



total **HEALTH** & wellness

For Members of
United Service
Association
For Health Care

FALL 2018

**When Should
You Take
Antibiotics?**

**Health Habits
That Could
Hurt You**

**Ellen
DeGeneres**

Spreading Kindness

USC
United Service Association
For Health Care



[cover story]

Ellen DeGeneres
Spreading
Kindness
page 10



4



6



8



14



17

- 3 Boost Your Home Workout with These 3 Tips
- 4 Kick-Start Your Diabetes Treatment Plan
- 6 Prevent Norovirus—Head for the Sink
- 7 When Should You Take Antibiotics?
- 8 What Is an Anti-Inflammatory Diet?
- 13 Listen Up! Ringing in the Ears Often Can Be Prevented
- 14 Your Member Benefits Have Been Enhanced!
- 15 5 Health Habits That Could Hurt You
- 16 New Hypertension Guidelines
- 17 Sleep Apnea's Link to Alzheimer's Disease
- 18 Gear-Free Ways to Build Strength
- 20 Get Out of Your Comfort Zone at Work



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FALL 2018

Boost Your Home Workout with These 3 Tips

Are you tired of the same old workout routine at home? Do you want to increase your exercise intensity? Here are a few tips to help you kick things up from the comfort of your living room, basement, or garage.

1

Mix it up.

If you typically participate in only one type of exercise, integrate something new. Adults ages 18 to 64 need aerobic, muscle-strengthening, and bone-strengthening exercise.

The good news is that some exercises can wrap all three together, such as jumping rope, playing basketball, or running on a treadmill. Turn up the intensity with the talk test: If you can talk while you are active, then you are working at a moderate level. If you can say only a few words before needing to catch your breath, you are making a vigorous effort.



3

Invite a friend over to work out with you.

Much like friendly competition, the support of a trusted friend can help push you further, too. One study indicates that exercising with a partner helps you plan better than if you work out alone. It can also hold you accountable to your fitness goals. +



2

Find a competitive outlet.

A friendly contest can push you harder to achieve your fitness goals. Research has found that competition can motivate you to move more, especially if you are comparing your fitness progress to that of your peers online. Invest in a step tracker that connects to an online fitness program or smartphone app—you can have some fun competition with your friends and family members as you step your workouts up a notch.



Kick-Start Your **Diabetes** Treatment Plan

Start taking care of your diabetes today to boost your energy, improve your body's ability to heal, and prevent future health problems.

→ The Basics of Diabetes Care

Here are a few steps to help you keep your diabetes under control:

- **Learn about diabetes.** Take a class, join a support group, and do online research. Understanding diabetes can help you make better choices for your health.
- **Check your ABCs.** A stands for A1c, a blood test that measures your average blood glucose level over the past few months. B stands for blood pressure. Healthy blood pressure helps prevent heart attack, stroke, and kidney and eye damage. C stands for cholesterol. Managing your cholesterol helps prevent heart attack and stroke.
- **Start making changes to your daily life.** Work with a dietitian to develop a healthy meal plan. Start to be more active. Work your way up to getting 30 to 60 minutes of physical activity most days of the week. Do both

aerobic activities, as well as strength training exercises. Take your medicines and check your blood glucose at home, as directed by your doctor.

- **Schedule regular checkups and tests.** Your A1c should be checked at least twice a year. In addition, your doctor will check your blood pressure, feet, and weight. You also need a complete foot exam, dental exam, eye exam, flu shot, cholesterol test, and tests to check for kidney problems.

Be Aware of Hypoglycemia

Hypoglycemia, or low blood sugar, happens when the level of glucose in your blood drops below normal. It can be a side effect of insulin or other types of diabetes medications. Symptoms of this condition include:

- Sweating
- Headache
- Confusion

- Vision problems
- Fast or irregular heartbeat

However, some people have few or no symptoms. Checking your blood glucose regularly alerts you if you're experiencing hypoglycemia.

Carry Fast-Acting Sugars with You

If you have signs of hypoglycemia, be sure to test your blood glucose. A general rule of thumb for many people with diabetes is: If your blood glucose is 70 mg/dl or lower, eat or drink one of these quick-fix foods. Each option has 15 grams of carbohydrates:

- Four glucose tablets
- Two tablespoons of raisins
- A half-cup fruit juice or soda
- One tablespoon honey, sugar, or corn syrup

After eating, wait 15 minutes and check your blood glucose again. If it's still low, take another 15-gram dose of glucose or carbohydrates. Repeat this process until your blood glucose level is back to normal.

