



WELCOA'S
spark16
 IGNITE YOUR BEST YOU.

FEATURING
 16 GREAT WAYS TO...
**BOOST
 YOUR MOOD**
 Pages 4-5

A MONTHLY HEALTHLETTER FROM THE WELLNESS COUNCIL OF AMERICA

**Do This—
 Not That**
 During Your Work Day

In addition to getting at least 30 minutes of activity a day, focus on small movements throughout the day. Here are some tips to get you started.

DO THIS...	NOT THAT...
DO: Stand or pace when talking on the phone	DO NOT: Sit when talking on the phone
DO: Take the stairs	DO NOT: Take the elevator
DO: Set your phone alarm every 30 or 60 minutes and stand or move for one to two minutes	DO NOT: Sit all day without moving or taking breaks
DO: Fidget while sitting	DO NOT: Sit completely still while working
DO: Take a "walk and talk" meeting with colleagues	DO NOT: Sit down for more than 60 minutes during meetings
DO: Stand when doing desk work—place computer on higher table or book case	DO NOT: Sit for more than 60 minutes when performing computer or office work
DO: Walk fast and use the longest route possible to get your coffee/water, use the rest room, get a print job, etc.	DO NOT: Take short cuts or worse yet, send someone else to get your coffee/water, print jobs, etc.



What Happens **Sit?**
 When You **Sit?**

(Hint: It's Worse Than You Think)

Researchers indicate that the modern sedentary American workplace (or what has been referred to as a “desk sentence”) *may contribute more to the decline of our health and fitness than we ever imagined.*

Your Body On Chairs

When you sit for an extended period of time, (more than an hour) your muscles and body start to shut down at the metabolic level. Your calorie-burning rate immediately plunges and key fat-burning enzymes responsible for breaking down triglycerides (a type of fat) simply start switching off. And it doesn't stop there. Prolonged sitting increases your risk for heart disease because enzymes that keep blood fats in check are inactive. Moreover, the less you move, the less blood sugar your body uses, and so the risk of developing type 2 diabetes increases.

And if all of this wasn't enough, here's one more item to consider. If you sit for extended periods each day, research suggests that 30 minutes in the gym may not be enough to counteract the detrimental effects of sitting.

But enough with the doom and gloom! There are some very easy steps you can take to counteract these negative effects and preserve your health.

Small Movements = BIG IMPACT

Small movements performed throughout your day can significantly thwart the effects of sitting. The best part is that doing simple movements throughout your day only requires only subtle changes to your daily work routine. Small modifications can improve muscle memory, tone and metabolism, decrease stress and increase productivity, and ultimately help your body counter the health detriments of sitting. So, in addition to your daily exercise routine, make a big effort to make small movements throughout the day.



**MORE HEALTH
 TIPS INSIDE**

This Month's Recipe:

SteelCut Oatmeal

With
Apples &
Cinnamon!

A warm bowl of oatmeal is a great way to start the day on a healthy note (especially as it gets colder!). This wholesome whole grain dish provides just the right amount of slow release carbs to fuel your muscles and brain through the morning along with a respectable dose of protein, a host of minerals, B vitamins and a special type of cholesterol-lowering fiber called beta-glucan. If you "dress it up" with a bit of nuts, fruit and super-healthy extras like wheat germ and canned pumpkin, you can take both its taste and its nutritional fire power to a whole new level of WOW!

INGREDIENTS:

¾ cup prepared steel cut oatmeal

2 heaping Tbsp of 100% canned pumpkin (Libby's is an excellent brand)

1 oz (about 1 small handful) of pecans, walnuts or nut of choice, chopped

A liberal dash or two of cinnamon

1 Tbsp of toasted wheat germ or ground flax

2 tsp of molasses, honey, maple syrup or dark brown sugar

1 small to medium diced apple with skin (about 1 cup) or fruit of choice

INSTRUCTIONS:

