



THE Y-AXIS



The Dirty Secret About Smartphones

Click, swipe, tap. You do it hundreds of times a day, then dip your hand into the popcorn bowl without a thought.



A 2025 study swabbed smartphones used by hospital workers and found nearly every device carried bacteria.⁵



Antibiotic resistant strains. Staph, E. coli, and other microbes were along for the ride.



Why so gross?

We carry phones everywhere, touch them constantly, and almost never clean them.

Gross! Next time you eat and scroll, grab a disinfecting wipe first.

COMMENTS?

Send comments to the editor:

evan@thehealthycopywriter.com

Knee Pain? Walk Smarter & Hurt Less

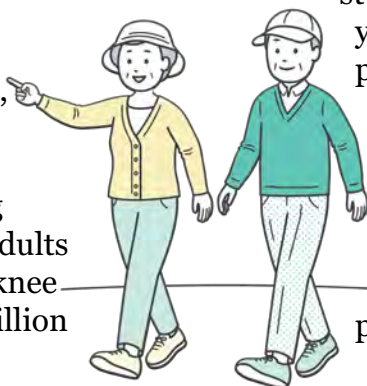
Gait retraining: A surprisingly simple way to reduce knee pain

Does getting out of a chair make your knees ache? Do stairs feel harder than they used to?

Even simple movements like bending down to pick something up can make knee pain flare.

If this sounds familiar, you're not alone.

Knee pain is taking a toll... About 1 in 4 adults experiences frequent knee pain. More than 32 million



Americans live with osteoarthritis, and the knee is the joint most often affected.

It's one of the top reasons people stop being active or eventually need joint replacement surgery.

But there is good news. A recent study found that changing the way you walk can help reduce knee pain and may delay the need for surgery.¹

Simple changes for healthier knees

Researchers tested a program called personal-

KNEE ►

THIS Popular Fried Food Raises Diabetes Risk

Eating French fries regularly raises diabetes risk up to 24%

"Do you want fries with that?" It's a question we all hear at the drive-thru. But before you say yes, you may want to think twice.

A new study found that eating French fries four or more times per week was linked to a **24 percent higher risk of**



developing type 2 diabetes compared to those who rarely ate them.²

That matters because about 38 million Americans already have diabetes, and another 98 million have prediabetes.

Most cases are type 2, which is strongly tied to diet and lifestyle.

Baked, mashed or boiled is better than fried

Researchers analyzed data from three **FRIES ►**

Listen Up: Boost Brain Health with Better Beats

Music & sound can rewire brain networks instantly to improve mood

Ever notice how a favorite song can lift your mood or help you focus? Science now shows it is more than a feeling. Your brainwaves actually respond to the rhythm of sound, reshaping brain networks in real time.

In a new study, researchers used advanced brain-scanning technology to watch how the brain responds during sound and music.³

They discovered that listening does not just light up one part of the brain.

- It reconfigures entire networks instantly.
- Different rhythms and tones strengthen the connections between regions that control memory, emotion, and attention.

▶ Press play to unlock the health benefits of sound

The way our brains adapt to sound may explain why music therapy has such powerful effects for:

- Mood
- Mental health

▶ **KNEE** ized gait retraining. They helped people with knee pain learn small walking adjustments, such as:

- Shifting weight
- Changing foot angle
- These simple changes helped reduce stress on the inner part of the knee.

Take control of knee pain

<https://tinyurl.com/m/2p9p7e32>




The results: Participants who retrained their stride reported less knee pain and better mobility. They also showed signs of slower joint damage, suggesting this approach could help put off knee replacement surgery in the future.

Got knee pain? Here's what you can do

- Pain relief
- And even recovery after injury
- It also sheds light on everyday benefits, like why background music can help you concentrate or why calming sounds reduce stress.

How to use sound for wellness

 **Boost your focus.** Try instrumental or lo-fi beats while you work.

 **Ease stress.** Listen to slow, calming music to help your body relax.

 **Lift your mood.** Upbeat playlists can energize and motivate.

 **Support sleep.** Gentle soundscapes or white noise can quiet a restless mind.

The next time you press play, remember that your brain is doing more than enjoying a tune. It is rewiring itself, one beat at a time.