When to Get Help

Extremely low blood glucose can cause fainting, seizures, or a coma. Be sure your family members know what to do—take you to the hospital or give you a shot of glucagon—if you are unconscious due to low blood glucose. If you have frequent episodes of hypoglycemia, talk with your doctor. +



Diabetes Control:

Get the Tests You Need

Daily blood sugar monitoring may be the first thing you think of when it comes to keeping tabs on your diabetes. But although this is an important measure of how you're managing your condition, diabetes is complicated—it affects major organs throughout your body. Periodically you'll need these tests to find out how diabetes is affecting your overall health:

Kidney disease test

How often: once a year

Why: Your doctor will measure protein levels in your urine and do a blood test to see how well your kidneys are filtering your blood.



Hemoglobin A1C (Hb A1c)

How often: at least twice a year

Why: This test, which requires a blood sample, shows how well blood sugar was controlled for the previous three months. A test result of less than 7 is the goal for many people with diabetes, but it may be different for you.



Blood pressure

How often: every doctor's visit

Why: High blood pressure is common in people with diabetes, and it raises your risk for complications such as heart disease. If you have high blood pressure, take daily readings at home as well.



LDL and HDL cholesterol

How often: at least once a year

Why: People with diabetes are more likely to have unhealthy cholesterol levels, which contributes to heart disease.



Dilated eye examination

How often: once a year

Why: An ophthalmologist or optometrist checks for damage to blood vessels in the retina. This condition, called diabetic retinopathy, can cause severe vision loss or blindness. If you don't have any signs of damage, your doctor may recommend getting tested every two years.



Comprehensive foot examination

How often: once a year

Why: In addition, your doctor should check your feet at every visit. Regular exams and proper foot care help prevent amputations.



Prevent Norovirus— Head for the Sink

Few viruses are more dreaded than norovirus—a very, very contagious illness that causes vomiting, diarrhea, nausea, stomach pain, fever, and body aches. Now, imagine that you could stop the spread of the nasty bug with one of life's simplest tasks: washing your hands.

→ Freshen Up Your Hand-Washing Skills

Washing your hands frequently and properly is key. Be sure to wash your hands at these crucial times:

- Before, during, and after preparing food
- Before eating
- Before and after taking care of someone who's sick
- After using the restroom
- After changing a diaper or helping a child with using the toilet
- After handling garbage
- After touching an animal, pet food, or animal waste

Always follow these steps when washing your hands:

- Wet your hands with water.
- Apply soap and rub your hands together, fronts and backs, for at least 20 seconds.
- Rinse and dry your hands.

What to Do if You Get Sick

Hand-washing is so effective at stopping norovirus because of how it's spread. As unpleasant as it sounds, you can get sick when vomit or stool from an infected person gets into your mouth. This can happen a couple of different ways:

- Touching a surface or object that may be contaminated, and then putting your fingers in your mouth
- Coming into contact with someone who's infected

You can really come into contact with the virus at any time, that's why hand-washing is so important.

Currently, there's no treatment for norovirus. If you get sick, drink lots of fluids to prevent dehydration, but see your doctor if you become dehydrated. Symptoms due to norovirus typically last for one to three days. +



FLU SHOTS STILL SAVE LIVES

You may have heard that the 2017–2018 flu vaccine wasn't very effective at protecting against the flu. That doesn't mean you should skip the shot this year.

Even when a flu vaccine isn't as effective as it could be, making sure as many people as possible get vaccinated each year still saves lives.

The flu vaccine changes annually and is still the number one way to protect against the flu. While everyone ages 6 months and older should get vaccinated, it's especially crucial for school-age children and young adults ages 30 to 39. The flu is most likely to spread among this group. By getting the shot, you'll protect yourself, your family, and older adults who are at higher risk for serious flu-related complications.



When Should You Take Antibiotics?

You wake up in the morning, and you know it's here: a cold. Stuffy head, sore throat, coughing, sneezing, the works. Time to call the doctor and get some antibiotics, right? Maybe not.

→ **ANTIBIOTICS CAN BE POWERFUL MEDICINE.** But you have to use them safely and correctly. And sometimes that means not using them at all.

