

Compliments of Stacey Shanner

start HEALTHY

ISSUE 35



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Finding the Best

EXERCISE ROUTINE

Get the results you want

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ISSUE 35
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Front of Tear Out Card 1

CARAMELIZED FENNEL *and White Bean Salad*

4 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, divided
2 medium fennel bulbs, trimmed, quartered, and thinly sliced (reserve ½ c. of the feathery fronds)
2 tsp. fresh thyme leaves
Kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper
3 tbsp. red wine vinegar
1 tbsp. Dijon mustard
1 clove garlic, grated or minced
2 (15-oz.) cans white beans, such as cannellini, drained and rinsed
½ c. dry white wine
½ small lemon, for serving



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Back of Tear Out Card 1

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Heat 2 tbsp. olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat until shimmering. Add the fennel and thyme, season with ½ tsp. salt and several grinds of pepper, and cook, stirring occasionally and reducing the heat if the fennel starts to burn, until soft and caramelized, about 25 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, whisk together the remaining 2 tbsp. olive oil, the vinegar, Dijon, garlic, a generous pinch of salt, and several grinds of pepper in a large bowl. Add the white beans and toss to coat.
3. Once the fennel is caramelized, pour in the wine. Scrape up any browned bits on the bottom of the pan and continue to stir until the wine has evaporated, about 1 minute. Transfer the fennel to the bowl of beans and toss to combine.
4. Coarsely chop the reserved fronds, add them to the bowl, and toss to combine. Taste and season with additional salt and pepper as needed. Serve warm or at room temperature, squeezing the lemon over the salad just before serving.

Reprinted with permission from *Salad Seasons: Vegetable-Forward Dishes All Year* by Sheela Prakash © Rizzoli, 2023. Photography © Kristin Teig.



SERVES 4



Dear Bill and Judy,

Most people think you need to go big or go home when it comes to New Year’s resolutions, but in reality, small daily actions can make a world of difference for your health. This issue of Start Healthy explores a myriad of ideas to help you start your year on a healthy note, including a guide to finding a personalized fitness routine, a trio of scrumptious and inventive salad recipes, and a list of innovative wellness technologies.

Embarking on a fitness journey can feel intimidating. However, you don’t have to take a one-size-fits-all approach. Finding a routine that fits your schedule, lifestyle, and goals is key, and inside you’ll find tips for how to do just that.

You might be thinking, “Salads for healthy new year recipes...how original.” But not so fast. In this issue, you’ll find three outside-the-box salad recipes that are sure to please, and one of them is so sweet and delicious, you’ll hardly recognize it as a salad.

Technological advancements are being made all the time, but the past few years have been a particularly exciting time for improvements in health technology. Be sure to check out the enclosed list of modern health tech, ranging from pain-relieving massagers to portable antianxiety devices, that are changing people’s lives.

How will you take a personalized approach to your health this year? As always, it’s a pleasure to send you this magazine.

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seven daily habits for

Better Mental Health

written by: *shelley goldstein*



It can be tempting to overhaul your whole life when your mental health dips, but small, everyday changes and routines will make the biggest difference.

1 | Get better sleep

Invest in a supportive mattress, comfortable sheets, and some new pillows, and set the room temperature between 60 and 67 degrees. Adults should get between seven and nine hours of sleep on a similar schedule each night for optimal benefits.

2 | Debrief before bed

If you find that your brain switches on right as your head hits the pillow, keeping you awake with a list of tasks for the next day, take the reins back by writing a to-do list before you go to bed. Once you put it to paper, your brain should be able to power down more easily.

3 | Take a walk outside

Walking increases bone density, strengthens muscles, improves heart health, and reduces stress and anxiety. Plus, being outside in nature has its own benefits, such as lowering cortisol levels. Make it even more fun by asking a friend to join you for a hike.

4 | Meditate

Find a comfortable place to sit, either on the floor or on a chair. Take a few deep breaths, and allow your mind to begin clearing. While focusing on your breathing, picture yourself in a place where you feel safe and relaxed. When thoughts arise, acknowledge them and let them pass. Doing this daily can improve your focus and anchor you in the present.

5 | Read for a half hour

There is nothing like a good book to help you escape into a story, learn something new, or give you insight into yourself.

If you have trouble finding time to read, try integrating audiobooks into your daily routine, such as by listening to one during a walk or while washing your face and brushing your teeth.

6 | Drink water

You might be surprised by how important water is for keeping all the systems in your body happy and functioning. The US National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine recommends a total daily fluid intake of 15½ cups for men and 11½ cups for women.

7 | Practice gratitude

Taking a moment to focus on what you are thankful for can instantly boost your mood. Send a text to a friend, write a thank-you note to a loved one, or journal for ten minutes about what you are grateful for in your life. You can even make this a nightly practice.

startHEALTHY



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FINDING THE BEST EXERCISE ROUTINE

written by: *lauren kim* photography by: *getty images, unless noted*

You've likely heard the advice that to be healthy, you need to perform at least some kind of exercise several days a week. Unfortunately, about 60 percent of Americans don't do this enough. It's not that we don't want to be physically fit; it's just that factors like our busy schedules and difficulty finding an exercise regimen we can maintain get in the way. If this scenario sounds familiar, follow these helpful ideas to create a workout routine that's right for you.

Do what you *like*

Fitness isn't one size fits all—there are many ways to exercise, and there isn't one right way to do it. For instance, Rebel Wilson has been known to flip tires, Halle Berry enjoys yoga and boxing, and Mark Wahlberg trains several days a week

in his home gym. Similarly, pursuing a healthy activity you enjoy—whether it's kickboxing, dancing, or roller-skating—is the best way to make fitness a regular part of your life.

