

# Live Better Newsletter



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## July 27<sup>th</sup> is Take Your Pants for a Walk Day!

Take Your Pants for a Walk Day is a great day to get some exercise. It's easy to celebrate. Simply go for a walk. Unless you are wearing a dress or a skirt, you are probably wearing pants. So, by definition, as you walk, they come along. Give your pants some exercise. After all, they are looking a little tight around the middle. The walk will do them, and you, some good.



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## Seeing is Achieving

Picture weight loss with visual cues!

Visual images hold amazing power. We can all still "see" the Challenger disaster, the flag rising over Iwo Jima, even our own high school yearbook pictures. The images are still with us today. And so are the emotions that go with them.

You can use this power to your advantage to help you lose weight. If you surround yourself with visual cues, you have a great chance of meeting that goal. A picture of what you want (or don't want) to look like; a vacation postcard that you're using as a reward; a picture of your kids who you want to stick around for - these images can stick around and pull at you even when they're not in sight.

## Boost Your Mental EQ

### Provided by Prevention

"Use it or lose it" certainly applies to your mind. If you challenge yourself by doing crossword puzzles, memorizing poems, or learning a new language for that trip abroad, you're more likely to feel--and stay--mentally sharp. Take a look at the following four tips that can also keep your mental motor revved.

**Go for Green Tea.** It's a much better pick-me-up than your typical Starbucks latte. The reason? Although it does have some energizing caffeine, it also contains theanine, a compound that has a stress-reducing effect on your brain. "It calms you while giving you mental clarity," says Jacob Teitelbaum, MD, author of *From Fatigued to Fantastic*

**Have Bran for Breakfast.** Eating a morning meal rich in fiber may make you more alert during the day. A recent study done at Cardiff University in Wales found that subjects who ate a high-fiber cereal in the morning showed a 10 percent reduction in fatigue, lower incidence of depression, and better cognitive skills. One theory: Fiber helps slow down the absorption of food in the stomach, so you have more energy for a longer period of time.

**Pop a Peppermint.** Oils in the peppermint plant increase alertness by stimulating your trigeminal nerve, "which is the same nerve that's activated when you revive someone with smelling salts," says Alan Hirsch, MD, director of the Smell and Taste Treatment Foundation in Chicago. Mints also contain menthol, which makes you feel cooler and more awake.

**Rearrange Your Office Furniture.** Think about it: Suddenly you can't just reach for the wastebasket unconsciously; you have to stop and flex your mental muscles to find where it is. You can also try taking a different route to work. These non-routine actions activate seldom-used nerve connections in your brain, to help strengthen and improve memory and make you less likely to succumb to fatigue.



## Active Cultures

By Vicki Salemi

Whether you turn on the TV or take a stroll in the supermarket, chances are you've encountered "active culture" products. From yogurts to cheeses they claim to help with a nervous stomach but the question is do they really work? And if so, how?

### The 4-1-1

Our intestines have natural micro flora, microorganisms that live in your digestive tract, which supports a healthy immune system, says Allison Acquisto MA, RD, LDN and assistant professor of culinary nutrition in the College of Culinary Arts at Johnson & Wales University. "This intestinal micro flora is critical not only for general immune health but also for healthy gut (intestine) function, metabolism of protein, fat, carbohydrates such as fiber and synthesis of vitamins in the body." Probiotics are live active bacteria which carry out these functions. "The food we consume such as yogurt, cheese and fermented dairy products contain beneficial bacteria."

### Prevention Popularity

So why the sudden popularity of active cultures? As medical science is realizing the composition of the bacteria in our micro flora become more and more important in disease prevention, there are

tremendous health benefits. Plus, it's one way to sell healthier products. "Companies are responding to the demands/needs of the public in trying to improve the nutritional quality of foods. Packaged and refined foods have really lost a lot of nutritional value and now there is interest in figuring out how to fix that. Adding probiotics to foods is one way to make them healthier," says Dr. Gary Huffnagle, professor of Internal Medicine and Microbiology/Immunology University of Michigan Medical School and author of *The Probiotics Revolution*.

### What's in a Label?

Some companies like Dannon are creating a new line of products like Activia, while other companies are simply adding the phrase "probiotics" to the label. Dr. Huffnagle explains, "Dannon is the model of how it should be done: the type of probiotic (name and strain) and the amount per serving are given on the label, or at least on a website, and the probiotic has some research and clinical testing available for review that has been published. Many companies are simply saying "contains probiotics," and then they never tell you what it is precisely or the amount." (Continued on Page 3)



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### How it Works

"Bacteria naturally found in the intestines have several functions. They feed on non-digested food ingredients, mostly soluble fibers. They may also help to absorb cancer fighting phytonutrients like the isoflavones found in soy. They make vitamin K, which is needed for blood clotting. They provide a barrier to infection in the colon, by inhibiting the growth of harmful (pathogenic) bacteria," notes Lanah Brenan RD who works for The Sports Club/LA in Beverly Hills and a private practice.

### The Scoop on Digestion

Probiotics can help regularity in either direction; they can make you go more or less depending on what your body needs. Dr. Huffnagle adds, "Probiotics can also help reduce the feeling of bloating and for some people it can reduce the discomfort associated with irritable bowel syndrome-like symptoms. There is also a flurry of studies and research suggesting that our metabolism and nutritional uptake from the intestinal track is also strongly influenced by the type of bacteria that live in our GI tract. While not yet conclusive, it again seems that probiotics are very helpful in this regard." In particular, probiotics are even more important for children than they are for adults because the immune system encounters microbes, foods and allergens for the first time as a child. In addition, scientific studies

have shown that regular consumption of specific probiotics has made a positive impact for seniors as it relates to a significant decrease in severity of the cold and flu.