Know Your Germs

The first thing to know is that antibiotics are not an all-purpose cure. If you have a bacterial infection—like pneumonia—they can be a big help. But most common colds and flu are caused by different kinds of germs called viruses. Antibiotics won't help you fight these illnesses at all. And sometimes, they can even be harmful.

Antibiotics work by fighting bacteria that make you sick, either by killing them or stopping them from growing. The more often antibiotics are used, the bigger the risk that bacteria will learn how to resist an antibiotic. These resistant bacteria are very hard to treat and can cause serious illness or even death.

That's why you should take antibiotics only when your doctor says they are necessary.

Antibiotics Do's and Don'ts

Follow these guidelines for using antibiotics.



Do:

- Take them for bacterial infections.
- Take all the medication prescribed. (If you use only part of the medicine, it can mean you treated only part of the infection.)

Don't:

- Take them for common cold symptoms like runny noses and coughs. Your body will fight off the illness on its own.
- Take them unless your doctor says you need them. They won't help and won't prevent other people from catching your cold. And they can create stronger bacteria that are harder to treat. +

READ MEDICATION LABELS EVERY TIME

The next time you have a headache, backache, or other type of pain, pause before downing a dose of ibuprofen or other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID). You could be taking too much.

Many adults in the U.S. are exceeding the recommended daily dose. While they are effective for treating pain and inflammation, they can cause side effects such as gastrointestinal bleeding, kidney damage, heart attack, stroke, and death.

Read the label every time you use it. Follow the directions exactly. Be careful not to exceed the maximum daily dose. The more you take, the higher your risk for side effects becomes. If you have questions about medications, talk with your doctor.

What Is an Anti-Inflammatory Diet?

Fad diets come and go—but the anti-inflammatory diet is different. Even though it's called a *diet*, it's actually an eating plan for life that may potentially ward off serious diseases. While the jury is still out on its effectiveness, experts believe this meal plan is worth considering. Read on to learn why.

→ Understanding Inflammation

Inflammation is the body's response to infection or injury. If you sprain your ankle, for example, the area becomes swollen—a reaction known as acute inflammation. This is how the body repairs the damage. Once the injury has healed, the inflammation subsides.

Sometimes though, it does not go away. This is called chronic inflammation, and over time it can contribute to the development of serious health problems, including heart disease, cancer, diabetes, obesity, and pulmonary and neurodegenerative diseases.

Researchers are looking into the causes and effects of chronic inflammation and how it might be prevented or treated. For example, studies have

found that consuming too many calories and carrying excess fat—as seen in obesity—play important roles in chronic inflammation. Researchers have also discovered that certain diets or foods can have an anti-inflammatory effect.

An Eating Plan for Life

There is currently no single anti-inflammatory diet. Various sources offer their own dietary guidelines to reduce inflammation and protect against disease. Some spell out eating plans such as the Mediterranean diet, which studies show may help control inflammation. Others encourage the consumption of foods that contain phytochemicals found in certain fruits and vegetables, which have also been shown to protect us from inflammation in different ways.

More research about anti-inflammatory foods is needed before any standard recommendations can be made. In the meantime, most experts suggest the following:

- Be aware of how many calories you should consume to maintain your weight. Avoid eating more calories than your body will burn in a day. Check out the American Heart Association's diet and lifestyle recommendations at www.heart.org.
- If you are overweight or obese, talk with your doctor about the best way to lose weight.
- Eat a low-fat diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- Eat fish at least twice a week.
- Avoid foods and drinks high in calories and low in nutrients. +

Gazpacho



Ingredients

4 cups tomato juice*
½ medium onion, peeled and coarsely chopped
1 small green pepper, peeled, cored, seeded, and coarsely chopped
1 small cucumber, peeled, pared, seeded, and coarsely chopped
½ tsp. Worcestershire sauce
1 clove garlic, minced
1 drop hot pepper sauce
⅓ tsp. cayenne pepper

¼ tsp. black pepper
2 tbsp. olive oil
1 large tomato, finely diced
2 tbsp. minced chives or scallion tops
1 lemon, cut in 6 wedges

Directions

1. Put 2 cups of tomato juice and all other ingredients except diced tomato, chives, and lemon wedges in the blender. Puree.
2. Slowly add the remaining 2 cups of tomato juice to pureed mixture.



- 3. Add chopped tomato.
- 4. Chill.
- 5. Serve chilled in individual bowls garnished with chopped chives and lemon wedges.

