



THE Y AXIS



LOL: It's Good For Your Health

Sure, you've got a lot on your plate. Most adults do. Work, relationships, doctor appointments, bills to pay, and everything else on your to-do list can take its toll. It's called life.

Want to know how to deal with it better?

Laugh more. Kids do a lot better job at this than adults. The average six-year-old laughs 300 times a day. Most adults only laugh 15 to 100 times a day.

Tap into your inner kid. Tell a joke. Watch a funny movie. Laugh more.

Research shows that laughing helps reduce stress, improve your mood, and strengthen the immune system.¹

COMMENTS?

Send comments to the editor:
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Munch Your Way to Heart Health Mediterranean-Style

Mediterranean Diet lowers heart disease risk by about 30 percent

Francisco Nunez Olivera enjoyed a simple life in Spain. He grew his own garden. He took a walk every day to check on his herbs and vegetables. He liked to toast the end of the day with a glass of red wine. He was always surrounded by family and friends. And he only went to the hospital twice in 113 years.

How did Olivera live 34 years longer than the average adult in the U.S.? It's actually pretty simple. He lived the lifestyle that was normal for people living in his region. It's called the Mediterranean diet. Research shows eating this way can greatly cut the risk for heart disease and 37 other health problems.²

Want to improve your heart health? Eat like Olivera. Here's how:

- **Eat more fresh vegetables.** Aim for 2 to 3 cups of vegetables per day.
- **Grab some fruit.** Most adults should eat about 1 to 2 cups of fruit per day.
- **Choose whole-grain bread, cereal, and pasta** instead of sugary cereal, white rice, and bread.

- **Bring on the beans** in soups, salads, stews, and casseroles.
- **Nibble on nuts.** Try a small handful of pistachios, pecans, almonds, or walnuts as a snack or added to salads.
- **Use healthy fats** like olive oil, canola oil, and soy oil. Fish, avocados, nuts, and seeds are also good sources of healthy fats.
- **Drink red wine or grape juice.** It's the antioxidants in grapes that help improve circulation and heart health.
- **Spice things up** with garlic, thyme, oregano, basil, cayenne, curry, and other herbs. Avoid or limit salt.

Eating this way can protect your heart, lower blood pressure, and reduce stroke risk. It may also help prevent some kinds of cancer, preserve memory, and control blood sugar. Munch your way to heart health, Mediterranean-style.

MORE
Mediterranean diet quick start
tinyurl.com/y784txrm



The Simple 30-Minute Swap to Live Longer

Sit less, move more, to lower risk of early death by 35 percent

How many hours a day do you spend sitting? Think about it. Driving, eating meals, working, watching TV. It all adds up. The average adult spends about eight hours a day sitting.

And that's a problem. Too much sitting can lead to weight gain, weak bones and muscles, poor heart health, and early death. Only 23 percent of adults get the minimum amount of exercise recommended (150 minutes a week).³

If you want to live longer, be more active. It's not as hard as you might think, even if you're ultra-busy. All you have to do is make one simple 30-minute swap.

New research suggests that if you swap 30 minutes of sitting per day with any kind of physical activity, you may cut your risk for early death by 35 percent.⁴ Even short bursts of activity that only last a few minutes can help.

Here are some easy ways to be more active:

- ✓ Take a break and go for a walk
- ✓ Clean your house as fast as you can



Whole-Grain Garlic Bread Sticks

Are you getting enough whole grains in your diet? You need 3 to 5 servings a day. But most adults eat less than one serving a day. And about 40 percent of adults don't eat any whole grains. You need whole grains in your diet. They're good for your heart and your health. Try this tasty recipe for whole-grain garlic bread sticks.⁶

Ingredients:

- 6 slices of whole-grain bread
- 2 T olive oil
- 1/2 tsp garlic powder
- Italian seasoning (as needed)

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 300 degrees.
2. Spread 1 tsp of oil on each slice of bread.
3. Sprinkle with garlic powder and Italian seasoning.
4. Stack bread and cut each slice into three equal parts.
5. Arrange bread sticks on baking sheet and place in oven.
6. Bake about 25 minutes or until crisp and lightly browned.

This is Your Brain on Stress...Any Questions?

Chronic stress impairs memory and brain function

Remember the anti-drug commercial from the 80s?

Actor John Roselius holds up an uncooked egg in an empty-looking kitchen. "This is your brain." Then he points to a sizzling pat of butter in a hot frying pan. "This is drugs."

He cracks the egg and drops it into the frying pan. It sizzles and pops, and then Roselius delivers the message in dramatic fashion. "This is your brain on drugs. Any questions?"

It's no secret illegal drugs are bad for your brain. But if you let chronic stress simmer on the back burner for weeks, months, or years, it can be just as bad.

Too much stress is a brain drain

New research suggests that chronic stress can impair memory, reduce

brain function, and lead to cognitive decline over time.⁵ Researchers found that people living with chronic stress tend to have higher levels of the stress hormone cortisol.

"The faster pace of life today probably means more stress," says lead researcher Dr. Sudha Seshadri. "When we are afraid, when we are threatened in any way, our cortisol levels go up ... It's never too early to be mindful of reducing stress."

Feeling stressed out? Take a deep breath. Go for a walk. Talk things out with someone you trust. Laugh more. And get professional help if you need to. You'll feel better and live longer. @



MORE

Best ways to manage stress
tinyurl.com/ycxxodhd

The Simple 30-Minute Swap to Live Longer (continued from page 1)

- ✓ Speed walk through the mall or grocery store
- ✓ Work in the yard
- ✓ Exercise during the ads on TV (push-ups, jumping jacks, curl-ups)
- ✓ Make time for the gym or fitness class

MORE

Be active your way
tinyurl.com/yb7748o4

"If you have a job or lifestyle that involves a lot of sitting, you can lower your risk of early death," says lead researcher Dr. Keith Diaz. "Move more often, for as long as you want and as your ability allows." @

References

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Take the February Health Challenge!

Try Vegan-Friendly Foods: Eat more plant-based foods for better health

Ask the Wellness Doctor:

This month Dr. Brittany Carter answers the question:

Is Chocolate Healthy?