

# Wellness Newsletter



January 2024

Happy New Year!

## Setting Wellness Goals for a Successful New Year



Happy New Year! This is a time for reflection, renewal, and the perfect opportunity to set meaningful wellness goals that will pave the way for a successful and fulfilling year ahead. Goal-setting is a powerful tool that can guide you towards a healthier, happier, and more balanced life. Here's how you can kickstart your goal-setting journey and set yourself up for a thriving new year:

### 1. Reflect on the Past Year:

Before diving into new goals, take a moment to reflect on the past year. Celebrate your achievements, acknowledge challenges, and identify areas for growth. Reflecting on your experiences will provide valuable insights and set the foundation for realistic and meaningful goals.

### 2. Define Your Priorities:

Consider what aspects of your life contribute most to your overall well-being. Whether it's physical health, mental wellness, career, relationships, or personal development, identifying your priorities will help you create goals that align with your values and aspirations.

### 3. SMART Goal Setting:

Use the SMART criteria – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound – to structure your goals. Instead of vague resolutions, break down your aspirations into concrete, actionable steps. For example, if your goal is to improve fitness, specify the type of exercise, set a measurable target, and establish a realistic timeline.

### 4. Create a Vision Board:

Visualization is a powerful tool for manifesting your desires. Create a vision board that represents your goals visually. Include images, quotes, and symbols that resonate with your aspirations. Placing your vision board in a visible location serves as a daily reminder of your objectives.



As you embark on your journey of goal-setting for the new year, remember that success is a continuous process of growth and self-discovery. By incorporating these strategies into your wellness plan, you'll not only set the stage for a successful year but also cultivate a healthier and more fulfilling lifestyle. Here's to a year of well-being, achievement, and the pursuit of your most meaningful aspirations!

New Year.  
Better you!



### 5. Prioritize Self-Care:

Success is not solely about achieving external milestones. Include self-care goals in your plan to nurture your mental and emotional well-being. Whether it's practicing mindfulness, setting aside time for hobbies, or ensuring quality sleep, self-care is essential for overall success.

### 6. Break Goals into Manageable Steps:

Large goals can be overwhelming. Break them into smaller, manageable steps. This not only makes the journey more achievable but also allows you to celebrate incremental successes along the way, keeping you motivated and focused.

### 7. Establish Accountability:

Share your goals with a friend, family member, or a wellness buddy. Having someone to hold you accountable can provide the encouragement and support needed to stay on track. Regular check-ins can also be an opportunity to celebrate achievements and troubleshoot challenges.

### 8. Embrace Flexibility:

Life is dynamic, and circumstances may change. Be open to reassessing and adjusting your goals as needed. Flexibility allows you to adapt to new opportunities or challenges without feeling discouraged.



# NUTRITION AND HEALTHY EATING



In a world where fast-paced lifestyles and processed foods often dominate our dietary choices, the importance of nutrition and healthy eating cannot be overstated. Fueling our bodies with the right nutrients is not just a matter of satisfying hunger; it is a fundamental step towards achieving and maintaining optimal health.



## Balanced Nutrition for Overall Well-being

Achieving a well-balanced diet involves consuming a variety of foods from different food groups. This includes a mix of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats. Each nutrient plays a unique role in supporting bodily functions, from energy production to immune system function.

## The Role of Macronutrients

Macronutrients, such as carbohydrates, proteins, and fats, are the building blocks of a healthy diet. Carbohydrates provide energy, proteins support muscle growth and repair, and fats are essential for hormone production and absorption of fat-soluble vitamins. Striking the right balance among these macronutrients is crucial for overall well-being.

## PLAN AHEAD Eating

Planning meals and snacks ahead of time helps you stick to your goals, save money and reduce stress by putting you in control of day-to-day life.

- 1. Look at your calendar.** Think about the week ahead and plan your meals and snacks around your work obligations, social schedule and other commitments.
- 2. Check your pantry/freezer.** Doing this helps avoid buying ingredients you already have.
- 3. Choose recipes.** Select recipes with at least two similar ingredients. Aim for fish at least twice a week. Plan vegetable and whole grain side dishes based on entrees.
- 4. Make a grocery list.** Being organized and having a list maximizes your time at the store and your budget.