Per Serving
Makes six 1-cup servings. Each serving provides: 87 Calories, 5 g Total fat (less than 1 g Saturated fat), 0 mg Cholesterol, and 593 mg Sodium.

* To cut back on sodium, try low-sodium tomato juice.



ellen degeneres:

Spreading Kindness

It could be said that Ellen DeGeneres, a widely popular comedian, author, actress, and entertainer, is best known as a humanitarian. But her passion for giving is more than just something she does. It's who she is. DeGeneres has made it her purpose in life to spread kindness. To raise others up. To give hope. And her giving spirit is contagious.

"I think we need more love in the world. We need more kindness, more compassion, more joy, more laughter," DeGeneres explained to *Good Housekeeping*. "I definitely want to contribute to that. I really want my time here to be positive and productive."

DeGeneres puts her beliefs into action by using her incredibly successful talk show as a platform for positive change. On *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*, which launched in 2003 and has won dozens of awards, DeGeneres routinely spotlights everyday heroes—those focused on doing good despite difficult circumstances or personal sacrifice. In true form, she often surprises these heroes with generous gifts as a thank you for their selflessness.

Multiplying Goodness

These efforts are more than charitable. They have created a ripple effect that has challenged her millions of viewers to become givers themselves.

For example, last year, DeGeneres joined with Cheerios to launch the "One Million Acts of Good" campaign. The campaign encouraged people to engage in random acts of kindness in big and small ways.

The campaign mirrored DeGeneres' own philosophy.

"Contribute to the world. Help people. Help one person. Help someone cross the street today. Help someone with directions unless you have a terrible sense of direction. Help someone who is trying to help you. Just help. Make an impact. Show someone you care. Say yes instead of no. Say something nice.

Smile. Make eye contact. Hug. Kiss," DeGeneres encouraged in her book *Seriously ... I'm Kidding*.

The challenge worked. Countless people responded with stories of their efforts to spread kindness—from packing Easter baskets for foster children and planting city gardens to picking up trash and paying for others in the drive-through line.

Changing Lives in Big Ways

Small acts of kindness are truly powerful and can change the world in amazing ways. But DeGeneres doesn't stop there. She is blessed with the means and the heart to give in really big ways as well.

**"I think we need more love
in the world. We need more
kindness, more compassion, more
joy, more laughter."**

For example, after DeGeneres' website surpassed the million mark of recorded random acts of kindness, she invited many of the "One Million Acts of Good" challenge participants on to her show. Her thank you? A whopping \$1 million gift, split among audience members.

And the list of big donations goes on.

Moved by the stories of the senior class student body at Summit Academy Charter School of Brooklyn, N.Y., DeGeneres partnered with Walmart to not only surprise the students with a \$25,000 gift for the school, but gave each and every member of the class a four-year scholarship to a New York state college—a gift valued at more than \$1.5 million.



Television personality and comedian Ellen DeGeneres launches the 'Duracell Power a Smile Program' at the Van Nuys Airport on November 22, 2013, in Van Nuys, California. (Photo by Michael Buckner/Getty Images)

Or when Hurricane Harvey hit Texas in 2017, DeGeneres was compelled to act in big ways. A native of Louisiana who spent her teen years in Texas, DeGeneres teamed up with Lowes to donate \$1 million to help rebuild Texas' Rockport-Fulton High School. She also donated \$25,000 to the Red Cross and \$25,000 to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals of Texas.

All In

Routinely named one of the most powerful people in the entertainment industry by Forbes, DeGeneres can do pretty much anything she wants with her time and money. But her compassion for all living beings is personal to her. And she's changed her life and habits because of it.

For example, an advocate for animal rights, DeGeneres stopped eating meat and became a vegan at age 50 after educating herself on animal cruelty.

Her free time has also changed because of her love for animals. For her 60th birthday, DeGeneres' wife Portia

de Rossi established the Ellen DeGeneres Wildlife Fund. The fund's first initiative is to build a gorilla conservation center in Rwanda as part of the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund. DeGeneres and de Rossi now spend personal time overseeing construction of the center.

Spreading the Love

Thankfully, when it comes to making the world a better place, DeGeneres just keeps on going, like the uber-famous character Dory she voiced in the 2003 film *Finding Nemo* and the 2016 sequel *Finding Dory*. And her enthusiasm and giving spirit is infectious. Even though most of us don't have pockets as deep as the star, we can still take her lead and live with a generous heart.

