

# Your Health

 Health Partners

JANUARY 2023  
NEWSLETTER

## NEW YEAR NEW YOU

*Even small changes can  
produce huge results...*





**T**he new year is a time for reflection and a time for change. If you want to improve your mental and physical wellbeing, now is the time to grasp that change with both hands. In our first Your Health of 2023, we are therefore focussing on some simple but potentially life-changing ideas to help you kick-start positive self-transformation.

## STARTING THE NEW YEAR RIGHT

### Get moving

Adults should do some type of physical activity every day. Any type of activity is good for you and the more you do the better, so try to get out for a walk each day – even if it is only for 10 minutes. Stretching before and after exercise is also important, so try to save five minutes to stretch your muscles, especially if you've engaged in a heavy-impact workout like running.

At this time of year, a little bit of natural light can make all the difference, particularly for those who experience *Seasonal Affective Disorder* (SAD). If you need motivation, the *Active 10 and Couch to 5k apps* are both free and can be downloaded easily to get you moving.

If you can't get outside, there are lots of online classes to check out – the *NHS Fitness Studio* is full of great online exercise videos covering a wide range of workouts.

For the NHS guidelines on exercise, see their *Live Well website*. Please do check with your doctor before starting any exercise programme.

### Carve out time for self-care

Brainstorm a list of self-care activities that make you happy, and block out time



for them as part of your daily routine. Your list might include spending more time with your friends, being outside, reading a book, exercising... We are all different, but the common denominator is that we all need time to soothe and replenish our energies to be better versions of ourselves and be more present for friends, family and colleagues.

### Be compassionate to yourself

Many of us will start the new year by making a list of resolutions. While goals are important, try not to overcommit or set unrealistic goals, which can lead to feeling overwhelmed and demotivated.

Amidst the excitement of new beginnings, we forget that change can be hard and takes time. What we then often do to compensate is punish ourselves with self-criticism and get stuck in negative cycles that leave us drained. Rather than accept





our humanness and forgive ourselves for our shortcomings, we berate ourselves.

This year, let's silence our inner critic and make self-compassion a resolution: 'I am here and doing the best I can, and that's perfectly fine'.

## Practice mindfulness

Do you ever feel as if your thoughts dictate how your day goes or how you interact with people around you? If that is true for you, mindfulness can help with getting some distance from unhelpful thoughts, emotions and other inner experiences that might be causing us distress. When we start feeling a little sad, anxious or irritable, it is not the mood that does the



damage but often how we react to it. The very effort of trying to free ourselves from bad moods – attempting to work out why we are unhappy and beating ourselves up about it – often makes things worse. It's like getting trapped in quicksand; the harder we try to free ourselves, the deeper we sink.

Mindfulness meditation can help you recognise upsetting or damaging thoughts and feelings as they arise and see them for what they are: just thoughts. They are not YOU. Practising mindfulness can teach us how to relate differently to our internal experiences and let go by anchoring ourselves in the present moment.


Mindfulness has been shown to influence one's health, wellbeing and happiness. It can improve your sleep and your focus, help you feel more confident and be more forgiving toward yourself and others.

Some guided meditation apps to consider include Headspace, Calm, Smiling Mind, Mindfulness Meditation by Mental Workout, Mindfulness and Stop, Breathe & Think. However, if you need to speak to someone outside of family or friends, use your EAP (Employee Assistance Programme) if you have one or try the Samaritans on 116 123 or [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org). If you don't feel better after a couple of weeks, speak to your GP.

## Keep hydrated

Evidence suggests keeping hydrated can help your mood, concentration and physical performance, so aim for six to eight glasses of water and other liquids each day to replace normal water loss (around 1.2 to 1.5 litres). Water, lower-fat milk and sugar-free drinks, including tea and coffee, all count.

## Watch your alcohol intake

Too much alcohol can hinder positive physical and mental health. It is recommended that adults drink no more than 14 units per week on a regular basis. Find out what that means for you on the *DrinkAware* website. 



## WATERMELON MOJITO MOCKTAIL

### Ingredients

- ¼ piece watermelon flesh
- 2 limes, thinly sliced
- Handful fresh mint
- Coconut water
- Agave syrup or honey to sweeten

### Method

Place the watermelon in the bottom of your glass. Add four or five thin slices of lime to your glass, plus a few mint leaves. Take a spoon and crush the ingredients together to release the flavours. Fill the glass with ice and coconut water. You can add a little honey or agave syrup to sweeten if required. Finish off with a sprig of fresh mint.