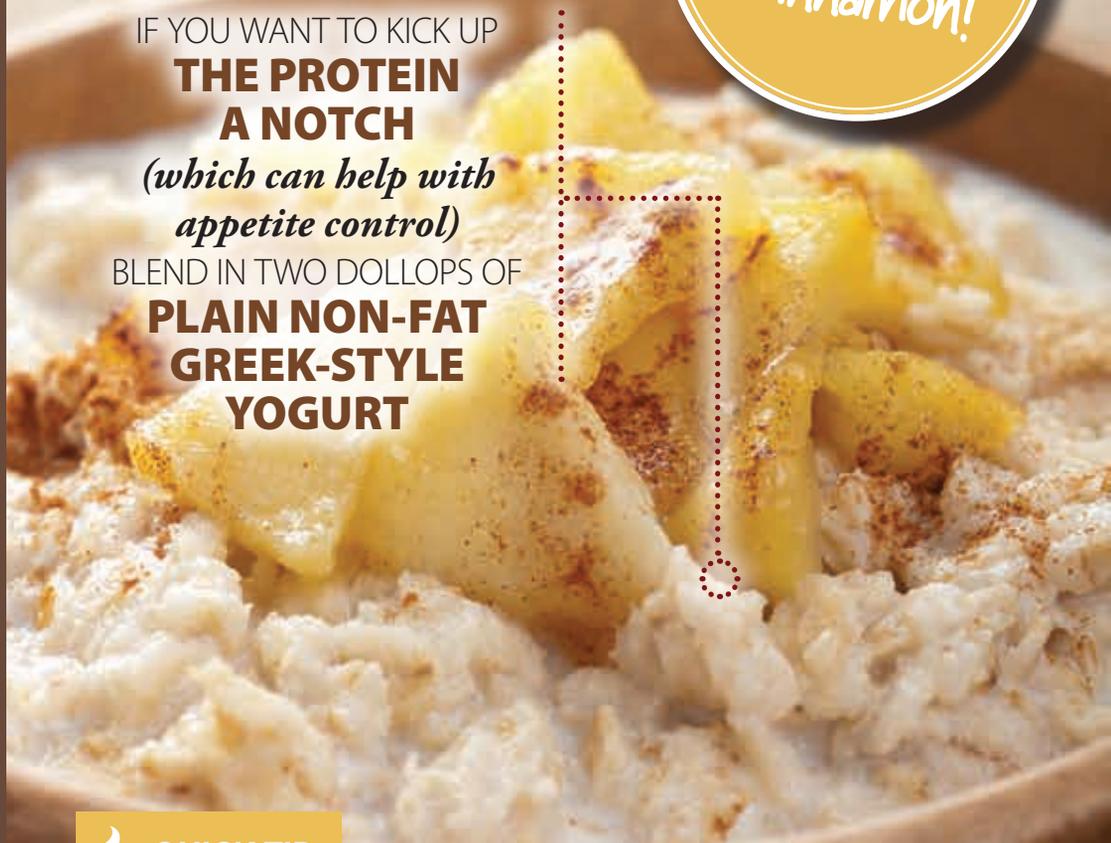
Prepare the steel cut oatmeal in water according to package instructions. Place in a bowl with the remaining ingredients.

* Old Fashioned rolled oats are fine too. Be sure to avoid packaged, flavored oatmeal however, as it is loaded with added sugar.

IF YOU WANT TO KICK UP
**THE PROTEIN
A NOTCH**

*(which can help with
appetite control)*

BLEND IN TWO DOLLOPS OF
**PLAIN NON-FAT
GREEK-STYLE
YOGURT**



QUICK TIP

Standard steel cut oats definitely take longer to cook (30 minutes), but are the healthiest and tastiest form of oats. Also referred to as coarse-cut or Irish oats, this "gourmet" type of oats is less physically processed than rolled or instant oats. This translates to a slower rise in blood sugar levels which is better for your health and your metabolism. And you will love their nutty taste and heartier texture!



Dr. Ann
Ann Kulze, M.D.

With formal training in nutrition and medicine, plus hands-on experience as a mother of four and family physician, Dr. Ann is a unique nutrition expert for the real world.

The whole food ingredients found in Dr. Ann's recipes are the right foods for health and vitality. Nutritional excellence naturally follows.

For more, visit DrAnnWellness.com.