"The most important thing for me is to know that I represent kindness," DeGeneres said to *Good Housekeeping*. "I'm glad I'm funny. I'm glad I make people happy, because that's very important. But I'm proud to be known as a kind person."

It seems like a good goal for us all. +



United Service Association
For Health Care Foundation
Giving from the Heart

YOUR USA+ MEMBERSHIP HELPS OTHER PEOPLE, TOO!

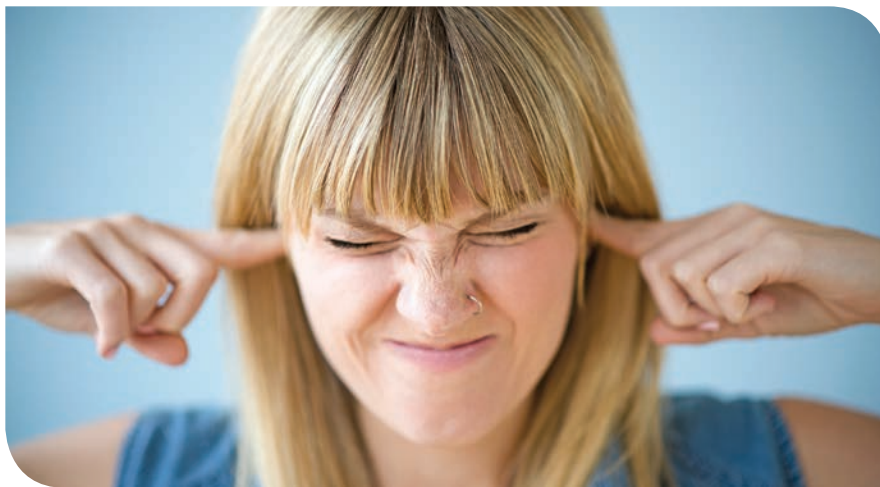
Many people are facing significant challenges: financial, emotional, or physical problems that severely impact the quality of their lives. And many times, all that is often needed is some assistance from someone who truly cares. On the other hand, there are many people who would love to participate in charitable causes—they just might not know how to reach out and help. Maybe you're one of those people. If so, it might be comforting for you to know that your United Service Association For Health Care (USA+) membership includes an extra benefit: philanthropy.

As a member of the USA+ family, a portion of your membership fee is donated to the USA+ Foundation, which gives to charities that make a difference and are committed to saving and improving lives. Through the combined contributions of our members, over \$8 million has been awarded to more than 200 worthwhile charities, community programs and national research programs. Remember: together, we can make a real difference.

For additional information regarding the USA+ Foundation or to request a Donation Grant Application form, please email us at info@usahc.com or call 800-872-1187.

Listen Up! Ringing in the Ears Often Can Be Prevented

Tinnitus is often called *ringing in the ears*, although it can also cause a buzzing, roaring, or hissing sound in your head. You can reduce your risk of developing tinnitus with a few changes.



→ **Within the past year, about one in 10 Americans experienced** tinnitus, based on a national survey of nearly 76,000 adults. But the rate was higher among those who said they had been regularly exposed to loud noise at work or during leisure activities.

These findings, published in *JAMA Otolaryngology–Head & Neck Surgery*, point to a strong link between tinnitus and loud noise. That's something you can protect yourself against.

Turn Down the Volume, Cover Your Ears

Tinnitus can range from a minor annoyance to a major problem. For some, it makes it difficult to hear, sleep,

concentrate, and enjoy life to the fullest.

To reduce your risk of developing tinnitus or making it worse, lower the volume of loud music. When possible, buy quieter versions of noisy products, such as power tools and recreational vehicles. If you have to be in a noisy environment, wear protective earplugs or earmuffs.

You Don't Have to Live with the Ringing

If you're bothered by tinnitus, ask your doctor about options for masking the sound in your head or finding better ways to live with it. +

HEARING LOSS IS ON THE RISE

Hearing loss is a significant problem, particularly among older adults. And it's a problem that affects more than just the ears. Those who experience hearing loss later in life are more likely to experience feelings of loneliness and isolation, difficulty with mental and physical function, and higher overall health costs.

In the year 2020, about 15 percent of the U.S. adult population will have some form of hearing loss. By 2060, that figure will increase to more than 22 percent.