It can also be helpful to remember that your workout doesn't have to look like a traditional one to benefit your health. Even everyday activities can do the job if they get you moving and work your heart, lungs, and muscles. Ones that may fit the bill include tasks you'd do anyway, such as cleaning your house, gardening, washing your car, or taking your dog for a walk. Pastimes like dancing, hiking, riding a bicycle, and swimming count too. Just be sure to go about your day as vigorously as you can to avoid being inactive for too long. Your body will thank you.

photo provided by: *susan niebergall*



Customize your *workouts*

Before you get started on an exercise routine, consider what you want to achieve in terms of your fitness goals. Fitness expert Susan Niebergall, author of the book *Fit at Any Age: It's Never Too Late*, only started exercising regularly later in life—yet she was able to develop a consistent program for herself partly by figuring out what she wanted out of it.

“As a middle-aged woman, my goal is to be healthy, move and function well, and have the opportunity to play with my grandchildren in my elderly years,” she says. Knowing that

everyone loses muscle, strength, and bone density as they age, she added ample strength training and weightlifting to her workouts. You’ll likewise want to find a routine that gets you closer to your own fitness goals, which may include improving your flexibility or building your core. For example, you could try Pilates for the former and exercises like planks, hollow-body holds, and dead-bug core poses for the latter.

When starting up a fitness regimen, take your fitness level, strengths, and physical limitations into consideration and avoid trying to do too much too soon to prevent injury or

burnout. If you’re new to exercise and aren’t very active, Niebergall suggests first working walks into your daily routine to reap the activity’s many physical benefits. Once you’re comfortable walking, you can then begin adding other healthy activities.

If you need ideas for workouts that fit your fitness level and goals, you could ask friends and family members for advice, follow fitness experts on Instagram or YouTube, or consider hiring a personal trainer, who can tailor your regimen to fit exactly what you need.

Suit *yourself*

Exercise is one area in life where you can put your own needs first, so use it as an opportunity to do what you enjoy most, whether that's running, walking, swimming, or dancing. The same goes for *when* to work out—if the thought of an early morning run makes you dread the sound of your alarm clock, run in the afternoon or evening instead.

Some individuals enjoy going to a gym to have access to fitness classes, training, and equipment. But if you'd prefer to work out in the comfort of your own home, you could use simple and inexpensive equipment like dumbbells and resistance bands instead. Or maybe you'd like to make new friends while also enjoying the great outdoors. In that case, consider joining a running club, taking up a sport like tennis, or partaking in pursuits like canoeing or exploring nature trails with others.

Track your *progress*

Finally, once you've begun an exercise program, you'll need to find ways to keep it going. Diligently tracking your fitness activities should help. You could do this by keeping an exercise journal, wearing a fitness tracker or smartwatch, or using an app like Strong to keep tabs on your gains. Many apps make it easy to share your progress with friends, too, so you can better motivate and encourage each other on your fitness journeys.



what to see and do in *Puerto Rico*

written by: *andre rios*

The Condado Beach skyline in Santurce

If you're keen on releasing some stress, eager to improve your heart health, or in need of a warm winter escape, a vacation could be your ticket to wellness. For a self-care retreat, head to an exotic territory that flies under the American flag: Puerto Rico.

Even if you spend only a few short days in this paradise, you'll understand why its people are passionately loyal to and proud of the islands they call home. This land is overflowing with misty mountains, sparkling white beaches, dense green forests, sunny skies, and colorful city streets, each

promising unforgettable experiences. So how can you get the most out of your trip? Build your Puerto Rico travel itinerary around these five must-see locales, each of which captures the sunny, fervent spirit of this Caribbean delight.

PLAYA AVIONES

Puerto Rico's pristine beaches are worth a dedicated trip, but with 270 miles of coastline and almost three hundred public beaches, you may struggle to decide where to lay your beach towel. Start your island retreat at the local favorite, Playa Aviones, which sits on the northeastern

shore of San Juan, the capital city. This palm-lined beach welcomes you with its soft sands, warm waters, and energetic waves that typically rise up to four feet, making it a surfer’s paradise. When you’ve finished your water sports, game of beach tennis, or latest beach read, walk right up to the food vendors at Kiosko el Boricua for a refreshing treat like limber, an island favorite that’s a cross between ice cream and an ice pop.

VIEQUES

Puerto Rico actually isn’t just one island but an archipelago with dozens of islands and other land formations. Vieques, one such islet sitting just a stone’s throw away from the

eastern coast, is a secret getaway for locals who adore its less frequented beaches and plentiful water sports excursions.

Rent a bike to ride along the shore, snorkel alongside intriguing Caribbean sea life (including four species of sea turtles), kayak around the island’s perimeter, take a fishing charter, or even book a sailboat that can take you as far as the US Virgin Islands to the east. However you decide to spend your day, be sure to linger after sunset to see a natural wonder at work—Vieques is home to the world’s brightest bioluminescent bay, where microorganisms produce natural light that makes the water glow.



Sun Bay Beach in the island of Vieques

EL YUNQUE NATIONAL FOREST

Set aside one morning for a hike in the United States’ only tropical rainforest, El Yunque. Sitting in the northeast portion of the mainland, this impossibly green paradise boasts mountain rivers that stream clear waters, an incredibly biodiverse landscape, and unique wildlife like the locally beloved coquí frog, which only lives in this forest. Prepare to get some exercise because El Yunque is best enjoyed either on foot or from the air via a hang glider. For a daring adrenaline rush, cliff-dive into one of the many natural pools throughout these lands. Just be sure to book your admission in advance on the USDA Forest Service website. To learn fascinating details about the delicate balance of wildlife and the efforts to conserve these lands, follow up your visit with a tour of the San Juan Botanical Garden.



