

Wellness Newsletter



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"Educate for Wellness, Knowledge for Life"

Faith and Family: The Heart of Christmas

Christmas is a season deeply rooted in faith, a time to reflect on the blessings and hope that the holiday represents. For many, it is a celebration of love, grace, and the light that faith brings into our lives. It reminds us to pause and focus on what is truly meaningful—our beliefs, our values, and the strength they provide during life's challenges. Christmas encourages us to embrace the spirit of peace and gratitude, renewing our hearts with hope and joy.

At the core of the season is family, the foundation of love and support that makes life's journey meaningful. Christmas is a time to come together, to share stories, laughter, and moments of connection that deepen our bonds. From gathering around the dinner table to attending holiday services together, these shared experiences strengthen the ties that hold families close. They remind us of the importance of being present for one another and cherishing the time we have together.

Faith and family unite to make Christmas a season of purpose and renewal. As we celebrate this special time, let's remember to nurture both—the faith that uplifts us and the family that surrounds us with love. Together, they inspire us to spread kindness and joy, creating a ripple of goodwill that extends far beyond the season. May this Christmas fill your hearts and homes with peace, love, and the blessings of faith and family.

Merry Christmas!



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"You're off to great places!

Today is your day! Your mountain is waiting, so get on your way!"

–Dr. Seuss

12 DAYS of Fitness

If scrambling through your "to-do list" has you working up a sweat, recognize it's time to add yourself to the top of the list to prioritize you and your health. Finding time and energy to exercise daily, is giving yourself and your body a very special gift by celebrating you. Prioritizing yourself is not selfish. Keep your spirits high and help avoid feeling drained by spending at least 30 minutes a day doing physical activity.

Finding joy in any activity that you are doing will help you stay motivated. There are many total body workouts or 12 days of Fitness Challenges that can be downloaded from the internet, or borrow ideas from the following suggestions of festive activities that double as exercise.

- 1. Holiday lights walking tour.** Bundle up and observe neighborhood decorations by foot.
- 2. Ice Skating.** Lace up and have fun on the ice while improving balance and coordination.
- 3. Sledding.** Head to the nearest hill and be sure to walk back up after racing to the bottom.
- 4. Snow Shoeing.** Feel the heart pumping oxygen to the lungs while breathing in the fresh air.
- 5. Clean and decorate your home.** Dig out boxes of decorations, tidy up, and dust, as cleaning will get your heart rate up.
- 6. Get cooking.** A half hour on your feet preparing a meal burns approximately 70 calories.
- 7. Rock around the Christmas tree.** Play your favorite music and bust a move for aerobic benefits and a good time.
- 8. Get crafty.** Take a winter hike and collect objects in nature, such as pinecones, for a festive art project.
- 9. Volunteer.** Look for opportunities that involve physical activity to help others, while helping yourself.
- 10. Have a scavenger hunt.** Race to collect items or perform fun activities.
- 11. Visit a museum.** Look for special events and seasonal promotions at local museums.
- 12. Go shopping.** Park far from the door and stroll the local stores.

HEALTH IMPROVING Gift Ideas

The holiday season inspires people to focus on everything that is important in life, like good health, friends and loved ones. Invest in the people you care about and their health by considering thoughtful gifts that enhance their wellness.

LISTED BELOW ARE ASPECTS OF PERSONAL HEALTH THAT CONTRIBUTE TO OVERALL WELL-BEING, AND A FEW IDEAS FOR MEANINGFUL GIFTS THAT SUPPORT EACH AREA.

EMOTIONAL

Feeling and expressing emotions, achieving a sense of fulfillment, optimism, and self-acceptance.

GIFT IDEAS: Books or a journal, bath set, incense, aroma therapy kit, herbal tea, coloring book, eye pillow.

PHYSICAL

Healthy behaviors for the body including exercise, nutrition, and abstaining from harmful habits to add quantity and quality of years to life.

GIFT IDEAS: Water bottle, air fryer, massage, white noise or sound machine.

INTELLECTUAL

Encourage creative and stimulating mental activities.

GIFT IDEAS: Pay for a class to learn a new hobby or skill, books or puzzles.

FINANCIAL

A secure path to managing money successfully.

GIFT IDEAS: Stocks, bonds or money in a CD so they can watch it grow, pay for a subscription to a service that saves or helps manage money, pay off one small debt.

SOCIAL

Improve social health by supporting healthy relationships.

GIFT IDEAS: Gift certificate for a class to learn something new like art, cooking music, yoga, or tai chi, write one thing you can do to help a friend on a card they can redeem.

