

WELCOA\* | OCTOBER 2022

# WELL BALANCED<sup>o</sup>

*Cultivating  
Kindness*

FOR A HEALTHIER  
MIND & BODY

THE BEST WAYS TO  
**COMBAT  
CYBERBULLYING**

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FINDING THE BEST TIME TO  
**GET ACTIVE**

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THE SURPRISING  
**HEALTH  
BENEFITS**  
OF BEING KIND

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# 5-MINUTE Candied Pecans

Lightly sweetened candied pecans come together in just minutes on the stovetop. They have a crackling sugar glaze. Enjoy them as a snack, add them to salads, or use them as a dessert topping.

1 cup raw pecan halves

2 Tablespoons sugar

1 Tablespoon water

1/8 teaspoon vanilla extract

Pinch of salt

Dash of cinnamon

#### SERVINGS:

8 people. Makes 1 cup of candied pecans.

#### DIRECTIONS:

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Set aside.

Bring a non-stick skillet to a medium heat. Pour the pecan halves into the dry skillet, and toast them for a couple of minutes.

Add sugar, water, and vanilla extract to the skillet. The sugar will melt into the water almost immediately, quickly creating a syrup. Use a spatula to evenly coat the pecans in syrup. Turn off the heat.

Pour the glazed pecans onto the parchment paper-lined baking sheet. Sprinkle with salt and a dash of cinnamon.

Allow the pecans to fully cool before storing in a covered container.

#### NUTRITION INFO:

Calories 97, Fat 9g, Carbs 5g, Protein 1g, Sodium 1mg, Sugar 3g



From the Kitchen of CADRY NELSON // Cadry is the writer, photographer, and recipe creator at Cadry's Kitchen, a vegan food and lifestyle blog. She shares plant-based comfort food classics that are ready in about 30 minutes. Cadry has been featured on Today, NBC News, Mashable, Reader's Digest, Shape, and Huffington Post. For more, visit [cadryskitchen.com](http://cadryskitchen.com).

# Carve ROOM IN YOUR MENU FOR Pumpkin

What is your experience with the season's most popular squash? If you said, "I like to cut two triangles for eyes and a big toothy grin," then it's time to up your pumpkin game.

After all, pumpkin squash isn't just a prime spot for candle holding. It's also a low-calorie vegetable (that is technically a fruit). It's chockfull of nutrients, vitamins, and minerals.

There are endless reasons to add this beloved squash to your autumn menu!

Let's start with the basics. One cup of cooked pumpkin has a mere 49 calories. It's high in fiber and very low in fat.

Pumpkin owes its vibrant orange hue to beta carotene. This antioxidant has been shown to reduce the risk of developing certain cancers (like lung and prostate), and protect against heart disease.

Bodies take beta carotene and convert it into vitamin A. Just one cup of cooked pumpkin satisfies about 200% of your recommended daily allotment of vitamin A.

That's good news for your immune system. Vitamin A helps fight off infections. It also promotes good skin and eye health.

Pumpkin also includes vitamins C, E, iron, potassium, and folate. Plus, the lutein and zeaxanthin found in pumpkin have been linked to lower risks of cataracts and age-related macular degeneration.

All the more reason to grab a pumpkin for your front stoop, and then bring another one into your kitchen.

## Ways to incorporate pumpkin into your diet

Pumpkin is incredibly versatile. It can be used in both sweet and savory applications. Obviously, many people associate it with pies and sweet drinks.

Here are even more ideas for everyone's favorite winter squash:

- » Stir it into oatmeal for added nutrients
- » Use it to substitute oil, eggs, or butter in baking

- » Add it to pancake, muffin, or brownie batter for moisture
- » Blend it into smoothies or dips for fall flavor
- » Incorporate it into creamy soups
- » Make pumpkin pasta or risotto
- » Add it to curry to temper spicy heat with sweetness
- » Roast it with rosemary for a fragrant side dish

## Don't forget the seeds!

Roasted pumpkin seeds are a delicious way to use the entire pumpkin. Plus, they're nutritious! A handful of roasted pumpkin seeds is packed with protein, fiber, and antioxidants. It's also a tasty snack in its own right.

To prepare them, pull the seeds from the cavity of a pumpkin. Remove any excess pulp. Boil seeds in salt water for 5 minutes, then drain and dry completely. Toss pumpkin seeds with oil and salt, then roast on a baking sheet at 350 degrees for 10 to 25 minutes, depending on the size of the seeds. You'll know they're done when the seeds are golden brown.



**About CADRY NELSON** // Cadry is the writer, photographer, and recipe creator at Cadry's Kitchen, a vegan food and lifestyle blog. She shares plant-based comfort food classics that are ready in about 30 minutes. Cadry has been featured on Today, NBC News, Mashable, Reader's Digest, Shape, and Huffington Post. For more, visit [cadryskitchen.com](http://cadryskitchen.com).

