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- ✓ Stubborn colds
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HAPPY**

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FOR LESS!**

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TASTE,
FREE
FROM
COMPROMISE**



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with choco-berry cupcakes

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Bliss in every bite

Crispy, toasty *mmm*

"French toast is one of my family's favorite Sunday breakfast picks," says Charles Grayauskie, FIRST associate food editor. "So this week I decided to surprise everyone with a chocolaty banana version. To make, I beat 4 eggs, 1 cup of milk, ½ cup of heavy cream and a pinch of ground nutmeg. I dip 8 slices of bread into the egg mixture, turning to coat. Melt 1 Tbs. of butter in a skillet over medium heat. In batches, I cook bread until golden brown, 2–3 minutes per side. I layer the toast with chocolate-hazelnut spread and sliced bananas. To finish, I drizzle on warm maple syrup. It's syrupy and delicious—and wins sweet smiles."



7 things making us happy

...that we just had to share with you!



Crafting up smiles

Cute pincushion

"Valentine's Day is the perfect excuse to shower my mom and sister with sweet little surprises," says Lauren Blum, FIRST assistant editor. "Since we all love crafting and sewing, I'm gifting them adorable pincushion donuts. To make each, I cut two 6" circles from pink felt, then I cut a small 2" circle out of the center of each, forming the donut's hole. Next, I sandwich batting between the circles and pin the felt together before quickly stitching edges closed. Then I glue on bright bead 'sprinkles.' Easy!"



Dazzling on a dime

Fresh-picked joy!

"I usually set a simple bouquet on my Valentine's dinner table, but this year I'm switching it up," says Patty Bontekoe, FIRST executive editor. "After picking up a tray of discounted plants at the store, I made a quick yet lovely bouquet-in-a-box. I nestled the tray of plants into a wooden crate, wrapped it with festive washi tape and pressed decorative heart picks into the soil. So pretty!"



"What is done in love is done well"

—Vincent van Gogh

Genius find

Sweet way to say 'I love you!'

"Waffles and ice cream is my go-to cozy dessert for snowy days," says Melissa D'Agnese, FIRST senior editor. "And this heart-shaped waffle maker is always a hit. It's compact enough to store on any shelf and cooks up perfect waffles each time. It's sure to win hearts!" (DASH Heart Waffle Maker, \$20 for two, HSN.com)



Makeup we ♥

Gorgeous glow

"I was getting ready for date night last weekend when I noticed my fair skin was looking a little dull," admits Leann Garofolo, FIRST assistant editor. "So to give it a dewy, flushed finish like **Mariska Hargitay's**, I mixed a dollop of a rosy-toned moisturizer with a small dab of foundation and blended it over my forehead, nose and cheeks. The pink light-reflecting particles make skin appear instantly luminous."

ONE TO TRY: L'Oreal Paris Age Perfect Cell Renewal Rosy Tone Moisturizer, \$20, Walmart.com

Phone-friendly: Snap a pic & share with a friend!

"There is no charm equal to tenderness of heart"

—Jane Austen





The pillow trick that quells hunger fast

A busy day left little time for lunch, and all you can think about is that big dinner you're planning to have. To ensure you don't stuff yourself to the point of a stomachache, try this: Before sitting down to eat, place a cushion between the small of your back and the chair. The pillow ensures you sit upright, a posture proven to help food travel more quickly to the lower stomach, which helps ward off discomfort. You'll feel comfortably full rather than stuffed.

QUICK POLL

What's the best way to wash a bra?

FIRST readers share their tips to ensure pricey bras always fit and feel like new

58% ♥ this idea!

Put bras in a pillowcase tied with a rubber band before placing in the washer, says Jan Wright. This keeps straps and bands from snagging and stretching.

42% ♥ this idea!

Hand-wash with a cap full of baby shampoo, says Sam Lowe. It gently cleanses without the chemicals that can break down the delicate fabric.

READER TIP

Keep luggage smelling fresh

"The last time I pulled my suitcase from the attic, it had a musty smell that infiltrated my clothes. My friend's tip? Place a few *unscented* dryer sheets in the bag before storing it. The porous material absorbs odor so it doesn't settle inside, without leaving behind a heavy fragrance. I just took it down again—it worked!"

—Maya Brown, Denver



Press here to beat stress

When snow days have you stuck in the house, anxious about to-do's not getting done, place a thumb between your brows and apply gentle pressure in a circular motion for up to five minutes. Activating this pressure point releases calming, mood-steadying hormones that quash anxiety *stat*. Bonus: It also relaxes the muscles to help smooth frown lines!

MONEY SAVER

Get glowing skin for pennies

Winter's chill sap your skin's luster? Revive it with items you already have on hand! Simply mix a pea-sized amount of petroleum jelly with a dab of a neutral, shimmery eye shadow, then lightly tap the mix onto cheekbones and beneath brows' arches: The sparkling sheen illuminates skin for a dewy, natural-looking glow.

MONEY SAVED: \$10 on makeup highlighter



SHOW-HOW

Mount a towel rod in your closet to organize and display scarves





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slimmer in seconds

Eye-catching animal print *3 style secrets*

Blouse

**V-neck
works
best**

✓ **Whittles
the middle**

A busy print on a high-neck top worn untucked creates a 3D effect that magnifies the torso. The fix: A V-neck top breaks up the pattern and directs the eye vertically for a longer, leaner look. Plus, a blouse that's a bodysuit on bottom stays neatly tucked into pants.

Brooke
Shields

Mary J.
Blige



Ellie
Kemper

✗ **Erases curves**

The combination of a dress with a waist-swallowing fit and a shoulder-widening boatneck pulls the eye from side to side for a short, wide and shapeless look.

STARTRAKS: GETTY (5); GC IMAGES/GETTY. TEXT: VICTORIA CONN

Dress

Go for belted



Eva LaRue

✓ **Highlights an hourglass**

A belted structured shirtdress directs focus in to the thinnest part of the torso, while a subtly flared skirt skims over hips. This defines feminine curves and beautifully balances the body.

Coat

Avoid a swing style



Nicky Hilton Rothschild

✓ **Subtracts 10 pounds**

When a bulky coat flares out from bust to thigh, it adds optical heft that makes the body appear bottom-heavy. But the linear style of a tailored top-per draws the eye up and down for a more slender silhouette.



Kelly Rutherford

FIRST PICKS

▼ **BB Dakota, \$78**
(Dillards.com, Ride or Tie Leopard Bodysuit)



◀ **MQGIOEA, \$20**
(Amazon.com, MQGIOEA Women's Leopard Printed Shirt Dress with Belt)



Luodemiss, \$56 ▶
(Amazon.com, Luodemiss Round Neck Leopard Print Midi Coat with Button)



Pretty up hair with pearls

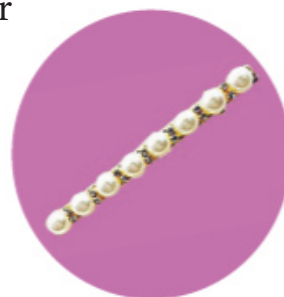
Kate Middleton

Renée Zellweger

Barrettes to boost luster

The bright, linear glow of alternating pearls and rhinestones reflects up onto hair for a luminous sheen. Bonus: Placing the clip above the ear pulls the eye upward for a face-lift effect.

FIRST pick: Statement The Label, \$20 (Statement-TheLabel.com, Pynchon Barrette)



Pins to add volume

Pearl-tipped pins not only keep a bun in place, the texture and dimension of the chic embellishments help even the thinnest of strands look plumper. Plus, the pearlescent glow enhances hair's natural highlights for the illusion of a fuller, more vibrant mane.

FIRST pick: Unicra, \$7 (Amazon.com, Wedding Silver Hair Pins)



Jessica Alba

Headbands to tame frizz and flyaways

Sliding a pearl-adorned headband through loose locks cleverly controls rogue hairs for a smooth and sleek finish. Even better? The hair topper directs the eye vertically, "elongating" the face so it appears slimmer.

FIRST pick: Summer Buns, \$15 (SummerBuns.com, SoHo Pearl Headband)



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best you

You, winter- for pennies!

Months of bone-chilling temperatures, whipping winds and dark days can take their toll on everything from your skin to your mood. So we found pampering treatments that harness the beautifying powers of ingredients you already have at home—no need to even step outside! Here, the easy recipes to soothe your skin and your soul, *stat*

Calm rashy skin

with a coconut-eucalyptus 'ointment'

Ease the redness and irritation that comes with flare-ups from winter skin ailments like rosacea, windburn, bacne and eczema with this skin-soothing salve.



1 Tbs. coconut oil

3 drops eucalyptus essential oil

TO DO: Mix ingredients in a bowl and apply to areas where skin is irritated. Relief is instant, but use two to three times a week for long-lasting results.

WHY IT WORKS: "Eucalyptus essential oil is packed with anti-inflammatory and antiseptic properties that soothe and heal inflamed skin," says medical aesthetician Holly Cutler. "And coconut oil's antioxidants help repair and protect skin's barrier to ward off future flare-ups."

-gorgeous

*10 spa-inspired remedies
you can easily do at home*



Slim a puffy face

with a light coffee compress

This “energizing” compress shrinks puffiness around the face for slimmer in seconds!

- ¼ cup brewed coffee, at room temp.**
- 1 Tbs. coconut milk**



TO DO: Mix ingredients together in a bowl, then saturate a small washcloth in the liquid. Place on top of the face, relax for 5 minutes, then rinse skin right after.

WHY IT WORKS: Coffee is a diuretic that helps flush away the fluids that make the face look puffy, says Cutler. And when paired with coconut milk (its vitamin C promotes collagen production), skin will look more taut so the face appears less swollen. Bonus? The compress depuffs under-eye bags too!



Tame static-prone strands

with an aloe leave-in

The season’s static-causing flyaways threatening to sabotage your everyday hairstyle? Spritz strands with this nutrient-rich treatment to thwart them!

- ½ cup aloe vera gel**
- ½ cup water**



TO DO: Pour the water and aloe vera gel into a spray bottle and shake well to combine. Mist onto hair (damp or dry) and comb through.

WHY IT WORKS: The water helps rehydrate dry strands (one of the causes of static), and moisturizing aloe penetrates the shaft to help lock that water in, says hairstylist Vernon François, who’s worked with Angela Bassett and Serena Williams. Even better? The plant’s gel seals hair’s cuticle to fight frizz, helping strands lie flat all day.



Mend rough cuticles

with an oil-blend soak

Constant dryness can cause the delicate skin on the cuticles to get rough and ragged, keeping them from protecting nails as well as they should. This oil-infused nail soak will restore them.

1 Tbs. almond oil

1 Tbs. jojoba oil

TO DO: Add the oils into a heat-safe bowl; microwave until warm (not hot). Soak nails for five minutes; rub in excess. Do twice a week.

WHY IT WORKS: "Jojoba oil's wax esters mimic the natural oil skin produces to replenish lost moisture," says aesthetician Joanna Vargas, who's worked with Naomi Watts and Julianne Moore. And antioxidant-rich almond oil strengthens the skin to thwart future hangnails. Plus, warming the oils allows them to absorb into rigid skin better.



Repair chapped lips

with a milk + honey 'balm'

If you're like us, you lick your chapped lips thinking it will help moisturize them, but skin experts say that actually dries them out more! Instead, slather your parched pout with this tasty and healing balm.

1 Tbs. honey

½ Tbs. milk



TO DO: Mix ingredients together in a small bowl.

Apply a thick layer onto lips whenever they feel super dry. Dab off excess before applying lipstick or gloss.

WHY IT WORKS: Humectant honey draws moisture deep into lips to hydrate within skin's many layers while its anti-inflammatory properties soothe the painful broken skin on the outside, says Vargas. "And milk's proteins help heal irritated skin while its lactic acid gently exfoliates any flakes on the lip's surface."



Heal raw, cracked hands

with a coconut 'cream'

We spend a lot of time scrubbing our hands this time of year to avoid cold- and flu-causing germs. It may save us from the sniffles, but our poor dry, cracked hands pay the price. This healing hand cream will help!

1 Tbs. coconut oil

1 Tbs. aloe vera gel

TO DO: Mix ingredients in a bowl and rub onto dry hands, then let sit for 10 minutes; rub in excess. Use every other day for results in one week.

WHY IT WORKS: Fatty acids in coconut oil penetrate skin's dry layers to restore and lock in moisture, says dermatologist Joshua Zeichner, M.D. And aloe's reparative vitamin E mends cracks.

Aah-romas that reverse the winter blahs

Studies prove that just inhaling essential oils can give you both a mental and physical boost. Here, 3 scents A-listers swear by to look and feel their best

Katie de-stresses with lavender

Katie Couric relies on lavender oil (like Plant Therapy Lavender Essential Oil, PlantTherapy.com), saying, "It's supposed to be relaxing!" She's right: Research shows its *linalool* soothes the nervous system to calm anxiety.



Kerry boosts joy with geranium

Kerry Washington smartly keeps geranium oil (like The Vitamin Shoppe Geranium 100% Pure Essential Oil, TheVitaminShoppe.com) on her nightstand. The floral scent is known to signal the brain to promote emotional stability and well-being.



Jennifer stays slim with grapefruit

Jennifer Lopez takes a whiff of grapefruit oil (like Homedics Grapefruit Essential Oil, Homedics.com) to curb cravings. Why it works: The oil's *limonene* helps the brain release hunger-blocking chemicals that suppress appetite to help shed pounds.



Shrink a double chin

with a matcha massage

Tossing on a scarf works wonders to mask a little extra weight around the neck, but once indoors, off comes the scarf and that double chin is on full display. This sculpting massage "chisels" the jawline to optically erase 5 pounds from the face.

- 2 Tbs. matcha powder
- 1 Tbs. water
- 1 Tbs. egg white

TO DO: Mix ingredients in a bowl; massage on using gentle pressure while gliding hands down the neck three to four times. Rinse after 15 minutes.

WHY IT WORKS: "Matcha's caffeine increases circulation and the

massage's motions speed lymph flow, together flushing out bloat-causing toxins," says medical aesthetician Holly Cutler. And the amino acids and protein in egg whites tighten skin for a firmer-looking jawline.



Smooth flaky skin with a sea salt polish

Exfoliating with this all-natural body polish restores the moisture that winter's cold air strips from skin.

¼ cup sea salt

¼ cup avocado oil



TO DO: Combine ingredients in a bowl. While showering, massage the scrub onto damp skin from feet to shoulders using circular motions. Use twice a week for baby-soft skin in two weeks.

WHY IT WORKS: Sea salt's small crystals gently whisk away dead, flaky patches of skin, says dermatologist Shari Sperling, M.D. Plus, minerals in the salt, like magnesium and calcium, nourish skin to alleviate dryness. And omega-3 fatty acid-rich avocado oil hydrates parched patches of skin, so it feels supple and soft long after you've stepped out of the shower.

Soften rough heels

with a brown sugar scrub

Heel skin lacks oil glands, making it susceptible to cracks that are especially painful when cooped up in heavy boots. To the rescue: this minty foot scrub!

- 2 Tbs. brown sugar**
- 2 Tbs. olive oil**
- 3 drops peppermint essential oil**



TO DO: Mix ingredients in a bowl; set aside. Next, soak feet for 5 minutes in a basin of warm water (this softens up the thick skin on heels). Remove feet from water and massage the scrub onto heels for one minute; rinse. Use twice a week to keep skin smooth.

WHY IT WORKS: Fine granules in brown sugar slough off rough, dead skin cells, and its *glycolic acid* attracts moisture to skin, says Dr. Sperling. Adding olive oil (its *squalene* hydrates) and peppermint oil (its antibacterial properties ward off infection) speeds results.



Thicken thinning hair with a sandalwood conditioner

The season's moisture-free air causes hair to fall flat, putting a spotlight on thin tresses. This volumizing and growth-encouraging mask will revive it.

- 4 drops sandalwood essential oil
- 2 Tbs. olive oil



TO DO: Combine the ingredients, then rub onto damp hair from roots to ends. Let sit for 20 minutes; rinse. Use twice a week for results in four weeks.

WHY IT WORKS: According to British research, sandalwood's woody scent has been found to boost hair-growth hormones in follicles by 30% within

one week! "Hair follicles contain the same receptors responsible for our sense of smell," says dermatologist Joshua Zeichner, M.D. "So the oil's aroma stimulates these receptors and promotes new growth." And olive oil's fatty acids help plump up locks for the appearance of instant body.

Genius drugstore innovations for skin so soft

No time for DIY? These old-school formulas now offer fast new ways to repair the effects of parched skin

Itchy? Try a wet-skin body lotion

Dermatologists say the most effective way to moisturize is by applying lotion immediately after showering (when pores are most receptive to hydration). Curel Hydra Therapy Wet Skin Moisturizer, (\$11, RiteAid.com) is *activated* by water to replenish vital fats, alleviating discomfort in seconds.



Inflamed? Try a spray-on ointment

Aquaphor Ointment Body Spray Moisturizer (\$9, Target.com) contains moisturizing *glycerin* and anti-inflammatory *panthenol* to soothe irritated skin. And the spray applicator covers skin quickly, eliminating the need to rub ingredients onto skin, which can worsen irritation.



Rough spots? Try a roll-on jelly

Petroleum jelly's thick formula creates a film that traps moisture in the upper layers of skin's surface. Vaseline All-Over Body Balm Stick (\$6, Walmart.com) has a roll-on applicator that slides easily over rougher spots like elbows and knees—sans the mess.



Wake up younger!

It's called 'beauty sleep' for a reason. "Studies prove that getting a good night's rest speeds collagen production, increases hydration, nixes inflammation and more," says Gretchen Frieling, M.D., a triple board-certified dermatopathologist in Boston. "Those beautifying benefits help reverse signs of aging in the hair, eyes and skin." But just in case you don't get that full 8 hours, these simple strategies will ensure you look youthful by sunrise



To volumize hair

The friction created between hair and the pillowcase from a night of tossing and turning leads to breakage that results in a thinner-looking head of hair. Plus, traditional pillowcases are made of porous cotton that absorbs moisture from hair, leaving it dry, brittle and flat, says Dr. Frieling.

PREVENT IT: Sleep on a silk pillowcase (like LilySilk 19 Momme Terse Silk Pillowcase, LilySilk.com). The fabric's glossy surface allows hair to move smoothly and freely against the pillow, stopping the harsh rubbing that roughs up the cuticle, explains Dr. Frieling. "And fibrous silk locks hydration into hair for a lustrous-looking mane come morning."

REVERSE IT: Whip up an avocado hair mask. "The stone fruit's fatty acids coat strands' shafts to help them retain moisture," says Dr. Frieling. "And its B vitamins strengthen hair to prevent breakage." To do: Mix half of an avocado with 1 Tbs. of olive oil (its *oleic acid* adds shine), apply from roots to ends of damp hair; let sit for 20 minutes, then rinse. Use once a week or as needed for lasting results.

To brighten under eyes

Light in any form (the clock next to your bed, the street lamp outside) can interfere with sleep-inducing melatonin. And that lack of sleep can cause blood vessels under the eyes to swell and leak, leaving dark circles behind.

PREVENT IT: Wear a chilled eye mask (like Earth Therapeutics Gel Bead Mask, Ulta.com) to bed. The cold, gentle pressure shrinks vessels, stops blood from pooling and blocks out light!

REVERSE IT: Dab on a turmeric-infused eye cream (like Derma E No Dark Circles Eye Cream, Ulta.com) twice a day. The spice's vitamin K strengthens veins and increases blood flow to nix dark circles in one month.

To smooth the décolletage

Constant movement during sleepless nights can put pressure on skin that worsens creases on the chest.

PREVENT IT: Place a silicone patch (like SilcSkin Decollette Pad, Walmart.com) onto the chest before dozing off. The large, rubbery "sticker" pulls skin taut to keep older wrinkles from deepening and new ones from forming, says Dr. Frieling. "And the silicone draws water to skin's surface, hydrating it so lines get smoother as you snooze."

REVERSE IT: Rub equal parts coconut oil (its *lauric acid* plumps skin) and rose hip seed oil (its vitamin A boosts collagen production) onto the chest twice a day for tauter skin in 30 days.

BREAKTHROUGHS FOR EVEN DEEPER SLEEP

A WEIGHTED BLANKET: Its deep-touch pressure increases the body's serotonin levels, which in turn releases sleep-inducing melatonin.

One to try: Tranquility 12 lb. Weighted Throw Blanket (Target.com)

A LAVENDER SPRAY: The scent's sedative effect raises sleep quality by 87%.

One to try: Nature's Truth Rejuvenating Lavender Mist Spray (Walmart.com)

A SCALP MASSAGE: The rubbing stimulates nerve endings that activate the body's *parasympathetic system*, helping you relax and fall asleep 50% faster.



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sip away stress

Healthy all winter

Outsmart cold-weather health hassles with these cozy sips packed with body-healing nutrients

MANUKA HONEY BOOSTS IMMUNITY

This unique type of honey from New Zealand is renowned for its high concentration of enzymes and anti-bacterial properties. In fact, delicious manuka has up to four times more healing nutrients than traditional honey. Some of the impressive perks:

+ Fights off harmful bacteria

One compound in manuka honey (called *methylglyoxal*) has been found to stop bacteria from anchoring onto the surface of cells, preventing infections before they can begin. The proof: In a study published in the journal *Microbiology*, consuming just 1 tsp. was enough to neutralize 85% of pneumonia-causing bacteria and halt its spread entirely.

+ Nixes cold symptoms

Antibacterial compounds in manuka honey break down bacteria right as it comes into contact with the throat for fast relief and healing. In fact, Finnish scientists found that manuka reduces symptoms like a stuffy nose and throat pain by 60%, making it as effective as many over-the-counter cold medicines.

+ Banishes GI woes

Manuka honey contains a natural form of hydrogen peroxide that optimizes digestion and kills off the bad bacteria that cause indigestion and inflammation. The result: Research at Cardiff Metropolitan University in Wales found that a daily dose of the honey slashes inflammation in the GI tract by 77%.

FIRST pick: We love Manuka Health MGO 30+ Honey Blend (available at Costco and Walmart.com). This certified hive-to-home New Zealand nectar boasts a high Unique Manuka Factor (UMF), which measures the quality and quantity of its antibacterial properties.



with honeyed teas



Rosemary-Lemon Lift

- 1 lemon tea bag
- 1 sprig rosemary
- 2 tsp. manuka honey
- 2 slices lemon

In mug, steep tea bag and rosemary in 1 cup hot water 3 min.; discard bag. Stir in honey. Garnish with lemon.

Makes 1 serving

Per serving: Cal. 45 Pro. 0g Carb. 12g
Fiber 0g Sug. 11g Chol. 0mg Sod. 3mg
Total fat: 0g Sat. 0g Trans. 0g

***Bonus!** L-theanine in tea boosts mood by 55%*



Berry-Hibiscus Soother

- 1 hibiscus tea bag
- 6 raspberries
- 1 Tbs. orange juice
- 2 tsp. manuka honey
- 1 sprig mint

In mug, steep tea and raspberries in 1 cup hot water 3 min. Discard bag. Stir in orange juice and honey. Garnish with mint and, if desired, more raspberries.

Makes 1 serving

Per serving: Cal. 57 Pro. 0g Carb. 15g
Fiber 1g Sug. 13g Chol. 0mg Sod. 10mg
Total fat: 0g Sat. 0g Trans. 0g

***Bonus!** Anthocyanins in raspberries boost belly-fat burn by 30%*

Ginger-Peach Perfection

- 1 peach oolong tea bag
- ½ cinnamon stick
- 1 thin slice peeled fresh ginger
- 1 slice lemon
- 2 tsp. manuka honey

In mug, steep tea bag, cinnamon and ginger in 1 cup hot water 3 min.; strain. Add lemon and stir in manuka honey.

Makes 1 serving

Per serving: Cal. 47 Pro. 0g Carb. 13g
Fiber 0g Sug. 12g Chol. 0mg Sod. 8mg
Total fat: 0g Sat. 0g Trans. 0g

***Bonus!** Gingerols in ginger relieve chronic aches and pains*





Flavorful add-ins reduce breast cancer risk by 67%

Loading up on dishes like garlicky pasta or French onion soup can keep breast cancer at bay, report researchers at the University at Buffalo. Study participants who ate garlic and onion at least five times a week reduced their risk of breast cancer by 67% over a six-year period. Garlic and onions brim with compounds known as *anticarcinogens*, which block the growth and spread of cancerous tumor cells. To see the benefits, study authors recommend eating at least one medium onion and one clove of garlic daily.

This meal tweak lowers cholesterol

Good news: You don't have to completely cut red meat from your diet to lower your "bad" LDL cholesterol. British researchers reporting in the journal *Food & Function* found that swapping in just a few servings of fish, chicken or plant-based substitutes (like soy) significantly lowered bad cholesterol in 12 weeks. Study subjects went from eating nine servings of red or processed meat per week, on average, to four or five servings. LDL cholesterol, elevated by overconsumption of red or processed meat, collects in blood vessels and can cause harmful blockages if left unchecked.

Surprise: Milk hydrates 50% better than water

Most people reach for water when thirsty, but Scottish researchers reporting in *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* say milk may be the smarter choice. Turns out, milk keeps you 50% more hydrated after two hours than plain water. Study authors say milk's sugar and fat slow the emptying of stomach fluid, which allows more fluid to absorb into the body. Milk's sodium also has a sponge-like effect, which aids in water retention that can last for hours. By contrast, plain water flushes directly through your system.

Mediterranean diet shields against kidney disease

So say Australian researchers in the *Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology*. Their analysis of previous studies found that subjects on diets emphasizing healthy fats and limited carbs, like the Mediterranean diet, had a 30% lower occurrence of chronic kidney disease (CKD). They say healthy fats, veggies, fish and whole grains aid in balancing blood sugar and preventing spikes that contribute to CKD.



Cheese wards off heart trouble

A diet high in salt is known to contribute to *blood vessel dysfunction*, a condition in which the veins and arteries become hardened or narrowed and strain the heart. But Penn State researchers say cheese can offset that damage. Volunteers on a high-salt diet who ate four daily servings of any type of cheese had a lower risk of blood vessel dysfunction than those on the same diet who ate no cheese. (One serving of cheese is about the size of three dice.) Investigators say nutrients found in cheese called *peptides* act as antioxidants to whisk away blood vessel-narrowing compounds that sodium leaves behind. And that holds true even if the cheese itself contains salt.



Americans who say
pizza is an acceptable
breakfast option

SOURCE: California Pizza Kitchen

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Mary Lou Retton | Gold Medal Gymnast

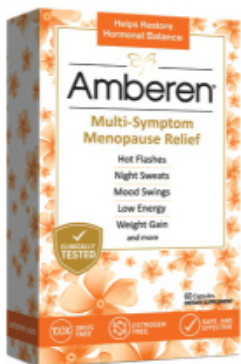


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[†]Individual results will vary. Mary Lou Retton's testimonial is based on 90 days of continuous use.

[‡]Based on clinical trials involving women with mild to moderate symptoms. Individual results may vary. | ^{*}IRI US MULO 52 wks 09.08.19 by UPC

^{*}These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease.

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Why can't I lose from my belly?