Raw vs. Cooked Food

Is One Better Than The Other?

You may have heard or read that raw foods are better for you. But is this really true? Do raw foods offer more nutritional benefits than their cooked counterparts?

The Raw Truth

A few studies do support the belief that cooking foods tends to kill key nutrients. Heat can destroy some important nutrients like water-soluble vitamins, many antioxidants and healthy fats like omega-3s. Many foods—namely fruits and veggies—are indeed most nutritious when raw. Of course, there are some precautions and factors to keep in mind if you're thinking of turning off the stove for good.

Chew On This

Although several fruits and veggies are more nutritious in their raw and unaltered form, it's still a good idea to cook some foods common to the typical adult diet. This is especially true when it comes to raw proteins like meat, fish and eggs. Remember this: Cooking is the best defense against harmful bacteria like salmonella, E. coli, and other microscopic parasites.

Additionally, some foods are more nutritionally beneficial when cooked. For example, tomatoes offer a treasure chest of nutrients for boosting your health, but their crown jewel is a super potent antioxidant called lycopene. It just so happens that cooked tomatoes (in sauces and pastes) offer the highest concentrations of lycopene.

Quick Tip

Some vegetables are better for you raw, while others are better for you cooked. Your best bet is to include some of both each day. Include at least one cooked vegetable and one raw variety as part of your lunch and dinner.

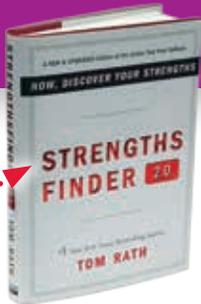


Superstar Food Of The Month: Pumpkin Seeds



'Tis the season for pumpkins! **NEWS FLASH:** Pumpkin seeds are a stand-out power food. Enjoy a handful for a quick and easy kick of protein, an all-star line-up of several key minerals including immune-boosting zinc, heart-happy monounsaturated fats, and one of nature's richest sources of cholesterol-lowering phytosterols.

BOOST YOU



Tip 13 Cool Tool

There are several personality and strength-based tools out there. One that has been tried, tested and true is StrengthsFinder 2.0. The online component allows you to discover and develop your unique strengths. Find out more at <http://strengths.gallup.com>



1 Smile, even if you don't mean it. There's good evidence that just smiling and looking like you're happy will actually make you feel happier. So smile—even if you don't have a good reason to.

2 Use your non-dominant hand to do daily tasks like brushing your teeth or hair. This simple switch promotes the growth of neurons in the brain, which can enhance your memory, mood and thinking. It's like giving your brain a regular workout, which in turn helps it stay healthy.

3 Eat a handful of walnuts. They're packed with omega-3 fats, which research indicates may help reduce anxiety and depression. Salmon and omega-3 fortified eggs are additional options.



4 Take a few seconds to look at your favorite pics. Save your favorite photos to your phone or PC and pull them up when you're feeling down. It's an instant pick-me-up!

5 Try something new once a month. It could be anything from trying a new food to taking a dance class. Whatever it is, the experience will widen your horizons and give you the confidence to try and achieve new things.

6 Stand up straight. It's so simple and you'll instantly feel better. In fact, experts note that when you maintain a tall and open stance, you'll feel more confident and levels of the stress hormone cortisol will decrease.

7 Set small goals you know you can achieve. You're never going to feel satisfied if your days seem like an endless circle without any reward or happy closure. Set a small goal that means something to you, and more importantly that you know you can achieve.



8 Drink a big glass of water. If you're dehydrated you're going to feel tired and have less energy. Plus, drinking a cool, calorie-free glass of water is just plain refreshing.

..Tips To OUR MOOD

"Action may not always bring happiness; but there is no happiness without action."

-Benjamin Disraeli

9 Get sunlight (or artificial light) as soon as you wake up. A University of Toronto study of more than 450 women found that those who got the most light, particularly in the morning, reported better moods and sleep.

10 Take three minutes to organize your desk. Clutter can make you feel overwhelmed and disorganized. So, straighten up a few items on your desk or work area. Even the illusion of order can ease the mind!

