

YOUR GAMEPLAN TO LIVE

Avoiding Germs at the Gym



During cold and flu season, (and always) it's smart to increase your hygiene at the gym. Be **SAFE** not **SORRY!** However, don't let germs at the gym keep you from going, because exercise is one of your body's best immunity boosters. Here are some tips to be smarter about avoiding germs at the gym this cold and flu season:

Clean Equipment BEFORE and AFTER. Many gyms have policies that say you must clean the equipment after use, but not everyone follows instructions, so wipe it off thoroughly before use.

Bring a towel and Keep your Hands Away from your Face. Germs get into your body through your mouth, eyes, and nose, so the easiest way to spread them is to touch something with germs on it and then touch your face. Use your towel to wipe sweat from your face rather than using your hands.

Wash your hands frequently. Wash your hands after using a cardio machine and every once in awhile when using other equipment. Use hand sanitizer frequently if hand washing is not an option.

Keep your distance. Try to schedule your workouts when the gym isn't as crowded, or if it is crowded, try to keep some distance especially if you notice someone with symptoms.

Bring your own water. Water fountains are a prime spot for germs. People use their hands and have their mouths near them. It is also not unusual for people to spit in it. Gross but true.

Yoga Mats. You may want to consider bringing your own because they could have germs among other things lurking on them. If you use communal mats be sure to wipe yours down thoroughly before use and wash your hands soon after.

Why You Should Consider Adding Spirulina to Your Diet



Spirulina is a freshwater and saltwater, blue-green algae with *powerful* health benefits. In a wide range of studies, spirulina has been found to successfully treat many different ailments.

One of the really special characteristics of spirulina is its rich protein content. Spirulina is 50-70% protein by weight (better than red meat, which is about 27% protein by weight).

Not only is it high in protein, it also contains 18 different amino acids, including ALL of the essential amino acids and 10 of the 12 non-essential, making it a complete or "perfect" protein source.



Paleo Pumpkin Pie Cupcakes

Ingredients:

- 1 can pumpkin or 1 1/2 cups pumpkin puree
- 2 very ripe bananas
- 1/2 cup coconut sugar
- 1 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp ginger
- 1/4 tsp nutmeg
- 1/4 tsp sea salt

For the whip topping:

- 1 can full fat coconut milk
- 2 T maple syrup
- 1 tsp vanilla beans

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. In a food processor, combine all the cupcake ingredients and blend until smooth. You may need to scrape down the sides a few times.
3. Spoon the mixture into lined muffin pans. You can also use silicone liners. They don't stick like paper liners can.
4. Bake for 20-25 minutes.
5. Let these cool completely before removing the muffin liners. Since they are soft like pumpkin pie, put them in the fridge after baking. It should firm them up more.
6. To make the whip topping, open the can of coconut milk that has been in the fridge overnight. Scoop the fatty white part off and place in a mixing bowl with the vanilla and maple syrup. Use the whipping attachment and whip the coconut into a cream. Scoop a little on top of each muffin. Enjoy!

By Melissa King

Recipe notes: Keep these stored in the fridge. I highly recommend making the whip topping right before eating for optimal results in taste and texture. Please note: The texture/taste may vary based on the pumpkin puree and ripeness of the banana. These have more of a pumpkin pie texture than a cupcake texture.

<https://mywholefoodlife.com/2014/09/07/paleo-pumpkin-pie-cupcakes/#M1lqvSvVT716lv.99>
<https://mywholefoodlife.com/2014/09/07/paleo-pumpkin-pie-cupcakes/#dwcgzHu3P3lceewG.99>

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Spirulina contains important vitamins and minerals such as...

- B vitamins, vitamin K, calcium, iron, magnesium, selenium, manganese, potassium and zinc
- Iodine
- Gamma-linolenic acid (GLA), an important fatty acid for the heart and joints
- Antioxidants chlorophyll and carotenoids

Studies confirm and support spirulina's reputation as a powerful immune booster, showing it can combat Candida overgrowth and encourage a healthy gut microbiome.

What else makes spirulina such a superstar? It is VERY nutritionally dense and is being considered a primary ingredient to fight world hunger and malnutrition. It also has the unique ability to withstand *extreme temperature variations!*

For these reasons, NASA and the European Space Agency are researching the benefits of incorporating spirulina into astronauts' diets on spaceships including possible missions to Mars.

While spirulina is entirely natural and generally considered a healthy food, there are some exceptions you need to be aware of. Avoid spirulina if you are/have...

- Severely allergic to seafood
- Allergic to iodine
- Pregnant
- Nursing
- Hyperthyroidism
- Phenylketonuria
- Auto immune disease
- A fever

Note: Spirulina might increase the immune system. By increasing the immune system, it might affect the effectiveness of medications that decrease the immune system. If you are on such medications, check with your health care provider.

*****Don't use any spirulina product that hasn't been tested and found free of microcystins and other contamination. Products that are contaminated are not safe, especially for children.**

How much Spirulina?

Because spirulina is also a potent detoxifier, you may or may not experience a detox reaction depending on your toxic burden. For that reason, it is best to start with a small dose and work your way up after you see how your body responds.

