



# WELLNESS NEWSLETTER

## September 2025

 **WORKPLACE WELLNESS**  
MEMBERSHIP

 **EMPLOYEE WELLNESS**  
SOLUTIONS NETWORK

## HIGHLIGHTS for the [August 2025 Newsletter](#)



### **Walk Smarter, Hurt Less: A Surprisingly Simple Way to Reduce Knee Pain**

Got achy knees? You're not alone. One in four adults deals with knee pain. A new study shows that small changes in the way you walk can ease pain, improve mobility, and even delay surgery.



### **THIS Popular Fried Food Raises Diabetes Risk by Up to 24%**

"Want fries with that?" Think twice. Research found that eating French fries often is linked to a higher risk of type 2 diabetes. Here's what you need to know.



### **Listen Up: Boost Brain Health with Better Beats**

Music does more than move your feet. It rewires your brain. Learn how sound therapy can improve mood, focus, stress, and even aid in recovery.



### **Recipe: Southwestern Stuffed Potatoes**

Hungry for something warm, cheesy, and packed with beans, corn, and salsa? Give this Southwestern Stuffed Potato recipe a try.



### **Y-Axis: The Filthy Secret About Smartphones**

Your phone may be dirtier than a toilet handle. Here's why + how to keep germs from hitching a ride from your hands to your mouth.



### **Ask the Wellness Doctor: How can I create healthy snack habits?**

Struggling with mindless munching? Get practical tips to make better snack choices without feeling deprived.



### **Health Challenge: Strengthen Your Body**

Want stronger bones, better sleep, and more energy? Join this month's challenge to build strength with weights or simple bodyweight exercises.



THE Y-AXIS



## The Dirty Secret About Smartphones

Click, swipe, tap. You do it hundreds of times a day, then dip your hand into the popcorn bowl without a thought.



A 2025 study swabbed smartphones used by hospital workers and found nearly every device carried bacteria.<sup>5</sup>



Antibiotic resistant strains. Staph, E. coli, and other microbes were along for the ride.



Why so gross?

We carry phones everywhere, touch them constantly, and almost never clean them.

Gross! Next time you eat and scroll, grab a disinfecting wipe first.

## COMMENTS?

Send comments to the editor:

[evan@thehealthycopywriter.com](mailto:evan@thehealthycopywriter.com)

# Knee Pain? Walk Smarter & Hurt Less

*Gait retraining: A surprisingly simple way to reduce knee pain*

Does getting out of a chair make your knees ache? Do stairs feel harder than they used to?

Even simple movements like bending down to pick something up can make knee pain flare.

If this sounds familiar, you're not alone.

**Knee pain is taking a toll...** About 1 in 4 adults experiences frequent knee pain. More than 32 million



Americans live with osteoarthritis, and the knee is the joint most often affected.

It's one of the top reasons people stop being active or eventually need joint replacement surgery.

**But there is good news.** A recent study found that changing the way you walk can help reduce knee pain and may delay the need for surgery.<sup>1</sup>

## Simple changes for healthier knees

Researchers tested a program called personal-

**KNEE ►**

# THIS Popular Fried Food Raises Diabetes Risk

*Eating French fries regularly raises diabetes risk up to 24%*

"Do you want fries with that?" It's a question we all hear at the drive-thru. But before you say yes, you may want to think twice.

A new study found that eating French fries four or more times per week was linked to a **24 percent higher risk of**



**developing type 2 diabetes** compared to those who rarely ate them.<sup>2</sup>

That matters because about 38 million Americans already have diabetes, and another 98 million have prediabetes.

Most cases are type 2, which is strongly tied to diet and lifestyle.

**Baked, mashed or boiled is better than fried**

Researchers analyzed data from three **FRIES ►**

# Listen Up: Boost Brain Health with Better Beats

*Music & sound can rewire brain networks instantly to improve mood*

Ever notice how a favorite song can lift your mood or help you focus? Science now shows it is more than a feeling. Your brainwaves actually respond to the rhythm of sound, reshaping brain networks in real time.