Q: My high-protein diet is working—I'm down 17 pounds! But the soft belly bulge around my middle hasn't budged, and I'm constantly tired. What can I do?

A: Soft fat that spills over your belt often signals a sluggish lymphatic system, especially if you also have swollen ankles. The lymphatic system functions as the body's waste disposal system, ferrying fat and toxins to collection points where they can be removed from the body. But when the system gets overwhelmed with excess fat—as it can when a successful diet prompts cells to release fat—this waste can get stored back in belly-fat tissue until it can be safely removed.

Fortunately, it's easy to get this fat moving again: Simply fill up on two daily servings of bright green and red veggies, like spinach, arugula, beets and red peppers. Natural compounds in these foods spur the production of *nitric oxide*, a compound that strengthens the muscles surrounding lymph vessels, helping them pump lymph fluid with greater ease. The payoff: Once lymph is flowing freely, stubborn jiggles will melt away to the tune of up to 15 pounds per week.

Patricia's sweet slimming snack

When busy actress Patricia Heaton needs an energizing pick-me-up to get through go-go-go days, she snacks on a Peanut Butter Pie ONE Bar (available in drugstores). With 20 grams of whey protein and 10 grams of prebiotic fiber per bar, these treats promise an hours-long metabolism boost and increased fat burning.



Q

Dairy makes me bloated, so a friend suggested I try oat milk. Is it a healthier choice?

A

Give it a try! Oat milk is quickly gaining popularity in the nondairy milk market, and for good reason. It's much creamier than almond milk or rice milk, has a milder flavor than most nut milks, is safe for those with nut allergies and doesn't contain inflammatory omega-6 fatty acids. Oat milk also delivers a dose of soluble fiber that triggers the release of hunger-suppressing hormones in the stomach, helping to cut snacking by 81%.

To get the benefits, look for oat milk without added sugar (like Oatly, in grocery stores). Or consider making it at home: It's easy, and since oats cost less than \$2 per pound, inexpensive. To make: Soak 8 oz. of rolled oats in water for 30 minutes. Drain and blend with 2 cups of water for a thick sip or 4 cups of water for something resembling 2%. Your milk will keep in the fridge for up to five days.

Is fasting a bad idea with acid reflux?

Q: My girlfriend has lost 35 pounds with intermittent fasting. I'd love to see results like that, but I have bad acid reflux. Will it still work for me?

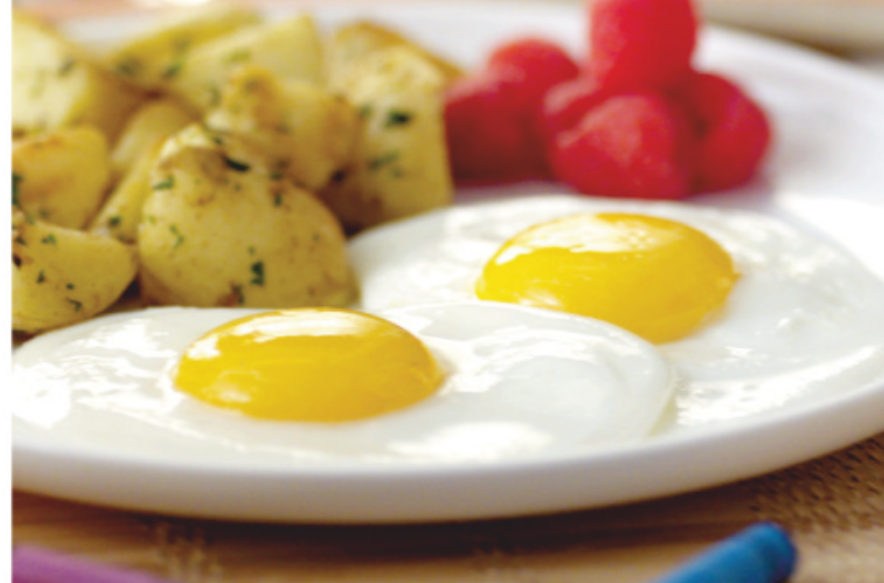
A: You're smart to ask: Intermittent fasting, or confining all of your eating for the day to a set window of time, can boost fat loss by 50%. But folks with acid reflux are typically encouraged to do the exact opposite: Eat small portions of food throughout the day.

Luckily, there's an easy way to reap the benefits of fasting *and* control your reflux. First, instead of one big meal, eat two or three small meals. This helps you avoid a very full stomach, which loosens the cap between the stomach and the esophagus, allowing acid to flow upward. Second, close the kitchen early. A common cause of acid reflux is lying down after eating—one study found that eating within three hours of bedtime caused a seven-fold increase in reflux. So eating your last meal four hours before bed will promote slimming without the burn.

Put FIRST to work for you!

Nutrition experts Mira Calton, CN, and Jayson Calton, Ph.D., are leading authorities on micronutrient deficiencies and bestselling authors of *The Micronutrient Miracle: The 28-Day Plan to Lose Weight, Increase Your Energy, and Reverse Disease* (available at Amazon.com). To ask them a question, send an email to health@firstforwomen.com.





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feel-great foods

Carrots mend damaged tissues

Great news from Canadian scientists: Enjoying a cup of carrots daily can ease bothersome muscle and joint pain by up to 45%, plus it'll help you heal 50% faster if you're injured right now. These root veggies are brimming with nutrients (vitamin C and *beta-carotene*) that speed the healing of damaged muscle and cartilage.

6 delicious ACHE ENDERS



Soothe cold-weather discomfort with tasty superfoods

Hot peppers trigger the release of natural painkillers

When your head is throbbing, biting into a hot pepper-laced meal or snack could cut your brain pain by 50% in as little as 10 minutes. Thanks goes to a unique compound called *capsaicin* that gives chili peppers their fiery heat. According to investigators at St. Luke's Hospital in Kansas City, capsaicin energizes brain nerves, kick-starting their production of powerful ache-banishing hormones called endorphins.



Ginger shuts down the body's soreness signals

A daily dose of ginger cuts even chronic stiffness, achiness and pain in half for 75% of women, Danish researchers say. Credit goes to healing compounds (*gingerols*) that halt the production of pain-triggering hormones called *prostaglandins*. Simply add 1½ tsp. of fresh root or ¾ tsp. of dried spice to meals, nibble on three slices of candied ginger or sip two mugs of ginger tea.

Red onions flush inflammation

Whether you cook with them or munch on them raw, adding ½ cup of red onions to your daily diet can reduce aches by 33%, Oregon Health & Science University researchers say. This veggie's mix of nutrients (sulfur and *anthocyanins*) energize liver cells, helping them break down and excrete inflammation.

Olive oil quiets creaky joints

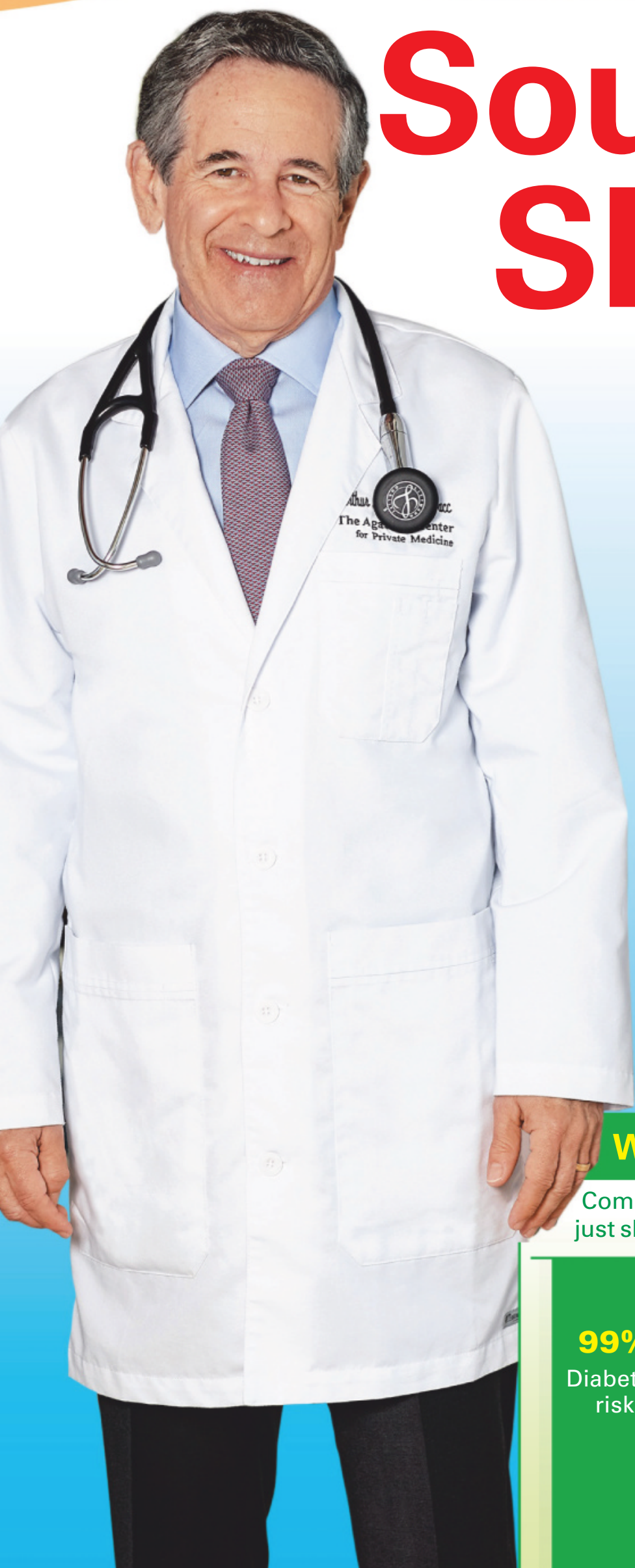
Extra virgin olive oil (EVOO) contains two rare compounds—*oleocanthal* and *hydroxytyrosol*—that switch off a pain-triggering enzyme as effectively as ibuprofen, say researchers at Seattle's Bastyr University. Savor 2 Tbs. of EVOO each day (ideally, in place of less healthy fats) and you'll heighten your joint comfort, flexibility and mobility by 35%.



Potatoes heal stiff, achy muscles

Potato skins are packed with magnesium and potassium, minerals that relax blood vessels, improving nutrient-rich blood flow to sore muscles and injured tissues. No wonder Australian scientists say enjoying a medium-sized potato daily cuts muscle stiffness and pain by 40%, plus reduces your risk of cramps by 65%.





South Beach SLIM WITH

Arthur Agatston, M.D., renowned creator of the South Beach Diet, has combined his delicious food formula with the undeniable power of keto to create a super diet that's helping thousands of women transform their waistlines—effortlessly!

Seems like only yesterday the South Beach Diet was all the rage—and for good reason! Women dropped massive amounts of weight on the cardiologist-created plan, and they felt healthier than ever. The problem? It simply didn't work long-term. Not even for its creator, Arthur Agatston, M.D.: "I would eventually 'cheat'—on my own diet!—when I was stressed or traveling and definitely during the holidays," he admits. "I got pretty frustrated at my poor self-control, not to mention the return of my belly!"

What led to Dr. Agatston's diet-revolutionizing "aha" moment? Blueberry pie! "After a late-night binge, I dove into the research and realized that there was a good reason I was cheating," he tells FIRST. "I wasn't giving my body enough time to reset my insulin levels." While the traditional South Beach Diet temporarily *lowers* levels of the

What South Beach + keto will do for YOU

Combining these two high-power plans into one does more than just slim the belly! Here, a few of the other benefits you'll enjoy:

99%
Diabetes
risk

90%
Food
cravings

72%
Heart
disease
risk

50%
Skin
breakouts

41%
Stroke
risk

+ keto = EASE

*Drop 1 lb
every day!*

belly fat—packing hormone insulin over the course of two weeks, it doesn't measurably improve the body's ability to *utilize* insulin—so as soon as you reintroduce insulin-spiking foods like fruit and grains, the body starts storing fat again. Dr. Agatston's research revealed that changing the way the body processes insulin takes longer than the two weeks of low-carb eating his original diet called for. "It's clear now that it takes at least four weeks for the body to switch out of fat-storing mode and start burning fat for fuel," he explains. "The original South Beach Phase One simply wasn't long enough."

Dr. Agatston's new plan combines the strongest parts of the original South Beach Diet with the best practices of the keto diet—making both better. The new approach emphasizes the good protein, fats and low-starch carbs from the South Beach plan, but it incorporates a longer initial low-carb phase to help the body relearn how to process insulin and burn stored fat for energy. Extending the low-carb portion of the plan is key, says Ryan Lowery, Ph.D., co-author of *The Ketogenic Bible*. He explains, "When you eat low amounts of carbohydrates, the body releases less insulin, which allows you to break down body fat to use as energy."

Dr. Agatston also made sure to keep plenty of healthy carbs and protein in the food formula, sidestepping one of the most common problems women

have with the keto diet: low moods and lack of energy caused by restricting too many nutrients. "This enables us to get the fat-burning benefits of the keto diet," he says. "But it's easier to start and easier to sustain as a lifestyle."

The proof is in the results: Dr. Agatston reports that his newly reimagined plan speeds weight loss even more effectively—and most of those dropped pounds come from the belly. "Since starting my new approach in 2018, I've maintained a 20-pound weight loss—almost all from my belly—with surprising ease," says Dr. Agatston. And women FIRST spoke to echoed the doctor's success, with some women losing as much as 8 pounds every seven

days! Vivian Tordeau, 55, lost at least a pound a day. "The weight loss was astronomical," she raves. "I've never felt better in my life, and I think I look at least 10 years younger!"

Just as nice as the lower number on the scale is the slew of health benefits that keto-friendly South Beach diet-ers rave about, including better sleep, more energy, fewer headaches and even less joint pain and acid reflux. "Many health issues, such as brain fog, irritable bowel symptoms and skin conditions like acne and psoriasis go away," Dr. Agatston says. And best of all, he reports that most women begin to see these benefits after just three days!

Ready to start *your* transformation? Read on for the plan that will help you look and feel decades younger.

"You get the fat-burning benefits of the keto diet, but it's easier to sustain as a lifestyle"

—Arthur Agatston, M.D.

FEEL YOUR BEST AS YOU LOSE

Combining the keto diet with the bestselling South Beach Diet prods the body to burn stored fat for fuel while still providing enough carbs and protein to promote health—and these easy strategies ensure you'll feel great as the fat melts away!

ALWAYS HUNGRY? Switch your cooking oil

Most nonstick oil sprays are made with cottonseed or canola oils, which have been shown to impair satiety signals in the brain. Instead, Dr. Agatston suggests filling a food-safe spray bottle with olive or avocado oil, which contain keto-friendly fats that won't leave you feeling hungry.



TIRED? Add *this* salt

Some 75% of women on a low-carb diet struggle with brain fog and fatigue. To banish and prevent these ills, Dr. Agatston adds 1 tsp. of light salt to a glass of drinking water once or twice a day. With about half the sodium of regular salt and 350 times more potassium, this supermarket pick improves electrolyte balance to keep energy levels stable.



HEADACHES? Add a snack

Many women report headaches as the body transitions from burning sugar to burning fat for fuel. But a high-fat snack can stave off keto headaches by providing a dose of easily accessible fuel for the brain.

A recipe to try: Mix 1 cup of melted dark chocolate, 1 avocado, 1 Tbs. of melted coconut oil, ½ tsp. of salt and 1 tsp. of vanilla until smooth. Roll into balls. Store in the fridge.



Turn for the keto-friendly South Beach plan

So simple, so effective

The keto-friendly South Beach Diet optimizes the body's fat-burning systems *without* overly restricting healthy carbs and protein. "Strict ketogenic diets can be difficult," says Arthur Agatston, M.D., author of *The New Keto-Friendly South Beach Diet*. "I have found that my more flexible approach works just as well and is easier to adopt and sustain. And the

research is clear that carbohydrate intake in the range I recommend turns the body into a fat-burning machine. You'll watch your belly melt away along with your cravings, and feel your energy levels soar." Much like the original South Beach Diet, the new keto-friendly approach is split into two phases. To get the benefits, just follow these simple guidelines:

Note: Consult your physician before starting this program, especially if you take medication for type 2 diabetes or blood pressure, advises Dr. Agatston. The plan is so effective that it can drive your blood pressure or blood sugar too low.

PHASE ONE Power off pounds

During the first phase of the keto-friendly South Beach plan, you'll follow a low-carb food formula for at least 28 days, keeping your daily carb intake at about 50 grams per day, while getting 60% of your calories from fat, 25% from protein and 15% from carbs. "Giving up grains during the first phase will improve the body's ability to utilize insulin," says Dr. Agatston. "It will help to reset your cravings so you rely less on starches and more on healthy proteins, fats and vegetables to fill you up." Instead of grains, enjoy $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of potatoes, carrots or other starchy vegetables daily.

You'll fill the rest of your plate with plenty of non-starchy vegetables, including broccoli, asparagus, cauliflower and zucchini. Then add 3 oz. of lean protein from beef, poultry, game meats, pork or fish; 3 eggs; or 6 oz. of tofu. Make sure you're getting enough fat (and add some flavor) by enjoying healthy fats like olive oil and coconut oil as well as full-fat dairy, like whole-milk yogurt, cheeses and butter. "When it comes to optimizing your intake of healthy fats, make sure you're getting plenty of omega-3 fats, which help lower inflammation," Dr. Agatston advises. To get the benefits,

aim to regularly enjoy salmon, walnuts, tofu and omega-3 enriched eggs (like those from Eggland's Best, which contain two times more omega-3s than traditional eggs). Thanks to the high protein and healthy fat content in your meals, you'll feel satiated all day.

For your fastest slimdown ever, Dr. Agatston also suggests incorporating intermittent fasting—extending the time between meals for 12 to 14 hours—into Phase One after two weeks. "Most patients find it works to skip just one meal, usually breakfast," he explains, noting that the less often we eat, the less insulin the body creates, which helps the body use insulin more effectively.

Sample meal



Omelet Fold 2 oz. thin-sliced smoked salmon and 1 tsp. crème fraîche into a two-egg omelet. Serve with a side salad dressed with olive oil and vinegar.

When can I move

If most of the following statements are true, you're ready for Phase Two. If not, you will probably benefit from staying on Phase One

☐ You've been following Phase One for at least 28 days

PHASE TWO Stay slim

In many ways, Phase Two is very similar to Phase One—but more relaxed and sustainable, making the plan easy to stick to for the long-term. To that end, Dr. Agatston recommends getting about 100 grams of mood-boosting carbohydrates per day from low-glycemic whole foods like fruit ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup daily of berries, apples, melon, peaches or kiwi), high-fiber grains ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup daily of oats, quinoa and wild or brown rice) and beans and legumes ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup daily of beans, edamame, hummus, lentils and split peas), along with a daily serving of higher-starch veggies (like half a medium sweet potato or $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of pumpkin or carrots) in addition to the non-starchy vegetables from Phase One.

One note of caution: While Phase Two allows for more carbohydrates than Phase One, it should still be high in protein. You should be getting 50% of your calories from fat, 30% from protein and 20% from carbohydrates, so don't let the added carb-rich foods replace protein on your plate. "After about age 50, we know that metabolism tends to slow down—that's why you might find you put on weight more easily," says Dr. Agatston. That makes protein especially important—it helps the body preserve the lean muscle mass that keeps metabolism humming.

After healing the body's insulin response during Phase One, the body is better able to switch between

to Phase 2?

- ☐ You feel energetic during the day and sleep well at night
- ☐ You don't experience sugar cravings
- ☐ Your belly is flatter

for life

burning fat and burning carbs, so you can slim while still being able to enjoy special occasions with your friends and family. "Have a piece of cake at a birthday party or a slice of pizza with your kids," says Dr. Agatston. "Just try to consume these foods infrequently." If you notice your sugar cravings returning, cut back on your carbohydrate intake, starting with fruit, which is higher in sugar than other healthy carbs and can trigger cravings.

You can stick with Phase Two as long as you'd like. "Or you can go back and forth between the two phases as you work toward your goals," says Dr. Agatston. "I'm confident that you'll find this lifestyle easier than you imagine, and you will reap the same benefits that my patients and I have. I expect that you, too, will feel better than ever and won't want to turn back."

Sample meal



Chili Sauté 1 cup of diced fresh veggies for 4 min. Add ¼ cup chicken broth, ¼ cup diced tomatoes and ¼ cup canned beans. Bring to a boil; simmer 10 min. Top with avocado.

It worked for me

"I weigh less than I did in high school!"

"I'm scared. Can I sleep in your bed tonight?" The question, from the 6-year-old granddaughter she'd raised since birth, hit Barb Heacox hard. Barb's husband had just had a heart attack, and Barb—carrying unwanted weight—knew she was at risk too. As she squeezed the hand of the frightened little girl she'd adopted, Barb was sure of one thing: *I have to get my health in order. This child needs me.*

Barb needed to find the answer to the weight riddle that had stumped her for decades. "I knew this was important. I had to find something that worked long-term." She'd had many disappointments, like when she'd tried Atkins but found it impossible to maintain.

So Barb felt hopeful when her sister Carol told her about Stephanie Laska's *Dirty, Lazy, Keto*, a more relaxed low-carb plan. With it, Barb shed 20 pounds the first 30 days. She kept things simple and sustainable, making things like keto chicken soup, and never felt deprived.

On this plan, Barb wound back the clock. "I actually weigh less now than I did in high school!" Her body said "thanks" by allowing her to do previously impossible things, like getting off her diabetes medication and running races with her grandkids. Most miraculously: "I haven't gained a pound in three years. It hasn't even been hard," beams Barb. "I'm so glad I took control of my life. It's never too late!"



THEN: **265 lbs**

Barb lost **127 lbs!**

Barb Heacox, 62, Wichita Falls, TX
Height: 5'

NOW:
138 lbs

feel-great update

*Uncover the reason for
YOUR daily slump—and
the body-clock secrets that
guarantee nonstop energy*

**Foggy when you first
wake up? Lift your legs**

If you climb out of bed wishing you could climb right back in, blame a sluggish lymphatic system. This network of vessels shuttles metabolic waste to your liver for disposal—but during sleep, this cleansing system can slow, allowing tiredness-triggering waste to collect in tissues. The good news: Scientists at the University of South Florida in Tampa say getting gravity on your side kick-starts lymphatic flow in two minutes to chase away grogginess for up to three hours. To do: Before getting out of bed, lift your legs in the air and spend two minutes doing gentle knee bends, ankle rotations and toe wiggles.

**Fast fixes for
your 'tired time'**

Groggy midmorning? Try knitting

Wish midmorning naps were a “thing”? That’s because your brain’s *prefrontal cortex*, which helps you stay clearheaded and focused, is experiencing an early day dip in electrical activity. Fortunately, researchers say you can energize your prefrontal cortex—sharpening concentration, memory and energy by 32%—by taking a 10-minute break to focus on a creative task like sketching or knitting. Daniel H. Pink, author of *When: The Scientific Secrets of Perfect Timing*, notes that brief, restorative breaks are key to better AM brain function.



Sluggish after lunch? Munch on macadamias

Your pancreas, which produces sugar-controlling insulin, is most likely to misfire in the early afternoon, letting blood sugar dip to snooze-inducing levels, says neurologist Daniel Amen, M.D. To increase your PM energy and stamina by 65%, add 1 oz. of macadamias to your lunch, or enjoy these crunchy treats as an early afternoon snack. UCLA researchers say the nuts’ healthy plant oils energize a tired pancreas, plus prod tissues to use up insulin, allowing fatigue-fighting blood glucose to reach brain and muscle cells that need it.

Dozy in the afternoon? Cool your brow

Your nervous system craves an afternoon break and tries coaxing you to catnap by tamping down the production of energizing beta brain waves. But Australian scientists say a brief drop in skin temperature—try splashing cool water on your cheeks, holding a cold pack to your eyes or stepping outside if it’s chilly—can kick-start beta wave release in 30 seconds, boosting your energy and focus by 50% for 90 minutes.

Beat by dinner? Beautify with plants

We’re exposed to twice as much tiredness-triggering carbon dioxide when we’re cooped up in tightly sealed homes and offices, say researchers at Washington State University. And that exposure can dampen the central nervous system, leaving us dragging by dinner-time. But Portuguese research suggests that decorating rooms you frequent with air-purifying plants like ferns and spider plants cuts indoor carbon dioxide levels by 30% to prevent evening energy dips.



Weary all the time? Sniff vetiver before bed

The number-one cause of all-day fatigue is poor sleep. Thankfully, there’s an easy Rx: Take 15 minutes before lights-out to enjoy the aroma of 100% vetiver essential oil (place 4 drops on a tissue and set it beside you as you read or relax). A study in the journal *Natural Product Research* reveals vetiver’s earthy aromatic compounds prompt the release of sleep-enhancing theta brain waves, helping you drift off 45% faster and sleep 25% more deeply, increasing daytime energy by 65%.



"An exercise headaches!"

Debilitating head pain and dizziness kept Louise Geib from leading a full life—until she discovered the fun, simple exercise that restored her health and happiness

Take it one second at a time. The meeting will be over in 15 minutes. I can do this, Louise Geib told herself as she struggled through intense pressure in her head. "I was meeting with my team, and I was completely miserable," Louise recalls. "As the owner of a mechanical contracting company, I had to be present, but it was hard to muster through. When someone was speaking, I had to turn my chair toward them instead of my head to prevent dizziness.

"All I could think about was how bad I felt. No one knew that anything was wrong, but I often had to follow up later, usually asking the same questions I had asked earlier. I was used to being on top of my game, but now I felt behind. I knew I couldn't go on like this—something had to change.

Feeling powerless

"After a particularly stressful season in my life, I found myself dealing with chronic, debilitating pressure in my head that made it impossible to do anything. I could barely do any work on my computer, and I could only take calls on speakerphone.

How balance exercises end

"Vestibular migraines are the most common cause of dizziness," says Amir Kheradmand, M.D., research director at the Vestibular and Ocular Research Lab at Johns Hopkins. Women with this condition typically experience the usual migraine symptoms, plus unsteadiness, sensitivity to motion and brain fog—but these secondary symptoms can occur independent of a headache.

Fortunately, it's easy to fix. Just like some people are less flexible than others, people with vestibular migraines have a lower threshold for dizziness, says Dr. Kheradmand "It's like having a weak muscle. If you work it out, it gets stronger." The proof: In an Australian study, balance exercises helped sufferers feel 27% less dizziness. To get the perks, do these moves twice each week.

Louise Geib,
Atlantic
Beach, FL

ball cured my

I started to work from home, but as my productivity continued to suffer, I was forced to sell my company.

“Not only did I have pressure in my head and stiffness in my neck, but the dizziness never let up. I felt like I was on a boat 24/7. I was also sensitive to sound and light, and I had tingling in my arms, legs and feet. I battled brain fog, but when I started to slur my words, I became really worried. Everyday tasks like going to the grocery store were exhausting, and it felt like my whole life centered around managing my symptoms. I was determined to find out what was wrong with me, and because I had a tremendous faith in God, I knew I would get better.

Relief...at last!

“At first, I chalked my symptoms up to being tired, but as they persisted, I made an appointment with my doctor. After running tests, he thought I might have a serious abnormality in my ear canal that would require surgery—something I wanted to avoid.

