



WELLNESS NEWSLETTER
APRIL 2021

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HIGHLIGHTS for the April 2021 Newsletter

5 Signs COVID is Taking a Toll...Even if You're Virus Free

You've followed all the COVID-19 guidelines. Social distancing, limited in-person contact, masks, and sanitizing are now a regular part of life. But something's still not right. Sound familiar? Here are 5 signs COVID fatigue may be taking its toll on you.

Munch and Crunch Whole Grains for Heart Health

You might think breakfast isn't complete without donuts, pastries, and white-bread toast. But they're actually loaded with empty calories that can lead to weight gain, diabetes, obesity, and heart disease. But it doesn't have to be that way...

The Hamster-Wheel Hack to Boost Your Immune System

What if there was a simple way to boost your immune system and reduce inflammation? It's a lot easier than you might think. All you need is about 20 minutes a day.

Y-Axis: Beans, Beans...The Magical Fruit

What if you could get your hands on some magic beans to lose weight and control your appetite? Here's what you need to know...

Recipe: Walnut Energy Snacks

Hungry for something simple, healthy and tasty? Give this recipe a try.

Take the April Health Challenge!

Build Core Strength: Exercise to strengthen your core.

Ask the Wellness Doctor:

This month Dr. Don Hall answers the question: How can I exercise if I'm always busy?

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THE Y AXIS



Beans, Beans... The Magical Fruit



What if you could get your hands on some magic beans to lose weight and control your appetite?

You'd whip out your credit card. Right?

Keep the card in your wallet. Just eat more beans.

Take your pick. Garbanzos, kidney beans, lentils, black beans, snow peas, soybeans, and many others.

A recent study showed that people who eat beans at meal time eat fewer calories.

And they feel fuller longer.⁴

Plus beans are a healthy source of fiber and protein that provide protective health benefits.

Pass the beans to control weight and hunger. Music will follow.

COMMENTS?

Send comments to the editor:

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5 Signs COVID is Taking a Toll...Even If You're Virus-Free

Health risks rise as pandemic continues

You've followed all the COVID-19 guidelines. Social distancing, limited in-person contact, masks, and sanitizing are now a regular part of life.

Maybe you've even tested negative for COVID-19, or received the vaccine. But you still feel like something's not right. Sound familiar?

A new report published by the American Psychological Association shows that COVID culture may be taking a toll on your health in more ways than one, such as:¹

- 1. Weight gain.** 61% of adults tipped the scale in the wrong direction over the past year. If you've gained 15 to 29 pounds during the pandemic, you're not alone.
- 2. Poor sleep.** 67% of adults have experienced trouble sleeping during COVID-19. This includes sleeping too much (more than 9 hours) or not enough (less than 7 hours).
- 3. Lack of healthcare.** If you've been avoiding the doctor, worried about exposure to

COVID-19, you're not alone. An estimated 47% of adults have delayed or canceled needed healthcare.

4. Increased stress. If you're a parent with kids who made the switch to online learning, you know it hasn't been easy. About 67 percent of adults with school-age kids said their stress levels have increased during the pandemic.

5. Alcohol increase. When some people get stressed out, alcohol can become an unhealthy way to cope. Researchers found that alcohol use has increased 23 percent during COVID-19.

If COVID culture has taken a toll on your health, NOW is always a good time to make a change.

Keep it simple. Eat more fruits and vegetables. Be active. Manage stress in healthy ways. Improve your sleep habits. And ask for help if you need it.

MORE

How to prevent COVID fatigue
<https://tinyurl.com/5artyh8w>

Munch & Crunch Whole Grains for Heart Health

Aim for 3 to 5 servings of whole grains per day

What's for breakfast? It's easy to grab a donut, pastry or fast food. But that kind of daily habit puts your heart health at risk.

An estimated 18.2 million people in the U.S. are living with heart disease. It's the leading cause of death in the U.S., claiming the lives of about 655,000 people a year.

But you can do something about it like country music star Jessie James Decker.

With two young kids, she's always on the go. And she's busy with recording, along with running several businesses. But she doesn't miss a morning breakfast without whole-wheat toast.