# THE BENEFITS OF *Being Kind*



There's a common-held belief that being kind can help us get into the "good place", but did you know that being kind can actually reap long-lasting health benefits?! Mounting scientific research reveals that demonstrating simple acts of kindness can promote heart health, reduce stress, and help you live longer—just to name a few.

Here's what the science is saying about kindness and your health:

### **A kind heart can lead to a healthy heart.**

When you're showing a genuine act of kindness, it can prompt your body to produce oxytocin. Oxytocin is a cardioprotective hormone that has been shown to reduce inflammation and improve cardiovascular function. <sup>[1]</sup> Moreover, a recent study found that people who spent money on others were more likely to have lower blood pressure than those who spent money on themselves. <sup>[2]</sup> High blood pressure is one of the most significant risk factors for heart attack and stroke, and by lowering your blood pressure, you're decreasing your risk of developing a heart condition.

**Some selflessness can promote calmness and reduce anxiety.** Being kind boosts serotonin and dopamine, which are neurotransmitters in the brain that promote calmness and a peaceful feeling that can help combat depression and anxiety. In fact, a recent study from the University of British Columbia revealed that highly anxious individuals who performed at least six acts of kindness a week experienced a significant increase in positive moods, relationship satisfaction, and a decrease in social avoidance. <sup>[3]</sup>

**Kindness can help you cope with pain and heal faster.** Showing acts of kindness can release endorphins, which act as your body's natural pain killer. <sup>[4]</sup> Helping others is also believed to increase levels of an endorphin-like chemical in the body called substance P, which can relieve pain. <sup>[5]</sup>

### **Showing compassion can lead to a longer life.**

Studies have shown that people who regularly volunteer or spend a significant amount of time serving others tend to live longer and have a lower chance of dying early than those who don't. <sup>[6]</sup> Additionally, those who make kindness a habit have been shown to have 23 percent

less cortisol (the stress hormone) and age slower than the average population. <sup>[7]</sup>

### **Super Simple Ways to Be Kind**

Showing acts of kindness, both big and small, makes a positive impact on your family, friends, and community. Of course, you stand to gain numerous benefits from being kind as well. It is important to note that to reap these benefits requires you to develop a life-long habit of being kind to others. Fortunately, it doesn't take a ton of effort to be kind. Small and simple acts can do the trick. Here are some tips to get you started:

- » Smile at strangers you see on the street, at the grocery store, etc.
- » Greet people you see with a warm and genuine "good morning" or "good afternoon".
- » Give someone a genuine compliment.
- » Hold the door for the person behind you.
- » Pay for the person behind you in the line at the coffee shop.
- » Give up your seat on a crowded bus or waiting room.

<sup>[1]</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC747297/> <sup>[2]</sup> [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283724094\\_Is\\_spending\\_money\\_on\\_others\\_good\\_for\\_your\\_heart](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283724094_Is_spending_money_on_others_good_for_your_heart)

<sup>[3]</sup> <https://psych.ubc.ca/news/kindness-may-help-socially-anxious-people-relax-says-new-research-by-dr-lynn-alden/> <sup>[4]</sup> <https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/the-art-of-kindness>

- » Show your pets some extra love during playtime.
- » Help friends, family, and neighbors when you recognize they need it. This could mean babysitting, pet sitting, or helping with a chore or project.
- » Say “I love you” to those you love, every day.
- » Help keep your community clean and pick up litter if you see it.
- » Surprise someone you know who may need a pick-me-up with a thoughtful gift—flowers, cookies, a bottle of wine.
- » Donate to your favorite cause or charity.
- » Volunteer when and where you can—at your place of worship, your child’s school, a local shelter, etc.



### Remember! Be kind to yourself.

If you’re not taking the steps to be kind to yourself—getting enough sleep, exercising, practicing self-care, affirming yourself, etc.—it will be more difficult to treat others with kindness. Make sure you’re taking the time you need to show yourself some compassion and love!



## Ask the Expert...

### How long does it take to reap the health benefits of being kind?

A simple act of kindness can reward our bodies and minds with feel-good chemical substances right away. However, you can’t perform one single act of kindness and expect to realize long-term health gains. To fully reap the health benefits, kindness needs to become part of your daily routine. This doesn’t necessarily mean you have to volunteer at a food bank every weekend—small and quick acts of kindness like saying hello to a stranger count!

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*Have a question?* Ask our experts by going to [welcoa.org/expert](https://welcoa.org/expert). If your question is selected we will contact you directly with your answer and it will be featured in an upcoming issue.

