

Friendships Foster Good Health



Adult friendships create meaningful social connections. More than ever since COVID-19, we've seen firsthand the impacts of loneliness and social isolation on people. Staying connected through adult friendships can help us overcome any negative impact of aging.

In fact, research has shown that having close friends may help add years to your life. One study suggested that those with a larger social network had lower mortality at a 10-year follow-up than those with a smaller social network. **Specifically, adults with strong social connections** were shown to have a reduced risk of significant health problems, including depression, high blood pressure and an unhealthy body mass index. And of course, companionship can also improve your self-confidence and reduce stress.

However, the 2021 American Perspectives Survey found that Americans report having fewer close friendships than they once did. The good news is that it's more about quality than quantity.

Maintaining friendships as a busy adult can be challenging at times. To connect well with other people, it helps to be yourself and be available to friends by making your relationships a priority. To nurture friendship, make time for those you care about. Be present by connecting regularly. Show up for your friends, especially when it could matter the most to them.

Be the friend you want to have, and lead with kindness and compassion. You can show your trust as a friend by sharing and asking for help when the time comes.

March is Nutrition Month.



Dietitian's Grocery List

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD



It's easier to prepare nutritious meals and snacks when you plan them in advance. An important first step in planning is grocery shopping for the right ingredients and properly stocking your fridge, freezer and pantry.

Some people create a meal plan and know what they will cook each night. Others prefer to rely on a well-stocked kitchen so they can prepare meals in a pinch. If you prefer the latter, this grocery list should keep you supplied for delicious last-minute meals.

Pantry:

- ☐ Canned beans and lentils
- ☐ Canned fish
- ☐ Brown rice
- ☐ Assorted noodles: pasta, rice noodles, etc.
- ☐ Whole grains, such as quinoa and oats
- ☐ Nuts and seeds
- ☐ Peanut butter
- ☐ Canned tomatoes and tomato sauce
- ☐ Whole-grain crackers

Fridge:

- ☐ Milk or non-dairy alternative
- ☐ Eggs
- ☐ Greek yogurt
- ☐ Cheese
- ☐ Salad greens (spinach, romaine, kale, etc.)
- ☐ Vegetables: broccoli, carrots, sweet peppers, etc.
- ☐ Fruits: apples, berries, melons, etc.
- ☐ Condiments: mayonnaise, mustard, soy sauce, etc.

Freezer:

- ☐ Frozen vegetables, such as peas, broccoli and stir-fry mix
- ☐ Frozen fruit, such as peaches, mango and berries
- ☐ Chicken
- ☐ Fish and seafood, such as salmon and shrimp

Countertop:

- ☐ Bread, pita and tortillas
- ☐ Fruits and vegetables kept at room temperature: tomatoes, avocado, bananas, etc.

Dark cupboard:

- ☐ Onions
- ☐ Potatoes and sweet potatoes
- ☐ Garlic

Staples to have on hand:

- ☐ Extra-virgin olive oil or other cooking oils
- ☐ Vinegar (cider, rice, balsamic)
- ☐ Favorite dried herbs and spices
- ☐ Salt and pepper

You can mix and match the foods from this shopping list to make delicious meal combinations, such as:

- ☐ Shrimp stir-fry: Frozen stir-fry vegetables, shrimp, noodles.
- ☐ Chicken dinner: Chicken, broccoli, leafy greens, quinoa.
- ☐ Pasta bake: Pasta, tomato sauce, canned chickpeas, cheese.
- ☐ Vegetable fried rice: Eggs, brown rice, frozen peas, carrots.
- ☐ PB and banana roll-ups: Peanut butter, banana, tortilla or pita.



Daylight Saving Time and Your Health



Daylight saving time (DST) impacts your body's natural rhythms. And the result can be far more than feeling extra sleepy after setting your clock forward an hour on March 10. The reason? The shift in time disrupts the body's natural rhythms.

Proponents of DST assumed it would make better use of more daylight in spring and summer and more sunlight exposure would boost moods. But research shows DST is associated with psychological disturbances, weight gain, increases in heart attacks and strokes and even more car crashes.

Daylight saving time can affect your health because of how the time change impacts circadian rhythm: the body's natural 24-hour biological cycle, set by the timing and daily amount of bright light exposure. During DST, which lasts until early November, your body gets less light in the morning and more light in the evening, which can disrupt your circadian rhythm.

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine and other sleep experts advise eliminating DST, but they've been unsuccessful.

However, these tips may help you fare better during daylight saving time:

- For one to two days leading up to the switch to DST, get outside in the morning. More natural morning light can help preserve your circadian rhythm.
- The night before DST begins, go to bed one hour earlier than normal to prepare. Avoid caffeine, alcohol and blue light exposure one to two hours before bedtime.
- Exercise in the morning can increase wakefulness. It helps reset your internal clock, too.

Stay Informed About Your Medications

By Elizabeth Smoots, MD

Information about prescription and over-the-counter medications changes over time. It's important to keep up with new warnings, side effects, interactions or recalls for the drugs you take. These tools can help you stay informed.

MedWatch is published by the FDA and provides safety alerts for FDA-regulated products, such as prescription and over-the-counter drugs, medical devices, cosmetics, food and beverages. To learn more, search for **MedWatch** at [fda.gov](https://www.fda.gov/medwatch).

The FDA safety checker is a searchable database for drug recalls, market withdrawals and safety alerts at [fda.gov/safety/recalls-market-withdrawals-safety-alerts](https://www.fda.gov/safety/recalls-market-withdrawals-safety-alerts).

MedlinePlus offers a wide range of information about medications, herbs and supplements at [medlineplus.gov](https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus).

Drugs.com provides access to FDA updates and new drug approvals. It also has a pill identifier, a side effect checker and a checker for interactions with drugs, foods and diseases.

Your health care provider and pharmacist are reliable sources of current information about medications.

Medication tip: It's important to avoid taking more than one medication with the same ingredient. For instance, many cold remedies contain acetaminophen. If you take more than one of these cold products, you may exceed the maximum recommended acetaminophen dose; this can lead to liver damage. Check the list of ingredients on the label for every medication you use.



Benefits of Weighted Gloves

Weighted gloves build strength and stamina and tone arms.

Lifting dumbbells and working out with resistance machines aren't new, but using weighted gloves can be a more convenient and less complicated way to add weight training to your fitness quest.

Previously, mainly boxers have used heavy, weighted gloves when they work out with punching bags. Now anyone can choose from a wide variety of gloves with small weights at sporting goods stores and online.

Weighted gloves for exercise typically have pocket-type holders on the backs which hold the weights (usually ½ to 1 pound for beginners and up to 4 pounds for the more fit). Some come with several different weights so you can add or subtract the amount from the gloves. It's important to make sure the gloves have secure but comfortable straps, too.

So, if you're not a boxer, what can you do with weighted gloves? Boosting your walking routine while carrying the extra weight is one of the easiest activities. You'll burn more calories. The gloves also add extra resistance to strengthen your upper body. Walking regularly with weighted gloves can strengthen bone density, reducing the risk of osteoporosis, too. You can also increase cardiovascular fitness and build stamina.

If gloves aren't for you, try wearing weights on your ankles and wrists. While all can help fitness if used safely, talk to your health care provider before you use any wearable weights if you have back, joint, or balance problems or other chronic conditions.



The **Smart Moves Toolkit**, including this issue's printable download, **Eating Plan for Life**, is at personalbest.com/extras/24V3tools.

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