“I decided to get a second opinion, so I made an appointment at the Johns Hopkins Neuro-Visual and Vestibular Disorders Center. There, the doctor

ran a battery of tests and diagnosed me with *vestibular* migraine. He explained that it’s a common type of migraine marked by dizziness and head pressure. I learned that the condition affects the vestibular system, which links the inner ear to the brain and is responsible for our sense of balance.

“The doctor told me that my condition could be managed with some diet changes, like reducing my caffeine intake. He also prescribed a small dose of a prescription antidepressant that is used off-label for migraines. Most surprisingly, he told me that I should move as much as possible.

“I was thrilled to learn that I wouldn’t need surgery, but I was shocked that I had something as common as a migraine because it felt so different from ‘normal’ migraine headaches. I was desperate to learn more about the condition, so I read the book, *Heal Your Headache*, by David Buchholz, M.D., and found information through the Vestibular Disorders Association (Vestibular.org).

“I learned the best way to manage my condition was with exercises that challenge the vestibular system—just like my doctor said. I read that balance exercises were most effective, so I hired

a personal trainer with a rehab background. He created a program using a BOSU ball, a dome-shaped half-ball attached to a flat rubber platform.

“At first, the exercises were challenging, so I started out doing them on the ground. As I got stronger, I would stand either on the rounded or flat side of the BOSU ball, using a wall or bench for support if I became dizzy. Since the ball is curved, you have to work hard to keep your balance. This helped strengthen the muscles in my eyes and the vestibular system.

“Although the workouts initially left me a little fatigued, within weeks, my symptoms had significantly improved. And not only did my balance and dizziness get better, but my legs, core and back got stronger as well. Outside the gym, I started pushing myself to go for a walk or run an errand to keep moving. I couldn’t believe how important exercise was to my recovery, and I know it’s a habit I’ll keep up forever.

“Now that I’m no longer dealing with constant pain, I’m more active than ever. I love to take trips and go skiing, white-water rafting and hiking. Exercise has restored my life and my happiness—and I feel so blessed!”

—As told to Julie Revelant

headaches and dizziness

Toe Taps

This improves coordination to reduce dizziness.

To do: Stand next to the ball, flat side down. Put your right foot on the BOSU. Press up to standing on your right foot, then lower your left foot to the ground. Do 10 reps on each side.



Bird Dog

This strengthens the lower back and challenges balance to improve stability.

To do: Kneel on the ball, flat side down and your hands on the ground. Extend right hand forward and left foot back. Return to start. Do 10 reps per side.

Flamingo Stand

By strengthening the core, this move helps eliminate dizziness.

To do: Place the ball on the ground, flat side up. Step on the middle of the platform with your right foot. Slowly bend your left knee to lift your left foot up into the air, keeping a slight bend in the right knee. Hold for at least 10 seconds, then switch sides.





Proof: It's never too late to start exercising

When it comes to building muscle, fitness beginners fare just as well as lifelong athletes. In a small study, British researchers reporting in *Frontiers in Physiology* had volunteers age 70+ who didn't work out regularly perform basic leg exercises. Investigators then measured the growth of key proteins that indicate the ability to build muscle. The result: Non-exercisers had the same muscle-forming capacity as athletes their age who'd been training for 50 years, suggesting that age and skill are no barriers to starting a workout routine.

Texts help keep blood sugar steady

Could encouraging texts help diabetics better regulate blood-sugar levels? Yes, according to research published in *Circulation: Cardiovascular Quality and Outcomes*. Testing levels of *hemoglobin A1c*, or the average blood sugar, is an important part of diabetes maintenance. In this six-month study, 69% of subjects who received daily encouraging text messages reached their target A1c levels. Researchers say advice such as diet tips and glucose check reminders help people remember to monitor blood-sugar levels. Free apps such as Diabetes:M or MySugr offer similar tools.

Unexpected upside of marriage: brain protection

In a 14-year study of more than 15,000 people, Michigan State University researchers found that married couples were significantly less likely to develop dementia than those in other relationships. The financial security that comes from matrimony, which provides better access to health care, is likely one reason, says study author Hui Liu, Ph.D. Also, married people have more opportunities for social support, regular conversation and activities through larger social networks, all of which keep the brain stimulated.

Phone therapy relieves IBS symptoms by 40%

As many as one in five of us struggle with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) symptoms like cramping, diarrhea and constipation. Now, a study in *The Lancet* found that volunteers enrolled in over-the-phone *cognitive behavioral therapy* (CBT), which helped folks make small lifestyle changes, reduced the severity of IBS symptoms by 40%. Often covered by insurance plans, CBT focuses on deep breathing, muscle relaxation and guided imagery.



Naps reduce risk of heart attack

Curling up for the occasional midday snooze is linked to better heart health, say Swiss researchers reporting in the journal *Heart*. Analyzing the habits of more than 3,400 volunteers over five years, investigators found that one to two naps per week lowered the risk of heart failure, stroke and heart attacks by 48%. Short and infrequent power naps might compensate for poor nighttime sleep, thus delivering the benefits of adequate sleep to the heart. Lead study author Nadine Häusler, Ph.D., recommends one to two naps per week between noon and 5 PM to avoid disrupting your regular nightly slumber.

11 months

How long the average person puts off scheduling a doctor's appointment

SOURCE: GN Hearing

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"Nothing holds me

For Gina Roberts-Grey, 52, getting through the day without a nap was a struggle. Then she discovered the surprising cause of her fatigue and the shockingly simple solution

Stay awake! Gina Roberts-Grey told herself as she settled into her favorite chair to watch a Saturday evening college basketball game with her family, trying to will herself to not fall asleep before 8 PM. "You'll never make it through the first half," her son joked. "And I knew he was right," says Gina. "I'd probably fall asleep and miss another fun moment with my family—something I was beginning to think was my new way of life."

Tired all the time

"Almost two years ago, I started feeling uncharacteristically exhausted for no apparent reason. My normal bedtime had always been around 10 or 11, but suddenly I couldn't stay awake past 7. *Maybe that's what happens after you turn 50*, I thought. But then it started affecting my ability to work. I work at home as a freelance health writer, and I started nodding off at my desk, then curling up for a nap on my couch. *I must not have slept well*, I told myself the first time it happened, but the naps quickly became a daily occurrence."

"I started scheduling interviews with story sources around the times of day when I knew I'd be more alert. I worried about being able to get my work done, and whether my fatigue would impact my livelihood."

"I had made a career speaking to health experts, and I knew I ate right and took care of myself and shouldn't be exhausted 24/7. So at my 2018 physical, I worked up the

courage to mention the months of intrusive fatigue to my doctor. I worried I'd sound foolish for bringing up something as simple as being tired, but I opted to do so because I was becoming stressed about it. It was upsetting to not be able to stay awake to watch a movie with my family or worry that I'd doze in and out of conversation. My doctor reviewed my diet and lifestyle, checked my blood for anemia and thyroid issues, explored sleep disorders and more, then told me there was nothing wrong—there was no explanation for my fatigue.

"Coffee, tea and energy drinks weren't an option since I have a caffeine sensitivity. So I started splashing cold water on my face and neck, then doing jumping jacks to rev my energy enough to stay awake to work. But I continued to struggle, dragging myself through each day and anxious to pour myself into bed and go to sleep. My next annual physical was a repeat of the last. Leaving without answers, I

One-minute QUIZ

IS A NERVE MALFUNCTION MAKING YOU TIRED?

If you're often fatigued and have two or more of the symptoms below, an out-of-whack vagus nerve may be to blame

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☒ Anxiety | ☒ Frequent urination |
| ☒ Never feeling full | ☒ High blood pressure |
| ☒ Brain fog | ☒ Gut issues like IBS |
| ☒ Constipation | ☒ Blue moods |
| ☒ Low libido | ☒ Achy joints |

Gina Roberts-Grey, Baldwinsville, NY



back now!”

thought I was doomed to yawning and napping my way through life.

Relief at last

“I decided to take matters into my own hands and began looking into unexplained causes of fatigue. I found research that explained how the body’s *vagus nerve* acts as a communication pathway, sending signals between the brain and body, but that excessive stress impairs that network, which can lead to fatigue, brain fog and sadness.

“Suddenly, the pieces fell into place. Just before my fatigue set in, I lost my beloved dog, who had been chronically sick for several years, and my husband and I were also coping with the prolonged illness of an elderly parent. Add in the stress of exhaustion and its impact on my ability to make a living, and I found myself in a vicious cycle of heightened and excessive stress.

“Coincidentally, around that time, I was reading Lauren Chelec Cafritz’s book, *Breath LOVE*, for an article I was writing. It explained how ‘connecting’ your breaths by breathing continuously, instead of taking short pauses between each breath, releases stress. And since my *vagus nerve* research had taught me you can strengthen and tone the nerve with breathing

strategies to better manage stress, I thought it was worth a try.

“With guidance from Lauren’s book, I sat at my desk and took a deep breath, filling my lungs until I couldn’t suck in an iota more of air. Then I slowly breathed out through my nose while squeezing my abs as if doing an abdominal crunch. I repeated the cycle five times and was amazed to feel an immediate sense of calm energy—totally different from a jolt of caffeine. I had to really focus on this new way of breathing, but I could see it was making a difference, so I repeated the cycle a few hours later.

“Unbelievably, I made it through an entire day without leaning back to ‘rest my eyes’ or catch a snooze. And after doing the exercises three or four times daily over the next few days, my energy was back!

“I still begin my day with several deep breaths, and I rely on a deep breath or two midday or anytime I need a boost of energy or stress relief. And since a strong *vagus nerve* also depends on exercise and eating well, I’ve kept up those healthy habits. Now, I easily work full days, and my family no longer teases me that I’ll be asleep before the opening credits of a movie. I feel like a new person!”

90% of women drained by a glitch in internal communication system

! The *vagus nerve* is an information highway to the brain, says integrative neurologist Ilene Ruhoy, M.D., Ph.D., founder of Seattle’s Center for Healing Neurology. “The nerve descends from the brain stem down the neck, into the chest and then to the abdomen,” she explains. When properly functioning, it helps maintain heart rate and digestion, regulate emotions and pain and control inflammation, she says. But when the nerve is weak, symptoms like exhaustion, brain fog, GI issues and blue moods can occur.

! Stress causes *vagus nerve* malfunction for 90% of women, says *vagus nerve* researcher Paul Spector, M.D. Other factors: a sedentary lifestyle, poor sleep and a poor diet. But he says most women go undiagnosed because the vague symptoms are considered “normal” in our high-stress culture.

✓ All women would benefit from improving *vagus nerve* function (also called vagal tone), asserts Dr. Spector, who adds that the strategies below will strengthen the nerve to increase energy.

😊 Deep breathing strengthens vagal tone to reduce stress, sharpen mental clarity and improve function of all vital systems, asserts Dr. Ruhoy. The key: exhaling longer than you inhale, since nerve activity is optimized when exhaling. To do: Inhale deeply for four beats, hold for two, then exhale for at least six, advises Navaz Habib, D.C., author of *Activate Your Vagus Nerve*. Repeat for two to three minutes, twice a day.

😊 Also smart: Stimulating cold receptors on nerves in the face signals the *vagus nerve* to slow breathing and heart rate, lowering stress, says Dr. Spector. To get the benefit, place a cold, wet washcloth on your forehead and bridge of your nose, taking three deep breaths, then breathing normally for five minutes.

News! Reduce swollen, achy joints by 57%

Optimizing *vagus nerve* function shuts down inflammation, report scientists in *PLOS ONE*. In an animal study, they found that activating the nerve—which runs from the brain stem to the gut and affects everything from mood to heart rate—reduced swelling in arthritic joints by up to 57% and cut levels of an inflammatory protein by 54%. And the strategy works for humans too, says Paul Spector, M.D. “Issues like chronic stress can cause overactivity in the sympathetic nervous system, which in turn promotes inflammation,” he explains. But activating the *vagus nerve* turns on the *parasympathetic nervous system*, shutting down the stress response and easing inflammation. To get the benefits, try the steps at right, which instantly improve *vagus nerve* function.

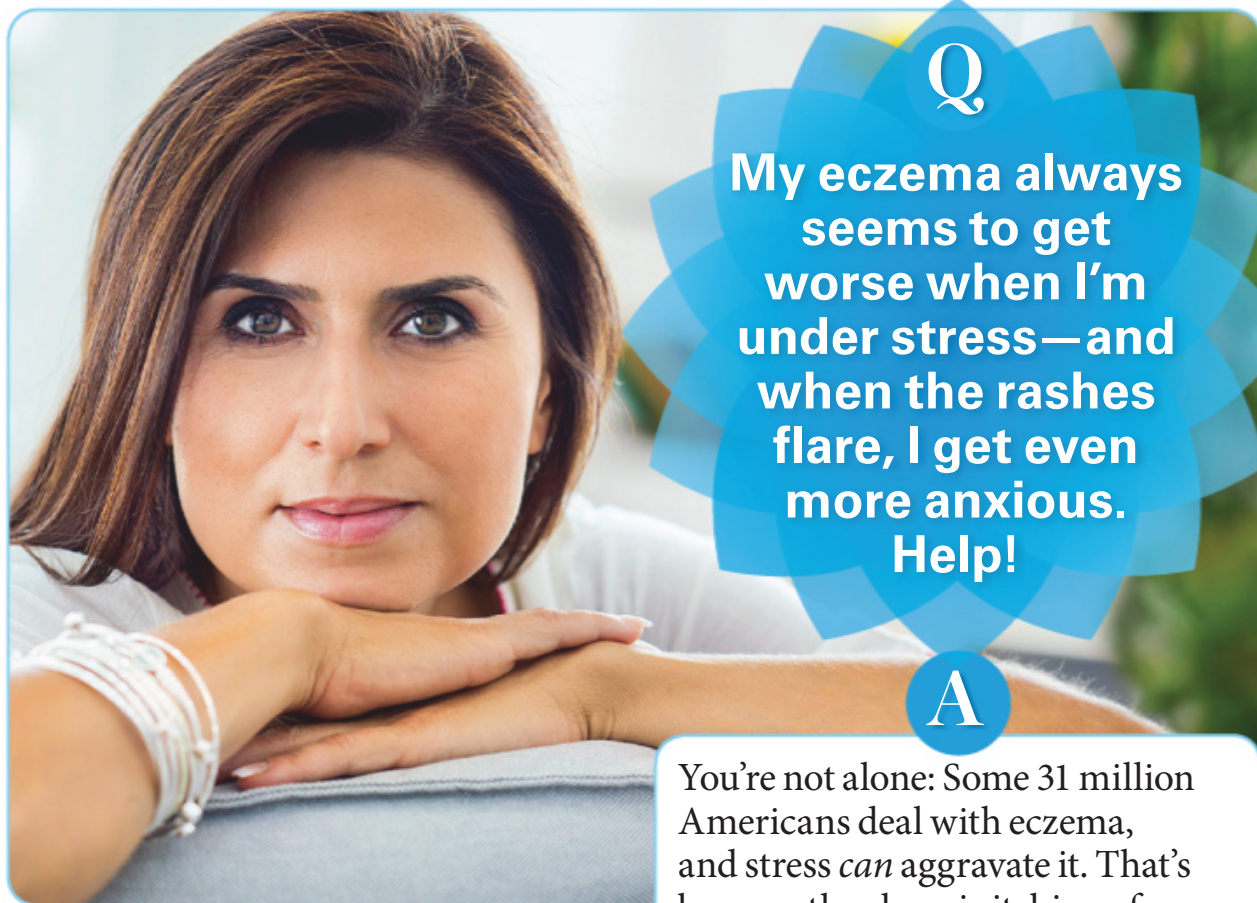
Why do I get dizzy after exercise?

Q: One of my New Year's resolutions was to start exercising more often. It's going great, except I sometimes get very dizzy when I finish a workout. What's up?

A: Are you drinking plenty of water before and during your workout? If not, dehydration could be behind your dizziness. Most of us are diligent about downing water when it's hot out, but our body's thirst response is diminished by up to 40% in the winter, according to University of New Hampshire researchers. The reason? Our blood vessels constrict when the weather is cold to keep our core warm, but this also fools our body into thinking it's hydrated, so we don't feel thirsty. When exercising, make sure you have a water bottle handy, no matter the time of year. I advise sipping 4 to 16 oz. for every 15 to 20 minutes of exercise, and at least 64 oz. total throughout the day.

Another common cause of dizziness after exercise: low blood sugar, especially if you're exercising before eating breakfast. The reason: When you eat, your body stores energy as *glycogen* to use between meals. But when you exercise before eating and use up all of your stored glycogen for energy, your body has no fuel left, which can cause dizziness. To avoid the issue, try having a light meal that includes complex carbohydrates, like whole-grain breads or cereal, before you exercise. Complex carbs turn to energy more slowly than simple carbs, like white bread, so they provide a longer energy boost. Plus, they won't leave you feeling sluggish after eating.

If neither of these rid you of dizziness, you can try dialing back the intensity of your workouts, building back up gradually. But if the symptom persists, or is accompanied by palpitations, shortness of breath or chest tightness, I advise seeing your doctor.



Q

My eczema always seems to get worse when I'm under stress—and when the rashes flare, I get even more anxious. Help!

A

You're not alone: Some 31 million Americans deal with eczema, and stress *can* aggravate it. That's because the chronic itching of eczema activates brain regions in a similar way that stress does, raising cortisol—and too much of the stress hormone impairs immunity, which can lead to inflammation that triggers more flare-ups and more stress!

The remedy I suggest to soothe both: meditation. In an Emory University study, people who regularly practiced mindfulness meditation were more aware of their anxiety triggers, which decreased stress *and* rash frequency. To find meditation practices, search "body scan mindfulness" on YouTube.

I also advise applying a cream, like Kamedis Eczema Therapy (Amazon.com), after a warm shower, when skin is damp. It's been shown to cut flare-ups in half.

Can I trust a virtual doctor's visit?

Q: My insurance company just started covering "virtual" doctor appointments over video chat, but I don't know if I can trust it. What do you think?

A: Telemedicine, or consulting remotely with a doctor, has been around for years, but technology has made it easier than ever to speak with a qualified physician. If you're dealing with a common symptom, like a sore throat, or can't get in to see a doctor because of your location or a hectic schedule, these services are great for convenience. But that's not the only benefit. One study showed telemedicine saved patients as much as \$120 per appointment and helped them avoid unnecessary emergency room visits, bringing savings as high as \$1,500.

To get the most from your "visit," I suggest using a service with a video component, so the doctor can actually see you. But know that it's still important to have a nearby doctor who knows your medical history—and see him or her in person for checkups or more serious symptoms.



Put FIRST to work for you!

Cindy Geyer, M.D., is the Medical Director at Canyon Ranch Wellness Resort in Lenox, Massachusetts, and a faculty member at The Center for Mind-Body Medicine in Washington, D.C. To ask her a question, send an email to health@firstforwomen.com.

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DOUBLE-DUTY FAT BLASTERS

Master trainer Jillian Michaels tones trouble spots from head to toe with this circuit. Complete two rounds to melt pounds in record time

Deep lunge with row

FIRM THIGHS & STRONG BACK

Maintaining stability in this deep lunge activates the quads and inner-thigh muscles to help banish pesky chub rub, says Michaels, while the rows melt fat from the upper back.

TO DO: Stand with your feet together, holding 5-pound weights. Take a big step forward with your right foot and bend your knee to 90°, keeping your left leg straight and your left heel up. Pull the weights up and back, then lower down. Continue for 1 minute. Switch legs for the second round.



Squat press

TIGHT TUSH & TONED TORSO

These are two of the most effective exercises for allover sculpting. Squats engage the *gluteus maximus* and hamstrings to lift the tush, says Michaels, while the overhead press calls on the deltoids, rhomboids and lats to tone your upper half.

TO DO: Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and hold 5-pound weights up in front of your face. Lower into a squat. As you press up, rotate your palms outward and press the weights overhead, then lower down and rotate your hands back in. Continue for 1 minute.





Front lunge curl

LEAN LEGS & PERKY CHEST

Stepping into a lunge works every muscle below the waist, says Michaels, including the calorie-burning quads, hamstrings, glutes and calves. Incorporate a classic hammer curl to sculpt the upper body, and this exercise will quickly melt fat from head to toe.

TO DO: Stand with your feet hip-width apart, holding 5-pound weights at your sides. Take a medium step forward with your left foot and bend both knees to form right angles. As you bend your knees, curl the weights up to your shoulders. Push off your left foot to return to standing, then repeat on the right. Continue for 1 minute.

Side lunge front raise

SLIM HIPS & SLEEK SHOULDERS

Say goodbye to saddlebags with side lunges, which engage the hard-to-reach abductors. Michaels adds a front raise to tone the *anterior deltoids* and sculpt sexy shoulders.

TO DO: Stand with your feet together. Hold 3-pound weights with your palms facing you. Take a large step to the side with your left foot and bend your knee to 90°, keeping your right leg straight. Raise the weights to shoulder height. Return to start and repeat to the right. Continue for 1 minute.



Warrior 3 tricep extension

FLAT BELLY & SEXY ARMS

This balance position calls on the *transverse* and *rectus abdominis* and the *obliques*, the muscles that work to sculpt an enviable silhouette. What's more, says Michaels, extending weights to the back engages the triceps to eliminate wave wiggles.

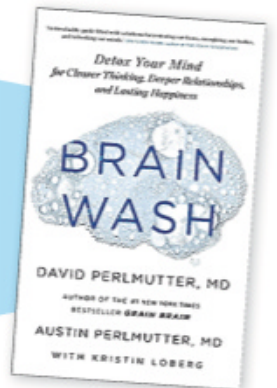
TO DO: Stand with your feet together, holding 3-pound weights in front

of your thighs. Shift your weight to your right foot and bend your knee slightly. Lift your left foot to the back as far up as you can (keeping your toe pointed down), letting your chest float down. Pull the weights up. Extend them to the back, then pull them back in. Continue for 1 minute. Switch legs for the second round.



Freedom from fog and fatigue

Feeling stressed, tired and unfocused? Physicians David Perlmutter, M.D., and Austin Perlmutter, M.D., reveal the surprising modern-day culprit that's disrupting key pathways in the brain—and 6 simple strategies that will rewire your brain for total health



Women who feel worn-out are often told to prioritize “me time.” But according to David Perlmutter, M.D., and his son, Austin Perlmutter, M.D., co-authors of *Brain Wash*, for millions of us, the brain is in a biochemical state that makes it impossible to feel calm and energized. To blame, they say: technology. “Smartphones and social media remodel the brain so the anxiety-producing *amygdala* becomes dominant, while the *prefrontal cortex* (PFC), the region that restores energy, becomes less active.”

Fortunately, research reveals the brain can quickly rewire itself, making your PFC more active and helping you feel better in just 10 days—*without* giving up your gadgets! Here's how...

Snack on pistachios

Eating foods rich in the amino acid *tryptophan* will help you feel calmer and happier for four hours, report scientists at Canada's University of Ottawa. “Tryptophan is a building block of a mood-boosting hormone that soothes the anxiety-producing *amygdala*, reducing stress,” says Dr. David Perlmutter, author of the bestselling book *Grain Brain*. The study-proven dose: 50 pistachios or ¼ cup of sunflower seeds daily.



Load up on ‘vitamin N’

“Decorating with potted plants will give you a daily dose of vitamin N (nature), which is proven to sharpen problem-solving skills,” Dr. Austin Perlmutter asserts. In fact, research shows that indoor plants can increase energy by 30% and promote healthy activity in the PFC. Tip: Pick gardenia, begonia or mint, which stimulate your brain with their beauty *and* their scent.

Tune into silence

Relaxing in silence for 15 minutes prompts the release of hormones that improve brain function for 24 hours, says Dr. David Perlmutter. In fact, more than 600 studies prove the brain-healing power of daily doses of silence, which also foster a 55% improvement in happiness by encouraging the growth of new brain cells in the region associated with memory and emotion.

Breathe in a calming scent

“Cedarwood essential oil calms an overactive *amygdala*, easing anxiety and sharpening focus within seconds,” says Dr. Austin Perlmutter, who adds that this plant extract is rich in compounds that promote healthy activity in the PFC. Indeed, a recent research review suggests that this soothing scent heightens electrical activity in the PFC by 50%, reducing anxiety in as little as two minutes.



Use a ‘first-aid kit’

“Moving acts as a first-aid kit for aging brain cells,” says Dr. Austin Perlmutter. That's because using large muscle groups stimulates the growth of new connections throughout the brain. What's more, Harvard studies show that women are 75% less likely to be fatigued and can focus three times better when they move regularly. Dr. Perlmutter notes: “Just getting out of your chair for two minutes each hour can help.”

Take a brain booster

DHA, an omega-3 fatty acid, makes up 97% of the fat in the brain, UCLA researchers say. And studies suggest keeping DHA levels high *doubles* your ability to think clearly. To get the benefits, Dr. David Perlmutter suggests taking 1,000 mg. daily, adding: “Supplements often contain multiple omega-3 fats. Check the label to make sure you're getting enough DHA.” One to try: Nordic Naturals DHA Xtra (\$27, Vitacost.com).

Your family will thank you for making them smarter

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pays the best interest”

—Benjamin Franklin



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Surefire strategy for reaching goals

To achieve your dream of landing a new job this year, make a clear plan (like, “I’ll apply for three jobs this week and spend 30 minutes updating my résumé”). In a study in the journal *Psychological Science*, folks striving to get fit who scored higher in something called “planfulness” racked up more visits to the gym over 20 weeks than their counterparts who didn’t map out their strategy for achieving goals. Researchers explain that planfulness is part of conscientiousness, which is associated with keeping you motivated.

Proof: A little kindness goes a long way

Treating your volunteer group to lunch can not only lift their mood, it can boost their self-esteem too. When bus drivers received a piece of fruit in their lunch every day for three weeks (considered a gift or bonus from their employer) they had significantly fewer feelings of depression, according to a study in the *International Journal of Occupational Safety and Ergonomics*. What’s more, they also had greater feelings of confidence to face challenges as a result of this perceived kindness. It seems feeling valued and respected cultivates feelings of happiness and self-efficacy.

Best way to recharge during a break at work

As you step away from your desk at work, tuck your phone away—you’ll feel more restored afterward, suggests a study from Rutgers University in New Jersey. While working on word puzzles, volunteers took a break during which one group was allowed to use their phones, while the other wasn’t. Post-break, the cellphone group took 19% longer to finish the task and solved 22% fewer problems than their peers. Researchers say the phone gave them an addictive urge to check for messages. This drained their brainpower, putting their performance on par with those who got no break.

Easy tweak to boost persuasiveness

When you’re pitching a fund-raising idea to your church group, try changing up the volume and pitch of your voice and including pauses as you speak. A study in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* found that subjects who did so were more likely to convince others of their ideas. This speaking style makes you appear confident and sincere, which audiences find persuasive.



Key to an even happier marriage

Being humble delivers bigger benefits to your relationship than you might expect, according to research from the University of Michigan. Investigators asked 284 couples to talk about their own and their partner’s levels of humility, then share whether they’d be willing to forgive their significant other for a hurtful deed. Researchers discovered that people were markedly more likely to offer forgiveness to their partner if that person was humble. The reason? A willingness to admit and embrace personal flaws made it easier for volunteers to give them a pass.

