

Healthy U @ Work

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 **Franciscan**
WORKING *Well*

Spend Wisely This Holiday Season

Parties, presents, and special events can fill the holidays with fun. They can also make them a little frantic. The parties need planned, the presents bought, and the special events scheduled. There are feasts to cook and gifts to wrap and cards to exchange. In the frenzy, it's easy to overspend. In order to avoid a large credit card bill come January, consider the following tips:

Cap Your Spending Much overspending comes from impulse buys and last-minute purchases. Look critically at your budget and determine what you have to spend on presents, social outings, and other holiday expenses. If you share financial responsibilities with a loved one, do the initial budgeting together to avoid any unwelcome, last minute surprises. Agreeing on a holiday spending budget will free you both up to have more fun! When you have your budget, stick to it.



Start Early Start right away to find the presents you need at the best prices. Give yourself a few options for each person, so if you find something on sale, you can pick a great present at a great price. Most often the best deals are early! Many stores offer early Black Friday deals, letting you skip the crowds but keep the savings. Compare prices from several retailers so you know what is truly a good deal and what is just hype. Once the holidays are over, consider saving for next year starting in January! Even five dollars a week can help ease any holiday spending worries in the future.

Save with Friends Want to treat an important person in your life? Ask co-workers, siblings, or friends to pitch in together to share the cost of that perfect gift so everyone wins. If you are hosting, plan a budget friendly meal or do it potluck style. Remember the reason for the season. If you do an annual gift exchange, consider replacing it with a new, less costly tradition like a family game night, holiday bake off, or caroling party. Not every social outing needs to cost you money! Plan a day with friends, family or co-workers to volunteer at a local food bank, animal shelter, or other organization that could use your help.

Relax and enjoy the holiday festivities knowing you've kept your spending under control.



SAD?

Seasonal Affective Disorder

Despite the upcoming holidays, many people start to feel the 'winter blues' this time of year. But if your winter blues become severe or you have experienced them for more than two years in a row, you may be one of the half a million people in the US that experience seasonal depression, often called Seasonal Affective Disorder.

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is believed to be caused by a reduction in sunlight available during the day. One theory is that reduced sunlight can cause an imbalance of serotonin or other neurotransmitters in the brain that affect mood. A second theory considers that lack of sunlight can throw off our natural circadian rhythm (biological clock) that regulates our sleep cycle. It has also been suggested that lack of sunlight may lead to increased levels of melatonin that contribute to sleepiness and fatigue. People with SAD may also experience vitamin D deficiency associated with serotonin imbalance.

Symptoms of SAD mirror that of clinical depression -- low energy, trouble sleeping, moodiness, difficulty concentrating, cravings for carbohydrates, weight gain, social withdrawal, feeling of hopelessness or worthlessness (National Institute of Mental Health).

If you are suffering from SAD, you can

Let the light in! Open the curtains or blinds and bring in as much natural light as possible. Some doctors will recommend a light therapy box, designed to stimulate the retina. The cells of the retina signal the hypothalamus, a gland that controls your sleep cycle, an important part of seasonal depression.

Get outside during the day. Even just a short time each day can make a real difference in your mood, sleep, and energy levels.

Produce of the Month Onions

Onions are an easy way to enhance your nutrition and add flavor to almost any dish. Onions are a natural prebiotic, known for supporting helpful bacteria in the gut that improve digestion and boost immunity. Onions are also linked with lowering inflammation and helping prevent certain cancers.

The Basics: Onions are a member of the allium family, along with garlic, leeks and shallots. The most common varieties are yellow, white, red and sweet. They differ in color, texture and flavor. Yellow onions are a great all-purpose cooking onion that offers the most mild, balanced flavor. White onions offer the most pungent flavor and are great cooked or raw. Red onions have a crisp texture and peppery flavor ideal for serving raw in salads. Sweet onions, such as Vidalia onions, are the mildest option. No matter what onion you choose, look for onions that are dry and show no signs of mold or sprouting. Store at room temperature in a well-ventilated spot, ideally out of direct sunlight. Sweet onions are more delicate and should be kept in the fridge. When ready to use, peel off the outer papery layers and cut according to your needs. Chopped onions should be stored in a sealed container in the refrigerator for 2-3 days.