El Yunque National Forest

VIEJO SAN JUAN

A convergence of Spanish colonial and militaristic efforts resulted in what is now called Viejo San Juan, a historic neighborhood of Puerto Rico’s capital city known for its breathtaking mix of pastel facades, monumental statues, and steadfast stone walls lining the shore. The celebrity of this district is El Morro, a sixteenth-century citadel fort and modern-day museum that’s a tourist favorite. Check out the cannons and dungeons peppered throughout the grounds, then take a scenic walk to La Fortaleza. Completed in 1540, this azure colonial mansion is now home to Puerto Rico’s governor, and it maintains its historical charm through touches such as candlelit dining rooms.

Just off the mansion’s prominent plaza is Calle de la Fortaleza, an art-and-eatery-lined promenade known for its multicolored structures. Embrace the freedom of getting lost in this district; there are dozens of other historic sites to encounter, from medieval cathedrals to structures designed to fend off pirates.



Colorful homes in Viejo San Juan



The Condado district of Santurce

LA CALLE CERRA

When the sun sets on the shores, the locals let loose at the proliferation of music venues and late-night restaurants throughout the island. As with Puerto Rico’s beaches, the nightlife offers an impressive number of choices, so start with an evening at Calle Cerra, a popular district in the youthful Santurce neighborhood of San Juan lined with imaginative street art. This spot is not for the shy traveler; you will quickly be wrapped up in conversation (and potentially led into an impromptu dance) with the locals who fill the streets. You may also find yourself enjoying a meal or drink with the local bar owners, who customarily socialize with their patrons. Some may even introduce you to secret spots around the island to eat, dance, or see local artists.

When the day breaks, continue living as the Boricuas, or local citizens, do at La Placita, a market where you can shop for fresh tropical produce and partake in the islands’ favorite dishes. Some classics unknown to many on the US mainland include *arroz y habichuelas* (a rice-and-bean



Puerto Rican tostones (fried plantains)

dish), *encebollado* (steak and onions), *lechón* (slow-roasted pork), and family recipes of staple ingredients like plantains. In the more than one hundred years since La Placita was founded, it has become a local landmark for both food and enjoyment, especially when the night market hosts indulgent treats like fried empanadillas (savory turnovers filled with meat and vegetables).

MORE TO DISCOVER

If you have the time, there are dozens of other sites on this tropical escape that warrant a visit. The Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico hosts thought-provoking works from revered Boricua artists and up-and-coming names alike, while birdwatching tours seek out colorful wildlife native to this paradise. The salty sea air and active lifestyle here invite you to take in its many sights on foot, but it also has many appealing spots to lie back and take a breather. Either way, you’re sure to restore a sense of calm and exhale your worries away in Puerto Rico.

For more info, visit discoverpuertorico.com



Historic El Morro castle along the San Juan coastline

get a fresh start with written by: allison gomes A HOME INVENTORY

It's always fun to buy something new for yourself or your home, whether it's a TV, piece of jewelry, or decorative trinket. Such an item can bring joy, but it can also easily get lost in the chaos of everything else you own. A memento may wind up being shoved into the back of your hall closet and not resurface for a couple of years.

That's where a home inventory comes in handy. Besides helping you keep a well-organized home, it can play an important part in a homeowner's insurance process. If you've never done one before or even really thought about what it entails, then consider moving it to the top of your to-do list for 2024.





What is a home *inventory*?

A home inventory is a collection of all your personal possessions that you can turn to should you ever need to file a claim with your homeowner's insurance. It tends to include a description of the items you own, their estimated value, copies of receipts, purchase dates, and serial numbers. Though you likely won't have all this information for each item, collecting as much as you can will help you keep track of the different objects you own and how many of each you have.

However, for high-ticket items in your home that aren't easily replaced, such as electronics or family heirlooms, it is essential to either include a copy of the receipt or get an appraisal to include in your inventory. First, doing so can help you purchase the right amount of coverage for your home. Just as important, it can ultimately make the whole filing process a little easier—if you must file a claim because an object is stolen or damaged in a way that falls under your insurance policy, you will have proof of owning it as well as its estimated value.

While it's best to have a home inventory for insurance purposes, it also can be a useful way to organize your home. Having clutter-free living spaces can play a big part in your mental health as it can help you better relax, thus reducing stress and anxiety. Whatever may be motivating you, be sure to take the time to sort through and catalog your possessions.

Types of *inventories*

The kind of inventory you make will depend on your personal preference. You can do a written, digital, or visual inventory or any combination of the three, so consider which option you think would be simplest for you to reference back to and regularly update.

- **Written:** This is a complete written list of the different items in your home and all other necessary information. You can create a virtual spreadsheet that you can easily update or opt to handwrite a physical copy. Just be sure to keep a copy of the inventory not only in your house but also in an outside location.
- **Digital:** A digital home inventory could be as simple as keeping a regularly updated note on your phone, but you could also use an app to keep track of your belongings. Ones like Itemtopia, Homechart, and Sortly allow you to add every item in your home to a list, which you can then divide by room or according to your personal preferences. Include photos of each item, and update the list as soon as you buy something new.
- **Visual:** Whether it's a collection of photos or a video walk-through of your home, a visual inventory provides proof of your ownership of each item. Take pictures or videos of each room in your house and the specific items in them. You can store these on your phone for your reference should you ever have to file an insurance claim.



