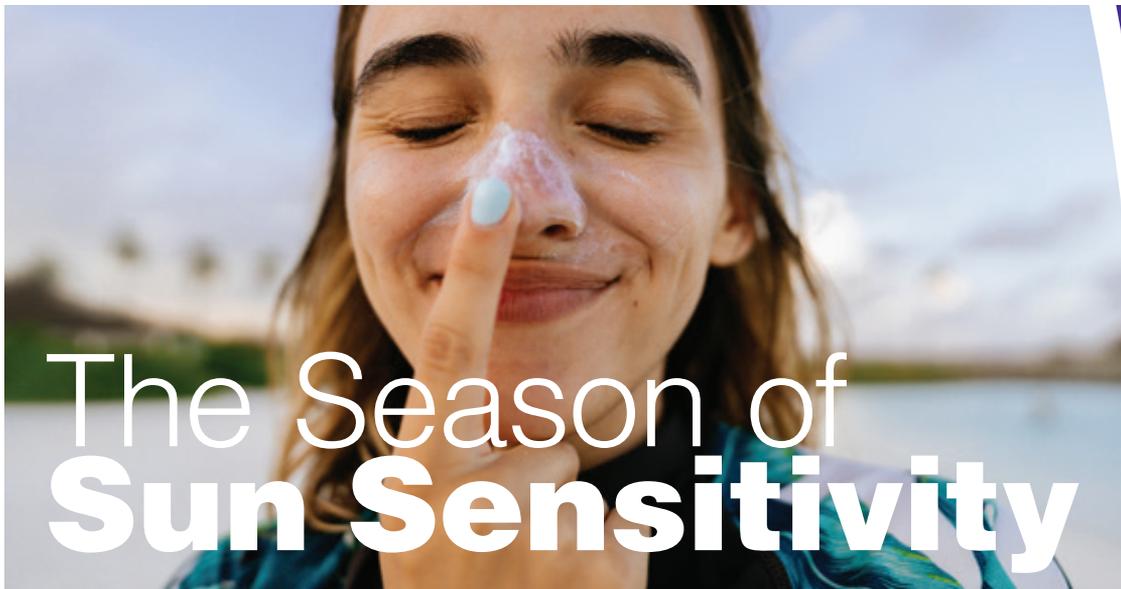




Choices for healthy living • nutrition • fitness • well-being • health



## The Season of Sun Sensitivity

**A**s spring sunshine heads our way, it can be a challenge for those people who have reactions to sunlight.

Allergic reactions (or sensitivities) to sunlight occur when ultraviolet (UV) radiation triggers changes in the body's skin cells. The immune system mistakenly identifies proteins in the cells as harmful invaders, and then releases antibodies to attack those cells. This results in symptoms that include hives, blisters, or an itchy red rash.

A common type of sun allergy is called polymorphic light eruption (PMLE). Symptoms usually appear within hours or days after exposure to sunlight and include itchiness, the formation of tiny white or yellow bumps on a red background, or skin that can get increasingly red and swollen after exposure.

Actinic prurigo is characterized by chapped, split lips and conjunctivitis (an inflammation of the inside of the eyelid) as well as raised patches

of red skin and itchy bumps that show up within days of sun exposure.

Chronic actinic dermatitis can cause thick patches of dry, itchy and inflamed skin, with other patches of skin that don't seem to be affected at all.

Certain medications (such as tetracycline antibiotics), chemicals (including fragrances), and medical disorders (like dermatitis) can cause photosensitivity, making the skin more sensitive to the sun's effects.

Often reducing sun exposure, without any treatment, will help resolve the condition.

Treatment can include corticosteroid creams, oral antihistamines and, for severe cases, oral corticosteroids or oral immunosuppressant medications.

People with sun sensitivity should always wear a minimum SPF 30 sunscreen as well as sunglasses, a long-sleeved shirt and wide-brimmed hat.

