

summer 2021

wellness matters



Choices for healthy living • nutrition • fitness • well-being • health



Juice: Worth the Squeeze?

Is juicing the key to getting on the track to good health? The abundance of green juices and specialty cold-pressed juice shops suggests it may be. Proponents claim juicing rids your body of toxins, a key component to weight loss. But there are several reasons to be wary about juicing, say health professionals.

The notion that the stomach needs to rest from its normal processing of food is a misperception, says Gail Hammond, a professor with UBC's Faculty of Land and Food Systems. "Whether you drink juice or eat fresh fruits and vegetables, very little digestion occurs in the stomach."

Health professionals also dismiss juicing as a means to detox the body: "The concept of ingesting certain foods or nutrients to detox our bodies is a manmade myth," says Winnipeg-based registered dietitian Gina Sunderland. "Our bodies

are designed to do that on their own through our kidneys and livers."

"From a nutrient perspective, juices provide simple sugars and some vitamins and minerals," Hammond tells *Wellness Matters*, "but lack the dietary fibre that is found in whole vegetables and fruit, so you're getting a surplus of concentrated sugars and far fewer nutrients."

But is juicing better than nothing for those who have too little fruit and vegetables in their diets? "In moderation, juice can provide some of the key nutrients found in the whole food," says Hammond. Still, it's best to eat whole, fibre-dense fruits and vegetables whenever possible, to limit the concentrated sugar that's a by-product of cold-pressed juice.

10 FAST FACTS

1 Almost one half (49%) of those who feel they have suffered from depression have never gone to see a doctor about this problem.

2 Scratching a mosquito bite stirs up the skeeter saliva and increases your body's histamine response, making the itching worse.

3 Walking at 4 mph increases your resting metabolic rate (RMR) by a factor of five.

4 Running at twice that speed increases RMR by 13.5 times, more than three times the metabolic increase for only double the speed.

5 It's harder to put on 10 pounds of muscle than it is to lose 10 pounds of fat.

6 The perimeter of the grocery store is usually where 90% of the healthy food is.

7 Lactic acid is not the cause of delayed-onset muscle soreness (DOMS). Lactic acid returns to normal levels within 60 minutes of finishing exercise.

8 Laughing 100 times is believed to be the equivalent of 15 minutes of exercise on a stationary bike.

9 One can of soda a day increases your chances of getting type 2 diabetes by 22%.

10 There are more skin cancer cases due to indoor tanning than lung cancer cases due to smoking.

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Tapping into **Weight Loss**



While many of us are on a constant quest for the latest, best weight-loss diet, the answer may have been in front of us the whole time. The key to weight management, or at least one very important aspect, might actually be in the tap – and best of all, it's free!

Feeling thirsty can be confused as feelings of hunger resulting in eating when the better fix would have been a glass of calorie-free water. When you feel hungry have a glass of water. Thirty minutes later, if you are still hungry, eat a healthy snack or meal. By staying evenly hydrated throughout the day, false feelings of hunger can be minimized. Replacing calorie-laden sugary beverages with zero calorie water is also an important choice in trying to shed pounds.

Aim to drink between half an ounce and one ounce of water for every pound

you weigh per day. This varies based on age, climate and exercise. An active person should increase this to an extra 1.5-2.5 cups per day to keep up with sweat losses. Carrying a bottle of water and emphasizing nutritious, watery foods like oranges, melons, berries, celery, peppers and green salads are good ways to enhance hydration.

A warm climate calls for more water due to losses through sweating. Older people might not need as much as they are typically less active and may have medication or health concerns in regards to over hydration.

Water on its own will not facilitate weight loss, but it is definitely a vital accessory. Adequate hydration partnered with a healthy diet and an active lifestyle will do the most for weight loss – an approach that has always been right in front of us and easy to tap into.



summer recipe

Lima Bean, Mint and Ricotta Salad

Servings: 4

INGREDIENTS

1 cup	lima beans, from frozen
1/2 cup	fresh shelled green peas
1 tbsp	olive oil
1 lemon	zested and juiced
sea salt	to taste
fresh mint	a handful, chopped
1/4 cup	toasted hazelnuts, chopped
1/4 cup	diced pancetta
1/2 cup	ricotta cheese

INSTRUCTIONS

- In a large bowl, stir the lima beans, peas, olive oil, lemon zest and juice. Season, to taste, with salt and add the mint. Transfer to a serving platter.
- In a small pan, toast the chopped hazelnuts over a medium heat until the skins start to become flaky and the nuts are fragrant. Sprinkle on the salad.
- In the same pan, fry the diced pancetta over medium heat until crisp. Remove from the pan leaving behind as much of the fat as possible. Add the pancetta and dots of ricotta to the salad.

