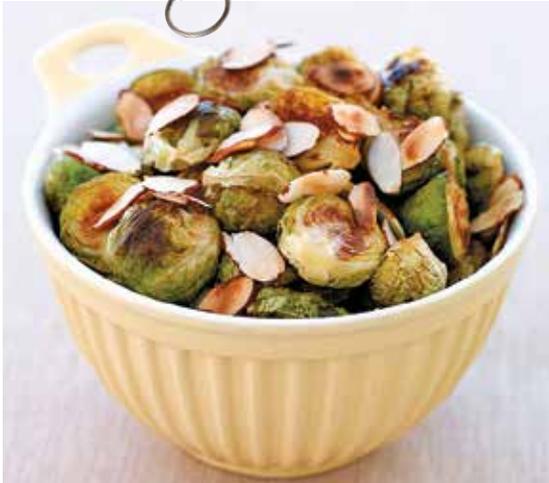




the CommonHealth Compass



Take 10 For You! Improve Your Health in Just 10 Minutes a Day



CommonHealth’s new health improvement campaign, *Take 10 For You... Improve Your Health in Just 10 Minutes a Day*, is now underway. The program takes a closer look at breaking the “I don’t have time” barrier that may be preventing you from making healthy choices. We address how small changes can add up to big improvements, and learn how we can revitalize, simplify, relax, connect, and take care of ourselves in just 10 minutes a day. Discover ways to lower your stress, reduce clutter, improve your health, give yourself peace of mind, as well as prevent, reduce, and even reverse your risk for chronic disease. Remember to strive for progress, not perfection, and let CommonHealth show you how to start making permanent and positive life changes. Ask your agency CommonHealth Coordinator to schedule a program today.



Walking Group Travels the Globe!

The Virginia State Bar walking group – The BAR BELLES – have created an incredible walking group. They accumulate their steps and take virtual walks all around the world. They even keep a scrapbook of their adventures. They started with CommonHealth Weight Loss Challenge 2013 and have kept walking.



How do they do it? They each keep track of individual steps, the steps are turned into their organizer on Fridays and she totals the steps for the week. The steps are then divided by 2,000 (roughly 2,000 steps equal a mile). She uses Mapquest to determine the miles.

Where have they been? One virtual trip was to Virginia Beach. They walked there and back while other staff attended the Annual Meeting of the State Bar members. Their current trip is visiting 11 endangered landmarks across the country. They started in James City County and traveled to JFK terminal in New York, then to Massachusetts, Maine, Ohio, Montana, Alaska, California, Arizona, Texas and finally Puerto Rico. They do a little sightseeing in each place with postcards and attraction information. They should be “home” in the next few months.



Roasted Brussels Sprouts with Toasted Almonds

4 PointsPlus Value
Prep time: 12 min
Cook time: 22 min
Serves: 4²/₃ cup per serving

Roasting vegetables brings out their natural sweetness. Try this method with other thick-cut vegetables such as onion wedges, pepper chunks and carrot sticks

- 20 oz uncooked Brussels sprouts, trimmed of outer tough leaves and cut in half lengthwise
- 2 Tbsp olive oil, extra-virgin
- 1 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
- ¼ tsp sea salt
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- 2 Tbsp sliced almonds

Instructions

Preheat oven to 425°F.
In a large bowl, combine Brussels sprouts, oil, vinegar, salt and pepper; toss to mix and coat and then spread on a nonstick baking sheet. Roast, stirring once, until nice and brown, about 20 to 22 minutes.
Meanwhile, in a small skillet, cook almonds over medium heat, stirring constantly, until golden brown and fragrant, about 3 to 4 minutes. Mix toasted almonds with cooked Brussels sprouts and serve hot.

<http://www.weightwatchers.com>

Five Diet Resolutions for 2014

Are you making bold resolutions in the New Year to “eat right” – whatever that means? Stop trying to overhaul your entire diet in a day! Resolve to think small and you can reach any diet goal – one focused step at a time. Why not start with these simple tips?

New Year’s Diet Resolution No. 1: Go Slow

Resolving to get more fiber in your diet this year? Maybe more fish or fresh fruit? Any diet change is easier if you take slow, small steps. For example:

- Vow to add a piece of produce to your brown bag lunch daily.
- Designate a day as fish day.
- Package up a single serving of your favorite whole-grain cereal, then treat it as your midmorning snack.

New Year’s Diet Resolution No 2: Water, Water, Everywhere

Water: It’s cheap, fat-free, and gives your body a quenching boost. Find the idea of eight cups a day daunting? Think small:

- Drink one glass first thing in the morning, before you brush your teeth.
- Tempted by more soda? Another glass of wine? Drink a cup of water with a splash of your favorite beverage in it first.
- Resolve to drink one more cup of water today than you had yesterday.

New Year’s Diet Resolution No. 3: Go for the Gold... and Red... and Purple

Colorful produce is packed with disease-fighting plant compounds, so when you shop, reach for a rainbow.

