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HEALTH OBSERVANCE

Cervical Health Awareness Month

WHY EARLY DETECTION MATTERS

Each January, Cervical Health Awareness Month reminds us of the importance of proactive measures in preventing cervical cancer and promoting overall health. Cervical cancer is one of the most preventable types of cancer, yet it still affects thousands of women annually. Raising awareness about early detection, regular screenings, and HPV vaccinations can help save lives and improve health outcomes. Here's what you need to know to take control of your cervical health.

WHY SCREENINGS ARE ESSENTIAL

Cervical cancer often has no symptoms in its early stages, making routine screenings like Pap tests (or Pap smears) and HPV tests vital. These tests detect abnormal cell changes in the cervix early, often before cancer develops. If you're 21 or older, talk to your doctor about how often you should get screened. Staying consistent with your screenings is one of the most powerful things you can do for your health.

PROTECT YOURSELF WITH THE HPV VACCINE

The human papillomavirus (HPV) is the leading cause of cervical cancer. The HPV vaccine offers strong protection against the virus, significantly lowering your risk. If you haven't been vaccinated yet, it's not too late—ask your healthcare provider if the HPV vaccine is right for you. It's recommended for preteens and young adults but may also be available for others depending on their health history.

SMALL STEPS, BIG IMPACT

Preventive care plays a key role in your wellness journey. Add a reminder to schedule your next cervical screening, talk to your doctor about the HPV vaccine, and make healthy lifestyle choices like eating well and exercising regularly to support your overall health.

LET'S TAKE ACTION TOGETHER

This Cervical Health Awareness Month, empower yourself by staying informed and proactive about your health. Regular checkups, education, and healthy habits are key to staying strong and thriving. For more information, visit the [CDC Cervical Cancer Resources](https://www.cdc.gov/cervical-cancer/) or the [National Cervical Cancer Coalition](https://www.ncccoalition.org/).

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/cervical-cancer/>



Small Steps, Big Changes Setting Realistic Fitness Goals

New Year's resolutions have been around forever, as has the habit of breaking them. So, how do we make a resolution—and stick to it?

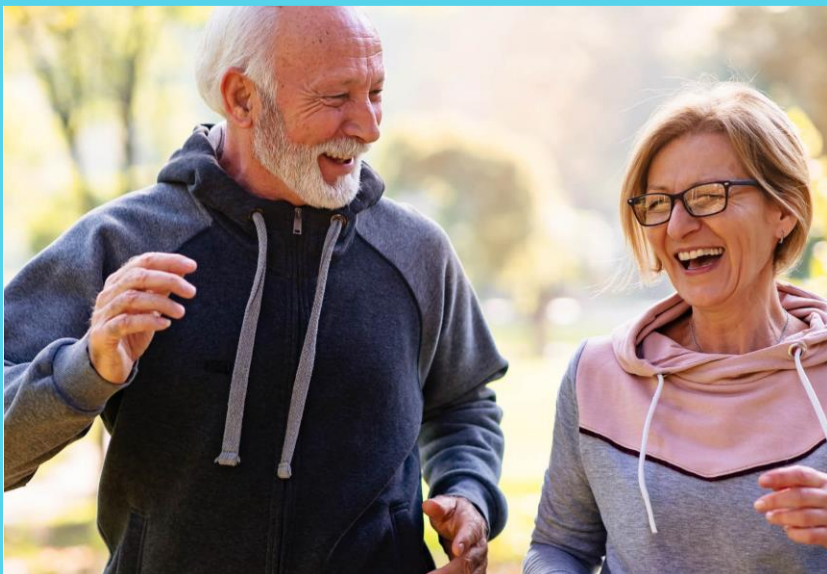
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Shine Bright This Winter How to Avoid the Effects of SAD

As the days grow shorter and colder, many people find themselves feeling low on energy, unmotivated, or even downright sad.

