WELL BALANCED°

Welcoming Winter:
WELLNESS STRATEGIES FOR A HAPPY WINTER SEASON

TRIED AND TRUE
WAYS TO RECHARGE

———

HOW TO BEST
PREPARE FOR FLU SEASON

———

DON'T LET THE COLD STOP YOU:
THE BENEFITS OF WINTER WORKOUTS

Cashew NOG

Looking for a festive drink this holiday season? Make cashew nog! No raw eggs here. Just cashews, vanilla, spices, and dates for sweetness. It's endlessly creamy!

4 cups unsweetened non-dairy milk

¾ cup raw cashews

6 Medjool dates, pitted

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon, plus extra for garnish

1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg

Dash of cardamom

Pinch of salt

4 cinnamon sticks (optional garnish)

NUTRITION INFO:

Calories 271, Fat 6g, Carbs 46g, Protein 12g, Sodium 122mg

DIRECTIONS:

In a high-speed blender, combine unsweetened non-dairy milk, raw cashews, pitted Medjool dates, vanilla extract, ground cinnamon, ground nutmeg, a dash of cardamom, and a pinch of salt.

(No high-speed blender? Grind the raw cashews first in a clean coffee grinder, until they become the texture of flour. Then add them to the blender with the remaining ingredients.)

Blend until everything is fully broken down, and you don't hear any crunching sounds in the blender.

You can drink it right away, but it becomes much thicker and richer if refrigerated for a few hours.

When you're ready to serve it, pour the nog into 4 glasses. Garnish each drink with a shake of ground cinnamon and finish with a cinnamon stick.

SERVINGS:

4 people

EXCELLENT SOURCE OF CALCIUM

A glassful of this eggless nog isn't just delicious! It also provides 399 milligrams of calcium. That's about 40% of your daily calcium requirements!

Calcium is a mineral that is best known for its part in building strong bones and teeth. It also helps blood clotting, contracting muscles, nerve function, releasing hormones, and regulating heart rhythms.

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.

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Good Mood Foods
FOR THE DARKEST TIME OF YEAR

Remember July? We sat on the porch until 8:30 at night waiting for the sun to go down...Those were the days.

In the winter, late summer nights seem like a lifetime ago—especially when the sun is setting before we've even stepped outside the office.

When so much of the day is spent in darkness, it can dampen your spirits and leave you feeling sluggish. All of that gray may have you wanting to curl up on the sofa, dive into comfort food, and hibernate until spring.

As much as we might like it, there's no pressing fast forward on winter. But we can do our best to buoy our spirits with some good mood food.

Start the Day with a Satisfying Breakfast

Studies have shown that eating a balanced breakfast can lead to more energy, better memory, and a more even-keeled attitude.

Each morning, focus on getting an array of fiber, protein, healthy fat, and carbohydrates.

Here's one of my easy favorites: avocado toast on whole wheat bread with pickled red onions and a few slices of baked tofu.

I also like peanut butter toast with sliced banana for a delectable combination of salty and sweet. Nuts are packed with satiating protein and heart-healthy fat.

Load Up on Dark Leafy Greens

Dark leafy greens are filled with antioxidants, magnesium, and folate, all of which have been tied to happier dispositions.[1,2,3] Fill your produce drawers with collards, bok choy, turnip greens, kale, and spinach.

Sauté greens with garlic for a delicious side dish, or enjoy them raw in a salad.

Help Your Gut With Fermented Foods

Did you know that only about 10% of serotonin production happens in the brain?[4] The rest of it happens in the gut!

Improve your gut biome with fermented foods like sauerkraut, kimchi, kombucha, tempeh, and non-dairy yogurt. Research has linked fermented foods with lower incidences of anxiety, depression, and stress.[5,6]

» Add raw sauerkraut to sandwiches and pizza.

» Throw kimchi into a brown rice bowl.

» Make a tempeh BLT for lunch.

