



The Wellness News

Tips and resources for living well

December 2024

Parkinson's Awareness Month

Shake and Freeze Day is an annual campaign to raise awareness of Parkinson's disease held on December 21. The Shake and Freeze campaign was created by a mother and daughter who had eight family members diagnosed with Parkinson's. After taking care of both their parents/grandparents in their home for over 13 years, they launched their campaign to educate the public about Parkinson's and raise funds for charities dedicated to finding a cure and supporting Parkinson's patients. Those who participate in the Shake and Freeze campaign wear shorts on the shortest day of the year, stepping out into the cold to "shake and freeze" so that one day, thanks to awareness and fundraising, people with Parkinson's won't have to endure these symptoms without hope for a cure.

Parkinson's is a chronic and progressive movement disorder that initially causes tremors in one hand, stiffness, or slowing of movement. Non-motor symptoms and associated conditions may include behavioral and cognitive problems, apathy, anxiety, depression, and sensory or sleep problems. There are more than 200,000 cases of Parkinson's per year, and it is more common in males with a family history. The average onset is after the age of sixty.

The exact cause of Parkinson's is unknown, but researchers believe a combination of genetic and environmental factors plays a role. Ongoing exposure to herbicides and pesticides may slightly increase your risk of Parkinson's disease. Because the cause of Parkinson's is unknown, there are no proven ways to prevent the disease. Some research has shown that regular aerobic exercise might reduce the risk of Parkinson's disease. Other research has shown that people who consume caffeine get Parkinson's disease less often than those who don't drink it. Currently, there is not enough evidence to suggest that drinking caffeinated beverages protects against Parkinson's.

Shake and Freeze Day is a powerful reminder of the importance of raising awareness and funding for Parkinson's research and patient support. By taking part in this annual campaign, you can help shine a light on the daily challenges faced by those with Parkinson's, supporting a movement dedicated to finding a cure.

Source: <https://shakeandfreeze.com/>



The Wellness News

Tips and resources for living well

December 2024

Winter-Proof Your Workout: Staying Active in Cold Weather

As temperatures drop, keeping up with a workout routine can be challenging. But with a few adjustments, you can stay active and motivated all season long! Here are some tips to winterize your workout routine and make the most of your fitness goals, even in colder weather:

- **Embrace Layering:** Start with a moisture-wicking base layer to keep sweat away from your skin, add an insulating layer for warmth, and finish with a water-resistant outer layer to protect against wind and snow. Dress in layers you can remove as you warm up, keeping in mind that cold air requires special attention to prevent hypothermia and frostbite. Don't forget gloves, a hat, and breathable socks to stay comfortable from head to toe. This way, you'll be able to stay active outside, no matter how chilly it gets!
- **Shift Indoors When Needed:** Winter weather can be unpredictable. Consider exploring indoor workouts on days when outdoor conditions are too severe. High-intensity interval training (HIIT) is effective for maximizing calorie burn in a shorter time, which can be perfect for staying fit on those colder days when getting outside isn't as easy. A quick 20–30-minute indoor HIIT session can elevate your heart rate, build endurance, and keep your metabolism high without needing much space or equipment. Other home exercises like bodyweight routines, yoga, or indoor cycling can be just as effective. Many fitness apps and YouTube channels offer free or low-cost programs to help keep you active indoors.
- **Try Seasonal Sports:** Winter is the perfect time to add seasonal activities like skiing, snowboarding, or ice skating to your workout routine. These sports keep you fit and allow you to enjoy the season. Plus, they provide a full-body workout that builds endurance, balance, and strength.
- **Keep Warm During Cooldowns:** Cool down inside after working out, if possible, to avoid a rapid drop in body temperature. Stretching inside after a winter workout helps prevent muscles from tightening up too quickly in the cold. When you finish your workout, put on extra layers to prevent your body temperature from dropping too quickly. Wrapping up in a jacket or blanket post-workout keeps your muscles warm and reduces the risk of stiffness or chills after intense exercise in cold weather.

