

HOLIDAY HEALTH CHALLENGE 2021

WEEK 2



YMCA of Greater Westfield
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Welcome to Week 2 of the Holiday Health Challenge!

We hope you had a wonderful holiday with your friends and family!

By now, you should have been contacted by your team leader, so you have a point of contact for any questions going forward. Please always feel free to contact me at murbanski@westfieldymca.org with anything.

Hopefully you had success in Week 1, and met whichever goals you set for yourself. Going into Week 2, you will want to:

- Weigh yourself (if maintaining weight)
- Rate yourself on the well-being scale (if working on well-being)
- Do a mental check on your activity level – did you increase it?
- Let your team leader know what you did for last week's bonus challenge (outdoor activity)
- Fill out a raffle ticket at the front desk if you had a successful week!

This week, the themes are:

Smart snack ideas...snacking is a good thing, if done properly. This week, watch what you are snacking on, how often, how much, and try some new snack ideas. Be purposeful about your eating (Am I hungry? Is this a good choice?), vs. just grabbing that bag of chips 'because'. Attached is an article regarding healthy snacking and some good choices to have on hand. And we have a handy magnet for your refrigerator with some 100 calorie snack ideas, as well. **Pick yours up at the front desk!**

Add a workout...add one extra workout or class to your routine this week. It can be as simple as adding an additional longer walk, hitting the cardio or weight rooms an additional day, taking an extra class, or completing the bodyweight routine* at home.

*Attached. If questions on this routine, contact myself or your team leader

'Do nothing'...take some time to disconnect this week, not just from electronics, but from your to-do list. Attached is an article on the benefits of doing nothing. We rarely do that, so try for a few minutes each day (or as many days as you're able to). It'll do you good!

And remember – the purpose of the challenge is to help keep you on track with healthy habits (and perhaps make some new, small, lasting changes), and offer you accountability to do so, not to be an added stressor to your life. Approach it as such!

Secondly, if you have a 'bad' day, there's always tomorrow to jump back on that horse.

Yours in good health-

Michelle

BODYWEIGHT WORKOUT

10-15 Squats

10-15 Pushups (floor, chair, wall)

20 Situps or crunches

30 jumping jacks (or modified)

TWICE THROUGH

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20 walking lunges OR 10 stationary split squats per leg

Plank with 20 shoulder taps



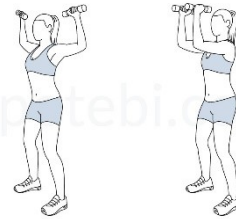
20 Step ups with a knee raise – on stair or sturdy step stool
(modification – step forward, drive opposite knee up)



TWICE THROUGH

10 side lunges each side (complete one side first)

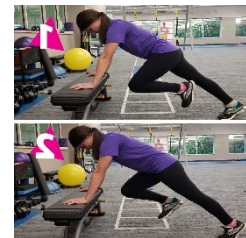
Squats with chest fly – squat down with arms open (1st image below), come up and squeeze elbows together (2nd image)



Isometric shoulder blade adduction – squeeze together and hold for 3-5 seconds, 10 X



30 mountain climbers



TWICE THROUGH

The Actual Health Benefits Of Doing 'Nothing'

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How often do you do nothing? Really nothing. Like the “just sitting on the couch and staring off into space, alone with your thoughts” kind of nothing. Completely free from distractions. If you’re anything like the average person today, you’re probably thinking “rarely” or even more likely, “never.”

In today’s world, we’re accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We gladly take the time to charge our phone’s battery, but disregard recharging our own. The second boredom strikes, we pick up our phones and scroll through social media or turn on the TV and start binge-watching a show we’ve already seen. Doing nothing has become a thing of the past, which means people are experiencing burnout at record-breaking speeds.

You might be surprised to find that there are actual benefits of doing absolutely nothing. When you turn off all distractions, it allows space for your subconscious to expand, ultimately boosting your creativity. When distracted, our mind jumps to the most obvious answers when trying to solve problems. But once you take the time to exhaust those options, you end up thinking of breakthrough, inventive answers that can lead to some life-changing ideas.

Boredom also lets you know when something is wrong. When you’re constantly buzzing around, checking off your to-do list, it’s easy to ignore emotions and miss out on what that inner voice is trying to tell you. But when you start to quiet your mind and your surroundings, you can start to feel those gut feelings coming to the surface, ultimately motivating you to make changes that better your life.

Probably most surprising, doing nothing can even help you to be kinder. Being alone with our thoughts makes us long for a larger sense of purpose, prompting us to try challenging and meaningful activities that extend beyond our own lives.

Even after reading about the many benefits of doing nothing, you might be thinking, “but I need to be productive at all times.” This is especially the case for women. It might feel weird to sit on the couch while there are dishes in the sink, but this can be fixed with a change of mindset. Instead of seeing it as “not being productive,” think of it as investing in your own wellbeing. Because that’s exactly what it is.

You also don’t need to suddenly fit in an hour of doing nothing into your day. Start with five minutes at the same time each day. If your mind starts to turn to that email you forgot to send or your breathing starts to get ragged, don’t worry. All these reactions are normal and will fade over time. Suddenly after a week or so, doing nothing will become something you look forward to. Yes, really.