11 Take a walk outside. A study published in *BMC Public Health* found that going for a 20-minute walk outside twice a week was more restorative than the same exercise indoors.

12 Reframe a negative situation. Stuck in traffic? You just got 30 minutes of meditation time. Have to stay late at work? You're making a great impression on the boss. Make an effort to find the silver lining in any negative situation—the more optimistic you are, the better you will feel.

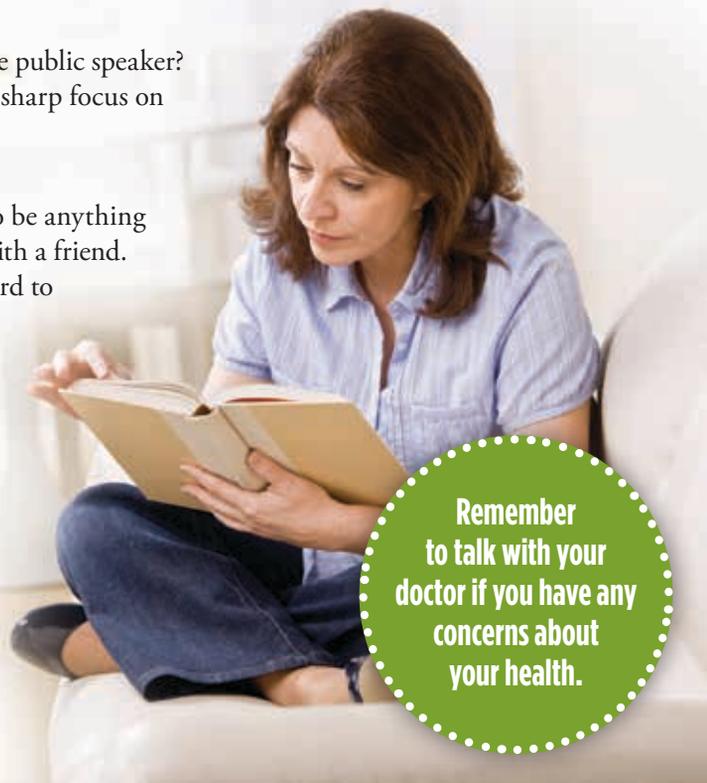
13 Focus on your strengths. Lousy cook? Terrible writer? Horrible public speaker? Don't dwell on it any longer, and let it go today. Instead, place a sharp focus on what you're good at, and further develop those talents.

***14 Reward yourself every day (yes every day!).** It doesn't have to be anything big—20 minutes to read, watching your favorite show, a walk with a friend. Find healthy things that bring you joy and you'll have a lot to look forward to every day.

15 Start the day thinking about what you're thankful for. Research shows that those who practice gratitude can cope with negative events and experiences more positively.

16 Compliment someone. Give an honest compliment to someone. The act of genuine kindness will not only uplift the receiver's spirits, but yours as well.

Remember to talk with your doctor if you have any concerns about your health.



Treating That Pain In The Neck

It's happened to most of us at one time or another. We wake up from a night's sleep with a "crick" in our neck—not able to turn or move our head without a good amount of pain and strain.

What Causes It?

Neck pain is most often caused by repeated, sudden or prolonged movements to the neck's muscles, ligaments, tendons, bones, or joints. For example, holding your head in an abnormal position for an extended period of time (i.e. sleeping on it "wrong"). Heavy lifting, playing sports and even desk work can all also cause a crick or stiff neck.

What's The Best Way To Treat It?