## 10 FAST FACTS

- 1** A commercially prepared chocolate muffin can have more than 50 grams of carbohydrates.
- 2** Riboflavin keeps skin, eyes and nerves healthy and releases energy in cells.
- 3** Milk is 87 percent water. Protein, carbohydrate, vitamins and minerals make up the other 13 percent.
- 4** Pumpkin seeds are high in zinc, which is good for the prostate and building the immune system.
- 5** The mushroom is the only non-animal high natural source of vitamin D.
- 6** A handful of almonds eaten every day can increase levels of good cholesterol.
- 7** Oats provide the highest protein content of all the cereals.
- 8** You will not find a nutrition facts table on coffee and tea because they contain so few nutrients.
- 9** The first set of Canadian dietary guidelines was published in 1942.
- 10** The consumption of ultra-processed food has increased more than any other food group since the 1980s.

- 3** Top Proteins for Vegetarians
- 5** MELT Your Muscles
- 7** Beware the "Energy Vampire"



# Nature's CANDY

**I**n the summertime, particularly late July through August, one of Mother Nature's best treats is at its prime: fresh blueberries. When super nutritious foods are being considered, blueberries always make the list.

A day spent picking blueberries or sourcing them from a local farmer's market is well worth it. In scientific testing of over 100 foods, blueberries consistently rank highly for their antioxidant benefits. These health-promoting properties have been shown to play a role in better blood-pressure maintenance, protecting cardiac muscle, improving insulin response, reducing memory loss, and reduced growth of cancer cells in breast and colon cancer studies.

One cup of blueberries provides four

grams of fibre, 11 grams of carbohydrate and about 85 calories. Blueberries are also hydrating with a water content of 85 percent. Given their superfood status, there is unfortunately an abundance of misinformation online that exaggerates these claims.

What is true is that blueberries are worth including in your meals and snacks regularly. Enjoy them fresh in the summer months and then keep a supply in the freezer for topping oatmeal or throwing into smoothies in the fall and winter. They're a perfect natural way to satisfy a sweet craving. For a well-balanced, plant-based meal idea that also makes great leftovers to pack for a workday lunch, try the salad recipe here courtesy of BC Blueberries.



## BLUEBERRY Superfoods Salad

Serves: 4

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups (200 g) raw kale, stem removed and chopped
- 1½ cups (225 g) B.C. blueberries, fresh or frozen
- 1½ cups (225 g) cooked quinoa, cooled (*⅔ cup uncooked quinoa*)
- 1 cup (150 g) raw beet, peeled and grated
- 3 tbsp (30 g) hemp hearts
- ⅓ cup (80 ml) Flax Lemon Vinaigrette (see recipe below)
- ¼ cup (35 g) sunflower seeds

### Flax Lemon Vinaigrette:

- 3 tbsp (45 ml) flax seed oil
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) lemon juice
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) fresh parsley, finely chopped
- 1 tsp (5 ml) honey
- 1 tsp (5 ml) lemon zest, finely grated
- 1 tsp (5 ml) pepper
- ½ tsp (2.5 ml) salt
- ¼ tsp (1.5 ml) turmeric powder (optional)

### INSTRUCTIONS

#### Vinaigrette

- In a bowl, whisk together, lemon juice, parsley, honey, lemon zest, pepper, salt and turmeric.
- Slowly drizzle in the flax seed oil until emulsified.

#### Salad

- In a bowl combine kale, blueberries, cooled quinoa, grated beet, hemp hearts and flax lemon vinaigrette.
- Top with sunflower seeds.

Find more beautiful blueberry recipes at [bcblueberry.com](http://bcblueberry.com)

**"Eat to workout, don't workout to eat."**  
—Katie Chung Hua, professional bodybuilder

# 3 HABITS That Could be Slowing Your METABOLISM

Lack of exercise, late night snacking, insufficient water ... these are some of the more commonly recognized metabolism killers. But do you have other habits that are impacting your basal metabolic rate?

Andrea Falcone, a registered dietitian and certified fitness professional from Ontario, shares three habits that could be messing with your metabolism.

