

Compliments of Stacey Shanner

start HEALTHY

ISSUE 34

MERRY *Christmas!*



Stacey Shanner

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Front of Tear Out Card 1

ROASTED RED PEPPER CHICKPEA SALAD *with red wine vinaigrette*

Salad

- 2 (14-oz.) cans chickpeas, drained, aquafaba reserved
- 1 (16-oz.) jar fire-roasted red bell peppers, drained and finely chopped
- 2 large green bell peppers, finely chopped
- ½ medium red onion, finely chopped
- ½ c. finely chopped flat-leaf parsley

Red Wine Vinaigrette

- ¼ c. red wine vinegar
- 3 tbsp. reserved aquafaba




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Back of Tear Out Card 1



Ingredients continued from reverse side

- 2 tbsp. pure maple syrup, plus more as needed
- ½ tsp. Dijon mustard
- Juice of ½ large lemon
- ½ tsp. salt, plus more as needed
- ½ tsp. black pepper, plus more as needed
- ½ tsp. garlic powder

1. To make the salad, place the chickpeas, red bell peppers, green bell peppers, onion and parsley in a medium glass bowl that has a lid. Using a large spoon, toss the ingredients to combine them.
2. To make the red wine vinaigrette, combine the vinegar, aquafaba, maple syrup, mustard, lemon juice, salt, black pepper and garlic powder in a blender. Blend the ingredients for 30 seconds, until the dressing is emulsified. Taste the vinaigrette and add more maple syrup, salt or black pepper if desired. Pour the dressing over the salad and use the large spoon to toss the salad with the dressing.
3. Cover the bowl with its lid and place the salad in the fridge to chill for at least 1 hour, or preferably overnight. Serve this salad cold on its own, alongside any main course, on a bed of greens or with rice or quinoa for a more filling dish.

YIELDS 6 SERVINGS

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start HEALTHY

ISSUE 34

Dear Bill and Judy,

The holidays are the perfect opportunity to reflect on and be grateful for the most important things in life: health, home, family, and time. This issue of Start Healthy ushers in this momentous season with ideas for making a big impact via small acts of kindness, gift-giving tips to promote good mental health, and a look at the power of nostalgia.

Doing good for others is one of the hallmarks of the holidays, but you don't have to think big to make a difference. The enclosed tips for giving back in seemingly small ways can help you impact the lives of others more than you might think.

Everyone on your list could benefit from the gift of good health. Be sure to check out the gift guide inside with ideas for the best mental-health-focused items your loved ones are sure to appreciate this season.

Whether or not you realize it, thinking about the past can have a profound effect on your well-being. Explore the science behind nostalgia and how it can make you happier and help you build stronger relationships.

May this season bring you good health and happiness. As always, it's a pleasure to send you this magazine.

Stacey Shanner



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The Power of Kindness

Use these ideas to give the gift of kindness during the holidays.

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healthier HOLIDAY CHOICES

written by:
lauren kim



The holiday season is a time for dressing your table with tasty food for family and friends. If you're looking for lighter fare this year, here are a few ideas to help you assemble a mouthwatering spread filled with healthy nutrients, fresh ingredients, and whole grains.

ROLLS: Canned rolls are simple to prepare, but healthy homemade pumpkin oatmeal muffins, made with pumpkin puree, rolled oats, and pecans, are almost as easy to bake—and they might taste better too.

STUFFING: This side dish is a holiday favorite, but it can be high in carbohydrates, calories, and fat. Instead, try making a wild-rice stuffing with celery, onion, dried cranberries, and fresh thyme and sage, and you'll have your guests asking for seconds.

SWEET POTATO CASSEROLE: Spuds don't have to swim in marshmallows to please the palate. Instead, make a lighter sweet potato casserole by using almond butter and topping the dish with a homemade pecan crumble.

FRESH GREEN BEANS: Skip the canned veggies and dried onions, and offer fresh beans topped with panko breadcrumbs, freshly grated Parmesan cheese, and caramelized mushrooms and onions instead.

CRANBERRY SAUCE: Make your own cranberry sauce by gently boiling cranberries in water, orange juice, and honey for a side dish that's lower in calories and filled with fresh flavor.

TURKEY: Turkey is mostly a lean and healthy food if you don't fry it. Also, avoid eating the skin if you are counting calories.

DESSERT: It's OK to indulge in a bit of decadent dessert during the holidays, but for a lighter option, make an apple crisp using rolled oats or whip up some chocolate-covered strawberries.

There's certainly nothing wrong with enjoying some decadently delicious holiday foods. And with these healthier offerings, you can do so without the guilt.

start HEALTHY



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the keys to
**Exercising
Consistently**

written by:
allison gomes

It's no secret that staying active is an important part of creating a healthy lifestyle. We all know we should be doing it, but it's not always that simple—especially around the holidays, when schedules get jam-packed. But with just a few key strategies, you can find ways to keep up with your daily exercise routine, no matter how hectic life may get.



Why consistency matters

Consistency is an essential component of exercising and achieving your fitness goals. If you only sporadically go to the gym or lift weights, you likely won't see a lot of progress toward your goals, whatever they may be, and may instead be left with sore, tight muscles. On the other hand, a consistent routine can improve your overall well-being, helping you feel both mentally and physically stronger.