New research shows that eating whole grains help lower the risk for:²



- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Certain types of cancer
- Early death



Walnut Energy Snacks

Need a healthy snack to keep you going? Try this easy, no-bake recipe made with walnuts.⁵

Ingredients

- 1/2 C walnuts
- 3/4 C dates, freshly pitted
- 1/2 C almond meal
- 1 C rolled oats
- 1/2 C sunflower seeds
- 1/4 C cocoa powder
- 3 T maple syrup
- 1/4 C sesame seeds

Directions

1. Use a food processor to lightly pulse walnuts into smaller pieces. Set aside.
2. Place remaining ingredients in food processor. Blend until mixed well.
3. Pour mixture into bowl. Stir in walnuts.
4. Roll mixture into walnut-sized balls.
5. With sesame seeds in a small bowl, roll balls in seeds to coat.
6. Serve right away. Or store in the fridge for a few days or freezer for a week.

Makes 10 servings.
239 calories per serving.



The Hamster-Wheel Hack to Boost Your Immune System

20 minutes of treadmill running prevents inflammation

Susie Chan took up running a few years ago to stay in shape. As a busy mom, it wasn't always easy to make time to exercise. But she stuck with it, often running on a treadmill at home.

Then she ran a half marathon with her brother, and kept going. Chan recently set a new world record for running 68.54 miles in 12 hours on a treadmill. But it was close. She beat the old record by just 1.75 miles.

You don't need to crush treadmill miles like Chan. But a little exercise IS good for your health.

New research shows that just 20 minutes of moderate exercise (like walking fast on a treadmill), helps prevent inflammation and strengthens the immune system.³

Researchers also found that moderate exercise helps:



Speed recovery after an injury



Protect the body against viruses and bacteria



Repair tissue damage



Control blood sugar levels



Support weight management



Prevent chronic diseases

Want to boost your immune system and protect your health? Hop on a treadmill and go. Or get outside for a walk. You'll feel better, be healthier, and live longer.

Munch & Crunch Whole Grains for Heart Health (continued from page 1)

Researchers found that eating at least three servings of whole grains per day (like two slices of bread and a bowl of oatmeal) can make a difference.

Add more whole-grains to your diet

The U.S. Department of Agriculture recommends eating 3 to 5 servings of whole grains per day.

Here are some easy ways to add more whole grains to your diet:

- Use whole-grain bread for toast or sandwiches
- Serve whole-grain pasta with lunch of dinner
- Use brown rice instead of white rice
- Try whole-cereal or oatmeal for breakfast

- Choose whole-grain tortillas instead of ones made with white flour

Crunch & munch more whole grains to protect your heart and your health.

MORE

Try these whole-grain recipes <https://tinyurl.com/4k68yru5>

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Take the April Health Challenge!

Build Core Strength: Exercise to strengthen your core

Ask the Wellness Doctor:

This month Dr. Don Hall answers the question:
How can I exercise if I'm always busy?



WELLNESS CHALLENGE

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Build Core Strength

CHALLENGE

Exercise to strengthen your core

Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read “Build Core Strength.”
2. Create your own plan to build core strength.
3. Keep a record of your completed health challenge in case your organization requires documentation.



When Sue Sanders woke up in the morning her back hurt. And she'd groan getting out of bed.

“I was pretty much a couch potato,” says Sue. “My back hurt all the time, and I didn't have any energy. Even little things like tying my shoes were hard.”

She chalked it up to having kids and gaining weight. But there were other lifestyle factors at play.

She spent most of the day sitting at work. She watched a lot of TV after work. Her diet included a lot of high-calorie foods and drinks. And she wasn't active.

But then something happened...

She changed her diet by eating fewer calories and healthier foods. She started drinking more water instead of soda. And she started exercising.

Core Strength Quiz

How much do you know about the benefits of core strength? Take this quiz to find out.



Y N

1. You can strengthen your core with just 10 minutes of exercise a day.
2. When you are physically active, good core strength can help prevent injuries.
3. You don't really need core strength to do simple things like put on your shoes, turn to look right or left, bathe, or sit in a chair.
4. Studies show that improving core strength can often help reduce lower back pain.
5. You can make your balance and stability better by developing core strength.