In a new study, researchers used advanced brain-scanning technology to watch how the brain responds during sound and music.<sup>3</sup>

**They discovered that listening does not just light up one part of the brain.**

- It reconfigures entire networks instantly.
- Different rhythms and tones strengthen the connections between regions that control memory, emotion, and attention.

## ▶ Press play to unlock the health benefits of sound

The way our brains adapt to sound may explain why music therapy has such powerful effects for:

- Mood
- Mental health

▶ **KNEE** ized gait retraining. They helped people with knee pain learn small walking adjustments, such as:

- Shifting weight
- Changing foot angle
- These simple changes helped reduce stress on the inner part of the knee.

**The results:** Participants who retrained their stride reported less knee pain and better mobility. They also showed signs of slower joint damage, suggesting this approach could help put off knee replacement surgery in the future.

**Got knee pain? Here's what you can do**

Take control of knee pain

<https://tinyurl.com/m/2p9p7e32>



- Pain relief
- And even recovery after injury
- It also sheds light on everyday benefits, like why background music can help you concentrate or why calming sounds reduce stress.

## How to use sound for wellness

 **Boost your focus.** Try instrumental or lo-fi beats while you work.

 **Ease stress.** Listen to slow, calming music to help your body relax.

 **Lift your mood.** Upbeat playlists can energize and motivate.

 **Support sleep.** Gentle soundscapes or white noise can quiet a restless mind.

The next time you press play, remember that your brain is doing more than enjoying a tune. It is rewiring itself, one beat at a time.



**How music boosts mood & health**

<https://tinyurl.com/bddkt77t>

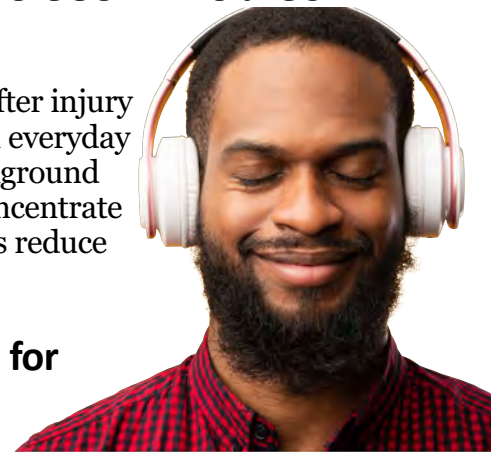
✓ **See a pro.** A physical therapist can analyze your gait and teach safe adjustments.

✓ **Strengthen support muscles.** Strong hips, thighs, and calves take pressure off the knee.

✓ **Stay active.** Low-impact movement like walking, swimming, or cycling keeps joints moving.

✓ **Watch your weight.** Every extra pound adds pressure on the knees.

Small changes in how you walk can ease pain today and protect your knees for years to come.



# Recipe: Southwestern Stuffed Potatoes

Warm, cheesy, and full of flavor, these Southwestern Stuffed Potatoes pack beans, corn, and salsa into a quick and healthy meal. A perfect comfort food with a nutritional boost.

## Ingredients

- 2 medium potatoes
- 1 C black beans (rinsed, drained )
- 3/4 C salsa
- 1 C corn
- 1/2 C cheese ((try cheddar, pepper jack, or Mexican blend))

## Directions

1. Scrub potatoes well. Poke each potato with a fork 2 or 3 times.
2. Microwave on high for 5 minutes. Turn potatoes

over & microwave another 3 to 5 minutes, or until easily pierced with a fork. Set aside.

3. In a microwave-safe bowl, combine beans, salsa and corn. Microwave for 2-3 minutes, stirring occasionally, until heated through.

4. Cut potatoes in half length-wise and flatten with a fork.

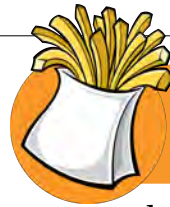
5. Divide bean mixture between the four halves. Sprinkle with cheese and serve warm.

