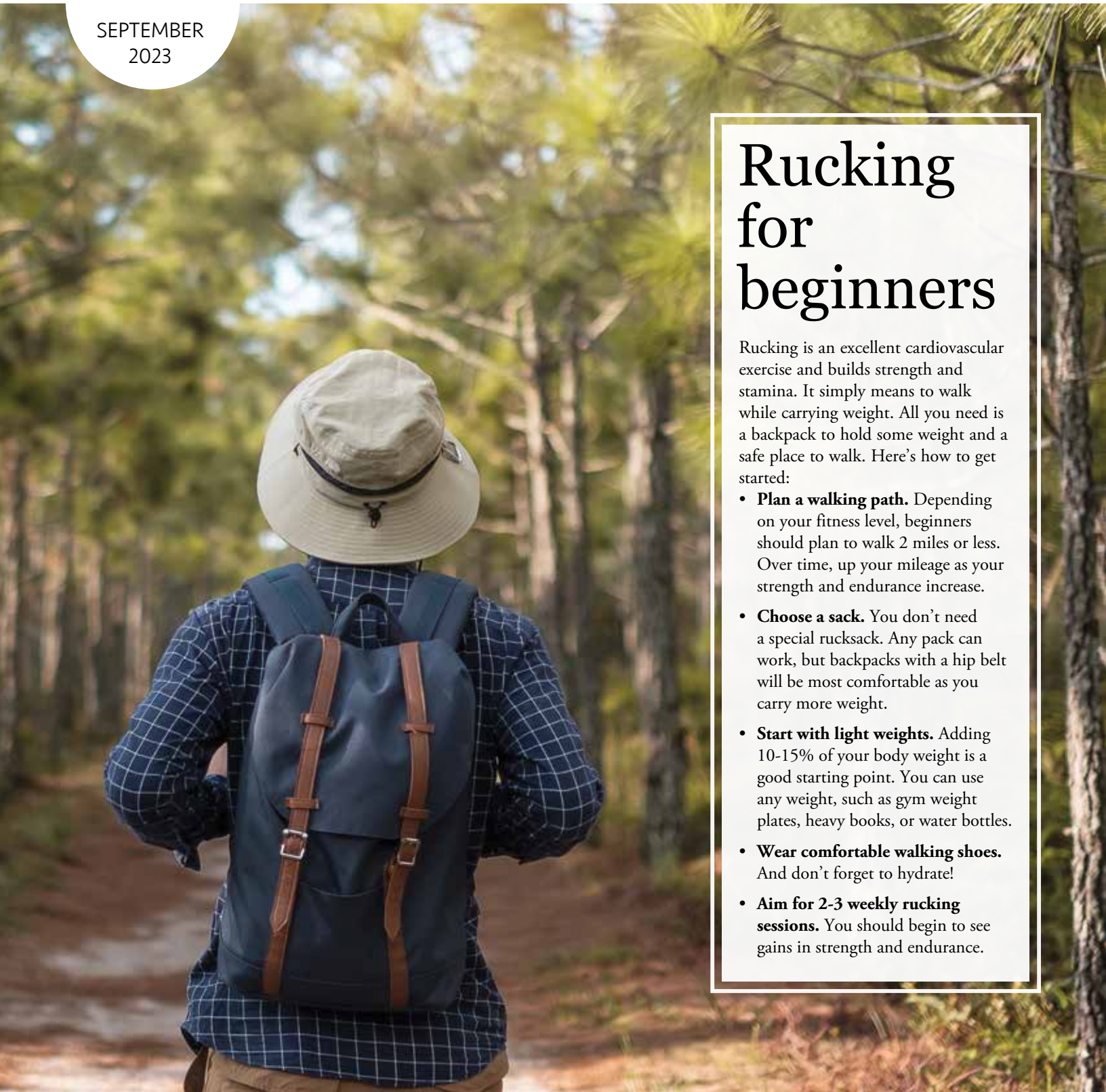


# HealthyLife®

## LETTER



SEPTEMBER  
2023



## Rucking for beginners

Rucking is an excellent cardiovascular exercise and builds strength and stamina. It simply means to walk while carrying weight. All you need is a backpack to hold some weight and a safe place to walk. Here's how to get started:

- **Plan a walking path.** Depending on your fitness level, beginners should plan to walk 2 miles or less. Over time, up your mileage as your strength and endurance increase.
- **Choose a sack.** You don't need a special rucksack. Any pack can work, but backpacks with a hip belt will be most comfortable as you carry more weight.
- **Start with light weights.** Adding 10-15% of your body weight is a good starting point. You can use any weight, such as gym weight plates, heavy books, or water bottles.
- **Wear comfortable walking shoes.** And don't forget to hydrate!
- **Aim for 2-3 weekly rucking sessions.** You should begin to see gains in strength and endurance.

