



JANUARY 2016 HEALTHYROADS® NEWSLETTER

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Welcome to HEALTHYROADS!

In this monthly newsletter, you'll find a collection of articles on popular health and wellness topics. If you'd like additional support in your quest to lose weight, improve nutrition, develop an exercise plan, reduce stress, or quit smoking, visit us online at www.healthyroads.com. There you can find a collection of tools to help you reach your health goals.



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Wellness and Healthy Living Preventing and Caring for Concussions

Concussions are the most common form of traumatic brain injury, or TBI. They can change the way your brain functions for a few days or longer. Blows to the head can cause TBI. Violent jolts to the brain, such as those that can occur with whiplash, can also cause them. Contact sports are common culprits, but the impact caused by a motor or bike crash, fall, fight, or blasts may also be to blame. To help lower your risk of concussion:

- * **Wear the right type of protective gear for any sport or activity.** Be sure to wear well-fitted headgear, wear it the right way, and keep it in good shape.
- * **Drive and ride safely.** Wear your seatbelt, follow driving laws and speed limits, focus on driving, and don't use drugs, alcohol, or mobile devices while driving.
- * **Keep your home safe.** Be sure dark or dim areas are well lit before you enter, and remove or secure items that might cause you to trip or fall. Block off stairways and install window guards if you have young children in your home.
- * **Get routine exercise.** Add workouts that strengthen your leg and core muscles and to help improve your balance in addition to cardiovascular exercise.

If you have experienced a blow to your head or whiplash-type injury, call your doctor right away or

seek emergency medical care if you have any of the following:

- * Lasting or recurrent vomiting or dizziness
- * Loss of consciousness that lasts longer than 30 seconds
- * Seizure(s); drowsiness, confusion, or disorientation
- * Large bumps or bruises on the head
- * Headache that worsens over time
- * Weakness or numbness that persists; slurred or other changes in speech
- * Changes in behavior, such as mood swings, crankiness, or crying a lot
- * Changes in physical coordination, such as stumbling or clumsiness
- * Vision or eye issues, such as pupils that are not equal sizes or are enlarged

Go over your care plan with your doctor. Ask what you can and can't do, treatments you can and can't use, and when and how to resume activities. Monitor your signs and symptoms, and call your doctor right away if any get worse. Stay away from sports and jarring activities until signs and symptoms have fully resolved. Avoid stress. Limit activities that make you think and concentrate.

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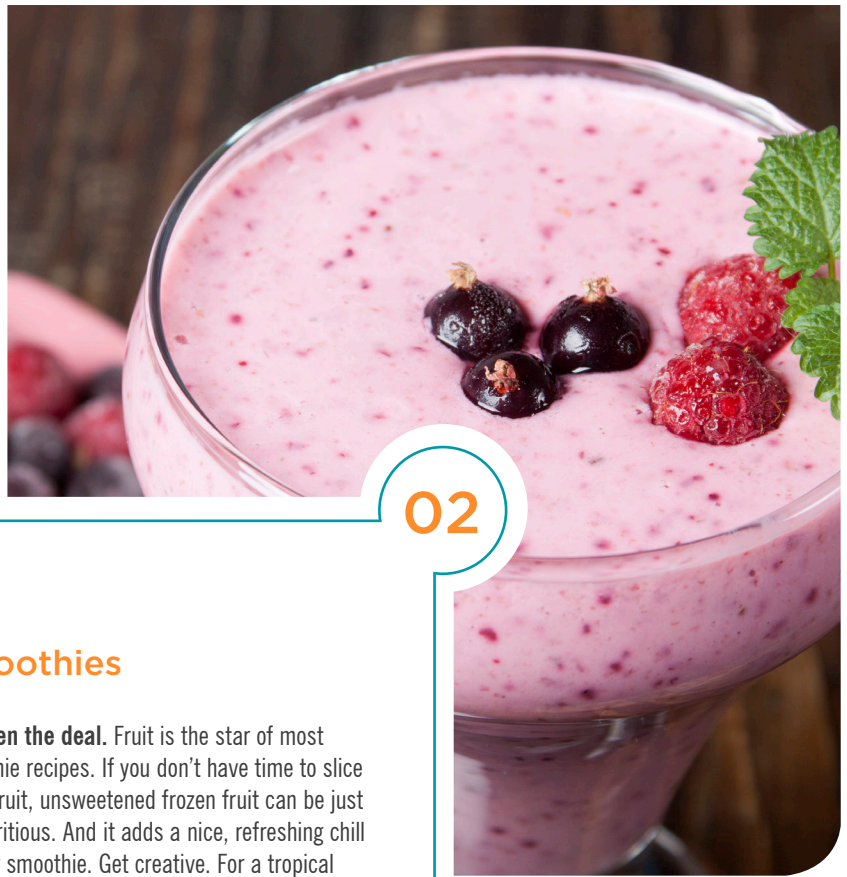
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Life Skills
Building an Emergency Fund