Hearing loss can happen suddenly or gradually over time. In some cases, the cause is genetic and can't be prevented. But in other cases, hearing loss is caused by prolonged exposure to loud noises. People with certain jobs experience noise-related hearing loss more than others, including:

- Construction workers
- Musicians
- Military personnel
- Farmers

Some medications, like certain antibiotics, anti-inflammatory drugs, and chemotherapy drugs, may also carry a risk for hearing loss as a side effect. Talk with your doctor if you are concerned about hearing loss.

Your Member Benefits Have Been Enhanced!

In today's technology-driven world, data breaches are happening at an alarming pace. In 2017, there was a 44 percent increase in data breaches over the previous year. Last year's Equifax data breach resulted in the exposure of sensitive personal information of 148 million American consumers, which included name, Social Security number, birthdates, address, and in some cases driver's license number.



→ **ACCORDING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, AN ESTIMATED 17.6 MILLION PERSONS** become the victims of at least one incident of identity theft each year. Identity theft is the attempted or successful misuse of an existing account, such as a debit or credit card account. It can also be the misuse of personal information to access retirement funds, file fraudulent taxes, obtaining government benefits, or use of your information in a traffic stop or to open new accounts. More concerning is that thieves will sell your personal information for profit on the *dark web* making it difficult to know when the identity theft will stop.

Most victims discover the identity theft after the incident occurs usually when they are purchasing a home or car or when a financial institution

contacts them regarding suspicious activity or a collection account they were not aware existed.

Equifax offered free credit monitoring for one year to consumers whose data was breached, but monitoring a credit report does not resolve the theft. The Federal Trade Commission estimates that recovering from identity theft can take an average of six months and 200 hours of work.

What would you do if you became a victim of identity theft? Do you have the coverage in place that will provide assistance with repairing your credit report, recovery of the funds stolen from your account and associated legal costs? As a USA+ member, Identity Theft Protection is included in your membership at no additional cost to you. Your membership includes benefits for fraud

related expenses, such as lost wages as a result of time off work, reasonable attorney's fees for defense costs for specific civil suits (for attorneys appointed by the insurance company), notary and certified mailing costs for completing fraud affidavits, long-distance phone charges associated with re-establishing your identity, along with many other out-of-pocket expenses that are related to the recovery of your identity. Your plan also provides assistance with the restoration process if you become a victim, providing the support you need during a difficult time. If you have a family package, your spouse and dependents will receive this coverage as well.

You can access additional information regarding your valuable identity theft benefit by logging into your account at our website: **www.usahc.com**. +

5 Health Habits That Could Hurt You

Your health is a priority, so you try to take good care of yourself. But some habits that you think are healthy may actually be harmful. Here's how to avoid five common mistakes.

→ 1 Reusing Unwashed Grocery Bags

The problem: Reusable grocery bags reduce waste. But they may also harbor germs that could contaminate your food and make you sick.

The fix: Wash reusable bags frequently. Put cloth ones in the washing machine, and scrub plastic ones with hot, soapy water. Store in a cool, dry place.

2 Eating Large Amounts of Nuts

The problem: Nuts are packed with protein, fiber, vitamins, minerals, and heart-healthy fats. But they also contain about 160 to 180 calories per ounce.

The fix: Keep servings small—1.5 ounces (a small handful) of whole nuts or 2 tablespoons of nut butter.

3 Counting Sheep for Hours

The problem: A consistent bedtime helps promote better sleep. But if you don't doze off within 20 minutes, forcing yourself to stay in bed is counterproductive.

The fix: Get up and do something relaxing, such as reading a book or listening to soft music, until you feel drowsy.

4 Doing the Same Workout Every Day

The problem: Staying active is crucial for your health. But always doing the same thing can get boring and zap your motivation.

The fix: Mix things up. Walk one day; then ride your bike, go for a swim, or use an elliptical machine the next. Include strength and flexibility activities as well.

5 Leaping Before You Look

The problem: It's fun to try out a new cardio routine, strength move, or yoga pose. But improper form could lead to injury.

The fix: To see how to do an exercise correctly, take a class, follow a video, or look up how to do it online. +





New Hypertension Guidelines

Do you know your blood pressure level? Even if you keep close tabs on this important health number, it may be time to take another look.