Incorporate Omega-3 Fatty Acids

Omega-3s are well known for their many health benefits, including the potential to help with mood. One study out of the University of Pittsburgh found that those who had higher levels of omega-3 fatty acids were less prone to mild or moderate symptoms of depression.[7]

Cram more omega-3s into your diet by way of flaxseed, chia seeds, walnuts, and soybeans.

» Add ground flaxseed or chia seeds to your morning smoothie.

» Make a simple overnight chia pudding for breakfast.

» Add walnuts to salads, or use them in pesto instead of pine nuts.

» Snack on steamed edamame with flaky sea salt.

Get Sweet on Chocolate

As if we needed an excuse to indulge in dark chocolate!

Flavonoids in the cocoa plant increase blood flow in the brain and offer anti-inflammatory effects. Plus, eating chocolate just makes us feel good!

Choose chocolates that contain at least 70% cocoa solids for the maximum endorphin-releasing and mood-boosting benefits.

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.

[1] https://bit.ly/3tEHTUt [2] https://www.livestrong.com/article/486457-the-dosage-of-magnesium-for-anxiety [3] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6211514 [4] https://bit.ly/3hQfuZ8
[5] https://www.mdpi.com/2072-6643/13/6/1783/htm [6] https://bit.ly/3hLjFoZ [7] https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2006/03/060303205050.htm

REJUVENATE

FROM THE *Inside Out!*

Balancing items like work, family, and your social life can prove overwhelming at times. Indeed, there may be days when you feel flat-out exhausted. Simple tasks like replying to a message or taking the trash out can seem like daunting feats when you're feeling tired and rundown. If this sounds familiar, you're not alone. A recent survey conducted by OnePoll reveals that three in five Americans feel more tired now than they've ever been in their lives.[8]

The good news is that there are several simple and effective ways to get re-energized and revitalized. Here's how you can get some "oomph" back into your day:

Get your read on. A recent University of Sussex study discovered participants' stress levels decreased after *less than 10 minutes of reading.*[9] The study's authors noted that it doesn't matter what you read, so long as you're enjoying what you're reading. This type of engaged reading can provide an escape from the worries and stresses of everyday life. Maybe now's the time to join a book club!

Get creative in the kitchen. Making a home-cooked meal can prove relaxing and reinvigorating, especially if you're cooking a favorite family meal or experimenting with new ingredients. Practice mindfulness while you're in the kitchen. Take in the aromas and chop with purpose and calmness of mind. And a bonus benefit of cooking at home—it may help you live longer! People who cook at home up to five times a week are 47% more likely to live another 10 years, according to research conducted on a group of elderly Taiwanese citizens.[10]

Set a "breather" alarm. Taking a few minutes to simply focus on your breath can do wonders to recharge and relieve stress. Long, slow breaths in which you breathe in deeply and exhale slowly enable more air to flow into your body and can help calm your nerves, reducing stress and anxiety. Some studies even show that deep breathing can help you improve your attention span and lower pain levels.[11,12] Set a daily alarm on your smartphone so you remember to focus on your breath every day.

Check out your company benefits. We spend a good amount of our waking hours working, so it makes sense to recharge and rejuvenate at the workplace! Many companies have enhanced their benefits to provide employees with ways to stay healthy and reduce stress. Onsite fitness facilities, cooking classes, and physical and mental well-being programs are just a few ways companies across the country are helping keep their employees healthy. Talk to your human resources department if you're unsure of what benefits and programs are available to you.

Venture outside. A 2019 study that included data from almost 20,000 participants found that spending at least two hours in nature per week can significantly boost health and well-being. The authors noted that the benefits remain whether you spend the two hours at once or break it up into smaller segments throughout the week.[13]

Hang with friends. Spending time with good friends can provide a much-needed escape from your day-to-day routine. Friends are also an outlet to share what's on your mind and listen to their feedback and advice. Spending time with friends not only boosts your mood, but can also help you gain fresh, new perspectives. Schedule a lunch or afternoon out with your friends this week!

