



the CommonHealth Compass

Metabolism Makeover

Ever wondered why it seems one person can eat anything they want and not gain a pound, while another person's every indulgence shows up on the scale? It's because of differences in metabolism, muscle mass and physical activity.



Metabolism is the body's process of converting food into energy that we need to survive and function on a day to day basis. This energy is used to stay warm, move around and keep vital organs functioning. A

faster metabolism uses energy (calories) quickly, while a slower metabolism uses less energy to keep the body running.

Knowing that, it's tempting to throw up our hands and blame weight issues on a slow metabolism. But that's not the end of the story. There are many factors that we can control. Join CommonHealth to learn more about boosting your metabolism and maintaining a healthy weight.



RECIPE

Black Bean & Salmon Tostadas

Pickled jalapeños, cilantro and avocado perk up convenient canned salmon for a quick tostada topping. Skip store-bought and make your own crispy shells in the oven. Serve with: Brown rice cooked with diced tomatoes and onions or salsa.

Cook: 25 min. | Ready In: 25 min.



Ingredients

- 8 6-inch corn tortillas
- Canola oil cooking spray
- One 6- to 7-ounce can boneless, skinless wild Alaskan salmon, drained
- One avocado, diced
- 2 tablespoons minced pickled jalapeños, plus 2 tablespoons pickling juice from the jar, divided
- 2 cups coleslaw mix (see Tip) or shredded cabbage
- 2 tablespoons chopped cilantro
- One 15-ounce can black beans, rinsed
- 3 tablespoons reduced-fat sour cream
- 2 tablespoons prepared salsa
- 2 scallions, chopped
- Lime wedges (optional)

Directions

1. Position racks in upper and lower thirds of the oven; preheat to 375°F.
2. Coat tortillas on both sides with cooking spray. Place on 2 baking sheets. Bake, turning once, until light brown, 12 to 14 minutes.
3. Combine salmon, avocado and jalapenos in a bowl. Combine cabbage, cilantro and the pickling juice in another bowl. Process black beans, sour cream, salsa and scallions in a food processor until smooth. Transfer to a microwave-safe bowl. Cover and microwave on High until hot, about 2 minutes.
4. To assemble tostadas, spread each tortilla with some bean mixture and some salmon mixture and top with the cabbage salad. Serve with lime wedges, if desired.

Kitchen tip: Look for convenient preshredded cabbage-and-carrot "coleslaw mix" near other prepared vegetables in the produce section of the supermarket.

Cut Down on Dishes: A rimmed baking sheet is great for everything from roasting to catching accidental drips and spills. For effortless cleanup and to keep your baking sheets in tip-top shape, line them with a layer of foil before each use

Recipe By: EatingWell Test Kitchen, <http://www.eatingwell.com/recipe/249998/black-bean-salmon-tostadas/print/>



Power Up with Breakfast

Breakfast gives you energy to start the day. A healthy breakfast is important for everyone. Get the morning nutrition you need with these quick breakfast ideas.

- Make instant oatmeal with fat-free or low-fat milk instead of water. Toss in raisins or dried cranberries and chopped walnuts. Or mix in $\frac{1}{4}$ cup unsweetened applesauce and sprinkle with apple pie spice or cinnamon.
- Layer fat-free or low-fat plain yogurt with your favorite crunchy cereal and blueberries.
- Blend a breakfast smoothie with low-fat milk, frozen strawberries and a banana.
- Top a toaster waffle with fat-free or low-fat yogurt and peach slices.
- Stuff a whole-wheat pita with a sliced, hard-cooked egg and low-fat shredded cheese.
- Spread peanut butter on a whole-wheat tortilla. Add a peeled, whole banana and roll it up.
- Spread low-fat cream cheese on a whole-grain toasted bagel. Top with sliced strawberries.
- Add lean ham and low-fat Swiss cheese to a toasted whole-grain English muffin.

If your taste buds just don't crave breakfast foods, try these:

- Leftover veggie pizza.
- Deli turkey, a slice of low-fat cheese and lettuce wrapped in a tortilla.
- Leftover quinoa or brown rice mixed with low-fat yogurt, dried fruit and nuts. Sprinkle with cinnamon.

RECIPE

Wintertime Cereal

Ingredients

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup wheat and barley nugget cereal
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup 100-percent bran cereal
- 2 teaspoons toasted sunflower seeds
- 2 teaspoons toasted almonds, sliced
- 1 tablespoon raisins
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup bananas, sliced
- 1 cup strawberries, sliced
- 1 cup raspberry or strawberry flavored low-fat yogurt

Directions

1. Mix the wheat and barley nugget cereal, bran cereal, sunflower seeds and almonds in a medium bowl. Add raisins, bananas and half of the strawberries.
2. Gently stir in the yogurt and divide between two bowls.
3. Scatter the remaining strawberries over the top and enjoy!

Nutritional Information

Serves: 2

Calories: 352; Total fat: 6g; Saturated fat: 1g; Carbohydrate: 69g; Sodium: 272mg; Fiber: 8g

Source: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, Reviewed by Taylor Wolfram, MS, RDN, LDN

<http://www.eatright.org/resource/food/planning-and-prep/snack-and-meal-ideas/power-up-with-breakfast>

10 Brain Boosting Foods and Strategies

What is one of the best choices you can make to nourish, protect and boost brain power? A simple and easy-to-implement answer to this question is to eat more unprocessed whole foods, which are naturally full of vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and phytochemicals.

