



THE Y AXIS



From Fat to Fit in 2017

Let's face it. You probably need to drop a few pounds after the holidays.¹ So how are you going to tip the scale in the right direction in 2017?

Clean up your diet. Eat more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fish, nuts and legumes. And drink plenty of water.

Be more active. To help you get in shape, check out the top five fitness trends in 2017:²

1. Use a fitness tracking tool.
2. Do exercises using your body as a weight. (Think squats, pushups, and pull-ups.)
3. Do circuit training workouts.
4. Work with a personal trainer or coach.
5. Lift weights or do strength training exercises.

2017



Or just go for a walk.

COMMENTS?

Send comments to the editor:
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Practice Yoga to Control Blood Pressure

Yoga, meditation, breathing help reduce stress

Inside the quiet and tranquil Mystic Springs Oasis there's a 5,000-pound yoga instructor named Nangi. She has tattoos. She wears bracelet jewelry. And she also teaches meditation. She's an elephant in the Disney movie *Zootopia*. Despite her size, Nangi moves with ease from one pose to the next: Bird Dog, Seated Angle Pose, Accomplished Pose, and Forward Bend.

Nangi, a fictional character, likely has her blood pressure under control. But a lot of people don't. In fact, one in three adults has high blood pressure. It's a problem that can raise the risk for a heart attack or stroke, poor circulation, and other health problems.

What can you do to control blood pressure? Eat a low-sodium diet and healthy foods. Lose weight or maintain a healthy weight. Exercise 30 to 60 minutes a day.

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Video: Yoga for beginners
<http://tinyurl.com/gnhe814>

Talk to your doctor and take medication if necessary. And manage stress in healthy ways. There's more than one way to do this, but yoga and meditation appear to help.

In a recent study, researchers tracked blood pressure in a group of people for three months.³ One group did yoga, meditation, and breathing exercises for about an hour a day.

Their blood pressure went down. Other groups in the study didn't see a change in blood pressure.

Want to keep your blood pressure in check? Take a yoga class (sorry, Nangi isn't taking any more students). Watch a yoga video and

follow along. Learn a few basic poses (called asanas), and develop your own yoga routine to reduce stress and keep your heart healthy.

Even One Soda a Day Raises Diabetes Risk

Choose water instead of drinks sweetened with sugar



Pop open a can or twist the cap on a soft drink. The fizzy sound can trigger a gulping reflex for some people. The average American drinks 53 gallons of soda a year. And it's one reason why health experts believe one in three people could have type 2 diabetes by 2050.⁴

If you want to cut your risk for diabetes, make "Drink more water" one of your New Year's resolutions. Just one can of soda a day may rise the risk. High blood sugar can lead to poor circulation, kidney problems, blindness, and early death.

A recent study found a link between drinking soda and high blood sugar.⁵ Researchers looked at data on about 310,000 people. They found that people who drink one to two cans of soda a day (12 ounces or more) are 26 percent more likely to develop diabetes than those who don't drink it.



RECIPE Hot Ginger Tea

Need a way to combat cold weather and improve your health? Research shows ginger can help reduce inflammation, prevent certain types of cancer, and strengthen your immune system.⁹ Drink hot ginger tea. It's easy to make.

Ingredients

3 ounces thinly-sliced ginger root
1 C of water
Honey (to taste)

Directions

1. Add one cup of water to cooking pot or tea kettle.
2. Add ginger root and heat until boiling.
3. Strain to remove any ginger root pulp.
4. Add honey to taste. Stir and enjoy.

Chill Out: How to Exercise in Cold Weather



Winter weather doesn't have to stop you from working out

It's too cold to go out. That's a classic excuse to avoid exercising when the temperature drops. But cold weather doesn't have to keep you from getting outdoors.

Every year, a small group of runners bundle up to brave temperatures around -22° F to run the Antarctic Ice Marathon. Race officials make sure runners have the proper clothing for the conditions. The runners wear layers of thermal, fleece, and windproof clothing. They also cover their hands, feet, head, and face to run in the cold. And along the frozen 26.2-mile course, runners can take breaks in heated tents.

Ice Marathon Race Director Richard Donovan says it's very important to keep the hands, feet, and ears warm. These are the most at risk in cold temps.⁷

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How cold is too cold for outdoor exercise?
<http://tinyurl.com/hhbhsjq>

Cold-weather exercising is great if you are prepared. But experts suggest you exercise indoors when temperatures or the wind chill factor drops below 0° F.

What to wear

For exercising in "normal" cold weather, take a tip from cold-weather exercise experts.⁸ Dress in layers of clothing – a jacket, hat, gloves, tights, long-sleeve shirt, and undershirt. The layers help maintain your body heat and wick moisture away from your skin. As your body temperature increases during your workout, you can remove a layer. Take care to protect your hands, ears, and feet with thick, warm gloves, socks, and stocking cap.

If you have asthma or other breathing problems, talk with your doctor. You may need to avoid exercising in cold weather. And if it's too cold, stay indoors. Go to the gym, walk at the mall, or use a treadmill or stationary bike. @

Even One Soda a Day Raises Diabetes Risk (continued from page 1)

Diet soda not much better

But don't bank on switching to diet soda as the answer. A separate study found that drinking artificially-sweetened beverages still raises the risk for diabetes.⁶

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Learn more about soft drinks and disease
<http://tinyurl.com/hwd8kcy>

How often do you drink soda? Once a day or more? Maybe it's time to rethink your drink. Drink more water. And if you want a little flavor, add lemon or lime slices. Or try unsweetened fruit juice. Anything you can do to reduce your risk of diabetes is worth the effort. @

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8. McCormick, B. (2002). Field manual for the United States Antarctic Program. Centennial, CO: Raytheon Polar Services Company.
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Take the January Health Challenge!

Track Your Eating Habits: Keep a record of your food choices

Ask the Wellness Doctor:

This month Dr. Joe Raphael answers the question:
How can I get the most out of using a fitness tracking tool?