With the right adjustments, winter workouts can be enjoyable and keep you on track with your fitness goals, no matter the weather. Embrace the season, stay prepared, and keep moving

Source: <https://www.today.com/series/one-small-thing/how-stay-active-winter-11-winter-workout-tips-exercising-cold-t169615>



The Wellness News

Tips and resources for living well

December 2024

Feeling Down This Season? Tips for Beating the Holiday Blues

The holiday season can be joyful, but for some, it brings feelings of sadness, anxiety, or isolation. Known as the "holiday blues," this phenomenon can often be exacerbated by the winter months' lack of sunlight, leading to Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) or seasonal depression. Recognizing and taking proactive steps to address these feelings can make a big difference.

- **Stick to a Routine:** Maintaining a consistent daily routine, even during the holidays, helps provide structure and stability. Try setting a regular wake-up time, meal schedule, and bedtime to keep your body's internal clock steady, which can improve mood and energy levels.
- **Embrace Light Therapy:** With shorter days and limited sunlight, consider using a light therapy box. Sitting near one of these lights for about 20–30 minutes in the morning can help alleviate SAD symptoms by simulating sunlight and boosting serotonin levels.
- **Move Your Body:** Physical activity releases endorphins, which can reduce stress and improve mood. Winter offers unique options like ice skating or hiking, but even a brisk walk during the day can do wonders. Try to get outside during daylight hours, as exposure to natural light can improve mood.
- **Set Boundaries:** The holiday season often means numerous social obligations. It's okay to say no to events or activities that feel overwhelming. Setting boundaries helps you conserve energy and prioritize the things that genuinely make you feel good.
- **Prioritize Sleep:** Quality sleep is essential for mental health. Try to keep a regular sleep schedule, limit caffeine, and avoid screen time before bed to improve the quality and duration of your rest.
- **Practice Gratitude:** Writing down things you're grateful for each day can shift your focus from stressors to positive aspects of your life. Gratitude journaling can help enhance your mood and provide perspective during challenging times.
- **Stay Connected:** Feelings of isolation are common during the winter, so prioritize connection with loved ones. Even a quick phone call or a video chat with family or friends can reduce feelings of loneliness and improve overall mood.
- **Limit Alcohol Intake:** Alcohol can amplify feelings of depression and anxiety. Try to keep holiday drinking in moderation, focusing instead on staying hydrated and opting for non-alcoholic alternatives.
- **Seek Professional Help:** If holiday blues or seasonal depression becomes unmanageable, consider speaking to a mental health professional. Therapy and, if necessary, medication can provide effective support.

By implementing these strategies, you can reduce the impact of holiday blues and enjoy the season with greater balance and peace.

Source: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/how-my-brain-works/202312/what-are-holiday-blues-and-how-to-deal-with-them?msocid=387d785076de6f2d3bef6d5a771c6ec8>



The Wellness News

Tips and resources for living well

December 2024

French Onion Grilled Cheese

Ingredients

- 8 (1 ounce) slices whole-wheat bread
- 1 cup caramelized onions
- 1 ½ ounces shaved Gruyere, about 1 cup
- 1 teaspoon fresh thyme

Directions

1. Spray a skillet with nonstick spray. Place four slices of bread in pan over medium-low heat.
2. Top each bread slice with 1/4 cup caramelized onions and 1/4 cup cheese.
3. Sprinkle each sandwich with 1/4 tsp fresh thyme.
4. Heat on medium-low until the bread is toasted, onions are heated through, and cheese begins to melt.
5. Top with additional bread slice.
6. Flip each sandwich over and heat until cheese is melted, and bread is toasted. Serve immediately.

QUICK TIP!

Just a hint of Gruyere's bold, intense flavor goes a long way in this sandwich. Use a Microplane to shave it finely, so it melts perfectly throughout your sandwich, making each bite deliciously cheesy.

Nutrition

Per Serving: 1 Sandwich

Calories: 260 | Protein: 12g | Carbohydrates: 38g | Dietary Fiber: 3g | Saturated Fat: 3g | Total Sugars: 9g | Sodium: 399mg | Total Fat: 7g

Source: <https://www.eatingwell.com/recipe/8028397/french-onion-grilled-cheese/>

We know it is not always easy to juggle everything & realize simple tips can help provide a different approach. Your EAP is here to help with family, work, health, well-being & legal issues.

1-800-343-3822 | TDD 1-800-448-1823 | www.AWPnow.com

Here for you as life happens