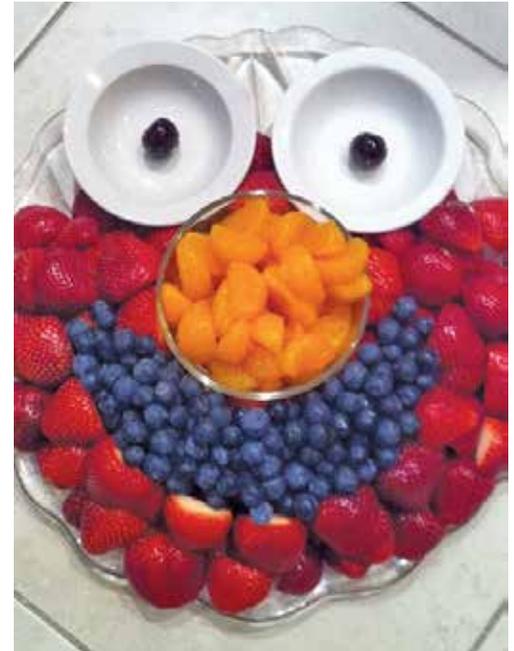
- Designate a color-a-day. Maybe Mondays are yellow, with grapefruit, golden apples, or corn starring in meals, while Tuesdays are purple with plum and eggplant.
- Get the kids involved and go for a theme: Build a green pizza with emerald bell peppers and artichokes, or a red produce-infused chili.
- Vary the rainbow – pick up a new-to-you fruit or veggie the next time you shop.

New Year’s Diet Resolution No 4: Tackle Mindless Munching

You’re chatting with friends around the dinner table or watching a DVD – and you just keep nibbling. Try these tips to reign in the munchies:

- Pop a stick of gum or a sugar-free mint in your mouth.
- Brush or floss your teeth.

- Pay attention – look at each piece of food you plan to eat.
- Busy your hands with a glass of water, a cup of tea, or cleaning off the table.



New Year’s Diet Resolution No 5: Stack the Odds in Your Favor

Don’t forget to help yourself succeed, and to reach out for help when you need it.

- Buddy up with a friend or family member with diet and weight loss resolutions. Then share your ideas, plans, and successes regularly.
- Leave the temptations – ice cream, chips, soda – at the grocery store. Promise yourself you’ll cater to cravings only outside the home, in one-serving portions.
- Socialize with non-food events. Get your friends together in the park, for a hike, or at the movies.

Bonus New Year’s Diet Resolution: Baby Your Body

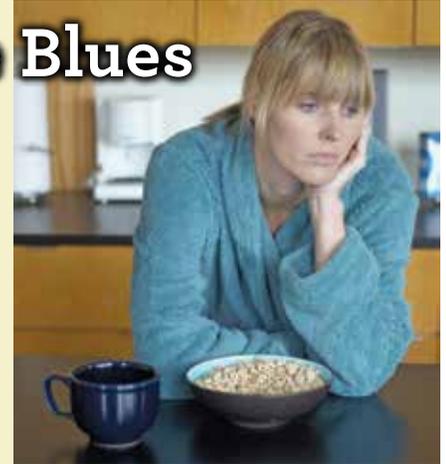
Prevention: It’s a lot less daunting than treating a chronic condition, so do the little things that keep your body thriving.

- Get moving 30 minutes a day most days. Go for a walk, give the car a good scrub, take a hike. Whatever gets the blood pumping qualifies!
- Get those tests you know you need. Cholesterol checks, prostate exams, pap smears – stay ahead of the game by staying healthy.
- Get all the snooze-time you need. Sleep helps body and soul recharge, stay healthy, and cope with stress.

Take enough steps and you’ll reach any goal. Resolve to make a few small diet resolutions this year and then just watch how far you’ll go!

Shorter Days, Holidays, and the Blues

Depression can strike at anytime, and directly affects the workplace, so recognizing and addressing it can make a world of difference – not just for the employee with the blues but for the whole team too!



- Depression is the leading cause of medical disability for people aged 14 to 44 (Stewart, Ricci, Chee, Hahn, & Morganstein, 2003).
- Eighty percent of depressed people are impaired in their daily functioning (Pratt & Brody, 2008).
- People with symptoms of depression are 2.17 times more likely to take sick days (Adler, et al., 2006; Greener & Guest, 2007). And when they are at work their productivity is impaired—less ability to concentrate, lower efficiency, and less ability to organize work.

Everyone feels sad occasionally, but when a person experiences these emotions intensely and for long periods of time, it can be a signal of clinical depression, a medical illness that affects your mood, behavior, thinking and health.

Depression is a common illness, not a weakness. Just like any other illness, depression must be diagnosed by a health care provider. Fortunately, more than 80 percent of depressed people can be treated quickly and effectively.

Symptoms of depression may include depressed mood or loss of interest for weeks or longer; major weight loss or gain in a short time, overeating or loss of appetite; excessive sleepiness or insomnia; restlessness, irritability, agitation; fatigue or loss of energy; feeling worthless or excessively guilty; difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions; excessive crying; aches and pains that do not resolve; and suicidal thoughts. In the workplace, there may be decreased productivity, morale problems, lack of cooperation, safety risks or accidents, absenteeism, alcohol/drug use, difficulty getting along with co-workers, presenteeism (working but not fully engaged), and complaints of aches, pains, or tiredness.