70%

Reduction in odds of feeling depressed after eating dark chocolate

SOURCE: *Depression & Anxiety*

instant inspiration

Suzanne's best

Golden Globe–nominated actress, author and health advocate, Suzanne Somers, 73, shares her tips to beat stress, boost joy, revitalize health and restore vibrant, youthful energy!

By Alexandra Pollock

Valentine's Day is on the horizon, and Suzanne Somers is ready to celebrate with simple heartfelt gestures of love. "Every year, I make paper valentines for my grown kids just to tell them I love them!" she says. "The people I love breathe life into me!" For Suzanne, that love is part of what she calls the "juice"—the joy, energy and vitality that keeps her feeling young. Another key ingredient? Practicing self-love. "When you take care of yourself, you have more spring in your step," she says. "I think it's important to wake up, do your hair, put on nice clothes and makeup. It's not for anyone else—it's to feel good about *you*. Taking time to love yourself and to show love to others is all that matters!" Here, more of Suzanne's secrets to bliss!

Multiplies success

Positive visualization

"To achieve at anything, you have to believe you can!" asserts Suzanne. "I grew up during the Cold War, and when I was a little girl, I'd hide in my mother's closet with her glow-in-the-dark rosary beads, and I'd say, 'Why do you fight?' Then I'd imagine they'd reply, 'You're right, we shouldn't fight.' I don't know if that led to peace, but I *believed* it did. And through the years, I've learned what you believe creates your reality!"



Secret weapon: keto snacks

"Years ago, I created a weight-loss program called, **SOMERSIZE**, which was essentially the keto diet!" says Suzanne. "I eat a high-fat, high-vegetable, high-protein diet with little sugar and grain. When I'm craving carbs, I have a piece of organic cheese, and it always satisfies!"

stress solutions



**Energizes and
inspires**

Daily gratitude

“Gratitude keeps me energized in my most busy moments,” Suzanne explains. “One of the great things that has happened as I’ve moved on in years is that I’ve learned to be more present and enjoy every moment to the fullest. There’s a beautiful quote by Lao Tzu that says, ‘If you are depressed, you are living in the past; if you are anxious, you are living in the future; if you are at peace, you are living in the present.’ I try to stay at peace living in the present, so nothing seems overwhelming to me like it used to. I take things as they come, knowing that everything is an opportunity to learn and grow.”

Melts a menopot

Mixing up exercise

“I’m still married to my ThighMaster & LBX!” Suzanne says with a laugh. “But I also love to interact with nature—I go for walks in the mountains near our house or on the beach. Frank Lloyd Wright said ‘Nature is the only face of God you will ever see,’ and that’s what happens on these walks: I see the divine in everything! But on days when the weather is bad, I love yoga. I’ve been doing it for 19 years, and it’s my favorite luxury. I do it every other day, just for me—it keeps me feeling healthy and pain-free, and it really brings so much peace.”



Nourishes the soul

True love

“I get my strength from the great love in my life—from my family, friends and my husband, Alan,” Suzanne says with a smile. “Love is all there is: It’s not who you are, what you do or what you have at all. It’s all about who you love and who loves you. I have an incredible family and true friends who mean so much to me. And I wake up every morning to my husband telling me I’m beautiful. It doesn’t matter if it’s true or not, it’s what he thinks—and he makes me feel that I am, indeed, beautiful. Of course, I also love God. I have an ongoing dialogue with Him that gives me strength and peace when I need it most, and that is a true gift!”

PICK UP SUZANNE’S LIFE-CHANGING NEW BOOK!

“My 27th book practically wrote itself,” Suzanne says of her latest release, *A New Way to Age*, on sale now. “Not that it wasn’t hard work and that I didn’t slave away for the past year and a half, but one day, I looked at my computer and I thought, *I’m finished. I’ve said everything I wanted to say this time!*”

The book is a compendium of doctors’ interviews and easy-to-understand lessons Suzanne has learned

about health techniques, such as balancing nutritional and mineral deficiencies, detoxifying your gut for weight loss and natural pain management. In each chapter, she offers a revolutionary philosophy for a longer, better-quality life—something she also seeks to achieve with her cosmetics line, Suzanne Organics (SuzanneSomers.com).

“It’s all about the choices we make daily, both good and bad,” says Suzanne. “Our choices going forward

matter. Most everyone will likely choose the allopathic route, meaning ‘Here’s the symptom and here’s the drug for that symptom.’ And when you need pharmaceuticals, they are a godsend! But this book explores another way, offering alternative and natural approaches, as well as cutting-edge age-reversal protocols that can change lives!”



Overcome any

Experts share strategies guaranteed to help you bounce back from life's letdowns with grace & guts!

When things don't turn out the way we'd hoped, it can feel like the rug's been pulled out from under our feet. Whether it's getting *this* close to landing a dream job—only to lose out in the end—or realizing that our forever relationship actually has an expiration date, there's no doubt about it: Disappointment stings.

“In my practice, I've found that people avoid disappointment far more than other negative emotions,” reveals psychotherapist Mary Lamia, Ph.D., author of *Emotions! Making Sense of Your Feelings*. “It's easier to be angry, for example, because disappointment comes with finality: the recognition that we won't get what we wanted.”

The good news? Simply admitting that we've been let down opens the door to recovery. “Adopting an *adaptive response*—where we try to learn from the experience rather than deny our feelings—allows us to move forward,” promises Lamia. “In fact, studies show that unmet expectations, which can feel so painful in the moment, make us much more resilient in the long run.”

The key is to ask yourself questions designed to broaden your perspective, advises Christine Padesky, Ph.D., coauthor of *Mind Over Mood*. For instance: *What might this situation look like three years from now after things have settled down?* and *Have I recovered from similarly stressful experiences?* This new internal dialogue will quiet your inner critic and open your heart to healing.

Read on for more strategies that will help you tackle setbacks and come out the other side wiser *and* stronger!



disappointment

THE LETDOWN

"I didn't get the job"

You were the perfect candidate for a new position, and the interview went great...but the call you were expecting never came, and now you're back to rewriting your résumé. Struggling with self-doubt, you're not sure which step to take next. "Career disappointments are a double whammy," says Padesky. "Not only do they deal a blow to our confidence, they threaten our financial well-being and the ability to take care of our family."

THE BOUNCE-BACK

Double your 'superpowers'

Take an inventory of your internal *and* external resources, urges Padesky. First, think about your unique strengths: Are you an ace problem solver? Do you have a great sense of humor? "It's these attributes—your innate superpowers—that will help you survive this." Next, focus on *outside* resources. For example, maybe a friend has a useful connection. "Your network is bigger than you think, and people *want* to help you succeed."

THE LETDOWN

"My relationship fell apart"

When a relationship ends—be it a significant other or a friendship—it takes with it years of memories, dreams and plans. "Whether the split is recent or happened years ago, the disappointment can be crushing, and we tend to compound it by blaming ourselves," says Alison Cook, Ph.D., author of *Boundaries for Your Soul*. "We'll berate ourselves for not trying harder or not seeing signs sooner."

THE BOUNCE-BACK

Treat yourself tenderly

"You can't heal in a context of criticism, so you must treat yourself tenderly," declares Cook. How? Replace self-recriminations with kinder words, such as, *I know that I am loved, worthwhile and whole*. Adopting a self-compassionate perspective significantly decreases rates of depression and reduces the harmful effects of stress—something we can all use when going through a heartache.

THE LETDOWN

"They didn't come through for me"

She could always be counted on to make you laugh and lend you an ear... but when your pipes froze and burst, and you needed a place to stay, the cousin you thought you were close to wasn't there for you, making you feel literally left out in the cold. "No-show family or friends can break your heart," says Shasta Nelson, author of *Frientimacy*. "I've counseled many clients through this—at first, we often don't even realize how angry we are."

THE BOUNCE-BACK

Set an intention to forgive

Forgiveness can be difficult, especially if the person who let you down doesn't try to make amends. To free yourself from anger and move forward, start by simply *intending* to forgive, says Nelson. "Journaling is a great way to do this—I suggest making a list of what's hurt you and write down your intention to forgive in clear, simple language," she advises. Even if you can't forgive 100%, this helps open your heart and move you in the right direction.

THE LETDOWN

"I missed out in life"

You thought that by now your life would be something more. More travel, more friends, more *sparkle*... "Disappointments don't have to be specific to be painful," shares Padesky. "Many of us struggle with a dull, aching sense that our lives haven't turned out to be as exciting or fulfilling as we envisioned." Don't be embarrassed to feel this way or chastise yourself for being ungrateful. Instead, take it as a sign that you should and *can* make the necessary changes that'll lead to greater happiness—and allow you to put regret and disappointment behind you."

THE BOUNCE-BACK

Think like a director

Rebounding from dashed expectations may be as simple as harnessing your inner "Spielberg," promises Padesky. "Imagine your life is a movie, and you're the director: What tweaks can you make to improve your story line?" If you want it to be a comedy but it's more like a soap opera, ask yourself how you might inject some levity into your day. For example, could you listen to the music you loved as a teen on your commute? "Life isn't something that happens to us," says Padesky. "It's a participation occupation, and we can all rewrite our stories to shift from disappointment to determination and usher in happiness."

SOLUTIONS FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY



resolutions
MADE EASY



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Less time for
prep = more
time to enjoy!

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5-ingredient delicious



Celebration-special yet weeknight-easy,
our too-tempting entrées, sides and
sweets wow without the work



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20-
page
mini
mag

pull out
&
save

*Delish they
can't resist!*



Lemony Herb-Roasted Chicken



15-minute prep
makes it easy to
show you care

Chocolate-Raspberry Bundt Cake

How we made it healthier

Potatoes brighten moods. Enjoying skin-on spuds daily is key to staying 42% calmer and happier all winter, say Purdue University researchers. Potatoes are rich in potassium, which soothes the brain's anxiety center.

Roasted Baby Potatoes

Baked Parmesan Zucchini

Simply scrumptious



Lemony Herb-Roasted Chicken

ACTIVE TIME: **15 min.** TOTAL TIME: **2 hrs.** SERVES: **6**

To add an easy-to-do flavor boost, we brushed our bird with a jazzed-up bottled dressing that makes a great marinade for other meat dishes too

- 1 lemon**
- ½ cup bottled olive oil & vinegar salad dressing**
- 1 Tbs. chopped fresh parsley**
- ½ tsp. dried herbes de Provence**
- 1 (6–7 lb.) roasting chicken**

1 Heat oven to 375°F. Grate ½ tsp. zest and squeeze 2 Tbs. juice from lemon into bowl; stir in salad dressing, parsley, herbes and ½ tsp. salt.

2 If desired, truss chicken; place in large roasting pan. Brush chicken with half of salad dressing mixture. Roast 1 hr., 20 min.

3 Brush chicken with remaining salad dressing mixture. Continue

roasting until meat thermometer inserted into thickest part of thigh away from bone registers 170°F, about 30 min. Let chicken stand 15 min. before carving.

Per serving: Cal. 617 Pro. 59g Carb. 1g Fiber 0g Sug. 1g Chol. 190mg Sod. 471mg Total fat: 40g Sat. 10g Trans. 0g

2 easy variations

Sesame-Lime Chicken: Substitute a lime for the lemon and use bottled sesame-soy salad dressing instead of oil-and-vinegar. Omit the parsley and herbes de Provence.

Caesar Chicken: Use Caesar vinaigrette instead of the oil-and-vinegar dressing and sub in dried Italian seasoning for the herbes.



Baked Parmesan Zucchini

ACTIVE TIME: **10 min.** TOTAL TIME: **25 min.** SERVES: **6**

Thin wedges of zucchini bake up tender and delicious under a blanket of seasonings and cheese

- 2 zucchini**, (1½ lbs.), cut lengthwise into ¾"-thick wedges
- 2 Tbs. olive oil**
- 1 tsp. dried herbes de Provence**
- ½ tsp. garlic powder**
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese**
- 1 Tbs. chopped fresh parsley** (optional)

1 Heat oven to 375°F. Coat large rimmed baking sheet with cooking spray. In bowl, gently toss zucchini with oil, herbes de Provence, garlic powder, ½ tsp. salt and ¼ tsp. pepper; sprinkle with Parmesan and toss.

2 Arrange zucchini in single layer on baking sheet. Bake until tender, 8–10 min. Remove from oven. Heat broiler; broil until lightly browned, about 3 min. If desired, serve sprinkled with chopped fresh parsley.

Per serving: Cal. 75 Pro. 2g Carb. 4g Fiber 1g Sug. 2g Chol. 3mg Sod. 263mg Total fat: 6g Sat. 1g Trans. 0g

Easy variation

Try this easy technique with broccoli instead of zucchini: Use 1½ lbs. florets and bake for 20–25 min.

chicken dinner

Roasted Baby Potatoes

ACTIVE TIME: 15 min. TOTAL TIME: 1 hr. SERVES: 6

Purple spuds not only add a pop of color, they're packed with four times the antioxidants as white varieties

- 2 lbs. **baby potatoes** (preferably assorted colors such as red, white and purple), *halved if large*
- 3 Tbs. **olive oil**
- 1 tsp. **garlic powder**
- 1 tsp. **onion powder**
- ½ tsp. **crushed dried rosemary**

① Heat oven to 375°F. Coat large rimmed baking sheet with cooking



spray. In bowl, toss potatoes with oil, garlic and onion powders, rosemary, ½ tsp. salt and ¼ tsp. pepper.

② Spread potatoes in single layer over baking sheet. Roast, stirring occasionally, until tender, 40–45 min.

Per serving: Cal. 164 **Pro.** 2g **Carb.** 25g **Fiber** 4g **Sug.** 2g **Chol.** 0mg **Sod.** 195mg **Total fat:** 7g **Sat.** 1g **Trans.** 0g

Chocolate-Raspberry Bundt Cake

ACTIVE TIME: 40 min. TOTAL TIME: 3 hrs. SERVES: 16

Thanks to instant pudding and cake mix, our glazed Bundt is extra moist—and extra easy

- 1 (15.25 oz.) **pkg. dark chocolate fudge cake mix**
- 3 **eggs**
- ⅓ **cup oil**
- 1 (3.9 oz.) **pkg. instant chocolate pudding mix**
- ⅔ **cup dark chocolate chips**
- 2 Tbs. **seedless raspberry jam**, at room temp.
- 1⅓ **cups canned white frosting** (from 16-oz. can)
- Red and pink concentrated food colorings**

① Heat oven to 350°F. Coat 12-cup Bundt pan with baking spray with flour. On low speed, beat cake mix, eggs, oil, pudding mix and 1 cup water 30 sec.; on medium speed, beat 2 min. Transfer to pan. Bake until toothpick



inserted into center comes out clean, 45–55 min. Let cool 20 min. Transfer from pan to rack; let cool completely.

② In microwave-safe bowl, microwave chocolate chips in 15-sec. intervals, stirring, until melted. Stir in jam and 2 Tbs. water; spoon over cake.

③ Transfer ½ cup frosting to pastry bag fitted with medium star tip; reserve. Tint ½ cup of remaining frosting red with food coloring; tint remaining frosting pink. Transfer tinted frostings to separate pastry bags each fitted with medium star tip. Pipe frosting swirls around cake top.

Per serving: Cal. 392 **Pro.** 4g **Carb.** 50g **Fiber** 2g **Sug.** 38g **Chol.** 73mg **Sod.** 486mg **Total fat:** 20g **Sat.** 6g **Trans.** 0g

Cheers-worthy VALENTINE SIPS

It's easy to fall in love with these festive cocktails: They're pretty to look at, delicious to sip and oh so easy to mix up

'All My Love' Mai Tai

This tropical tippie can warm up even the coldest winter night. The optional rose water adds a lovely floral note. **To make:** In ice-filled cocktail shaker, combine ¼ cup rum, ¼ cup orange juice, 2 Tbs. triple sec, 1 Tbs. lime juice, 2 tsp. sugar and a dash of rose water (optional). Cover; shake. Strain into 2 ice-filled glasses. Garnish with mint and unsprayed orchid blossoms.



'Sweetheart' Sparkler

Kick off dinner with loved ones with this pretty-in-pink glass of bubbly. **To make:** In cocktail shaker, combine ¼ cup ruby red grapefruit juice and 2 Tbs. sweet vermouth. Divide between 2 glasses. Tilt one glass; pour about ½ cup chilled prosecco down inside; repeat. If desired, garnish with raspberries. For a nonalcoholic version, use sparkling grape juice.



'Be Mine' Bramble

An almost-instant, easy-to-make berry syrup is the secret ingredient in this classic sip. **To make:** Muddle 2 Tbs. sugar, 2 Tbs. mixed berries (thawed, if frozen) and 2 Tbs. water; strain into ice-filled cocktail shaker. Add ¼ cup gin and 2 Tbs. blackberry liqueur. Cover; shake. Divide between 2 glasses; top with club soda and blueberries.





Make their night extra-special!

*Rib-Eye Steaks
with Chipotle Butter*



Treat yourself
to easy-on-you
entertaining!

*Creamy Red
Velvet Cheesecake*

*Garlicky White Beans
and Tomatoes*

*Red Pepper and
Herbed Ricotta Crostini*

How we made it healthier

Peppers keep the sniffles away.

The red gems on our crostini are packed with vitamin C and *carotenoids*, nutrients that strengthen the respiratory tract. Stanford researchers say enjoying 1 cup per week can decrease the risk of colds and sinus infections by as much as 67%.



Sensational steak



Rib-Eye Steaks with Chipotle Butter

ACTIVE TIME: 20 min. TOTAL TIME: 30 min. SERVES: 6

Easy enough for a weeknight dinner, special enough for company—these tender steaks sear to juicy perfection in less than 10 minutes

- ¼ cup **butter**, at room temp.
- 2 tsp. minced **chipotle in adobo**, or more to taste
- 1 clove **garlic**, minced
- 1 tsp. grated **lime zest**
- 4 (1 lb.) **bone-in rib-eye steaks**, about ¾"-thick

1 In bowl, combine butter, chipotle, garlic and zest; stir until well combined. Reserve. Dividing equally, sprinkle 1 tsp. salt and ½ tsp. pepper over all sides of steaks.

2 Coat nonstick skillet with cooking spray and heat over medium-high heat. In batches, cook steaks, flipping once, about 4 min. per side for medium-rare. Transfer to platter;

cover to keep warm while cooking remaining steaks. Serve steaks topped with reserved chipotle butter. Chipotle butter can be made several days ahead and stored in covered container in refrigerator.

Per serving: Cal. 618 Pro. 60g Carb. 1g Fiber 0g Sug. 0g Chol. 216mg Sod. 585mg Total fat: 40g Sat. 17g Trans. 0g

2 easy variations

Peppercorn butter: Substitute 1 tsp. coarsely crushed black peppercorns for the chipotle. Omit lime zest and ground pepper.

Fresh herb butter: Substitute 1 tsp. minced fresh rosemary for the chipotle and lemon zest for the lime. Add 1 tsp. minced fresh parsley.



Garlicky White Beans and Tomatoes

ACTIVE TIME: 20 min. TOTAL TIME: 35 min. SERVES: 6

Stir a tablespoon of balsamic vinegar into the beans just before serving for a kick of zingy-sweet *mmm*

- 2 Tbs. **olive oil**
- 2 cloves **garlic**, thinly sliced
- 1 (19 oz.) can **cannellini beans**, rinsed
- 1 (14.5 oz.) can **diced tomatoes** with basil, garlic and oregano
- 1 Tbs. chopped fresh **parsley**
- Basil sprig** (optional)

1 In pot, heat 1 Tbs. oil over medium heat; add garlic. Cook, stirring frequently, until golden, 2–3 min. Using slotted spoon, transfer garlic to paper towel; reserve.

2 Add beans and tomatoes with their juice to pot; increase heat to medium-high. Bring to boil; reduce heat to medium-low. Cook, stirring occasionally, until flavors blend and liquid thickens, 15–20 min.

3 Stir ¼ tsp. salt and ¼ tsp. pepper into bean mixture. Remove from heat; stir in parsley. Serve topped with reserved sautéed garlic and a drizzle of remaining 1 Tbs. oil. If desired, garnish with basil sprig.

Per serving: Cal. 149 Pro. 6g Carb. 20g Fiber 8g Sug. 3g Chol. 0mg Sod. 397mg Total fat: 5g Sat. 1g Trans. 0g

supper



Red Pepper and Herbed Ricotta Crostini

ACTIVE TIME: 15 min. TOTAL TIME: 20 min. SERVES: 6

For bonus garlic flavor, rub a small clove of garlic over the toasted bread

- 18 (½"-thick) slices **French bread**
- 1 Tbs. **extra-virgin olive oil**
- ⅔ cup **ricotta cheese**
- 1 tsp. **minced fresh oregano**, + additional leaves
- 1 cup **drained chopped roasted red peppers** (from a jar)

1 Heat broiler. Place bread on rack on rimmed baking sheet; broil, flipping



once, until golden, 1–2 min. per side. Cool slightly; brush with oil.

2 Mix ricotta, 1 tsp. oregano, ¼ tsp. salt and ¼ tsp. pepper until combined. Spread over toasts; top with red pepper. If desired, garnish with oregano.

Per serving: Cal. 146 Pro. 6g Carb. 16g Fiber 1g Sug. 0g Chol. 14mg Sod. 190mg Total fat: 6g Sat. 3g Trans. 0g

Creamy Red Velvet Cheesecake

ACTIVE TIME: 45 min. TOTAL TIME: 9 hrs. SERVES: 16

Our secret shortcut? A crust made from prepared poundcake crumbs

- 1 (14 oz.) **pkg. frozen triple chocolate poundcake**, thawed
- 3 (8 oz.) **pkgs. cream cheese**, at room temp.
- 1¼ cups **sugar**
- 3 **eggs**
- ½ cup **sour cream**
- 2 tsp. **vanilla extract**
- 2 Tbs. **all-purpose flour**
- 2 tsp. **unsweetened cocoa powder**
- 2 tsp. **no-taste red concentrated food coloring**
- 1 cup **sweetened whipped cream**

1 Position racks in center and lower third of oven. Place large roasting pan on lower oven rack; fill halfway with water. Heat oven to 300°F. Coat 9"x3" springform pan with cooking spray. In food processor, pulse cake until crumbs form. Press into pan bottom.



2 On medium speed, beat cream cheese and sugar until smooth. On low, beat in eggs one at a time, then sour cream and vanilla. Beat in flour and cocoa, then food coloring until smooth. Spread batter in springform pan. Bake on center rack above roasting pan of water until center jiggles slightly when shaken, about 1 hr., 20 min. Turn oven off. Leave cake in oven with door closed 1 hr. Transfer to rack. Run knife around edge of cake to loosen. Cool. Cover; chill at least 8 hrs.

3 Remove side of pan. Transfer cake to serving plate. Garnish with whipped cream.

Per serving: Cal. 370 Pro. 6g Carb. 31g Fiber 1g Sug. 25g Chol. 113mg Sod. 210mg Total fat: 26g Sat. 14g Trans. 0g

Fast & easy winning dips

Whether you're hosting a "Gal"-entine's party, Super Bowl bash or any get-together, these spreads are sure to score big

Creamy queso

Pepper jack gives this ooey-goopy bowl of yum a kick of heat—use Cheddar for a milder version.

To make: In skillet, cook ½ cup chopped onion in 1 Tbs. butter over medium heat until tender. Whisk in ½ lb. each shredded pepper jack and American cheese and ¼ cup heavy cream until bubbly. Garnish with tomato and cilantro. Serve with tortilla chips.



Roasted red pepper

This tangy-sweet crowd-pleaser can be made a few days ahead and chilled; let warm briefly before serving. **To make:** Puree 3 chopped roasted red peppers, ¾ cup plain croutons, 2 Tbs. olive oil, 2 Tbs. tomato paste, 1 tsp. red wine vinegar, 1 clove garlic, ½ tsp. salt and ¼ tsp. pepper until almost smooth. Stir in cayenne to taste. Serve with pita chips, crackers or veggies.



Cheesy crab

A dash of Old Bay is the trick to making this seafood dip irresistible. **To make:** In baking dish, combine 12 oz. lump crab meat, 8 oz. cream cheese, ¼ cup mayonnaise, 1 chopped onion and 1 tsp. Old Bay seasoning. Bake at 350°F until hot and bubbly, about 30 min. Top with chopped fresh chives. Serve with toasted French bread.



Roast once,

Our two-for-one meal ideas make it easy to keep your crowd satisfied for days



Citrus-Thyme Roast Beef

ACTIVE TIME: 20 min.

TOTAL TIME: 1½ hrs.

SERVES: 4 + leftovers

- 2 Tbs. olive oil
- 1 Tbs. Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tsp. dried thyme
- 1 tsp. grated lemon zest
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 lbs. beef eye-of-round roast
- 8 oz. cremini mushrooms, halved
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved

Per serving: Cal. 380 Pro. 56g Carb. 5g
Fiber 1g Sug. 2g Chol. 139mg Sod. 500mg
Total fat: 14g Sat. 4g Trans. 0g

A tangy from-scratch glaze guarantees our scrumptious roast is packed with flavor

1 Heat oven to 400°F. Coat roasting pan with cooking spray. In small bowl, combine 1 Tbs. olive oil, Worcestershire sauce, dried thyme, lemon zest, half of garlic, ½ tsp. salt and ½ tsp. pepper; brush over beef. Roast until meat thermometer inserted into thickest part registers 125°F for medium-rare, about 40–50 min. Let stand 10 min.

2 Meanwhile in nonstick skillet, heat remaining oil over medium-high heat. Add mushrooms, ¼ tsp. salt and ¼ tsp. pepper; cook, stirring, until browned, 7–8 min. Reduce heat to medium-low; stir in tomatoes and remaining garlic. Cook 1 min. Remove from heat. Serve with mushroom mixture.

Zesty Roast Beef Sandwiches

In less than 15 minutes, you can turn leftover roast beef into hearty dinnertime sandwiches sure to satisfy even the hungriest appetites. To make: In small bowl, combine ½ cup mayonnaise and 2 Tbs. cream-style horseradish. Divide 12 slices roast beef among 4 crusty roll bottoms. Sprinkle with salt and pepper to taste. Top with ½ cup sliced sweet onion, horseradish mixture and roll tops. Serves 4



FOOD & PHOTO (3); STOCKFOOD; GETTY

feast twice!

Roast Chicken with Vegetables

ACTIVE TIME: **25 min.**

TOTAL TIME: **2½ hrs.**

SERVES: **4 + leftovers**

- 4 carrots**, halved lengthwise, cut into 3" pieces
- 2 leeks**, white and light green parts only, halved lengthwise, cut into 3" pieces
- 1 red onion**, cut into ¾" wedges
- 2 Tbs. olive oil**
- 2 Tbs. Montreal chicken seasoning**
- 2 tsp. dried rosemary**, crushed
- 1½ tsp. smoked paprika**
- 1 (6–7 lb.) roasting chicken**
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes**

Per serving: Cal. 697 Pro. 67g Carb. 17g
Fiber 4g Sug. 564g Chol. 211mg Sod. 564mg
Total fat: 39g Sat. 10g Trans. 0g

Smoked paprika adds a bold kick to this tender and juicy chicken dinner winner

1 Heat oven to 350°F. Coat roasting pan with cooking spray. Toss carrots, leeks and onion with 1 Tbs. oil and 1 Tbs. seasoning. Combine rosemary, paprika and remaining seasoning. Place chicken in pan; rub with remaining oil. Sprinkle seasoning mixture inside and outside of chicken; truss. Arrange vegetables around chicken.

