
HELLO
January
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BRAIN EXERCISES

TO SHARPEN YOUR MEMORY & FOCUS

- Learn a new language
- Active reading and note-taking
- Mindful breathing meditation
- Play chess
- Crossword puzzles
- Sudoku
- Listen or play music
- Work a jigsaw puzzle

5 Brain Exercises to Improve Memory and Concentration

https://youtu.be/KVm5QuXSxxA

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https://tinyurl.com/6jtfskbt

HEALTH BENEFITS OF POPCORN

- WHOLE GRAIN
- PROTEIN & PHOSPHORUS
- ANTIOXIDANTS
- GLUTEN FREE
- BRAIN FOOD
- SUGAR FREE

SPICY CHIPOTLE POPCORN

- 1/2 cup popcorn kernels
- 1 tsp. olive oil
- Cooking spray
- 1-2 tsp. chipotle chili powder
- Zest of 1 lime

- Toss the popcorn kernels with oil. Cook however you like to cook your popcorn (stove, microwave, airpopper, etc.)
- If possible, grind or blend the spice mixture to a fine powder. This will help the seasoning stick better.
- Once popped, transfer to a bowl and spritz with cooking spray. Sprinkle on the chipotle chili power and lime zest, toss and enjoy!

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http://tinyurl.com/42ryhtez

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CUT the CLUTTER BINGO!

GET 4 IN A ROW FOR A BINGO!

☐ Kitchen Pantry	☐ Linen Closet	☐ Fridge & Freezer	☐ DVDs & CDs
☐ Medicine Cabinet	☐ Under the Kitchen Sink	☐ Junk Drawer	☐ Shoes
☐ Old Electronics	☐ Garage Shelves	☐ Under the Beds	☐ Kitchen Cupboards
☐ Bedroom Closet	☐ Master Bedroom	☐ Art & Craft Supplies	☐ Reduce Cleaning Supplies

NAME _____

Getting rid of clutter would eliminate 40% of housework in the average home.

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Live Well, Work Well

January 2026

Clear the Clutter for Your Health

January is recognized as Get Organized Month, making it the perfect time to refresh your space and mindset. Clutter doesn't just take up physical space—it can weigh on your mental health, increase stress and even impact productivity. By clearing the clutter, you set yourself up for a healthier, more successful year.

A survey commissioned by The Container Store revealed that 7 in 10 Americans pin the success of a new year on a clutter-free home.

Being organized extends beyond having a neat desk or a tidy home; it has a direct impact on your overall well-being. A cluttered environment can lead to feelings of overwhelm and anxiety, making it harder to concentrate and complete tasks efficiently. When your surroundings are orderly, your mind feels clearer, decision-making becomes easier and stress levels drop. Organization also saves time and energy, allowing you to focus on what truly matters instead of searching for misplaced items or juggling chaos. In short, an organized space creates a sense of control and calm that benefits both your mental and physical health.

Getting organized may seem overwhelming, but small, manageable steps can add up to big results:

- **Start small.** Pick one area, such as a drawer, a shelf, or even your email inbox, and tackle it first. Success in one spot builds momentum.
- **Declutter daily.** Spend just 10 minutes each day putting things back in their place. This simple habit prevents clutter from piling up.
- **Create systems.** Use labeled bins, folders or digital tools to keep items easy to find.
- **Go digital.** Reduce paper clutter by scanning important documents and storing them securely in the cloud.
- **Set limits.** Adopt a "one in, one out" rule for new items to keep your space from becoming overcrowded.

Organization isn't about perfection—it's about creating a space that supports your goals and well-being. By making small, consistent changes, you'll feel more in control and energized for the year ahead.

Health Benefits of Dry January

As the holidays end, Dry January is a popular wellness challenge where participants abstain from alcohol for the entire month. This initiative encourages people to take a break from drinking after the often-indulgent holiday season. The goal is to reassess one's relationship with alcohol and start the new year with a fresh perspective. Many people use the month to reflect on their drinking habits and make more mindful choices about alcohol.

While a month of sobriety can seem overwhelming to some, it comes with some advantages. A brief break from moderate to heavy alcohol consumption may offer the following health-related benefits:

- Better sleep
- Increased focus
- Improved mood
- Boosted energy
- Clearer complexion
- Potential weight loss

Alcohol can also contribute to various health conditions, such as high blood pressure, kidney or liver problems, heart disease and certain cancers. As such, a period of sobriety can positively affect one's well-being and overall health. If you have any questions or concerns about your alcohol consumption, talk to a health care professional.

Rescue Your Skin This Winter

Taking care of your skin properly can be challenging. The task can seem almost impossible to achieve when the temperature and humidity levels drop. Having dry skin may not seem like the most concerning health issue, but not treating it can result in itchiness, cracked or painful skin, as well as eczema and dermatitis.

A Harris Poll found that 6 in 10 Americans say their skin feels "unhealthy" during the winter.

