ingest. Norwegian is not the only cruise line that offers so many exercise options. No matter what your favorite ship, every cruise lover can turn an ordinary relaxing vacation into a fitness vacation.

Trade the typical sandy beach vacation for a snow-white one and head into the mountains for a week of skiing, snowshoeing and hiking. One such resort, Das Kranzbach Hotel & Wellness Retreat in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, is perfect for couples looking for a romantic getaway and a chance to get fit. With a slew of activities based out of the only English country house in Bavaria, Das Kranzbach provides a romantic alpine retreat that will challenge your body physically and then let you relax and recuperate in luxury.





Boot-camp-style vacation spas are gaining popularity as more and more people are using their vacation time to get active. Target Fitness, for example, in Herefordshire, England, features 5-6 hours of exercise per day, which is sure to transform your body. Your stay also includes detailed nutritional and training seminars that ensure you train not just your body but your mind as well. Trained fitness professionals will give you individual care every day and create a specific plan combining aerobic exercises, core workouts, deep stretching and more, providing a complete package of fitness. Boot camps such as Target Fitness are not for the faint of heart but will sculpt and tone your body in a fun and refreshing atmosphere. Because these boot camps have gotten so popular, a quick search on the internet is sure to find a boot camp nearby that suits your needs.

If you are looking for an extreme fitness vacation experience, think about heading to Phuket, Thailand, for a stay at Tiger Muay Thai training complex. Test yourself and get in shape while learning the ancient martial art of Muay Thai kickboxing where it originated. Ranging from simple to elegant, accommodations are available to suit your particular needs. If you have energy left after training, you can explore the beautiful island of Phuket and learn about Thailand's history and culture.

Fitness vacations don't need to be expensive or complicated. A weekend spent hiking in the woods can be a low-cost way to exercise the whole family. Simply find the closest national park or campground and gather the family for a few days of outdoor play away from technology and the temptation of sitting on the couch in front of the television.



Heading into the woods offers more than just hiking.

Swimming, outdoor yoga, mountain biking, kayaking, rafting and any outdoor games your family enjoys will all give you a workout in a refreshing environment.

If you feel like you can't miss out on the beach this summer, make your normal vacation a fitness vacation by choosing beach activities that get you moving. Instead of sunbathing all day, get in the water and swim, kayak or row for several hours a day. Physical sports and games on the beach such as volleyball, running, Frisbee and soccer all provide an extra workout your body isn't used to because it's much harder to run in the sand than on flat ground. Even walking up and down the shoreline for a few miles will help turn your regular vacation into a fitness vacation.

These are just a few of the many ways you can turn this summer's annual vacation into a fitness vacation that is fun and healthy. With a little creativity and planning, there is no reason not to change up the yearly routine and find a fit, healthy adventure for everyone to enjoy. You'll feel so invigorated and healthy that you'll start planning next year's fitness vacation as soon as you get home.

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Beetroot

Known for their beautiful, dark red coloring, beetroots are a gorgeous root vegetable used as a culinary ingredient all over the world. There is a new reason to put beetroots in the spotlight: Mounting evidence is showing that their distinctive color may not be the only thing they will be known for—they could become the next great superfood.

A 100-gram serving of beetroot provides 20 percent of the recommended daily value of folate and 14 percent of the recommended daily value of manganese. Beetroot also contains fiber, iron, potassium, calcium, zinc and other nutrients in smaller quantities. However, it is the high nitrate content in beetroot that makes it such a health-boosting food.



When beetroots are consumed, their nitrates are converted into nitrites, which circulate in the blood.

