

# HealthyLife®

## LETTER



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2026



## Movement mentors

Achieving your physical activity goals is always easier and more fun with support. Your friends are key to maintaining motivation and accountability to be the best kind of workout buddy and cheer squad.

### ACTIONS THAT CAN HELP

- Ask your friend, “Will you text me a reminder at 6:30 AM to hit the gym, and if I don’t reply in 10 minutes, will you call me?” This makes them an active accountability partner.
- Instead of suggesting dinner and a movie, ask, “Let’s make our Friday night plan a walk on the trail followed by a healthy picnic instead of ordering takeout.”
- Ask them to use a shared step-counting app or fitness tracker. “Would you mind joining this app? Knowing you can see my daily steps helps keep me moving.”
- When you work out together, ask them to focus on your technique. “Can you watch my squat form? Your reminder will help me prevent injury and meet my lifting goal.”

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# Unlock your gut power

Glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) is a hormone produced in your gut that acts as a natural appetite suppressant and blood sugar regulator. Released primarily after eating, it tells your brain you're full, slows down digestion, and stimulates insulin production. You can enhance your body's own production through dietary and lifestyle choices.



## NATURAL TOOLKIT

- Fiber, particularly the soluble type found in foods like oats, beans, apples, and flaxseeds, is a major GLP-1 trigger. When this fiber reaches the lower intestine, gut bacteria ferment it, creating short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs). These SCFAs appear to play a key role in the release of GLP-1.
- Meals that include lean protein (like eggs, fish, and legumes) and unsaturated fats (like olive oil, avocados, and nuts) are more effective at stimulating GLP-1 release than meals high in saturated fats. This combination helps slow gastric emptying and promotes a sustained feeling of satiety.
- The order in which you eat your food may matter. Some studies suggest that eating protein and vegetables first may lead to a greater GLP-1 response. This may help prevent post-meal blood sugar spikes.
- Exercise is a powerful natural booster. Both high-intensity bursts and longer, moderate-intensity movement can increase GLP-1 production, potentially by stimulating compounds that signal its release. Aim for a mix of cardio and resistance training.
- Slowing down while eating gives your gut time to process nutrients and signal the release of GLP-1 to your brain. This delay enhances satiety.
- Certain natural compounds have been studied for their potential GLP-1-boosting effects. These include berberine and curcumin (found in turmeric). There is not enough evidence to show a weight loss benefit. Also, they may pose a safety risk, especially for pregnant and breastfeeding women. Discuss taking natural compounds with your doctor, including any interactions with medications you take.



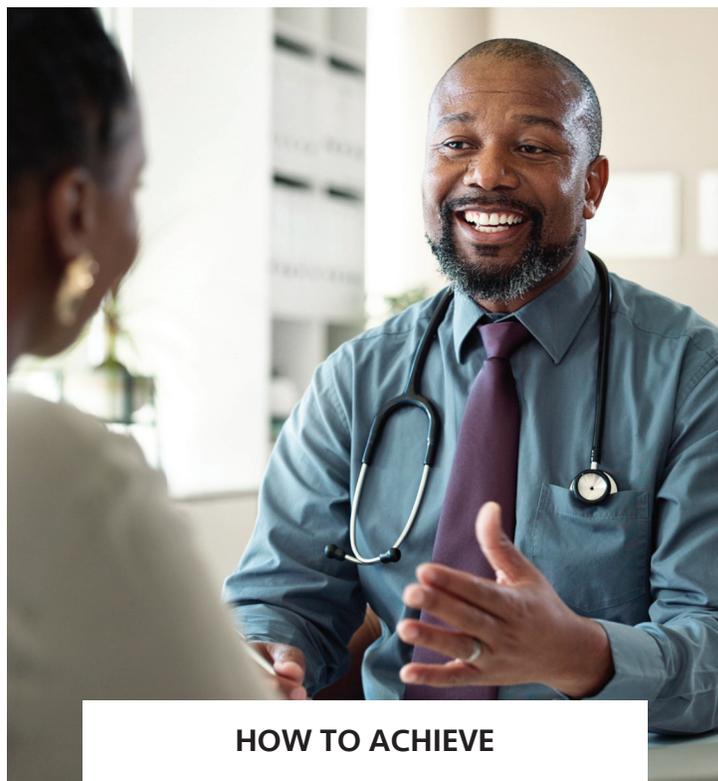
# Power of a second opinion

Navigating health decisions can be daunting, but remember, you're an active participant in your care. A second opinion can be a valuable tool, offering fresh perspectives and empowering you to make the most informed choices about your health. It's about ensuring you have all the information and feel confident moving forward.



