



## Newsletter November

Table of contents

Health promotion article (Pg. 2-3)

Exercise of the month (Pg. 4)

Healthy eating tip (Pg. 5-6)

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# Be Well Aware – Health Article



## Change Your Mindset: Swap Expectations for Appreciation

### Changing Your Mindset Through Appreciation

Research shows that the way you think can influence your brain composition overtime, leading to more permanent changes. Individuals who focus on gratitude and appreciation can structurally change their brain to automatically allow for positive, automatic responses.

This new wave of research sheds light on how powerful our mindset is to our overall health. Perceiving situations with a “glass is half full” mindset can allow us to leave expectations behind and focus on the here and now.

A negative mindset can stem from “what-if” questions we pose to ourselves. These questions are the expression of negative expectations. For example, we ask ourselves “what if I fail?” We are focusing on the possibility of failing instead of what we can do in the present moment to accomplish our goal.

### The Problem With Expectations

We set expectations for ourselves as well as others. Unfortunately, we set expectations that may not be realistic. When these unrealistic expectations are not met, disappointment occurs.

Each individual copes with disappointment differently. However, most individuals respond negatively to disappointment. Sadness and anger may occur, creating a negative mindset.

### Expectations and Appreciation for Our Health

Fitness and health goals are important when trying to make positive life changes. The way we set goals is important in how our mindset changes.

Weight loss goals are common and can be either motivating or detrimental. Setting realistic goals, such as losing 1 pound per week can be useful. This goal is motivating as well as attainable. We often see individuals setting goals that will leave them disappointed when the goal is not met, such as losing 20lbs in one month. Rapid weight loss can be a detrimental expectation.

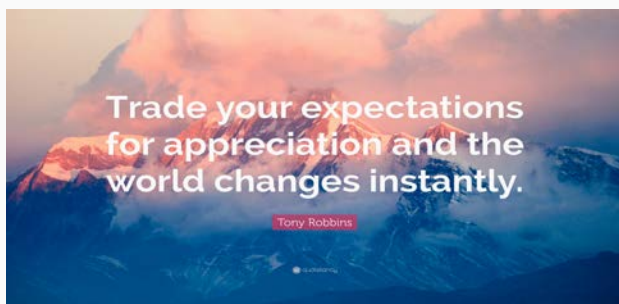
Appreciating our ability to make small changes in our lifestyle can switch our mindset to being more positive. We can appreciate our success with cutting back on sugar or adding in an extra workout this week. It is important to appreciate our health apart from aesthetics. Being grateful we can squat, raise our arms overhead, and walk down the street is a great place to start!

## Mindset Matters

One can argue that a healthy mindset is the first building block to becoming a healthier, more fit individual.

Whether you are starting a new fitness journey or struggling to find motivation to continue, your mindset plays a role in how effective you are in accomplishing your goals. Working on our mindset through appreciation and meditation can lead to better overall health.

Let's start by engaging in a powerful exercise to change mindset!



## Homework

Start journaling when you wake up or before you go to bed. Write what you are grateful for and any positive experiences you'd like to remember. Gratitude statements can range from being grateful you woke up to appreciating that your manager praised your hard work. The goal is to focus on positive thoughts and experiences.

*Weekly Gratitude Journal*

<i>Sunday</i> _____ 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____	<i>Monday</i> _____ 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
<i>Tuesday</i> _____ 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____	<i>Wednesday</i> _____ 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
<i>Thursday</i> _____ 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____	<i>Friday</i> _____ 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
<i>Saturday</i> _____ 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____	

### References:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/what-mentally-strong-people-dont-do/201504/7-scientifically-proven-benefits-gratitude>

<https://www.healthline.com/health/8-ways-to-embrace-self-love-and-thank-your-body#4>

[https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/gratitude\\_journal](https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/gratitude_journal)



# Exercise of the Month



## Cool-Down & Static Stretching

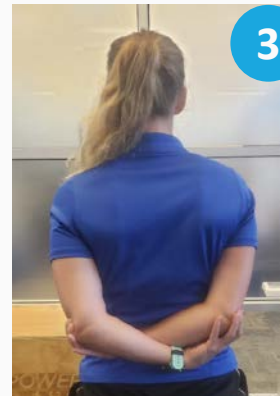
**Purpose:** A cool down returns the body back to a steady state while stretching can help decrease muscle stiffness. Stretching can enhance flexibility, which can improve quality of movement.