Maintaining a consistent routine often comes down to one thing: eliminating excuses. It's easy to say that you don't

have the time or that it's too much work to go to the gym each day, but if you can find the time to scroll on your phone for thirty minutes, watch your favorite show, or play a video game, then you can find the time to work out. Of course, that doesn't mean you have to give up your relaxation time entirely; it simply involves changing your priorities a bit so you can fit in both.

Schedule your workouts

If you want to see better results from your exercise, you'll need to first develop a routine that works for you. It's

important to remember that what's best for one person might not be right for you. Some people can wake up with the sun and go on a three-mile run every morning, but if you're not a morning person, you likely won't want to start your day even an hour earlier. Instead, you could go to the gym at lunch or opt for a late-afternoon run. Your exercise routine should always fit with both your schedule and your preferences, not someone else's ideal.

Once you've found a routine, make it a regular part of your daily ritual. It may take some time to get used to it—after all,

research shows that it takes an average of sixty-six days for a new habit to fully take hold—but if you stick to it, it will soon become just a normal part of your day. One helpful strategy is noting on a calendar the days that you work out and what you did each time. This will allow you to physically see how consistent you have been, or perhaps haven't been, which can become another motivator in your fitness journey.

However, as the seasons change and your responsibilities shift, you may miss a day or two of your usual routine. And that's OK. It won't undo all the progress you've made. You

just want to be sure to get back into your usual healthy habits once the season calms down.

Create realistic goals and track *them*

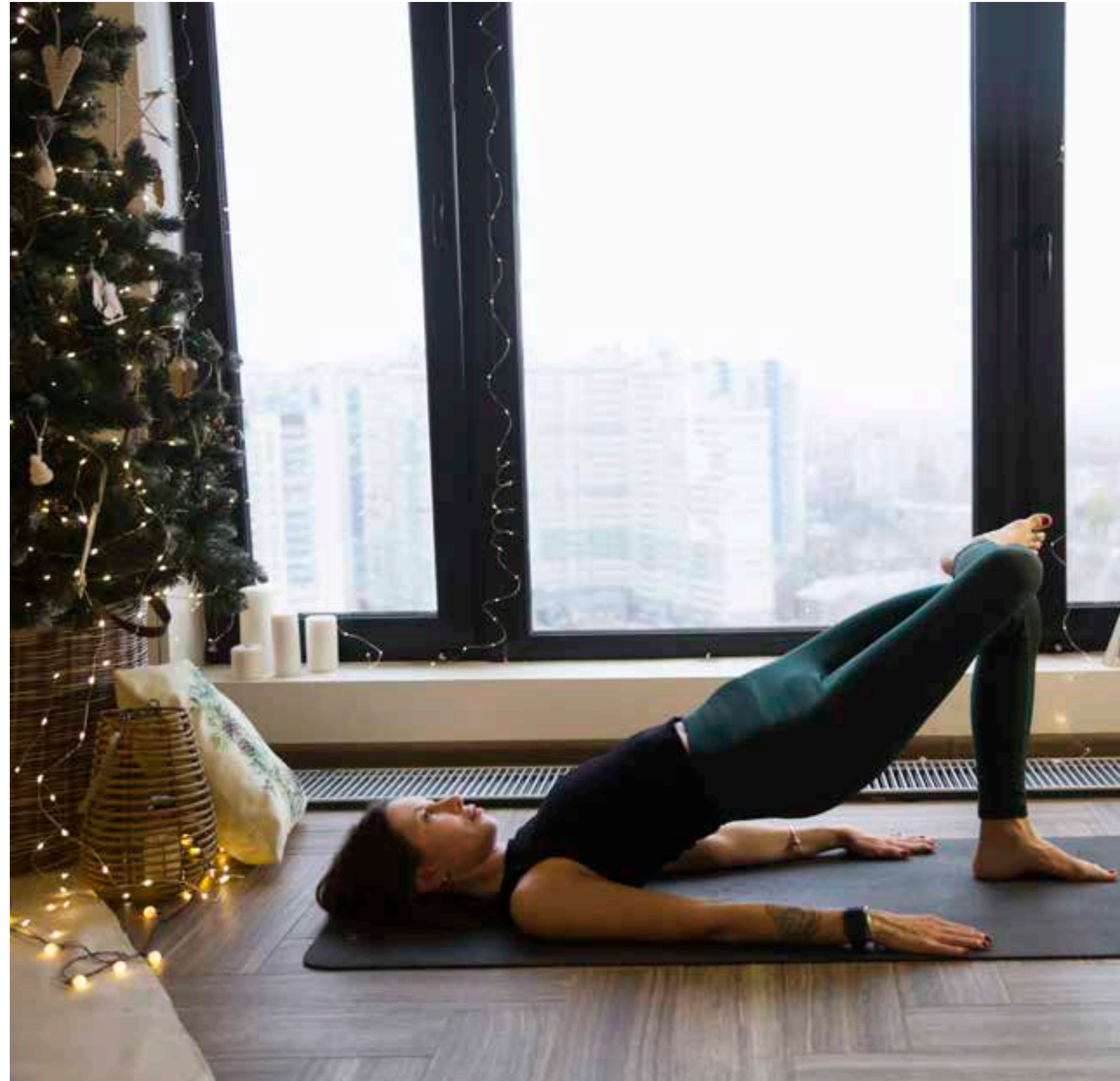
Just like you may make a goal to do the dishes before you go to bed every night or to complete a project proposal before you leave work on Friday, you'll want to have trackable goals for your fitness journey. For instance, let's say you have a goal to lose 5 percent body fat by the end of the year. That's not going to happen after one week of exercising and eating well. Instead, it will take time and dedication on your part, requiring you to make small, continuous steps toward achieving that larger ambition.