# Protect your vision

Your eye health is an essential part of your well-being. Whether you wear glasses or not, your eyes benefit from regular self-care.

As you age, your risk of eye disease goes up. But simple steps taken now can protect your vision in the future.



## TAKE CARE OF YOUR HEALTH

The health of your eyes is directly linked to the health of the rest of your body.

- Eat a healthy diet. Dark leafy greens such as spinach, kale, and collards provide many essential nutrients for your eyes. Fatty fish such as salmon provide omega-3s which are also good for eye health.
- Exercise. An active lifestyle decreases risk of being overweight, having diabetes, or having high blood pressure.
- Quit smoking. Smoking increases risk of eye diseases like macular degeneration and cataracts.



## KNOW YOUR RISK FACTORS

Certain factors increase your risk of eye disease. Your family and eye doctor can discuss risk factors with you and help manage future risks.

Common risk factors for eye disease include:

- Age. Older adults are at higher risk.
- Overweight or obesity
- Family history of eye disease
- African American, Hispanic, or Native American heritage
- Health conditions such as high blood pressure or diabetes



## GET A COMPREHENSIVE DILATED EYE EXAM

Many vision issues have no symptoms or warning signs. A dilated eye exam is the best way to catch problems early.

During a dilated eye exam, your eye doctor will put drops in your eyes to dilate them. This allows more light into your eyes, which makes it easier for the doctor to see your retina and check for problems.

Depending on your risk factors and your age, you should have a dilated eye exam every 1 to 2 years.



## PROTECT YOUR EYES

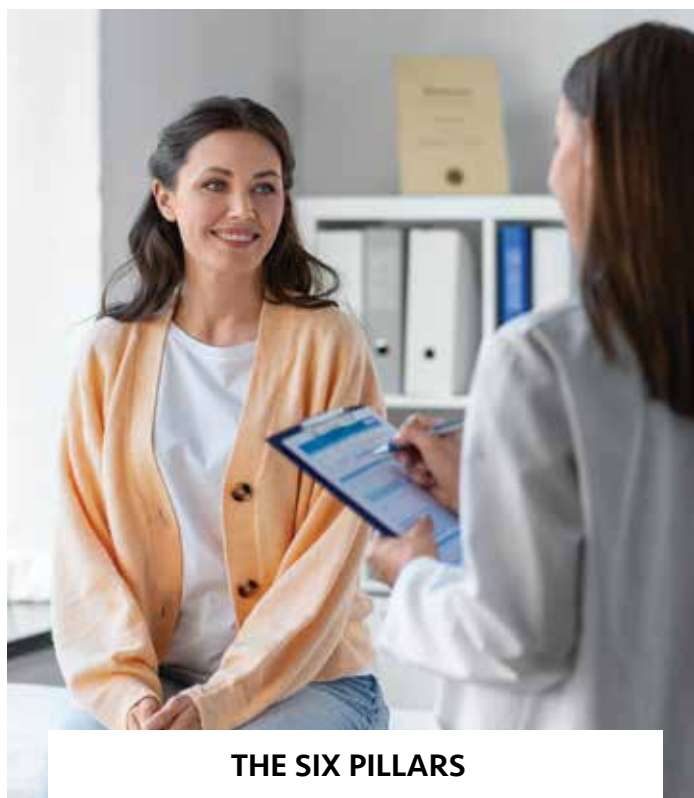
- Wear sunglasses, even on cloudy days. Look for sunglasses that protect against both UVA and UVB rays.
- Use protective eyewear when playing sports or doing home repairs.
- Give eyes a break from screens. Every 20 minutes, look away from your computer at something at least 20 feet away for 20 seconds.
- Follow good handwashing hygiene to protect eyes from infections.



# The benefit of Lifestyle Medicine

Lifestyle medicine is a medical approach focused on using lifestyle interventions to prevent, treat, and manage disease. Healthcare professionals who practice lifestyle medicine often have specialty certifications and additional training in the six pillars of lifestyle medicine.

Working with a lifestyle medicine practitioner may be a good fit for those who want to improve their lifestyle to prevent future illness. It can also complement conventional medical treatment for those with existing chronic disease.