Try This: Onions are an easy addition to veggies, salads, sandwiches, casseroles, stir-fries, soups, omelets, and the list goes on. Try these quick pickled onions to top off tacos, burgers and more. Pack thinly sliced red onions into a 1-pint mason jar. In a small saucepan simmer ¼ cup distilled white vinegar, ¼ cup apple cider vinegar, 1 ½ teaspoon fine sea salt, and ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional). Carefully pour the vinegar mixture into the jar over the onions and use spoon to remove air bubbles and make sure all onions are covered. Allow the onions to cool to room temperature (about 30 minutes) and they are ready to serve. Store leftover pickled onions in covered mason jar for 2-3 weeks.

The Facts: One cup of onion has approximately 65 calories and is a very good source of vitamin C, fiber, vitamin B6, and manganese.

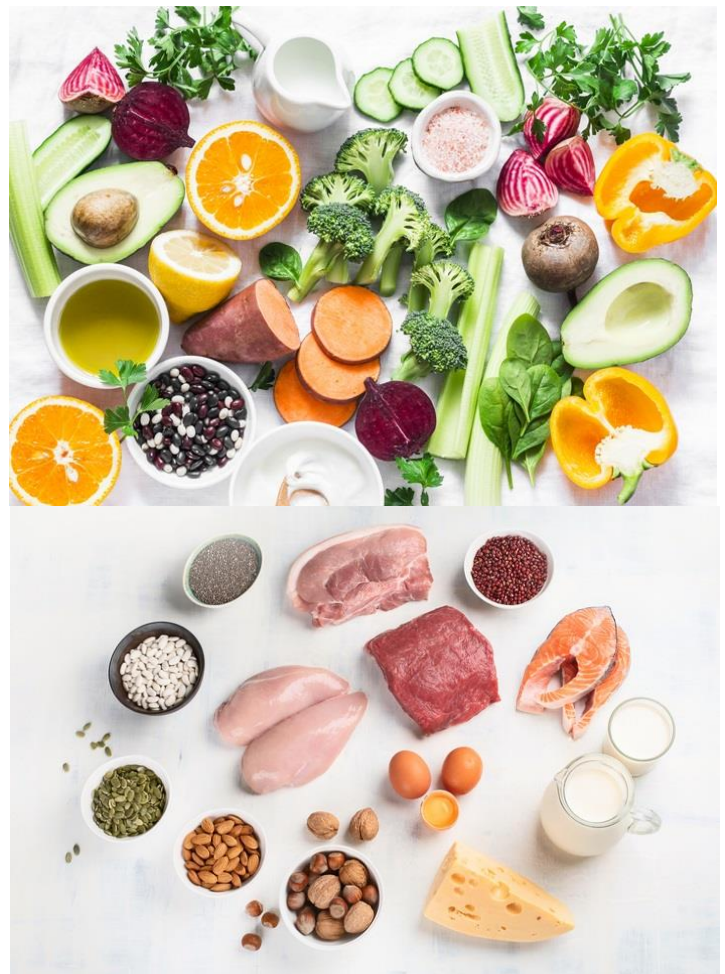
Are You Getting Enough B Vitamins?

B vitamins refers to a group of vitamins that are essential for cellular health and energy metabolism by converting the proteins, carbohydrates, and fats you eat into usable energy.

- B-1 (thiamine) is important for nervous system and brain health and can protect the body against stress.
- B-2 (riboflavin) helps to break down ingested protein and fats and produce red blood cells.
- B-3 (niacin) acts as an antioxidant, making and repairing DNA. Niacin can also help increase REM sleep, lower cholesterol and ease arthritis symptoms.
- B-5 (pantothenic acid) is key for digestion and a healthy nervous system.
- B-6 (pyridoxine) plays a role in over 100 enzyme reactions that impact the nervous system, lymphatic system and digestion. Vitamin B6 helps prevent heart disease, support mood and reduce symptoms of depression. B6 is also known to help treat nausea during pregnancy.
- B-7 (biotin) is known for supporting healthy skin, hair, eyes, liver, and nervous system.
- B-9 (folate or folic acid) is critical for heart health, genetic development during pregnancy, and cancer prevention.
- B-12 (cobalamin) is important for blood cell production, helping to protect against anemia. B12 may help reduce depression and anxiety, according to recent research.