## PLAN YOUR MEALS

Create a weekly meal planner to help you – and your family – eat healthier. Make a shopping list and stick to it! Avoid shopping when you're hungry or you might find your willpower slipping away when walking down the biscuits aisle.

## EAT THE RAINBOW

Weight gain at this time of year is a reality for many. Take a look at the NHS Eatwell Guide to find out what a healthy plate looks like; try to incorporate a variety of colourful vegetables and fruits for each meal.

Introduce new and healthy recipes into your diet. Visit the British Heart Foundation for inspiration – their curried chicken wraps look amazing and this stir-fry is as colourful as you can get!





## VEGETABLE STIR-FRY WITH TOFU & NOODLES

### Ingredients

- 2½ tsp rapeseed or olive oil
- 115g (4oz) firm tofu, well-drained and cut into 2.5cm (1in) dice
- 1 red pepper, deseeded and thinly sliced
- 4 spring onions, chopped
- 1 small clove garlic, crushed

- 1 small fresh red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped
- 85g (3oz) mangetout
- 85g (3oz) green cabbage leaves, finely shredded
- 1 carrot, shaved into long, thin ribbons (using peeler)
- 2 nests of dried medium egg noodles or wholewheat noodles (about 82–98g/3–3½oz total weight)
- 3 tbsp homemade or reduced-salt vegetable stock
- 3 tbsp unsweetened apple juice
- 2 tsp reduced-salt soy sauce, or to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 tbsp toasted sesame seeds (optional)

*“Try to incorporate a variety of colourful vegetables and fruit.”*

### Method

1. Heat one teaspoon oil in a non-stick wok or pan. Add tofu; cook over a medium-high heat for five to six minutes or until golden all over, turning occasionally. Remove to a plate using slotted spoon; keep hot. Add remaining oil to any juices in wok. Add red pepper, spring onions, garlic and chilli; stir-fry over a medium-high heat for two to three minutes. Add mangetout, green cabbage and carrot; stir-fry for two to three minutes.

2. Meanwhile, cook noodles according to packet instructions; drain, rinse, drain again and keep hot.

3. Return tofu to wok. Add stock, apple juice, soy sauce and black pepper; stir-fry for one to two minutes or until hot. Add hot noodles and toasted sesame seeds (if using); toss to mix for a minute or so overheat. Serve immediately.



## Protect your health

Get a flu vaccination if you have not already had one. As well as helping to ward off the influenza virus, it will boost your body's immune system in fighting off colds and other illnesses. With COVID-19 still about, make sure you continue to maintain hygiene measures as appropriate and keep up to date with your boosters.

If you feel unwell (and it's not an emergency), ring 111 or visit [111.nhs.uk](https://111.nhs.uk). This site can help you find out where to get help for your symptoms if you're not sure what to do, how to find general health information and advice, where to get an emergency supply of your prescribed medicine and/or how to get a repeat prescription.

If you need to contact your GP but are not up to attending face to face, check your surgery's website. They are likely to undertake a video/telephone consultation.


## WANT TO IMPROVE YOUR POSTURE?

Try this chest stretch.

- Sit upright and away from the back of the chair
- Pull your shoulders back and down and extend your arms out to the side
- Gently push your chest forward and up until you feel a stretch across your chest
- Hold for five to ten seconds and repeat five times








Your pharmacist may also be able to give you some good advice regarding minor conditions.

And finally, keep yourself warm this winter. Wrap up when you go out and try to keep your home at around 18C.

### Reach out

Keep in touch with family and friends where possible. There may be volunteering opportunities where you can help someone less fortunate than yourself, which can also help lift your mood.

Check out *the Gov.UK's pages on volunteering* to find options in your region. There are also some great sites like *Meet Up*, where you can attend events with like-minded people in your area. 

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**Sources:** *NHS, BHF, Drinkaware, Food Revolution, ParkRun, Samaritans, Headspace, Gov.uk, MeetUp*

### NEXT ISSUE:

- National Heart Month
- Time to Talk
- Financial Wellbeing

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At Health Partners we offer a full range of tailored health and wellbeing services.

**Our thinking is innovative.** We constantly develop new responses and tools designed to address the health and wellbeing challenges that face your business and people.

**Our commitment is total.** We invest in our services, creating new ones and keeping in step with every client. We constantly explore new ways of working and make no compromises in the quality of our services.

**Simply put, we are here to help people be their best.**