When there is a demand for more oxygen, the nitrites are converted into nitric oxide, which causes blood vessels to dilate, thereby increasing circulation and lowering blood pressure. A study published in the *Journal of Nutrition* concluded that juice made from beetroots was responsible for a modest reduction in blood pressure.¹ While we most often think of beetroots as dark red, other studies show these positive effects come from both red and white versions of the plant.²

Beetroot may be helpful for athletes as well. Research has found a connection between ingesting beetroot and improved exercise performance in individuals identified as inactive or recreationally active. Participants in one study saw moderate improvements in exercise after drinking beetroot juice.³

An unrelated study on beetroots and exercise found cyclists performing in an enclosed chamber mimicking high altitude improved their times by an average of 16 seconds after a single dose of beetroot juice. These findings indicate that by increasing nitric oxide bioavailability through drinking beetroot juice, the cyclists could lessen the negative effect of hypoxia brought on by high altitude and cycling.⁴

Both beetroot juice and whole beetroots have been shown to help improve exercise, due to their nitrate content.

Researchers caution that while whole vegetables have been shown to have health benefits, nitrates from other, less natural sources (such as processed meats like bacon, ham and sausage) may have detrimental health effects. Therefore, it may be prudent for athletes to obtain nitrates from beetroot and other whole vegetables.⁵

If exercise performance and healthy blood pressure were not enough to make beetroots a superfood, what about cognitive performance as well? An initial, small study done at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, N.C., found regularly consuming beetroot juice may increase blood flow to certain areas of the brain. Although more

evidence is needed to say for sure if there is a connection, researchers believe the results suggest that beetroot may be helpful to older adults in improving regional brain perfusion in critical brain areas known to be involved in executive functioning.⁶

Depending on the culinary preferences of your region, beetroot is often served pickled, juiced or in a soup, such as borscht. Beetroot is also an ingredient in red chrain and the Finnish salad rosolli.



Beets make a wonderfully tasty, colorful, health-boosting addition to nearly any salad.

When beetroot juice is dried at low temperatures, the resulting powder is a rich source of bioavailable nitrates, which can be incorporated in nutritional supplements designed to support healthy production of nitric oxide in the body.

¹ Mario Siervo, Jose Lara, Ikponmwonsa Ogbonmwan, John C. Mathers. Inorganic Nitrate and Beetroot Juice Supplementation Reduces Blood Pressure in Adults: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *J. Nutr.* June 1, 2013, vol. 143 no. 6 818-826.

² Hobbs D. A., Kaffa N., George T. W., Methven L., Lovegrove, J. A. (2012). "Blood pressure-lowering effects of beetroot juice and novel beetroot-enriched bread products in normotensive male subjects." *British Journal of Nutrition.* 108 (11): 2066-2074.

³ Hoon M. W., Johnson N. A., Chapman P. G., Burke L. M. The effect of nitrate supplementation on exercise performance in healthy individuals: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *International Journal of Sport Nutrition and Exercise Metabolism.* 2013;23(5):522-532. doi: 10.1123/ijsnem.23.5.522.

⁴ Muggenridge D., Howe D., Spendiff O., Pedlar C., James P., Easton C. The Effects of a Single Dose of Concentrated Beetroot Juice on Performance in Trained Flatwater Kayakers. *Int. J. Sport Nutr. Exerc. Metab.* 2013;23:498-506. doi: 10.1123/ijsnem.23.5.498.

⁵ Margaret Murphy, Katie Eliot, Rita M. Heuertz, Edward Weiss. "Whole Beetroot Consumption Acutely Improves Running Performance." *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics* April 2012, Volume 112, Issue 4, Pages 548-552.

⁶ Presley, Tennille D., et al. "Acute Effect of a High Nitrate Diet on Brain Perfusion in Older Adults." *Nitric oxide: biology and chemistry / official journal of the Nitric Oxide Society* 24.1 (2011): 34-42. PMC. Web. 16 Mar. 2017.

Why Women and Men Should Train Differently

It's no secret that women and men are different. From the surface down to the cellular level, the differences in female and male physiologies create different needs and requirements to maximize the benefits of exercise.