Consider these skin care tips for the winter months:

- **Adjust your shower routine.** The length and temperature of your showers can significantly impact the dryness of your skin. Long and hot showers during the cold months can strip the natural oils from your skin, leaving it dry. Try short, lukewarm showers instead.
- **Use moisturizer.** Applying moisturizer, especially after showering, can help keep your skin hydrated and prevent dryness.
- **Avoid products with fragrances.** Oftentimes, the better a product smells, the more irritating it can be for your skin. As such, consider choosing fragrance-free skin products and laundry detergents.
- **Use a humidifier.** Humidifiers can add moisture to the air within your home, helping to prevent and relieve environmental dryness.
- **Stay hydrated.** Ensure you're drinking enough water throughout the day to improve the appearance of your skin and reduce its susceptibility to dryness.

Talk to your health care provider if you have specific skin health concerns.

Recipe of the Month

Garlic Ginger Ramen With Beef

Makes: 6 servings

Ingredients

- ½ lb. lean ground beef
- 2 cups water
- 2 packages instant ramen-style noodles (3 oz. each, broken into small pieces)
- 16 oz. frozen stir-fry vegetables
- 2 green onions (thinly sliced)
- 1 Tbsp. fresh ginger (or ¼ tsp. ground ginger)
- 2 cloves garlic (minced or ½ tsp. garlic powder)

Preparations

1. In a large skillet over medium-high heat (350 F in an electric skillet), brown the ground beef. Drain fat from the skillet. Drain fat from the skillet.
2. Add water and one ramen seasoning packet to the cooked beef and mix well.
3. Add the vegetables, green onion, ginger and garlic. Bring to a boil over high heat.
4. Add the ramen noodles, reduce the heat to low and simmer for 3 to 5 minutes, until the vegetables are tender, stirring occasionally.

Nutritional Information

(per serving)

Total calories	193
Total fat	5 g
Protein	11 g
Sodium	331 mg
Carbohydrate	27 g
Dietary fiber	3 g
Saturated fat	1 g
Total sugars	3 g

Source: MyPlate

MENTAL HEALTH MINUTE

AssuredPartners

January 2026

Mental Health Benefits of Dry January

Each January, millions of people around the world commit to "Dry January," a month-long break from alcohol. While the challenge is often associated with physical health benefits, such as improved liver function, a better immune system and more energy, it also offers significant mental health advantages. The following are potential mental health benefits of participating in Dry January:

- **Improved mood and emotional stability**—Alcohol is a depressant that can disrupt the brain's chemical balance, often leading to mood swings, anxiety and even depressive symptoms. Taking a break allows your body to recalibrate, reducing these fluctuations. Many participants report feeling more emotionally stable and less irritable after just a few weeks without alcohol.
- **Reduced anxiety and stress**—Although alcohol may seem like a quick fix for stress, it often exacerbates anxiety in the long run. Drinking can interfere with neurotransmitters that regulate mood, creating a cycle of temporary relief followed by heightened anxiety. Dry January breaks this cycle, helping individuals experience calmer, more consistent mental states.
- **Boosted self-esteem and sense of control**—Completing Dry January can provide a powerful sense of accomplishment. Setting a goal and sticking to it reinforces self-discipline and boosts confidence. This achievement often translates into a greater sense of control over other aspects of life, which is essential for mental well-being.
- **Better social and emotional awareness**—Without alcohol as a social crutch, people often discover new ways to connect with others and cope with stress. This can lead to healthier relationships and a deeper understanding of personal triggers and habits. Many participants find that they enjoy socializing without relying on alcohol, which can reduce feelings of isolation and improve overall happiness.

Taking a month off from alcohol gives your mind and body time to reset and offers insight into your drinking habits. If you're considering quitting entirely or have concerns, consult a health care professional.

How New Year's Resolutions Impact Mental Health

As the calendar turns to January, many people embrace the tradition of setting New Year's resolutions. While these goals can inspire positive change, they also have a profound impact on mental health—both good and bad. Understanding this dynamic can help you create resolutions that support your well-being rather than undermine it.

Resolutions can provide a sense of purpose and motivation. Setting achievable goals fosters optimism and gives structure to the year ahead. On the flip side, unrealistic or overly rigid resolutions can lead to stress, guilt and disappointment. When goals are unattainable, failure can trigger feelings of inadequacy or anxiety.

The following are tips for making more mindful New Year's resolutions:

- **Start small and specific.** Instead of vague goals like "be healthier," choose actionable steps such as "walk 20 minutes a day." Small wins build momentum and confidence.
- **Focus on mental wellness.** Include resolutions that nurture your mind, such as journaling, practicing gratitude or scheduling regular downtime. These habits can help reduce stress and improve emotional resilience.
- **Be flexible.** Life is unpredictable. Allow room for adjustments without labeling yourself a failure. Flexibility prevents unnecessary pressure and keeps goals sustainable.
- **Celebrate progress, not perfection.** Recognize every step forward, no matter how small. Positive reinforcement strengthens motivation and reduces self-criticism.

By setting thoughtful goals and prioritizing your mental health, you can begin the year with confidence and create lasting, positive change.

If you're feeling overwhelmed or want to explore ways to support your mental health, consider reaching out to your HR representative to learn more about the mental health benefits available to you.