Studies show that people who eat more vegetables and fruits perform better on cognitive tests, while those who eat a lot of sugar and saturated fats are more likely to have some learning impairment. Remember, when choosing foods, it is important to consider both calories (energy density) as well as the nutrients they contain (nutrient density). This eating strategy will help to support optimal physical and brain health.

Omega 3 Fats - Studies showed that fatty acid and fish intake help with cognitive function. Consider consuming marine foods high in EPA and DHA throughout the week (e.g., salmon, mackerel and halibut).



Coffee/Caffeine - Caffeine is a plant alkaloid that physiologically acts to increase the excitability of the sympathetic nervous system. Higher lifetime coffee consumption has been associated with better performance on cognitive function tests. However, recommendations are to consume no more than three cups.



Green Tea - Green tea has been purported to have a number of physical and cognitive health benefits. Evidence shows that green tea may possess potent activities of neuroprotection and amyloid precursor protein processing leading to cognitive enhancement. A higher consumption of green tea is associated with a lower prevalence of cognitive impairment. Enjoy an extra cup of green tea!

Carbohydrates - Glucose is the main metabolic fuel of the brain. The rate of glucose delivery from food to the bloodstream depends on the nature of carbohydrates in the diet, which can be classified as the glycaemic index (GI) and glycaemic load (GL). A low glycaemic breakfast has been shown to promote better cognitive performances later in the morning. Try to focus on eating low GI and GL carbohydrates, such as vegetables, some fruits and unprocessed whole grains.

Blueberries - Blueberries contain polyphenolic compounds (anthocyanins) which have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects. Anthocyanins have been associated with increased neuronal signaling in brain centers, mediating memory function as well as improved glucose disposal.



Dark Chocolate - Cocoa and chocolate are a rich source of flavonoids, which have potent antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. Research has also shown favorable effects on neurocognition and behavior. The neurobiological actions of flavanols are believed to occur via the expression of neuroprotective and neuromodulatory proteins that promote neurogenesis, neuronal function, brain connectivity, blood-flow improvement and angiogenesis in the brain and sensory systems. Add a dash of raw cacao to smoothies in the morning or in a hot drink.



Walnuts - Walnuts contain the n-3 fatty acids α -linolenic acid and linoleic acid, and are a rich dietary source of polyphenols, antioxidants and lipids. Walnut supplementation has been shown to have favorable effects on motor and cognitive ability. Grab some blueberries and walnuts as part of your breakfast or a snack!

Turmeric (Curcumin) - Curcumin, from the curry spice turmeric, has been shown to possess potent antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties and to reduce β -amyloid and plaque burden. Those who consumed curry "occasionally" and "often or very often" had significantly better Mini-Mental State Examination scores than did subjects who "never or rarely" consumed curry. Add spice to your egg dish with a sprinkle of turmeric, or if curry is your thing, enjoy it with the added perk of knowing its health benefits.

Resistance Exercise - Aging is a dynamic and progressive process involving morphological, functional, hemodynamic, and psychological changes, all of which reduce one's ability to adapt to the environment as well as increase vulnerability to pathological processes. The central nervous system and cognitive functioning also undergo changes with aging, such as neuronal loss, which results in a decline in cognitive performance. Cognitive functions most susceptible to senescence include attention, memory, and central executive functions. Many researchers have emphasized the role of moderate- and high-intensity resistance exercise programs on optimal physical and cognitive functioning. Make resistance training a part of your exercise routine.

Be Sure to Know Your Numbers!

Good health begins with preventive wellness care. Knowing your cholesterol numbers is a great step toward good health. The Local Choice (TLC) CommonHealth wellness program offers health screenings every two years. The confidential health screenings are done at your worksite for convenient, quick results. At the screening, you will instantly learn your blood pressure, cholesterol, Diabetes Risk Assessment and random blood glucose sample, and Body Mass Index (BMI).

Knowing your numbers from regular medical screenings can empower you to make the best choices for your health. Early detection of health risks is important in preventing chronic diseases. If your results point toward a health concern you will be offered educational materials, be advised to follow up with your healthcare provider, and a nurse will contact you with additional information on the condition.

All TLC participants may participate, including full-time, part-time, and wage employees. Additionally, retirees and dependents (18 years or older) who are covered under the TLC health insurance plan may participate. To schedule a health screening, please contact your Regional Coordinator.



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Family Corner

Looking to break up the short days of winter and get out and about with the family? Plan a trip to one of Virginia's indoor family fun spots. Whether your family enjoys hands-on museums, laser tag, rock climbing, or splashing at a water park, Virginia has many options for indoor fun in your region. Check out this [list of ideas](#) from the [Virginia is for Lovers](#) blog and plan your trip today. Be sure to let the whole family know about your plans so that everyone has something to look forward to!

If your budget is dictating that you spend more time at home this winter, check out the [Day By Day Literacy Calendar](#) from the Library of Virginia which has expanded to offer a "[Be Healthy](#)" tab. Topics and activities include everything from indoor exercises, to having the whole family be prepared in an emergency, to getting enough rest. Try something new that will help your kids establish healthier behaviors this winter that will last a lifetime.



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