**1 Long-term dieting.** "People who consistently under-consume calories are at risk of slowing their metabolism," Falcone tells *Wellness Matters*. "Your body needs a certain amount of energy to maintain regular functions. When it doesn't receive adequate calories, it goes into starvation mode and will try and hold on to every calorie you consume, ultimately slowing the rate at which it burns energy."



**2 Eating breakfast late.** "Is breakfast the most important meal of the day? No. Every meal is important. But we have breakfast after a six- to eight-hour fast. The longer you wait to eat breakfast, the slower your metabolism ends up being. Ideally eat your breakfast within 15 to 45 minutes of waking."

**3 Too much cardio, not enough strength training.** "It's a common misconception that in order to lose weight you need to do cardio, and though this supports weight loss, it doesn't increase your metabolic rate. Effective strength training will increase your muscle mass, which will in turn boost your resting metabolism. You'll burn calories just sitting still!"

## TOP PROTEINS for Vegetarians

Whether you're new to vegetarianism or have been living the lifestyle for years, the first question you may ask yourself when it comes to food is, "Am I getting enough protein?" Fortunately, our understanding of what a protein is has come a long way. You are no longer reliant on tofu only.

Protein, carbohydrates and fat form the three required macronutrient pillars of a healthy diet. These three groups provide all of the vitamins, minerals, calories and fibre we need if we choose well. In a vegetarian diet, and depending on whether you are 100% vegan or more flexitarian, your protein choices include all legumes such as chickpeas, black beans, soybeans and lentils, plus soy foods and tofu, nuts, nut butter and seeds, hemp, and protein powders made from soy or whey.

If your diet permits some poultry, fish, eggs or milk, these foods also provide protein. A protein-rich food typically supplies eight to 25 grams of protein per serving. There is also protein in whole-grain foods such as brown rice, quinoa and barley, although in much lower amounts.

To estimate if you're getting enough protein each day, vegetarian-sourced or not, a general guideline is to multiply your weight in kilograms by 0.8 to 1.2 grams of protein. For example, a 75-kilogram adult (take a weight in pounds and divide by 2.2 to convert to kilograms) requires 60 to 90 grams of protein each day. Depending on how active you are, you may require up to 1.8 grams of protein per kilogram. Individuals trying to gain weight or recover from a serious illness also have increased protein needs.

### VEGETARIAN PROTEIN SELECTIONS

Food and Serving Size	Grams of Protein
Peanut butter, 2 tbsp	8
Almonds, ½ cup	15
Flax seeds, 2 tbsp	18
Chia seeds, 1 oz.	5
Tofu, ½ cup	10
Tempeh, 4 oz.	18
Lentils, 1 cup cooked	18
Chickpeas, 1 cup cooked	14
Soybeans, 1 cup cooked	30
Buckwheat, 1 cup cooked	23
Quinoa, 1 cup cooked	12
Hemp hearts, 2 tbsp	10
Seitan (wheat gluten), 1 oz.	21
Kefir, 1 cup	11
Eggs, boiled, 2	12
Cottage cheese, ½ cup	16
Ricotta, ½ cup	14
Greek yogurt, 1 cup	18-20
Yogurt, 1 cup	13
Cheese, 1 oz.	8
Milk, 1 cup	8
White fish fillet, 3 oz.	21

"The odds of going to the store for a loaf of bread and coming out with only a loaf of bread are three billion to one."

—Erma Bombeck, writer

# The Toughest Fitness Challenge: **BOXING**



**I**t's the sport that never fades away. Every few years a new boxing-type exercise emerges, such as kickboxing, or a round of workouts of fewer than 15 minutes that includes boxing moves.

The appeal is that the steady cardio and strength training of boxing—coupled with the benefits of warmups like skipping, plus upper-body conditioning—can improve cardiovascular endurance, hand-eye coordination and ramp up your total fitness level.

Fitness writer Laura Williams

notes on *GirlsGoneSporty.com* that boxing workouts typically include the jabs, crosses and hooks—plus the footwork that goes with these punches. If you're interested in amateur boxing, you'll learn how to throw and take punches. But for most of us, the boxing training is a killer workout that conditions every part of the body.