It is possible to get all the B vitamins you need by eating a healthy, balanced diet that includes a variety of vegetables, fruits, protein, and whole grains. Good food sources for B vitamins include

- Legumes – beans, lentils, peas, soybeans
- Nuts and seeds – almonds, peanuts, pecans, walnuts, sunflower seeds
- Vegetables – broccoli, spinach, kale, cabbage, white potatoes, sweet potatoes, mushrooms, cauliflower
- Fruits – citrus fruits, avocado, bananas, apricots, dates
- Whole grains – oats, barley, millet, brown rice, fortified cereals and breads
- Dairy – yogurt, milk, cheese
- Meat – egg yolks, red meat, pork, poultry (dark meat), liver
- Seafood – salmon, tuna, sardines, squid
- Nutritional yeast – ideal for individuals with vegetarian and vegan diets as B12 does not occur naturally in plant foods



While it is always better to get nutrients from whole foods, a quality multivitamin or a B-complex supplement can help you reach your daily recommended dose of each B vitamin. Talk with your doctor if you think you have a need for supplementation. Supplements are frequently recommended for women who are pregnant, individuals who are over the age of 65, practice a vegetarian or vegan diet, or those with any indicating medical conditions or history, including those who have undergone gastric bypass surgery.

Indoor Workouts for Winter

It's time to work out. You look outside. It's dark, getting colder. When the colder weather comes and sunlight slips away, you may be tempted to trade your workout for the comfort of the couch. Do you find yourself putting your healthy habits on hold this time of year? How can you maintain your workout momentum during the fall and winter months?

Remember your why. Why is it important to you to make time for being active? How will you feel if you ignore your body's need for daily movement? Take some time to reflect on these questions and come back to your answers whenever you need to motivate yourself to get active.

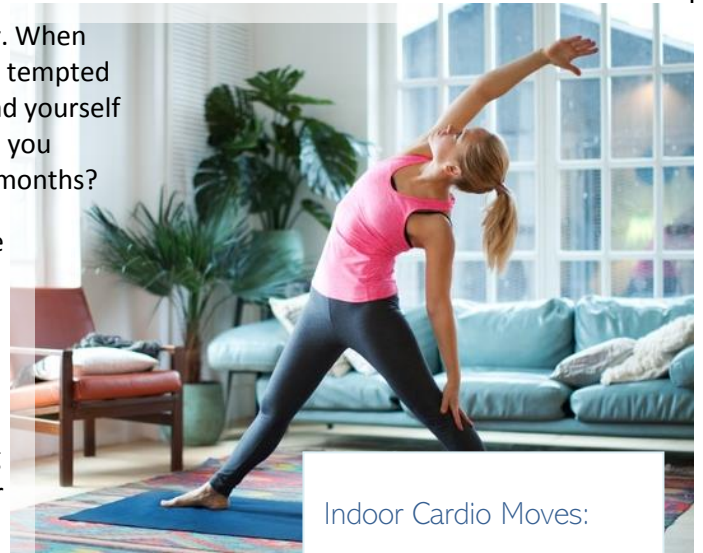
Then find an indoor activity that keeps you moving. If bundling up for a winter walk isn't your thing, there are plenty of indoor options to keep your healthy habits year-round.

Work out at home. Try streaming a workout app on your tablet, Roku, or other streaming device. Many offer free trial periods, so you can figure out which ones are a good fit for you. If you like to walk, run, or cycle consider investing in treadmill or stationary bike. You can also check out workout DVDs from most public libraries. Or put on some music and have an impromptu dance party to burn some calories!

Join a gym. Some fitness centers and yoga studios offer monthly memberships or class packages that may work for you during the winter months. Shop around to find a reputable facility that offers what you want at the best price.

Be a mall walker. Mall walking is easy, convenient, and free. Keep comfortable walking shoes in your car and invite someone along to make it more fun. To prevent impulse buys while you walk, keep your wallet in the car. Many shopping malls also offer walking times before stores open.

Check for free resources in your community. Many school districts, community centers, parks department and neighborhood associations offer indoor workout facilities or group classes. See if your local schools open up their indoor track or basketball court before school or in the evenings.