"Why are you trying so hard to fit in when you were born to stand out?"

—Ian Wallace, artist

FODMAPs

FODMAPs is an acronym for Fermentable Oligosaccharides, Disaccharides, Monosaccharides and Polyols. These are all short-chain carbohydrate foods or beverages including fruits like mangoes and pears, and vegetables like asparagus and beets, along with milk products, nuts and sweet foods.

Researchers from Monash University in Australia discovered that FODMAPs foods are poorly absorbed in the gastrointestinal tract, and easily fermented by gut bacteria. This process produces hydrogen and methane gases, and has an osmotic effect, meaning that water is drawn into the large bowel. These undigested sugars stretch the intestine and signal nerves in other digestive organs. This can cause abdominal pain, gas and diarrhea among other discomforts.

It doesn't happen to everyone. Some people can consume as many of these foods as they want without problems. Individuals who suffer from digestive disorders like IBS tend to suffer the most from consuming these foods. Reducing and managing the intake of high-FODMAPs foods may lessen their symptoms. For those with gluten intolerance who avoid gluten and see an



improvement but not a total elimination of symptoms, learning more about FODMAPs is also a wise step.

Not every short-chain carbohydrate food or drink will pose a problem. Learn which ones may be most troublesome

for you, then limit or avoid those while emphasizing low-FODMAPs foods. Detailed lists of FODMAPs foods can be found online, from organizations like the Canadian Digestive Health Foundation (cdhf.ca).



New Thinking About Calories

Counting calories is old-school thinking. A more accurate way to gauge how much fuel you need (measured as calories) is to listen to your body. Eat when you are hungry, not when the clock tells you it is time to eat. And never ignore hunger pangs: if you don't eat when your body wants food, it can sense a famine is coming, and will conserve your energy by slowing your

metabolic rate (the rate of your cellular activity). With a slow metabolism, you'll become less efficient at burning calories, and that includes burning stored body fat.

Visit with a dietitian if you need credible information about nutrition, especially if you need help getting rid of any negative, limiting beliefs you may have about food and calorie intake.

"Letting go means to come to the realization that some people are a part of your history, but not a part of your destiny."

—Steve Maraboli, author



Hip Hooray

If you suffer knee pain, you may be surprised to learn that you could find relief by improving your hip strength.

Studies have shown that many runners who regularly suffer knee injuries or chronic knee pain have weak muscles in the hip.

If the hips, and the surrounding gluteal muscles, aren't strong enough to keep the femur (the large bone of the upper thigh) aligned properly above the patella (the knee cap), extra stress will fall on the knee joint. Poor alignment may also cause other symptoms, such as back pain.

Simple hip adduction/abduction movements using exercise tubing, or controlled lunges, and other floor exercises can strengthen your

hips and gluteals. Visit a physical therapist or a certified fitness professional to learn how to do these exercises properly.

Knee pain can also be due to many other factors, such as obesity, foot abnormalities, and accident or injury.

Flexible thigh muscles are also important in preventing knee problems. Extra stress falls on the knees if the quadriceps muscles (front of the thigh) are inflexible or tight. Regular stretching of the thighs keeps them flexible to adequately absorb the shock as you run. Therefore less shock is absorbed in the knees.

Learn more about your options and design your strategy by checking with a fitness professional and/or your physiotherapist.

Get on Track

Getting regular exercise, picking up your running pace, and losing weight can be hard goals to achieve. Technology can help. Fitness trackers do everything from counting the number of steps you take in a day to telling you how many calories you burn in that noon-hour workout.

TIPS

When choosing a fitness tracker:

- Be clear about your needs. Do you really need to know your glucose level? If not, go for a more basic model.
- Consider sport-specific trackers. Swimmers and cyclists will want different features.
- Try out wristbands and clip-ons first before you buy to see which design you find more comfortable and practical.

The wearable technology, typically sold as a wristband or clip-on, contains several tiny sensors that measure factors such as heart rate and body temperature. Devices range in price and capability: some are nothing more than digital pedometers while others are far more sophisticated, with features including water-resistance or the ability to measure blood-oxygen level. Certain models come with a GPS, allowing runners, walkers and cyclists to map their routes and analyze the terrain. The app-enhanced trackers can be synced to users' smartphones and those of other app users, meaning you can gamify your activity and engage in some friendly competition.

