



Decide to thrive during your holidays.

DECEMBER 2014

December is here. If you are like most people you are probably beginning to feel overwhelmed as you begin to prepare for this month's festivities. There may be decorating to do, gifts to buy, presents to wrap, parties to attend, family to visit and multiple schedules to accommodate. Add to this the challenges that come with family personalities, fulfilling old traditions, and creating new traditions and we have the perfect recipe for a lot of holiday stress.



Before taking one more step towards your holiday plans, pause for a moment. Take deep, slow breath and check in. What do you want your December holidays to be about this year? Think about your highest values. You are in charge of your holiday experience. You get to choose where you will invest your energy, resources and your time.

Take 5-10 minutes to restore your sense of calm and reconnect to your healthy holiday vision. Review the list below and identify one or two strategies that you will incorporate into your life this month:

- **Aromatherapy.** Lavender soothes and calms. Citrus uplifts and energizes. Which do you need today? Your local health food store carries these essential oils.
- **Be present.** Take five minutes and focus on only one thing at a time. Spend time in the moment and pay attention to your senses. When you spend time in the moment, your stress diminishes.
- **Breathe deeply.** Sit up straight, eyes closed, with a hand on your belly. Slowly inhale through your nose, feeling the breath start in your abdomen and work its way to the top of your head. Reverse the process as you exhale through your mouth. Deep breathing counters the effects of stress by slowing the heart rate and lowering blood pressure.
- **Cash envelopes.** Come up with a budget that supports your holiday vision. When your envelope is empty, your shopping is done.

- **Decompress.** Place a warm heat wrap around your neck and shoulders for 10 minutes. Listen to calming music, close your eyes, while relaxing your face, neck, upper chest, and back muscles.
- **Eat nourishing food.** What foods give you energy and help you to feel your best? Drink water. Take a multivitamin.
- **Move your body.** Daily activity such as taking a walk can prevent stress from building up. Can't get outside or to the gym? Try yoga to prepare your body and mind for your day.
- **Reach out.** Talk to others, preferably face to face or on the phone. Share what's going on. You can get a fresh perspective while keeping your connection strong.
- **Sleep.** Your body recovers from the stresses of the day while you are sleeping.
- **Tune in to your body.** Regularly do a mental scan of your body to see how stress affects it each day. Find places you feel tight or loose.

With this awareness you will be able to use one of the above strategies to keep your stress level low.

Resources: WebMD.com

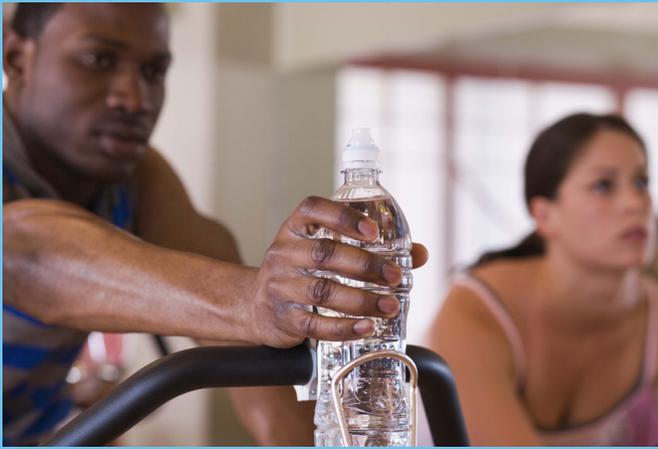
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SHAKE IT UP! MAKE YOUR WORKOUT WORK HARDER

Do you find it hard to get excited about your workout? Maybe you've consistently laced up your shoes and hit the road for your walk, but it just doesn't feel like you're getting as much for your efforts anymore? Well you're in luck! With a few new moves and a little fine tuning, you can shake up that routine to and make it work for you.

In a 2013 study, the American Council on Exercise set out to replicate the groundbreaking study of Japanese speed skating coach Izumi Tabata's training method, which demonstrated that as little as four minutes of very high intensity exercise each day is enough to reap the health benefits of longer moderate intensity workouts. The method, called Tabata, is used in formats for High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) and Cross Fit.

Steps for High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT):

Begin with at least a five minute warm-up and end with a cool-down. This can be the primary activity, like walking or cycling, at a somewhat slower pace.

After your warm-up, increase your pace to a moderate to high intensity for four minutes, and then add a one minute interval of one of the following moves.

After the one minute interval, resume the activity at a moderate pace for another four minutes and repeat the 4:1 ratio until you've completed at least four cycles.

Perform the moves with good form at a controlled, but quick pace. Slow the movement slightly to improve your form, if you notice that your form is getting sloppy before the one minute interval is complete.

If you have any pre-existing health conditions and/or are over 40 years old, consult with your physician before starting a physical activity program.

Although moderate physical activity is safe for most people, you should consider talking to your doctor before you start an exercise program.

It is possible to gain the health benefits and improvements seen with high intensity interval training (HIIT) without compromising form and risking injury by adding these four exercises to your usual walk or ride.