2 Roast until chicken is no longer pink near bones, about 1 hr., 45 min., adding tomatoes during last 20 min. Let rest 10 min. Serve chicken with vegetables.

Pasta with Chicken and Almonds

Transform chicken leftovers into a company-special dish. To make: Cook 8 oz. linguine; reserve ¾ cup pasta water, then drain. In skillet, heat 2 Tbs. oil over medium heat. Add 2 cups chicken and 2 tsp. minced garlic; cook 1–2 min. Add pasta, pasta water, ¼ cup grated Parmesan, ½ cup toasted sliced almonds, ½ tsp. pepper and ½ tsp. salt. Heat.

Serves 4



Baked Ham with Asparagus and Carrots

ACTIVE TIME: 20 min.

TOTAL TIME: 2½ hrs..

SERVES: 12 + leftovers

- ½ **cup apricot preserves**
- 2 **Tbs. honey Dijon mustard**
- 3 **tsp. dried sage**
- 2½ **tsp. garlic powder**
- 2 **tsp. balsamic vinegar**
- 1 (8–9 lb.) **reduced-sodium bone-in butt portion ham**, fat trimmed to ¼" thickness
- 1 **lb. asparagus**, trimmed
- 8 **oz. baby carrots**
- 1 **Tbs. olive oil**

Per serving: Cal. 300 Pro. 32g Carb. 13g
Fiber 1g Sug. 7g Chol. 81mg Sod. 1,394mg
Total fat: 13g Sat. 4g Trans. 0g

Basting our quick-prep ham with an easy apricot-Dijon sauce adds irresistible zing

1 Heat oven to 325°F. Coat roasting pan with cooking spray. Combine apricot preserves, honey Dijon mustard, 2 tsp. sage, 2 tsp. garlic powder, balsamic vinegar and ¼ tsp. pepper.

2 Place ham in roasting pan cut side down. Brush with ¼ cup apricot glaze. Roast 1 hr., 15 min. Toss vegetables with olive oil, remaining sage and garlic powder. Add to pan; roast until tender, 1 hr., brushing ham with remaining glaze during last 30 min. of cooking time.

3 Transfer ham and vegetables to platter. Skim and discard fat from pan juices. Serve ham with vegetables and juices.

Ham and Egg Quesadillas

Give ham a Tex-Mex spin that's perfect for breakfast. To make: Beat 6 eggs, 1 cup diced ham, 1 cup diced tomatoes, 1 chopped scallion and ¼ tsp. salt. In non-stick skillet, cook eggs over medium, stirring, until set. Remove. Place 8" flour tortilla in skillet; sprinkle with ¼ cup shredded cheese. Top with half of eggs, ¼ cup shredded cheese and 8" tortilla. Cook 2 min. Flip; cook 2 min. Repeat with remaining eggs, tortillas and cheese. *Serves 4*





Fish Fillets with Fennel, Zucchini and Tomato

ACTIVE TIME: **20 min.** TOTAL TIME: **1 hr.**

SERVES: **4 + leftovers**

- 1 bulb fennel**, trimmed, fronds reserved, quartered, cored, cut into 1/4"-thick slices
- 2 zucchini**, cut into 1/2"-thick rounds
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes**
- 3 Tbs. olive oil**
- 1 tsp. grated lemon zest**
- 1 Tbs. lemon juice**
- 4 (8 oz.) cod fillets**

Per serving: Cal. 237 **Pro.** 29g **Carb.** 9g
Fiber 3g **Sug.** 6g **Chol.** 65mg **Sod.** 365mg
Total fat: 9g **Sat.** 1g **Trans.** 0g

Roasted fennel gives this mild white fish loads of subtle licorice-like flavor in this healthy one-dish meal

1 Heat oven to 400°F. Coat 2½-qt. baking dish with cooking spray; add fennel, zucchini, cherry tomatoes, 1 Tbs. olive oil, ½ tsp. grated lemon zest, ¼ tsp. salt and ¼ tsp. pepper. Toss to coat completely; roast until vegetables are almost tender, about 25 min.

2 Mix lemon juice, ¼ tsp. salt, ¼ tsp. pepper and remaining lemon zest and olive oil; brush over cod. Place on top of vegetables. Bake until cod starts to flake and is opaque in thickest part, 10–12 min. Serve cod with vegetables.

Panko-Crusted Fish Cakes

Panko breadcrumbs are the secret to keeping these cakes crisp on the outside. To make: Mix 1½ cups flaked cooked cod, 1 cup panko, ¼ cup mayonnaise, 1 egg, 1 chopped scallion, 1 tsp. Old Bay seasoning, ½ tsp. grated lemon zest and ¼ tsp. salt. Shape into 4 (3") patties. Coat in ⅓ cup panko. Cover; chill 1 hr. In non-stick skillet, heat 2 Tbs. oil over medium heat. Cook cakes, flipping once, until golden, 4–5 min. per side. *Serves 4*



Save precious time with these shopping lists

SIMPLY SCRUMPTIOUS CHICKEN DINNER



Lemony Roasted Chicken

- ☐ 1 (.65 oz.) cont. dried herbes de Provence
- ☐ 1 (16 oz.) btle. olive-oil-and-vinegar salad dressing
- ☐ 1 lemon
- ☐ 1 bunch fresh parsley
- ☐ 1 (6–7 lb.) roasting chicken

Baked Parmesan Zucchini

- ☐ 1 (.65 oz.) cont. dried herbes de Provence
- ☐ 1 (3.12 oz.) cont. garlic powder
- ☐ 1 (17 oz.) btle. olive oil
- ☐ 1 (8 oz.) cont. grated Parmesan cheese
- ☐ 1½ lbs. zucchini

Roasted Baby Potatoes

- ☐ 1 (3.12 oz.) cont. garlic powder
- ☐ 1 (2.62 oz.) cont. onion powder
- ☐ 1 (.35 oz.) cont. dried rosemary
- ☐ 1 (17 oz.) btle. olive oil
- ☐ 2 lbs. baby potatoes, preferably assorted colors such as red, white and purple

Chocolate-Raspberry Bundt Cake

- ☐ 1 (15.25 oz.) pkg. dark chocolate fudge cake mix
- ☐ 1 (3.9 oz.) pkg. instant chocolate pudding mix
- ☐ 1 (12 oz.) pkg. dark chocolate chips
- ☐ 1 (12 oz.) jar seedless raspberry jam
- ☐ 1 (16 oz.) can white frosting
- ☐ 1 (1 oz.) cont. red concentrated food coloring
- ☐ 1 (1 oz.) cont. pink concentrated food coloring

Kitchen staples: salt, pepper, eggs, oil

SENSATIONAL STEAK SUPPER



Rib-Eye Steaks with Chipotle Butter

- ☐ 1 (7 oz.) can chipotle peppers in adobo
- ☐ 1 head garlic
- ☐ 1 lime
- ☐ 4 (1 lb.) bone-in rib-eye steaks, about ¾"-thick
- ☐ 1 (1 lb.) pkg. butter

Red Pepper and Herbed Ricotta Crostini

- ☐ 1 loaf French bread
- ☐ 1 (17 oz.) btle. extra-virgin olive oil
- ☐ 1 (12 oz.) jar roasted red peppers
- ☐ 1 bunch fresh oregano
- ☐ 1 (15 oz.) cont. ricotta cheese

Garlicky White Beans and Tomatoes

- ☐ 1 (17 oz.) btle. olive oil
- ☐ 1 (19 oz.) can cannellini beans, rinsed
- ☐ 1 (14.5 oz.) can diced tomatoes with basil, garlic and oregano
- ☐ 1 head garlic
- ☐ 1 bunch fresh parsley

Creamy Red Velvet Cheesecake

- ☐ 1 (1 oz.) btle. vanilla extract
- ☐ 1 (8 oz.) cont. unsweetened cocoa powder
- ☐ 1 (1 oz.) cont. red no-taste concentrated food coloring
- ☐ 1 (4 lb.) pkg. granulated sugar
- ☐ 3 (8 oz.) pkgs. cream cheese
- ☐ 1 (8 oz.) cont. sour cream
- ☐ 1 (8 oz.) cont. heavy cream
- ☐ 1 (14 oz.) pkg. frozen triple chocolate poundcake

Kitchen staples: salt, pepper, all-purpose flour, eggs

ROAST ONCE, FEAST TWICE!



Citrus-Thyme Roast Beef

- ☐ 1 (17 oz.) btle. olive oil
- ☐ 1 (5 oz.) btle. Worcestershire sauce
- ☐ 1 (.37 oz.) cont. dried thyme
- ☐ 1 lemon
- ☐ 1 head garlic
- ☐ 1 (8 oz.) pkg. cremini mushrooms
- ☐ 1 (10–16 oz.) cont. cherry tomatoes
- ☐ 3 lb. beef eye of round roast

Chicken with Vegetables

- ☐ 1 (17 oz.) btle. olive oil
- ☐ 1 (2.75 oz.) cont. Montreal chicken seasoning
- ☐ 1 (.35 oz.) cont. dried rosemary
- ☐ 1 (1.75 oz.) cont. smoked paprika
- ☐ 1 lb. carrots
- ☐ 2 leeks
- ☐ 1 red onion
- ☐ 1 (10–16 oz.) cont. cherry tomatoes
- ☐ 1 (6–7 lb.) roasting chicken

Ham with Asparagus

- ☐ 1 (18 oz.) jar apricot preserves
- ☐ 1 (17 oz.) btle. olive oil
- ☐ 1 (12 oz.) btle. honey Dijon mustard
- ☐ 1 (.5 oz.) cont. rubbed sage
- ☐ 1 (3.12 oz.) cont. garlic powder
- ☐ 1 (16 oz.) btle. balsamic vinegar
- ☐ 1 lb. asparagus
- ☐ 8 oz. baby carrots
- ☐ 1 (8–9 lb.) low-sodium bone-in butt portion ham

Fish with Fennel & Zucchini

- ☐ 1 (17 oz.) btle. olive oil
- ☐ 1 bulb fennel
- ☐ 1 lb. zucchini
- ☐ 1 (10–16 oz.) cont. cherry tomatoes
- ☐ 1 lemon
- ☐ 4 (8 oz.) cod fillets

Kitchen staples: salt, pepper

KEY

☐ GROCERY ☐ PRODUCE ☐ MEAT/SEAFOOD ☐ DAIRY/FROZEN



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Show your love
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with bliss

We topped fabulous-from-scratch fudgy cupcakes with fluffy strawberry frosting for a sweet treat guaranteed to make everyone feel extra-special

Chocolate-Dipped Strawberry Cupcakes

ACTIVE TIME: 1 hr. TOTAL TIME: 2½ hrs. SERVES: 18

- 1⅔ cups all-purpose flour
- 1¾ cups granulated sugar
- ⅔ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1½ tsp. baking soda
- ¾ tsp. baking powder
- ¾ tsp. salt
- 2 eggs
- ⅔ cup oil
- ⅔ cup warm brewed coffee
- ⅔ cup + 3 Tbs. milk
- ½ tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 cup butter, at room temp.
- 1 cup white chocolate chips, melted, cooled
- 2 cups confectioners' sugar
- 2 tsp. strawberry extract
- ⅛ tsp. pink concentrated food coloring
- Chocolate-covered strawberries (optional)

1 Heat oven to 350°F. Line 18 muffin cups with cupcake liners. In bowl, whisk together first 6 ingredients. Add eggs, oil, coffee, ⅔ cup milk and vanilla extract; on medium speed, beat until blended, about 2 min. Divide evenly among liners. Bake until toothpick inserted into centers comes out clean, 16–18 min. Let cool.

2 On medium-high speed, beat butter until smooth. On medium speed, gradually beat in white chocolate. On low speed, gradually beat in confectioners' sugar, then remaining milk until fluffy, 2–3 min. Beat in strawberry extract and pink food coloring. Transfer to pastry bag filled with medium star tip. Pipe over cupcakes. If desired, top each with chocolate-covered strawberry.

Pro tip for perfect chocolate-covered strawberries

To make strawberries dazzle, simply dip 'em in chocolate! To do: In microwave-safe bowl, microwave 2 cups semisweet chocolate chips in 15-sec. intervals, stirring, until melted and smooth. Stir in 2 tsp. oil. Line baking sheet with parchment or wax paper. Holding strawberries by skewer or hulls, dip 24 berries, one at a time, into chocolate. Let excess drip off, then transfer to paper. Chill dipped strawberries until chocolate is set, about 10 min.



FOOD & PHOTO: GETTY (2)

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December 30, 2019

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Fun, festive treat

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Michelle lost 171 lbs and healed her thyroid! See pg 31

- ↑ Metabolism
- ↑ Energy + mood
- ↑ Mental clarity
- ↓ Hunger

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Cherry Chocolate Kiss Cookies

ACTIVE TIME: 40 min. TOTAL TIME: 1 hr. SERVES: 36

- 1 (16.5 oz.) pkg. **sugar cookie dough**
- 1 $\frac{1}{3}$ cups **all-purpose flour**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup **drained maraschino cherries without stems, patted dry, chopped**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. **almond extract**
- 36 **Hershey's Kisses, unwrapped**

Heat oven to 325°F. On medium speed, beat dough, flour, cherries and extract. Divide into 36 portions; roll into balls. Place on ungreased baking sheets. With thumb, make indentation in center of each. Bake until set, 10 min. Immediately press 1 Kiss in center of each cookie lightly. Let cool 5 min. Remove; let cool on racks.

Per serving: Cal. 97 Pro. 1g Carb. 15g Fiber 0g Sug. 8g Chol. 3mg Sod. 46mg Total fat: 4g Sat. 2g Trans. 0g

HEALTH BONUS

Wind down with chocolate.

Enjoying just 2 oz. daily boosts the production of calming *oxytocin*, cutting the risk of chronic stress by 45%.



Double-Chocolate Brownie Hearts

ACTIVE TIME: 45 min. TOTAL TIME: 3 hrs. SERVES: 12

- 1 (16.5 oz.) pkg. **walnut brownie mix, prepared in 9" pan**
- 1 cup + 2 Tbs. **semisweet chocolate chips**
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup **milk**
- Hearts confetti sprinkles**

Using 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ " heart-shaped cutter, cut out 12 brownies; place on rack over wax paper. In microwave-safe bowl, mix 1 cup chocolate chips with milk; microwave in 30-sec. intervals, stirring, until melted. Spread over brownies, covering completely. In microwave-safe bowl, microwave remaining chocolate chips until melted. Drizzle over brownies and garnish with sprinkles.

Per serving: Cal. 290 Pro. 3g Carb. 40g Fiber 2g Sug. 27g Chol. 14mg Sod. 118mg Total fat: 14g Sat. 4g Trans. 0g

HEALTH BONUS

Boost brainpower with walnuts.

These crunchers brim with omega-3 fats and *manganese*, nutrients that enhance short-term memory by 45%.



Turn for more treats



Layered Strawberry Parfaits

ACTIVE TIME: 25 min. TOTAL TIME: 3½ hrs. SERVES: 6

- 1 (3 oz.) pkg. **strawberry gelatin mix**
- 1 cup **heavy cream**
- 2 Tbs. **sugar**
- 12 **strawberries**, halved and/or sliced
- ¼ cup **white chocolate shavings**

In bowl, combine strawberry gelatin and 1½ cups boiling water until dissolved; let cool. Beat heavy cream and sugar until stiff peaks form. Stir 1½ cups whipped cream into gelatin mixture. Transfer remaining whipped cream to covered container; chill. Divide gelatin mixture evenly among 6 (8 oz.) glasses. Cover and chill until set, about 3 hrs. Garnish with reserved whipped cream, sliced strawberries and white chocolate shavings.

Per serving: Cal. 224 Pro. 3g Carb. 21g Fiber 0g Sug. 20g Chol. 46mg Sod. 71mg
Total fat: 15g **Sat.** 10g **Trans.** 0g

HEALTH BONUS

Ease aches with strawberries.

Anthocyanins in these gems reduces the production of inflammatory proteins, lessening joint pain by 25%.



Raspberry Cupcakes

ACTIVE TIME: 45 min. TOTAL TIME: 1 hr. SERVES: 24

- 1 (16.5 oz.) pkg. **red velvet cake mix**
- 3 **eggs**
- ⅓ cup **coconut oil**, melted
- 2 tsp. **raspberry extract**
- 4½ cups **chocolate frosting**, from 3 (16 oz.) cans
- Assorted sprinkles**

Heat oven to 350°F. Line 24 muffin cups with cupcake liners. Prepare cake mix according to package directions, using 1 cup water, eggs and coconut oil. Stir in raspberry extract. Divide evenly among liners. Bake until toothpick inserted into centers comes out clean. Let cool 10 min. Transfer to rack; let cool completely. Transfer frosting to pastry bag fitted with star tip; pipe over cupcakes. Garnish with sprinkles.

Per serving: Cal. 392 Pro. 3g Carb. 53g Fiber 1g Sug. 44g Chol. 49mg Sod. 320mg
Total fat: 20g **Sat.** 7g **Trans.** 0g



HEALTH BONUS

Dial down hunger with coconut oil.

Fatty acids in this oil increase appetite-suppressing hormones, helping women eat 256 fewer calories per day.



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PRO SECRET

Ellie's key to chicken fingers with 46% fewer calories

"There's no need to deprive yourself or go to extremes to be healthy," assures chef Ellie Krieger, author of *Whole in One*. For a lighter "fried" chicken, she coats chicken tenders in yogurt, dredges them in a 3:1 mix of whole-wheat panko crumbs and chopped almonds (sautéed in a little olive oil), then bakes them at 450°F for 15 minutes. The healthy coating makes for crunchy, flavorful chicken sans heavy fried batter.



smart swap!

- Calories cut: **97**
- Carb grams cut: **8**
- + Fiber grams added: **3**

Numbers reflect 1 chicken tender made with almond-panko instead of batter-fried



Easy way to bake up heart-shaped cupcakes

Sweeten everyone's Valentine's Day with heart-shaped treats—no pricey specialty pan required! Just try this: After placing liners in a regular cupcake tin, tuck a marble or small ball of aluminum foil in each well between the liner and the tin to create a heart-shaped indent. Then fill and bake. Spread with frosting as desired and share.



SOS for wilted kale

If the kale in your fridge looks limp, revive it fast with this tip: Use scissors or a knife to trim the stems at an angle, then pop the bundle into a glass of water (like a flower bouquet) and refrigerate. Cutting the stems at an angle helps them absorb water, and after a few hours, the leaves will perk right up.



Smart trick to using up *all* the mustard

That tiny bit of Dijon left on the sides and bottom of your jar doesn't have to go to waste: Use it to make a flavorful vinaigrette! Simply add one part vinegar, three parts olive oil, salt and pepper to the jar, then close the lid and shake vigorously to combine. Toss with salad greens or use as a marinade for chicken.

Toss-together terrific: Fluffy biscuits in a flash!



2 cups flour



½ cup Hellmann's/Best Foods Light Mayonnaise



¾ cup milk



Drop ¼ cupfuls on baking sheet. Bake 10 min. at 450°F

Josephine had a hard time losing weight and suspected it had to do with her love for carbs. One day she came across Zuccarin™, a carb blocker, which changed things for her for good.

I'm a carboholic but...

I finally reached my desired weight

“My name is Josephine and I live in Toronto. I work as a nutritional planner for hospital patients. All my life I’ve struggled with my weight but in the last year I finally figured it out. I’m down to my desired weight and feeling better than ever. My friends and aqua-fitness instructor keep asking me how I lost the weight, in addition to my diet and fitness classes*.

I CAME ACROSS ZUCCARIN

A few years back I was always tired, craving sugar and I was overweight, so I suspected that it was because of too many carbs and fluctuating blood sugar levels. I went looking for a

supplement that could help reduce the absorption of carbs and came across a popular mulberry leaf extract product from Sweden, called Zuccarin Diet.

WEIGHT LOSS SUCCESS - FINALLY

When I started taking Zuccarin Diet, I noticed how much better I felt and how my sugar cravings seemed to be fading. As a nice side effect, I was finally losing weight. I was thrilled!! It has been over a year now, and I have reached my desired weight goals. When anyone asks me how I did it, I’m the first to tell them about Zuccarin Diet. I strongly recommend it.”

- Josephine T., Toronto, ON



PROVEN Weight Loss

Zuccarin Diet™, a Swedish supplement made from naturally sourced mulberry leaf extract, is proven to help weight loss by slowing the absorption of carbs you eat. An Italian study of Zuccarin™ showed an average weight loss of 20 pounds in just 90 days, in the Zuccarin group. They lost 10% of their total body weight and 3 times more weight than the control group, not taking Zuccarin.¹

1- “White Mulberry Supplementation as Adjuvant Treatment of Obesity”, Journal of Biological Regulators and Homeostatic Agents., Vol 28, no.1, 2014./

*Results may vary. Always read the information on the box before taking any product. Zuccarin Diet can be taken as a compliment to a healthy lifestyle that incorporates a calorie reduced diet and regular physical activity.



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Beautify your table *with patterned place settings*

Sweet striped settings offer guests a happy hello as they sit. **To do:** Stack 3 striped plates in various sizes at each seat; set an eggcup and a hard-boiled egg on top. Tape a circular name tag to a straw; add to the plate. Grab a 20" square napkin, then visit NapkinFoldingSecrets.com and click on "diagonal pocket" to find an easy how-to. Tuck the bottom napkin point under; slip cutlery inside.



Make serving a cinch *with a convenient caddy*

A cute cutlery caddy made from an old pail keeps utensils at-the-ready on your buffet. **To do:** Clean out a sunny bucket or beach pail with soap and water, then wipe dry with a cloth. Next, tie a length of gingham ribbon into a bow at each end of the pail's handle. Fill the pail with assorted patterned cutlery and display on a tabletop.

Bring on *a waffle*

Welcome loved ones to a whimsical weekend gathering filled with sweet treats and effortless extras



Table styled by Brittany Garner and Heather McTaggart of OkayestMoms.com.
Photograph by Nicole Quiroz Photography.

joy with *brunch!*

PLANCED
IS A
LE IN
HAND

Set the mood for happy *with a so-special setting*

The key to throwing a Valentine's brunch that's easy, chic *and* sweet: mixing a range of rosy hues with gorgeous texture and hints of sparkle. Here, a table is topped with a white cloth, a shiny pink sequin runner, servers of help-yourself waffles, fruit and candy toppings. Adding a metallic textured vase filled with roses and a letter board note furthers the celebratory feel. The wow-worthy touches: a bright-and-bubbly balloon backdrop (made by tying balloons and gold streamers to a ribbon and taping it to the wall) and a gold garland draped along the front of the table. *So fun!*

DECO & STYLE (3); FLORA PRESS. TEXT: LAUREN BLUM



Dress up snacks *with too-cute fruit cones*

A waffle cone filled with berries offers a fun and festive take on a traditional breakfast fruit cup.

To do: For each, roll a paper party napkin into a cone shape and insert into a store-bought waffle cone. Fill the cone with berries, mini cookies or other petite treats; display cones on a platter.

SUCCESS SECRET: For a sweet favor, pack cones in cellophane treat bags and cinch shut with ribbon.



Toast to friendship *with personalized drink favors*

Personalized bottles of rosé make guests feel extra special. **To do:** For each, use double-stick tape to adhere white cardstock over the label of a mini wine bottle. Next, wrap a small piece of white washi tape around a striped party straw and snip a triangle out of the end to form a flag. Jot down a name on the flag and tape the straw to the bottle.



A pretty-in-pink display to *sweeten the day!*

WHAT'S NEW

This Valentine's Day, florists are swapping classic red rose displays for surprisingly sweet floral hatbox bouquets. "Here, plush roses in a variety of sizes and colors—from blush pink to soft champagne—combine for a lush display that's full of eye-catching interest," says floral designer Cathy Herrold. "Plus, the ribbon-wrapped hatbox adds an unexpected yet charming touch. It's a lovely display for *any* tabletop!"

GET THE LOOK

Fill a 5"-tall vase with water and place in a 6"-tall hatbox. Cut 10 pink roses and 10 smaller yellow roses to 8". Crisscross stems in the vase to form a tight bunch. For the bow, shape three lengths of ribbon into circles, pinch each at the middle and stack. Next, wrap a small piece of ribbon around the center of the bow; hot-glue to secure. Wrap another length of ribbon around the box and tape in place; glue bow in center.

INSIDER'S SECRET

If you notice a few roses in your bouquet starting to droop, revive them with this easy florist trick: First, fill a sink with warm water, then re-snip each wilted stem while holding it underwater (to prevent water-blocking air bubbles from forming). Next, submerge the entire flower in the water for five minutes. After this deep hydrating "bath," blooms will look plump and perky.

A little dream to
cuddle in her
custom swaddle

Rosie

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So Truly Real®
Baby Doll



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her pacifier!



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 - An *employee-owned* company



Exquisite details bring this sleepy-eyed sweetheart to life

This adorable baby girl's eyes have fluttered closed, and she's drifted off to dreamland. Swaddled in a cozy blanket with pink cabbage roses, she's waiting for you to scoop her into your arms and love her always!

Introducing *Rosie*, a So Truly Real® premium-quality doll by artist Marissa May. *Rosie* is a heart-stealing example of the doll maker's art, beautifully handcrafted in *RealTouch*® vinyl to preserve every detail, then delicately hand-painted with a *weighted* cloth body to feel like a real baby in your arms. Her soft hair is *rooted by hand* for an exceptionally true-to-life look and feel. *Rosie* is a vision in pink in a long-sleeved nightgown with a floral headband that coordinates with her swaddling blanket. Both her thumb or her white pacifier fit perfectly in her little rosebud mouth! The result is a baby doll that will delight you with her lifelike appeal.

A remarkable value for a limited time

A one-of-a-kind by Ms. May can sell for thousands, but *Rosie* can be yours for only \$139.99*, payable in four easy installments of \$34.99. Available for a *limited time*; order today!

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Vriesea

Orchid
'Pink
Lemonade'

Light up a coffee table with a gorgeous orchid 'garden'

"Tropical houseplants bring a burst of color and a touch of summer warmth to your living space, especially during cold winter months," says Angela Staehling, author and illustrator of *Happy Houseplants*. When creating a container display, she recommends choosing plants with different textures, heights and colors for the most interest. **To do:** Gather 1 pot of *vriesea* and 2 pots each of *pandanus*, orchid and miniature *guzmania*. Leaving them in their plastic pots, drop plants into a low planter, placing mini plants up front. Fill gaps with decorative Spanish moss. Set in bright light and keep soil moist.