They've also never been more popular. "In terms of wearable technology, fitness devices are leading the charge,"



says Tom Emrich, founder of We Are Wearables, a community that facilitates innovation in wearable tech. "People want to be fit, they want to be healthier, or they want to compete with their friends, and all of these devices promise that."

Just starting an exercise program or prepping for your next marathon? Fitness

trackers help you become more aware of your habits, patterns, progress, and activity level – or lack thereof. "It's not necessarily the counting of steps that's important as it is the motivation that a tracker provides," Emrich says. "It holds you accountable to your fitness goals. It reminds you to move."

"The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong."

—Mahatma Gandhi, political leader

Salty Solution



Salt has received a bad rap lately, yet it is an important part of our diet, helping to balance our fluid levels and assist our muscular and nervous systems.

“Low sodium levels can be a real problem, particularly for high-endurance athletes and professionals who sweat a lot, like firefighters,” says Tristaca Curley, registered dietitian in

Kelowna, B.C., and nutrition expert with BodySense, an initiative of the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport.

Curley explains that during the course of a day an active person can lose between two and five litres of sweat. One of the biggest consequences of low sodium levels in the blood is a condition called

hyponatremia. Although rare, it can be fatal. “Hyponatremia is more common in novice ultra endurance athletes,” Curley says. “People end up replacing water but not electrolytes. The sodium concentration then drops and the concentration of sodium in our brains stays the same. Our brain acts like a raisin. Water from our blood

moves into our brain and our brain expands. This can be potentially fatal.”

There are a number of ways to recognize the signs of low sodium. “If you are a heavy sodium sweater you may have white stains on your clothes after a workout,” Curley says. “Often people mistake low sodium for dehydration. Mental and muscle fatigue can be symptoms, as well as cramps. The issue can then be exacerbated as people drink more water which then dilutes the sodium in the blood.”

When increasing sodium, check with your doctor or health specialist first.

DRINK UP

Want to make your own sports drink? Curley recommends:

- 1 cup unsweetened cranberry juice (or other 100% fruit juice)
- 1 cup water
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

Mix and refrigerate until using.



WALK ON BY

Running is well-known for its health and weight-loss benefits. An intense form of exercise that’s good for building bone mass, it also gets the heart pumping. However, it’s not for everyone and can place more stress on the joints.

Walking – especially when done with weights – can yield multiple benefits. Like other forms of weight-bearing exercise, walking helps improve bone strength. When you add weights in, you’re upping the intensity for increased benefits.

Although running is thought to burn more calories than walking, a study published in the *Journal of Applied Physiology* found that walking at a rate of 4 mph on a treadmill with hand and ankle weights was comparable to jogging at 5 mph without the extra weight.

Vancouver fitness professional and *Wellness Matters* expert Tommy Europe says that walking is a good alternative to running, particularly for those who are just getting started on a fitness routine.

“Walking, like any type of exercise, helps boost mood – it gets the endorphins going – and helps people reduce stress,” Europe says. “It’s a great way to get moving.”

“Dumbbells are fine,” he adds. “I’m not a big fan of ankle weights as it puts an extra/unnatural load on the knees.”

If you consider yourself in good physical condition, or are ready to take your fitness up to the next level, Europe recommends interval training, which means going at an intense pace (say, power walking) for a period then resting via a light walk, and repeating.

Other ways to improve endurance is to walk up steep hills. Europe also notes that strength training with weights is essential regardless of what type of cardio you choose.

“Biology gives you a brain. Life turns it into a mind.”

—Jeffrey Eugenides, author



COPING WITH NOCTURNAL ANXIETY ATTACKS

For most people, there's nothing better than settling into bed after a long day. For some, however, sleep doesn't always offer an escape from the stresses of the day. "Nocturnal anxiety attacks can be quite distressing," says Caroline Lupetin, a registered clinical counsellor that practices out of Coquitlam, B.C. "Nocturnal anxiety can also lead to insomnia, which often compounds anxiety even further," she adds.

"If an anxiety attack wakes you from sleep, get up, drink a glass of water, and pet your cat or dog (if you have one)," Lupetin suggests. "You could also try doing something mundane that might make you feel sleepy again," she adds. "To help calm anxiety, take a deep breath, count to three, hold for three, and exhale for three. Or you could look around the room, list five things you can see, four things you can smell, and three things you can touch."

To help ease nocturnal anxiety, Lupetin recommends practicing calming techniques 30 minutes to an hour before bed. "Write in a gratitude journal, meditate, practice positive visualizations, or drink some herbal tea." If anxiety is

seriously impacting your life, Lupetin recommends working through your anxiety with a professional counsellor.