## WHEN TO CONSIDER

- If you're facing a significant surgery, a life-altering diagnosis like cancer, or a complex treatment plan
- When your symptoms are ongoing but the diagnosis isn't clear or treatments aren't working as expected
- For uncommon diseases where specialized expertise might be beneficial
- If different doctors have given you varying opinions
- If you don't feel fully comfortable or confident with your current doctor's recommendation
- Many doctors, especially specialists, often encourage second opinions for complex cases, because they understand their value to the patient.



## HOW TO ACHIEVE

- Contact your health insurance provider to understand your coverage for second opinions. Some plans may require pre-authorization.
- Be open and honest with your current doctor. Most doctors welcome a second opinion as it can lead to better patient outcomes. Ask them for a referral.
- Ensure you have all relevant medical records, including test results, imaging scans, and previous doctor's notes, to share with the new physician.
- Look for a doctor who specializes in your specific condition or area of concern. Resources like hospital websites, medical associations, or even your insurance company's directory can help.
- Before your appointment, write down any questions or concerns you have. This ensures you cover all your bases and get the information you need.
- For some conditions, a telehealth consultation with a specialist in another city or state might be an option, broadening your access to expertise.



# Stop, look & chew



Mindful eating is a simple practice where you pay attention to your food and your body without judgment.

## STEPS TO SAVOR

- Turn off the television, put away your phone, and step away from your computer. Dedicate your mealtimes solely to eating.
- Pace yourself. It takes about 20 minutes for your brain to receive the signal that your stomach is full.
- Before the first bite, notice the food's aroma, appearance, and texture. Chew thoroughly to fully appreciate the flavor of each ingredient.
- Before you eat, ask yourself: Am I truly hungry, or am I eating out of boredom, stress, or habit?
- Plate your food instead of eating directly from a bag or container, which can lead to mindless consumption.

# Recipe: Veggie pinwheel wrap & sides



## INGREDIENTS

### For the Pinwheels

- 1 large (10-inch) whole wheat tortilla
- 2 tablespoons cream cheese (low-fat, or hummus/pesto)
- 1/2 cup spinach
- 1/4 cup (thinly sliced) cucumber

### For the Sides

- 1/2 chopped bell pepper
- 1 medium carrot (cut into sticks)
- 1 medium (sliced) apple
- 2 tablespoons unsalted peanut butter (or almond butter)
- 2 ounces low-fat cottage cheese

## DIRECTIONS

1. Lay the whole wheat tortilla flat on a clean surface.
2. Evenly spread the low-fat cream cheese (or hummus/pesto) across the entire surface of the tortilla, going almost to the edges.
3. Place the spinach leaves over the cream cheese on the tortilla. Then, lay the thinly sliced cucumber pieces evenly across the center.
4. Starting from one edge, roll the tortilla up very tightly into a compact cylinder. Wrap the cylinder tightly in plastic wrap or foil and chill in the refrigerator for at least 15 minutes. This helps the wrap firm up and prevents it from unraveling.

5. Remove the chilled wrap and use a sharp knife to slice it into 6-8 pinwheels (about 1-inch thick).
6. Place the pinwheels into your lunch container. Add the cut bell pepper, carrot sticks, and apple slices to separate sections. Include the individual containers of low-fat cottage cheese and nut butter for dipping the apple slices or carrots.

**Note:** To reduce sodium content, use sodium-reduced cottage cheese. To reduce carbohydrate content, use a smaller or “lower-carb” tortilla.

**NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION:** Serves 1  
Per serving: 612 calories, 26g total fat, 8g saturated fat, 77g carbohydrates, 3g added sugar, 13g fiber, 26g protein, 854mg sodium

# Declutter & destress

In our fast-paced world, we're constantly bombarded with choices—what to wear, what to eat, what to watch, what to buy. This endless stream of decisions, often called “decision fatigue,” can secretly drain our mental energy, leading to stress, anxiety, and even procrastination. It's time to learn how to declutter your choices and empower your mind.



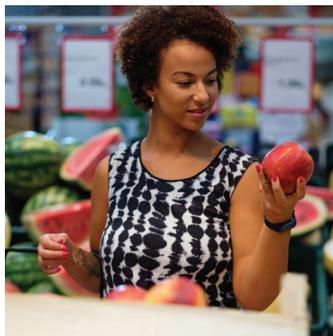
## UNDERSTANDING DECISION FATIGUE

Your brain has a finite capacity for making good decisions each day. Every small choice, from picking out socks to replying to an email, uses up this mental energy. When depleted, you're more prone to impulsive choices, procrastination, and feeling overwhelmed.



## DECLUTTER YOUR ENVIRONMENT

A tidy physical space often translates to a clearer mind. Visual clutter adds to sensory overload, making it harder to focus and relax. Start small—one drawer, one shelf—and experience the immediate mental lift.



## AUTOMATE THE MUNDANE

Identify daily choices that don't truly matter to you. Batch mundane tasks like grocery lists or bill paying. This frees up mental bandwidth for what truly counts. These small acts of mental delegation ensure your energy is preserved for important creative and problem-solving tasks later in the day.



## PRACTICE “NO”

It's a complete sentence. Saying no to commitments that don't align with your priorities or energy levels is a powerful way to simplify your schedule and protect your mental resources. This prevents overcommitment and subsequent stress.



## INFORMATION OVERLOAD

Unfollow accounts that don't add value, unsubscribe from excessive emails, and designate specific times for checking news or social media. Consider turning off most phone notifications. The constant buzzing creates mini-interruptions that fragment your focus and increase overall mental strain.



## DEFINE PRIORITIES

When you know what truly matters, decision-making becomes easier. If a choice doesn't align with your top values or goals, it's often easier to let it go or defer it. This creates a filter for incoming options.

# Teen tune-up

Being a teenager presents a unique set of pressures, from academic demands to navigating a 24/7 digital social landscape. These challenges can significantly impact mental health, making adolescence a critical time for developing strong self-care habits.



## KEYS TO HEALTHY MINDS

- Adolescence is characterized by significant brain development and hormonal changes. Teens may grapple with issues like anxiety related to college applications, social isolation, and feeling pressured to be “perfect.” It’s important for them to know that feeling overwhelmed is common, not a personal failure.
- While social media offers connection, platforms often expose teens to unrealistic comparisons, cyberbullying, and the stress of maintaining a flawless online persona. Encouraging digital detox periods—even for just an hour a day—can significantly reduce social comparison and FOMO (Fear of Missing Out).
- Teens naturally have later sleep cycles, often clashing with early school start times. Chronic lack of sleep is strongly linked to irritability, difficulty concentrating, and increased risk of depression. Setting a consistent, bedtime routine (with all screens off 30-60 minutes before bed) is essential for mental recovery.
- Self-care is any intentional act to recharge. Teens should identify activities that truly relieve stress, such as listening to music, spending time outdoors, journaling, or engaging in a hobby. Encourage them to schedule these activities just like they would a practice or class.
- While digital chatting is prevalent, face-to-face interaction is crucial for developing empathy, communication skills, and feelings of belonging. Encourage teens to prioritize spending time with close friends or family without the distraction of their phones.
- Teens often fear being judged or dismissed if they admit to struggling. Teach them that seeking help from a trusted adult, school counselor, or therapist is a sign of strength and self-awareness. Parents should model this openness by talking about their own struggles, when appropriate.



# Hobby connection

WE OFTEN VIEW HOBBIES AS SIMPLE DISTRACTIONS, BUT DEDICATED TIME ON ACTIVITIES LIKE KNITTING OR GARDENING DOES FAR MORE THAN JUST RELAX YOU. HOBBIES ACTIVELY SHARPEN YOUR MIND, SECRETLY BOOSTING YOUR ABILITY TO TACKLE COMPLEX PROBLEMS.