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# LOOKING AFTER YOUR Lymphatic System

You may not hear or think much about your lymphatic system, but it's a vital and complex system that plays a critical part in your health. Keeping this system in tip-top shape can help your body absorb essential nutrients and squash infections. Here's what you need to know.

## What is the Lymphatic System?

The lymphatic system is a network of tissues, vessels, and organs that work together to move a colorless, watery fluid called lymph back into your bloodstream. <sup>[8]</sup> When your lymphatic system is working properly it helps your body:

**Maintain proper fluid levels.** The lymphatic system collects excess fluid that's excreted from cells and tissue throughout your body and returns it to your bloodstream. This allows for fluid balance in your body.

**Absorb fats from the digestive tract.** Recent scientific research highlights the importance of the lymphatic system for the absorption of dietary fats and fat-soluble vitamins in the digestive system. <sup>[9]</sup>

**Fight infections.** The lymphatic system plays an important part in your body's ability to fight disease and infection. It releases white blood cells and other immune cells that help your body fight bacteria, viruses, and parasites that may enter your body. <sup>[10]</sup>

**Remove cellular waste.** The lymphatic system removes waste products and abnormal cells from your body.

## Show Your Lymphatic System Some Love

You can support your lymphatic system through healthy lifestyle habits like:

**Physical activity.** When you move your body, you're also helping your lymphatic system move fluid and waste through your system. Whether it's a run, walk or regularly standing up and stretching throughout the day, engaging in different forms of exercise can promote healthy lymphatic activity.

**Deep breathing.** Moving the diaphragm muscle through deep breathing can also help lymphatic fluids circulate.

**Staying hydrated.** If you're not properly hydrated, less fluid will flow through your body. Drinking sufficient water throughout the day encourages healthy lymphatic function.

**Eating whole foods.** A diet rich in nutrient-dense, whole foods like fruits and vegetables and limiting processed foods and beverages can improve overall health and optimal lymph function. <sup>[11]</sup>

## Warning Signs to Watch For

A poorly working lymphatic system can lead to lymphedema. Lymphedema signs and symptoms include:

- » Swelling of part or all of the arm or leg, including fingers or toes
- » Restricted range of motion
- » Recurring infections
- » Hardening and thickening of the skin (fibrosis)

Make an appointment with your doctor if you notice any of these signs. <sup>[12]</sup>

# Workouts THAT Work FOR YOU

## Finding the Best Time of Day to Get Active

There's been a lot of debate around the best time to exercise—is it ideal to do it first thing in the morning? During your lunch hour? Is it a good idea to exercise at night? To be sure, there's a good amount of research on the topic. Here's what you need to know.

### What's the best time to exercise?

Most experts will agree that any time you can find to exercise (without compromising other areas of your well-being) is the best time to exercise. After all, lack of time is one of the most common reasons adults say they're not regularly active. So, if the afternoon is the best time for you to carve out some body-loving movement, you should stick to that. That being said, if your schedule is flexible you may want to consider experimenting to find the time of day that leaves you feeling energized and able to make the most of your workout.

### How to find your exercise "sweet spot"

When it comes to finding the ideal time to exercise there's a lot to consider, and most of it is specific to your unique needs. Here are some key items and questions to consider:

*Do you commonly miss workouts during the day due to distractions and scheduling conflicts?* First off, remember that you are deserving of making your self-care a priority on your daily calendar. With that being said, oftentimes putting yourself first before your hectic workday begins can be the easiest for scheduling. Moreover, early exercisers often say that a morning routine leaves them feeling more energized and productive during the day.

» **Take note:** If you experiment with early morning workouts consider keeping a workout journal to hold yourself accountable to that self-care appointment, and make note of how you feel throughout the day. Are you hitting the snooze button? Do you feel energized or groggy during the rest of the day?

*Do you have problems falling asleep?* If you struggle to fall asleep, intense workouts close to your bedtime could prove problematic. One recent study revealed that vigorous exercise an hour before bed could delay sleep and disturb sleep quality.<sup>[13]</sup>

» **Take note:** Keep a sleep log and track how easily you can fall and stay asleep.

Also, make note of the days and times you exercise. This will help give you an idea of whether morning or evening workouts have any impact on your sleep.