[8] https://studyfinds.org/exhausted-nation-pandemic-tired-energy [9] https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/health/news/5070874/Reading-can-help-reduce-stress.html [10] https://bit.ly/2w8ncFC [11] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5455070 [12] https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1526-4637.2011.01243.x [13] https://go.nature.com/3hTKoQt

Make time for your hobbies. Spending time on an activity that you enjoy can improve your mental health and well-being. In fact, research shows that people with hobbies are less likely to suffer from stress, low mood, and depression.[14] Whether it's watching movies, dancing, painting, etc., find time for the activities you love.

One Nation Under Stress
Employees of all ages and professions are experiencing the impact of stress, fatigue, and mental health challenges. A recent survey conducted by OnePoll reveals that three in five Americans feel more tired now than they've ever been in their lives.[15]

Ask the Expert...

How can I tell the difference between a bad day and burnout?

There's no universal test or way to medically diagnose burnout, but there are some signs and symptoms that are usually associated with burnout. These signs include:

» Feeling cynical or critical at work

» Having to drag yourself to work

» Difficulty performing at work; decreased productivity

» Irritability with co-workers, customers, or clients

» Lacking the energy to focus

» Having negative feelings and low satisfaction about your job

Keep in mind that we all have stressful, bad days. With burnout, the feelings are chronic and don't go away. See a healthcare professional if you're dealing with stress you can't manage.
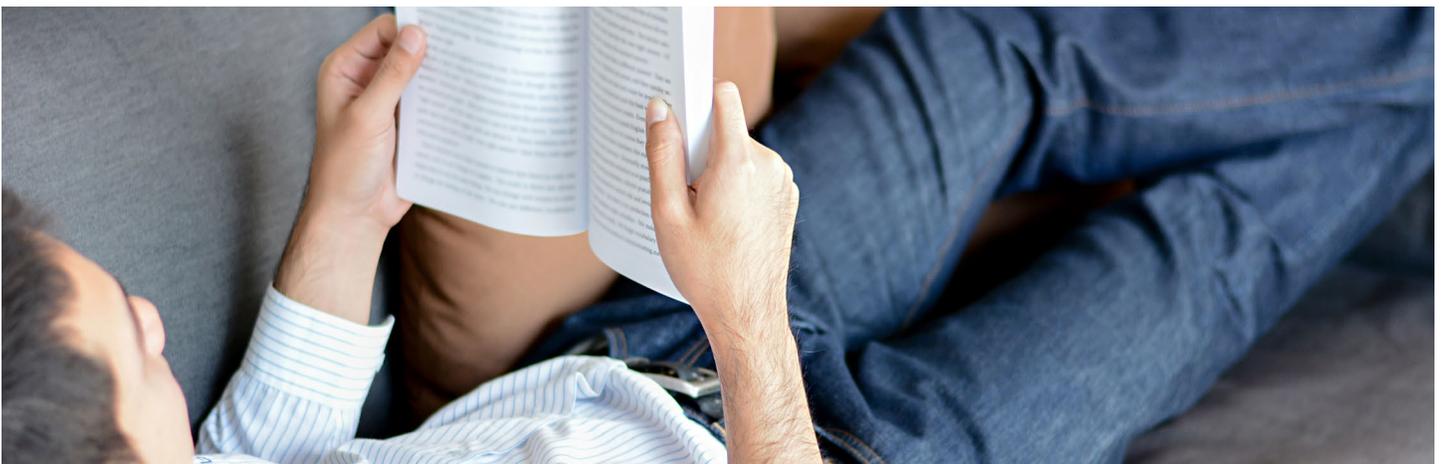
WELL BALANCED™ has an impeccable reputation for providing trustworthy information to improve your well-being and create healthier work cultures. Our network of physicians, dietitians, wellness professionals, and more are here to answer your crucial health questions.