The inventorying *process*

If you're overwhelmed by the idea of creating a home inventory, just remember one thing: take it one step at a time. You don't have to look through everything you own all at once—choose one room or closet and then sort through your items in that specific area, deciding what you want to keep, donate, or toss. This is your chance to declutter your spaces, so if you haven't used an item in years, perhaps it's time to say goodbye to it. You also might find belongings you forgot about, which gives you the chance to make better use of them.

After sorting through your items, make note of what you're keeping. You can do this via your chosen method, such as by writing down each item or cataloging it in an app. Include a description of the items as well as the serial numbers and any other information you know about them. Your goal here is to keep track of as many details as possible so you can easily reference them in the future.

After you're done sorting and inventorying each object in that area, take a picture of the fully completed space.

When you're finished with the first space, you can then move through the different locations of your home, repeating this process in each one. Bring your partner or kids into the mix, making it a family affair. (Just ensure they don't make the process take longer.) And don't forget about items you have stored outside the home, such as in a shed, garage, or storage unit, since those are often covered under homeowner's insurance as well and may need to be organized or decluttered.

Ultimately, a home inventory is a great way for you to keep track of the items in your home both for your own purposes and for filing a claim for lost or damaged items. Either way, it's never a bad idea to keep records of what you own, so make time this year to work your way through your rooms and make note of your most valued and valuable possessions.



photo by: getty images

recipes by: sheela prakash photos by: kristin teig, unless noted

The Perennial *power of salads*



People tend to think that salads are only for warm-weather seasons like summer. But as these mouthwatering recipes from the *Salad Seasons* cookbook illustrate, any time of year is the perfect time for a healthy meal made with fresh ingredients.

Salad Seasons: Vegetable-Forward Dishes All Year by Sheela Prakash
© Rizzoli, 2023. Photography © Kristin Teig.

SERVES 4

Wilted Cabbage *and warm shallot salad*

Cabbage might just be the humblest vegetable around. It sits patiently among all the other winter vegetables, often getting ignored. It's inexpensive and unassuming. When it's taken home, though, it gives and gives. A head of cabbage lasts forever in your refrigerator's crisper drawer and can be transformed into a countless number of cozy, wholesome dishes. This simple recipe is inspired by retro warm spinach salads, but instead of spinach, thinly sliced green cabbage is the star. It's tossed with a warm caramelized shallot dressing and paired with lots of nutty shaved Gruyère for a winter salad that's modest in the best way.

measure

- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 4 medium shallots, thinly sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- ½ medium (2- to 3-pound) head green cabbage
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 2 teaspoons honey
- 2 ounces Gruyère cheese, freshly shaved (about ⅔ cup), divided

make

1. Heat the olive oil and butter in a medium skillet over medium heat until the butter melts. Add the shallots and garlic, season with a generous pinch of salt and several grinds of pepper, and cook, stirring frequently and reducing the heat if the shallots and garlic start to burn, until the shallots are very soft, caramelized, and deep golden brown, about 15 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, quarter, core, and thinly slice the cabbage cross-wise. Place in a large bowl. Sprinkle with a generous pinch of salt and massage with your hands to soften.
3. Once the shallots have caramelized, remove the skillet from the heat and whisk in the balsamic vinegar, red wine vinegar, Dijon, and honey.
4. Pour the shallot mixture over the cabbage and toss to coat and wilt. Taste and season with additional salt and pepper as needed. Add half of the shaved Gruyère and toss to distribute the cheese. Garnish with the remaining shaved Gruyère.





SERVES 4

Caramelized Fennel *and white bean salad*

Onions aren't the only vegetable you can caramelize. Thinly sliced fennel takes on the same deep golden color and softened texture when cooked slowly on the stovetop. Fennel's strong anise flavor also mellows when caramelized, and the vegetable becomes sweeter and more approachable. When tossed with creamy white beans and a simple garlicky dressing, the result is a balanced, satisfying bowl.

measure

- 4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 2 medium fennel bulbs, trimmed, quartered, and thinly sliced (reserve ½ cup of the feathery fronds)
- 2 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 3 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 clove garlic, grated or minced
- 2 (15-ounce) cans white beans, such as cannellini, drained and rinsed
- ½ cup dry white wine
- ½ small lemon, for serving

make

1. Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat until shimmering. Add the fennel and thyme, season with ½ teaspoon salt and several grinds of pepper, and cook, stirring occasionally and reducing the heat if the fennel starts to burn, until soft and caramelized, about 25 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, whisk together the remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil, the vinegar, Dijon, garlic, a generous pinch of salt, and several grinds of pepper in a large bowl. Add the white beans and toss to coat.
3. Once the fennel is caramelized, pour in the wine. Scrape up any browned bits on the bottom of the pan and continue to stir until the wine has evaporated, about 1 minute. Transfer the fennel to the bowl of beans and toss to combine.
4. Coarsely chop the reserved fronds, add them to the bowl, and toss to combine. Taste and season with additional salt and pepper as needed. Serve warm or at room temperature, squeezing the lemon over the salad just before serving.