Travel and Tidbits

Whether taking a vacation or visiting loved ones, choose nourishing foods to fuel your journey and quench your thirst.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO KEEP YOUR BODY AND WALLET HAPPY WHEN EATING AWAY FROM HOME:

- Pack snacks such as fruits, vegetables and nuts to curb hunger and stay satisfied between meals.
- Bring a reusable water bottle to refill and stay hydrated, save money, and help the environment.
- At convenience stores, look for options such as low-fat yogurt with granola, cheese and sliced veggies, salads, or fresh fruit options.
- Use technology to find healthy options and nutritious meals on the road.

Eating out often feels like a treat, but when traveling, it's an everyday occasion. Practice balance by choosing a special treat for a small indulgence once a day, while mindfully eating fiber and nutrient rich vegetables and lean proteins.



Tips for Managing the Holiday Blues

The holiday blues refer to feelings of sadness, stress, or anxiety that some people experience during the holiday season, typically around November and December. While the holidays are often associated with joy and celebration, they can also bring about negative emotions due to various factors.

Causes of Holiday Blues:

Financial Pressure: Spending on gifts, travel, and events can create stress.

Loneliness: Those who are away from loved ones or have lost someone may feel isolated.

High Expectations: Pressure to create the "perfect" holiday experience can lead to disappointment.

Stress and Overcommitment: Juggling social gatherings, work obligations, and family can be overwhelming.

Seasonal Changes: For some, shorter days and less sunlight during winter contribute to seasonal affective disorder (SAD), exacerbating feelings of sadness.

Reflecting on the Past: The holidays may bring up memories of better times or regrets.

Coping Strategies:

Set Realistic Expectations: Avoid perfectionism and focus on meaningful moments.

Create a Budget: Plan your spending to reduce financial strain.

Stay Connected: Reach out to friends, family, or community groups.

Practice Self-Care: Prioritize sleep, exercise, and healthy eating.

Manage Your Time: Learn to say no to avoid overcommitment.

Seek Professional Help: If feelings persist, consider talking to a therapist or counselor.



Signs of Holiday Blues:

Persistent feelings of sadness or emptiness
Increased stress or irritability
Fatigue or difficulty sleeping
Changes in appetite
Difficulty concentrating

Top 10 Must-Watch Christmas Movies for the Holiday Season

1. Home Alone (1990)

Why Watch: Mischief, laughs, and heartfelt family moments as Kevin McCallister defends his home from burglars.



2. Elf (2003)

Why Watch: Buddy the Elf's pure, hilarious journey to reconnect with his dad in New York City is a dose of holiday cheer.



3. National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation (1989)

Why Watch: Clark Griswold's quest for the perfect family Christmas is a comedy staple.

4. It's a Wonderful Life (1946)

Why Watch: A timeless classic about hope, community, and the difference one person can make.



5. The Polar Express (2004)

Why Watch: This magical animated journey to the North Pole embodies the wonder of believing.



6. The Grinch (2018)

Why Watch: A modern, animated take on Dr. Seuss's story with a heartwarming message.



7. Miracle on 34th Street (1947)

Why Watch: A touching story about belief and the true spirit of Christmas.

8. Love Actually (2003)

Why Watch: An ensemble cast weaves together romantic and heartwarming holiday stories.

9. A Christmas Story (1983)

Why Watch: Nostalgic and humorous tales of Ralphie's quest for a BB gun.

10. Klaus (2019)

Why Watch: A beautifully animated film that reimagines the origins of Santa Claus with heart and humor.



Grab some popcorn and enjoy the binge watching!



New Year, New You: Simple Steps to Start Strong

The clock strikes midnight, and suddenly it feels like a fresh start is within reach. But let's be honest—how often do those grand New Year's resolutions fizzle out by February? Instead of making promises that feel overwhelming, why not take a practical, intentional approach to prepare for the new year? Imagine a January where your goals feel achievable, your stress is minimized, and your mindset is primed for success. Sounds good, right? Let's dive into how you can make it happen.

1. Reflect Before You Reset

Take time to look back on the past year. Celebrate your wins—big and small. Acknowledge the challenges you've overcome. Writing these reflections in a journal can help you recognize patterns and identify areas for growth. Knowing where you've been makes it easier to see where you want to go.

2. Set SMART Goals, Not Grandiose Dreams

Instead of saying, "I'm going to lose 50 pounds" or "I'll save \$10,000," break those goals into smaller, actionable steps. SMART goals are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. For example: "I'll lose 5 pounds by the end of February by exercising three times a week and meal prepping on Sundays."

3. Declutter Your Space and Mind

Start the year with a clean slate—literally. Tidy up your home, organize your workspace, or finally tackle that junk drawer. A clear space can lead to a clearer mind. Pair this with mindfulness practices, like meditation or deep breathing exercises, to let go of mental clutter too.