## THE SIX PILLARS

Lifestyle medicine is an evidence-based, holistic approach to healthcare. Practitioners provide education and motivation to make lifestyle changes that improve health. It encompasses six core pillars:

- **Nutrition:** A whole-food, plant-based diet forms the foundation for good nutrition.
- **Physical activity:** An active lifestyle has been shown to improve health and reduce the risk of illness.
- **Restorative sleep:** Establishing good sleep habits gives the body the rest it needs to maintain good health.
- **Stress management:** Stress impairs the body's ability to function well, so stress management is essential to overall health.
- **Avoidance of risky substances:** Tobacco, alcohol, and drug use carry risks and are detrimental to health.
- **Positive social connection:** Healthy relationships are an essential aspect of well-being.

## CONVENTIONAL VS. LIFESTYLE MEDICINE



Conventional healthcare is often focused on treating disease once it has occurred. And this is a very good thing! When someone is ill, they should go to the doctor and receive the best treatment modern medicine can offer.

Lifestyle medicine focuses on building a healthy lifestyle. It's important to understand that lifestyle medicine is not a replacement for conventional medicine. But it can support health and well-being when used alongside modern medical therapies and techniques.

Be aware that not all lifestyle medicine practitioners are doctors, and some even discourage conventional treatments. Both approaches have a place in modern medicine. Look for a certified practitioner knowledgeable in the benefits of both conventional and lifestyle medicine to ensure you receive the best evidence-based care.

Source: American College of Lifestyle Medicine

# Up your fiber for better health

Fiber is an essential and often overlooked nutrient. Found only in plants, fiber is actually indigestible, but it adds bulk to the diet and offers many health benefits.

## HOW FIBER WORKS

Fiber is a type of carbohydrate, though it works differently in your body than most other carbohydrates. Your digestive tract can't break it down or absorb it. But that's actually a good thing.

When you eat fiber, it passes through your body undigested. Along the way, it provides food for healthy bacteria in your intestines. It also adds bulk to stools, easing the transit of food through your digestive system.

## HEALTH BENEFITS

Some of fiber's key actions include:

- Supports a healthy balance in the microbiome
- Reduces inflammation
- Aides in the removal of excess cholesterol
- Adds bulk to the stool, which prevents constipation
- Promotes fullness
- Supports healthy digestion

## EATING MORE FIBER

Adults should consume 25-35 grams of fiber daily for optimal health. Eating a plant-based diet high in whole grains, fruits, vegetables, beans, nuts, and seeds makes it easy to meet your fiber needs.

### Examples of high-fiber foods include:

- 1 apple - 4 grams
- ½ cup raspberries - 4 grams
- 1 cup broccoli - 5 grams
- 1 cup brown rice - 4 grams
- ½ cup beans - 7 grams
- 2 tablespoons almonds - 4 grams

### To get more fiber in your diet, try these tricks:

- Choose whole grains instead of refined grains. For example, use whole-grain bread instead of white bread, or brown rice instead of white rice.
- Snack on raw fruits and veggies like carrots, apples, peppers, and pears. Be sure to eat the skin!
- Sprinkle nuts on salads.
- Add beans to soups, salads, and sauces.
- Start your day with a whole-grain cereal like oatmeal or bran. Sprinkle flax or chia seeds on top for extra fiber.
- Swap meat for beans as a protein source.





# Fiber spotlight: Chia seeds



Chia seeds are an easy way to add more fiber to your diet. As part of a plant-rich diet, these tiny seeds provide an added boost of nutrients.

## NUTRIENTS IN CHIA

Chia seeds are one of the richest plant sources of Omega-3 fatty acids, known for their anti-inflammatory benefits.

One tablespoon of chia seeds provides:

- 70 calories
- 2 grams of protein
- 5 grams of fiber
- 4 grams of mostly polyunsaturated fat as Omega 3's
- A good dose of calcium, zinc, and phosphorus



## HOW TO EAT THEM

Chia seeds can be eaten in their whole form, mixed with some type of liquid. When wet, they absorb fluid and swell, breaking apart their outer surface. This allows for digestion and absorption of their nutrients. Try these tips to add them to your diet:

- Add them to smoothies.
- Make chia pudding by mixing ½ cup milk with 2 tablespoons of chia seeds and one teaspoon of a sweetener like maple syrup or honey. Let it sit overnight in the fridge.
- Mix chia seeds into oatmeal or other hot cereal.
- Add them to stir-fries.
- Mix into salad dressing.
- Sprinkle them on yogurt.