SERVES 4

Shaved Pears and Chocolate

with amaretti crumble

Crunchy Italian amaretti cookies, also called amaretti di Saronno, are a fun ingredient to play around with. While you can of course pair a couple with your espresso, they're so packed with bittersweet almond flavor, that's really just the beginning. You can grind them into a flour-like consistency to use in cakes, turn them into a crust for tarts or cheesecakes à la graham crackers, or add them to a fruit crumble topping. Using them as a crumble is the approach here, except you'll bake it separately to create sweet and crunchy contrast for a bowl of juicy shaved pears and dark chocolate. It's an understated dessert that feels special.

measure

- 2 ounces small crunchy amaretti cookies (about eighteen 1¼-inch cookies)
- 3 tablespoons raw whole almonds
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon light or dark brown sugar
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 tablespoons cold unsalted butter, cut into cubes
- 2 firm but ripe medium pears, such as D'Anjou or Bosc (about 1 pound)
- Juice of ½ medium lemon (about 1½ tablespoons)
- 1 ounce bittersweet or dark chocolate (60% to 70% cacao)
- Extra-virgin olive oil, for serving
- Flaky sea salt, for serving

make

1. Arrange a rack in the middle of the oven and heat the oven to 375°F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Place the amaretti cookies in the bowl of a food processor fitted with the blade attachment. Pulse until coarsely ground, about 10 pulses. Add the almonds, flour, brown sugar, cinnamon, and kosher salt and pulse until the almonds just start to break up, about 8 pulses. Add the butter and pulse until large, heavy crumbs form and no dry spots remain, about 30 pulses.
3. Transfer the crumble mixture to the prepared baking sheet in a single layer, squeezing it into large clumps with your hands in the process. Bake, gently tossing halfway through, until golden brown and firm to the touch, 8 to 10 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, quarter, core, and very thinly slice the pears (there is no need to peel them unless you prefer to). Place in a large bowl, drizzle with lemon juice, and toss to coat. Transfer the pears to a serving bowl or platter.
5. Once the crumble is ready, let it cool for 10 minutes, then sprinkle it over the pears. Shave the chocolate with a vegetable peeler or paring knife over the top, then drizzle with a bit of olive oil and sprinkle with a few pinches of flaky sea salt.





Reframing Your INNER VOICE

interview with:
emmanuel rivera, LPC
written by: andre rios

When life has you feeling blue, just turn on some funky, high-beat music and dance your way into the sunshine. Who needs negativity when you can choose to live like a butterfly flitting from flower to flower? Just tell yourself that you're strong, and your worries will—*poof!*—go away.

The thing is, this may not necessarily be the healthiest approach to life. Cognitive behavioral therapist Emmanuel Rivera, LPC, explains that it's actually far more effective to reframe your mindset and balance your inner voice. Here he recommends how you can transform negativity into logical reflection, brainstorm solutions to negative circumstances, and employ positivity as an assistive tool to improve your mental health.

What is self-talk from a psychological standpoint?

Self-talk is the voice in your head that reflects on your behavior and situations. Many people struggle with negative self-talk, such as overly self-critical thoughts, which impacts their day-to-day life. Improving this mental voice is a constant practice, especially for those with certain mood disorders like anxiety and depression.

It's important to know that this voice doesn't just appear out of nowhere. It's something that we create ourselves, and it's influenced by a number of factors—our life experiences and upbringing, social and environmental factors, and trauma can all shape it.

How can someone improve their self-talk? The most important change to focus on is making gradual improvements without denial. Cognitive behavioral therapists recommend several strategies for accomplishing this.

The first is mindfulness, which is not to be confused with meditation. Mindfulness is a state of nonjudgmental awareness that brings your focus to the here and now. Anyone can, and should, incorporate this tool into other activities. Slow down, breathe, and try to focus only



on your senses. What do you see? How does your skin feel? If you're feeling overwhelmed by negative thoughts, a relaxed state of awareness can help calm that voice.

Therapists will also coach their clients to use a technique called cognitive restructuring to improve self-talk. We often feel our emotions without recognizing the thoughts and beliefs fueling them. With cognitive restructuring, you acknowledge your thoughts and then try to replace them with more balanced and reasonable ones.

So rather than giving in to extreme thoughts like "I humiliated myself in that meeting," you should challenge them instead by asking if such negativity is rational. Find evidence for and against it—we also call this identifying thoughts and putting them on trial. For example, many people are afraid of public speaking because they fear judgment from their peers. But think logically about this situation. How badly would you have to perform to actually

ruin your relationships or lose your job? How likely are those outcomes, really?

Socratic questioning—the practice of questioning your thinking until you arrive at a deeper truth—is another way to help address negative thoughts. You can learn which fears or bad memories are at the root of your negative thoughts; you might even discover that you're hearing a parent's critical voice rather than your own. A therapist can walk you through the process of Socratic questioning so you can apply it to your daily life.

Many therapists also recommend behavioral activation to improve self-talk. This is the practice of surrounding yourself with motivating influences, such as constructive friendships and hobbies you enjoy. By engaging with these influences, you "activate" more pleasant feelings. Your environment, which includes friends, family, work, romantic relationships, and even the media you consume, affects your overall

*If you're feeling overwhelmed
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mindset. Try to reflect on each of its aspects, and consider if they're adding stress or negativity.

Ultimately, improving your self-talk takes practice. Recite positive statements to yourself throughout the day or anytime you're feeling down. You may not believe them at first, but that's the power of repetition.

Are there limitations to what positive thinking can do? In a way, yes. Positivity is just one tool for reframing your mindset rather than an outright solution.

Toxic positivity can lead to avoidance. In order to fix problems, you need to address and confront them, not just cover them with positivity. Try to determine where your negative thoughts are coming from. Don't ignore them; acknowledge them.