TIPS

Techniques to Help Calm Nocturnal Anxiety:

- Prepare for the next day by packing a lunch and laying out your clothes.
- Limit your exposure to electronics before bed. Don't watch TV, text, or go online when you're winding down.
- Avoid any heated conversations that might irritate you, and don't ruminate about what went wrong during the day.
- Practice calming techniques, like gratitude, meditation, or deep breathing before bed.
- Think of a calming place, like a sandy beach in Hawaii. As you lie down to sleep, take a few deep breaths and sense everything that's there: feel the sand under your toes and watch the waves lap along the shoreline.
- Perform a relaxation body scan by starting at your toes and working your way up to your head, relaxing each body part along the way.



Vacation from Electronics

Severing the connection to our personal communication devices, even for a short period, is necessary to recharge our own batteries. There is a growing movement to unplug, from a day of activity outdoors to family vacations planned purposefully around no WiFi access to guarantee some IRL (in real life) bonding time.

Electronics have a tangible, negative effect on our bodies, says Dr. Hilary Booth, a naturopathic doctor at the Darou Wellness practice in Toronto. "There is a profound impact," she says. "The pineal gland, found in our brains, works with circadian rhythms, the cycle of light and dark, sleep and awake. It responds to light wavelengths. And all our devices—phones, tablets, electronic readers, TVs—give off blue light, the brightest in the spectrum, identical to daylight. The pineal gland can't release melatonin in daylight." And when our sleep patterns are off, our relationships can suffer, too.

When Dr. Booth recommends patients take a full vacation from screens, "I get a lot of resistance and panic," she says, calling a tech-free week the "gold standard." "When we do old-fashioned things like play Scrabble with the family, we allow the body to reset. And all the good hormones, like dopamine, which brings feelings of love and joy, help balance out the stress hormones."

"Thoughts are roots; words are leaves; actions are fruits. Every success tree has all working normally!"

—Israelmore Ayivor, author

5 Tips for a Powerful Journaling Practice

“Keeping a ‘Mood, Food and Fitness Journal’ is a powerful tool for transforming mental health because it can physically change our brains for the better,” says wellness coach Catherine Roscoe Barr, whose clients begin a consistent practice of journaling within the following parameters.

1 Mood: Gratitude

Our brain’s innate negativity bias keeps us alert to physical danger, but also to our inner gremlins and outer critics. Balance this by writing down at least five things you’re grateful for, to grow what Roscoe Barr calls “positivity antennae.”

2 Mood: Fact-check

“The most dangerous stories we make up are those about our lovability, divinity and creativity,” says researcher Brené Brown. Make the process of fact-checking your stories a regular practice.

3 Mood: Emodiversity

“Emodiversity is an important metric for assessing the health of the human emotional ecosystem,” says psychologist Jordi Quoidbach. While a baseline of positivity is the goal, it’s important to recognize and work through all of your emotions as they arise.



4 Food

Many of us struggle to make the connection that processed junk makes us feel like junk, and that fresh, nutrient-dense food makes us feel vital. By writing down how you feel after eating you can begin to shape what you crave.

5 Fitness

Our bodies are meant to move, yet so much of our modern lives result in inactivity. Movement stimulates the release of feel-good chemicals in the brain, so tap into those positive feelings by journaling about them, and hardwiring physically active behaviour.

THE NEUROSCIENCE OF JOURNALING

Neuroplasticity describes our brain’s malleable, resilient nature and its ability to change throughout our entire lives as a result of our behaviour.

Experience-dependent neuroplasticity is a passive process where our unconscious thoughts, words and actions reinforce our habits.

Self-directed neuroplasticity is an active process where we consciously use our minds to hardwire healthy habits.

The Purrfect Companion



Spending time with an animal can be one way to manage anxiety and curb stress. Service animals are commonly trained to provide therapeutic assistance to people in need, but the benefits of owning a household pet can be just as high.