[14] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2863117   [15] https://www.indeed.com/lead/preventing-employee-burnout-report

Protect Yourself
FROM THE FLU
Science-Backed Tips & Tricks

For the past few years, the world has been focused on preventing the spread of COVID-19. That focus is indeed still warranted, but it's also important that we pay attention to the seasonal flu. For most people, the seasonal flu is a mild illness, but sometimes the flu can be serious or even deadly.

First Things First
The best way to protect yourself and others from the seasonal flu is to get vaccinated.[16] The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone age 6 months and older get a flu vaccine every year. It's best to get your flu vaccine by the end of October, but if you haven't gotten the vaccine yet, it's not too late. Getting the vaccine in the winter months can still protect you from the flu, as the flu season can last as late as May.[17]

In addition to getting your yearly flu vaccine, there are some simple, proven, and effective tips that can help keep you and those around you from getting sick:

Put a lid on it. If you're in a public place, make it a habit to put a lid on your coffee mug or glass of water. This can help ensure germs from coughs and sneezes don't find their way into your drink.

Allow fresh air to circulate. In the colder months, we typically have our windows closed, but it's a good idea to open the windows for 20 to 30 minutes to allow fresh air to circulate. Fresh air can help improve airflow, and it can help reduce virus particles in your home from spreading.[18]

Turn up the heat. According to the World Health Organization temperatures of 140°F to 150°F are enough to kill most viruses.[19]

Turn your dishwasher to its highest temperature setting during the winter months and use it to clean and sanitize items like children's toys and pacifiers. You can run them through a high-heat cycle with no detergent, just vinegar. You can also use your dryer's higher heat setting to kill germs on items like throw pillows, blankets, and winter coats. Instead of washing these items daily, you can throw them in the dryer for 30 minutes at high temperatures to kill any viruses that have landed on them.

Clean hard surfaces. Studies show that flu viruses can survive for 24 to 48 hours on hard, nonporous surfaces such as stainless steel and plastic.[20] Spray countertops, doorknobs, light switches, phones, remote controls, etc. with a cleaning spray. Use a paper towel or if you're using a cloth towel, throw it in your washing machine after every use.

Lastly, it's important to always do your best to stay away from people who are sick. If you're sick, stay at home and isolate yourself to prevent the spread of the flu.

What's the difference between the cold and the flu?
The flu, also called influenza, is a viral respiratory illness. It's often confused with the common cold because of the similarity in symptoms, which can include a cough, sore throat, and stuffy nose. However, flu symptoms also include fever, cold sweats, aches throughout the body, headache, exhaustion, and even some gastrointestinal symptoms, such as vomiting and diarrhea.[21]

[16] https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/actions-prevent-flu.htm [17] https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/its-good-time-get-your-flu-vaccine [18] https://bit.ly/3UNdgbp
[19] https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/155821 [20] https://bit.ly/3E8RFTO [21] https://sitn.hms.harvard.edu/flash/2014/the-reason-for-the-season-why-flu-strikes-in-winter

STEP OUT & INTO A HOST OF

Health Benefits

Why You Should Take Your Workouts Outside This Winter

Sticking to your exercise routine in the winter can be challenging. There's less daylight and the colder conditions are conducive to snuggling up under a blanket and turning on your favorite show. However, there's good reason to brave the elements and go outside for a walk, run, or any other activity you enjoy (ok, maybe not swimming).

Here are some of the key benefits of exercising outside when the mercury drops:

Boost your metabolism. Research shows that exercising in cold weather can transform white fat, specifically belly and thigh fat, into calorie-burning brown fat.[22] Brown fat is a type of body fat that helps regulate body temperature. When you're in the cold, brown fat burns calories in order to keep your body warm, and in the process, it gives your metabolisms a bit of a boost.[23]

Lower your risk of heart disease, hypertension, and diabetes. When you're physically active in the cold your calorie-burning brown fat is activated, and your body may even grow new brown-fat cells. This a good thing, considering a study published in 2021 found that individuals with brown fat stores had lower rates of heart disease, and that brown fat was associated with lower rates of coronary artery disease, congestive heart failure, hypertension, and type 2 diabetes.[24]

Improve physical endurance. When exercising in the heat you usually lose fluids quickly and the warm temps can cause your heart rate to rise, which can lead to exhaustion. However, when you're properly dressed and working out in the cold you may not tire as easily. You may find you can exercise longer, which can help you build endurance and stamina.