Utilize the **Weekly Meal Planner & Shopping List Template** provided below or make your own.

## Mindful Eating Habits

In addition to choosing nutritious foods, adopting mindful eating habits can positively impact health. Paying attention to hunger and fullness cues, savoring each bite, and avoiding distractions during meals can contribute to better digestion and an enhanced appreciation for the food we consume.



## Micronutrients and Their Importance

Micronutrients, including vitamins and minerals, are essential for various physiological processes. For instance, vitamin C supports the immune system, calcium is vital for bone health, and iron is crucial for oxygen transport in the blood. A diverse and colorful array of fruits and vegetables is key to obtaining a spectrum of micronutrients.

## Hydration and Its Impact

Water is a fundamental element for our bodies, playing a role in digestion, nutrient absorption, and temperature regulation. Staying adequately hydrated is essential for overall health. Choosing water as the primary beverage over sugary drinks helps maintain hydration without added calories.



## The Dangers of Processed Foods

Processed foods, often high in refined sugars, unhealthy fats, and additives, can contribute to various health issues. A diet rich in whole, unprocessed foods provides essential nutrients without the detrimental effects associated with excessive consumption of processed products.



Weekly Meal Planner & Shopping List Template Example:	
S	PRODUCE
M	
T	
W	
T	MEAT
F	
S	
Breakfast Ideas:	DAIRY
Lunch Ideas:	
	MISC
Snacks:	



## Fresh Ideas for Getting Active Getting Physical Outdoors



Life is an ADVENTURE



**When it comes to physical activity, which appeals more to you: Walking on a treadmill? Or on a dirt path? Using a rowing machine? Or paddling a kayak down the river?**

Physical activity is more than exercise, it's your time to move your body, refresh your spirit, and let your inner child go out to play!

Here are a few adventurous activities to consider as alternatives to ordinary exercise:

**Mountain biking** will have you whizzing up and down trails and kicking up dust as you tackle terrain. It's a low impact sport that won't wear on your joints like running, and there are trails to suit all fitness levels.

**Rock climbing** increases cardio endurance, upper-body and core strength, and flexibility. There are indoor rock climbing facilities that are perfect for beginners to tackle.

**Sledding or snowboarding** in the winter can be fun and the walk back up the hill can be more rewarding than a stair climber machine.

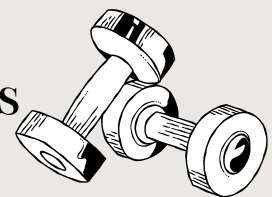
**Skiing** can provide a rush, with wind in your face and snow moving briskly beneath your skis. Downhill or cross country skiing offers a cardiovascular work-out and improves balance and range of motion.

**Hiking** is the ultimate back to nature activity. There's no better way to fully experience a landscape than by trekking through it.

Spectacular natural settings tend to accompany adventure activities and spending time outdoors and in nature is great for your physical and mental health.