How music boosts mood & health

<https://tinyurl.com/bddkt77t>

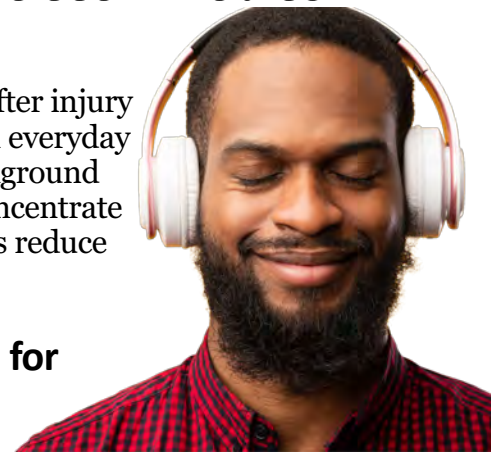
✓ **See a pro.** A physical therapist can analyze your gait and teach safe adjustments.

✓ **Strengthen support muscles.** Strong hips, thighs, and calves take pressure off the knee.

✓ **Stay active.** Low-impact movement like walking, swimming, or cycling keeps joints moving.

✓ **Watch your weight.** Every extra pound adds pressure on the knees.

Small changes in how you walk can ease pain today and protect your knees for years to come.



Recipe: Southwestern Stuffed Potatoes

Warm, cheesy, and full of flavor, these Southwestern Stuffed Potatoes pack beans, corn, and salsa into a quick and healthy meal. A perfect comfort food with a nutritional boost.

Ingredients

- 2 medium potatoes
- 1 C black beans (rinsed, drained)
- 3/4 C salsa
- 1 C corn
- 1/2 C cheese ((try cheddar, pepper jack, or Mexican blend))

Directions

1. Scrub potatoes well. Poke each potato with a fork 2 or 3 times.
2. Microwave on high for 5 minutes. Turn potatoes

over & microwave another 3 to 5 minutes, or until easily pierced with a fork. Set aside.

3. In a microwave-safe bowl, combine beans, salsa and corn. Microwave for 2-3 minutes, stirring occasionally, until heated through.

4. Cut potatoes in half length-wise and flatten with a fork.

5. Divide bean mixture between the four halves. Sprinkle with cheese and serve warm.

Note: Makes 4 servings. 240 calories per serving.



► **FRIES** large U.S. studies that tracked more than 160,000 adults for decades.

- They looked at how different potato preparations (baked, boiled, mashed, or fried) affected health.
- **The results:** potatoes are not all created equal. French fries were the clear culprit.



How fast food affects your body

<https://tinyurl.com/4xp6mxjc>

whole grains, or legumes lowered the risk of type 2 diabetes. Even choosing baked or boiled potatoes was a better option.

In contrast, baked, boiled, or mashed potatoes did not carry the same risk when eaten in moderation.

Why? Frying adds unhealthy fats, extra calories, and can cause blood sugar spikes that raise the risk for diabetes.

The study also showed that swapping French fries for healthier foods such as vegetables,

Smarter swaps to try

- **Roast potato wedges** with olive oil and herbs instead of frying.
- **Order a side** salad, beans, or brown rice with your meal. Keep fries as an occasional treat, not a daily habit.

Your order is up: small changes on your plate today can help protect you from type 2 diabetes tomorrow.

References

1. Uhlrich, S., et al. (2025). Personalised gait retraining for medial compartment knee osteoarthritis: a randomised controlled trial. *The Lancet Rheumatology*. From: <https://tinyurl.com/hyhy5me2>
2. Mousavi, S.M., et al. (2025). Total and specific potato intake and risk of type 2 diabetes: results from three US cohort studies and a substitution meta-analysis of prospective cohorts. *British Medical Journal*, 390:e082121. From: <https://tinyurl.com/3w7n4zpj>
3. Rosso, M., et al. (2025). FREQ-NESS reveals the dynamic reconfiguration of frequency-resolved brain networks during auditory stimulation. *Advanced Science*, 12(20). From: <https://tinyurl.com/2587bxrn>
4. U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2025). Southwestern Stuffed Potatoes. From: <https://tinyurl.com/bde958vf>
5. Olsen M., et al. (2022). Mobile phones are hazardous microbial platforms warranting robust public health and biosecurity protocols. *Scientific Reports*, 12: 10009. From: <https://tinyurl.com/dzv4dtk4>



Ask the Wellness Doctor: How can I create healthy snack habits?

Health Challenge: Strengthen Your Body: Build stronger muscles & bones

 **WellNotes**
SEPTEMBER 2025