Indoor Cardio Moves:

- Climbing stairs
- Jumping jacks
- Mountain climbers
- Burpees
- Jump rope
- High knees

Calisthenics for Strength:

- Push-ups
- Crunches
- Leg lifts
- Planks
- Squats
- Lunges
- Chair dips
- Calf raises

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

Continued from page 2

Exercise and eat right. Regular exercise helps with all kinds of stress and anxiety, and eating fruits, vegetables, and quality protein help to maintain the blood sugar.

Make plans. Get together with friends and family, or plan a trip during the winter months. Staying connected with the people and activities we love can help boost serotonin levels in the brain.

Reduce stress. Try meditation, journaling or another stress reducing activity. If you are feeling overwhelmed, ask for help at home or work when possible.

If symptoms do not improve within two weeks or if your mood worsens, call your doctor immediately. Therapy or medication may be needed to treat your depression. No matter the season, you can feel better!



Q: Hey Erin. I am getting ready to do a lot of traveling over the holidays. I've been doing really well at getting in my workouts, but I worried about staying active while I'm gone. Do you have any tips or tricks that may help me?

Kyle P.

A: Hello Kyle. Thanks for reaching out. I understand how crazy and difficult the holidays can be especially when traveling. Finding time to workout while participating in all of the holiday festivities can sometimes be a little overwhelming but there are plenty of ways to fit them in. It may not be your normal workout or routine but something is always better than nothing.

- Get your family involved and do something together! Get everyone up one day and go for a walk or run, attend a yoga class, do a Turkey Trot, whatever it is do it together.
- Get up a little earlier and get it done. If you're not a morning person, remember it's only for a short time and if staying strong is important to you it will be worth it.
- Keep it under 30 minutes. There are so many short, effective workouts you can find and do online and many of them don't require any equipment. For example, look for workouts labeled as high intensity interval training (HIIT).
- Plan ahead. Find a local gym or small boutique fitness center that has equipment or classes you can take advantage of during your visit.
- Just MOVE! We tend to be less active during the holiday season. Most of our gathering we sit to eat, sit to talk with family, sit in the car on the drive home, and so on. Strive to get upwards of 7,500 steps in each day, it doesn't matter how you get them, just get them!

In addition to staying active, focus on making healthy food choices throughout the holiday season. For example, enjoy your Thanksgiving feast but make a point to have a healthy breakfast and drink plenty of water that day. Be mindful of how often you say yes to desserts as well. It is easy to let yourself have a little treat here and there but doing that the whole time can add up and you'll end up throwing all your hard work out the door. The holidays are a time to celebrate and allow yourself a treat or two, just don't go overboard.

I hope you have a blessed holiday season and enjoy your time with family!

Dedicated to your success,

Erin M Long, B.S., NSCA-CPT

Optimal Health Through Gratitude

The Thanksgiving holiday reminds us to be grateful. Families and friends gather to celebrate life's blessings. If we purposefully focus on gratitude the remaining 364 days of the year, we will likely improve our psychological, physical and social well-being, increase life satisfaction and combat stress.

Researchers have studied the benefits of practicing gratitude and documented extraordinary benefits.

Gratitude can be strengthened with practice! Simple activities like writing a letter to someone you are grateful for, practicing saying thank you to significant others, family members, co-workers for 7 days can help to form a habit. Research suggests that practicing gratitude daily results in developing a state of mind that results in extraordinary benefits.

Jamie Ducharme, in TIME magazine November 2017, cited the following benefits discovered in research from practicing gratitude:

1. Gratitude can make you more patient.
2. Gratitude can improve your relationships.
3. Gratitude improves self-care (caring for others also helps you care for yourself).
4. Gratitude may help prevent overeating.
 - "Gratitude replenishes willpower," says Susan Peirce Thompson, a cognitive scientist who specializes in the psychology of eating."
5. Gratitude can help ease depression.
 - Research shows that noting three things to be grateful for each day helped people feel happier and they reported less depression.
6. Gratitude may improve sleep.
 - Research in *Journal of Psychosomatic Research* recommends counting blessings instead of sheep for improved sleep.
7. Gratitude gives you happiness that lasts.
 - Emma Seppälä, a happiness researcher at Stanford and Yale Universities, states "Gratitude is a frame of mind, not instant gratification."

Say thank you and count your blessings daily to reap the benefits of gratitude!

Need Help Being Grateful?

Call 219-662-3730 or 1-800-747-7262

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