Plyo Jumps

Stand with your feet a little wider than shoulder width apart. Bend your knees and lower your body in a semi-squat then propel yourself up as if you are going to shoot a basket. Continue to "score" as many baskets as you can. Do football knees, lifting your knees as high and fast as you can, as an alternative movement.

Mountain Climbers

Bend forward from the hips and place your hands on the ground (a step or bench can be used as a modification) so that your body forms an upside-down V. Hop one foot forward towards your hands and one foot back, then switch feet and continue for full minute. Do Jumping Jacks as an alternative movement.

Squats

Stand with your feet shoulder width apart and toes facing forward, reach your arms straight forward as you sit back into your heels, bending from your hips (avoid rolling your shoulders or upper back forward). Sit into your heels as far as comfortable or until your upper legs are parallel to the ground, keeping your knees in line with your toes and your weight in your heels. Squeeze your inner thigh and buttocks muscles as you lift your body back up to standing and repeat for the full minute.

Side Skaters

Standing with your feet shoulder width, hop to your right while sweeping your left foot behind, and then hop to your left while sweeping your right foot behind. Pull your hand from front to back with the steps to simulate skating. Change the hop to a step to simplify the movement and reduce impact if necessary.

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ask

THE HEALTH COACH



Q My child received toys as holiday gifts, how do I know if they are safe?

A Unfortunately, there is no comprehensive list of potentially hazardous toys. Not every toy is tested for safety so it is your job to be an educated consumer. Dangerous toys can cause injuries that range from a simple cut to a life-threatening emergency. Keep these things in mind while shopping for children:

- Non-motorized scooters, bicycles, inline skates, and other riding toys cause more toy-related injuries yearly than any other toy category. Children need to be supervised and use the proper safety equipment.
- If a toy or part of a toy can fit inside a toilet paper tube, it is dangerous for infants, toddlers, and children who explore objects with their mouths.
- Make sure that any toys that have small parts also have sturdy construction and parts are tightly secured.
- Small balls, marbles, and balloons put children at risk for choking.
- If a toy has a string, strap, or cord longer than seven inches, it could wrap around a child's neck and lead to strangulation.
- To avoid risk of injury and cuts, it is important for children under the age of 8 to avoid toys with sharp edges, points, or pieces of plastic that stick out. These can lead to cuts or scrapes.
- Most children get lead poisoning from lead dust on their hands and toys. Lead is especially toxic to the brains of young children and can cause permanent mental and developmental impairment. Toys made from PVC should be avoided; opt for wooden or cloth toys instead.
- Use caution with loud toys and products such as children's music players. Long-term exposure to loud noise can cause hearing damage.
- Battery-operated toys are a safer choice than toys that need to be plugged into an electrical outlet. Use caution and make sure the battery compartment cannot be opened by the child. Swallowing any type of battery can cause severe illness.
- Take a look at online reviews before making video game purchases. You may even consider renting and previewing before you purchase. Violent video games may lead to sleep disturbance.

Source: CDC.gov

fresh

AND HEALTHY RECIPE OF THE MONTH



CRANBERRY-ORANGE-NUT COOKIES

• **Makes:** 2½ dozen cookies • **Active Time:** 35 minutes • **Total Time:** 1½ hours

Crisp, moist and chewy, this cookie created by Georgene Egri of Walnut Creek, California, has the essential ingredients for the holidays: citrus, nuts and cranberries. These cookies travel well for gift-giving and lunchboxes.

Ingredients

- 1½ cups whole-wheat pastry flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup chopped walnuts
- ½ cup chopped dried cranberries
- 1 cup plus 3 tablespoons sugar, divided
- ½ cup smooth, unsweetened applesauce
- ¼ cup canola oil
- 1 tablespoon freshly grated orange zest
- 3 tablespoons orange juice

Preparation

1. Whisk flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt in a large bowl. Stir in walnuts and dried cranberries.
2. Whisk 1 cup sugar, applesauce, oil, orange zest and juice in a medium bowl until smooth. Make a well in the dry ingredients and pour in the wet ingredients. Mix until well blended. Cover with plastic wrap and chill for 30 minutes.

3. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or a nonstick baking mat.
4. Put the remaining 3 tablespoons sugar into a small flat-bottomed dish or pan. Roll the dough with floured hands (it will be very moist) into 1½-inch balls, then roll in sugar to coat. Place 2 inches apart on the prepared baking sheet.
5. Bake the cookies until barely golden brown, 12 to 15 minutes. Cool on the pan for 1 minute; transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.

Tips and Notes

- **Make Ahead Tip:** Prepare the dough through Step 2, cover and refrigerate for up to 3 days. Store the cookies in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 5 days.
- **Nutrition:** Per cookie: 102 calories; 5 g fat (0 g sat, 1 g mono); 0 mg cholesterol; 15 g carbohydrates; 1 g protein; 1 g fiber; 94 mg sodium; 24 mg potassium.

Recipe courtesy of EatingWell.com