Boxing is routinely ranked as the most difficult sport because—compared to other sports—it requires equal ability in strength, power

and endurance and because it also requires much more muscle movement among all the muscle groups. A study by ESPN a few years ago determined that boxing is the sport that requires the most athleticism. The careful balance of constant motion while trying to punch and not be punched takes enormous co-ordination and effort for competitive boxers.

For those who'd like to set up their own space for a boxing workout, it only takes a few pieces of equipment.

## SKIP TO IT

A rite of passage for young children, skipping has always been a great cardio workout and is routinely used in boxing training. Here's why:

- Boxers warm up with skipping and they continue to perfect this skill because it builds stamina.
- Tones both upper and lower body muscle groups.
- Helps with co-ordination and agility while also improving balance.
- Builds bone density.

**"Ignore your health and it will go away."**

—Unknown



**The popularity of scuba diving** in Canada has grown exponentially over the past few years, and for good reason. While it may be considered a fun activity, the average scuba diver burns .053 calories per minute per pound, according to [divebuddy.com](http://divebuddy.com). That's a whopping 525 calories per hour for a 165-pound (75-kilogram) adult. Scuba diving targets some of the key muscle groups, including the legs, glutes, core and back, and helps maintain long-term fitness.

"The almost weightless environment underwater requires a lot of core strength and balance; this helps stabilize the body. Diving also targets a lot of muscle groups you wouldn't normally use," Brendan Andresen, PADI course director and previous manager and director of training at the UBC Aqua Society, told *Wellness Matters*. "Diving isn't a strenuous sport, but it increases your lung capacity and makes you aware of your breathing which can, in turn, help with other sports," he adds.

Often the benefits of the sport go unnoticed as diving is considered low-impact and attracts people of all ages. However, Andresen warns that base-level fitness is needed to take part. "There are some cardiovascular issues with diving, but the fitness and mental health benefits are underrated with diving. It has a meditative aspect to it; it's almost like an introversion time and you become very aware of your body and mind."

#### TIPS

##### Are you a diver who suffers from "ear squeeze"?

Andresen recommends these techniques to prevent ear pain when diving:

- Use a nasal irrigation system or a sinus rinse.
- Hydrate. Drinking water makes mucus less sticky.
- Avoid eating dairy; it increases mucus production.
- Quit smoking. Tobacco smoke promotes mucus production.
- Stop the pressure. Warn your dive buddies you will need to go slowly.

## MELT Your Muscles

Have you noticed people gliding their thighs on foam rollers or pummeling their feet on rubber balls at the gym lately? The MELT (Myofascial Energetic Length Technique) Method is spreading rapidly.

Proponents of this bodywork technique claim all manner of benefits, from relief of chronic pain and aching joints to promoting self-healing of the body. Reducing cellulite, helping stress and digestive problems, assisting weight gain, reversing low energy and insomnia and even improving wrinkles and skin tone are among the many (unproven) claims.

The method is championed by exercise physiologist Sue Hitzmann, who was an aerobics star in Manhattan until she was sidelined by severe heel pain. She researched a plan to stimulate and re-hydrate the fascia (the fluid-filled system of connective tissue that protects, stabilizes and supports our muscles, nerves, organs and bones). Stress, sedentary lifestyle and injury can cause the fascia to become dehydrated and blocked.



"Think of it like a sponge," says Gloria Feltham, a Gananoque, Ontario-based MELT Method instructor who was trained by Hitzmann. "When you work the fascia, it plumps it back up, moving around the collagen so it flows."

Though the feet, with 7,000 nerve endings, are one focus, "It is a global treatment, like reflexology," Feltham says. "It can affect your knees, your hips, your posture, your overall wellbeing in so many ways." Check out routines at [meltmethod.com](http://meltmethod.com).

**"You don't have to be great to start, but you have to start to be great."**

—Zig Ziglar, author



## The Bare Essentials

**E**ssential oils are the fragrant, highly concentrated natural constituents that are found in plants. When used correctly, essential oils are believed by some to bring a wide range of mental health benefits.