Give yourself a short initial goal that you can then increase once you meet it, such as exercising for thirty minutes in the morning and limiting yourself to one sweet treat a day. At the end of the first month, you can assess how you're feeling physically and mentally and then determine how you want to change your goal or if you want to keep moving forward with what you've been doing. When you make achievable goals and consistently meet them, you can feel a sense of accomplishment that can further motivate you to keep up with your exercise regimen even when life gets busy.

Have *accountability*

Establishing an exercise routine doesn't have to be a solitary goal. It helps to bring someone into your plans, whether it's a best friend, spouse, partner, or fellow gym goer. Letting others know what you're doing can give you a support system that will not only hold you accountable but also encourage you when things get hard. Your friends and loved ones can provide a shoulder to cry on or a pat on the back when you need it the most.

Exercising consistently doesn't need to be physically and mentally draining. By changing your mindset and adjusting your habits, it can instead become a rewarding part of your everyday routine.



The Power of KINDNESS



written by: *bonnie joffe*

It's generally assumed that the holiday season is a joyous one filled with love, laughter, and family get-togethers. Unfortunately, this isn't true for everyone. Some people may struggle with health issues, isolation, depression, or job loss, making it hard for them to enjoy the festivities. So be deliberate about showing kindness not only to the people in your life but also to your fellow community members—doing so may have a powerful impact on both you and those you serve. Here are some suggestions for giving back.

HELP THE ELDERLY

The holidays can be one of the most challenging times of the year for older people who live alone or in an assisted-living facility, especially if they are far from family. However, even the smallest act of kindness can lift their spirits.

- Take an older person for a car ride to see holiday decorations in the area.
- Help them shop for and wrap holiday gifts, then deliver them to the recipients if possible.
- Cook and deliver a few hot meals to them, or take them food shopping.
- Visit them in their home or senior facility, and bring a game or a small arts and crafts project to do with them.
- Shovel and salt their walkways, and take their trash cans to and from the curbside.



ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILDREN TO HELP OTHER CHILDREN

Teach your children about empathy by urging them to help and relate to children less fortunate than themselves. The holiday season is a great time to foster this awareness by taking them to a children's hospital or shelter, where they can do the following activities.

- Write notes for children who are hospital bound or in shelters.
- Give out crayons, coloring books, and puzzles.
- Deliver a Christmas stocking with small toys and crafts or a Hanukkah bag with cookies, a dreidel, and holiday-themed coloring books.
- Gather a group of friends to make holiday decorations, then bring the crafts to children in shelters or hospitals.



RECOGNIZE PUBLIC-SERVICE AND HOSPITALITY WORKERS

Public-service and hospitality employees work hard daily to ensure that you receive the services you want and need. Letting them know you appreciate them will go a long way toward making them feel valued.

- Send a care package to someone in the military to thank them for their service.
- Bring holiday cookies to local law-enforcement officers and firefighters.
- Leave a bag of holiday treats and a thank-you note for your mail carrier and UPS, FedEx, and Amazon drivers.
- Add an extra tip for a server at your favorite restaurant.
- Purchase scratch-off tickets for your babysitter, pet sitter, maintenance worker, and neighborhood trash collector.





GIVE BACK TO LOCAL CHARITIES, FOOD BANKS, OR HOMELESS SHELTERS

There's always a need for more volunteers and resources to help those less fortunate, and these deficiencies are even more pronounced during this time of year. So pick a charity, and donate money or your time. Even a little bit can make a big difference.

- Volunteer to help serve food at your local homeless or food shelter on Thanksgiving or Christmas.
- Give a homeless person a meal, or buy them a gift card from a food store or eatery.
- Assemble a bag of toiletries, socks, gloves, and spare blankets for the homeless.
- Donate diapers, clothing (used or new), toiletries, toys, and books to women's shelters.

- Bring canned, nonperishable goods to your local food pantry or food bank.
- Donate pet food and supplies to an animal shelter.

DAILY ACTS OF KINDNESS

Demonstrating kindness during the holidays, when stress levels are often at their highest, will brighten anyone's day. It can be as simple as smiling at another person, letting someone go ahead of you in line, or paying for a cup of coffee for the person behind you.

Never underestimate the power of kindness. No matter what time of year it is, always look for ways to extend a hand to help a fellow human being. Whether you organize a visit to a senior home, hospital, or shelter to sing carols, bake holiday cookies, or simply pay it forward, you can't go wrong when you help others.

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

How to Run Your First Road Race

If you've never run a road race before but would like to compete in a 5K or 10K, then it's time to lace up your running shoes! Finishing one of these races is easier than you think, and with a little bit of training, you could be crossing the finish line in just a few months' time.

Choose your race

If you haven't competed before, the first step is picking how long a course you'd like to run. Among the best races to consider as a beginner are a one-mile race, a 5K (just over three miles), or a 10K (a little more than six miles). Even if you haven't run a race before, you could still prepare for a 5K

within two months and a 10K in two to three months; just be sure to give yourself the time you'll need to build up enough strength and endurance for it. For your first race, pick one that will be held locally so you won't have to invest a lot of time and money to get to it.