How did you do? Your core muscles include your abs and all the other muscles that help stabilize your spine. Research shows developing core strength improves balance, mobility, and posture, and lowers your risk for injuries.¹

Answers: 1. True. 2. True. 3. False. 4. True. 5. True.

When her personal trainer said building core strength could help reduce back pain, she was determined. At first she could barely hold a plank for a few seconds.

But she kept going. Within a year, she lost about 100 pounds. And her core strength improved. Her personal best for a plank...3 minutes!

“I have so much more energy now,” says Sue. “I feel better, and I can actually get out and do stuff like hike, walk, or work in the yard.”

How to build a better core
<https://tinyurl.com/3h9asey9>

Fun fact...Strong core muscles improve balance, stability, and make everyday living easier. Ready to build a stronger core? Take the month-long challenge to Build Core Strength.

4 Easy Ways to Build Core Strength

Wondering how to build core strength? FYI...Sit-ups aren't on the list. Here are 4 easy ways to build core strength:

1. Breathe

- Take a deep breath. Go ahead, suck it in.
- Hold your breath. Count to 10.
- Repeat.



This is a simple exercise you can perform to improve core strength anytime.

2. Replace Your Chair...

- *With a stability ball.* Use a stability ball instead of the typical office chair.
- Why? Sitting on a chair can weaken your core muscles. Using a stability ball forces your core muscles to work harder.



3. Straighten Up

- Sit up straight. Walk tall.
- When you keep your spine straight and in alignment, you're using core muscles.



4. Do Core-Strength Exercises

Developing core strength is a lot easier than you might think.

Give this core-strength workout a try (<https://tinyurl.com/y258nyzj>).

It only takes a few minutes:

- Plank
- Dead Bug
- Pointing Dog
- Back Extension
- Good Morning
- Reverse Crunch
- Superman
- Russian Twist
- Windshield Wipers



Plank



Pointing Dog



Back Extension

Build core strength anytime...Add a few core strength exercises to your gym workout. Or do them while watching TV. It won't take long for your core muscles to get stronger.

Core strength can have a big impact on your overall health and quality of life. Make the effort to strengthen your core every day.

You'll have better strength, balance, and stability. You'll lower your risk for injuries. You'll feel better too.



5 Surprising Reasons Core Strength Matters



Strengthen your core. You've heard the advice before from a friend, at the gym, in a magazine, or online.

But what does it really mean? Core strength is sometimes misunderstood as a code word for six-pack abs.

But it's a lot more than that. Some surprising benefits of core strength include:

1. Keep your back happy. Exercises like curl-ups, leg raises, planks, and push-ups improve core strength and help reduce neck and back pain.²

2. Protect the lines of communication. Your brain and spinal cord control the central nervous system. Strong core muscles help stabilize the spine. They also help protect the spinal cord used to help the brain and body communicate.³

3. Be steady and strong. What if you did a few simple core-strength exercises a day for 4 weeks? One recent study found that just 15 minutes a day improved strength and balance.⁴

4. Prevent injuries. "I have fallen, and I can't get up." You don't want to be that person, right? Research shows developing core strength helps prevent injuries, muscle strains and spasms.⁵ It also helps reduce hip and knee strain.

5. Improve posture. Sitting for long periods can lead to poor posture. But it doesn't have to. Just 20 minutes of core strength moves 3 times a week can help.⁶

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Build Core Strength

CHALLENGE

Exercise to strengthen your core

Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, etc.).
2. Take action to build core strength a few minutes a day.
3. Use the calendar to record your actions and choices to build core strength and make it a regular part of your life.
4. Review your progress at the end of each day, each week, and at the end of the month. Then keep up the practice for a lifetime of best health.

MONTH:							HC = Health Challenge™ ex. min. = exercise minutes
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary
HC [] ex. min. _____							
HC [] ex. min. _____							
HC [] ex. min. _____							
HC [] ex. min. _____							
HC [] ex. min. _____							

_____ Number of days this month I did core-strength exercises
 _____ Number of days this month I exercised at least 30 minutes

Other wellness projects completed this month:

Name _____ Date _____



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ASK THE DOCTOR

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Q. How can I exercise if I'm always busy?