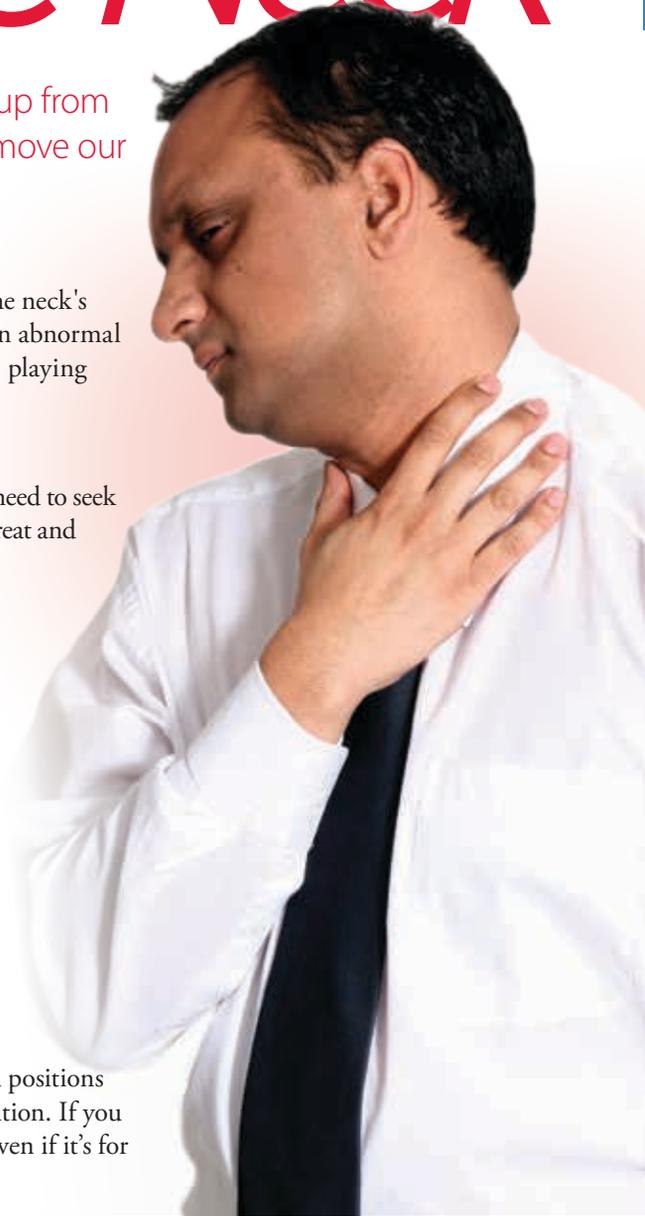
A crick or stiff neck will usually go away by itself in a few days, and most people don't need to seek medical treatment for it. In the meantime, you can leverage some simple strategies to treat and alleviate the pain in your neck:

- Try an over-the-counter pain reliever such as acetaminophen, aspirin, or ibuprofen.
- Apply heat to the neck or shoulder for 10 to 15 minutes at a time to relax the muscles. You can also alternate with ice, applying an ice pack to reduce inflammation and swelling.
- Avoid any vigorous stretching or movements that hurt—this will only aggravate the condition.

If your pain does not get better with these treatments or it begins to worsen, call your doctor.

What's The Best Way To Keep It At Bay?

If you're prone to neck pain, try gently stretching your neck muscles every day (see the column below for some quick and easy stretches). Additionally, avoid awkward positions while sleeping—don't nod off in a chair or couch with your head in a crooked position. If you work behind a desk all day, try to get up every hour to stretch and move around (even if it's for as little as 30 seconds).



QUICK & EASY NECK & SHOULDER STRETCHES

Gentle stretches that target your neck and shoulders can help keep your muscles, ligaments and tendons loose. These stretches can help you prevent a stiff neck, and moreover, they are energizing and will give you an added boost during the day!

Shoulder Blade Stretch

The shoulder blade stretch targets the muscles surrounding your shoulder blades and sides of your neck:

- Stand or sit with your back straight and shoulders back.
- Interlace your fingers and stretch your arms straight out in front of your body as far as you comfortably can.

Shoulder Rolls

These shoulder rolls can help relieve and prevent neck and muscle tension:

- Roll your shoulders down and back, starting with small circles and working up to larger circles.
- Do 10 circles backwards and then repeat forward circles.

Chin Tuck

This stretch targets the back of your neck:

- Lower your chin to your chest while keeping your shoulders nice and straight.
- Hold the stretch for 15 to 30 seconds.
- Relax and slowly lift your chin to the starting position. Repeat two to five times.

How Much Do You SIT IN A DAY?