While there has been limited research to fully support these claims, a study in 2008 by the Department of Nursing, at Daegu University in Korea, found that patients with terminal cancer who received an aromatherapy hand massage with an essential oil blend reported less pain and depression than those who were given a general oil hand massage. As the number of clinical studies into the benefits of essential oils and mental health grows, it's important to better understand both the associated benefits and the risks.

"We're seeing increasing interest in essential oils from long-term and palliative care, and from people experiencing different forms of depression," Danielle Sade, past president of the Canadian Federation of Aromatherapists tells *Wellness Matters*. "Essential oils trigger a very positive response because they deal with the olfactory system, a gateway to emotional memory responses."

In Sade's experience, essential oils have been shown to help those suffering from anxiety and panic attacks. "The action of breathing in an essential oil that has been

properly facilitated by a practitioner, is the first step to unwind the body," comments Sade. Essential oils cannot be generalized and they act differently for each individual.

"Essential oils must be used in moderation and effectively, as with the whole natural health industry. You need to be aware there are practices out there that are quite extreme and have no scientific basis. The bottom line is for the safe use of essential oils you should always see a professional," says Sade.

### TIPS

Sade recommends these blends to treat four different types of anxiety:

**Tense Anxiety** (feeling tension in the body and muscle pain). Combine 5 drops of lavender, 1 drop of clary sage and 1 drop of roman chamomile

**Restless Anxiety** (feeling sweaty and dizzy, such as when the body is in fight or flight). 5 drops of neroli and 3 drops of bitter orange

**Repressed Anxiety** (feeling irritable, having difficulty concentrating, or feeling exhausted). 3 drops of rose otto and 2 drops of lavender

**Apprehensive Anxiety** (feeling uneasy). 6 drops bergamot FCF and 2 drops of frankincense

Consult your practitioner to find out where to buy oils.

# Study Finds Different Levels of Brain Activity

A new study published in the *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease* has found significant differences between the brains of men and women that may be crucial in understanding gender-based risk for brain disorders, says psychiatrist and lead study author Daniel G. Amen.

Single photon emission computed tomography (SPECT) measures blood activity in the brain as well as images acquired from people both at rest and performing various cognitive tasks. It is the largest functional brain imaging study to date, and the results show different blood flow in specific areas of the brain.

The brains of women in the study were more active than men in many areas of the brain, particularly the prefrontal cortex, which is involved with focus and impulse control, and in the limbic or emotional areas of the brain, which is associated with mood and anxiety. The visual and coordination regions of the brain were generally more active in men.

The study's findings of increased prefrontal cortex blood flow in women compared to that of men may explain why women generally display more empathy, intuition and self-control than men. The increased blood flow in the limbic areas (emotional) regions of the female brain may explain why women may be more vulnerable to anxiety, depression, insomnia and eating disorders.

Understanding these differences may be useful as brain disorders affect men and women differently. Women have significantly higher rates of Alzheimer's disease, depression (which is itself a risk factor for Alzheimer's disease) and anxiety disorders, while men have higher rates of ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) and conduct-related problems.

It is hoped more precise knowledge of the physiological and structural gender differences in brain function will increase our understanding of mental health, and perhaps in understanding our relationships with our loved ones.

"Believe in yourself and all that you are. Know that there is something inside you that is greater than any obstacle."

—Christian D. Larson, author

# In Praise of Work Naps

**Sorry Mr. Dithers**, but it turns out Dagwood Bumstead was ahead of his time.

The hapless comic-strip drudge who has been snoozing at his office desk for decades is now a trendsetter as more workplaces are discovering the benefits of nap time for employees.

Corporations like Google and Procter & Gamble have introduced nap pods into their corporate environments, allowing employees to catch a few winks during office hours. At the huge Nike headquarters near Portland, Ore., employees are encouraged to use the quiet rooms to chill and snooze during the workday.