### M is for Moderation

When stored properly you'd think this superstar bacteria is all good, right? Well, the experts say too much of a good thing may be bad. "There may be negative effects. For instance if you start eating it too quickly, you can get a cramp, diarrhea or feel bloated." The key here is moderation says Christine Gerbstadt, MD, RD and spokesperson for the American Dietetic Association. While the taste in general of probiotic products is more tangy or sour than sweet, Gerbstadt mentions you usually can't actually taste the difference.

## Eating Healthy on a Budget

By [Karen Asp](#)

You're trying to eat healthy, but with the rising cost of groceries, that's not always easy. Fortunately, though, with some smart shopping strategies, you can avoid breaking the bank when buying healthy foods. Just follow these tips from Sissy Osteen, Ph.D., associate professor at Oklahoma State University and Katherine Tallmadge, R.D., national spokesperson for the American Dietetic Association and author of 'Diet Simple.'

**Skip most organic products.** No matter how much buzz you hear about buying

organic products, they're still a more expensive option than non-organic products. If you are concerned about your health, though, choose organic when buying these 12 products, which have the highest pesticide levels, according to the Environmental Working Group: peaches, apples, sweet bell peppers, celery, nectarines, strawberries, cherries, pears, imported grapes, spinach, lettuce and potatoes.

**Avoid pre-cut, pre-packaged meals and foods.** Sure, pre-cut, pre-packaged food items are convenient and can save you prep time. Yet they often cost more than made-from-scratch meals or produce that you cut. Plus, pre-packaged meals are often high in fat, calories, sodium or sugar.

**Expand your protein options.** Try new sources of protein like beans and tofu, which are less costly than meat. Besides, eating less meat (and more beans) is better for your health. Even when you're cooking meat-based dishes, decrease the meat and add more beans and vegetables.

**Be a savvy produce shopper.** You can often find deals on produce that's in season. Or head to a local farmer's market which often has amazing bargains on produce. You should also compare prices between a bag of produce rather than individual items (i.e. a bag of apples versus four individual apples). If you can use the produce before it spoils, a bag may be a better bet.

**Substitute peanut butter for lunch meat.** Kudos for brown bagging it, an easy way to save money. Yet rather than choosing lunch meat, which adds up, switch to peanut butter. Not only will it save you money, peanut butter is also a nutritious source of protein.

**Choose generic over name brand items.** In general, generic brands, which you can find for everything from frozen vegetables to whole-wheat bread, are cheaper than name brands. Of course, compare prices to be sure.

**Buy frozen versus fresh produce.** Frozen produce can often be a better buy than fresh produce, but as always, check those prices. After all, if produce is in season, it may be cheaper than frozen. Other benefits to frozen? It can live for months in the freezer and is just as nutritious, if not more, than fresh produce. Just avoid frozen produce with sauces, which can add calories, fat and sodium.

**Make a list.** Grocery stores need to make money, which is why they employ sneaky tricks to entice you to buy more (i.e. bakeries by the entrance, milk at the back of the store, more expensive foods shelved at eye level). Yet if you have a list, you'll be less tempted by these marketing ploys to buy on impulse. Also, leave your kids at home when you shop; otherwise, you'll be pressured into buying items not on your list, including not-so-healthy foods.

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## Fun Facts

- 40% of all indigestion remedies sold in the world is bought by Americans.
- A hard working adult sweats up to 4 gallons per day. Most of the sweat evaporates before a person realizes it's there, though!
- A person will burn 7 percent more calories if they walk on hard dirt compared to pavement.
- A sneeze can travel as fast as 100 miles per hour.
- Banging your head against a wall uses 150 calories an hour.
- Gardening is said to be one of the best exercises for maintaining healthy bones.

**Look Great. Feel Better.  
Live Better**



## Ranch-Style Steak Kabobs

- 4 new potatoes, cut in half
- 1/4 cup KRAFT Ranch Dressing, divided
- 1 lb. boneless beef sirloin steak, cut lengthwise into 1/2-inch-thick slices
- 8 cherry tomatoes

**HEAT** grill to medium-high heat. Cook potatoes in saucepan of boiling water 12 to 14 min. or until tender; drain. Cool slightly.

**RESERVE** half of dressing. Thread meat, accordion style onto 4 skewers, alternating potatoes and tomatoes between folds of meat; brush with remaining dressing.

**GRILL** 10 to 12 min. or until meat is done, brushing with reserved dressing the last 2 min.

### Substitutes

- Substitute KRAFT ROKA Blue Cheese Dressing for the Ranch dressing.
- Mushrooms can be substituted for the baby new potatoes.

### Cooking Know-How

Soak wooden skewers in water for 30 min. before adding kabob ingredients to prevent charring.

## Nutrition Information

(per serving)

Calories	250
Total fat	11 g
Saturated fat	3 g
Cholesterol	60 mg
Sodium	200 mg
Carbohydrate	16 g
Dietary fiber	2 g
Sugars	2 g
Protein	22 g

## In The News: Is No News Good News?

Doctor's offices sometimes fail to inform patients of abnormal test results, according to a recent study published in the "Archives of Internal Medicine." The researchers found that 7 percent of the time primary-care doctors delayed or failed to deliver such news to patients. While many doctors believe that patients should assume that "no news is good news," the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality warns that such lapses represent poor patient care. The organization offers these quick tips when getting medical tests. If you're having a medical test, ask your doctor when you should expect to receive your tests results. If you're not contacted within the specified time frame, call the office. Remember, it's your health. The news was reported by ABC News, the NYTimes and MedPage Today.