→ **THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF CARDIOLOGY (ACC) AND American Heart Association (AHA)** recently made significant changes to the national blood pressure guidelines. The new guidelines lower the definition of high blood pressure, promoting more aggressive prevention and earlier intervention of hypertension. Why did the guidelines change and what do they mean to you?

Understanding the Numbers

According to the new ACC/AHA guidelines, normal blood pressure levels are lower than 120/80 mmHg; blood pressure between 120–129/80 mmHg is considered elevated; and Stage 1 hypertension begins at 130/80 mmHg, down

10 points from the previous definition of 140/90 mmHg. This means that many more people—especially those who are younger—will likely be diagnosed with hypertension for the first time.

The guidelines were updated following an extensive review of published research, which showed that heart-related complications occur at lower blood pressure levels than previously thought.

Focusing on Treatment

If your blood pressure was considered healthy under the old guidelines but is now categorized as elevated or high, the news can be disturbing. More than anything though, it acts as warning to

take control of your blood pressure before it causes harmful health effects. But that doesn't necessarily mean you need to begin medication treatment. In fact, the majority of people newly categorized with elevated or high blood pressure will be prescribed lifestyle changes alone. The guidelines recommend medication only for those who have a combination of hypertension and a high overall risk for heart disease or stroke.

It's important to talk with your doctor to have your blood pressure checked and discuss the results.

Empowering Change

Because lower blood pressure levels are proven to be healthier, everyone should take steps to reduce their numbers by adopting a healthy lifestyle. The guidelines encourage people to exercise regularly, eat a healthy diet low in sodium, limit alcohol intake, and take steps to lose weight.

Remember, high blood pressure is a major risk factor for death related to heart disease and stroke. And because hypertension causes no pain or symptoms, it's important to not only know your numbers and what they mean, but also take it seriously. Without intervention, unhealthy blood pressure levels can cause problems that often go unnoticed until it's too late. +

Sleep Apnea's Link to Alzheimer's Disease

Loud snoring isn't just a noisy nighttime nuisance. It could signal a serious health problem called obstructive sleep apnea (OSA). With OSA, you stop breathing for periods of time while you sleep. It can occur dozens of times per hour throughout the night. Untreated, OSA may raise your risk for a slew of health problems including obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart attack, and more.



→ OSA and Your Brain

Now, research uncovers a new risk for people with OSA. Older adults who have OSA may be more likely to develop Alzheimer's disease, according to a study in the *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine*.

Researchers followed more than 200 men and women ages 55 to 90 for two years. They found that those with OSA had higher levels of beta-amyloid in their brain. Beta-amyloid are compounds that form plaque in the brain—a telltale sign of Alzheimer's disease. The more severe their OSA, the more beta-amyloid they developed.

Sleep Well, Stay Well

If you or someone under your roof has OSA, this doesn't mean you'll definitely

develop Alzheimer's disease. You can take action to protect your brain.

If you think you may have OSA, contact your doctor for a diagnosis.

Signs of OSA include:

- Loud snoring
- Choking or gasping sounds after a pause in snoring
- Daytime fatigue
- Headaches, dry mouth, or sore throat when you wake up in the morning
- Changes in mood such as irritability, depression, or mood swings

Your doctor may prescribe a sleep study to diagnose OSA. If you have the condition, treatment is available. +

CHOOSING A MEMORY CARE FACILITY

If you have, or a loved one has, progressive memory loss, thinking about long-term care is important. Improve your future and quality of life by taking an active role in choosing a facility. Get started with these tips.

1 Focus on safety. Ask how the facility supports freedom of movement while maintaining a safe environment.

2 Consider the environment. Pay attention to the details. Choose a place where you feel at home.

3 Look beyond medication. Ask what other therapies—such as aromatherapy, music therapy, massage or animal-assisted therapy—besides medication are offered.

4 Take a test run. Eat a meal, talk with a staff member, or try out an activity. The facility should offer plenty of recreational and social activities.

Gear-Free Ways to Build Strength

The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans say all adults should do strength training at least twice a week along with 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity.

→ **THESE THREE MUSCLE-BUILDING EXERCISES USE YOUR BODY WEIGHT TO HELP YOU GET STRONGER**, maintain a healthy weight, and reduce your risk for illness, such as heart disease,

type 2 diabetes, cancer, and bone-thinning osteoporosis.