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02

Nutrition and Weight Management: Energize Your Morning: Breakfast Smoothies

Skipping breakfast can leave you tired, hungry, cranky, and unfocused. It can also make you more likely to crave high-calorie foods later in the day. But what if you don't have time to make breakfast in the morning? Or what if you or your kids aren't hungry first thing in the morning?

Pull out your blender. With the right ingredients, a quick smoothie can bump up your fruit and veggie intake for the day, boost your energy, help you hydrate, and satisfy your hunger for hours. Here are some tasty ideas for healthy smoothie ingredients to help jumpstart your day:

- * **Power up with protein.** Protein helps keep you satisfied longer. Low-fat milk or low-fat yogurt will give your smoothie protein, as well as a creamy texture. A small spoonful of almond or peanut butter can add a bit of protein and flavor. Wheat germ, raw pistachios, or cashews are yummy options to try, as well.

- * **Sweeten the deal.** Fruit is the star of most smoothie recipes. If you don't have time to slice fresh fruit, unsweetened frozen fruit can be just as nutritious. And it adds a nice, refreshing chill to your smoothie. Get creative. For a tropical smoothie, toss some fresh or frozen pineapple and mango chunks in with some banana slices. Sprinkle unsweetened coconut or squeeze an orange or your favorite citrus fruit into the mix. Berries of all sorts make a deliciously sweet smoothie, too.

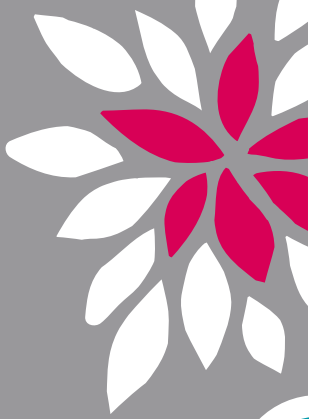
- * **Go green.** Fruits aren't the only way to add flavor, fiber, vitamins, and minerals to your smoothie. Dark green veggies can do the same. Try some raw baby spinach, kale, mustard greens, or Swiss chard. Blend with apple slices, berries, or another sweet fruit to cut the bitter flavor of the leafy greens. Add a small handful of raw nuts or another protein source. You can also toss in a couple sprigs of your favorite herb, such as mint, basil, dill, or thyme.

These are just a few ideas for healthy smoothies. Experiment and create your own. You can also add chilled water or natural, unsweetened juice to make your smoothie thicker or thinner. Keep healthy portions in mind. Adding too much of certain foods can crank up your smoothie's calorie count. Go light on some items such as fruit juice, nut butter, and nuts if you want your smoothie to stay low calorie.

