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HDHeartbeat

A Health Designs Newsletter



Staying Healthy During the Holiday Season

Don't let the hustle and bustle of the holiday season get you down! Managing your health and having fun can coexist with these practical tips:

- Practice mindful eating with portion control! You don't need to avoid your favorite dishes this holiday season. Take a little of each dish to avoid overindulgence.
- Stay active this holiday season. Take a family stroll in the neighborhood and enjoy the light displays, park further in the parking lot when you do your holiday shopping, or pencil in those exercise breaks in between project deadlines.
- Manage your stress with mindfulness, deep breathing, or simple gratitude.
- Practice good hygiene by washing your hands for at least 20 seconds, coughing or sneezing into your elbow or in a tissue, and choosing to stay home when you're not feeling your best to keep those germs at bay.
- Enter the holiday season with the mindset of mindfulness. Focus on the present moment instead of the past or even the future. Enjoy every bit of magic this holiday season has to offer you.

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Managing Stress and Finding Joy Amid Holiday Chaos

The happiest season of all is right around the corner but can also bring some unwanted and increased stress. One recent report found that the top stressors of the holiday season are affording holiday gifts, grieving a loss or missing a loved one, and dealing with challenging family dynamics. Sometimes these stressors can affect how we behave but keep these tips in mind heading into the thick of the holiday season.

- Plan your social commitments ahead. With multiple party invitations, only you know which one works for your schedule.
- Don't be afraid to say no if you're not feeling the holiday spirit.
- Spend your pennies wisely. Make a budget for each person and stick to it. Choose handmade gifts instead of purchasing one.
- Does your environment calm you or stress you? Use lamps or candles, turn on music, open windows, or diffuse scents that will recharge you like relaxing lavender or vanilla or energizing citrus.
- Manage stress by maintaining those healthy habits we talked about on page 1!
- Respect different opinions than yours at the dinner table.
- Celebrating a holiday after a loss of a loved one? Is there a tradition you can adopt that honors their life and memory?

HD MONTHLY CHALLENGE

For the month of December we invite you to enjoy the holiday season for what it is; a truly magical time to be spent with loved ones near and dear to you.

Orange Cardamom Hot Chocolate

- 4 cups of milk
- 1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
- Rind of ½ of one navel orange, avoid peeling into the pith (white part) of the orange
- 1.5 tsp of ground cardamom

Note: this recipe makes 4 servings. If you wish to make a single serving divide ingredients by 4.



1. Add milk, orange peel, and ground cardamom into saucepan. Heat on medium, stirring often, until milk begins to steam and small bubbles form around the edges. Do NOT let it boil.
2. Allow milk to simmer for five minutes.
3. Use slotted spoon or fine mesh strainer to remove and discard the orange peels.
4. Pour into mug and top with small piece of orange peel and an extra dash of ground cardamom.
5. Take it on the go and enjoy your local light displays!

How to Set Wellness Goals for the New Year

Once the holiday rush has come and gone, we'll have New Year's Day to look forward to. And with New Year's Day comes those exciting and ambitious health and wellness goals. Don't wait until New Year's Day to get started on writing those goals! Start your reflection period now in December to start the New Year on the right foot.

– The first step is to identify what you want to change AND why the changes would be important to you. Connecting your why makes your health and wellness goal more meaningful and motivating for you to stick with especially when it gets hard.

– Once you have those large goals written down, break them up into smaller achievable actions. With each goal you have written down for yourself you should be

asking yourself, "How am I going to achieve this goal?" or "What will I need in order to achieve this goal?" Also ask yourself "If/then" questions? For example: "If it rains outside, how will I complete my exercise goal?"

– Make your goals more fun. Plan small rewards for yourself for when you hit each goalpost along the way. For example, if you complete 5 exercise sessions you can treat yourself to a new outfit. Save larger rewards for later down the road.

– Track your goal progress. Looking ahead can be daunting at times. Don't forget to track your progress so you can take step back and see all you have accomplished thus far on your journey. Tracking your progress also let's you know what is and isn't working on your health and well-being journey.

EMBRACE EARLY DARKNESS

Early sunsets don't just signal winter; they offer a chance to reset. Our most recent HD Blog shares how leaning into the season can support calmer nights and healthier habits.



Blog