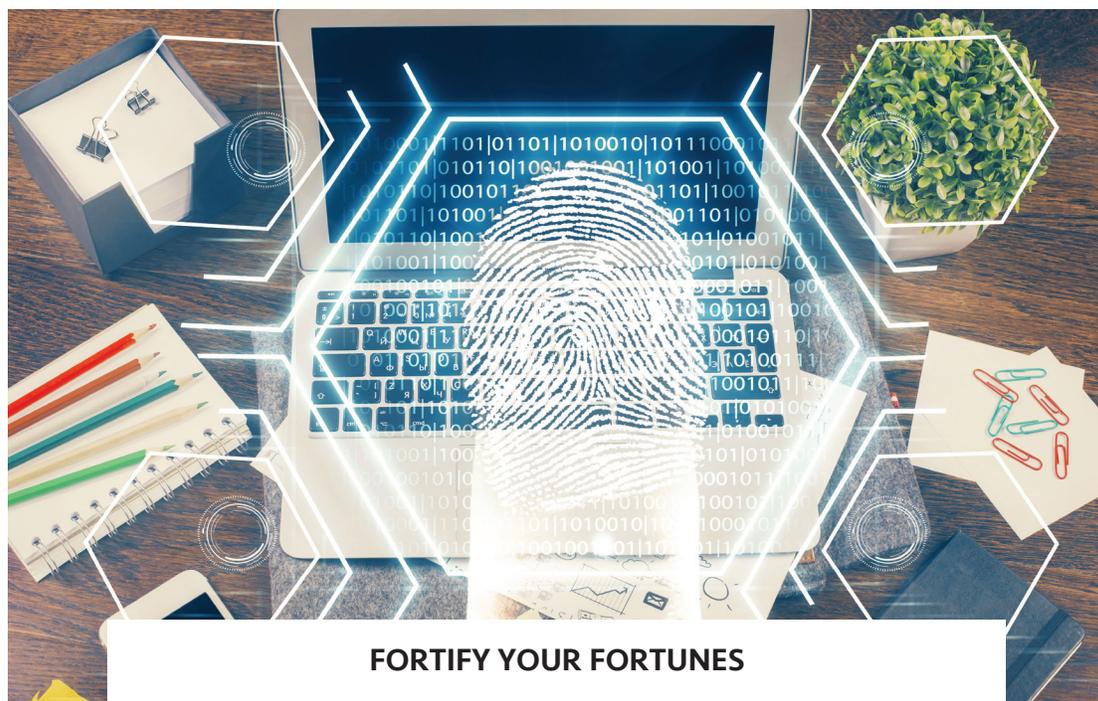


## COGNITIVE REWARDS

- Hobbies force you to explore multiple solutions, like a cook improvising a recipe. This divergent thinking helps you generate innovative ideas when professional solutions aren't obvious.
- Activities like learning a language or building models improve planning, memory, and cognitive flexibility—skills critical for managing complex work tasks.
- Tasks requiring concentration, like playing an instrument, train your brain to filter distractions, leading to better attentional control during work projects.
- Hobbies help lower the stress hormone cortisol, which inhibits the problem-solving centers of the brain. This can lead to clearer thinking.
- Hobbies can create a safe space to fail and try new things, developing the resilience and persistence needed to overcome difficult challenges.

# ID thief, begone

Identity theft is a growing concern. Empowering yourself with knowledge and proactive habits can significantly reduce your risk and safeguard your peace of mind.



## FORTIFY YOUR FORTUNES

- Use strong, unique passwords for every online account and enable two-factor authentication whenever possible. A password manager can help you keep track.
- Regularly check your bank and credit card statements for any suspicious activity, no matter how small. Report anything unusual immediately.
- Consider freezing your credit with all three major credit bureaus (Equifax, Experian, TransUnion). This prevents new credit from being opened in your name.
- Always shred sensitive documents like bank statements, credit card offers, and old bills before discarding them.
- Be extremely cautious about sharing your Social Security Number (SSN). Only provide it when absolutely necessary and to trusted entities.
- Be wary of unsolicited emails, texts, or calls asking for personal information. Legitimate organizations rarely ask for sensitive data this way.