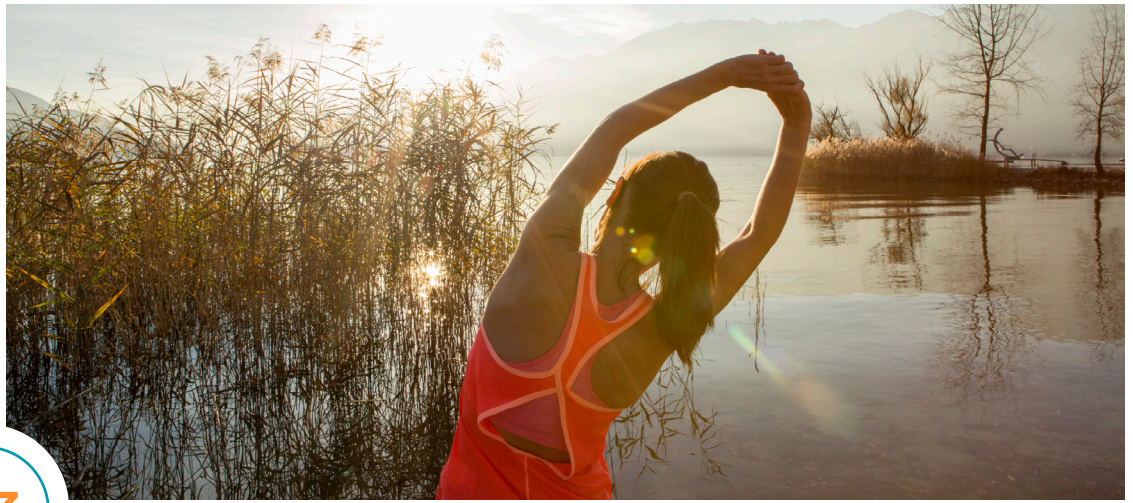


HEALTH TIP:

A breakfast smoothie can boost your energy in the morning. And those veggies and fruits you toss into the blender? Count them toward your intake for the day.



03



Active Living

Energize Your Morning: Get in Motion

Waking up in the morning can be tough. Dragging your sleep-laden body out of bed. Making the slow, zombie-like shuffle to the kitchen for your first cup of coffee.

But what if there were a better way to jump-start your day? There may be. You might get your pistons firing a little faster with a short bout of exercise. We're not talking about a trip to the gym or a 5-mile run. Just a gentle, 10-minute mini-workout to get your body moving, your blood flowing, and your energy humming.

Here are some ideas on how a morning mini-workout might look:

- * **Begin in bed.** Some slow, gentle movements while you're still in bed can be just the thing. Plus, what better place to warm up for your short bout of exercise to come?

So, while you're still lying in bed, start with a few deep breaths. Slowly stretch your arms above your head. Then lower them back down to your sides. Repeat. Next, do 5 to 6 ankle and wrist circles, in both directions. Turn your head gently from side to side. Bend your legs slightly, and then straighten them. Repeat, bending your legs more deeply as your hips and knees start to loosen up.

- * **Take it up a notch.** Once you're warmed up and out of bed, do 7 to 8 minutes of mild-to-moderate aerobic exercise or strength training. Or both. You could start with a brisk walk or bike ride in your neighborhood. Or, you could dance around the living room, jump rope, or do some jumping jacks. You might follow that up with some push-ups, squats, lunges, yoga poses, or core strengthening exercises.
- * **Cool down.** Take a minute or two to cool down at the end of your mini-workout. The easiest way is to slow down the activity that you did for your workout. You could follow that up with some stretching, tai chi, or yoga poses.

Think of ways to create your own morning routine. Done daily, it will help get you closer to the recommended 150 minutes or more of moderate cardio or 75 minutes or more of vigorous cardio each week. Plus, revving up your morning can change the whole tone of your day. It can boost your energy, improve your mood, and help you face stress later in the day.

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Life Skills

Building an Emergency Fund

Want to lower your financial stress? A good early step is to build an emergency fund. By definition, emergencies are not planned. Yet we all have them from time to time. Your car may make an odd noise that turns into a major repair. The roof leaks. You lose your job. A family member falls ill.

The best time to prepare for an emergency is now. No matter how much money you make, you can save a bit each month. If money is tight, you can save tax refunds, bonuses, or gifts of money.

Once you have a fund in place, you can rest easier. If an emergency arises, you should still be able to buy food, pay for housing, and cover medical care, at least for a while.

To get started building an emergency fund, follow these tips:

- * **Decide how much you aim to save.** Set a goal rather than simply starting to save money. You may want to choose a dollar amount, such as \$500 or \$1,000. You may want to set aside funds to live on for 3 to 6 months. Choose a goal that is something you feel you can reach. If 6 months of living expenses seems so high you don't want to start saving, think about putting aside less.

- * **Set up an account just for your emergency fund.** Keep this money in a different account from your day-to-day funds. This will lower the temptation to borrow from or lose track of this fund. You could open a savings account, go for CDs, or use a money market account. You want your emergency money to be “liquid” (easily available in case of need).
- * **Automate your savings.** If a set amount of money goes from your paycheck right into an emergency fund account, you won't have to rethink whether or not to save part of each paycheck.
- * **Restock the fund if you use it.** When an emergency happens, use your funds and be thankful you saved ahead. Then keep on saving or restart your savings plan to build up the fund again.

No one welcomes a crisis. But your stress level may be lower if you have set aside money to cover a surprise cost. Start this pay period to build your fund. Greater peace of mind will be an immediate benefit.



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