The one difference between female and male physiologies that might be the biggest benefit for women is that women's bodies tend to burn more fat during exercise. Studies have shown that women burn more fat and less carbohydrates and protein than do men at the same level of exercise. Women also don't store as much glycogen after eating carbohydrates.¹

An unrelated study found that the protein requirements for women are about 10 percent lower than those for men.²

Nevertheless, low-protein diets have been shown to lessen the effectiveness of exercise, so protein remains a critically important nutrient for muscle repair and building after exercise. Women may just need a little less than men do.

There are several possible explanations as to why female bodies rely more on fat for energy than on glycogen produced from complex carbohydrates. Differences in the nervous and hormonal systems could be the root cause. Or it may be women's bodies have adapted to having a higher fat percentage than men's bodies of the same weight.

Regardless of why, the fact remains there is a difference, and women may be able to maximize their workout routines if they adapt their diets to this knowledge.³

This doesn't mean women should gorge on fatty foods before exercising. It does, however, mean they may be able to substitute some fats for complex carbohydrates during pre-exercise meals. After decades of being told dietary fat should be avoided at all costs, it can be hard to adopt the new knowledge that fats are a healthy part of any diet as long as they are eaten in amounts relative to the amount of energy your body outputs.

A woman's physiology gives her an advantage over many men—females tend to be more resistant to fatigue than do males. Because of this, women often perform better with higher reps. This has been shown to be true even when women and men at the same strength level are compared.⁴ Furthermore, women recover faster after a set than do men, so they don't need as much rest as men to complete the same relative training volume.

It may sound counterintuitive, but even though women may have better fatigue resistance, their bodies tend to react less well to high-intensity interval training than do men's bodies. Women can put their physiological fatigue advantage to work by focusing on steady-state cardio activities.



One final physiological difference that benefits women—mood-boosting effects of aerobic exercise tend to be greater in women than in men.⁵ So not only are women able to exercise longer without as much fatigue, but they will also feel better afterward!

Women and men may have different physiologies that can be harnessed to maximize workouts, but they also have some important similarities that shouldn't be ignored. Most guidelines suggest drinking about 20 ounces of water 2-3 hours before exercising, regardless of sex.

¹ Tarnopolsky MA. Sex differences in exercise metabolism and the role of 17-beta estradiol. *Med Sci Sports Exerc* 2008;40:648-54. doi:10.1249/MSS.0b013e31816212ff.

² Rand WM, Pellett PL, Young VR. Meta-analysis of nitrogen balance studies for estimating protein requirements in healthy adults. *Am J Clin Nutr* 2003;77:109-27.

³ Hunter, S. K. (2014) Sex differences in human fatigability:

mechanisms and insight to physiological responses. *Acta Physiol*, 210: 768-789. doi:10.1111/apha.12234.

⁴ Fulco CS, Rock PB, Muza SR, Lammi E, Cymerman C, Butterfield G, Moore LG, Braun B, Lewis SF. Slower fatigue and faster recovery of the adductor pollicis muscle in women matched for strength with men. *Acta Physiol Scand*. 1999;167:233-239.

⁵ McDowell, Cillian P.; Campbell, Mark J.; Herring, Matthew P. "Sex-Related Differences in Mood Responses to Acute Aerobic Exercise." *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*: September 2016, Volume 48, Issue 9, p 1798-1802.



Consuming eight ounces during your warm-up and another eight ounces every 10-20 minutes during exercise is also recommended in order to stay properly hydrated.

Women and men also need to eat a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables with every meal to help support exercise efforts. Fruits and vegetables contain antioxidants that help fight the surge in free radicals that can accompany intense workouts.



Too many overly fatty and sugary foods will leave men and women feeling sluggish during workouts.

Women and men have different bodies with different needs. Understanding how to support those unique needs can help women maximize the benefits of their workouts.

Are Men Closing the Age Gap?

For hundreds of years, women have, on average, outlived men. But two recent studies show that men may be closing the gender gap in mortality. What is responsible for this phenomenon, and what can men (and women) learn from it to live longer, healthier lives?