Lift yourself to a new level of fitness with these gear-free exercises that target major muscle groups.

The Perfect Push-Up

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There's no better way to work the muscles in your arms, chest, and shoulders than an old-fashioned push-up.

To-do tactic: Lying on the floor, come up on your hands and toes in a plank position with your arms straight. Keep your abdominal muscles tight, align your head with your spine, and keep your feet together.

Slowly bend your elbows and lower your body toward the floor, keeping your torso rigid and your elbows close to your sides. Then press back upward through your arms and straighten your elbows. Do as many push-ups as you can. Work up to at least eight to 12.

If a traditional push-up is too hard, try wall push-ups. Stand at least an arm's length away from the wall, and keep your feet shoulder-width apart. Lean in and put your hands on the wall at shoulder height and width. Lower your body toward the wall while keeping your feet flat on the floor. Repeat.



The Side Plank



More for Your Core

The side plank strengthens your trunk muscles. It also targets your hips and glutes (your buttock muscles).

To-do tactic: Lie on your right side with your left foot on top of your right foot. Raise yourself up on your right elbow. It should be bent 90 degrees.

Lift your hips off the floor and tighten your abdominal muscles (try not to sag). Hold for up to 60 seconds. Repeat on your left side.

For a greater challenge, balance on your right hand instead of your elbow, extend your hips into a straight line, and reach your left hand toward the ceiling in line with your right arm, as if you were forming a T on its side. Repeat on your left side.

The Lunge Plunge

The Lunge Plunge

A standing lunge works the front of your thighs and those glutes.

To-do tactic: Standing with your feet together, step forward with your right foot and lower your body until your right thigh parallels the floor. Bend forward slightly and squeeze the glutes on the left side of your buttocks to increase the stretch in your left hip flexor muscles. Keep your back straight.

Push with your front leg to return to the starting position. Repeat eight to 12 times, getting deeper into the stretch with each repetition. Lunge with your left leg forward for eight to 12 reps. +



START THINKING ABOUT BONE DENSITY NOW

If you are a woman in your 30s or 40s, you may think that you don't need to worry about your bone strength. Yet after age 30, you've already passed your peak bone mass. Your actions now can help protect your bones and decrease your risk of getting osteoporosis in the future. Here's what to do.

Eat a balanced diet that provides plenty of calcium and vitamin D. These nutrients play key roles in the health of your bones. Calcium is found in low-fat or fat-free milk and dairy products, dark green leafy vegetables, and sardines. It's also added to some brands of orange juice, soy milk, and cereal. Vitamin D is found in fortified milk, saltwater fish, and egg yolks.

Get regular weight-bearing exercise—the best type of exercise for maintaining strong bones. Examples of weight-bearing activities include weight training, walking, jogging, climbing stairs, dancing, and playing tennis.

Don't smoke, and avoid excessive alcohol. Smoking is linked to decreased bone density. Drinking too much alcohol may interfere with calcium levels in your body and affect hormones that help protect your bones.

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Get Out of Your Comfort Zone at Work

When's the last time you challenged yourself at work? If you've been nestled in your comfort zone for a while now, it may be time to shake things up.

→ **CONSIDER TRYING ONE OF THE FOLLOWING SIX SUGGESTIONS** designed to stretch you in new ways.

- 1 Expand your social set.** Do you always lunch with the same folks—or eat at your desk? Invite someone new out for lunch. You'll grow your network and knowledge of office culture.
- 2 Analyze a process.** Do you always handle a certain task the same way? A well-thought-out update might help save you or your company time, money, or both.
- 3 Offer to help.** Once you've streamlined your workload, see if you can help those around you succeed as well. A spirit of camaraderie almost always encourages creative thinking—a win for you, your colleagues, and your organization.
- 4 Sharpen your skills.** When was the last time you explored a certificate or degree that could help you excel? Identify a conference or online class



that could refresh your thinking, then pitch how it could help the company to your boss. You might be able to get financial assistance for it, too.

- 5 Request new responsibilities.** Your boss might have already noticed your attitude and sought you out for a task force or cross-departmental project. If not, bring him or her your list of accomplishments and see what's available. Your initiative can

also help come review time.

- 6 Find ways to give back.** Organize a volunteer day or see if your company offers opportunities to mentor less-experienced personnel. These activities could add dimension to your work, position you as a valued resource, and expand your career possibilities beyond what you thought achievable. +