



# the CommonHealth Compass

## 5 MINUTE MEAL Deli Roll

Microwave tortilla for 10 seconds (so it won't tear), place deli meat, veggies and slice of cheese on tortilla and roll. You can add mustard or another condiment. Pair with your favorite fruit and you are good to go! I like to do 2 of the smaller tortillas, they are easier to pack. Each fully made wrap will run around 200-250 calories. Load up on the veggies if you need more bulk and less calories!

### Try these variations:

*(Also great as a sandwich or stuffed in a pita pocket)*

- 3 oz. lean roast beef, cheddar cheese, arugula and a couple of tablespoons of non-fat Greek yogurt mixed with horseradish.
- 3 oz. sliced chicken breast, spinach, honey mustard and Swiss cheese.

Recipe provided by: Victoria Tate RDN, CSSD, American Family Fitness West End



## Dial It Down Stress Less

Are you stressed? Maybe you feel it, maybe you don't. Either way you probably have stress, as 70% of Americans admit to feeling stressed during the workday. Deadlines. Challenging colleagues. Hostile customers. Too much work, not enough time.

Whatever it is that causes you stress, you probably have it. How does it affect you? Do you have headaches? Are you sick? Do you have trouble concentrating? There are ways you can help lessen the stress in your life and you can handle it better!



Why is this so important? Stress can cause illness, decrease productivity, be very costly, and can even increase your weight gain. So CommonHealth wants you to Dial it Down to Stress Less! Join us for our latest campaign and learn fun and practical ways to decrease your stress and improve how it affects you, so that you have fewer health risks! Incentive gifts are available for participants while supplies last.

Contact your Regional Coordinator to schedule an onsite training today and participate in our Wellness Wednesdays starting in January.

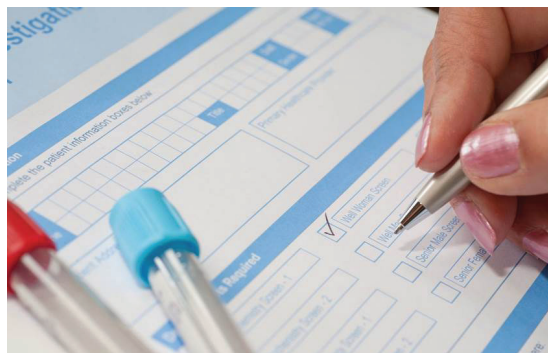


## Welcome 2016 with a Health Screening

Regular health exams and screenings are important because they can help to identify potential health problems in the early stages, when they may be easier to treat.

Through The Local Choice, CommonHealth offers free confidential health checks at your workplace. At the screening, participants will instantly learn their blood pressure, cholesterol, Diabetes Risk Assessment, and Body Mass Index (BMI). Over the years, these screenings have identified previously unknown health risks such as high blood pressure and high cholesterol for many employees.

Early detection of health risks is important in preventing chronic diseases. Your health is ultimately your responsibility, and paying attention to important health screenings is one of the most important things you can do to live a long and vital life. Contact your CommonHealth Regional Coordinator to schedule a health screening today.



# Physical Activity and Blood Pressure

**Physical activity** not only helps **control your blood pressure**, it also helps you manage your weight, strengthen your heart and manage your stress level. A healthy weight, a strong heart and general emotional health are all good for your blood pressure. Exercise in our culture may not “just happen.” Taking charge of your fitness may be one of the best decisions you’ll ever make. The choice is yours.

**Regular physical activity helps to reduce blood pressure, control weight and reduce stress.**

## What happens if I’m inactive?

Regular physical activity helps to improve overall health and fitness. People who aren’t physically active are much more likely to develop health problems. Even moderately intense physical activity, such as brisk walking, is beneficial when done regularly for a total of 30 minutes or longer at least 5 days a week. Lack of physical activity increases your



risk for **heart attack** and **stroke** and can contribute to obesity. On the other hand, regular physical activity helps to reduce blood pressure, **control weight** and **reduce stress**.

## American Heart Association Recommendation

For overall health benefits to the heart, lungs and circulation, perform any moderate- to vigorous-intensity aerobic activity using the following guidelines:

- For most healthy people, get the equivalent of at least 150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes) per week of moderate-intensity physical activity, such as brisk walking.
- If you need to lower your blood pressure or cholesterol, aim for 40 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity 3 to 4 times per week.
- You can incorporate your weekly physical activity with 30 minutes a day on at least 5 days a week.
- Physical activity should be performed in episodes of at least 10 minutes, and preferably, it should be spread throughout the week.
- Include flexibility and stretching exercises.
- Include muscle strengthening activity at least 2 days each week.

## Find something you like!

If you love the outdoors, combine it with exercise and enjoy the scenery while you walk or jog. If you love to listen to audiobooks, enjoy them while you use an elliptical machine. When it comes to physical activity, just get moving. Find ways to enjoy and savor the benefits as you gradually increase your activity level.

## These activities are especially beneficial when done regularly:

- Brisk walking, hiking or stair-climbing
- Jogging, running, bicycling, rowing or swimming
- Fitness classes at your appropriate level
- Activities such as team sports, a dance class or fitness games

## Mix it up. Variety is good for you.

A variety of activity helps you stay interested and motivated. When you include strength and flexibility goals (using weights, resistance bands, yoga and stretching exercises), you also help reduce your chances of injury so

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you can maintain a good level of heart-healthy fitness for many years.

### Reward yourself with something that supports your goals.

- **Pay yourself.** Set aside a small amount of money for every workout. After one month, invest your payoff in something that motivates you to keep up the good work, like new music to enjoy while you walk or a new workout shirt.
- **Celebrate your milestones.** Fitness needs to be a regular part of your life, so finding ways to savor your success is important. Log your walk time or distance and write

yourself a congratulatory note when you achieve a milestone, or indulge in a massage after every 100 miles - whatever incentive works to keep you moving!