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LIVE SIMPLY

MENTAL WELLBEING PROGRAM

HEALTH TIP CORNER

Wellness Pillar: Physical

Small Steps, Big Changes: Achieving Your Fitness Goals This Year

Dawn Koch – Wellworks For You

SETTING REALISTIC FITNESS GOALS

New Year's resolutions have been around since the 17th century, as has the habit of breaking them. So, the age-old question remains: how do we make a resolution—and stick to it?

HERE ARE SOME GENERAL TIPS TO KEEP IN MIND:

1. Set goals that excite you and are realistic.
2. Be specific, but keep it simple.
3. Have smaller interim goals.
4. Create a plan.
5. Write it all down.

Setting realistic fitness goals is a fantastic way to stay motivated and achieve long-term success. But how do you know if your fitness goals are realistic? Start by considering why each goal is important to you and imagining what success looks like. It's also crucial to consider where you're starting. If you're new to exercise or a sport, you may see quicker improvements early on, which can be incredibly motivating.

Keep your goals simple, but be specific about what you want to achieve. Break your larger goal into smaller, interim steps that guide you toward your ultimate objective. These may include diet, exercise, and training milestones that align with your overall plan. Make sure each goal is measurable, and write everything down, including timelines for both interim and final goals. Regularly track your progress and celebrate your achievements to maintain motivation.

Finally, build a support system that includes family and friends. You may also benefit from expert guidance, such as working with an exercise professional or sports coach. By following these steps, you'll be well on your way to setting and achieving your fitness goals.

Source: <https://5bridgeshealthandfitness.com/blog/fitness-new-years-resolutions/>



Shine Bright this Winter

How to Avoid the Effects of SAD

Lisa Kyler – Wellworks For You

As the days grow shorter and colder, many people find themselves feeling low on energy, unmotivated, or even downright sad. If this sounds familiar, you might be experiencing Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), a form of depression tied to the changing seasons. While SAD is common, especially in the winter months, there are steps you can take to keep your mood and energy levels steady.

BRIGHTEN YOUR DAY WITH LIGHT THERAPY

Lack of sunlight during winter months can disrupt your body's internal clock and reduce serotonin levels, which can lead to SAD symptoms. One of the most effective ways to counteract this is through light therapy. Sitting near a light box for 20-30 minutes each morning can mimic natural sunlight and help regulate your mood. If you don't have a light box, simply spending time outdoors on bright days can also help.

STAY ACTIVE AND MOVE YOUR BODY

Exercise is a natural mood booster. Physical activity releases endorphins and can improve symptoms of depression, including SAD. Whether it's taking a brisk walk, trying a new workout, or stretching with yoga, moving your body can make a big difference. Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate activity most days of the week.

PRIORITIZE SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

It's tempting to hibernate during the colder months, but isolation can make SAD symptoms worse. Stay connected with family, friends, or colleagues through phone calls, virtual chats, or in-person meetups when possible. Joining a group activity, like a book club or fitness class, can also lift your spirits and provide a sense of belonging.

FUEL YOUR BODY WITH MOOD-BOOSTING FOODS

A balanced diet supports both your body and your mind. Focus on foods rich in vitamin D, omega-3 fatty acids, and complex carbohydrates to keep your energy and mood stable. Examples include salmon, leafy greens, nuts, whole grains, and fortified dairy products. Avoid overindulging in sugary snacks, which can lead to energy crashes and mood swings.