**Target Muscles:** Hamstrings, Glutes, Hips, Chest

**Equipment Needed:** Mat

**Movement:** Hold each stretch for 15-30 seconds. Perform stretches 2-3 times.

1. **Seated Head-toward-knee Stretch:** Sit with your right leg stretched out in front of you and your left leg bent, relaxed and pointing away from the body. Lengthen your spine and slightly rotate the torso toward the stretched leg. Gently fold forward. Hold and repeat on the other side.
2. **Reclining Figure 4 Stretch:** Begin by lying on your back with both knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Cross your right foot over your left thigh and bring your legs toward the torso. Hold and repeat on the other side.
3. **Behind the Back Chest Stretch:** Seated or standing, begin with arms hanging by your sides and shoulders pressed down away from your ears. Gently squeeze your shoulder blades together, broaden your chest and then bring the arms behind the back and grip elbow to elbow.



### Sources:

<https://www.acefitness.org/education-and-resources/lifestyle/blog/5657/5-chest-stretch-variations>

<https://www.acefitness.org/education-and-resources/lifestyle/blog/6499/flexibility-exercises-for-beginners>

# Health-Full Eating & Nutrition



## Mindful Eating

November is full of good food, family, and fun! We have tailgating, football get-together's, picnics and bonfires, and of course Thanksgiving! With all of these great opportunities to get outdoors and see friends and family, there is also a common downside, all of the fall food options! How can we stay on track with being healthy when there are s'mores around a bonfire, stuffing and goodies at Thanksgiving, and chili and cracker trays each week for football? Here are some tips to keep you on track while you are still enjoying all of the fall activities as long as you stay mindful.

**S'Mores-** You can substitute this yummy treat with dark chocolate and nuts. A mixture of 1 serving of salted almonds and 1 serving of dark chocolate pieces still allows for satisfying a sweet tooth while staying a bit healthier!

**Cheese and Cracker Platter-** You can substitute cheese and crackers for a veggie platter. Both can be easily found premade at most grocery stores. The fiber in the veggies will also help you digest any other foods that may not have been on your diet for the day.

**Thanksgiving Stuffing:** Substitute traditional Stuffing with Herbed Wild Rice and Quinoa Stuffing. See recipe on next page.



# Healthy Recipe

## HERBED WILD RICE AND QUINOA STUFFING

### From Kitchen Treaty



#### INGREDIENTS:

*2 tablespoons olive oil + more for greasing the baking dish + more for drizzling over the top*

*1 large yellow onion, finely chopped*

*2 stalks celery, chopped (about 1/2 cup)*

*2 medium Granny Smith apples, peeled and diced*

*2 medium cloves garlic, peeled and finely minced*

*2 tablespoons fresh thyme leaves, minced*

*1 teaspoon kosher salt + more to taste*

*1/2 cup dry-ish white wine (I like Sauvignon Blanc for both cooking and drinking; Chardonnay would work well too)*

*4 cups low-sodium vegetable broth*

*2 cups uncooked wild rice blend (I prefer a blend of 50% wild rice and 50% brown rice)*

*1 cup uncooked quinoa, rinsed well*

*1 1/2 cups dried cranberries*

*1 cup raw pecans, chopped*

*1/2 cup chopped fresh Italian parsley + 1/4 cup more for topping after baking*

*1/4 cup fresh sage leaves, minced*

#### DIRECTIONS:

Place a large pot over medium heat. Add the oil. When hot, add the onions and celery and cook, stirring occasionally, until soft, about 5 minutes. Add the apples, garlic, thyme, and salt. Cook, stirring frequently, for one more minute. Stir in wine, then add broth. Bring to a boil. Stir in the wild rice blend and reduce the heat to medium-low. Simmer, covered, until the rice is tender, about 35 minutes. Stir in the quinoa and cover again. Cook until the quinoa is tender, about 15 more minutes. Stir in the cranberries, pecans, 1/2 cup parsley, and sage. Taste and add additional salt if desired. Remove from heat.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Rub a large (9-inch x 13-inch is best) casserole dish with a little olive oil. Lightly scoop the rice mixture into the casserole dish, lightly mounding it instead of mashing it down.

Bake until golden brown, 25-30 minutes. Drizzle with a little more olive oil and sprinkle with remaining chopped parsley. Serve.

Eating healthy while having fun might take a more mindful approach, but with so many delicious substitutions, it is easy to make the switch!

#### References:

<https://www.kitchentreaty.com/herbed-wild-rice-and-quinoa-stuffing/>