So today, go ahead and do something for yourself: Do nothing. It might just be everything you were looking for.

How Often Should We Eat?

As an individual with your own body type, nutritional needs, and eating habits, your eating schedule may look entirely different than that of a friend or coworker. Some people thrive off a filling breakfast, while others may eat their first substantial meal closer to lunchtime. This is a concept referred to as **bio-individuality**, meaning that the food choices and mealtimes that work for you and your health goals may not be beneficial for someone else.

As a general guideline, nutritionists recommend eating three spaced-out meals throughout the day and one to three snacks to hold you over in between. By eating smaller, more frequent meals, you are less likely to feel extreme hunger, preventing you from **overeating** at your next meal or snacking on processed foods that give you a quick boost of energy.

A 2015 **study** found that those who ate larger, less frequent meals were likely to have a higher BMI than those who ate more regularly throughout the day. Small meals and snacking can boost your metabolic rate, promote weight loss, and increase your energy level and mood, but these benefits are maximized when the nutritional quality of those smaller meals is high. If you're snacking on processed foods and chips, for example, you may not reap the same benefits as if you were focusing on a diet full of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, protein, and healthy fats.

Meal sizes and frequency

Each day of eating can look a bit different, whether you've just completed a difficult workout or you're **fighting a cold**. On days when you're more physically active, you may find that you crave larger, more nutrient-dense meals – like a veggie-packed omelet or a hearty bean stew. On days you're taking a break from physical activity or engaging in restorative activities, such as yoga or stretching, you may tailor your meals to support a more relaxed state. Either way, listening to your body as well as speaking with a nutritionist or dietitian can help you find a healthy balance in your eating schedule, including which foods will best support your body each day.

Considerations:

Sex –Men and women **metabolize food in the body differently** due to height, weight proportion, and hormonal differences. Men tend to have more muscle mass than women, which means they require a higher calorie intake. This means men usually benefit from eating larger, more consistent meals throughout the day.

- **Age** –Older adults tend to be more sedentary, meaning they do not burn calories as quickly. This means lighter meals and consistent snacking may be best for them. Aging also impacts hormone levels, which may factor into how much and how often someone is eating.

Activity level –Does your job require a lot of moving around? Are you regularly engaging in physical activity? If so, chances are you will find yourself needing more fuel and larger portion sizes throughout the day.

Skipping meals can **slow your metabolic rate** and, in extreme circumstances, may cause your body to go into **starvation mode**. To prevent this, many people benefit from staying fueled with small, nutrient-dense snacks throughout the day, such as apple slices dipped in almond butter, a yogurt with mixed berries and granola, or carrots with hummus.

When you space out your meals and allow yourself to enjoy multiple nutritious snacks and meals, you are also giving yourself ample time and opportunity to get the **essential vitamins and minerals** your body needs! Some of the most important ones include iron, magnesium, potassium, and vitamins A, C, and D.

Eating whenever you're hungry

That rumble in your stomach may not necessarily be your body's signal to eat another meal. Remember to check in with yourself before grabbing a snack and consider why you may be feeling hungry (especially if you just finished a big meal an hour ago!). Did you get enough sleep last night? Are you drinking enough water? Often, your body will send hunger cues to let you know that something needs extra attention. Sometimes, a craving may even be an **emotional reaction** to unmet needs. Make an effort to "feed yourself" with what we call primary food, the things found *off your plate* that nourish you. This could look like spending quality time with a loved one, calling a friend to check in, or taking alone time to recharge.

The true feeling of hunger is a natural cue to let you know your blood sugar is low and you are in need of fuel. While moderate hunger is normal, the pangs of hunger you feel when you go too long without eating can be detrimental to your health. Again, ignoring your hunger cues may cause your body to go into starvation mode.

It's important to learn to pay attention to your unique **hunger cues**, giving you the opportunity to figure out which foods both satisfy your hunger *and* provide essential nutrients. When you learn how to properly manage your hunger and satiety, you can better maintain healthy **blood sugar balance** with consumption of ample protein, fiber, and healthy fats. Stay prepared for great nourishment by keeping your fridge stocked with **healthy snacks** that you can easily grab.

A great habit is pre-portioning your snacks. This means counting out the chips before you start eating them. This will prevent you from over-eating, and it helps you enjoy each chip because you only get so many. When done properly, snacking gives you the much-needed boost to make it to your next meal without all the extra calories. The key tip is to *start paying attention to everything you are putting into your body*. Plan for your meals as well as your snacks. And don't assume that your healthy meals compensate for your unhealthy snacking.

HEALTHY SNACK SUGGESTIONS:

Rice cakes with a topping (nut butter, chocolate hummus, guacamole)

Veggies and hummus or guacamole

Fresh fruit & nut butter

Popcorn

Nuts (just be aware of serving size)

Hard boiled eggs

Yogurt and fruit/nuts

Edamame

Roasted seaweed

Pickles

Avocado toast

Fruit and nut bars

For portion sizes and nutritional info on some snacks, as well as snack recipes, go to: <https://www.trifectanutrition.com/blog/healthy-low-calorie-snacks-for-weight-loss-to-satisfy-any-craving>