Therapy is one of the most important tools to guide you through this process. With it, you can learn to identify the factors that created any negative, self-critical thinking you're struggling with. What issues or conflicts in your life are affecting your mindset, and how can you find solutions to these problems?

How can someone achieve more balanced thinking?

Use logic. A lot of negative self-talk stems from thinking with just your emotional mind. But when you combine emotion with logic, also called the wise mind, you can achieve balanced thinking. But, again, it is a constant practice, especially for people living with a mood disorder—even an undiagnosed one. If you work with a therapist to balance your thinking, you can change your mindset as well as your daily life.

For more info, visit [mentalhealth.gov](https://www.mentalhealth.gov)

written by: shelly goldstein

Beyond Booze

In recent years, the sober-curious movement has been steadily gaining traction, driven by people reassessing their relationship with drinking and exploring the idea of reducing or pausing their alcohol consumption. Rather than pushing any strict rules or restrictions, this trend is rooted in a desire to support mental and physical health, increase mindfulness, challenge social norms, and create authentic connections with others. It has also paved the way for brick-and-mortar

sober bars, nonalcoholic pop-ups, and thoughtfully crafted mocktails. Take a deeper look at the sober-curious movement as seen through the eyes of four insiders.

The origin of the *movement*

In 2018, author Ruby Warrington published *Sober Curious*, a book aimed at social drinkers who were questioning and reexamining their habits surrounding alcohol. She sought to interrupt the binary of drinkers

and nondrinkers and offer those who fell somewhere in between a space for discourse.

This idea initially captured the attention of women, but today it has greater mass appeal. In fact, according to Chris Marshall, owner of Sans Bar in Austin, Texas, there's been a surprising new demographic frequenting his nonalcoholic establishment—college-aged men. He attributes this shift to young people being fed up with drinking to excess at bars and clubs. Younger

generations are rejecting those expectations but still want a place to socialize and connect with their friends. To that point, most of his patrons are sober curious rather than sober or in recovery.

A place for *everyone*

Though Sans Bar and the sober-curious movement existed before the pandemic, Marshall believes it played a large role in giving the movement staying power. He explains, "COVID taught us to be aware

of how we live in every aspect of our lives. It forced us to slow down and evaluate how our work and our diets impact us and how disconnected we feel from others. We live in the age of social media, but there is an epidemic of loneliness.”

Marshall’s years as a counselor sparked his interest in opening Sans Bar. He saw the way his clients struggled—not with sobriety but with the isolation that comes with not social drinking. To combat this, he opened a place where everyone could feel welcome. He continues, “Regulars are absolutely a thing at my bar. And the community that people have found is special. I didn’t anticipate how customers would build roots and connections. People who have been coming for years like to help others who are there for the first time.”

Marshall understands the challenges of his business model and believes the way forward is through strategic partnerships with other businesses that have underutilized brick-and-mortar spaces. For his newest venture, he partnered with fitness company Swift Fit Events to cocreate the Texas Wellness Oasis, a pop-up that serves boozeless cocktails out of Swift Fit Events’ space. Both this and his original East Austin bar are open on Friday nights, though he hopes to expand Sans Bar’s days of operation to include Thursdays and Saturdays in July.

A different kind of *spirit*

Because this is a relatively new frontier, bottles of nonalcoholic spirits can still be quite expensive. It doesn’t help that the process of making them can resemble the lengthy distillation process of traditional alcohol. Chris Boyd, cofounder of Monday, one of the early makers of nonalcoholic spirits, explains, “This brave new world of adult drinks is still in its first inning. When only a small percentage of the world knows you exist, quite a bit of money needs to be spent on marketing. Plus, many brands are still dealing with supply chain issues.” Research and development is another hidden cost since the methods for creating something flavorful without alcohol can be daunting and time-consuming.





Boyd was inspired to start his brand after a birthday outing with friends led him to wonder why he couldn't have a proper cocktail without alcohol so he could keep socializing but still be functional at work the following morning, a Monday (hence the brand's name). His company's first nonalcoholic spirit, Monday Gin, launched in December 2019. There is no playbook to follow when it comes to creating a nonalcoholic spirit, as Boyd explains: "Spirits that focus on a single hero ingredient, like the juniper berry for London Dry-style gins, tend to be a little easier to create. In contrast, spirits that have multiple star components can be quite complex and therefore difficult to nail down."

A bartender's experiment

As an international dance instructor, Ruth Evelyn frequently travels to different countries, which provides opportunities for her to try many different flavors and cocktails. But during the pandemic, the dance world shut down. Already a hobbyist bartender, she suddenly found herself with more time to



experiment with her own recipes. The lull also gave her a chance to check off a bucket list item: work as a bartender at a fancy cocktail bar. At Backbar outside Boston, Evelyn learned under the tutelage of Sam Treadway, named the city's best bartender in a 2013 *Boston Magazine* poll.

She soon began thinking that alcohol may not be necessary to create great drinks. She says, "One of the things I love about a well-crafted cocktail is the flavor journey it takes you on. You begin somewhere, perhaps take a sharp turn, then wind around to a finishing note. The difference a drop of salt tincture or a twist of oil from an orange peel can make is astounding. Alcohol isn't needed to create drinks that contain that experience." She also listened to friends who don't drink and realized just how difficult it can be to feel a part of social events without drinking.

Evelyn eventually left Backbar but missed having an outlet for that aspect of her creativity. She discussed this with Kelsey Munger, the owner of a local bakery and coffee shop, who encouraged her to set up a nonalcoholic pop-up there. Evelyn's community dubbed it Free Spirits, and the opening was packed. Says Evelyn, "People who drank alcohol and people who didn't all said how much they loved the drinks and how much they didn't miss the alcohol aspect." The pop-up has led to more collaborations, and she is looking forward to other opportunities for people to form bonds in an alcohol-free environment.