4. Prioritize Your Well-Being

This is the year to put self-care at the top of your list. Schedule your annual health check-ups, create a consistent sleep schedule, and find a physical activity you genuinely enjoy. Don't forget to nourish your body with wholesome meals—it's not about perfection, but consistency.

5. Build a Support System

Share your goals with a trusted friend or join a community group aligned with your interests. Accountability can be a powerful motivator. Plus, having people to celebrate your progress with makes the journey more rewarding.

6. Embrace Flexibility

Life happens, and things don't always go according to plan. Be kind to yourself if you face setbacks. Adjust your goals as needed, but never lose sight of the bigger picture—progress over perfection.

Preparing for the new year doesn't have to be daunting. By taking intentional steps, you can create a foundation for long-term success. Start small, stay consistent, and remember: Every positive change, no matter how small, is a step toward a healthier, happier you.

Cheers to your best year yet!



Featured Recipe of the Month

SEARED STEAK WITH ROASTED GARLIC



Ingredients

- 12 ounces semisweet chocolate, chopped
- 2 cups whole-milk plain Greek yogurt
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- ¼ cup mini semisweet chocolate chips
- 6 candy canes (about 3 ounces), crushed into small pieces
- ½ teaspoon coarse sea salt

Directions

1. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Place chopped chocolate in a double boiler over simmering water; heat, stirring often, until melted. (To improvise a double boiler: Bring 1 inch of water to a simmer in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Place chocolate in a medium heatproof bowl that sits above the simmering water.) Pour the melted chocolate onto the parchment-lined pan, spreading it into an even layer about 1/8 inch thick. Refrigerate until the chocolate just begins to set, about 10 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, combine yogurt and vanilla in a small bowl. Drizzle the yogurt mixture over the chocolate, and then lightly spread it in an even layer over the chocolate. Sprinkle with mini chocolate chips, candy cane pieces and salt. Freeze until the yogurt is completely set, about 2 hours. Break into 20 pieces; serve frozen.

Ingredients

- 1 small head garlic, roasted (see Tip)
- ¼ cup low-fat mayonnaise
- 1 teaspoon minced fresh rosemary
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground pepper, divided
- 1/8 teaspoon kosher salt plus 1/4 teaspoon, divided
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1-1 ¼ pounds boneless strip steaks (about 1 inch thick), trimmed

Directions

1. When cool enough to handle, squeeze the roasted garlic pulp into a small bowl. Add mayonnaise, rosemary, 1/4 teaspoon pepper and 1/8 teaspoon salt. Stir and gently mash together, leaving large pieces of garlic intact to create a chunky sauce.
1. Pat steaks dry and cut into 4 equal portions. Sprinkle with the remaining 1/4 teaspoon each salt and pepper. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat until very hot, but not smoking. Add the steaks and cook until browned on the bottom, 2 to 4 minutes. Turn over, reduce heat to medium-low and cook to desired doneness, 3 to 5 minutes for medium-rare. Serve the steaks with about 1 1/2 tablespoons aioli each.

Sweet Treat of the Month

CHOCOLATE PEPPERMINT BARK





Manager Podcast

Review-Rest-Renew for 2025



Click
Here

Now is when most organizations conduct end of the year reviews. Taking this time to review the past year provides an ideal opportunity for leaders to reward themselves for their efforts and accomplishments. Once done its time for rest and recuperation. Healthy rest routines supply the leader with the energy and focus to set goals for the upcoming new year. Leaders who practice such effective routines in turn model this for their teams. Imagine the unifying impact for leaders and teams as the new year approaches. In this month's Podcast Laura White, supervisor, and John Redden a member of the management consultation team, discuss how vital Review, Refresh, and Renew is to maintain healthy, effective teams. The benefits of such leadership will be evident in optimal productivity.

Health Tip of the Month

Building Healthier Habits

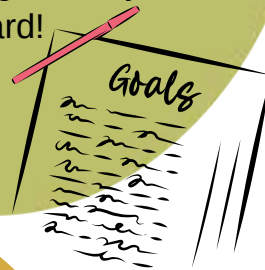
Prioritize your well-being this year by staying hydrated, eating balanced meals, and getting enough sleep. Combine regular exercise with mindfulness practices, like meditation or deep breathing, to support both your physical and mental health. A healthier you starts with small, daily habits!

Take care
of your body

Fitness Tip of the Month

Start Goal Setting for the New Year

Start the new year strong by setting realistic fitness goals and creating a plan that fits your lifestyle. Remember, consistency is key—small, steady steps lead to big, lasting results. Celebrate your progress along the way and keep moving forward!



Quote of the Month

New year, new opportunities—
let's make it our best chapter
yet!