Get your gear

The good news is that the only specialty gear you'll need to run in a road race is a pair of running shoes. Even if you already have a set, you might want to invest in ones that are more supportive and can protect your feet and joints from the high impact of running. Ask a staff member at a local sporting goods store to help you pick out a pair that fits you well; the type of cushioning your feet need will depend on your running style, where you plan to run, and what injuries you are prone to. Also, be sure to consider fit. Your shoes shouldn't be too tight, too big, or too small—otherwise, you may end up with an unexpected injury.

While high-quality shoes are the most important piece of gear, you'll also want to wear comfortable clothes that are easy to run in. Ones made from moisture-wicking materials can prevent you from getting too hot. Also, make sure your attire is relatively loose so it doesn't create friction and cause chafing. This condition is common among runners and can be painful; you could also use an anti-chafing balm to prevent it.

Start training

The next step is to get moving! If you don't currently jog or run, you could ease yourself into it by implementing a walk/run program in which you jog for thirty to sixty seconds, walk for one to two minutes, and then repeat. If you need time to catch your breath, extend the amount of time you spend walking until you feel rested enough to jog again. In the beginning, aim to walk/jog





like this for about thirty minutes a day, two to three times a week, giving yourself a day or two of rest in between. What you don't want to do is go for a run every day—rest days are important to give your body time to recover from your training. If you need more help structuring your runs, there are plenty of 5K and 10K prep programs online you can consult, or you could use an app like Couch to 5K.

Gradually run *more*

As you become more comfortable jogging, you can slowly start to decrease your walking time and increase your running time, extending the length of your route until you can consistently run the full distance of your race. To avoid injury, don't push yourself to go longer or faster than you

can handle. On your rest days, you could try doing gentle forms of exercise, such as yoga or light swimming, for extra conditioning and to soothe and stretch sore muscles.

Get some *support*

It might be easier to prep for your race if you train with others. Janice Fuld, a member of Brooklyn's Prospect Park Track Club who has completed many 5Ks, 10Ks, half marathons, and marathons, suggests finding a friend or group to train with to help you stay motivated and make the task more fun. Other runners might be able to help you with other important considerations, too, including how to pace yourself during your runs and build a healthy mindset for race day.



Janice Fuld

photo courtesy of: *janice.fuld*

Prep for race *day*

About a week before your first competition, you will want to taper down your training to give your body the rest it needs for the big day. Avoid overexerting yourself, keeping your runs light and easy instead. Get plenty of sleep during the nights leading up to your race, and only eat light, easy-to-digest foods the morning of your event. Drink enough water before your race and along the route to stay hydrated; you may be able to bring your own water bottle. "Also, don't try anything new on race day, such as foods you haven't eaten before or clothes you haven't worn before, including your race-day shirt," Fuld says.

Have fun

Remember that you don't have to push yourself too hard—it's your first race, after all. It's not about how fast you run or how long it takes you to cross the finish line. "You don't have to run the whole race—it's perfectly acceptable to walk some or all of it," Fuld says. "Some experienced runners incorporate intervals of running and walking into their races." Only after you complete your first race should you focus on reaching other goals, such as running the entire race or finishing it in a set amount of time. Before you know it, you'll be a veteran runner with several personal records under your belt. You may even trade up to a longer race next time!



Gift Ideas for Good MENTAL HEALTH

written by: *andre rios*



A holiday gift worth treasuring makes life for the recipient a little bit better. The most thoughtful ones may not be the most expensive, like jewelry, or the most versatile, like cash, but rather have the recipient's unique needs and lifestyle in mind.

As a friend, parent, partner, relative, or coworker to someone with mental health struggles, selecting the perfect holiday present can be challenging. How can you show this special person how much you understand them and support them—especially in a season particularly rife with difficulties like stressful to-do lists, gloomy weather, and potential family conflicts? Give them a customized, considerate gift to help make the season more enjoyable.

Be present for their *needs*

According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), almost one in five adults deals with some type of mental illness, which it notes can affect how a person may “think, feel, act, make choices, and relate to others.” This makes it highly likely that someone you care about experiences such difficulties. While nothing can replace good mental health care, the ideal holiday gift can empower them to practice self-care or take steps to better manage their symptoms and improve their daily life. Follow this gift guide inspired by the NIMH’s self-care advice to show your support to a loved one this holiday season.

Home spa goods

Build the special person in your life a custom self-care kit stuffed with relaxation and wellness goods. For example, you could fill a box or gift bag with lotion and bath products in calming scents like lavender candles and bergamot, which can quiet the mind and even improve sleep. Include a gift card for a subscription to a relaxation or meditation app, a service that guides its members through calming breathing techniques and often offers soothing audio recordings that can fight symptoms of anxiety. Add in some products that cater to their routines, like shower steamer tablets or bath bombs, and you’ll equip them for a much-needed self-care day.

Relaxing toys

A home-spa box set may not be ideal for children, but that doesn’t mean they’re too young for self-care. Gift them soothing toys they will love such as scented therapy dough, which will discharge relaxing and therapeutic scents while keeping their hands busy and helping them release pent-up energy.

Research shows that some toys can even stimulate children’s minds and improve their sensory processing. Good



“edutainment” products include see-and-say games and toys that encourage interaction, like light-up instruments and shape-sorting toys. Just be sure to consider each child’s individual personality and the toy’s targeted age range, which can be found in its product details section, to avoid gifting a child a toy they’ve already outgrown.