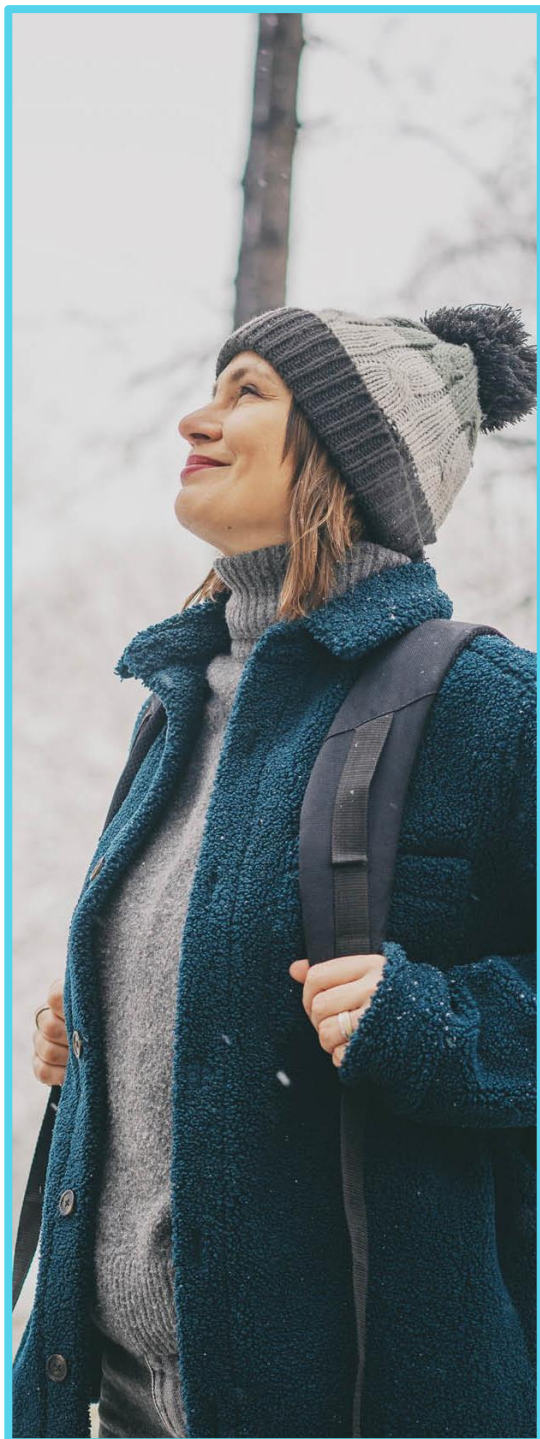
STICK TO A CONSISTENT ROUTINE

Keeping a regular schedule can help regulate your body's internal clock and improve sleep quality. Try to go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, even on weekends, and spend time outdoors during daylight hours to maintain your natural rhythm.

If you've tried these tips and are still feeling down or struggling with daily tasks, it might be time to reach out for professional support. Therapies like counseling or medication can be highly effective in treating SAD. Don't hesitate to consult a healthcare provider—they're there to help you feel your best.

This winter, take charge of your mental well-being by incorporating these simple but effective strategies into your routine. Seasonal changes can be challenging, but with the right tools and habits, you can keep yourself happy and healthy all season long.

Source: <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/seasonal-affective-disorder>



FEATURED RECIPE

High-Fiber Apple Cranberry Baked Oats

8 Servings | Total Time: 70 Minutes

Gluten-Free, Vegetarian, Heart-Healthy



INGREDIENTS:

- 2 large Fuji or Honeycrisp apples
- 2 1/2 cups gluten-free old-fashioned rolled oats
- 1 1/2 cups whole milk
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1/3 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons grated orange zest
- 3 tablespoons orange juice
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 3/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups frozen cranberries

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 375F. Lightly coat a 7-by-11-inch baking dish with cooking spray.
2. Using the large holes of a box grater, grate 1 apple to yield about 3/4 cup packed. Set aside. Cut the remaining apple into 1/2 -inch cubes to yield about 1 cup.
3. Combine the oats, milk, eggs, brown sugar, orange zest, orange juice, vanilla, baking powder, cinnamon, nutmeg and salt in a large bowl; stir until thoroughly combined. Fold in cranberries and the grated apple. Transfer to the prepared baking dish and sprinkle with the chopped apple.
4. Bake until golden brown and set, 40 to 45 minutes. Let cool for 15 minutes. Slice and serve warm or at room temperature.

NUTRITION

Per Serving: 1 piece

Calories: 230

Carbohydrates: 40g

Saturated Fat: 2g

Total Sugars: 19g

Protein: 7g

Dietary Fiber: 5g

Cholesterol: 51mg

Sodium: 169mg

Source:

www.eatingwell.com/high-fiber-apple-cranberry-baked-oats-8737780