

Chill Out: Exercising Even When It's Cold

It's too cold to go out. That's a classic excuse to avoid exercising when the temperature drops. But cold weather doesn't have to keep you from getting outdoors.

Every year in early December, a small group of runners bundle up to brave temperatures around -22°F to run the Antarctic Ice Marathon.

Race officials make sure runners have the proper clothing for the conditions. The runners wear layers of thermal, fleece, and windproof clothing. They also cover their hands, feet, head, and face to run in the cold. And along the frozen 26.2-mile course, runners can take a break in a heated tent.

"It is extremely important to keep the peripherals [hands, feet, and ears] warm," says Ice Marathon Race Director Richard Donovan. "These are the most vulnerable to cold-related conditions."

Cold weather exercising is great, but experts recommend exercising indoors when temperatures or the wind chill factor drops below 0° Fahrenheit.

For exercising in "normal" cold weather, take a tip from cold-weather exercise experts: Dress in layers of clothing – a jacket, hat, gloves, tights, long-sleeve shirt, and undershirt. The layers help maintain your body heat and wick moisture away from your skin. As your body temperature increases during your workout, you can remove a layer. Especially protect your hands, ears and feet first with thick, warm, gloves, socks, and stocking cap.

If you have asthma or other breathing problems, talk with your doctor first. You may need to avoid exercising in cold weather.

The Antarctic Ice Marathon. 2011.

Field manual for the U.S. Antarctic Program. National Science Foundation. 2010.



Vitamin B12 – A Key to Keeping Your Memory Intact

Lost your keys? Walked into a room and forgotten why you were there? Missed an important appointment?

If you've ever felt like your memory was slipping, you're not alone. Mild memory loss is a normal part of aging. However, the right amount of vitamin B12 in your diet might help your brain stay healthy longer. It may also help you retain memory as you age.

In a recent four-year study, researchers tracked 121 adults who were over age 65 when the study began. They tested the group's B12 levels. They also had members of the group perform several memory tests and have a brain scan.

The researchers found that adequate vitamin B12 in the diet helped prevent memory loss. B12 also slowed memory loss in these older adults as they aged. Those with low levels of vitamin B12 had more memory loss than those with adequate levels of the vitamin.

The right amount of vitamin B12 might improve your brain health and memory. Here are ways to get enough vitamin B12 in your diet:

- Aim for 2.4 to 6 micrograms of vitamin B12 daily.
- Fish, meat, poultry, eggs, milk, and dairy products are naturally high in vitamin B12. Plant foods such as fortified cereal and soy milk are also good sources of B12.
- Most people get enough vitamin B12 from the foods they eat. However, some people have trouble absorbing vitamin B12 from food.

Your doctor can test your vitamin B12 level to see if you have a deficiency.

- If you don't eat any dairy, eggs, fish, poultry, or meat, take a B12 supplement.
- If you are over age 50, take a B12 supplement. Your body's ability to absorb vitamin B12 from food decreases as you age.
- Avoid alcohol and excessive use of antacids. Both interfere with B12 absorption.

National Institutes of Health.

Archives of Neurology. 1998.

Neurology. 2011.

For more about vitamin B12 sources, see www.cdc.gov/Features/VitaminB12/

Purple Potato Eaters Lower Blood Pressure

Potatoes are a healthy food. True or False? The answer isn't as simple as you might think. It's actually both.

You can't eat a supersized serving of French fries or bag of potato chips and think you're eating healthy. One study suggests that just one extra daily serving of potatoes, baked or fried, can cause more weight gain than a daily can of soda. In addition, French fries and potatoes don't count as healthy vegetable choices, according to the Harvard School of Public Health.

But in a recent study, eating *purple* potatoes helped overweight and obese people lower their blood pressure. In the study, a group of overweight and obese adults with high blood pressure ate 6-8 small microwaved purple



potatoes twice a day for four weeks. The group did not eat any purple potatoes for another four weeks, but followed their normal diet. At the end of the study, the participants' blood pressure had dropped an average of 4 percent. Notably, the group did not gain weight during the study.

Researchers think it was the nutrients in the purple potato skins, such as vitamin C, potassium, and fiber, that reduced the participants' high blood pressure. Keeping your blood pressure in a normal range will reduce the risk of damage to your heart, brain, kidneys, and eyes.

New England Journal of Medicine. 2011.

American Chemical Society. 2011.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

5 Ways to Fight Holiday Weight Gain

Do you kick off the holiday season with a plate full of good intentions? Most people do. Still, the average American adult gains 1 to 2 pounds during the holidays.

That may not seem like much. But over two-thirds of U.S. adults are already overweight or obese. Add 20 or 30 years of gaining a few pounds a year and you could look a little like Santa himself.

You can still enjoy holiday foods through New Year's. You just need a plan to avoid weight gain. Here are some things to do:

1. Eat more fruits and vegetables.
2. Instead of candy, choose healthy snacks such as almonds, yogurt, air-popped popcorn, or salsa with whole-grain crackers.
3. Never go to a party hungry!
4. Go easy on the alcohol.
5. Make time to exercise.

You don't want the gift you remember most to be the extra pounds you packed on during the holidays. Give yourself the gift of good health. Make a plan to eat healthy and exercise regularly. Stick to it, and you'll have something to celebrate.

New England Journal of Medicine. 2000.
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
National Institutes of Health.

Going to Work Sick is a Gamble



When a casino employee in Reno, Nevada, gambled that he could go

to work sick and not infect anyone else, he lost the bet. The sick employee spread the norovirus to 365 co-workers. At least half of the employees who became sick also stayed on the job. In a few days, an estimated 700 guests had nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and stomach cramps linked to their stay at the hotel and casino.

Health officials traced the outbreak to sick workers who failed to wash their hands after going to the bathroom.

An estimated 20 million people suffer from the norovirus every year. The norovirus is responsible for more illnesses than all other viruses, bacteria, and parasites combined.

All it takes is a microscopic droplet of the bug to sicken someone else. The norovirus is spread through contaminated stool or vomit that makes its way into food or beverages by someone who is sick. Even the most thorough hand-washing may not entirely eliminate the virus. That's why health officials recommend not preparing or serving food until two or three days after feeling better.

To stop the spread of the norovirus:

- Wash your hands with soap and water every time you use the bathroom.
- Wash fruits and vegetables before you eat them or prep them for cooking.
- Cook meat and seafood thoroughly.
- Use disinfectants on contaminated surfaces.
- Avoid contact with others for 1-2 days after you or they are infected.

Learn how to protect yourself from the norovirus at www.cdc.gov/features/norovirus

Norovirus Blog. 2011.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

ASK THE WELLNESS DOCTOR

Q: How much calcium do I need?

A: Go to www.wellspring.com/ask-dailycalcium.pdf to read the answer from Don Hall, DrPH, CHES.

To ask your question, email: evan@wellspring.com, subject line: Ask the Wellness Doctor. Emails with any other subject line will be directed to the spam folder.

Health Challenge: "Rediscover the Art of Celebration" available at: www.wellspring.com/wn/hc-celebrate.pdf
Stay positive during the holiday season with these helpful tips.