Everyone deserves a place to connect with friends in an environment free from the pressures of alcohol. As the sober-curious movement continues to prove it isn't going anywhere, the viability of nonalcoholic bars and pop-ups is expected to increase and lead to more opportunities for sober-curious patrons across the country.

THE CURIOSITY *of cuteness*

interview with: *joshua paul dale* **written by:** *matthew brady*
photography by: *getty images, unless noted*



photo credit: sakura studio

Joshua Paul Dale, a professor at Tokyo's Chuo University who specializes in Cute Studies, discusses how cuteness has evolved, the difference between the American and Japanese (*kawaii*) versions, and why people respond to it.

How did you get interested in this subject?

About ten years ago, I was walking down my street in Japan and noticed that the construction barriers had been replaced with Hello Kitty-style animals. It made me pay more attention to *kawaii* cuteness



and how omnipresent this phenomenon is here. Even train safety posters and manhole covers are full of cute characters and images.

After doing more research, I realized that not much had been written about cuteness, which I thought was strange because it's a multibillion-dollar global phenomenon thanks to franchises such as Mickey Mouse, Winnie the Pooh, and Pokémon. The more I researched, the deeper the topic went—it goes so far back in



history, I thought that it must have been important in our evolution as a species. It's also embedded into so many different academic disciplines, including the humanities, art and literature, biology, and cognitive psychology. So I launched the Cute Studies project and opened it to anyone from any discipline. The response has been great.

When was cuteness first studied? The first person to research cuteness was Konrad Lorenz, an Austrian biologist who theorized about it in 1943. He thought that we have an instinct we can't help but act on—when we see something cute, we immediately rush to care of it—and developed a schema of childlike characteristics that most people inherently find cute, such as big eyes and chubby cheeks. Other scientists have confirmed this schema, but they disagree with Lorenz's conclusion that it's an instinctive response. In recent years, using fMRI machines they've found that while cuteness attracts our attention quickly in terms of our brain activity, our behavior after that reaction is also based on our individual preferences, experience, and culture.

Has cuteness always been part of the human experience? That's a good question. One theory posits that people began to practice cooperative breeding, a distinctly human phenomenon among primates where mothers would allow others to help take care of their children; in turn, those people would want to do so because they were drawn to the child's cuteness. So cuteness created a net gain: even if you expended energy taking care of someone else's child without having your genes passed along, the whole species still benefited. This theory puts cuteness at the dawn of the evolution of our genus, which means Neanderthals would've experienced it the way we do.



In contrast, some experts believe that we're cuter than Neanderthals because we've become neotenic: we have juvenile characteristics that persist into adulthood and follow the same schema that Lorenz developed in the 1940s. According to that school of thought, cuteness developed when Homo sapiens did.

When did the focus on kawaii begin in Japan? It can be traced back 1,000 years. Some major artwork from back then clearly tries to trigger the cuteness response. It's been part of Japanese culture, especially visual art, ever since. The Edo period in particular, from the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries, has tons of examples of cute things.

In terms of modern culture, kawaii took off in the early twentieth century. At that time, Japanese girls were educated in separate schools, so they had a chance to form their own subculture. Later, in the 1970s, the unique style of kawaii-influenced handwriting they developed helped kawaii expand into mainstream culture. This is also when Hello Kitty appeared.

How is cuteness perceived differently between cultures? The primary types of cuteness today are North American cuteness and Japanese kawaii. The main difference is that the English word *cute* originally came from *acute*, which meant "clever" or "shrewd." In the eighteenth and



nineteenth centuries, it was directed toward an adult who was cunning and may try to trick you out of something.

I think that influence still exists in some ways. For example, if you look at the history of American animation, cute characters often have an appearance that's a bit twisted. The early Mickey Mouse was cunning and played tricks, but Disney got the message from audiences and made him younger and cuter. Even today, Americans seem to like cuteness with a bit of a noncute twist, and it's more ironic to them. In Japan, the focus is mainly on what you feel, not just on what you're looking at.

Which part of the brain is triggered by cuteness, and what benefits do we get from it? Broadly speaking, cuteness activates the reward areas of the brain that release

serotonin and oxytocin, so it can help with stress release. It's like a feedback loop: when you see something cute, it makes you feel good, and when you look at it again, you feel even better. Cuteness is a kind of cognitive priming that gets the brain ready for a positive experience.

Is that why people are drawn to taking care of babies, puppies, and kittens? Yes, take care of and socialize with them. For babies to survive as members of a community, they need to be taught how to interact with others. So having something that pushes us to not only take care of babies but also play with them is vital to our evolution as a species. Cuteness also humanizes things—if we see something as cute, it prompts us to treat it as a fellow being, even if it's an animal or object, by increasing our empathy.

Why do people squeal when they see something cute?

It's a phenomenon called cute aggression. It's basically cute overload. When feeling overwhelmed by cuteness, about half of adults will experience symptoms like squealing or a clenched fist or jaw to deal with their excess emotions. That's why one of the first things we teach young children is that you can't squeeze a puppy too hard.

Cuteness has also been used as a marketing tool. Do you see that expanding? Definitely. In the future, we're going to see more AI products that look and act cute. Right now, people tend to get frustrated with such a product if it doesn't do what's expected. But if it's cute and makes a mistake, they're likely to be more forgiving. Corporations are well aware of this, and they're starting to build cute attributes into these machines.