- Starting dose for adults: 500 mg to 3 grams/day
- Adult Daily Maintenance Dose: 3-5 grams/day
- To decide what is right for your specific needs, especially if you are dealing with a serious condition like cancer, you may need to consult with a specialized natural healthcare provider.

Sources:

<https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2018/11/05/spirulina-health-benefits.aspx>
<http://www.evolveingwellness.com/post/spirulina-and-chlorella-treatment-dosage-and-use>
<https://www.webmd.com/vitamins/ai/ingredientmono-923/blue-green-algae>

As We "Fall Back" to Shorter Days, Take Extra Care While on the Road



While we do only one quarter of our driving at night, 50% of traffic deaths happen at night. It doesn't matter whether the road is familiar or not, driving at night is always more dangerous.

Now that Daylight Saving Time has ended – for 2018, many people will find themselves spending more time driving in the



Sweet Potato Casserole

Ingredients:

- 3 pounds sweet potatoes, peeled and chopped (about 8 cups)
- 1/2 cup 2% reduced-fat milk
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted and divided
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3/4 teaspoon kosher salt, divided
- 1 large egg, beaten
- Cooking spray
- 1 cup old-fashioned rolled oats
- 2/3 cup pecans, chopped
- 3 tablespoons almond meal
- 3 tablespoons maple syrup, divided
- 1 tablespoon canola oil

Directions:

- Preheat oven to 375°F. *Place potatoes in a large saucepan; cover with water to 1 inch above potatoes. Bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer 6 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Drain. Return potatoes to saucepan. Add milk, 1 tablespoon butter, and vanilla; mash to desired consistency. Stir in 1/2 teaspoon salt and egg. Spread potato mixture in the bottom of an 11x7-inch glass or ceramic baking dish coated with cooking spray.
- Combine remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt, oats, pecans, almond meal, and 2 tablespoons syrup in a bowl. Add remaining 1 tablespoon butter and canola oil; toss to coat. Sprinkle oat mixture over potatoes. Bake at 375°F for 18 minutes or until surface is golden. Remove pan from oven; drizzle with remaining 1 tablespoon maple syrup.

<https://www.cookinglight.com/recipes/sweet-potato-casserole-crunchy-oat-topping>

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dark. Depth perception, color recognition and peripheral vision can be compromised in the dark, and the glare of headlights from an oncoming vehicle can temporarily blind a driver. Not to mention this time of year tends to have more traffic with the upcoming holidays.

What should you do to combat darkness?

- Aim your headlights correctly, and make sure they are clean
- Dim your dashboard
- Look away from oncoming lights
- If you wear glasses, make sure they're anti-reflective
- Clean the windshield to eliminate streaks
- Slow down to compensate for limited visibility and reduced stopping time

The American Optometric Association recommends drivers:

- Have annual vision exams
- Reduce speed
- Minimize distractions such as talking with passengers, listening to the radio, and especially, using the phone
- Check with your doctor about side effects of prescription drugs
- Limit driving to daytime hours if necessary

Evening rush hour (between 4 and 7 p.m. weekdays) is a dangerous time to drive due to crowded roadways and drivers that are eager to get home after work. In winter, it's dark during rush hour, compounding an already dangerous driving situation.

How can you make it home safely during rush hour?

- Don't be an impatient driver; slow down
- Stay in your lane and beware of drivers who dart from lane to lane
- Even though the route may be familiar, don't go on autopilot; stay alert
- In unfamiliar areas, consult a map before you go, and memorize your route
- Don't touch your phone, eat, drink or do other things that are distracting

Source: National Safety Council - <https://www.nsc.org/road-safety/safety-topics/night-driving>

Quick Relaxation Technique—Deep Breathing Exercise



With the holidays upon us, stress is likely to be increased. The following is a relaxation technique that you can practice almost anytime, anywhere.

The key is to breathe deeply from the abdomen, getting as much fresh air as possible in your lungs. Breathe from your abdomen rather than from your upper chest. This will help you to inhale

more oxygen. The more oxygen you get, the less tense, short of breath, and anxious you feel.

- Sit comfortably with your back straight or lying down. Put one hand on your chest and the other on your stomach.
- Breathe in through your nose s-l-o-w-l-y. The hand on your stomach should rise. The hand on your chest should move very little.
- Exhale through your mouth s-l-o-w-l-y, pushing out as much air as you can while contracting your abdominal muscles. The hand on your stomach should move in as you exhale, but your other hand should move very little.
- Continue to breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Try to inhale enough so that your lower abdomen rises and falls. Count slowly as you exhale.

The Best Homemade Healthy Green Bean Casserole

Ingredients:

For the onions:

- 2 medium to large yellow onions, thinly sliced
- 1 teaspoon olive oil



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Cranberry-Pear Crisp

Serves 4-6.

If you're making for a crowd, double the recipe and the pan size!

