

HEALTHY *You!*

Your Source for a Happy and Healthy Lifestyle

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THE GIFT OF EXERCISE

For many, the holidays are the most wonderful time of the year. But the shopping, decorating, social gatherings, and other demands of the season can be overwhelming.

Exercise is a valuable tool to help you get through the holiday season. Not only does it help prevent holiday weight gain, working out can help you manage stress. Here are five reasons why exercise is good for your mental health:

- Reduces symptoms of depression and can help boost your mood
- Releases feel-good endorphins that can enhance your sense of well-being

- Provides structure to help you stay on track with other tasks and responsibilities, which can help you feel less stressed
- Takes your mind off of your worries, which may fuel anxiety
- Improves sleep which can be interrupted by stress

To reap the physical and mental health benefits of exercise, aim for at least 30 minutes or more of exercise three to five days a week.

Sources:

canr.msu.edu/news/managing_holiday_stress

mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/depression/in-depth/depression-and-exercise/art-20046495





BOOST YOUR MOOD WITH FOOD

Eating healthy meals is an important part of staying healthy throughout the holiday season.

Take a bite out of holiday stress with foods filled with mood-boosting nutrients:

- 1. Omega-3 fatty acids** may help prevent surges in stress hormones. It can be found in oily fish such as salmon, rainbow trout, sardines, mackerel, and halibut. Non-seafood sources include walnuts, chia seeds, and dark leafy greens.
- 2. Vitamin B6** is necessary for creating neurotransmitters that regulate emotions, including serotonin. To ensure you get enough of this key nutrient, include vitamin B6-rich foods, such as chickpeas, potatoes, salmon, tuna, and turkey, in your diet.
- 3. Vitamin C.** Studies suggest that vitamin C can curb stress hormones. Good sources of vitamin C include broccoli, kiwi, oranges, peppers, raspberries, and strawberries.

Sources:

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Mango Coconut Chia Pudding

1/2 cup unsweetened almond or coconut milk

2 tablespoons chia seeds

2 teaspoons pure maple syrup

1/4 teaspoon coconut extract

1/2 cup diced fresh mango

1 tablespoon toasted unsweetened coconut chips, divided

Stir the milk, chia seeds, maple syrup, and coconut extract together in a small bowl. Cover and refrigerate for at least eight hours and up to three days. When ready to serve, stir well and spoon into serving bowl, then top with mango and coconut. Enjoy!

HYDRATED FOR THE HOLIDAYS



Staying hydrated during the cold weather months is just as vital as it is in the summer. Drinking enough water helps aid digestion, maintain blood pressure, stabilize your heartbeat, and regulate body temperature, among other things.

Here are a few ways to stay hydrated at your next holiday gathering:

- **Bring a bottle with you.** Whether on the go or at holiday functions, keep a filled reusable water bottle with you to sip from throughout the day or event.
- **Drink water before eating.** Before making a beeline to the buffet, chug a glass of water. This will not only help you stay hydrated, but also helps control cravings and may prevent overeating.
- **For every cocktail, drink water.** Alcohol dehydrates you, so be sure to drink one glass of water for every cocktail to help prevent a hangover.

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womenshealthmag.com/fitness/a19934473/hydrate-for-holidays/
eatingwell.com

QUESTIONING RELATIONSHIPS

Should I stay or should I leave? You may have asked yourself these questions before about a relationship. Relationship ambivalence occurs when opposing emotions and desires exist towards the other person that creates uncertainty about being in the relationship. Two conflicting aspects of being in a relationship can include the fear of being trapped in an undesirable relationship while simultaneously experiencing the fear of being alone. This uncertainty can hinder your pursuit of happiness.

If you're uncertain about a relationship, consider the following:

- Listen to your gut instinct. Whenever your mind is uncertain about which way to go, quiet your mind and tune in to your body. Your body may be telling you something through physical symptoms. For example, anger is often held in a clenched jaw or fists, while fear can be expressed as butterflies in your stomach.
- Respect the natural ebb and flow of relationships. Understand that people and circumstances change. If the relationship does end, the pain of grief and loss are normal and will subside with time.
- Your happiness never depends on any one thing or person, no matter how important that thing or person may seem.



CELEBRATE A BEAUTIFUL LIFE

Important milestones, holidays, and traditions can be difficult for those who have lost a loved one. They can bring up painful reminders and memories. While you may not ever fully get over the loss of a loved one, it's important to deal with it in a healthy way. Here are a few ways to cope with loss:

- **Stay connected with others.** Lean on your family and friends for support, including people who were special to your loved one. You may also consider joining a support group.
- **Think about the good times with your loved one.** Instead of focusing on the loss, reminisce about the things that made your relationship special. As you think about your loved one, you may find yourself both laughing and crying.
- **Start new traditions.** Make a donation to a charitable organization in your loved one's name on their birthday or holidays, or plant a tree to honor them.
- **Get help.** If your grief gets worse over time or interferes with your ability to function in daily life, talk to a mental health care provider.

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DON'T GET *WRAPPED UP* IN OVERSPENDING

It's easy to get carried away — and overspend — when buying holiday gifts for family and friends. But you don't have to go into debt to have an unforgettable holiday. Here are four tips to help you avoid spending too much money:

- 1. Create and stick to a budget.** Start by analyzing last year's spending to find out how much you spent. If you spent too much, this is an ideal time to get strategic about how to manage your holiday spending. Then, set a realistic spending limit for each gift you plan to buy and commit to it.
- 2. Pay for purchases with cash.** It's easy to lose track of spending when using a credit card. By paying only in cash, you're forcing yourself to only spend what you have.
- 3. Consider homemade gifts.** Take a moment to think about what family and friends on your gift list could really use or enjoy. A homemade gift may be worth more than a more expensive store-bought gift.
- 4. Use coupons.** Before you shop online, search for coupon codes for your favorite online stores. If shopping in store, look through your mail for coupons and flyers.

Sources:

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MONTHLY QUIZ

1. Which of the following is true when it comes to the benefits of physical activity on mental health?

- A. It improves sleep
- B. It provides structure to help you stay on track with other responsibilities
- C. It releases feel-good endorphins that can enhance your sense of well-being
- D. All of the above

2. True or false: Omega-3s are found in seafood and non-seafood sources.

- A. True
- B. False

3. What is the timeline for grief?

- A. While you may never get over the loss, you can learn to live with it and honor the memory of your loved one
- B. 7 days
- C. 7 years

1. D, 2. A, 3. A

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