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CREATE A home gym

Going to the gym can be expensive in terms of both money and time. Instead of spending all that money on a membership, why not invest in equipment you can use for years without having to leave your house?

You don't need fancy machines to create a functional home gym. And you don't even need much space. These items can fit anywhere and will challenge your body to get stronger and healthier.

Resistance bands: Get a set that offers low, medium, and high resistance for a variety of challenges.

Kettlebells: Choose a 6 kg (13 pounds) kettlebell for women or an 8 kg (18 pounds) kettlebell for men.

Step platform or box: A step platform or box will allow you to do step-ups, jump-ups, and other types of movements that get you in the cardio zone.

Exercise ball: This inflatable ball adds variety to your workouts and is easy to store.

Jump rope: If jumping is safe for you, a jump rope is an ideal piece of cardio equipment.

Source: National Library of Medicine

Recipe: Banana Walnut Oatmeal



INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups fat-free or low-fat milk
- 1 dash salt
- 2 cups oats (quick-cooking)
- 2 bananas (very ripe, mashed)
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup
- 2 tablespoons walnuts (chopped)

DIRECTIONS

1. In a small saucepan, combine milk and salt. Heat over medium heat until steaming hot but not boiling.
2. Add oats and cook, stirring until creamy, 1 to 2 minutes.
3. Remove the pan from heat and stir in mashed banana and maple syrup. Divide between 4 bowls. Sprinkle with chopped walnuts and serve.

Nutrition Information: Serves 4: Total calories 292 kcals, total fat 6 g, saturated fat 1 g, sodium 118 mg, carbohydrates 52 g, fiber 5 g, protein 11 g.

Source: MyPlate.gov

Cholesterol: *to eat or not to eat?*



Not that long ago, eggs were considered taboo, and heart healthy eating meant avoiding cholesterol. However, our understanding of the impact of dietary cholesterol on blood cholesterol has evolved in recent years.

Instead of worrying about the amount of cholesterol in food, watching your overall fat intake is most important, especially the unhealthy fats. For the best heart protection, you should consume a diet low in unhealthy fats, such as saturated and trans fats.

Moderation is key. Cholesterol-containing foods can be part of a healthy diet as long as you do not over-consume them.

FOODS THAT CONTAIN CHOLESTEROL & UNHEALTHY FATS

- Egg yolks (egg whites do not contain cholesterol)
- Cheese
- Butter
- Shellfish
- Red meat
- Full fat milk and yogurt
- Fried foods
- Processed meats
- Most fast foods
- Desserts such as cake, cookies, and pies

DECREASE INTAKE OF CHOLESTEROL & UNHEALTHY FATS

A healthy diet is one high in plant foods such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. If you focus on eating more of these unprocessed, plant foods, you will naturally be eating a diet lower in fat and cholesterol.

Try these tips to bring more balance to your diet:

- Eat 1-2 fruits and vegetables at each meal.
- If you consume dairy products, choose fat-free or low-fat.
- When you eat meat, choose lean cuts and limit your portion to 3 ounces.
- Choose baked over fried foods.
- Limit processed meats such as lunch meat, hot dogs, bacon, and salami.
- Eat more fiber from fruits, vegetables, oats, and beans.

Know your heart risk

One reason heart disease is so deadly is due to its silent nature. Often, people do not know they have heart issues until they experience a heart attack or stroke.

There's plenty of good news, though. The risk factors for heart disease are fairly easy to spot. Taking steps to understand your heart numbers and manage your risk can decrease your chance of heart disease. And even if you already have heart disease, you can improve your odds by addressing your risk factors.



NUMBERS TO KNOW

Regular check-ins with your doctor are key to monitoring heart health. Your doctor will check your blood pressure, blood lipids, and overall health to determine your heart disease risk. Here are some numbers that could signal cause for concern:

- Blood pressure equal to or higher than 130/80 mm/Hg
- Total blood cholesterol ≥ 200 mg/dL
- LDL cholesterol ≥ 100 mg/dL
- HDL cholesterol less than 40 mg/dL for men and 50 mg/dL for women
- Fasting blood sugar equal to or higher than 100 mg/dL
- Waist circumference greater than 40 inches for men and 35 inches for women

HABITS THAT PUT YOU AT RISK

While the numbers your doctor tests for can indicate your heart disease risk, they are not the only factors to watch out for. Your lifestyle habits can tell you a lot about the health of your heart. Here are some habits that can increase your risk:

- Smoking
- Drinking more than 1 drink a day for women or 2 drinks a day for men
- Eating too much salty food
- Not eating enough fruits and vegetables
- Consuming a diet high in red meat and processed foods
- Being sedentary, or getting less than 150 minutes of exercise a week

WHAT TO DO NEXT

If any of these risk factors apply to you, talk to your doctor about your heart health. A long and healthy life requires a healthy heart.

There are many effective treatments for heart disease, but the best plan is prevention. Taking steps to address your risk factors can make all the difference. Your doctor may recommend:

- Changes to your diet
- More exercise
- Cutting back on alcohol
- Quitting smoking
- Getting more sleep
- Medication

Ergonomics *for the home office*

If you are working from home, either full or part-time, you should ensure your home office is set up ergonomically. A set-up that is not designed for efficiency and comfort can lead to wasted time and poor posture.

Do a quick assessment of your work space and see if it meets ergonomic standards.



THINGS TO CHECK WHEN SEATED AT YOUR DESK:

- Are your head and neck balanced and in line with your spine?
- Can you sit upright in your chair with your lower back fully supported?
- Are your shoulders relaxed and forearms parallel to the floor?
- Are your wrists straight when using the mouse or keyboard?
- Is your monitor an arm's length away and in direct line of sight?

HOME OFFICE CONSIDERATIONS:

- Are you working in a comfortable location?
- Can you alternate between sitting and standing?
- Do you move regularly to stretch and change position?
- Are your most used items within easy reach?

Source: United States Department of Labor