Personal space

Give your loved one the gift of a personal escape—a spot where they can check out and calm their mind. Indoor swings may offer a positive, soothing sensory experience for children with ADHD or autism, while an indoor tent can act as a quiet place to relax, read, and play. For adults, consider gifting a weighted blanket and entertainment like an engaging novel to make self-care moments more relaxing. Pillows, roll-out mats, and fairy lights can also help them design a peaceful retreat at home.

Journals

Giving a journal could be one of the most productive and helpful ways to show you care. This classic mental health tool offers a myriad of proven benefits, including relaxation, a way to process feelings, and even a simple distraction from life’s stressors. “Journaling can be a great pressure-releasing valve when we feel overwhelmed or simply have a lot going on internally,” says Amy Hoyt, PhD and founder of the therapeutic program Mending Trauma, in Healthline. There are many ways for your loved one to use this gift, including dream, food, or gratitude journaling, but it’s best if you simply give them the tool and leave any specific recommendations to a therapist.

Event tickets

If a friend or family member enjoys spending one-on-one time with you, offer them a gift they will cherish: some quality time together. Trips with them to a museum, convention, concert, or festival can be a balm to loneliness or feelings

of isolation. But before you purchase tickets, make sure to confirm their expressed interest in a certain activity or event.

For future celebrations like a birthday or anniversary, consider giving a subsequent gift that reflects on these moments together, such as a framed photo or signed poster from the event. Sometimes all they may need is a simple reminder that they are appreciated, and keepsakes of these memories will express that you treasure quality time with them and value their company.

Their fondest wish

This final gift idea may sound broad, but it's actually the most specific: What does your loved one *really* want? Which TV series, graphic novels, music, or books are they passionate about? Have they expressed interest in developing a new skill? What kinds of supplies could help kick-start these projects? Gifting your loved one the activity or entertainment they enjoy most may be just what they need to help them escape from negative thoughts and feelings. Best of all, these personalized gifts will show them that you truly listen to them, care about their interests, and want to support their passions.



What to avoid

When showing your support for a loved one with mental health struggles, subtlety is key. Try to avoid giving gifts that spell out "I am giving this to you because of your mental health," especially if they may open your gift publicly. In other words, avoid "othering" the person, or making them feel different because of their mental health needs. Even worse, you don't want to communicate that their identity is built around their condition or struggles.

As MentalHealth.gov suggests, friends and family members should show support by "treating people with mental health problems with respect, compassion, and empathy." How can you do so with a gift? Give a present that pertains to the individual, not the illness. Always have the recipient's unique lifestyle and tastes in mind. If need be, you can reach out to someone close to them about what the recipient would enjoy. With a little research, you can select a gift that will truly mean something to a person who needs your care and support.



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Photo credit: Jackie Akerberg.

SENSATIONAL *winter salads*

recipes by: jackie akerberg **photos by:** jackie akerberg , unless noted

Salads are often relegated to the bottom of the list of holiday sides—but there’s no reason they should be. These hearty and nutritious recipes from *The Clean Vegan Cookbook* show that a well-made and properly dressed salad can indeed be the star of the show.

photo by: getty images

ROASTED RED PEPPER CHICKPEA SALAD

with red wine vinaigrette

SERVES 6

measure

Salad

- 2 (14-oz.) cans chickpeas, drained, aquafaba reserved
- 1 (16-oz.) jar fire-roasted red bell peppers, drained and finely chopped
- 2 large green bell peppers, finely chopped
- ½ medium red onion, finely chopped
- ½ cup finely chopped flat-leaf parsley

Red Wine Vinaigrette

- ¼ cup red wine vinegar
- 3 tablespoons reserved aquafaba
- 2 tablespoons pure maple syrup, plus more as needed
- ½ teaspoon Dijon mustard
- Juice of ½ large lemon
- ½ teaspoon salt, plus more as needed
- ½ teaspoon black pepper, plus more as needed
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder

make

1. To make the salad, place the chickpeas, red bell peppers, green bell peppers, onion and parsley in a medium glass bowl that has a lid. Using a large spoon, toss the ingredients to combine them.
2. To make the red wine vinaigrette, combine the vinegar, aquafaba, maple syrup, mustard, lemon juice, salt, black pepper and garlic powder in a blender. Blend the ingredients for 30 seconds, until the dressing is emulsified. Taste the vinaigrette and add more maple syrup, salt or black pepper if desired. Pour the dressing over the salad and use the large spoon to toss the salad with the dressing.
3. Cover the bowl with its lid and place the salad in the fridge to chill for at least 1 hour, or preferably overnight. Serve this salad cold on its own, alongside any main course, on a bed of greens or with rice or quinoa for a more filling dish.