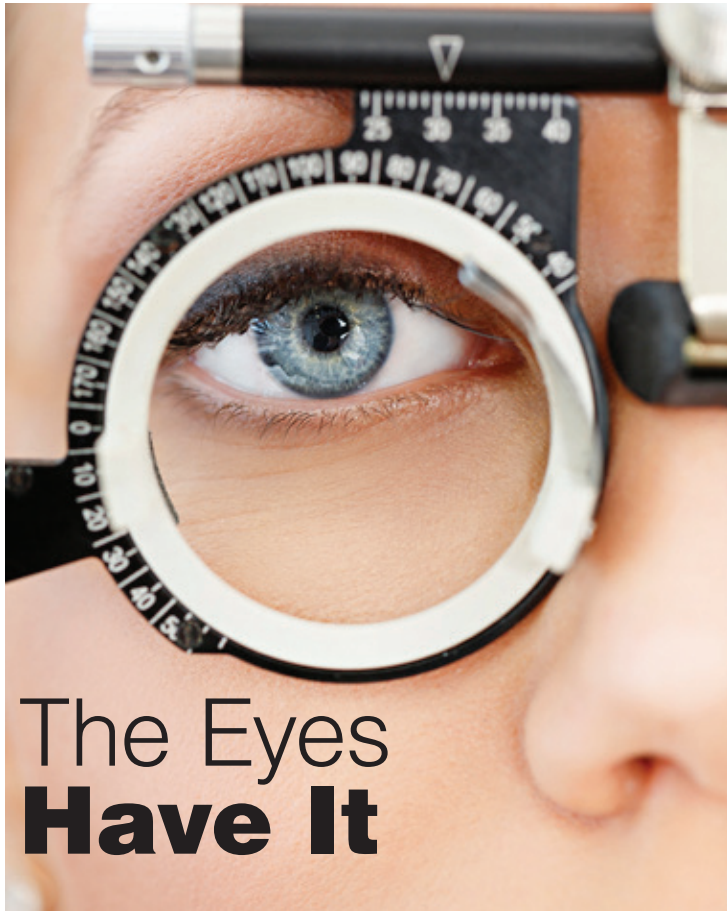
Spending time with pets offers numerous physical health benefits according to clinical counsellor Dr. Patricia Nitkin. These include lowered blood pressure and heart rate, decreased cortisol levels (the stress hormone), and increase in oxytocin (the “love” hormone).

And the health benefits aren’t just physical: “Pets offer critical companionship and as mammals we cannot survive without it,” says Dr. Nitkin. Pet owners also have greater social interaction with others, further decreasing loneliness and easing social anxiety.

Don’t have a pet of your own? Workplaces are starting to allow pets in the office, improving employee productivity and providing a sense of calm. Be sure your colleagues aren’t allergic to pets before bringing them in!

“If you ever know a man who tries to drown his sorrows, kindly inform him his sorrows know how to swim.”

—Pittacus Lor, author



The Eyes Have It

Regular eye exams by an optometrist can be essential in maintaining your overall health. In fact, according to the Canadian Association of Optometrists (CAO), an eye exam could help detect potentially life-threatening conditions such as brain tumours, high blood pressure and diabetes. But how is it that an optometrist can see the future in your eyes?

Cancer

According to the CAO, a brain tumour can cause vision abnormalities and even skin cancer may be detected during a comprehensive eye exam, as lesions often first appear on the eyelid.

Diabetes

According to the Canadian Diabetes Association, an estimated one million Canadians live with undiagnosed type 2 diabetes. Damage to your small blood vessels in the retina could be an indicator of diabetes.

High Blood Pressure

The blood vessels in the retina can help identify hypertension (high blood pressure), a leading cause of heart attack and stroke.

Neurological Conditions

The CAO explains that since the optic nerve is essentially an extension of the brain, a neurological condition that affects nerve cells can be detected during an eye exam. Problems with eye movement and the ability of your eyes to track and work together could be an indication of Parkinson's or multiple sclerosis.

Visit opto.ca to learn more.

Fight or **Flight?**

Back when humans were being chased by dinosaurs, says Dr. John Dempster, the founder of The Dempster Clinic for functional medicine in Toronto, our "fight or flight" response kept us alive. "But now we live in a state of perpetual stimulation and stress, and our adrenal glands are in overdrive."

The adrenal glands produce cortisol, which sends blood to your heart and lungs

and muscles so you can run fast. That means it also deprives your brain of blood and oxygen, which leads to feelings of confusion, general anxiety and exhaustion. "Your body can't differentiate traffic stress, problems with your boss, issues in your relationships, financial pressure ... and so it responds in the same way it historically did to predators."

There are two methods to measure cortisol, says Dr. Dempster: a saliva test,

which calculates the hormone directly, as well as blood tests, which also measures related hormones, and levels of various minerals and nutrients which affect how our organs and glands work.

Dr. Dempster says that good sleep, exercise and a diet high in fresh, organic whole vegetables and fruits and low in processed foods is the basis for good health. "Those basics also affect cortisol production," he says. "A sugary, high-fat snack will ramp right up your cortisol, and further abuse your adrenal glands."

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