A. Ever feel like you're too busy to exercise? You know...things like work, family, and everything else on your to-do list keep you on the go. And you can't seem to find the time.

You're not alone. About 80 percent of adults don't get the minimum amount of exercise (150 minutes a week).¹

Here's the thing...people who DON'T EXERCISE are more at risk for things like:

- Depression
- Diabetes
- Heart disease
- Elevated blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Certain types of cancer
- Age-related memory loss
- Weight gain and obesity

The good news, even if you're busy you can fit exercise into your schedule. And you don't need to run a marathon, spend a fortune on fitness, or log hours in the gym.

You can improve your health by exercising in 10-minute chunks of time. You've got 10 minutes here and there during the day, right?

Even if you're busy, you can still fit exercise into your schedule. Here's how:

1. Make Exercise a Priority

Taking good care of your health by exercising pays off. In a recent Harvard study, researchers found that exercising at least 150 minutes a week cut the risk of early death by 31 percent.² When you exercise, you don't lose time. You actually gain time.



2. Try a 10-Minute Workout

Short on time? Instead of skipping a workout, fit in short sessions here and there.

- Take a walk
- Ride a bike
- Pick a workout video and follow along
- Do your favorite exercises or just 10 minutes

Aim for 30 minutes of exercise or activity daily. That's just three 10-minute sessions.

3. Plan a Morning/Evening Workout

What's your morning or evening routine look like?

Take a closer look at how you spend time at the beginning or end of the day. If you're always busy and on the go, try this...

Wake up a few minutes earlier than usual OR Plan to exercise before bed.

If you're not getting any exercise, start with 10 minutes. It's worth the effort. Regular exercise can help:

- Improve sleep
- Reduce anxiety
- Decrease muscle tension
- Lower stress
- Reduce the risk for chronic diseases

4. Be Active on the Weekend

Maybe your work week is always crazy. You know...you're booked with appointments, meetings, and other activities.

ASK THE *Wellness* DOCTOR

If you're short on time to exercise during the week, plan to be active on the weekend. You can make time for things like:

- Walking
- Biking
- Playing tennis
- Getting in a round of golf
- Going to the gym
- Working in the yard

Use the weekend to catch up on getting at least 150 minutes of exercise a week.

5. Speed Up

If you're always busy, you're probably used to the go-go-go schedule. It's a smart way to exercise when you're short on time, too.

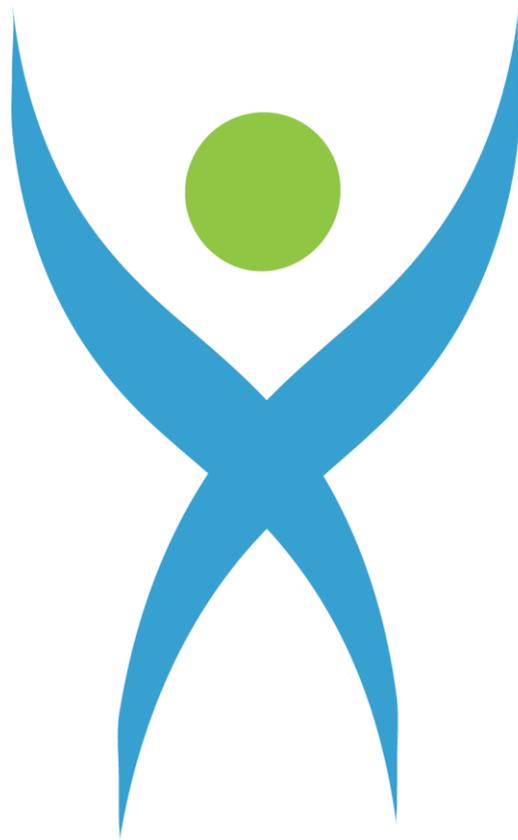
Research shows exercising in short 10-minute bursts can improve your mood and promote health.³ Try this:

- Hustle through a 10-minute workout
- Walk briskly to appointments.
- Speed walk up stairs.
- Race through the grocery store to do your shopping.
- Clean your house in record time.

It's one more way to help you get 30 minutes of exercise a day, and reap the benefits. Even if you're busy, you can find time to exercise.

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