LEMON PESTO LENTIL SALAD SERVES 4

with olives and sun-dried tomatoes

measure

Salad

- 1 cup green lentils
- 1 large bunch lacinato kale, stems removed, finely chopped
- Juice of 1 large lemon
- ½ teaspoon cold-pressed olive oil
- ½ cup pitted DIVINA® Frescatrano® or Castelvetrano olives, halved
- ¼ cup bagged unmarinated sun-dried tomatoes, finely chopped
- 1 large shallot, thinly sliced
- ⅓ cup Marcona almonds, coarsely chopped if desired
- ½ cup finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

make

1. To make the salad, fill a medium saucepan two-thirds full with water and bring it to a boil over high heat. Add the lentils and reduce the heat to medium-low. Simmer the lentils for 12 to 15 minutes, until they are tender but not mushy. Drain the lentils and set them aside to cool completely.
2. Meanwhile, make the lemon pesto vinaigrette. In a blender, combine the basil, parsley, pine nuts, nutritional yeast, salt, black pepper, miso, garlic, lemon juice, vinegar and maple syrup. Taste the vinaigrette and

Lemon Pesto Vinaigrette

- 1 cup loosely packed fresh basil leaves
- ¼ cup fresh parsley leaves
- ¼ cup pine nuts
- ¼ cup nutritional yeast
- ½ teaspoon salt, plus more as needed
- ½ teaspoon black pepper, plus more as needed
- 2 tablespoons white miso
- 2 cloves garlic
- Juice of 1 medium lemon
- ¼ cup red wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon pure maple syrup

season it with more salt and black pepper if needed. Set the vinaigrette aside.

3. To assemble the salad, combine the kale, lemon juice and oil in a large bowl. Massage the kale. Add the lentils, olives, sun-dried tomatoes, shallot, almonds and parsley. Toss the ingredients with salad servers to combine them. Drizzle the salad with the lemon pesto vinaigrette and toss the salad again. Chill the salad in the fridge for 20 to 30 minutes prior to serving it.

ROASTED CAULIFLOWER SALAD

SERVES 4

with dates and tahini

measure

Salad

- 1 large head cauliflower, cut into bite-sized florets
- 1 tablespoon tamari, coconut aminos, Bragg Liquid Aminos or soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon nutritional yeast
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 medium bunch fresh flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped
- 4 soft, pitted Medjool dates, finely chopped
- ¼ cup roasted salted sunflower seeds

Tahini Sauce

- ⅓ cup runny tahini
- Juice of 1 large lemon, plus more as needed
- ½ teaspoon salt, plus more as needed
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- 4–6 tablespoons cold water

make

1. To make the salad, preheat the oven to 425°F. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Place the cauliflower florets in a large bowl, and then drizzle them with the tamari. Use a large spoon or rubber spatula to gently stir the florets to coat them with the tamari. Sprinkle the florets with the nutritional yeast, garlic powder, black pepper and salt and gently stir them again to combine the ingredients. Spread the cauliflower florets on the prepared baking sheet. Roast the cauliflower for 25 minutes, until the edges of the florets are golden and crispy.
3. While the cauliflower is roasting, prepare the tahini sauce. In a medium jar, use a fork to whisk together the tahini, lemon juice, salt and garlic powder. Add 4 tablespoons of water and mix the ingredients together completely. Add up to 2 tablespoons of more water, until the desired consistency is reached. Taste the dressing and add more salt and lemon juice if desired.
4. Transfer the roasted cauliflower to a large bowl. Add the parsley, dates and sunflower seeds and stir to combine the ingredients. Divide the salad among four serving bowls. Drizzle each serving with the tahini sauce and serve the salads immediately.





THE POWER of nostalgia

written by:
matthew brady



In a scene from the classic movie *The Sound of Music*, Julie Andrews's character, Maria, attempts to console the von Trapp kids during a thunderstorm by recollecting what cheers her up, singing, "When the dog bites / When the bee stings / When I'm feeling sad / I simply remember my favorite things / And then I don't feel so bad."

The song itself, "My Favorite Things," has repeatedly struck a chord (pun intended) with countless people over the years, especially during the holiday season—it's been featured on several Christmas albums over the decades.

In a way, the song also illustrates how powerful nostalgia can be. But what, exactly, is nostalgia, and what causes us to experience it? When you take a closer look at what science says about the occurrence, you'll see that it can benefit your well-being in countless ways.

NOSTALGIA DEFINED

As is the case with many intangible things, it's often easier for people to explain nostalgia's effect rather than what it actually is. If you asked five different people about it, they'd likely give five different explanations—so the objectivity of a dictionary helps. Merriam-Webster.com defines nostalgia as

"a wistful or excessively sentimental yearning for return to or of some past period or irrecoverable condition."

Admittedly, some people are neither wistful nor sentimental about their past and would rather leave it behind, especially if it's something they don't look back fondly on. Then there's the flip side of the coin: instead of merely yearning for a return to the past, some people attempt to *live* there in order to avoid their present reality, which can also lead to nostalgic depression. After all, that idealized past cannot be achieved again.

Whether you're at either end of this spectrum or somewhere in the middle, though, you can't escape nostalgic moments—even the simplest connection to a person, place, or thing from your past can send your mind back in time. (For example, to this day, the aroma of Dove soap reminds me of visits to my paternal grandmother's home and gasoline of my maternal grandfather and his small business.)

ITS ORIGINS

Psychologists generally agree today that the overall experience of nostalgia is largely a positive one. But that wasn't always the case—in fact, it was originally deemed a



disease. Experts first started studying nostalgia centuries ago. Swiss physician Johannes Hofer coined the term in 1688 by combining a pair of New Latin words, *nostos* (homecoming) and *algos* (pain), as a way to describe what he thought was a mental illness in Swiss soldiers, who showed acute signs of mental and physical distress while fighting in faraway places.

In short, they were homesick.

Of course, no one understood this at the time. The idea that nostalgia was an illness or disease, or at least a symptom of one, continued largely unabated into the twentieth century. Fortunately, psychology's renewed interest in nostalgia beginning in the late 1900s resulted in a brand-new perspective—that it has a myriad of benefits.