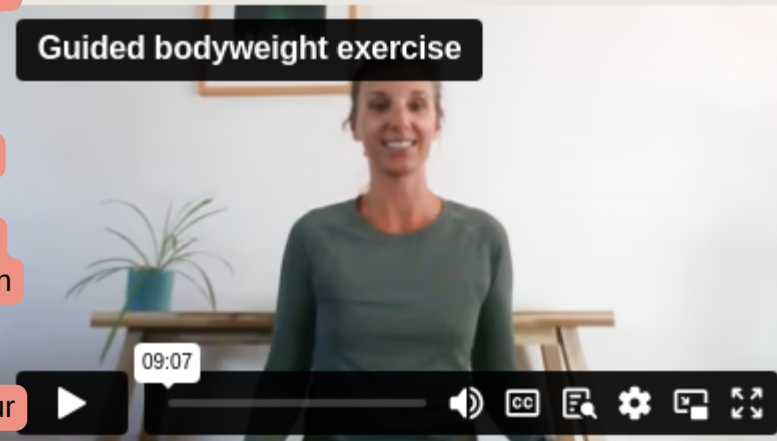


## Start thinking about your Fitness



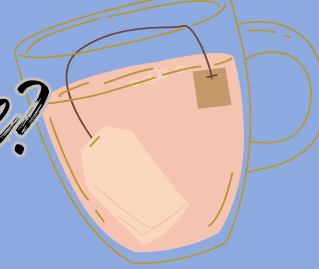
Begin a successful wellness journey with these quick fitness tips. Start by setting clear, achievable goals that align with your overall objectives. Change up your workouts by incorporating cardio, strength training, and flexibility exercises to keep things engaging. Be consistent by opting for regular sustainable workouts. Fuel your body with nutrient-rich foods to support your fitness journey, ensuring a balanced intake of proteins, carbs, and healthy fats. Listen to your body, get necessary rest when needed, and prioritize sleep for optimal recovery. Remember, small, consistent efforts pave the way for significant results on your path to wellness.

### Guided bodyweight exercise





# Do you make time for self-care?



## WHAT IS SELF-CARE?

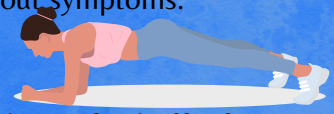
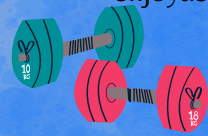
Self-care means taking the time to do things that help you live well and improve both your physical health and mental health. When it comes to your mental health, self-care can help you manage stress, lower your risk of illness, and increase your energy.

In a national survey, Americans cited benefits of self-care as: enhanced self-confidence (64%), increased productivity (67%), happiness (71%). From a physical health perspective, self-care also reduces heart disease, stroke and cancer.



## TAKE CARE OF YOU: HERE ARE SOME IDEAS!

- Embrace a more active lifestyle! Physical activity isn't just great for your body—it's a fantastic stress-buster for your mind. Exercise has proven benefits in treating depression and anxiety. Make your workout routine enjoyable by opting for outdoor activities like walks, hikes, or runs. Studies reveal that spending time in nature reduces fatigue, making it an effective way to combat depression and burnout symptoms.



- Nourish your body with a wholesome, balanced diet. What you eat influences your ability to fend off infections and impacts your mood. Combat anxiety by incorporating mood-boosting foods into your meals—think fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fatty fish, leafy greens, and nuts. Cooking at home ensures you get the nutrients your body craves and doubles as a relaxing activity.



- Prioritize your beauty sleep! Sleep plays an important role in your mental and physical well-being. Getting a lot of sleep can pave the way for better days ahead. Establish a consistent bedtime routine, aiming for 7-8 hours of rest each night. Combat sleep troubles with relaxation exercises, meditation, or by taking a digital detox. Keep your work and sleep areas separate, and limit caffeine and sugar intake for a more rejuvenating slumber.



- Treat yourself to some self-love and set boundaries. Take a moment to reflect on your path forward and anchor yourself. Make self-care a regular part of your schedule, indulging in activities that bring joy and rejuvenation. If anxiety creeps in, establish boundaries to create a safe and comfortable environment. This can include setting expectations around safety measures with loved ones or creating a "no list" for activities that add stress. Learn to say no to things that don't contribute positively to your mental well-being—your future self will thank you!



*I challenge you to create a self care plan and start taking care of you!*



# How your BRAIN GUT connection can help fuel your mental well being



## How nutrients support you

It's crucial to understand that no single food, drink, or supplement can miraculously improve mood or cure mental health conditions. Scientifically speaking, your brain and body require a balanced intake of proteins, fibers, carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals, (unsaturated) fats, and water for optimal functioning. Here are some key points:

- **Proteins:** Essential for producing chemicals that regulate thoughts and emotions.
- **Healthy Fats:** Omega fats from sources like salmon, avocados, nuts, and seeds support brain function.
- **Carbohydrates:** Complex carbs from whole grains provide steady glucose for sustained brain fuel.
- **Gut Health:** A balanced diet with fiber and probiotics (found in yogurt, sauerkraut, tempeh, and kimchi) promotes a healthy gut, crucial for digestion and nutrient absorption.
- **Hydration:** Inadequate water intake can lead to difficulty focusing, unclear thinking, and mood depression.

Conversely, a diet low in nutrients can negatively impact mental well-being. Examples include:

- **Trans Fats:** Found in processed and packaged foods, linked to bad moods.
- **Processed Sugary Foods:** Linked to hyperactivity, poor concentration, and mood issues in children and adolescents.
- **Caffeine:** While a common energy booster, excessive caffeine can lead to irritability, anxiety, depression, and disrupted sleep.