Two recent studies show men may be catching up to women in terms of life span. The first, a joint study between Imperial College London and the World Health Organization found that men born in 2030 are expected to live until they are 82.5 years old, and women until 85.3. This difference of 2.8 closed from a 4.6 year gap in 2001 and 6.3 year gap in 1971.¹

Recent research from the UK Office for National Statistics found that the most well-off men can expect to live slightly longer than women. Men in high-paying professional jobs were shown to have a life expectancy of 82.5 years compared to 82.4 years for the average woman.²

As medicine, technology and nutritional science have all advanced, everyone's life span has increased. In 2011, life expectancy at birth was almost double what it was in 1841!³ After so many years of a larger mortality gap, what has finally caused men to catch up? It turns out there isn't just one reason—there are several.

The first factor in the diminishing gap is that men are simply avoiding many of the bad habits that used to be associated with masculinity.

Smoking, drinking, eating unhealthy foods, bottling up feelings—these are all traditionally male associated traits that modern men are eschewing.



Similarly, modern men are more and more comfortable visiting doctors, therapists and health care professionals.

Heavily publicized men's health initiatives such as Movember (growing mustaches in November for prostate cancer awareness) have helped contribute to the growing acceptance that asking for help and taking care of your body aren't signs of weakness. As macho stoicism is decreasing overall, life spans are increasing.

Shifting diets have a role to play too. According to research, a noticeable divergence between male and female life expectancies occurred during the late 19th century, when male diets began incorporating higher consumption of meat and animal fats.⁴ Traditionally, male diets are full of meat and fatty foods.

Today we know that meat and fat are a healthy part of the diet as long as they are ingested in amounts that correspond to energy output, and are from animals raised under the most natural conditions possible, such as free ranging and eating only grass. Ideally, meat and fat should be consumed in small quantities, with lots of vegetables on the side. Before that knowledge, many men were eating diets that became associated with health problems such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol and weight (fat) gain. With this new information, men are able to eat a more balanced diet that provides their bodies with healthy amounts of fat.

Shifting careers may be partially responsible as well. Cutting-edge technology and changing needs mean fewer men are working in hazardous conditions. While the health threats from sedentary office life are very real, they may be easier to cope with than spending years underground mining or working in dangerous factories.

It's true that the gender mortality gap may be closing, but remember that these are global numbers. Any single man can still be living with bad habits that will shorten his life span.

The keys to ensuring a long and healthy life no matter what your age or gender are to eat a healthy diet rich in fresh fruits and vegetables, stay physically active, manage stress in healthy ways and maintain relationships with positive-minded people.

While more and more men are willing to adopt these lifestyles, not all men have. Make sure the men in your life know how important these lifestyle choices are so everyone can stay healthy longer.

¹ Digital, ONS. "How has life expectancy changed over time?" VisualONS How has life expectancy changed over time Comments. N.p., n.d. Web. 16 Mar. 2017.

² "Statistical bulletin: Interim Life Tables: England and Wales, 2010-2012." Office for National Statistics. N.p., n.d. Web. 16 Mar. 2017

³ Digital, ONS. "How has life expectancy changed over time?" VisualONS How has life expectancy changed over time Comments. N.p., n.d. Web. 16 Mar. 2017.

⁴ Beltran-Sanchez H, Finch CE, Crimmins EM. Twentieth century surge of excess adult male mortality. Proc Natl Acad Sci USA 2015;112:8993-8. doi:10.1073/pnas.1421942112.



Arthritis, Diet and Exercise

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that arthritis affects nearly half of all adults over 65. The pain and discomfort of arthritis are enough to lower some seniors' quality of life. Fortunately for many of these people, much can be done in terms of diet and exercise to help combat a disease that nearly half of us will experience to some degree.

Arthritis pain discourages many people from being active. However, regular physical activity can help manage arthritis. Flexibility exercises such as stretching and yoga help maintain your joints' full motion. Regularly doing these exercises helps maintain and improve flexibility in the joints, making it easier to move about and stay active.