THE REWARDS OF REMINISCING

Experts say that there is usefulness to waxing nostalgic, as it can help us understand ourselves better and improve our lives.

It crystallizes who we are

As an advanced species, it's natural for human beings to constantly make comparisons; it's how our minds process everyday life. So looking back nostalgically at our past can help us understand who we really are and how far we've come, whether over the past five years or the past fifty years.

In short, nostalgia can fortify our identity, which experts say is particularly helpful during life shifts—such as milestones, moves, and family changes—because it provides an anchor in times of uncertainty. Comforting memories can serve as a salve to any anguish we may be experiencing in the present and be a beacon of hope for the future.

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It makes us feel good

Though Hofer deemed nostalgia to be a depression-fueled disease, research today shows that quite the opposite may be true. Nostalgia can improve our self-esteem, make us more optimistic, and help us overcome negative feelings such as loneliness and anxiety. For example, when you reunite with family members and discuss holidays passed, you're all being reminded that you've mattered to others for a long time, which will boost your mood whether you went into the season feeling merry or melancholy.

There are even physical benefits. For instance, looking back with fondness can make you feel more energetic and enthusiastic. And that warm, fuzzy feeling you get when you're feeling nostalgic? That can be quite literal: a study by the University of Southampton showed that such reminiscing may actually make people feel physically warmer.

It strengthens bonds with others

Even if the good old days don't ever return in full, nostalgia reminds us about how special they were and how lucky we were to have had them—and the people we shared them



with. When we feel nostalgic, we're often compelled to smile at the thought of old friends or chat fondly with them about shared experiences. Besides making us feel good, this helps reinforce important connections in our lives, drawing us closer to the people we care about.

But the strengthening of bonds can go beyond our inner circles. Research shows that when we feel nostalgic, we also tend to be more charitable, compassionate, and empathetic to others. This means that embracing nostalgia, in a very real sense, can make the world a better place.

The holiday season is known for making spirits bright and turning scrooges into friendly and generous souls. But even if you feel a bit down, thinking back to past holidays and the fond memories that go along with them can be uplifting—as long as you keep a healthy balance between your past and present. In this way, nostalgia is a good example of how, when you simply remember your favorite things, you really don't feel so bad.

written by: andre rios

HELPING OTHERS *for a* *Healthy Mind*

Naturally benevolent people often encourage others to do good deeds for the support it offers people in need and the warm feelings of satisfaction that are gained in return. As it turns out, this isn't just common wisdom but actual demonstrated science. Charitable acts like volunteering for a cause, donating resources, and even performing a simple favor for someone can fire a myriad of responses in your brain, leading to what many scientists call the "warm glow."

Rewarding your *kindness*

When performing a generous act, our brains react in a fascinating way, engaging various circuits that not only make us feel good but also give us a sense that we have gained something in return. "Part of the uniqueness of the reward activation around gift-giving compared to something like receiving an award or winning money is that because it is social it also activates pathways in the brain that release oxytocin," Emiliana Simon-Thomas, PhD and a neuroscience expert who specializes in the psychology of altruism, tells APA.org. This sudden uptick in oxytocin after doing something charitable is what's responsible for that familiar "warm glow" feeling.



Oxytocin is a neuropeptide, or a class of small proteins that send signals throughout the brain and body to generate certain sensations and responses. We can attribute our feelings of trust in others, safety in a social setting, and connection with fellow humans, even strangers, to this chemical. “It’s often referred to as the ‘cuddle hormone,’” Simon-Thomas adds, because of the powerful, enduring

brain triggers the release of oxytocin, the subsequent rewarding, warm feeling sustains for a long period, unlike the brief perk of a dopamine response that occurs when you receive a positive stimulation like eating your favorite food. This means that you may experience more joy when you give money or items than when you receive them.



feelings of connectedness it triggers. In other words, we actually have a biological framework for experiencing deep, emotional links with others. So when you perform a service like participating in a food drive or giving personal care products to a shelter, you’re triggering a connection with the strangers you’re helping—a feeling you’re designed to crave.

Long-term fulfillment

Partaking in good deeds also offers more mental delight than the quick satisfaction you gain from such activities. When your

So why does your body reward generosity better? Is your brain trying to trick you into being more charitable and less thrifty? Actually, it has more to do with the human body’s evolutionary understanding that a strong social network is essential to one’s well-being. As social animals, our instincts make us keenly aware that acts like giving food to the hungry reinforce potentially life-saving bonds with others. After all, should we be the next to go hungry, a strong and loyal social network can support us in return.

Living to serve

Altruism may seem like it would be the product of good parenting, but, as with building social connections, giving back is deeply woven into our DNA. Unlike specific behaviors that we are taught or develop through social conditioning, generosity is instinctual, as if basic to our biology. “Humans are born with the biological ‘hardware’ required for generosity,” say the experts at the Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley. According to their research, the various cranial responses triggered when acting selflessly are signs that these acts are valuable to survival, so much so that our brains reward us for partaking in them, in turn training us to repeat them.

But charitable acts like helping a friend who is short on money don’t just feel pleasurable. Studies have shown that altruism also stimulates the orbitofrontal cortex, the segment of the brain responsible for complex decision-making. This suggests that the human mind not only enjoys being generous but also considers the ramifications of these acts of kindness. What do you lose when you give time or resources to others? How will doing so positively affect the other individual or group? And, most importantly, how will generosity impact your social network? For example, say that you are scrolling through a website for a humanitarian cause. Reading about the organization’s mission, projects,

and success stories may stimulate your orbitofrontal cortex to learn why it makes a difference, subsequently convincing you to contribute funds to them.