Early intervention is key, so discussing depression with employees and encouraging the use of Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) can be worthwhile for everyone. Mayo clinic offers a quick self-assessment at http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/depression/MH00103_D. While the assessment can't give you a diagnosis of depression, it can help you evaluate your mood, so you can seek treatment if necessary.

Call Employee Assistance At Any Time

Sometimes life can become a bit overwhelming – too many bills to pay, caring for our parents or older relatives, keeping up with our children's activities plus trying to find time for ourselves. If you are enrolled in a state health plan, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is there for you, your covered dependents and members of your household, with counseling and resources to help in achieving a healthy work-life balance.

All state health plans include an EAP. Up to four free counseling sessions with a licensed mental health provider are provided per incident each plan year. In addition, members may contact the EAP for 24/7 assistance with:

- Work/life balance and other issues of daily living such as:
 - Depression
 - Work and family stress
 - Substance abuse
 - Child and elder care issues
- Legal, financial and other consultation services, including credit monitoring, debt and budgeting assistance, mediation services and retirement planning.
- Referrals and resources regarding child and elder care, comparison shopping, travel assistance, education resources, and more.

Each plan's website features articles, webinars and other helpful tips for members. You may also contact your plan for additional information.

EAP Contacts

COVA Care and COVA HDHP - Anthem
 855-223-9277
www.anthemEAP.com

COVA HealthAware – Aetna
 888-238-6232
www.mylifevalues.com

Kaiser Permanente HMO - Kaiser
 866-517-7042
www.achievesolutions.net/kaiser

Stretching Exercises at Your Desk: 10 Simple Tips

1. Just stand up and sit down – no hands

- You might have gotten a gold star in preschool for sitting still, but it just goes to show you (best sellers notwithstanding) that not all of us learned everything we need to know in kindergarten. “If you stand up and sit down (over and over) – without using your hands – it can be a challenge,” says Smith. “Do it while you’re on the phone; no one will know.”

2. Substitute exercise for sitting – while you work

- Get rid of your desk chair and substitute an exercise ball, suggests Smith. “I used it for a while when I was having low-back problems; it was great,” Smith says. “All day you are engaging all the muscles in the back, legs, butt, everything, to stay balanced.”

3. Shrug your shoulders – to release the neck and shoulders

- Inhale deeply and shrug your shoulders, lifting them high up to your ears. Hold. Release and drop. Repeat three times.
- Move your head up and down and side to side. (Shedding tension is as much mental as physical.)

4. Loosen the hands with air circles

- Clench both fists, stretching both hands out in front of you.
- Make circles in the air, first in one direction, to the count of ten.
- Then reverse the circles.
- Shake out the hands.

5. Point your fingers – good for hands, wrist, and forearms

- Stretch your left hand out in front of you, pointing fingers toward the floor. Use your right hand to increase the stretch, pushing your fingers down and toward the body. Be gentle.
- Do the same with the other hand.
- Now stretch your left hand out straight in front, wrist bent, with fingers pointing skyward. Use your right hand to increase the stretch, pulling the fingers back toward your body.
- Do the same on the other side.

6. Release the upper body with a torso twist

- Inhale and as you exhale, turn to the right and grab the back of your chair with your right hand, and grab the arm of the chair with your left.
- With eyes level, use your grasp on the chair to help twist your torso around as far to the back of the room as possible. Hold the twist and let your eyes continue the stretch – see how far around the room you can peer.
- Slowly come back to facing forward. Repeat on the other side.

7. Do leg extensions – work the abs and legs

- Grab the seat of your chair to brace yourself and extend your legs straight out in front of you so they are parallel to the floor. Flex and point your toes five times. Release.
- Repeat.

8. Stretch your back with a “big hug”

- Hug your body, placing the right hand on your left shoulder and the left hand on your right shoulder.
- Breathe in and out, releasing the area between your shoulder blades.

9. Cross your arms – for the shoulders and upper back

- Extend one arm out straight in front of you. With the other hand, grab the elbow of the outstretched arm and pull it across your chest, stretching your shoulder and upper back muscles.
- Hold. Release. Stretch out the other arm in front of you – repeat.

10. Stretch your back and shoulders with a “leg hug”

- Sit on the edge of your chair (if it has wheels, wedge the chair against the desk or wall to make sure it does not roll). Put your feet together, flat on the floor.
- Lean over, chest to knees, letting your arms dangle loosely to the floor. Release your neck.
- Now bring your hands behind your legs, right hand grasping left wrist, forearm (or elbow if you can reach that far), left hand grasping the right. Feel the stretch in your back, shoulders and neck. Hold.
- Release your hands to the floor again.
- Repeat three times or as often as it feels good.

Source: By Susan Seliger, WebMD Feature Reviewed by Brunilda Nazario, MD
<http://www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/features/stretching-exercises-at-your-desk-12-simple-tips>.



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