Guzmania
'Theresa'

Warm up your space with flowering

Dress a dinner table with a guzmania runner

"Placing little guzmania plants in clear glasses filled with beads makes a lovely statement on any tabletop," says Staehling. "The plants will thrive since they don't need soil to grow." To make each, fill a short glass with glass beads or marbles, leaving space at the top. Use your fingers to gently break up roots of a mini guzmania and remove soil clinging to roots; nestle plant in beads. Fill the cup-shaped center of the plant $\frac{1}{4}$ full with water; change every 1 to 2 months. Place in bright light but keep out of direct sun.

Variegated dwarf pandanus



Guzmania 'Theresa'

Transport to an island paradise without leaving your home! These plants add sunny charm all winter



Begonia

Cheer up a kitchen counter with a blooming begonia

"Combining a vivid orange pot with hot-pink blooms brings an instant burst of energy and tropical flair to any room," says Staehling. To get the look, simply drop a pink begonia plant (still in its plastic pot) into a larger orange pot. To encourage your plant to grow and absorb more water, try fertilizing the soil with calcium-rich eggshells. Just save the shells from your eggs, add to a zip-top plastic bag, seal and crush with a wooden spoon. Then sprinkle a handful of shells on the soil's surface. Set in bright light; let soil dry out between waterings.

tropical plants



QUICK POLL

Light rooms during a blackout with *this*

The flashlights you've stashed for power outages are great for navigating hallways and stairs, but they aren't as much help illuminating a dark room. The fix: Broaden the light by using a white paper plate. Simply place a rubber band around the top of the flashlight and slip one end of a clothespin behind the band. Then clamp a white paper plate in the clothespin. The beam will bounce off the plate and brighten the room until your power is back on!

How do you locate a draft's source?

Brr! Nothing is more chilling than a freezing room or entryway, so we asked FIRST readers how to find where cold air is seeping in. Their top tips:

52% ♥ this idea!

Light a candle and carefully hold it 3" in front of each window and door, says Leah Smith. The flame will flicker when it's near a draft.

48% ♥ this idea!

Wet your hand and move it around doors and windows, says Mia Reed. Any drafts will feel cool on your skin.

MONEY SAVER

Get glassware sparkling

No need to buy pricey specialty products if your glassware is coming out of the dishwasher cloudy. The cheap, all-natural fix: Fill the sink with warm water and a few orange peels, then let glasses soak for five minutes before rinsing. The peels' citric acid will cut through soap scum, revealing crystal-clear glasses.

MONEY SAVED: \$6 for a bottle of dishwasher rinse aid

Nix shower liner mildew

To keep a shower curtain liner clean, fill a tub with a solution of 2 Tbs. of salt per gallon of water. Then, before you hang a new or just-cleaned plastic curtain, soak it in the solution for one hour. Once finished, hang as usual. The invisible coating of sodium crystals on the liner will block gaps in its fibers to prevent mildew from clinging to it.

SHOW-HOW

A tension rod + binder clips = freed up cabinet space



READER TIP

Minimize mixing messes

"I love whipping up a warm batch of snickerdoodles on cold winter days. My hand mixer makes it a cinch, but I often wind up with such a mess! Luckily, when baking with my sister one afternoon, she shared a neat trick: Just stick a large serving tray underneath the mixing bowl before beginning. It catches flour spills and splashes of batter, so all I have to clean is the tray instead of the countertop." —Carrie Lloyd, Boston

Easy way to remove snow

When it's cold and windy outside, the last thing you want to do is spend hours clearing snow from your driveway and patio. Speed up the chore with this do-ahead trick that saves time on snowy mornings: Coat the shovel with a layer of car wax. Once dry, the slick coating will allow snow to slide right off, letting you clear your path and get on the road in a flash.

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10 brilliant uses for **BAKING SODA**



1 Brighten yellow teeth for pennies

No need to splurge on pricey whitening strips to get a picture-perfect smile. Instead, simply brush your teeth with a mixture of equal parts baking soda and water two or three times per week. This coarse paste buffs away surface stains caused by coffee, tea and wine and reduces discoloration. Plus, baking soda neutralizes bad breath-causing germs.

2 Soothe blister burns fast

Ouch! You accidentally pressed your arm against a hot rack when removing cookies from the oven. To quickly nix the pain, mix 1 tsp. of baking soda with enough water to make a paste. Then apply to scorched skin and let dry. The slightly alkaline powder will balance your skin's pH levels to help cut down on blistering and speed healing, while the cooling sensation provides instant relief.

3 Reveal silky-smooth skin

Winter's dry air can leave skin feeling rough and cracked. What can help: adding $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of baking soda to a warm bath. As you enjoy a relaxing soak, baking soda restores skin's barriers and reduces inflammation so it's extra soft. *Aah...* that's better!

4 Winter-proof a walkway

A deep freeze is in the forecast for the morning, and you don't have any rock salt on hand. The in-a-pinch solution: Sprinkle baking soda on outdoor surfaces the night before. Since *sodium bicarbonate* lowers the freezing point of water, it will prevent ice from forming. And since it's less alkaline than rock salt, it won't corrode concrete surfaces or grass.



5 Caramelize onions in no time

Who doesn't love topping homemade burgers with sautéed onions? But it takes so long to caramelize them! The save: Add a dash of baking soda ($\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. per pound of onions) to onions as they cook. This will raise the onions' pH, which speeds up the chemical reaction that turns them brown.



6 Prevent a pet accident cycle

The next time Fido has an accident on the carpet, clean up the mess and prevent repeats by wetting the area with white vinegar and sprinkling on baking soda. Vacuum the next day. The baking soda-vinegar combo will erase the stain and neutralize the smell.



7 Get a thermos sparkling

This time of year, you love using your thermos to pack soup for lunch at work. The only downside? Soup leaves a crusty residue inside the container, and you can't run it through the dishwasher. To get it clean, add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of baking soda to $\frac{1}{2}$ quart of water, close and shake. Empty, rinse and wipe clean. The mildly abrasive powder will effortlessly loosen any buildup.



8 Banish tarnish in a flash

Guests are due for your dinner party in an hour when you realize your silverware is looking dull. But who has time to polish each individual piece? A better way: Line a baking pan with foil, fill with hot water and add 2 Tbs. of baking soda. Then let silverware soak in the mix for five minutes before buffing dry. The powder and aluminum combo will chemically react with the tarnish to eliminate spots.

9 Quiet a squeaky floor

Argh! Every time someone makes a trip to the bathroom in the middle of the night, one of the wooden floorboards squeaks so loudly that it nearly wakes up the whole house. To prevent creaks, sprinkle baking soda on any board's loud spots (and sweep away the excess). The powder will seep into the gaps in the floor and prevent the boards from shifting and creaking.



10 Guarantee sweet-smelling sponges

If your kitchen sponge is starting to emit an unpleasant odor, try this simple fix: Fill an old spice shaker with baking soda, then sprinkle on enough to cover the scrubber after each use. Store the spice container near the sink for easy access after every dishwashing session. Baking soda will neutralize the acidic remnants embedded in the sponge that are causing the offensive smells.

Sidestep winter hazards

Our experts share easy ways to stay safe and warm when you're out and about in frosty weather

To dodge car skids: Be black-ice savvy

Icy conditions cause more than 156,000 car accidents per year, but you don't have to be in one of them, promises automotive expert Lauren Fix. She encourages simply paying attention to a couple of key numbers when tuning into your local weather report. "Black ice appears when it's between 30 and 35 degrees Fahrenheit," she says. "It forms when there's moisture on the roadway from precipitation

or morning dew, which then freezes." Black ice is especially common on elevated surfaces like bridges, overpasses and areas shaded by trees. What to do if you do start sliding? "Avoid braking, which will cause your vehicle to spin," says Fix. Instead, gently steer in the direction the vehicle is sliding (left if you're veering left, right if you're veering right), which helps get you out of the skid safely.

To avoid icy slips: Walk like a penguin

Every year, more than 1 million people are injured from slipping on slick surfaces—and cases spike in the winter due to slippery ice and snow. Wearing shoes with flat, nonslip soles is your first line of defense. What also works: "Walk like a penguin," urges Tammy Franks of the National Safety Council.

"Just lean forward slightly so your center of gravity is over your feet, bend your knees a bit, point your toes out, then shuffle along taking short steps," she says. "This 'shuffle' improves stability as you walk." As for your hands, keep them out of pockets and at your sides, which boosts balance significantly.

To fend off frostnip: Layer the right way

You already know dressing in layers keeps you warm, but you may be surprised to learn that layering your clothes a specific way keeps you even cozier and prevents frostnip—the precursor to frostbite. "For the inner layer that rests directly against your skin, avoid cotton, which holds on to perspiration, making you feel wet and cold," advises

Franks. Instead, wear moisture-wicking material, such as non-itchy merino wool, which helps sweat evaporate so you stay dry and warm." Over that, opt for an insulating layer, such as a sweater, and over that, a coat that keeps out moisture. "And be sure your layers are loose," she urges. "A loose fit promotes circulation, which keeps you warmer." ❄️



Stay safe indoors too!

Check these batteries

Cases of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning *triple* in the wintertime due to the odorless, colorless gas being emitted by fuel-burning heaters, fireplaces and cars warming up in attached garages. Experts recommend replacing batteries in CO detectors once a year.

Follow the 3-foot rule

Home heating is the cause of more than 50,000 fires in winter every year—and 54% of those are due to flammable items placed too close to a heating source. The fix: Simply keep drapes, bedding, clothing and such 3 feet away from heaters, fireplaces and furnaces.

Plug in safely

Portable space heaters cause the most winter heating fires for the simple reason that they're not plugged in properly. Electric heaters are designed to plug directly into a wall outlet, not an extension cord or power strip—even one with a surge protector—since those can overheat.

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Cut the cable cord

“The average cable bill is about \$90 per month, and chances are, you’re not even watching a majority of the channels you’re paying for. Simply canceling those services and subscribing to one of the many streaming services, like Netflix, Hulu or Sling TV (some of which start at under \$10 a month!) can save you hundreds. And if you’re an Amazon Prime member, you already have access to thousands of TV shows and movies as part of your membership!” —*Bethany Hollars, money-saving strategist for BrickSeek.com*



Saves \$140!

Size up your pots

“When cooking, match the burner size to the pot size. Putting a 6" pan on an 8" burner and letting the heat go past the pan wastes about 40% of the heat generated. Using the right-size burner can save you over \$40 a year on your overall bill. And if you skip the dry cycle on the dishwasher and let dishes air-dry, you’ll save \$100 more in the kitchen.”

—*Pamela Braun, cookbook author and founder of MyMansBelly.com*

Saves \$1,275!

Set aside a few dollars every week

“Putting a percentage of your paycheck aside every month may feel like a heavy financial burden, but done in tiny increments, you’ll barely notice and can pocket hundreds by year’s end! For example, if you put \$10 in a savings account each week, you’ll have \$500 by December. Some banks even let you set up automatic transfers from a checking to a savings account so you don’t have to even think about it. Another easy way to save? Starting this week, set aside \$1 in an envelope, then \$2 the next week, then \$3 the next week and so on. By the end of the year, you’ll have \$1,275 in cash.”

—*Tanya Peterson, vice president of FreedomDebtRelief.com*

year—effortlessly!



Saves \$492!

Let your debit card help 'create' cash

"Sign up for a free app like Acorns or a Bank of America debit card—every time you make a purchase, they round it up to the next dollar and save you the difference. For example, spend \$4.15 on a latte, it will round it up to \$5 and move \$0.85 from your checking to your savings account. On average, the app saves you \$246 per year, and if you use your debit card more often, it could easily double the amount." —Joanie Demer, co-founder of *TheKrazyCouponLady.com*

Saves \$360! Ask providers for a deal

"Here's a little-known secret: Often, service providers for phones and cable have loyalty discounts or promotions running that they will not automatically apply to your account unless you ask. Just calling to ask for a better deal can save a couple hundred dollars in minutes! For example, I recently called my internet provider, and due to a new promotion, I was able to lower my bill by 50%—for the same service! The call may take a little time, but the payoff of saving every month after that makes it worth it." —Matt Woodley, money expert at *MoverFocus.com*

Saves \$600!

Take the \$5 bill savings challenge

"For the rest of the year, every time you get a \$5 bill, put it away in a jar, box or envelope—any place where it is out of sight, out of mind. It will surprise you how much your savings will add up at the end of the month (or year!). This is a fun little challenge you can do with friends or other family members to see who can save the most money. I did it and ended up with almost \$600!"

—Maria Smith, parenting blogger *HandfulOfThoughts.com*



Saves \$300!

Pocket BIG bucks at the gas pump

"The AAA estimates the average American spends 7% of their income on gas, so if you make \$45,000 a year, you're shelling out over \$3,000. But you can make 10% of that back! First, find a low-priced gas station close to your home or workplace using an app like Google Maps or Gasbuddy. Then make it your go-to station to fuel up at on the same day each week. This ensures you consistently get the best price rather than shelling out a higher amount elsewhere when the low fuel light goes on. Next, join that brand's loyalty program for rewards *and* use a credit card that has gas as a bonus category so you get about 3% cash back. All told, you can save up to \$300 a year." —Miguel A. Suro, writer at *RichMiser.com*

Saves \$300! Heat less water for the house

"It takes a lot of energy to heat the water for (and then dry!) just one load of laundry. Simply using the washer's cold water cycle (it cleans just as well as hot water) can save \$60 annually, and while a dryer can cost around 30 cents an hour to run, hanging as much as you can to air-dry can cut another \$10 a month from your utility bill. Also smart: Lower the temperature on your hot water heater from 140°F (the default setting from most manufacturers) to 120°F to save an extra \$120—you probably won't even notice the change since most of us don't shower in water hotter than that anyway." —Logan Allec, founder of *MoneyDoneRight.com*



easy money

Make money

These savvy women turned their passion for creativity into serious cash. Read on to learn their secrets so you can start earning too!

"I make \$115,000 a year teaching craft classes!"

"Years ago, when I was working full-time, I started to make and sell gift baskets on the side. I loved doing it—it was fun and brought joy to others. I bought picture frames, kitchen tools, food, keepsakes, baby blankets and bibs as well as unique containers like upturned umbrellas and children's wagons. Learning how to make them was a lot of trial and error, but I looked at baskets in stores, read magazines with how-to tips and attended conferences for people who make them.

"After a few years, a friend told me that ed2go, a company that offers online courses, was hiring someone to teach a class on making gift baskets. I applied and landed the gig!

"Ed2go gave me a model to create a course and a mentor to support me. I then created modules, lessons, a quiz and discussion questions. I also added links to YouTube videos from other experts. I used my laptop and purchased a few low-cost items like a tripod, a ring light, a microphone and a webcam. Today, I have a website (GiftBasketBusiness.com), and I offer a class on starting your own gift basket business on ed2go and classes on making gift baskets for fun or profit on Thinkific.com, a similar platform. I also teach in-person classes and give demonstrations at libraries.

"I love this work because I can incorporate my own style into making something. I earn more than \$115,000 a year for the classes I teach—money that pays bills, goes into the business and allows me to travel!"

Shirley George Frazier, 62, Paterson, NJ

with crafts!



"I make 6 figures a year helping kids craft!"



Penny Bauder,
44, San Diego

"I've always been creative, and after I had my first child and decided to stay home, I started to make baby booties and organize craft parties. A friend told me I should start my own business, but I wasn't sure what to do. I thought it would be cool for kids to receive a gift with a craft in the mail once a month. When I did some research, I realized there were actually people making money with subscription-based businesses. So in 2009, I launched Green Kid Crafts (GreenKidCrafts.com).

"To get started, a friend gave me a small loan. I used it to create a website and purchase inventory. I designed the first product and had friends test it out and give me feedback.

"Each box contains a themed learning kit with a STEM project, like 'All Around the World' or 'Save Our Oceans,' and a craft kids can do with

their own supplies. All of our products contain materials that are sustainable and natural. We have options for kids ages 2 to 4 and 5 to 10. We offer a monthly subscription for \$20 to \$30 a month, sibling boxes and single boxes to purchase on our website or on Amazon. Each box also has a 12-page kids magazine with puzzles, games and book suggestions related to the theme.

"We market the business in several ways, from working with bloggers that promote our products to posting on social media, but a lot of our customers find us through word of mouth.

"I love this business because I get to exercise my creativity every day, it inspires kids and it's flexible so I can be available for my kids. This year, we're slated to make \$2 million. I take a six-figure salary—money that pays the bills, pays for trips with my family and is donated to charity."

"I earn a full-time income making jewelry!"

"About 10 years ago, when my mother was sick, she came to live with me, and I quit my job to care for her. I was under a lot of stress, so I started making jewelry—something I had loved to do as a teenager—and gave some of the pieces to the hospice workers to thank them. Then I learned about Etsy and decided to start a shop and see if I could sell the jewelry. I called the business Jewels for Hope (JewelsForHope.net) and decided to donate a portion of the proceeds to charity. When I made my first sale, I was thrilled!

"I had no idea how to start a business, but my friends gave me books and I did a lot of research. I also joined The Artisan Group, an organization that

gave me information about growing my business, and later, helped me get celebrities to wear and promote my jewelry. At first I bought supplies at Michaels, but then learned that I could get a better price buying them wholesale.

"I make earrings, rings and bracelets, and use Swarovski crystals, gemstones and beads. I also make cuff links, bottle openers, money clips and diffuser bracelets for anxiety. I sell the jewelry on Amazon, my Etsy shop (Jewels For Hope) and in 10 retail locations.

"Making jewelry allows me to be creative and help others. I make a full-time income—money that goes back into the business or pays for extras like dinners out with my family."



Sandy D'Andrea,
62, Stamford, CT

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~ Cindy from Bartlett, IL

“ As a new mom, I wanted to stay home but needed an income. Since joining, my family and I have been very blessed...Give this business a try; there is nothing to lose and everything to gain! ”

~ Kayleen from Brooklyn, IA



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~ Kelly from Knoxville, TN



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Circle of kindness

A contagious smile

“The oil change should take about 30 minutes,” the man at the auto-repair counter said. I nodded, handed over my keys and went back to my conversation with my sister on my cell.

“You say to cheer up, but that’s impossible after the week I’ve had,” I grumbled. ‘I’ve lost an account at work, found out I need a root canal and have a leak under the bathroom sink.’

“A half hour later, the man called my name. I paid, got my keys, then went outside where my car was parked. But, as I climbed inside, my eyes widened. The dashboard was covered with colorful sticky notes with smiley faces drawn on them. I giggled, and looked up to see the clerk and guy who had serviced my car waving at me. I waved back, beaming, laughing and marveling at the kindness of two wonderful strangers—who gave me an oil change *and* changed my attitude!”

—Monica Abrams, 59, Twin Falls, ID

4 stories that will warm your heart

The power of love

Up, up and away!

“I heard myself moan through a blanket of darkness, yet I was powerfully drawn to a familiar, sweet little voice near my ear.

“‘Gran, I’ve got bubbles!’ I heard my 5-year-old granddaughter, Lizzie, chirp. ‘Wake up so you can see how beautiful they are!’

“I unstuck my tongue from the roof of my mouth and fluttered open my eyes. Suddenly, I saw beautiful bubbles floating around my hospital bed. Seeing me awake, Lizzie burst into a grin and wrapped her arms around me. In the next few minutes,

the nurse explained how, after my hysterectomy, I had trouble waking up from the anesthesia. But Lizzie insisted she had the remedy—and after making a trip to the hospital gift shop with her mom, she returned with bubbles.

“‘I *knew* it would work!’ Lizzie exclaimed.

“I took her tiny hand in mine. ‘Love works miracles every time,’ I said, my heart overflowing.”

—Lisa Ortiz, 58, Warwick, RI



Country wisdom

A stitch in time

"On my birthday, I was a bit perplexed when my grandmother gifted me with a *Cross-Stitching for Beginners* book along with needles, hoops, thread and patterns. I'd never been crafty like she was, and I didn't have the patience to tediously stitch a picture on fabric. I gave a weak smile of thanks.

"As my mother always said, busy hands make happy hearts,' she said with conviction. 'Come over this weekend, and we can cross-stitch together.'

"Not wanting to hurt her feelings, I came over that Saturday, where we spent hours painstakingly stitching flowers, birds, hearts...even phrases like 'Home is where the heart is.' As much as I enjoyed spending time together, I didn't understand how 'busy hands make happy hearts.' Truth was, cross-stitch didn't change that I was divorced and struggling with bills.

"Then one weekend, my grandmother handed me a note she received from the director of the local assisted living facility. It read, *I can't thank you enough for the beautiful framed cross-stitch pieces that you and your granddaughter made. We've hung them up, and they bring a smile of joy to our residents!*

"In that instant, it became so clear. By giving to others in need of joy, our busy hands did indeed make happy hearts! I leaned over and gave my grandmother a tight hug. 'Did I ever tell you what a wise woman you are?' I asked. She just nodded as her eyes twinkled." —Judy Gilmore, 44, Athens, GA



Angels among us

A heavenly dance

"It was going on five days since my beautiful horse, Fred, had left the barn for outdoor time in the fenced corral. His mate, Ginger, had passed away the week before, and he'd barely done anything more than blink sadly at me each time I went to his stall.

"I flashed back to the day I rescued the pair seven years prior. I named them after Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers because they would do this sort of dance together—trotting in circles around each other, first one way and then the other in beautiful unison.

"With my heart aching for Fred, I glanced over at the open barn door. 'Oh, Ginger, he misses you so much. Can you somehow heal his heart?' I uttered into the crisp air. Just then, Fred trotted out of the barn. I held my breath and stared in awe as he began his circle dance, going one way and then the other, as if Ginger were right there with him. Once finished, he glanced over at me, the shine back in his black eyes, as if to say, *Ginger is with me!* In tears, I realized that love never actually leaves after all." —Jean Hart, 63, Lincoln, NE





QUICK POLL

Fun way to boost Fido's confidence

When snowy days prevent your pup from getting to run around outdoors, keep him happy with an indoor game of tug-of-war. An expert secret: Letting your pal win sometimes not only makes it more fun for him, studies also show that dogs who play the game with their owners are often more obedient and have higher confidence. However, be sure to follow one basic rule: The game stops immediately if your pup's teeth ever touch your hand.

What's the easiest way to protect your dog's paws during winter?

Ice and rock salt on winter roads can damage your pup's sensitive paw pads when you walk him. So we asked readers for their top tips to keep Fido's pads protected on your strolls:

53% ♥ this idea!

Apply petroleum jelly to paw pads before you head out, says Abby Olson. The thin layer will keep skin from getting dried out and cracked.

47% ♥ this idea!

Keep the hair between the toe pads trimmed, says Jenny Roth. This will stop salt and ice from sticking to the hairs between his toes.

Get your pup to take medication

If Buster is stubborn about taking pills, try a DIY "pill pocket" that delivers them in a tasty way. To do: Mix 2 Tbs. of flour, 1 Tbs. of smooth peanut butter and 1 Tbs. of milk thoroughly in a bowl. Roll the mix into 10 small balls, then use the flat end of a ballpoint pen to push a hole in the center of each ball in which to put a pill. Freeze for up to three months. When you need to give your dog a pill, simply bring a pocket to room temperature.

Double-duty drinking dish

Your dog is such an enthusiastic drinker, he always sloshes water across the floor. Sidestep this problem by making a water bowl "planter." Simply place a water bowl in the center of a tray and surround with soil. Then plant small, pet-friendly greens around the bowl. Finish by filling the bowl with water. Any water your pet spills when he drinks will be absorbed by the thirsty plants, while the weight of the soil will help hold the bowl in place. Plus, you'll have a lovely new planter to brighten up the room—especially in the dead of winter!



Spot-clean hairball mess with *this*

Uh-oh! Lately it seems like Mittens is shedding, grooming and hacking up more hairballs than ever. Although you've scrubbed away most of the mess on the carpet, there's still a noticeable spot. To remove it, try this quick fix: Apply a dollop of shaving cream and let it sit for five minutes. Then scrape off the foam, dab the area with a wet cloth and vacuum. The *glycerin* in the cream dissolves stains so your carpet looks like new in no time! (Just be sure to spot-test first.)

Make it easier for your kitty to 'go'

In winter, dry indoor heat can dehydrate your furry friend, making it much harder for her to pass a stool. The telltale sign: You notice that she's been taking longer than usual in the litter box and/or her poop looks hard and dry. To help ease her discomfort and make it less strenuous to move things along during her bathroom breaks, mix the vet-recommended amount of ½ tsp. of mayonnaise per 5 pounds of body weight into her food daily for a week. The mayo helps promote healthy digestion so stools can move through her digestive tract quickly and painlessly.

Madeleine wrote to us to tell her story of how Blue Berry™ has impacted her quality of life and helped her enjoy her favorite hobby: painting beautiful landscapes.

Wonderful to have good eyes

“My name is Madeleine. I am retired and live in Montreal. I enjoy spending time in nature, painting beautiful plants and landscapes.”

Eyes began to weaken

“As I got older, I got concerned that my eyes would begin to weaken. This would upset me, because I love painting, which is very demanding on the eyes and requires accurate vision.

When I went to my optometrist, he explained to me how eyes can degenerate with age and that the vision unfortunately often gets worse with time.”

Read About Blue Berry™

“Then, in a magazine, I read about a man who had used Blue Berry tablets to maintain his eyesight. In hopes of getting the same results, I bought a box at my local pharmacy, and started the same day. I’ve been taking Blue Berry™ for almost a year, and I’m very happy with the product. I’m painting and my spirits have been lifted.

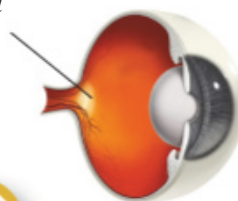
I’m very happy to have found this product, and recommend it highly to anyone who wants to take good care of their vision.”

- Madeleine F., Qc



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Doctors' best cold-weather cures

Between chilly weather and shorter days, little ones often feel less than their best this time of year. Here, doctors share how they chase their own kids' seasonal woes away

FOR WINTER BLUES

A little bit of sunshine

"My now-grown girls were definitely negatively impacted by the shorter and darker days of winter," recalls mother-of-three Gail Saltz, M.D., an associate professor of psychiatry at Weill Cornell Medicine in New York City. Her simple no-cost remedy? Time outside. "When the kids grew glum, I'd bundle them up and get them outside for at least 30 minutes when it was still daylight." Once outdoors, they simply walked. Why it helps: The combination of natural light and moving triggers the release of serotonin and endorphins—two hormones known to lift mood and improve focus. "If they had studying to do, we'd walk while I quizzed them," she says. "The girls knew it worked too," says Dr. Saltz. "They'd often ask to 'study while we walked' before I even offered."



FOR A CHAPPED NOSE

Petroleum jelly

"Last winter, my son wound up with an incessant runny nose that left the delicate skin on and around his nostrils chapped," says dermatologist Sonia Batra, M.D., a mother of two in Los Angeles. Since she knew that irritated, chapped skin can create openings for infection-causing bacteria, Dr. Batra had her son wash the area with a gentle cleanser before applying petroleum jelly. "I'd smear a small dab on and around his nostrils three times a day," she says. Petroleum jelly creates a protective barrier so skin can retain moisture. "He felt instant relief!" she says. "And in a few days, the irritation completely subsided."

