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Learning together

Embracing lifelong learning keeps our minds sharp and lives vibrant. It's about continuously seeking new knowledge and skills, no matter your age. This pursuit offers incredible benefits, even more so when you learn together with others:

- Group learning fosters a dynamic environment where diverse perspectives ignite new ideas.
- When you learn together, you also build a supportive community, enhancing motivation and making the process more enjoyable.
- Discussing concepts with others helps you grasp complex ideas more thoroughly. Group members are able to better analyze information from multiple angles.
- Learning groups offer a fantastic way to meet new people who share your interests, combating isolation.
- Tackling challenges as a team, like in a coding club, allows individuals to contribute their unique strengths, leading to innovative solutions.
- Sharing your expertise, whether it's explaining a tricky math concept or demonstrating a yoga pose, builds self-assurance and reinforces your own understanding.

Rising cancer in
younger adults
PAGE 2

Deficient in
vitamin D?
PAGE 3

Potluck
power-up
PAGE 4

Are you sober
curious?
PAGE 5

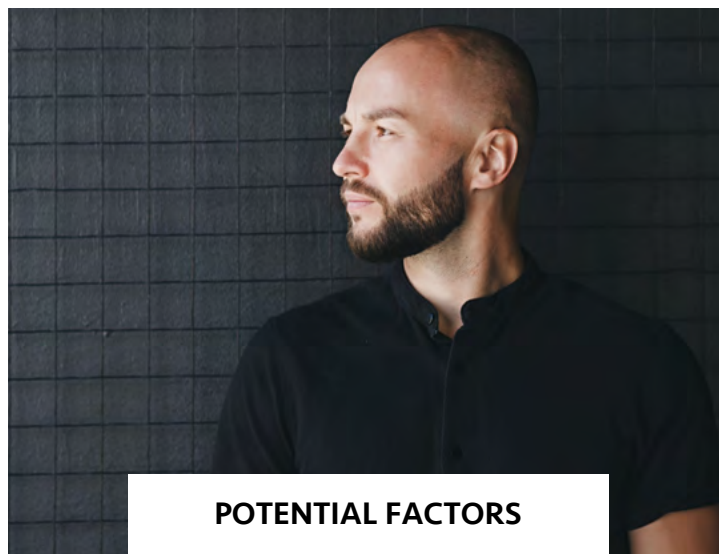
Boxing for
body & mind
PAGE 6

Bite into
better moods
PAGE 7

Power in
community
PAGE 8

Rising cancer in younger adults

More adults under 50 are being diagnosed with cancer than ever before. Although cancer among young adults is not new, increasing rates of many types of cancer among this group is concerning.



POTENTIAL FACTORS

- **Lifestyle changes:** Our modern lives often involve more ultra-processed foods, less physical activity, and increased rates of obesity. These factors are known to contribute to inflammation and can raise the risk for various cancers. Increased alcohol intake may also be a factor.
- **Environmental exposures:** We're exposed to a range of pollutants and chemicals in our daily environment. While the direct link to rising cancer rates in young adults is still being investigated, environmental factors are a potential area of concern.
- **Genetic predispositions:** Some individuals may have a genetic susceptibility to certain cancers that manifest at a younger age. Knowing your family history is important for early detection.
- **Changes in the microbiome:** Our gut health plays a significant role in overall health. Disruptions in the balance of bacteria in our gut (the microbiome) are being studied as a possible contributor to cancer development.
- **Improved detection:** While it might seem counterintuitive, advances in medical imaging and diagnostics mean we're better at finding cancers earlier, even in younger individuals who might have subtle symptoms.
- **Delayed diagnosis:** Unfortunately, young adults and their doctors might not immediately suspect cancer because it has been less common in this age group, leading to delays in diagnosis that can affect treatment outcomes.



IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

- The American Cancer Society reports a significant increase in cancer incidence rates for women under 50, particularly due to rising rates of breast and thyroid cancers.
- Other cancer types on the rise in both younger women and men include colorectal, cervical, kidney, testicular, melanoma, and pancreatic.
- Cancer in young adults can sometimes be more aggressive or present at later stages.
- If you experience unusual or persistent symptoms, discuss them with your healthcare provider.

Deficient in vitamin D?

Often called the “sunshine vitamin,” Vitamin D is crucial for strong bones, a healthy immune system, and possibly even mood regulation. Our bodies produce it when exposed to sunlight, but many people don’t get enough, especially during winter months or if they spend a lot of time indoors. We also get vitamin D from foods and from dietary supplements, if needed.



