

NUTRITION NEWS

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STUDENT NUTRITION
DEPARTMENT

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April Showers Bring May Flowers

Let's talk about how flowers offer more than their unique beauty/visual attractiveness and aromatics. Flowers also serve medicinal purposes and contain healing properties. Beyond their external qualities, certain medicinal flowers, like chamomile and rhodiola rosea, possess calming agents, immune boosting and stress relieving properties, as well as skin enhancing effects.

Chamomile is an herb that comes from small daisy-like flowers and is known for its calming properties that help with stress, insomnia, and anxiety (a rising problem in this day and age). There is research on the effects chamomile extract has on people with generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), which is the most common form of anxiety.

It is suggested that chamomile properties positively affects the neurotransmission of the "feel good" hormones, dopamine and serotonin. Another randomized controlled research trial showed chamomile improved cortisol (stress hormone) levels.

Rhodiola rosea (also known as golden root, arctic root, king's crown, or rose root) is a flowering plant/herb that is known for improving mental and physical endurance, increasing energy, and building resilience to stress. Rhodiola rosea has shown up in medical texts as early as 77 AD, and has been used to treat colds, flu, and now to help with depression, among other common health issues. There is an extensive list of health benefits for this powerful herb. Instead of relying on harsh medications with wild side effects, these medicinal extracts are making their beneficial mark and offering alternative support to prevalent health disorders.



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Let's Talk Stress

I hate to break it to you, but you cannot improve your health and body composition with nutrition alone. High stress and lack of sleep also contribute to an unhealthy gut microbiome. You can also expect to experience an increase in:

- Cravings for high glycemic foods (bread, cereal, chips, cookies, rice)

- Feeling tired/sluggish, mental fog/scatterbrained

- Mood swings and lack of joy/excitement

- Digestive distress/inflammation

Cortisol, as mentioned previously, is a stress hormone and when consistently elevated, it can really cause some harm and mischief to your health, body, and gut. All of these components work hand-in-hand and come full circle.



A lot of people may not even realize just how stressed they really are. It's one thing to say, "I'm not stressed" and maybe not even feel it, but it is surprising to those who actually go in for a cortisol lab test and find that their hormone levels are through the roof. All the sudden, their lack of energy, insomnia, and digestive problems start to make a little more sense. Chronically raised cortisol levels take a toll on the body internally and have a domino effect in terms of negative signs and symptoms experienced. Stress, sleep deprivation, gut problems, and a poor diet all lead to inflammation. Did you know inflammation is the leading cause of chronic illnesses? Full circle, my people.

Nobody wakes up from one day to the next unhealthy and disease/illness-ridden. This poor state takes time and consistently feeding the body highly processed foods, lack of sleep as well as exercise, and poorly managed stress.

And just like it takes time to reach an unhealthy state, it takes time to pull yourself out of that rut. The person and body, as a whole, has to heal in order to obtain an optimally working gut microbiome and it takes time, patience, intentional work and commitment/consistency. Try focusing on stress management, like deep breath work, yoga/meditation, and getting quality sleep. Seek out counseling if dealing with past, personal traumas. Stress is no friend to any of us.

What does organic really mean? The term refers to the way agricultural products are processed and grown. The term is practiced differently in separate parts of the world, but here in the U.S., organic crops must be grown without the use of synthetic herbicides, fertilizers, pesticides, or bioengineered genes (GMOs). Organic livestock raised for meat, eggs, and dairy products may not be given antibiotics, animal by-products, or growth hormones and must be raised in living conditions considerate to their natural behaviors. Shopping organic can be a bit more pricy, so shop organic when it comes to the "dirty dozen." When it comes to the cleaner fruits and vegetables, it's not as essential to shop organically if you're trying to get the most bang for your buck. But as consumers, it is important to know the consequences these harmful synthetic applicators pose on our health. Shopping organic as much as possible is a powerful practice that will hopefully change the way corporations process and grow food in this country that is favorable for people, animals, and the environment.

2021 EWG Pesticides in Produce

Clean 15: Fewest Pesticides



Dirty Dozen: Prioritize Organic



STRETCH. STRETCH. STRETCH.

Consistently stretching is SO important! Retaining and working towards more flexibility, especially as we age, is what will help us be more mobile and feel younger. Stretching helps strengthen our muscles, keeps them healthy, and helps us to sustain mobility in our joints.

Turn on some of your favorite tunes and set a timer, stretching for at least a minute on each stretching position (google proper stretches and form if you do not know where to start). The longer you stay in a stretch, the more range of motion and flexibility will be attained.

Watching a show or movie? Utilize that time to get in some good stretches.

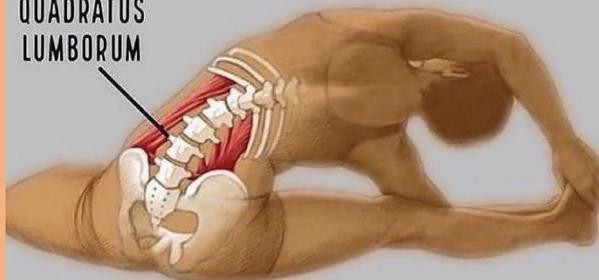
Stuck behind a desk all day? Take some time to step away and get some deep breaths in while stretching and loosening up your muscles.

Your body will thank you for it!!

DID YOU KNOW? WHEN YOU DO THIS STRETCH DAILY...

Holistic All

QUADRATUS
LUMBORUM



THIS IS THE AREA THAT CAUSES STIFFNESS AND LOWER BACK PAIN FROM LACK OF STRETCHING. THIS AREA MUST BE STRETCHED DAILY, ESPECIALLY IF YOU SIT ALL DAY.

Citrus-Marinated Flank Steak



Serves 3-4

Ingredients:

- 3 tablespoons avocado oil
- 2 tablespoons coconut aminos
- 2 teaspoons fresh lime juice
- 2 teaspoons apple cider vinegar
- 3 cloves crushed garlic

- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- ¼ teaspoon ground paprika
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 pound flank steak

Instructions:

- 1) In a small bowl, whisk together avocado oil, coconut aminos, lime juice, apple cider, garlic, salt, cumin, chili powder, oregano, paprika, and thyme.
- 2) Place the steak into a shallow glass or other nonreactive dish. Pour the marinade over the meat, ensuring it is entirely coated. Cover the dish and place in refrigerator overnight.
- 3) When you're ready to cook the meat, remove it from refrigerator and let sit at room temperature for 20-30 minutes.
- 4) Prepare a grill or warm a stove-top grill pan set over high heat. When it's hot, grill the meat 4 minutes on each side.
- 5) Let the meat rest on a cutting board for at least 5 minutes before slicing it against the grain.

Recipe Credit: Dr. Brighten

"The small victories are just as important as the big ones." For it is the small wins that construct and reinforce the big wins.