## Help yourself eat nutrient-rich foods

Following 3 general guidelines can help you choose more nutritious options:

### Eat more:

- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Whole grains (bread, brown rice, quinoa)
- Legumes (lentils, chickpeas, soybeans, and kidney, black or pinto beans)
- Fish and seafood
- Unsaturated fats like those found in oily fish (salmon, mackerel, sardines), avocados, seeds, nuts, olive oil



### Eat in moderation:

- Red meat (beef, pork lamb, goat and venison)



### Eat less:

- Refined sugars (from cane, beets, coconut, palm and corn)
- Processed foods, especially those high in saturated fat, salt and sugar (such as pre-packaged instant and canned soups, deli meats, sausages, snacks and breakfast cereals)

HEALTHY eat HEALTHY



Consider ways to help yourself steer toward nutrient-rich foods. For example:

- Prepare and store healthy meals and snacks in advance.
- Make one-pot meals — stews, soups and casseroles — to save yourself time and hassle.
- Make plans to cook in rather than eating out with family and friends.
- Have food delivered if getting to the store is too time-consuming or difficult.

Even small changes can make a difference over time. If you need recipe ideas, consider looking online for dietitian-approved options or asking your health care provider for help.

People all around the world often deal with mental health issues. While it's not as simple as just eating right, more and more studies are suggesting that certain diets can actually boost your brain health and improve your overall well-being. These diets might not be a cure-all, but they can definitely help with stress, focus, and mental health. Your brain and body crave a mix of nutrients to stay healthy.

## Risks of poor nutrition



Interestingly, much of this brain-nutrient-mental health support system can work both ways. If you're already feeling stressed, anxious or sad, you may find it difficult to eat in general, much less prepare healthful food. The lack of nutrients can thus perpetuate or worsen how you already feel.

The lack of rich nutrients makes it harder for your brain to function properly, which in turn aggravates your already struggling mental health.

When you're not feeling well or eating well, it can also affect your gut. You may feel stopped up, stirred up, bloated or gassy, all of which throws off your digestive system. If your digestive system is malfunctioning, your brain isn't getting the fuel it needs, and, hungry, struggles to function properly.

# Featured Recipe of the Month



## Acai Berry Bowl

### Ingredients



- 1 banana - sliced and frozen
- ½ cup blueberries - frozen
- ½ cup strawberries - frozen
- ¾ cup milk or juice - use your favorite milk (dairy milk, soy, almond, etc) or juice (apple or grape)
- ½ cup plain yogurt - (substitute with milk or juice if desired)
- 200 grams (2 packets) frozen acai puree - broken into pieces
- assorted toppings - nuts, seeds, fresh fruit, granola, coconut, etc.

### Instructions

- Freeze your fruit. Slice your banana and transfer it to a small baking sheet or plate lined with parchment paper. To the same plate, add the blueberries and strawberries (store-bought frozen fruit will work just as well). Transfer tray or plate to the freezer and allow fruit to freeze completely.
- Blend. Once frozen, add the milk and yogurt to the bowl of a large, high-speed blender. Add the frozen blueberries, strawberries, banana, and broken up acai. With the blender on low, use the tamper to push the frozen fruit down, mixing around as much as possible. Continue to blend on low until smooth, only adding additional liquid when needed.
- Assemble. Divide the smoothie into two bowls and top with all your favorite toppings. Popular additions include sliced banana, nuts, seeds, granola, and berries. Best enjoyed immediately.

Congrats on the winner for the \$25 Gift Card!



Thank you for attending the Wellness Webinar!

**Attend one of our webinars and be entered for a chance to win a prize!**

### Fitness Tip of the Day

Strive for at least 150 minutes of exercise per week

Break it down to 40 minutes 4 days a week, 30 minutes 5 days a week, or however you'd like! Choose what works best for your lifestyle.



### Quote of the Day

"A healthy outside starts from the inside."

– Robert Ulrich

### Health Tip of the Day

Get some fresh air.

Whether you get outside for some exercise or to read a book in the sunshine, you should take at least 30 minutes a day to get some vitamin D.