Battle seasonal affective disorder (SAD) and improve focus and memory. When you exercise outside during the daylight hours you're exposed to sunlight, which experts believe is one of the most effective strategies for addressing SAD; a mood disorder that tends to affect people during the dark winter months.[25] Moreover, some studies have demonstrated that people who exercise in the cold tend to experience improvements in their decision-making, focus, and memory.[26]

Sleep soundly. Exercise, whether done indoors or outdoors, has been shown to aid in falling and staying asleep. But there's additional research that shows the combination of sunlight exposure, fresh air, and physical activity can help you unwind and sleep more deeply.[27]

Lastly, before you begin your cold-weather workout, you'll want to spend a few minutes warming up. Inactive and cold muscles are more prone to injuries. Do some dynamic stretches before you begin your workout. Dynamic stretches involve stretching through the full range of joint motion, which boosts circulation and blood flow to your muscles. Examples of dynamic stretches include wide arm and leg circles, shoulder and neck shrugs, and high steps (bringing your knees high toward your chest).

When is it too cold?
When properly dressed, it's usually safe for most adults to work out in very cold temperatures, even those dropping into the single digits in degrees Fahrenheit. However, at the level of -18 degrees Fahrenheit the risk of hypothermia and frostbite increases, so you should use extreme caution or avoid outdoor exercise at those temps.

[22] https://bit.ly/3tlSVIg [23] https://www.nih.gov/news-events/nih-research-matters/how-brown-fat-improves-metabolism [24] https://www.nature.com/articles/s41591-020-1126-7#Sec11
[25] https://www.webmd.com/depression/features/sunshine-for-sad-sufferers [26] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8471173 [27] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4241899

HOW TO *Reconnect* WITH LONG-LOST FRIENDS

> "It is one of the blessings of old friends that you can afford to be stupid with them."
>
> *-Ralph Waldo Emerson*

From time to time, you may encounter fond memories of an old friend—of chatting, laughing, and spending time with them. If you've lost touch with that friend, you're not alone. According to scientists from Aalto University and the University of Oxford, people often tend to lose touch with others after the age of 25.[28] To be sure, it's difficult to stay in touch with the same circle of friends when you get older, begin working, diversify your social network, or start a family.

It's worthwhile to reconnect with old friends if you miss them and often think of them. You were friends at one point in your lives, so chances are good that that same connection is there. Of course, you may feel awkward about

approaching someone you haven't talked to in years. But rest assured there's nothing inherently abnormal about dropping an old friend a line. You shouldn't feel like you're being desperate or intrusive. People are often delighted to hear from an old friend unexpectedly.

Here are two simple steps to get reconnected:

» **Use social media.** You can usually find anyone via social or professional networks. Send your old pal a note via one of these platforms. Be direct and say something along the lines of, "I know we haven't talked in a while, but I just wanted to check in and say hi and see how you're doing."

» **Wait for and evaluate the response.** If your old friend doesn't reply, don't take it personally. You can take comfort in the fact that you at least tried to reach out, and you can let it be. If they do reply, evaluate the response to guide the next steps. If the response is brief

like, "Things are good, thanks" and doesn't include follow-up questions like, "How are you? What's new?" your old friend may not want to reconnect. However, if there's a lengthier response and follow-up questions, you may want to consider extending an invitation to meet in person.

If you meet in person, you can initiate the conversation by bringing up cherished memories or a funny time you shared. It will help remind you why you were close to begin with and it can help smooth over some of the initial awkwardness. Also, be sure to actively show your interest. Pay attention and ask follow-up questions to get to know who they are today.

Lastly, if things go well make concrete plans to meet again. Don't let years go by again before you reconnect!

[28] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4852646