Start gradually if you have not been active for quite some time or if you are beginning a new activity or exercise program. Consult your healthcare professional if you have cardiovascular disease or any other pre-existing condition. Scientific evidence strongly shows that physical activity is safe for almost everyone. Moreover, the health benefits of physical activity far outweigh the risks.

Adapted from the American Heart Association 08/04/2014

[http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HighBloodPressure/PreventionTreatmentofHighBloodPressure/Physical-Activity-and-Blood-Pressure\\_UCM\\_301882\\_Article.jsp#.VigwsXbD\\_u](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HighBloodPressure/PreventionTreatmentofHighBloodPressure/Physical-Activity-and-Blood-Pressure_UCM_301882_Article.jsp#.VigwsXbD_u)

## How to Stop a Headache

### Prevent and treat headaches naturally with these simple lifestyle changes

Many people rely on pain medication to relieve their headaches, but pill popping isn't the best way to tame your throbbing head. More often than not, you can remedy your headaches naturally with a few simple lifestyle changes.

#### Watch Your Blood Sugar Levels

If you eat processed, prepackaged foods that are high in sugar, your blood sugar levels will spike. This isn't a good thing, because high blood sugar levels can cause headaches and make them worse. When your blood sugar spikes, your insulin level must also spike to get all the excess sugar out of your blood. This is a problem, because high levels of insulin will cause your blood sugar to dip below normal levels, leading to hypoglycemia. Just like high blood sugar levels, low blood sugar levels also cause headaches. The best thing you can do to relieve your headache symptoms is to cut out processed garbage foods from your diet. Stick to all-natural fruits, vegetables and lean meats. If you can buy your food organic, that's even better. Nonorganic and processed foods both contain chemicals that can exacerbate headache symptoms.

***More often than not, you can remedy your headaches naturally with a few simple lifestyle changes.***



#### Hot and Cold Contrast

A hot and cold contrast can work wonders for relieving headaches. All you have to do is put your feet in a bucket or tub of warm water while placing a cold compress on your head at the same time. The cold compress causes the blood vessels in your head to constrict, while the warm water helps open up the blood vessels in your lower legs and feet. This causes the blood flow in your head to be diverted down towards your lower body. When you have a headache, the blood vessels in your head become dilated, so there is more blood pumping. The excess blood pumping through your head is what causes the throbbing pain you typically feel when you have a headache. When you implement a cold and hot contrast you are constricting the blood

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vessels in your head while increasing blood flow to your lower body. This allows the pain-inducing blood flow to move away from your head down to the lower body, which reduces your pain level.

## Drink More Water

Headaches are often caused by dehydration. But if you think your headaches may be caused by dehydration, don't go guzzle a ton of water all at once. Your body can only absorb a certain amount of water at one time. If you consume a large amount of water all at once, your body won't be able to utilize it all. This could cause you to remain dehydrated. It is better to consume small amounts of water throughout the day than to chug a large amount of water all at once. If you have a headache, drink 8 to 12 ounces of water, and then continue to take small, frequent sips throughout the day.

## Move More

Moving more throughout your day can also help to ease headache pain. The movement doesn't have to be very intense for it to help. Just going on a short walk in the fresh air can do wonders, because it increases oxygen levels. Lack of oxygen can cause headaches, and movement – especially when done outdoors – increases your oxygen levels, which helps alleviate your headache symptoms. High-intensity exercise sessions on a regular basis will get your blood flowing, increase endorphins (your "feel good" hormones) and reduce stress levels. All these things will help you prevent headaches before they start.

## Get Enough Sleep

Lack of sleep is one of the primary causes of headaches. Waking up tired and having trouble falling asleep are both common problems in people who suffer from migraines. But not to worry – it's also one of the easiest things to fix. If you go to bed and wake up at the same time every day (even on the weekends), your quality of sleep will increase tremendously. I know this can be tough to do, but in order

to alleviate your headache symptoms, you must make a habit of sticking to a sleep schedule.

## Relax

Many headaches are caused by stress and tension. Try meditation, yoga and deep breathing to alleviate stress and increase the flow of oxygen in the body. A good massage can help get rid of muscular tension in the neck and shoulders, which is also associated with headaches. Massages also help to increase blood circulation in the body and are a great way to relax and decrease stress.

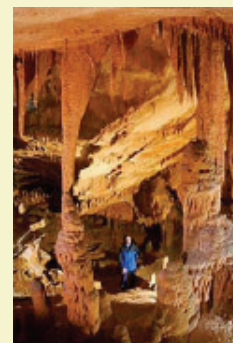
Source:

US News and World Report March 14, 2014, by Yuri Elkaim, BPHE, CK, RHN  
<http://health.usnews.com/health-news/blogs/eat-run/2014/03/14/how-to-stop-a-headache>

## FAMILY CORNER

### Virginia's Beautiful Caverns are Worth a Trip

Escape cabin fever by planning an active trip below ground. Virginia's caverns are great places to warm up on a cold winter day. Below-ground temperatures hover around 56 degrees, so caverns are the perfect attraction any time of the year. Virginia has eight caverns with some of the most spectacular formations in the country. Your children will love getting to explore and learn more about geology and the earth while you get a nice walk with the family out of the elements. To plan your trip underground, visit [www.virginia.org/caverns/](http://www.virginia.org/caverns/).



*Photo of Endless Caverns*



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[www.commonhealth.virginia.gov/tlc](http://www.commonhealth.virginia.gov/tlc)

Questions? E-mail us at [wellness@dhrm.virginia.gov](mailto:wellness@dhrm.virginia.gov).



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