PEOPLE AT RISK

Vitamin D deficiency is more common among some groups of people, who may need to be screened and monitored by their doctor:

- **Older adults:** This is partly because the skin’s ability to make vitamin D declines with age. Also, older adults are more likely to spend more time indoors than younger people.
- **Limited sun exposure:** These include people who are homebound and people who wear long dresses and head coverings for religious reasons.
- **People with dark skin:** Having greater amounts of the skin pigment melanin reduces the skin’s ability to make vitamin D from sunlight.
- **Conditions that limit fat absorption:** Liver disease, celiac disease, Crohn’s disease, and ulcerative colitis reduce dietary fat absorption, which also limits vitamin D absorption as a fat-soluble vitamin.
- **Gastric bypass surgery:** Part of the upper small intestine is bypassed, which is where vitamin D is absorbed from food sources. This results in less vitamin D being available for the body’s needs.
- **Milk allergy and lactose intolerance:** Not having milk products or following a vegan diet without any animal products removes major sources of vitamin D from a person’s diet.

SOURCES OF VITAMIN D

In addition to getting adequate exposure to sunlight, you should choose sources of vitamin D from:

- Fatty fish, such as salmon
- Egg yolks
- Beef liver
- Fortified foods, such as milk, breakfast cereals, some fruit juices, and fortified plant-milks
- Dietary supplements that contain vitamin D3

RECOMMENDED DAILY INTAKE

From food and possibly supplements:

- Adults 19-70 years: 600 IU (15 micrograms)
- Adults 71+ years: 800 IU (20 micrograms)

Note: It can be hard to get enough vitamin D from foods and drinks naturally. Consider choosing some fortified with vitamin D and talk to your doctor about whether you need a supplement. Be sure to discuss health risks associated with getting too much vitamin D through supplements. Your doctor can also help identify other possible causes of vitamin D deficiency.

Potluck power- up



The holiday season is often celebrated with delicious, but sometimes heavy, food. Be the star of the potluck by bringing a healthy dish to pass.

SMART IDEAS

- A colorful assortment of bell peppers, cucumbers, carrots, and cherry tomatoes served with a generous bowl of homemade or store-bought hummus is a crowd-pleaser.
- Quinoa is a nutrient-dense whole grain, and when combined with roasted Brussels sprouts, sweet potatoes, and cranberries, it makes a festive and filling dish. Drizzle with a light vinaigrette.
- Whole wheat pasta and veggie salad tossed with basil pesto dressing and pine nuts serves as a satisfying and flavorful side dish.

Herb-roasted root vegetables



INGREDIENTS

- 1 large sweet potato, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 3-4 medium carrots, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces or thick rounds
- 2-3 medium parsnips, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 large red onion, peeled and cut into 1-inch wedges
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon dried rosemary
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon salt (or to taste)
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar (optional)

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat your oven to 400°F. Wash and prepare all vegetables as directed in the ingredients list. Aim for similarly sized pieces to ensure even cooking.
2. In a large bowl, combine the cut sweet potatoes, carrots, parsnips, and red onion. Add the olive oil. Sprinkle with dried rosemary, dried thyme, garlic powder, black pepper, and salt. Toss thoroughly to ensure all vegetables are lightly coated with oil and seasonings.
3. Spread the seasoned vegetables in a single layer on one or two large baking sheets. Do not overcrowd the pan, as this will steam the vegetables instead of roasting them.
4. Roast for 30-40 minutes, stirring halfway through, until the vegetables are tender-crisp and slightly caramelized around the edges. Cooking time may vary slightly depending on your oven and the size of your vegetable pieces. Drizzle with balsamic vinegar, if using.

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION: Serves 6-8

Per serving: 155 calories, 6g total fat, 1g saturated fat, 25g carbohydrates, 0g added sugar, 5g fiber, 2g protein, and 125mg sodium

Are you sober curious?

Being sober curious means intentionally questioning your drinking habits. It's a personal journey of self-discovery, allowing you to enjoy social situations without relying on alcohol. Explore your relationship with alcohol. Find out how it makes you feel when you cut back or cut out alcohol for a weekend, a week, or longer.

WHAT YOU MAY NOTICE

- **Improved sleep:** Waking up refreshed and energized, leading to greater productivity and overall well-being.
- **Boosted energy:** Feeling more vibrant throughout the day, allowing you to tackle tasks with renewed focus and stamina.
- **Clearer skin:** A healthier glow, reflecting improved hydration and reduced inflammation from within.
- **Better mood regulation:** Fewer ups and downs, fostering greater emotional stability and a more positive outlook on life.
- **Financial savings:** More money in your pocket, freeing up funds for other enjoyable experiences and investments.