Some theories also suggest that prosocial behavior, or acting in a way that benefits our support network, was essential to the success of the cooperative social systems that helped early humans thrive. However, humans aren’t alone in being charitable. Studies of other social mammals like monkeys have indicated that a similar biological framework for prosocial behavior exists in them too. In one study reported by the Greater Good Science Center, some monkeys demonstrated a

willingness to give food away to unrelated primates, even if the recipients didn’t reciprocate their generosity.

Where humans exceed wild animals, though, is in our propensity to give anonymously, engaging in acts like giving food to a drive or answering requests to donate to causes online. These actions help people we don’t know and may never meet, which is charitable behavior that has never been reported in other species. While scientists continue to research the biological roots and physiological effects of being generous, our ability to do good for others is evident—as are the positive feelings we experience in return.



written by: *allison gomes*

ECO-FRIENDLY *room fresheners*



If you've ever lit a scented candle to quickly freshen up your home, you're not alone. Candles are a multibillion-dollar industry that's estimated to reach \$9.9 billion globally by 2028. Unfortunately for those of us with a growing collection, however, scented candles may not necessarily be the best for our health. Many release potentially harmful chemicals and particles into your home, which can be a concern if you have health problems, don't have proper ventilation, or burn candles for too long. So before you light another pumpkin-spiced candle, consider these eco-friendlier alternatives that will help your home smell good without reducing its air quality.

Beeswax candles

If you're perhaps not ready to ditch candles altogether, consider making a switch to 100 percent beeswax versions. They're made from one ingredient—you guessed it, beeswax—and are all-natural, nontoxic, and eco-friendly, so they won't contribute to air pollution. This *does* mean that they don't contain any artificial scents, but they still give off a natural, subtly sweet aroma.

Wax warmers

You could also consider melting naturally scented wax in an electric wax warmer. These devices are generally safer for both you and the environment since you're not dealing with an open flame or artificial and chemically enhanced scents.

Drop a piece or two into the warmer, then simply plug it into an outlet in any room in your home.

Essential oils

Essential oils are a versatile and powerful way to freshen the air in your home. Different oils can also have varying effects on your physical and mental health; for instance, lavender can improve sleep quality and mood. You can add a few drops to a diffuser, or you can create your own room spray by combining the essential oil with distilled water and witch hazel in a glass spray bottle. Just be sure to invest in high-quality oils made with the best ingredients, and always diffuse them in a well-ventilated room away from any children and pets.

Potpourri

While you may associate potpourri with your grandmother's house, it's actually a wonderful way to scent your home naturally. You can purchase a premade blend or make your own with items like dried citrus, cinnamon sticks, cloves, and so much more. Whatever route you choose, adding a handful or two of the mixture to different bowls throughout your home will give you a delightful aroma to enjoy all day long.

These natural and sustainable alternatives are great ways to refresh your living spaces while also creating a healthier home environment.

recommendations & referrals

are the core of my business and always greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your continued support!



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Front of Tear Out Card 2

LEMON PESTO LENTIL SALAD WITH *olives and sun-dried tomatoes*



Salad

- 1 c. green lentils
- 1 large bunch lacinato kale, stems removed, finely chopped
- Juice of 1 large lemon
- ½ tsp. cold-pressed olive oil
- ½ c. pitted DIVINA® Frescatrano® or Castelvetroano olives, halved
- ¼ c. bagged unmarinated sun-dried tomatoes, finely chopped
- 1 large shallot, thinly sliced
- ⅓ c. Marcona almonds, coarsely chopped if desired
- ½ c. finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley



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Back of Tear Out Card 2



*Ingredients continued
from reverse side*

Lemon Pesto Vinaigrette

- 1 c. loosely packed fresh basil leaves
- ¼ c. fresh parsley leaves
- ¼ c. pine nuts
- ¼ c. nutritional yeast
- ½ tsp. salt, plus more as needed
- ½ tsp. black pepper, plus more as needed
- 2 tbsp. white miso
- 2 cloves garlic
- Juice of 1 medium lemon
- ¼ c. red wine vinegar
- 1 tbsp. pure maple syrup

YIELDS 4
SERVINGS

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1. To make the salad, fill a medium saucepan two-thirds full with water and bring it to a boil over high heat. Add the lentils and reduce the heat to medium-low. Simmer the lentils for 12 to 15 minutes, until they are tender but not mushy. Drain the lentils and set them aside to cool completely.
2. Meanwhile, make the lemon pesto vinaigrette. In a blender, combine the basil, parsley, pine nuts, nutritional yeast, salt, black pepper, miso, garlic, lemon juice, vinegar and maple syrup. Taste the vinaigrette and season it with more salt and black pepper if needed. Set the vinaigrette aside.
3. To assemble the salad, combine the kale, lemon juice and oil in a large bowl. Massage the kale. Add the lentils, olives, sun-dried tomatoes, shallot, almonds and parsley. Toss the ingredients with salad servers to combine them. Drizzle the salad with the lemon pesto vinaigrette and toss the salad again. Chill the salad in the fridge for 20 to 30 minutes prior to serving it.

Bill and Judy Smith
123 Main Street
King of Prussia, PA 19406



The Smith Family
Philadelphia

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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