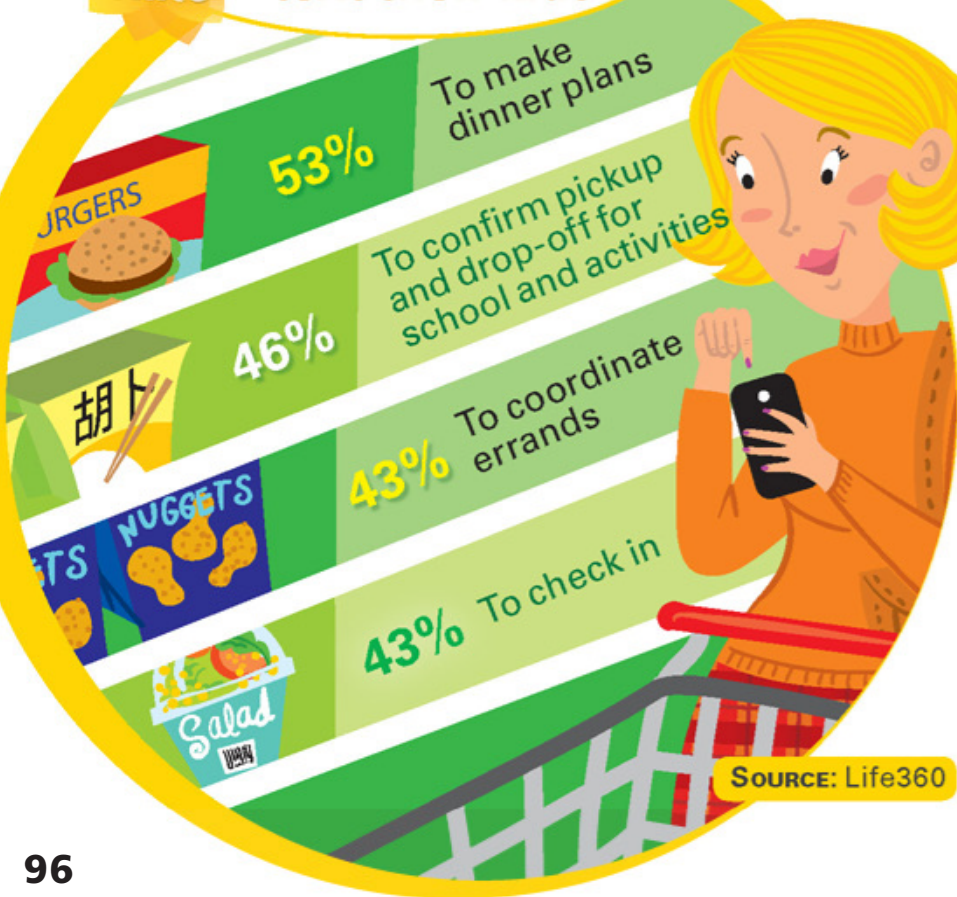
FOR CONGESTION

A simple massage

"When an upper respiratory infection starts, I have my kids sit in the bathroom while I turn on a hot shower for five minutes," says father-of-two Naresh Rao, D.O., a primary care physician and sports medicine specialist in New York City. "The steam opens the nasal passages, allowing them to drain." Next, Dr. Rao uses his thumbs to massage their faces with a light stroking motion for five minutes. His easy technique: "Start between the eyebrows, then move toward the temples." Finish by gliding your thumbs from the bridge of the nose down to the cheeks. "This stimulates the sinuses to clear congestion," explains Dr. Rao. "Besides making the kids feel better fast, it's great bonding time." ❄️

quick
take

Why parents
text their kids



Mac 'n' cheese made even better!

We swapped in whole-grain pasta and added a mix of veggies to give this comforting classic a good-for-'em boost of energizing nutrients

Veggie Mac 'n' Cheese

- 1 cup whole-grain **macaroni**
- 2 Tbs. **butter**
- 2 Tbs. all-purpose **flour**
- 1½ cups **milk**
- 1 cup frozen **mixed vegetables**
- ½ cup baby **spinach**, chopped
- 1 **tomato**, seeded, chopped
- 1 cup shredded **pizza cheese blend**

❶ Cook macaroni according to package directions; drain.

❷ Meanwhile, in medium pot, melt butter over medium heat. Whisk in flour; cook, stirring, 1 min. Remove from heat; gradually whisk in milk until smooth. Return to medium heat; cook, stirring, until mixture comes to a boil and starts to thicken, 1–2 min. Reduce heat to low; cook until thickened, about 3 min.

❸ Heat broiler. Stir macaroni, mixed vegetables, spinach, tomato and ½ cup cheese into sauce. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Divide mixture evenly among 4 (1¼ cup) ovenproof baking dishes (or transfer mixture to 5-cup baking dish, if preferred); sprinkle with remaining shredded cheese. Broil until cheese melts and browns, 2–4 min.

Active time: 25 min. **Total time:** 30 min.
Makes: 4

Help for 'down there' dryness

Q: I've had vaginal dryness since menopause. We use lubricants and I've tried vaginal moisturizers, but sex is still uncomfortable. Breast cancer runs in my family, so I don't want to take oral estrogen. Is it safe for me to use a topical estrogen?

A: Absolutely, yes! A low-dose vaginal estrogen cream, suppository, tablet or ring can relieve dryness and reinvigorate vaginal tissues—without the estrogen being absorbed throughout your body, the way it would be if you used traditional hormone therapy. It's even been found to be safe for breast cancer survivors.

You actually have many options for treating this problem, which is quite common: More than half of postmenopausal women suffer from vaginal dryness, discomfort and pain during sexual intercourse, but most don't seek treatment for it. Getting relief for this unpleasant symptom is important, not only for intimacy in your relationship, but also for your sexual health, since regular sexual activity helps maintain healthy vaginal tissues after menopause.

In addition to estrogen, you can consider trying a vaginal suppository that contains the hormone DHEA (*dehydroepiandrosterone*), which the female body converts to estrogen and testosterone in the vagina. Used nightly, it can combat dryness and painful sex in menopausal women. Or, if you'd prefer to use a nonhormonal product, talk to your doctor about Osphepa, a once-a-day pill that helps plump up and lubricate the vagina. It contains a *selective estrogen receptor modulator*—meaning it targets certain tissues without affecting others. My patients find that it's very effective for improving vaginal dryness, and one study found that it makes a substantial difference within four weeks.



Can menopause make my heart race?

Q: Lately I've noticed that my heart sometimes races as I'm getting a hot flash. Could this be due to perimenopause (I'm 49), or should I be worried about a heart arrhythmia?

A: This is tricky since it could be due to either. I tell women to see their doctor for any heart-related symptoms, since palpitations can be linked to more serious issues, especially if they're accompanied by trouble breathing, dizziness, weakness or chest pressure.

That said, it's not unusual to get heart palpitations during perimenopause. As estrogen levels decline, the sympathetic nervous system becomes more active, causing heart rate and blood pressure to spike in response to stress, including an oncoming hot flash. And while these palpitations can be anxiety-provoking, they're usually nothing to worry about. When they strike, try calming yourself with slow, deep breathing or by visualizing a relaxing scene such as a tranquil beach. Also, be sure to drink plenty of water to prevent an electrolyte imbalance, which can also cause palpitations.

Q

At the gym, I overheard two women talking about undergoing vaginal steaming at a spa. Could this eliminate my vaginal odor?

A

Often described as a "facial" for the vagina, vaginal steaming involves sitting over a bowl of hot water infused with herbs such as rosemary, basil or wormwood for 20 to 45 minutes. Some claim the centuries-old practice cleanses reproductive organs, eliminates odor and relieves menstrual pain, but scientific evidence is scant. And there are risks, like the possibility of burning vaginal tissue as well as infection if the equipment isn't kept super clean.

Besides, the vagina is a self-cleaning organ, which is why steaming (and douching) is unnecessary. In fact, efforts to freshen the vagina can disrupt the balance of bacteria and may actually result in infections. If the odor is foul or fishy and you suspect an infection, see your doctor. Otherwise, I advise cleansing the exterior vulval skin with warm water and a mild soap.



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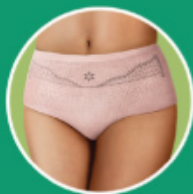
Barbara DePree, M.D., is a gynecologist in private practice and director of Women's Midlife

Services at Michigan's Holland Hospital. A Certified Menopause Practitioner, she is the founder of MiddlesexMD.com, an educational resource for women's sexual health in perimenopause and beyond. To ask her a question, send an email to health@firstforwomen.com.

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Love is what makes us perfect



Following a chaotic day of being stressed and grumpy with her kids, Rebecca Radicchi worried she'd never be the supermom her children deserved. But after a sweet bedtime conversation with her 4-year-old daughter, she learns that a little bit of grace can turn imperfections into perfect love

I pull up covers, tuck blankets tight, gently kiss foreheads and flip light switches. Bedtime is a sweet ritual that begins with pulling on pj's, brushing teeth and reading a story. It is that moment of the day when we reconnect and the house finally falls silent. Another day is behind us.

I pad down the stairs quietly, my multitude of parenting duties complete for another day. But before my foot even hits our last step, rather than treating myself to a deep breath, I begin reviewing the day. I'm tallying my failures. At a time when I should be reveling, I'm mentally listing all the ways I think I've fallen short as a mommy.

It feels like I spent the whole day yelling and fussing about picking up toys, refereeing emotional sibling injustices, and demanding that screen time be balanced with backyard play, drawing, building or creating something. And goodness, I allowed entirely too much sugar: syrupy pancakes, a couple of Oreos at lunch, an afternoon Popsicle and a bowl of mint-chocolate-chip ice cream after dinner. Good grief, I tried and failed once again at feeding the kids less sugar.

I'd not made time to have them read to me or practice those yet-to-be-mastered multiplication tables. I'd envisioned starting to read a book aloud during breakfast, but hadn't followed through. When water spilled

at dinner, I'd groaned and sighed. Toys are scattered around the house, and I checked off very little from my to-do list. I'd been obviously grumpy when my husband came home. Had I laughed at all? Why couldn't I be more fun? Did I look any of them in the eye? Was I cherishing every moment and making their childhoods magical, as all moms should? Everyone else is better at this.

Instead of enjoying a well-deserved rest, I'm judging myself—unfairly, as I'll learn.

A little voice interrupts my thoughts. "Mom?" my youngest daughter calls to me. "Momma, this was the best day. I love you."

Wait. Today? The best? What about all my fussing?

I turn toward her room, asking why she thinks the day was good. Her response: "We got to play all day, and you really took care of us. You are such a good mommy." The sleepy opinion of my 4-year-old catches me off-guard, immediately diminishing my inner critic's authority.

I climb back up the stairs, sit down on her bed, and say, "I'm so happy you had a good day. Wanna do it all over

again tomorrow? I'm sorry I fussed so much."

"It's okay, Mom. We were kinda crazy. I loved today though."

Her generous opinion of me, how she looks right past my flaws, causes me to pause to reconsider the day.

She deserves my apology, but as I start down the steps once more, I realize that I might need an apology too. Maybe I am being stingy with grace for myself. Maybe I've been listening to a harsh voice that I should be ignoring.

I need to forgive myself for having unreasonable expectations of my kids and myself.

I need to forgive myself for comparing myself to the curated social-media feeds of other moms.

I need to forgive myself for believing in an inflated caricature of the perfect mom.

I am intentional about teaching grace to my kids. I offer it to them and encourage them to pass along that same offer of forgiveness. But how much more effective might it be to lead by example?

On that ordinary evening after tuck-in, I laugh at myself, beginning a gradual shift in how I think about

"Maybe I'm being stingy with grace for myself. Maybe I've been listening to a harsh voice I should be ignoring"

love



myself as a parent. Though it takes me some time to fully recognize mommy guilt for what it is, I feel lighter immediately, knowing that my kids see our days differently than I do. I can set down some of the mental burdens I have been carrying.

It's time for a daily dose of grace in the morning and probably another at night. Letting go of unreasonable expectations would be so freeing. I need to stop inviting in false stories spoken by my inner critic. Who is setting these expectations anyway?

The next day, I wake up reminding myself that I am going to start moving toward forgiving myself more,

acknowledging in advance that I'll mess up, and lightening up. It is time to end this season of parenting self-doubt and start learning to be okay with the messy beauty of our ordinary days. I need pep talks, prayer and less failure tallying.

Later, I take a moment to look around the breakfast table at the faces of little people who love their mommy and don't notice every flaw. Their tendency to shower me with grace floods me with gratitude and a serving of hope. So, after I pour milk in cups, I sit down beside them and declare, "It's going to be the best day."

—Rebecca Radicchi



INSPIRATION, GUARANTEED

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Sparkling blue waters, snow-white sand and endless sunshine are what you'll find in this tropical oasis

Located on the pristine island of New Providence is Nassau—the beautiful capital of the Bahamas. This “jewel of the Caribbean” is known for its vibrant Victorian architecture, unique blend of cultures, picturesque landscape, duty-free shopping and nearly 10 world-renowned beaches—making it the perfect getaway for the whole family.

Begin your escape by basking in the sun's rays on Jaws Beach, where the famous movie was filmed. “If you want to escape from the busy Nassau crowds, this is your place,” says a reviewer from Illinois. “When we arrived, we were completely alone in this amazing piece of heaven. Just be sure to take beverages and towels because it's a rustic, beautiful beach, with no cabanas or bars.”

To discover what wonders await below the water, head to Cable Beach for a fun snorkeling experience. ►



Admire the vibrant architecture at Compass Point Beach



See beautiful poinciana blooms growing wild in the city

“The water was so calm, you could snorkel right off the beach on most days,” raves *KarrieF3* on TripAdvisor.com. “We saw turtles and stingrays!”

After you towel off, make the drive to visit the National Art Gallery of The Bahamas (\$10 per adult, free for children under 12). “This small museum is a treasure if you want to understand Bahamian culture,” says *ekj8135* on TripAdvisor.com. “The art is eclectic. But it is a small museum, which lets you take it all in. The gift shop is also a welcome change from tourist trinkets. There are many different handcrafted items, and it is affordable.”



Spy the Bahama woodstar, a type of hummingbird, fluttering through the landscape

End your day by strolling down Bay Street in downtown Nassau. There, you can savor tasty seafood and delicious Caribbean fare, buy handmade goods at the famous Straw Market and wander to the shoreline to admire the views of the stunning sunset.

Great day trip: *Paradise Island*

Hop on the ferry for a quick ride (\$3 per person) to the 685-acre islet of Paradise Island. Once on this oasis, visitors can unwind on the stunning Cabbage Beach, relax at one of many day spas, enjoy thrills at the Aquaventure Water Park, play with friendly dolphins and discover unique floral and animal species at the Ardastra Gardens, Zoo & Conservation Centre.

Don't miss *Nassau Market*

On Tuesday and Friday each week from 9 AM to 5 PM, head to Pompey Square in downtown Nassau for the biweekly Creative Nassau Market. There, you can shop for handmade products like jewelry and ceramics and even fresh-fruit Popsicles. ✨

Nassau *in a nutshell*

► Getting there

Grab your passport and fly into Lynden Pindling International Airport, then rent a car.

► Where to stay

For an affordable stay near the water, book a room at Orange Hill Beach Inn. Says *Jen M* on TripAdvisor.com, “A fantastic location overlooking the ocean!” Rates start at \$132.

► Where to eat

Enjoy fresh fish at Crabs and Ting. Says a reviewer from Maine, “The conch balls were the best we’ve ever had!”



Celebrate the Blessings of the Seasons

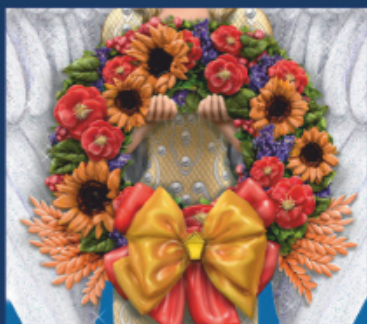
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"My mom vanished!"

DREAM: "My mother died a few years ago, but I dreamed she appeared to me as a little girl. I was so excited to see her. But as I reached out to her, she faded away. I felt so sad." —*Laura Bakker, Boston*

WHAT IT'S TELLING YOU: "Please take heart knowing that when our loved ones pass on, they often visit our dreams the way they want us to remember them—so your mom coming to you as a child signals her vibrant, joyful spirit. My hope for you is that you can focus on the fact that she appeared to you because of the strong bond you still share, and that you can begin to let go of the disappointment you felt when you couldn't touch her. The spirit of your mother is always with you, transcending time and space to cross over into the stuff of dreams."

Don't remember your dreams?

Take a moment to notice which photo you're drawn to the most—the one you choose resonates the strongest with your subconscious. Then read the analysis of the dream that goes with that image to reveal useful insight.

Bestselling author and renowned dream expert **Kelly Sullivan Walden** decodes the dreams of four FIRST readers.

"My car is rolling downhill!"

DREAM: "I'm driving up a steep incline and the brakes fail! My car starts rolling backward and is eventually stopped by something soft behind me, but I can't see what it is." —*Kay Pospisil, Racine, WI*

WHAT IT'S TELLING YOU: "Dreaming of driving uphill reflects that you're doing your best to advance in the world but may be facing a few roadblocks. Your subconscious is likely helping you find a better way to overcome these uphill battles. For example, instead of feeling the need to power through, consider stepping out of the driver's seat and asking for a helping hand. Just as your car was stopped by something soft as it rolled down the hill, trust that when *you* run out of steam or can't go another inch, you'll be 'caught' by the supportive hands of friends and loved ones, who will help you overcome any challenge life may put in your path."



of *your* dreams

Find the dream that rings a bell for you, then read on to tap into the transformative power of your subconscious



"I keep finding money!"

DREAM: "I was walking up the stairs, and on each step, I kept finding money! When I reached the third floor, a fortune-teller was waiting for me—but she refused to tell me my future and instead urged me to keep going." —Jovana Moran, Keansburg, NJ

WHAT IT'S TELLING YOU: "In our dreams, money is symbolic of power and independence. And the fact that you're finding so much cash means that you're discovering intense empowerment, akin to winning the lottery—materially and spiritually. I love how the fortune-teller doesn't simply give you the answers you seek. This is your dream sending you the message that in order to continue accessing higher levels of abundance, you need to trust yourself and seek your own counsel as you do the 'legwork' and keep striving. Most of us wait until we get to the top of the 'stairs' to feel a sense of accomplishment—but I believe your dream is encouraging you to celebrate every step you take."

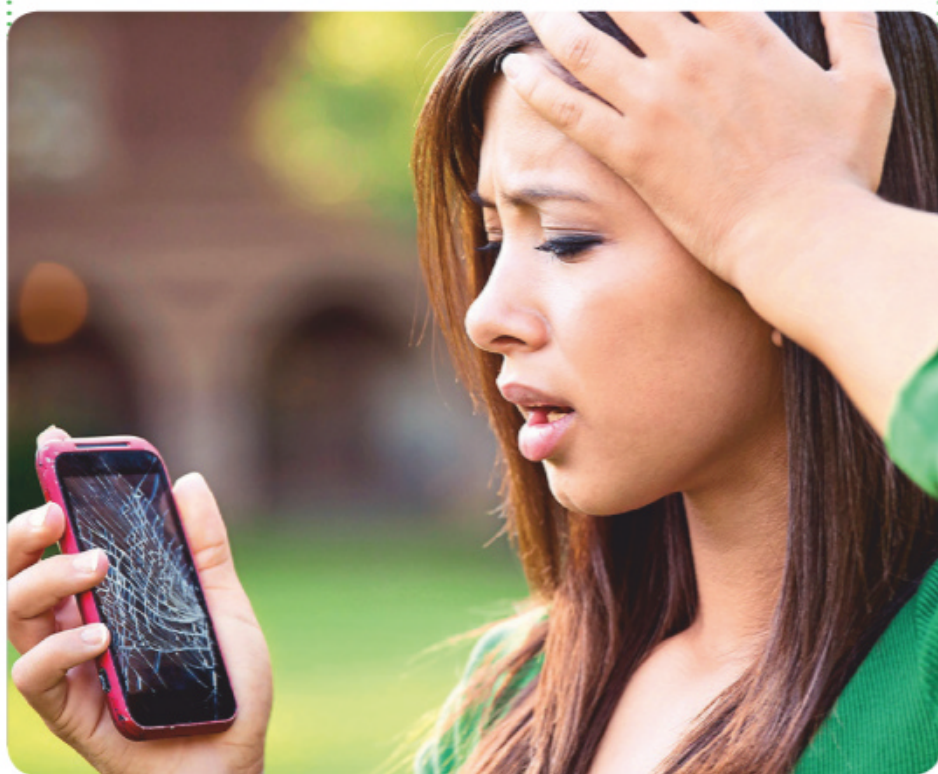
GETTY (4)

"I broke my phone!"

DREAM: "I dreamed I was on my cell having an argument with my husband, when I accidentally dropped my phone. It shattered into a million pieces, and I woke up in tears. What does this mean?"

—Emilia Grace, Mobile, AL

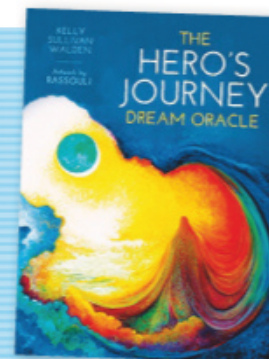
WHAT IT'S TELLING YOU: "Dreams that feature a cellphone reflect communication issues. Your phone being destroyed might suggest that it's time for a radical new 'upgrade' in the way you and your husband express your feelings. I believe your dream is showing you that the sadness you woke up with is more about the broken rapport between you and your husband than about losing your cellphone. In short, this dream is a wake-up call encouraging you to let your husband know how you've been feeling—remember, a breakdown always precedes a *breakthrough*, if you open yourself up to the possibility."



Put **FIRST** to work for you!



Kelly Sullivan Walden has been analyzing dreams for 20 years and is the author of seven bestselling dream books and two oracle card decks, including her latest, *The Hero's Journey Dream Oracle*. If you'd like Kelly to decode your dream, email her at Kelly@KellySullivanWalden.com or www.Facebook.com/KellySullivanWaldenDoctorDream.



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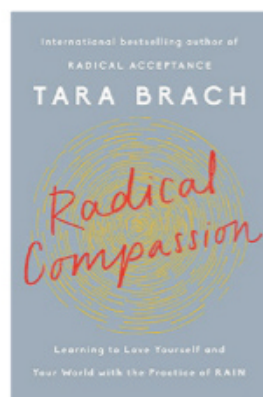


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Dreaming of a sunny getaway? Simply enter for a chance to win a three-night vacation for two at the Grand Fiesta Americana Coral Beach Cancún—valued at \$1,500! The prize includes a stay in a Junior Suite Ocean Front Room, a daily breakfast buffet and daily hydrotherapy at the resorts' state-of-the-art Gem Spa! Visit our website for official rules and to enter.

you deserve a break

7 books we're



Nonfiction

Radical Compassion

by Tara Brach, Ph.D.

“Feeling overwhelmed by all the divisiveness in the news and on social media, I jumped at the chance to lose myself in the newest book by one of my favorite spiritual writers,” says Carol Brooks, FIRST editorial director. In *Radical Compassion*, clinical psychologist and renowned meditation teacher Tara Brach guides the reader through her signature approach to escaping the push and pull that our minds are continually engaged in. With great kindness, she invites us to lose ourselves in validating the joy and love that resides outside of our mind’s whirring thoughts. “As I read and worked through the guided practices, I rediscovered a sense of God’s goodness and constant presence,” says Carol. “And I was delighted to find that my calm and sense of peace were fully restored!” (Viking, 2019; Hardcover \$28, Kindle \$15, Nook \$15)

Classic

Number the Stars

by Lois Lowry

“There’s really no better time for me to reflect on life’s blessings than when there’s a bright new year ahead,” says Victoria Conn, FIRST assistant fashion editor. “And this classic book reminded me to be thankful for what’s important, like friendship and family.” This story takes place during WWII as German troops begin their campaign to “relocate” all the Jews of Denmark. The events unfold through the eyes of 10-year-old Annemarie as her family takes in her Jewish best friend, Ellen, and conceals her as part of their family as Ellen’s world is turned upside down. “In a time of uncertainty and terror, Annemarie’s loyalty to her friend and the struggles they face together reminds us that friendship endures all,” says Victoria. “This year, when I’m feeling lost or sad, I know I’ll never be alone with a friend by my side—and that’s the greatest gift of all.” (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011; Paperback \$9, Kindle \$7, Nook \$7)



Chick lit

The Wedding Date by Jasmine Guillory

“When my weekend plans were canceled because of a winter ice storm, I was left feeling blue,” says Lauren Blum, FIRST assistant editor. “To boost my mood, I decided to curl up with this fun, romantic read—and it had me smiling all night long!” Pediatric surgeon Drew Nichols desperately needs a last-minute date for his ex’s wedding. On the eve of the festivities, Drew conveniently finds himself trapped in an elevator with Alexa, a mayor’s chief of staff looking to date again—and she agrees to be his fake girlfriend for the night. When the unassuming date goes so perfectly, they decide to start a long-distance fling from different cities in California. As work chaos and emotions escalate, will the two admit their true feelings for each other? Cheers Lauren, “Bursting with wit and romance, this sweet book unfolded like a rom-com movie—and it made me forget all about my initial plans!” (Penguin, 2018; Paperback \$15, Kindle \$8, Nook \$8)



loving now

Cozy mystery

Red Velvet Cupcake Murder by Joanne Fluke

"Sometimes on extra-chilly winter weekends, I get the urge to bake up treats," shares Rachel Cosma, FIRST senior health editor. "But when a snowstorm kept me from running to the store for ingredients, I satisfied my sweet tooth in a different way and downloaded this cozy mystery about bakery owner Hannah Swenson." Her famous red velvet cupcakes were a hit at a hotel's grand reopening party, until a guest is found dead from a poisoned cupcake. With Hannah at the center of an investigation, it's up to her to clear her name before it's too late. Says Rachel, "This read was full of twists—and delicious recipes!" (Kensington, 2014; Paperback \$8, Kindle \$7, Nook \$7)

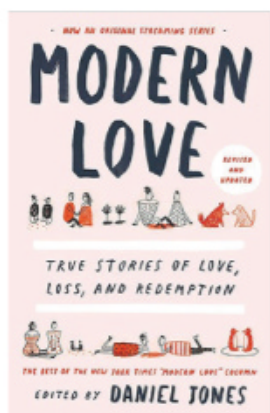


Short stories

Modern Love

Edited by Daniel Jones

"After the holiday rush, I tend to feel a bit lonely, especially with Valentine's Day right around the corner," admits Leann Garofolo, FIRST assistant editor. "So when my friend told me about this book of short stories—taken from the famed *New York Times* 'Modern Love' column—I knew it would lift my spirits." The book contains 40 short stories that delve into all aspects of love. "I enjoyed jumping from story to story," says Leann. "Each one filled my heart with warmth and hope." (Broadway, 2019; Paperback \$17, Kindle \$13, Nook \$13)

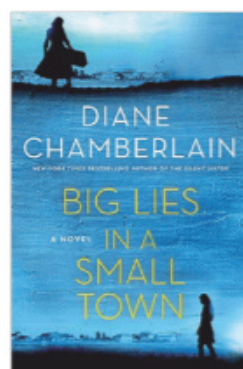


Historical fiction

Big Lies in a Small Town

by Diane Chamberlain

"I love books that flip between the past and present—they're a great escape from daily stressors," says Patty Bontekoe, FIRST executive editor. In 1940, young artist Anna Dale wins a contest to paint a mural in North Carolina. But when she starts the job, it's not what she expected. In 2018, Morgan Christopher is in jail for a crime she didn't commit, until she's released to restore an old painting—something she has no idea how to do. Says Patty, "I couldn't wait to see how the two were connected!" (St. Martin's, 2020; Hardcover \$28, Kindle \$15, Nook \$15)



Romance

Fight or Flight by Samantha Young

"Living far from family means I'm at the airport often," shares Melissa D'Agnese, FIRST senior editor. "During a recent delay, I wanted a fun read to occupy my time, so I bought this romance...which just so happens to start off on a plane!" Ava Breevort's flight home to Boston is delayed. Her first-class ticket may salvage the trip, but it's thwarted by an arrogant Scotsman who steals her seat. During their in-flight journey, the two butt heads—and spark chemistry. Raves Melissa, "This steamy story made the time fly by!" (Berkley, 2018; Paperback \$15, Kindle \$10, Nook \$10)



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Out of the mouths of babes

Beauty ritual backfire

“For Christmas, my husband gave me an assortment of fun beauty products, including a few of those silicone face masks that look like animals. To give my skin a nice glow, I decided to try one out one evening as I was getting ready to host a family get-together at my house. I was wearing one that looked like a pig when my 6-year-old grandson, Harrison, walked in. I have to admit, the mask was frightening—it made me look like I was one of the pig people out of a scary *Twilight Zone* episode.