# Recipe: Chia Oatmeal with Berries



## INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup low-fat milk
- 1/4 cup fat-free Greek yogurt
- 2 tablespoons chia seeds
- 2 teaspoons honey
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup uncooked rolled oats
- 1/4 cup fresh or frozen raspberries (or other berry)

## DIRECTIONS

1. Combine milk, yogurt, chia, honey, cinnamon, and vanilla in a container or jar with a lid.
2. Add oats and mix well.
3. Gently fold in raspberries.
4. Cover and refrigerate for at least 8 hours or overnight
5. Enjoy cold or heat as desired.

Nutritional information: Serves 2. Per serving: 381 calories, 8 g fat, 2 g saturated fat, 89 g sodium, 59 g carbohydrates, 14 g fiber, 19 g protein

Adapted from MyPlate.gov

# Break free from codependency

Codependency, also known as “relationship addiction,” is a learned behavior often passed down through families. It can impact the ability to have healthy, mutually beneficial relationships. Breaking the cycle of codependency means moving past childhood patterns to establish supportive relationships.



## WHAT IS CODEPENDENCY?

Codependency is a set of behaviors that can arise from a dysfunctional family environment. Children raised by parents who struggle with addiction, mental illness, or are abusive, are at higher risk of exhibiting codependency.

Co-dependant people tend to:

- Take on more than their fair share of responsibility
- Lack trust
- Have difficulty identifying feelings
- Have problems with intimacy and boundaries
- Fear being alone
- Extreme need for approval
- Do anything to hold on to relationships, even unhealthy ones

## RECOGNIZE CODEPENDENCY

The following questions can help identify codependent tendencies:

- Do you have trouble saying “no” to people?
- Do you feel rejected when significant others spend time with friends?
- Have you ever lived with someone dealing with addiction?
- Have you ever lived with someone who hit or talked down to you?
- Do you trust others’ opinions more than your own?
- Do you have trouble expressing your true feelings to others?
- Do you stay quiet to avoid arguments?

## BREAK THE CYCLE

Individual and group therapy are important to breaking the cycle of codependency. It helps you learn how to:

- Say “no” to unhealthy relationship patterns.
- Learn to be self-reliant.
- Get in touch with and trust your feelings.
- Reconstruct family dynamics.
- Stop enabling addictive and abusive behaviors.
- Be loving but tough.
- Identify and embrace your own needs.

# Breathing technique: Box breathing

FOCUSING ON YOUR BREATH IS A SIMPLE WAY TO MANAGE FEELINGS OF STRESS. THERE ARE MANY TECHNIQUES YOU CAN USE TO CONTROL YOUR BREATHING AND REDUCE FEELINGS OF ANXIETY.



When you're stressed, it's common for breathing to become faster and more shallow. Box breathing uses equal durations of inhaling, holding, exhaling, and holding to calm and steady the breath. While it may not be for everyone, it's another tool in your toolbox for managing stress.

## HERE'S HOW:

1. Wherever you are, notice your breath.
2. Take one or two normal breaths before you begin.
3. Inhale for a count of 4 and then hold at the top of your inhale for a count of 4.
4. Exhale for a count of 4 and then hold at the bottom of your exhale for a count of 4.
5. Take one or two normal breaths in between rounds of box breathing if needed.
6. Complete as many rounds as needed until you feel relaxed.



# Prepare yourself for surgery

Any surgery, whether big or small, will go better if you're fully prepared. A little knowledge and advanced planning can make recovery easier, quickly getting you back on your feet.



## ASK QUESTIONS

Find out how long the surgery will take, whether you need someone to drive you home, what restrictions you must follow afterward, and how long recovery will take. Depending on the type of surgery, ask about dietary restrictions, caring for the wound, and supplies for home.

## INSURANCE

Make sure you know what's covered and what medical bills you can expect. Some procedures may require prior authorization or additional paperwork for approval.

## PREVENT INFECTION

Talk to your doctor about any medical issues, such as diabetes that may increase your risk of infection. If you are a smoker, quit smoking to reduce infection risk. Also, follow your doctor's instructions on cleaning your skin before and after surgery.

## FOLLOW DIRECTIONS

Your doctor will likely provide instructions for the night before and the day of your procedure. Review those in advance and get any questions you may have answered.

## LIST MEDICATIONS

Talk to your doctor in advance about your medication and supplement regimen. Your doctor may make changes to your medication schedule before or after your surgery. Bring a detailed list of your medications on the day of your surgery and review it with the surgical team.

## CAREGIVER

Your support person can make a note of any information provided after surgery when you may not feel your best.