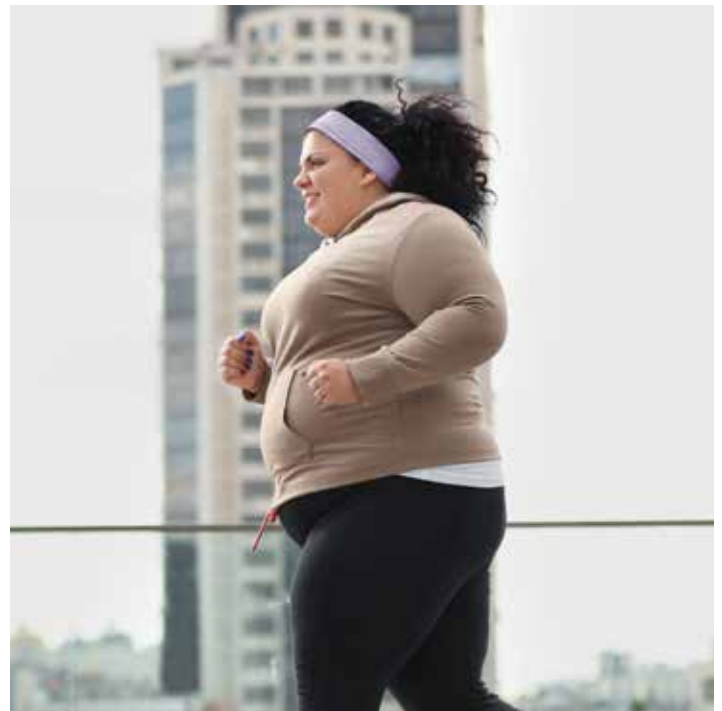
*Do you often "bring work home"?* If you often worry and think about work long after the work day is done, evening exercise can be a great way to de-stress, refocus on taking care of yourself, and leave your workday behind you.

» **Take note:** Be conscious of performing strenuous exercise too close to your bedtime, as cited above, it could possibly have a negative impact on your sleep.

Remember, carving out time and space to make your physical wellness a priority is important. How you choose to get there is up to you. Take time to consider your schedule and preferences to find the best way to make your workouts work for you.

### In praise of PM workouts!

One scientific study revealed that strength and flexibility are greatest in the late afternoon and that perceived exertion (meaning how hard you feel that your body is working) is lowest.<sup>[14]</sup>



<sup>[13]</sup> Stutz J, Eiholzer R, Spengler CM. Effects of Evening Exercise on Sleep in Healthy Participants: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *Sports medicine*. 2019;49(2):269–287

<sup>[14]</sup> [https://journals.lww.com/nsca-jscr/Fulltext/2012/07000/The\\_Effect\\_of\\_Training\\_at\\_a\\_Specific\\_Time\\_of\\_Day\\_33.aspx](https://journals.lww.com/nsca-jscr/Fulltext/2012/07000/The_Effect_of_Training_at_a_Specific_Time_of_Day_33.aspx)

# HELP FIGHT *Bullying* IN YOUR COMMUNITY

October is National Bullying Prevention Month. It's a great time for parents, educators, and students of all ages to learn about bullying, and more importantly, how to put a stop to it.

Believe it or not, you can help prevent bullying by simply addressing it and talking about it. In fact, research shows that when adults respond quickly and consistently to bullying, they send the message that it is not acceptable and therefore can help stop bullying behavior over time. <sup>[15]</sup>

## The New Landscape

The bullying landscape has changed tremendously over the past few decades. Children can still certainly get picked on at school, on the playground, or in the lunchroom, however, nowadays it seems that most bullying occurs online, which is also known as cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying is bullying with the use of digital technologies. It can take place on social media, messaging platforms, gaming platforms, and mobile phones. It is repeated behavior, aimed at scaring, angering, or shaming those who are targeted. <sup>[16]</sup>

Examples of cyberbullying include:

- » Posting comments, pictures, and/or videos about someone online that are mean, embarrassing, hurtful, and/or false.
- » Threatening to hurt someone or telling them to kill themselves.
- » Impersonating someone else online in order to solicit or post personal or false information about that person.

## Your Role

One of the best ways to stop cyberbullying is to talk with your child about the topic. Make sure they understand what cyberbullying is. Many adolescents don't even consider online bullying as "real bullying" because it doesn't happen face to face. Indeed, you want to make sure your child isn't unknowingly acting as a cyberbully. Spend time discussing examples and the ramifications of cyberbullying.

You'll also want to discuss and be prepared to address bullying if your child is a victim:

**Don't respond, but do report.** Be above the cyberbully and don't even acknowledge their hurtful and childish behavior. Instead, make sure your child knows to report it right away. Your child may be too embarrassed to share details with you, so make sure they also know they can report bullying behavior to platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok, etc. These platforms have strict policies on cyberbullying and harmful content and will remove any offenders.

**Take any threat seriously.** If any type of threat is made, make sure your child knows they must report this to you. Make a deal with your child that no judgment or punishment will come from you if they're scared or embarrassed. This is a matter of safety—threats should never be ignored and should be reported to authorities.

**Stick with trusted circles.** It's always important to have a trusted and supportive group of friends. If you're experiencing bullying, this circle of friends is even more critical. These are the people who can help you through difficult times and cheer you up.