“Harrison let out a yelp and asked, ‘Oh, no, Grandma! What happened to your face?’ I laughed and explained what it was. ‘It’s supposed to help me look 10 years younger,’ I teased.

“At the party, Harrison kept staring at me, concerned. Finally, my daughter asked what was wrong. I quickly explained about the silly pig mask. Everyone laughed, but that’s when Harrison added, ‘Grandma said it would make her look 10 years younger, but she still looks exactly the same age!’ I felt my cheeks burning, but couldn’t help but chuckle. I guess I got my ‘glow’ after all!” —Patricia Hobbes, 63, Stowe, VT

4 stories that will tickle your funny bone

Lord have mercy

Four-alarm lesson

“I teach Sunday school and I like to try to make the lessons interesting. So one week, I allowed the kids to examine the censer that burns incense during Mass. Once it had been handed around the room, I carefully loaded it with a small charcoal briquette, placed incense crystals atop the coal and lit it. Together, in total silence, the class and I watched the briquette burn, delighted when the incense began to smoke and produce that wonderful smell. I was feeling pretty awesome for being so creative, until I realized my mistake.

“As the incense filled the room I learned an important lesson myself:

The 90-foot ceilings in a nave are far more suitable for smoking censers than the eight-foot ceilings of a classroom. Before long, the fire alarms went off and the sprinkler system was activated. My class, as well as the congregation, who had been attending Mass, filed out to the parking lot where I had to explain my mistake, red-faced, to the Monsignor and firemen.

“Monsignor took it well and said with a laugh, ‘As it says in the Good Book, “Let your light shine before others”...only next time, perhaps open a few windows first?’”

—Sheila Hernandez, 59, Paducah, KY



Mistaken identity

A doggone mix-up!

"I only take our pup, Charlie, to the groomer twice a year. He's a small Westie with white, long semi-curly hair. Of course, once he gets his haircut, he looks like a completely different dog. This particular time, I dropped him off in the morning and went to run errands.

"Later, when I returned to pick him up, I walked up to the counter and told the clerk I was Charlie's mom. As I paid the bill, an attendant came out leading a little white dog on a leash that immediately got excited when it rounded the corner. 'There's my handsome boy!' I cooed as I walked over and attempted to pick him up. For some reason, Charlie started recoiling away from me and even gave me a little nip. That's when an older gentleman behind me cleared his

throat and asked, 'Excuse me, but are you sure that's your dog?' I thought it was an odd question, but I heartily responded with, 'Oh yes, I'd know my sweet boy anywhere!'

"That's when the door swung open again, and out came another small, white dog. Of course, *this* was Charlie, who ran to me and licked my face.

"I could feel my whole face go bright red as the attendants and the elderly couple, whose dog I had scared witless, all started laughing. I apologized as I took Charlie's leash and led him out of the groomers with his tail wagging happily behind him—while my proverbial tail was tucked between my legs!"

—Kathy Houser, 61, Atlanta



GETTY (5)

Hormone havoc

In the hot seat

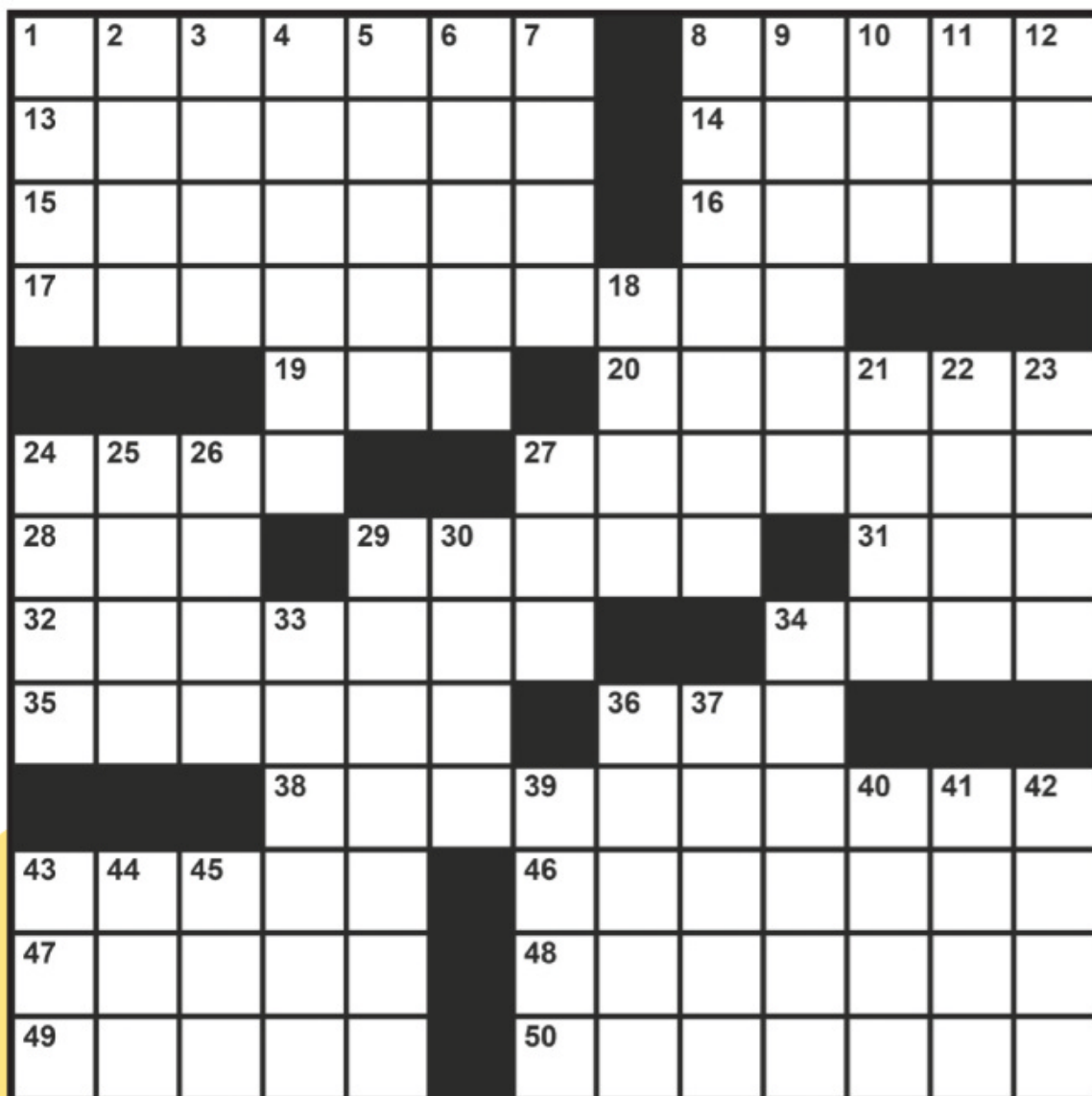
"Menopause hit me virtually overnight...and at nuclear force. My hot flashes were so intense, I felt like I could power a small city, and they came on so suddenly, there was never any time to prepare or head somewhere to sweat it out in peace. It was miserable to say the least.

"The most embarrassing one hit me when I was giving a presentation at work to about half a dozen colleagues—of course, they were all men. Things were going smoothly until I felt that telltale tingle wash over me. So I quickly wrapped up and asked if anyone had any questions. A couple of my co-workers raised their hands as I started sweating bullets, my face and neck turning bright red. By the time I barked off answers to their questions, my glasses had even fogged up!

"The young man sitting closest to me, who had just joined the company right out of college, was staring at me wide-eyed as I frantically patted my face with a tissue and fanned myself with a folder. As everyone awkwardly filed out of the room, I looked at the new kid, shrugged and said, 'Talk about being in the hot seat, huh?' He laughed nervously and scuttled away, looking at me like I might burst into flames. And to be honest, that wasn't too far from the truth!" —Donna Moxley, 50, Dothan, AL



Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 Least taxing
- 8 Minor quarrels
- 13 Grooming gizmo
- 14 Touch base on a fly
- 15 Cause ____ (major public controversy)
- 16 Powerful adhesive
- 17 Actress who's played both Storm and Catwoman (2 wds.)
- 19 AMA members
- 20 Add value to
- 24 *Sands of Iwo* ____
- 27 Astronomer mentioned in Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody"
- 28 Dedicated poem
- 29 Tinker Bell, for one
- 31 Former *Tonight Show* announcer Hall
- 32 Hoop shot that misses it all
- 34 Brainstorming product
- 35 Beginner
- 36 Maria ____ Trapp
- 38 Kate of the 2020 action flick *Jolt*
- 43 Racetracks, for example
- 46 Become frosted (2 wds.)
- 47 Marisa of *My Cousin Vinny*
- 48 Some detective work
- 49 Peel in a drink
- 50 Maserati designer

DOWN

- 1 Impress firmly
- 2 Lot measurement
- 3 Ledge
- 4 Ferdinand's wife
- 5 Smoldering fragment
- 6 Balkan people
- 7 Family diagram
- 8 In a tough way
- 9 Ancient scrolls
- 10 In days past
- 11 Rented prom outfit
- 12 Undercover agent
- 18 Bring up, as children
- 21 ____ *Three Lives*
- 22 Give up, as territory
- 23 *Kotb of Today*
- 24 TV journalist Lunden
- 25 Prefix meaning peculiar
- 26 Griffin of game shows
- 27 Jazz great Evans
- 29 Accepts responsibility (2 wds.)
- 30 Eldest Baldwin brother
- 33 Books in hotel rooms
- 34 Shoe part
- 36 Parish priest
- 37 "There's ____ every crowd!" (2 wds.)
- 39 Toy for windy days
- 40 Hertz alternative
- 41 Gave temporarily
- 42 And so
- 43 Giant outfielder Mel
- 44 Take an oath
- 45 "What Kind of Fool ____?" (2 wds.)

Spot the difference



There are six differences between the two photos above of **Idina Menzel** (center) with her *Frozen 2* costars Josh Gad and Jonathan Groff, celebrating the Disney movie's premiere in London. See if you can find them all!

Word search

G Q N O T G N I H S A W L E Z N E D
 E A T I H A L Y T R H S F O J V C C
 N N L R K F C I J O H N W A Y N E A
 E I Y P A M B N M B M N G S J Z N U
 H W V A A G L D X E Y H D E Q I A U
 A B F C M C O X G R P E A K Y E M T
 C M K I H D I B I T A X O N T G F O
 K P C D N E E N Y D L A H J K I F Z
 M A E O M P P R O E W T J T B S O I
 A U P D Z T M J E N R T S E F C H M
 N L Y R J A C K N I C H O L S O N H
 Z N R A B A H R F R D Q P M C Q I X
 M E O N P K B N H O G D L M A K T T
 B W G O D I I K W A R D E C U D S K
 B M E E G L L L X D X Z T W O H U L
 M A R L O N B R A N D O G P S P D C
 U N G C X X O F E I M A J B Y V E G
 K E L A M I M A R H C G Y F L E R O

Our favorite Oscar-winning men

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| Humphrey Bogart | Jamie Foxx |
| Marlon Brando | Colin Firth |
| Gregory Peck | Leonardo DiCaprio |
| John Wayne | Denzel Washington |
| Gene Hackman | Eddie Redmayne |
| Jack Nicholson | Rami Malek |
| Dustin Hoffman | |
| Robert De Niro | |
| Paul Newman | |
| Tom Hanks | |
| Al Pacino | |



Words and phrases can appear horizontally, vertically, diagonally, backward or forward and can overlap.

For solutions, turn to page 116



Sudoku

	6			1			2	
9		2			4			
8		1		2	3			
		9		4			5	7
2				5				6
4	7			3		2		
			4	9		7		8
			6			5		2
	4			7			1	

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3 x 3 box contains the digits 1 through 9. Digits cannot repeat within the same row, column or box.

For solution, turn to page 116

SIGN OF THE TIMES

Every time we try to eat healthy...



Along comes Valentine's Day, Easter, summer, Thanksgiving, Christmas or, you know, Monday, and ruins it for us!

Smile file

★ CAPTION CONTEST WINNER



What,
you never
had a bad
hair day?

—Sue Bugno

Photo submitted by Lee Marcucci

Make us laugh—
and win \$100!



“

_____”

Send your funny caption for the photo above to Caption Contest, *First for Women*, 270 Sylvan Avenue, Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632, or email laugh@firstforwomen.com. The winner gets \$100, and the caption will appear in an upcoming issue!

*If more than one entry contains the same winning caption, the contest winner will be chosen at random from that batch.



aquarius

(Jan. 20–Feb. 18)

You'll be stirred to express and go to bat for your big-picture ideas while communicator Mercury is in your sign from January 16 on. Higher-ups will be impressed by your confidence! Around February 9, the festive mood and time spent connecting with loved ones has you feeling supported and centered.



gemini

(May 21–June 20)

Miscommunication may impede your progress on an important project around January 28. Wait for the dust to settle to proceed. From February 7 through March, you'll have your pick of invites and other social occasions. Lighthearted fun with friends brings true joy!



libra

(Sept. 23–Oct. 22)

Your intuition will be amplified come January 27. Applying this to a mind-body routine (like meditation) has you feeling more vital! Then you may enjoy working with your neighbors on a charity project around February 9. The experience boosts your connections and sense of community.



pisces

(Feb. 19–Mar. 20)

If you've been wanting to have a heart-to-heart with a loved one, go for it while Mercury moves forward in your sign from February 3 on. You can land on a healing new track! From February 7 on, you'll be interested in boosting your cash flow. Brainstorm with friends for results.



cancer

(June 21–July 22)

You'll be compelled to hone your skills around a wellness routine from February 3 on. Knowledge brings empowerment! Around February 9, you may be reflecting on ways to feel more rewarded at work. Doing what you can to focus on projects you're passionate about can boost your cash flow.



scorpio

(Oct. 23–Nov. 21)

You might feel like colleagues simply aren't understanding you around January 28. Be patient: Clarity is just around the corner. Then, from February 7 on, you'll want to involve friends in your favorite fitness routine. Working out together feels exhilarating and motivating!



aries

(Mar. 21–Apr. 19)

Team up with colleagues on a major project from January 16 through February. Communicating your ideas leads to a win! Then you'll want to explore intriguing new forms of self-care with Venus in your sign from February 7 on. What you learn could boost your mind-body wellness.



leo

(July 23–Aug. 22)

Prioritize one-on-one time with loved ones from January 16 on. Bonding time feels revitalizing now! Come February 9, you may be frustrated if you've been putting your wellness on the back burner to focus on other responsibilities. Dedicate focus to a pastime you love.



sagittarius

(Nov. 22–Dec. 21)

Check with trusted experts on a burning wellness question while Mercury is in your third house of communication from January 16 on. Clarity improves your well-being. Then, from February 7 on, you'll feel inspired to be more playful and artistic on the job. Imaginative ideas lead to recognition!



taurus

(Apr. 20–May 20)

You may feel overwhelmed on the job, given the frenetic energy of the moment on January 18. Doing what you can to feel centered helps you power through. Around February 9, you'll crave work-life balance. Carving out time to decompress keeps you firing on all cylinders.



virgo

(Aug. 23–Sept. 22)

You'll get a burst of can-do energy to fuel your fitness and healthy eating plan while the sun is in your sixth house of wellness from January 20 on. A practical plan leads to wow-worthy results! Around February 9, reflect on your professional dreams. What you uncover could inform a power move!



capricorn

(Dec. 22–Jan. 19)

Whether you've been wanting to turn your side hustle into a main source of income or take on more responsibility, you'll get the green light around January 20. You'll soar! And from February 7 on, you'll revel in the pleasures of home life. Quiet moments bring true calm.

handy answers

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Relax & play SOLUTIONS pages 112-114

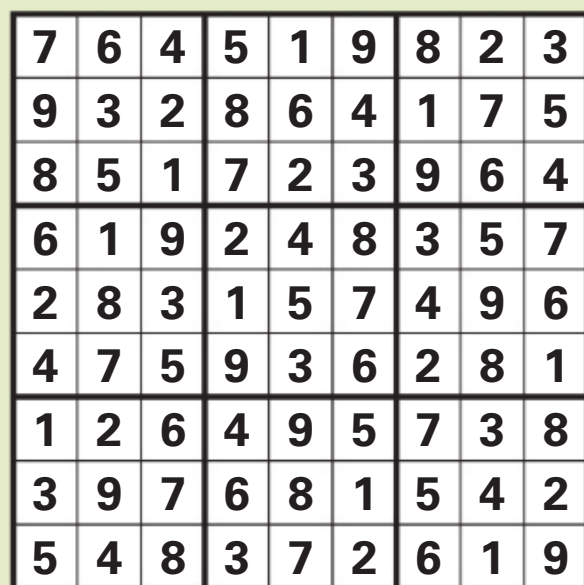
Crossword



Word search



Sudoku



Spot the difference



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Women Embrace Breakthrough Pill

A top medical doctor discovered a natural formula that targets your thyroid to combat lack of energy, mood concerns, and many other signs of thyroid imbalance needlessly affecting millions.

By S.A. Nickerson, Health Correspondent

Patient after patient had similar complaints — lack of energy, mood swings, lack of romantic interest and even more weight gain!

That's when Dr. David Brownstein discovered there was a common cause — **a problem with his patients' thyroid!**

In fact, 80% of Americans suffer from sub-optimal thyroid function. **And women over 45 are particularly vulnerable.**

"An incredible number of women across the country visit their doctor each year complaining of feeling tired, grumpy, or not quite right. Far too many of them are told this is normal for their age. Or even

worse, that it's all in their head," says Dr. Brownstein.

"Don't buy into this big lie," he warns, "because nothing could be further from the truth."

Dr. Brownstein is no ordinary doctor. **He's both a medical doctor and a renowned natural physician** serving as medical director of the respected Center for Holistic Medicine.

Before writing a prescription for a powerful drug with potentially harmful side effect, he always first seeks to find a natural remedy.

Thyroid Test Not Always Accurate

Dr. Brownstein cautions: *Very few women realize their thyroid isn't functioning adequately.*

This means their **health concerns are often ignored** or not taken seriously. And a common lab test for thyroid function may be misleading. So unfortunately, many sufferers have been told their thyroid is just fine when it's actually operating at a sub-par level.

Jumpstart Your Thyroid, Get Your Energy Back

Your tiny thyroid gland drives the metabolic rate of every cell in your body, 24

hours a day. It particularly impacts your energy level, your weight, and your mood.

From the beating of your heart to the function of your sex organs, your thyroid exerts a powerful hormonal influence on numerous critical tasks throughout your body.

Dr. Brownstein created a natural formula called **ACTALIN®** — a proprietary blend of **17 nutrients beneficial to thyroid health**, including iodine.

And contrary to what you hear, the iodine in table salt is simply not enough for full thyroid health.

With daily use, **ACTALIN** provides the body with a non-drug way to rev up a sluggish thyroid and regain lost energy.

In fact, **ACTALIN** has become so popular, over 600,000 bottles have already been sold.

Adrenal Support and Stress

While a high-stress lifestyle is a key factor impacting thyroid health, the adrenal glands also suffer. So the advanced **ACTALIN** formula offers support for your overtaxed adrenal glands with a unique blend that includes adrenal glandular powder. This provides more overall support for your busy, stressful life.

Women Call ACTALIN® a 'Godsend'

Many users write to praise this thyroid support formula.

"I knew I had a concern with my thyroid when I experienced fatigue and just not feeling right. I ordered a bottle and within days started feeling much better. My energy returned. I don't feel the need to sleep during the day and I feel years younger. I love **ACTALIN!** It has improved my health and my energy level. This definitely was a Godsend!"

Linda R. — Grapevine, TX

"I have more energy now than I did when I was in my 30s. I am actually looking forward to going in for my yearly physical."

Robin N. — South Lyon, MI

"My feet no longer feel cold. Now going on 2-4 mile walks daily and have lost 2 dress sizes. I attribute the increased energy level to **ACTALIN.**"

Jo R. — Greenwood, IN

"I have increased energy and a BIG reduction in brain fog. I've also noticed that my hair loss has stopped."

Carol D. — Santa Fe, NM

"**ACTALIN** has improved my life. More energy, haven't felt this good in YEARS. Friends can't believe all the energy I have."

Kathleen B. — Phillips, ME



DR. BROWNSTEIN

RISK-FREE 30-Day Trial of ACTALIN

We at Medix Select, one of the nation's premier nutraceutical companies, are sure you'll love **ACTALIN**, too. That's why we're offering a risk-free 30-day trial supply at NO COST. That's a \$39.95 value! Just cover a small shipping fee of \$4.95, that's all.

You'll also receive Dr. Brownstein's detailed special report "**A Doctor's Guide to a Healthy Thyroid**" as a **FREE** bonus gift (a \$20 value).

Toll-Free: 800-850-1421

Online: Actalin.com/First20



*Trial offer requires enrollment in SmartShip program. See Website for details. These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease. Testimonials are from actual customers who have used our products. Testimonials reflect their experience but may not be representative of all those who will use our product.



loving

Nothing beats cuddle time

Inuyama, Japan—Like mother, like daughter! This mama Bolivian squirrel monkey and her equally cute little girl love to lounge in the trees together at Japan Monkey Centre. And they're basically inseparable! Baby squirrel monkeys spend the first few weeks of life clinging to their mother's back as she moves from branch to branch. Not only is it a convenient form of transportation, it's a great way for mom and baby to snuggle and bond.

5 stories that will make you smile



cute

Double the adorable

Skopje, North Macedonia—Looks like love is in the air at Skopje Zoo! This pair of giraffes was spotted cozying up in a tender embrace that certainly warmed the hearts of guests. Giraffes use neck rubbing, often called "necking," as a way to show affection for both mates and family members. Scientists say the sweet display is the equivalent of a human hug and is a common sight among giraffe herds.

hungry

What a sweet treat

Stirling, Scotland—

The secret to winning over Zulu's heart? Meat—and lots of it! The African lion and the rest of his pride at Blair Drummond Safari Park couldn't contain their excitement after being gifted a frozen heart made of their favorite snacks. Zulu, being the leader of the group, was the first to investigate and sneak a taste of the festive concoction.



sweet

Hi there, cutie pie!

Mihama, Japan—

This curious Asian small-clawed otter at Minamichita Beach Land seemed eager to make friends, peeping his head out to look for a few new pals. Otters like this cutie are particularly social animals and live in family groups with up to 20 other individuals. For an otter, the more play-mates, the merrier!

precious

Pucker up, my dearest!

Chandrapur, India—Two spotted owlets sittin' in a tree...these smitten sweeties were caught sharing a smooch while perched on a branch in the Tadoba National Park. The photographer had been watching the pair for a week, hoping to get a snap of the two engaging in a display of affection. Luckily, the male owl couldn't resist planting a tender kiss on his beloved. This Asian species of owl is known to be monogamous and actually groom and feed each other when courting.





last laugh



"If the neighbor asks why her bouquet only has 11 roses, you didn't see me!"



"By the time she's ready, the restaurant will be closed!"



Photo submitted by Joy Bradway, Fair Lawn, NJ

THAT'S LIFE!



The heart-shaped gift we want



The heart-shaped gift he wants to get

Things kids say

A-LIST VEGETABLES

"My kids and I were shopping for ingredients for my homemade Valentine's Day dinner. When we wandered through the produce section, my 5-year-old, Nathan, picked up something and asked me what it was. "That's okra," I explained. Eyes wide, he replied, **"Oh, I've heard of that! Okra Winfrey!"**

—Lillian Bonner, Coeur d'Alene, ID

We want to hear from YOU!

Have a funny photo you'd like to share with other readers? Send it to Last Laugh, *First for Women*, 270 Sylvan Avenue, Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632, or email laugh@firstforwomen.com. If your photo is selected, we'll pay you \$100!

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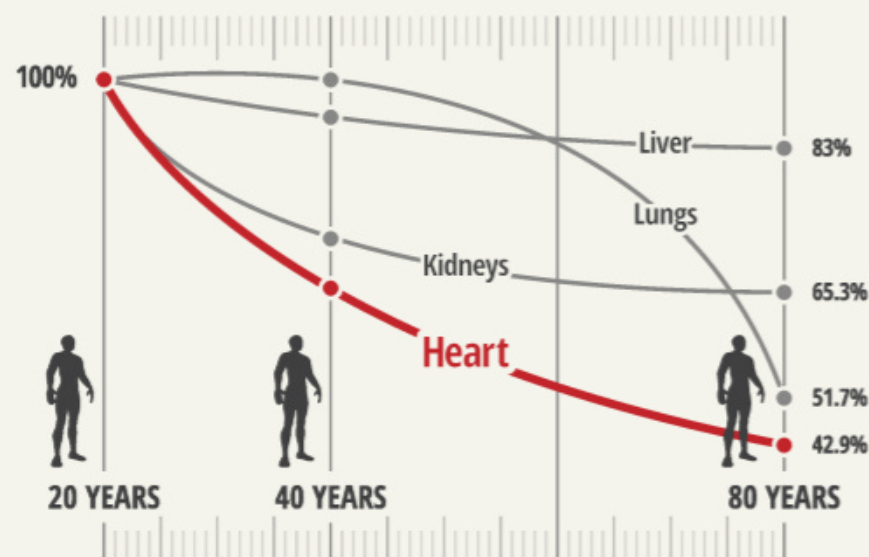
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For more information, visit

www.ubiquinol.org/FFW

CoQ10 Distribution in the Human Body



Source: A. Kalen et al. *Lipids*, 24, 579 (1989)

Resources:

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* These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.