In European societies, such as Italy and Spain, the average day is built around a planned afternoon break. Global retailing trends have eroded that tradition in favour of a solid eight-hour workday, but more companies now seem to be discovering the wisdom of the siesta.



## BENEFITS OF NAPPING

- Increases alertness.
- Improves learning and working memory.
- Can prevent burnout and helps combat information overload.
- Can heighten creativity.

Dr. Sara Mednick, professor in the department of cognitive sciences at UC Irvine and author of *Take a Nap! Change Your Life*, says that when it comes to improved performance, naps can be as beneficial as a good night's sleep.

Mednick says that people have a biological need for an afternoon nap, which should be taken at about 2 or 3 p.m. Mednick explains that the time of the nap is important as it coincides with the time when most humans and animals experience what

is called a post-prandial dip, or low ebb, when many of us actually feel sleepy.

A nap can range from 20 to 90 minutes. The results should benefit both you and your employer. Just try not to do it during a meeting.

# Beware the “Energy Vampire”

**Everybody's encountered one** – and some deal with them daily. It's the energy vampire, the person who leaves you feeling tired, sad, or even self-doubting with every interaction. “They can be friends, family, workmates, people you can't avoid,” says Bea Rhodes, founder of Vancouver's Rhodes Wellness College. “But you can always spot them by how you feel after you've spent time with them.”

Rhodes says the clearest sign of the energy vampire is a “poor me” attitude, and over-extended conversations in which “everything is someone else's fault.” When you finally get away, says Rhodes, you may find yourself feeling guilty, even when you haven't done anything wrong.

If you find yourself dealing with an energy vampire – and you likely will – these boundary-setting strategies from Rhodes Wellness College can help you preserve what Rhodes calls your “life force”:



1. Before any meeting, calm yourself with breathing exercises or other relaxation techniques. “Commit to not losing your cool,” says Rhodes.
2. Avoid being alone with them. Bringing in a co-worker can offer support and distraction.
3. Avoid lecturing or shaming. Engaging on that level is only feeding the desire for interaction and victimhood.
4. Bring humour into the conversation. “Keep it light, crack a few jokes,” says Rhodes. “This can help you deflect if they are amping up the abuse.”
5. Be direct – but only if you are confident in your ability to manage the consequences. “You can try to open up a discussion and tell them how you feel, but that requires sophisticated interpersonal skills,” says Rhodes.

While energy vampires can be exhausting, Rhodes says it's important to be compassionate. “It's almost like an addiction,” she says. “You can take power back by recognizing the person is not well. Just come from a kind place, and take steps to protect yourself.”

“I used to wonder what it would be like to read other people's minds, but then I got a Facebook account and now I'm over it.”

—George Takei, actor, director, author

# 5 TIPS FOR A HEALTHY VACATION



**A** vacation doesn't mean you have to sacrifice your health and fitness goals. Here are five ways to get active on your next trip:

**1 Plan ahead.** Find out if your hotel has a gym or pool. If not, research the area around your hotel and search for fitness centres nearby.

**2 In-room exercise.** There are plenty of exercises you can do in your hotel room with no equipment. Brandon Santo, a certified personal trainer and strength and conditioning specialist from Vancouver recommends squats, split-squats, lunges, vertical jumps, hip bridges, planks, dead-bugs and push-ups.

**3 Pack smart.** Bring your running shoes and gym gear. At your destination, stock up on water and healthy snacks like nuts and seeds, raw vegetables and fruit.

**4 Explore.** One of the best ways to get to know a new city is on foot or bicycle. Visit nearby parks and trails, or rent a bicycle and tour the city. Opt for a guided tour if you don't want to explore alone.

**5 Relax, but keep moving.** Balance time in the spa or by the pool with activities that spike your heart rate. "You wouldn't want the number of hours sitting on your vacation to be equivalent to the number of hours sitting at your desk job," says Santo.

*Wellness Matters* is published quarterly by Canada Wide Media Limited. A French version (*pause santé*) is also available. Correspondence may be addressed to:

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