
Got a furry, four-legged friend? If not, maybe you should. Owning a pet might be a lot of work. (Think poop patrol, meals, vet visits, hairballs...) But being a pet owner may be good for your health.

A Purr-fect Way to Lower Blood Pressure

Research shows that petting Fido or Mittens can help lower blood pressure. One study followed a group of stock brokers taking medication to control blood pressure. Adding a pet to their treatment plan actually helped lower blood pressure better than medication alone.

Digital bedtime habit disrupts sleep

An estimated 50 to 70 million adults in the United States have trouble sleeping. While there are many causes, there’s one emerging trend that has a negative impact on sleep quality. It’s reading in bed using an electronic device like a smartphone, tablet, or e-reader.

Power Off Electronics to Improve Sleep

You call it a night, put on your pajamas, brush your teeth, and head to bed. Sounds like a sensible bedtime routine, right? If more people really followed the “lights-out” rule, sleep-related disorders might not be such a problem.

Get Your Vitamin Zzzzs

To improve your quality of sleep, be sure to power off electronic devices before you get into bed. Instead, try reading a printed book, taking deep breaths, or focusing on something simple like counting sheep to help you brain relax. Eating a healthy diet, getting regular exercise, and going to bed at the same time every night can also help you get your Zzzs.

Practice Yoga to Protect Your Heart

Ever heard of The Great Namaste? It’s a yoga-inspired event that started in Portland, Oregon. Last year more than 800 people filled the city’s Pioneer Courthouse Square with colorful yoga mats. They performed poses (or asanas) like Downward Dog, Low Warrior, and Table Top. And the yogis set a new record for the longest yoga chain in the world.

Nearly 10 percent of adults in the United States practice yoga. If yoga is already part of your exercise plan, keep it up. If it’s not, consider giving it a try.

Heart-health benefits of yoga

It’s a low-impact form of exercise that can be modified to meet any fitness level. New research also shows yoga may help protect the heart by controlling blood pressure, cholesterol, and weight. Researchers looked at 37 studies on the health benefits of yoga. They found that people who practiced yoga regularly lowered their blood pressure by five points, reduced LDL (bad) cholesterol by 12 points, and...
RECIPE
Quinoa with Paprika and Cumin

Quinoa (pronounced KEEN-wah) is a healthy whole grain that isn’t just for foodies. It’s used in salads, breads, breakfast cereals, side dishes, and main course entrees. And it’s healthy. Tantalize your taste buds with this quinoa dish seasoned with paprika and cumin.

**Ingredients**
- 1 C quinoa
- 2 C water
- 1/4 t salt
- 1/2 t paprika
- 1/2 t ground cumin

**Directions**
1. Rinse quinoa in a fine mesh colander.
2. Place all ingredients in a saucepan with 2 cups of water. Cover.
3. Bring to a boil over high heat.
4. Reduce heat. Simmer for 10 to 15 minutes or until all water is absorbed.
5. Serve immediately, or refrigerate and reheat later.

**Practice Yoga to Protect Your Heart** (continued from page 1)

and lost an average of five pounds. These positive outcomes all help lower the risk for heart disease. Give yoga a try, and imagine yourself joining the longest yoga chain in the world.

**Take the March Health Challenge!**

Exercise 30 to 60 Minutes Daily: Make physical activity a daily habit.

**Ask the Wellness Doctor:**

This month Dr. Don Hall answers the question: What diet and lifestyle habits can lower my risk for cancer?