Take This Simple Test & Find Out

As discussed in this issue's cover, an overwhelming amount of recent research is pointing to the negative impact that sitting throughout the day can have on your personal health and fitness. One of the first and most effective steps you can take to decrease the time spent on your rear is to simply identify and track the amount of time you spend sitting down.

So, take a few minutes to determine how much time you spend seated during a typical workday—use this form to track the amount of time you spend sitting. *Be sure to include your commute time as well as lunch and/or break time that you are seated during your day.*

Monitor Your Daily Sitting For One Workweek & Then Do The Math

MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI
<input type="text"/>				

Now add each day's total together = This is your average number of hours per workweek spent sitting down.

Now take your average workweek total and divide it by five = ÷ 5 = This is your average number of hours per day spent sitting down.

Surprised by the total number?? Let's see how you scored.

Daily Sitting Scores

- Excellent:** Below 1-2 hours a day along with very active/physical labor during the day
- Good:** 2-3 hours a day with moderate movements during the day
- Average:** 4-5 hours per day with some light movements during the day
- Poor:** 6 or more hours per day with no movement during the day

The average American employee spends the majority of their time seated. Estimates range from **7-8 hours per day** at their desk or at lunch as well as **an additional 5-6 hours** seated while commuting, watching TV or on their computer seated at home.

If you scored in the average or poor category, make a serious and conscious effort to get more movement throughout the day. Remember, small movements like stretching or standing for 60 seconds every 30 or 60 minutes can do wonders to thwart the negative effects of sitting.



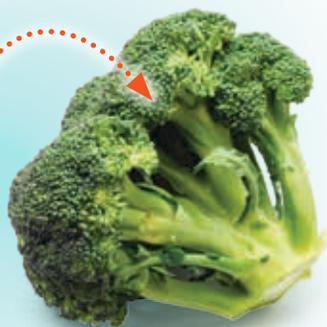
WELCOA'S **spark16**

IGNITE YOUR BEST YOU.

In every issue you'll find 16 ridiculously simple ways to stay healthy!

IN THIS ISSUE

- » The Health Hazards Of Your Chair
- » Is Raw Really Better?
- » How To Instantly Improve Your Mood
- » Make That Pain In The Neck Go Away!



DID YOU KNOW?

30
minutes

IS THE AMOUNT OF DAILY EXERCISE THAT YOU NEED TO SHOOT FOR IN ADDITION TO GETTING UP AND MOVING AROUND FOR A FEW MINUTES EVERY HOUR IF YOU SIT DURING THE DAY.

8
hours

IS THE NUMBER OF HOURS THE AVERAGE AMERICAN WORKER SPENDS SITTING. THIS DOESN'T INCLUDE THE ADDITIONAL 5-6 HOURS SPENT WATCHING TV OR COMMUTING. YIKES!

3
minutes

IS ALL IT TAKES TO CLEAR CLUTTER FROM YOUR DESK. STRAIGHTEN UP A FEW ITEMS ON YOUR DESK OR WORK AREA. EVEN THE ILLUSION OF ORDER CAN EASE THE MIND!



Proper Posture: A Must When You're Bound To Your Chair

In this issue we've covered the negative effects of prolonged sitting—but let's face it—sometimes sitting is just unavoidable. So, when you are tied to a chair, make sure you make the most of it with proper posture.

To be sure, proper posture:

- » Keeps bones and joints in the correct alignment so that muscles are being used properly.
- » Decreases the stress on the ligaments holding the joints of the spine together.
- » Prevents strain or overuse problems.
- » Prevents backache and muscular pain.
- » Contributes to a good appearance.

Quick Tips:

- » Sit up with your back straight and your shoulders back.
- » Distribute your body weight evenly on both hips.
- » Bend your knees at a right (90 degree) angle. Keep your knees even with or slightly higher than your hips (use a foot rest or stool if necessary).
- » Keep your feet flat on the floor.
- » Avoid crossing your legs.

What's In A Number?

1 HOUR

When you sit for 1 hour or more without moving, your muscles and body start to shut down at the metabolic level. Prolonged sitting also increases your risk for heart disease and developing type 2 diabetes.



60 SECONDS

The amount of time spent on small movements (stretching, standing, etc.) every hour that can counteract the effects of sitting.