Aerobic exercises such as walking or jogging strengthen the heart and make the lungs more efficient.

These exercises also build stamina and help control weight, the latter of which can reduce arthritis pain, as obesity and overweight add stress and pain on joints.

Resistance exercises such as lifting weights improve and maintain muscle mass. Strong muscles may help support and protect joints affected by arthritis.

Two simple exercises that are especially good for people with arthritis are walking and water aerobics.

Walking, which is an aerobic exercise, is free, low-impact and easy. Walking a few miles every day helps improve circulation, controls weight and has been shown to help reduce the risk of developing cardiovascular disease. Walking can also help reduce the risk of fractures, and it tones muscles that support joints affected by arthritis.

Water aerobics is particularly good for people with arthritis who have not been active for some time, because your natural buoyancy in water prevents falls and accidents.

Water also helps relieve your joints of pressure from the weight of your body, which can make it more comfortable for those suffering from joint pain—especially knee and hip pain. Water also provides natural resistance that helps build muscle mass.

These may be two of the best choices for seniors with arthritis, but virtually any low-impact physical activity, when done regularly, can help.

In addition to regular physical activity, people with arthritis may find including certain nutrients in their diets to be helpful. One such nutrient is omega-3 fatty acids. According to the Arthritis Foundation, experts recommend eating at least three to four servings of cold-water fish every week. Salmon, mackerel, sardines and herring are some of the best sources. Wild-caught fish have a better nutrient profile than do farmed fish. Smaller, shorter-living fish accumulate fewer environmental toxins than do larger, longer-living ones.

If you're not a fan of fish but still want to see how omega-3 fatty acids may help, high-quality supplements of EPA and DHA, either as fish oil, or derived from specific cultured algae, provide the same important long-chain omega-3 fatty acids that are obtained by eating fish.

Some oils may help fight against arthritis as well. Extra-virgin olive oil, in addition to its heart-healthy fats, contains oleocanthal, a compound that has properties similar to nonsteroidal, anti-inflammatory drugs, which many arthritis sufferers take to help manage pain.





Broccoli may be especially beneficial, because of a compound called sulforaphane, for those recently diagnosed with arthritis. This natural compound, also found in other cruciferous vegetables, has been shown to help prevent or slow the progression of osteoarthritis.¹

Vitamin C, found in all citrus fruits, may also help fight against arthritis. Vitamin C is a powerful antioxidant that fights against free radicals, which can trigger inflammation. In addition, vitamin C aids in the synthesis of collagen, which is the main protein in joint tissue.

Researchers currently believe that a compound called diallyl disulphide found in alliums may be responsible for this protective action.

An arthritis diagnosis doesn't have to confine a person to a sedentary lifestyle. The right diet and exercise, combined with regular doctor consultations, can help many people stay fit and active for a long time.

Last but not least, foods from the allium family, such as garlic, onions and leeks, may also help limit cartilage-damaging enzymes in the body.

¹ Davidson, Rose K et al. "Sulforaphane Represses Matrix-Degrading Proteases and Protects Cartilage From Destruction In Vitro and In Vivo." *Arthritis and Rheumatism* 65.12 (2013): 3130-3140. PMC. Web. 15 Mar. 2017.



Getting Kids More Active

Televisions, computers, tablets and smartphones are all competing for our children's attention, enticing them to stay indoors, glued to a screen.

Parents know how important it is for their children to be physically active, but sometimes the challenge of getting a child to put down a video game or smartphone connected to social media and instead go outside may seem insurmountable. How do we find interesting ways to pry them away from technology and get them moving more?

Technology isn't going anywhere. Completely shielding our children from computers and smartphones may be a disservice to a generation that will grow up in a world filled with amazing new gadgets and technology.

Instead, our goals should be teaching safe use of technology and skills necessary to live in the modern world while emphasizing the importance (and fun) of getting active and playing, without screen time.