WELLNESS BENEFITS

- **Improved cardiovascular health:** A healthier heart, leading to better circulation and reduced strain on your body
- **Better weight management:** Easier to maintain a healthy weight and support overall fitness goals by reducing calories from alcohol
- **Reduced risk of certain cancers:** A proactive step for your long-term health, significantly lowering your exposure to carcinogens
- **Reduced risk of liver disease:** Protecting a vital organ, allowing it to function optimally and detoxify your system more effectively
- **Reduced risk of various chronic conditions:** Overall improved well-being, contributing to a more vibrant and disease-resistant life

SUPPORTING OTHERS

- When hosting, provide mocktails, sparkling waters, or interesting non-alcoholic beers. This normalizes their choices and makes them feel included.
- Avoid asking "Why aren't you drinking?" or making them feel singled out. Their journey is personal, and they don't owe anyone an explanation.
- Suggest activities that don't revolve around drinking, like hiking, board game nights, or coffee dates. This broadens your shared experiences.
- Consider joining them in an alcohol-free evening or even for a period. Shared experiences can be incredibly supportive.
- If they want to talk about their experiences, be a supportive listener. Avoid offering unsolicited advice unless they ask.



Boxing for body & mind

Boxing is a full-body cardio powerhouse. When you throw a punch, you're engaging your core, legs, and upper body. Shadowboxing, mimicking boxing movements without a partner or equipment, provides similar benefits. It's a high-intensity, low-impact exercise that can be done anywhere, anytime.



PHYSICAL PERKS

- A boxing routine can improve blood circulation and lower risks for heart disease and stroke.
- Building muscle in your arms, shoulders, core, and legs can significantly increase your stamina with every jab, cross, and hook.
- Sharpening your reflexes and improving hand-eye coordination can enhance your body's overall stability and agility.
- Boxing can help manage a healthy weight by boosting your metabolism and contributing to overall fitness goals.
- The repetitive impact of punching (even air in shadowboxing) and dynamic movements help stimulate bone growth and strengthen bones, reducing the risk of osteoporosis.
- Dynamic movements involved in punching and footwork promote a greater range of motion in joints and muscles, improving overall body flexibility.



MENTAL BOOST

- Boxing can help to physically release tension, pent-up energy, and aggression, which can significantly reduce stress and calm your mind.
- This intense exercise requires your full attention to movements and sequences. Boxing acts as a mental reset, improving cognitive function and mindfulness.
- Feeling physically stronger, more capable, and mastering new skills empowers you, and promotes increased self-assurance in all areas of life.

SAFETY CONCERNS

Be aware that boxing comes with some risks, including traumatic brain injury and long-term brain impairment from repeated head blows. Other possible injuries include cuts, bruises, and fractures. Always follow safety guidelines when boxing with a partner:

- Wear proper, well-fitting headgear, mouthguards, boxing gloves, and other required safety gear.
- Spar with certified coaches and experienced partners in similar weight classes.
- Listen to your body, stay hydrated, and never ignore signs of a concussion.



Bite into better moods

THINK OF YOUR GUT AS YOUR “SECOND BRAIN.” THE TRILLIONS OF MICROBES LIVING THERE COMMUNICATE DIRECTLY WITH YOUR BRAIN, INFLUENCING EVERYTHING FROM STRESS LEVELS TO OVERALL MOOD.



FOODS TO CONSIDER

- Salmon, flaxseeds, and walnuts are vital for brain health and can help reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- Fermented foods like yogurt, kimchi, and sauerkraut contain probiotics that support a healthy gut microbiome.
- Oats, brown rice, and whole-wheat bread provide steady energy and contain tryptophan, an amino acid that helps produce serotonin, a “feel-good” neurotransmitter.
- Spinach, kale, and other greens are packed with folate, a B vitamin essential for neurotransmitter function and mood regulation.
- Blueberries, strawberries, and raspberries are rich in antioxidants, which protect brain cells from damage and support cognitive function.
- In moderation, dark chocolate contains compounds that may boost mood and reduce stress, plus it’s a source of antioxidants.



Power in community

Building a “mutual support circle” within your community is a fantastic way to share responsibilities and strengthen bonds. Strong social connections are vital for mental health. They not only reduce feelings of isolation but also increase resilience and foster a greater sense of joy.



- Begin by offering help to others. Grab groceries for an elderly neighbor, or water plants for a friend on vacation.
- Think about tasks you find challenging or time-consuming. Perhaps carpooling for school drop-offs or sharing meal ideas to reduce cooking fatigue.
- When asking for help, be clear about what you need. “Could you pick up my mail while I’m away next week?” is more effective than a vague request.
- Make it clear that you’re happy to return the favor. This makes the exchange comfortable and sustainable.
- Maybe you’re great at gardening, and your neighbor is a whiz with minor home repairs. Offer your strengths and discover theirs!
- Sometimes, people just need someone to talk to. Offer to listen and be supportive.