Will people always be drawn to cuteness? I certainly hope so! [Laughs] I have a Google Scholar alert for kawaii and cuteness, and I've seen an uptick in the number of articles written on these topics in a variety of fields, from robotics to marketing.

The biggest change that's happened since I moved here is that Japanese culture has become more popular overseas due to younger generations really getting into manga and anime. So we're going to see an even greater interest in kawaii as they grow up and continue to appreciate it.

For more info, visit cutestudies.org



THE MOST EXCITING *Health Tech of 2024*

written by: *andre rios* photo provided by: *one drop*

As technology becomes smarter and more integrated into our everyday lives, there are more ways than ever for these advancements to support our health and wellness. Take a look at some of the most unique health tech on the market.

TechCare massager | Relieve pain from arthritis, sciatica, and other disorders with TechCare's TENS Massager Unit, which uses low-voltage pulses to stimulate your nerves and interrupt pain signals. Simply apply the gel pads to painful areas, then attach the wiring to the controller. You can choose from a variety of massage modes like reflexology or Swedish massage for either pain relief or sheer relaxation.

[For more info, visit techcaremassager.com](https://techcaremassager.com)

One Drop glucometer | The Complete Diabetes bundle from One Drop includes a Bluetooth-enabled glucose meter kit and a test strip plan that helps people living with diabetes "take back their time, their power, and their life." The device is compatible with the company's smartphone app, One Drop Premium, which offers one-on-one wellness coaching, health data tracking, and more. Additional bundles are available for heart health, blood pressure, and weight tracking.

[For more info, visit to joinonedrop.com/starthealthy](https://joinonedrop.com/starthealthy)

Nreal AR glasses + XRAI Glass | Stylish and smart, Nreal glasses are compatible with a variety of smartphone apps,

one of which may be a solution for those with hearing limitations: XRAI Glass. Users only need to slip on the eyewear and activate the XRAI Glass smartphone app to have them respond to speech in real time, turning audio into captions and projecting them for the wearer to read. The app also stores conversations for future reference. Mark Atkinson, CEO of the Royal National Institute for Deaf People in the UK, calls the product "a great example of the positive difference innovative technology can make for people who are deaf or have hearing loss."

[For more info, visit xrai.glass/ar-glasses](https://xrai.glass/ar-glasses)

CalmiGo antianxiety device | In high-tension moments, it can be helpful to relax and breathe. The CalmiGo device helps stress and anxiety sufferers "achieve calm in three minutes" with a compact and portable breathing device. Holding up the CalmiGo to your mouth allows you to participate in guided breathing sessions for slower, deliberate exhalation while sensory stimuli like soothing vibrations, sounds, and scents ease your mind. The device is designed to "guide your brain to effortlessly turn off the 'fight or flight' response" and grant temporary relief from oppressive tension.

[For more info, visit calmigo.com](https://calmigo.com)

Make sure to speak with your doctor before trying any new health-related tech device.

recommendations & referrals

are the core of my business and always greatly appreciated.
Thank you for your continued support!



Stacey Shanner

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Front of Tear Out Card 2

SHAVED PEARS AND CHOCOLATE WITH
Amaretti Crumble

2 oz. small crunchy amaretti cookies (about eighteen 1¼-in. cookies)
3 tbsp. raw whole almonds
2 tbsp. all-purpose flour
1 tbsp. light or dark brown sugar
¼ tsp. ground cinnamon
¼ tsp. kosher salt
2 tbsp. cold unsalted butter, cut into cubes
2 firm but ripe medium pears, such as D'Anjou or Bosc (about 1 lb.)
Juice of ½ medium lemon (about 1½ tbsp.)

Ingredients continued on back



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Back of Tear Out Card 2

Ingredients continued

1 oz. bittersweet or dark chocolate (60% to 70% cacao)
Extra-virgin olive oil, for serving
Flaky sea salt, for serving

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Arrange a rack in the middle of the oven and heat the oven to 375°F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Place the amaretti cookies in the bowl of a food processor fitted with the blade attachment. Pulse until coarsely ground, about 10 pulses. Add the almonds, flour, brown sugar, cinnamon, and kosher salt and pulse until the almonds just start to break up, about 8 pulses. Add the butter and pulse until large, heavy crumbs form and no dry spots remain, about 30 pulses.
3. Transfer the crumble mixture to the prepared baking sheet in a single layer, squeezing it into large clumps with your hands in the process. Bake, gently tossing halfway through, until golden brown and firm to the touch, 8 to 10 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, quarter, core, and very thinly slice the pears (there is no need to peel them unless you prefer to). Place in a large bowl, drizzle with lemon juice, and toss to coat. Transfer the pears to a serving bowl or platter.
5. Once the crumble is ready, let it cool for 10 minutes, then sprinkle it over the pears. Shave the chocolate with a vegetable peeler or paring knife over the top, then drizzle with a bit of olive oil and sprinkle with a few pinches of flaky sea salt.

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Stacey is the best of the best! Our family was very pleased with her services, especially Snowball, our little pup! She listened to all of our concerns, wants, needs, and dreams. Stacey is totally awesome! I will be sharing her information with everyone that I know.



★★★★★
The Miller Family
Manayunk

Stacey was very patient with us, even though we were very picky. She knew how important it was for us to have a great experience and great service. We would definitely refer Stacey to all of our friends and family.



★★★★★
The Austin Family
Manayunk

Stacey is truly a very impressive person. She works fast, efficiently, and effectively. Her services are top of the line and we were very satisfied with her work. We love Stacey!



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