As such, the first step in getting tech-addicted kids to step outdoors is to model moderation. Studies have shown that excessive media use can lead to attention problems, school difficulties, sleep problems, eating disorders and obesity. Children learn from their parents. To avoid these dangers associated with too much screen time, parents must model healthy behavior. If parents are continuously moving from one screen to another, children will grow up mimicking that behavior. Parents should also avoid checking their phones for email and texts while playing with their children.

Rules help everyone know what is expected and what is acceptable behavior. Institute family rules, such as banning everyone (parents included) from bringing technology to the dinner table. Shutting off computers, phones and televisions two hours before bedtime is also a good habit to get your family into. Screen time close to bedtime can make falling asleep a challenge.

Use transitions to help ease children into no-technology times. When children are engrossed in a video game or movie, they may get quite upset if they are suddenly told to turn it off. Try giving a few alerts that they will have to turn off the device in 20 minutes and then 10 minutes. This lets kids know their time is running short, and they can mentally prepare themselves or, if in the midst of a complex video game, know that they need to get to a place where they can save the game, to be continued later.

Understanding why your child is using technology is important as well. For some children, online games are used to deal with stress, relieve boredom and even avoid loneliness when friends are not around. In these cases, taking away technology may cause more stress if you don't offer a good alternative to fill their time, such as going for a bike ride, taking a walk or playing hide-and-seek.

Just like role modeling healthy technology behavior, parents need to role model physical activity as well. Make time every day to do something active with your children.



Help your children find physical activities they enjoy. From signing your children up for a sports team to taking regular nature walks, help your children discover their own unique likes and dislikes. Matching your children's personality to an activity will help keep them engaged when they otherwise may be reaching for a phone.





Sometimes kids reach for technology because it's just easier. Parents can help their children by organizing play spaces that are engaging and orderly. Having too many toys out can be distracting to some children. Keep things as neat and uncluttered as possible, knowing that some messes are simply unavoidable with kids!

At the same time, toys must be easily accessible. Instead of putting toys out of sight in boxes or out of reach on high shelves, place them in smaller baskets or trays on low shelves. Children like to be able to see their options and get to them easily.



Technology serves many purposes. As your children grow into adults, technology will most likely serve even more purposes.

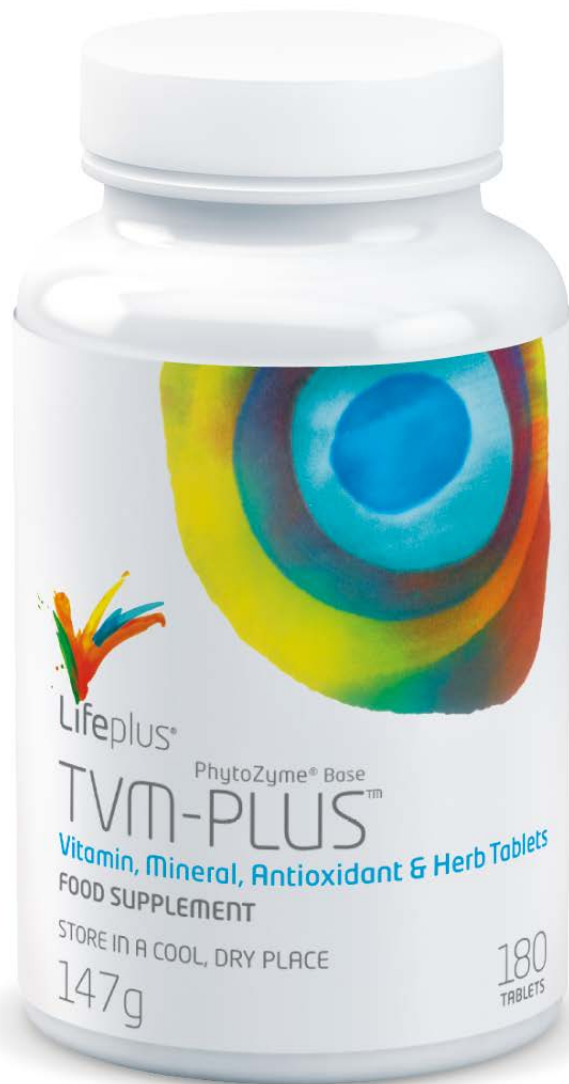
Completely banning technology in the house will not prepare your children for the future.