Ingredients:

- 2 pears, peeled and thinly sliced
- 2 1/2 c. cranberries, washed and picked over
- 3/4 c. plus 1/3 c. sugar, divided
- 3/4 c. flour
- 6 TBS cold salted butter, cut into small pieces
- 1/2 tsp ground ginger

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350°F. Layer half of the pear slices on the bottom of a 9-inch pie pan. Cover with the cranberries, and sprinkle 1/3 c. sugar over the berries. Layer the remaining pear slices on top of the cranberries.

In a mixing bowl, whisk together the flour, the remaining 3/4 c. sugar, and the ground ginger. Use a pastry cutter or a fork to cut the cold butter into the flour, until a crumbly mixture with chunks no larger than a pea is formed. Sprinkle the crumble mixture on top of the fruit. Place the pie pan on a baking sheet to catch any drips, and place in the preheated oven.

Bake for 45-55 minutes, until the top of the crisp is golden brown and the fruit is bubbly. Serve warm or at room temperature, topped with fresh whipped cream or vanilla ice cream.

-Adapted from [The Preservation Kitchen](#).

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- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour (or whole wheat pastry flour or gluten-free oat flour)
- 1/3 cup panko breadcrumbs
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

For the green beans:

- 2 pounds fresh green beans, trimmed

For the mushrooms:

- 2 tablespoons butter, divided
- 1 pound (16 ounces) sliced baby bella mushrooms
- 1 teaspoon fresh thyme
- Salt and pepper

For the sauce:

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1/3 cup all purpose flour (or whole wheat pastry flour or all purpose GF flour)
- 2 cups low sodium chicken broth (or vegetarian broth)
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/3 cup grated parmesan cheese
- Freshly ground salt and pepper, to taste

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 450°F. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper and spray with nonstick cooking spray. Set aside.
2. Place sliced onions in a large bowl, drizzle with 1 tablespoon of olive oil then add in flour, panko bread crumbs, garlic powder and salt. Use your hands to toss to combine, then place onions onto prepared baking sheet and bake for 35-40 minutes, using a tong to toss the onions every 10 minutes. Once done cooking, set onions aside. Reduce the heat in the oven to 350°F.
3. While the onions are cooking, bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add green beans in two batches, cooking for about 2-3 minutes per batch. I like to remove the green beans from the water with metal tongs and transfer to a large bowl, then repeat with additional green beans. Set aside.
4. Next cook your mushrooms: Place a large skillet over medium-high heat and add in 2 tablespoons butter. Once butter melts, add in the mushrooms, fresh thyme and salt and pepper. Cook mushrooms, stirring occasionally until mushrooms are nice and golden brown; about 4-6 minutes. Transfer to a bowl.
5. In the same skillet you cooked the mushrooms, add in 2 tablespoons of butter and place over medium heat. Once butter melts, whisk in flour and cook for 15-30 seconds until a paste forms, then very slowly add 2 1/2 cups of the broth, while you continue to whisk away lumps. You'll need to whisk pretty vigorously. Once smooth, increase heat, and bring mixture to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 5-10 minutes stirring every so often until sauce thickens up a bit, similar to a gravy. If it gets too thick, add in 1/2 cup more broth. Once thick, turn off the heat and stir in minced garlic and parmesan cheese. Season with salt and pepper.
6. Spray a 2 quart baking dish or 9x13-inch baking pan with nonstick cooking spray, or grease with olive oil or butter. Add in green beans, mushrooms and 1/4 of the crispy onions; gently toss together. Pour the sauce all over, then cover with foil and bake for 25-30 minutes. Remove foil, add the remaining crispy onions on top and bake for 5-10 more minutes. Serves 8-10. <https://www.ambitiouskitchen.com/best-homemade-healthy-green-bean-casserole/>

At the Gameplan for Living, we know that the future of healthcare is in the *prevention* of illness and injuries.

It is our mission to provide preventative care utilizing sports medicine principles and lifestyle modification training to create an atmosphere of health, safety, and performance to allow employees to enjoy an enhanced quality of life and reach their retirement—and beyond—SUCCESSFULLY!



Kale and Butternut Squash Stuffing

Ingredients:

- 5 tablespoons olive oil (divided)
- 1 pound Italian turkey sausage, casings removed (omit for vegetarian)
- 1 small butternut squash, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 3 small leeks, halved and thinly sliced
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 1 bunch kale
- 1 loaf stale whole-wheat bread, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 1 egg
- 2 cups chicken broth (vegetable broth if vegetarian)

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350°F and grease two small or one large casserole dish with 1 tablespoon olive oil. In a large pot, warm 1 tablespoon olive oil over medium heat. Add sausage, if using. Cook until browned, breaking up meat with a wooden spoon. Add butternut squash, leeks, salt, and pepper. Cook until leeks are soft, stirring occasionally. Add kale, cover, and cook 4 to 5 minutes or until wilted. Add bread and remaining 3 tablespoons olive oil, and toss to distribute oil.

Whisk egg and chicken broth together in a separate bowl, and then add to pot. Toss bread mixture around to coat and cook for about a minute, until liquid is absorbed. Add stuffing to prepared casserole dish(es) and bake for 40 minutes or until lightly browned. Keep stored in refrigerator.

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