But creating boundaries, encouraging safe behavior and showing your children the importance of a balanced life that includes plenty of physical activity and time in the natural world will help them thrive for years to come.

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Ask the Expert

How do I exercise safely outdoors in the sun?

After a long winter of rain, snow and ice, many people are excited to get outdoors for their exercise. But concerns of too much sun exposure, depleted ozone and melanoma may keep them in the gym rather than outside. With a few simple precautions, exercising under the sun isn't just safe—it's also a necessity for your health. Sunlight is directly responsible for triggering your body to produce vitamin D, which plays important roles in protecting bones and promoting healthy immune, cardiovascular and nervous systems. Sunlight also boosts your mood, which is wonderful after long, dreary winter months.

Exercise safely by getting outdoors in the early morning or late afternoon.

Avoid peak midday sun to limit your risk for dehydration, sunburn and heat-related problems. Choose a sunscreen that was developed specifically for sports, or your sweat may rinse away the protection, and don't apply it until you've allowed adequate time for vitamin D production, based on the time of year and time of day, as well as your skin type. During late spring to early autumn, many people exercise outside before 10 a.m. and after 2 p.m., when the ultraviolet rays



are less intense, so they can apply sunscreen after 30 minutes of exercise. Last but not least, drink plenty of water before, during and after your workout to avoid dehydration. Following these simple tips will allow you to get outside and safely enjoy exercising under the warm summer sun.

Can foods affect cognitive function?

Many of the foods you choose to eat can affect cognitive function, for better or worse. Like every other part of your body, your brain is susceptible to damage from free radical attacks, which have been linked to cognitive deficits. Therefore, eating foods rich in antioxidants, such as berries, will help protect against free radicals. Omega-3 fatty acids are another brain-protecting nutrient—specifically DHA, which makes up a large portion of brain tissue, particularly the membranes of nerve cells. The best source of DHA is fresh cold-water fish. Additionally, cocoa flavanols found in dark chocolate (avoid milk chocolate and look for at least 70 percent cocoa) have been shown to help improve thinking skills in older adults. Scientists are still trying to understand exactly how flavanols affect the human brain, but the evidence is clear that it only takes a few ounces of dark chocolate to reap the benefits of flavanols. Finally, wash your brain-boosting snack down with green tea. Freshly brewed green tea has been shown to help protect healthy cognitive performance. In particular, green tea seems to help safeguard memory tasks. These are not the only foods that help protect your gray matter. In general, if you consume a healthy diet rich in fresh fruits and vegetables, with amounts of healthy fats that coincide with your activity level, your brain will benefit as much as your body.

Why do I hear so often that I should eat a "wide variety" of foods in my diet?

Eating a wide variety of foods has two major benefits. The first is that your body has complex nutritional needs. It takes more than just a small handful of different foods to provide those needs. Picky eaters are especially at risk of not receiving everything they need because eating a limited diet limits the nutrients we consume. On the other hand, eating a wide variety of foods (each with its own specific nutritional content) will provide the body with a wide spectrum of nutritional support. As we age and go through different phases in life, our nutritional needs change. Consuming a wide variety of foods will also help ensure that no matter where we are in life, we are receiving the nutritional support we need at that time. The second major benefit of eating a wide variety of foods is that it helps avoid monotony and flavor burnout. No matter how healthy a food is, most of us can get tired of eating it when we serve it at every meal. This can lead to snacking on unhealthy foods in order to stimulate taste buds.



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