**Note:** Makes 4 servings. 240 calories per serving.



► **FRIES** large U.S. studies that tracked more than 160,000 adults for decades.

- They looked at how different potato preparations (baked, boiled, mashed, or fried) affected health.
- **The results:** potatoes are not all created equal. French fries were the clear culprit.



## How fast food affects your body

<https://tinyurl.com/4xp6mxjc>

whole grains, or legumes lowered the risk of type 2 diabetes. Even choosing baked or boiled potatoes was a better option.

In contrast, baked, boiled, or mashed potatoes did not carry the same risk when eaten in moderation.

Why? Frying adds unhealthy fats, extra calories, and can cause blood sugar spikes that raise the risk for diabetes.

The study also showed that swapping French fries for healthier foods such as vegetables,

## Smarter swaps to try

- **Roast potato wedges** with olive oil and herbs instead of frying.
- **Order a side** salad, beans, or brown rice with your meal. Keep fries as an occasional treat, not a daily habit.

**Your order is up:** small changes on your plate today can help protect you from type 2 diabetes tomorrow.

## References

1. Uhlrich, S., et al. (2025). Personalised gait retraining for medial compartment knee osteoarthritis: a randomised controlled trial. *The Lancet Rheumatology*. From: <https://tinyurl.com/hyhy5me2>
2. Mousavi, S.M., et al. (2025). Total and specific potato intake and risk of type 2 diabetes: results from three US cohort studies and a substitution meta-analysis of prospective cohorts. *British Medical Journal*, 390:e082121. From: <https://tinyurl.com/3w7n4zpj>
3. Rosso, M., et al. (2025). FREQ-NESS reveals the dynamic reconfiguration of frequency-resolved brain networks during auditory stimulation. *Advanced Science*, 12(20). From: <https://tinyurl.com/2587bxrn>
4. U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2025). Southwestern Stuffed Potatoes. From: <https://tinyurl.com/bde958vf>
5. Olsen M., et al. (2022). Mobile phones are hazardous microbial platforms warranting robust public health and biosecurity protocols. *Scientific Reports*, 12: 10009. From: <https://tinyurl.com/dzv4dtk4>



**Ask the Wellness Doctor:** How can I create healthy snack habits?

**Health Challenge:** Strengthen Your Body: Build stronger muscles & bones

 **WellNotes**  
SEPTEMBER 2025



# Strengthen Your Body

**Build stronger bones & muscles**

Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™:

1. Read “Strengthen Your Body.”
2. Use weights or bodyweight exercises to do resistance training
3. Keep a record of your workouts in case your organization requires documentation.

When Bridie Wilkins first started going to the gym, she stuck to familiar activities like yoga, group classes, and cardio workouts on the treadmill.

But the results she was hoping for never quite came.



So she decided to add a couple of strength sessions each week. The difference was clear.

 **After just a few weeks, she:**

- Felt stronger
- Had more energy
- Slept better
- And even noticed her posture improving.

The confidence she gained from strength training carried over into other parts of her life.



What started as a small experiment quickly became a habit she didn't want to give up.



**Want to get stronger, move better, prevent injuries, and feel your best?**

You can strengthen your body with weights or simple bodyweight exercises. Ready to begin?

Take the month-long Health Challenge to Strengthen Your Body.

**STRENGTH ►**



## Flex Your Knowledge

How much do you know about strength training? Take the quiz to find out.

**T F**

1. ☐ ☐ Strength training is only for athletes and bodybuilders.
2. ☐ ☐ Strength training helps prevent muscle loss as you age.
3. ☐ ☐ Bodyweight exercises like push-ups and squats count as strength training.
4. ☐ ☐ Lifting weights can improve brain health, muscle strength, balance and mobility.
5. ☐ ☐ You have to lift weights every day to see results.



**Check your answers.** How did you do?



Strength training is not just for athletes. It benefits everyone.



**After age 30, adults lose 3 to 5 percent of their muscle mass each decade**, but resistance training can help slow this loss.<sup>1</sup>



Strength training also supports brain health, mood, and memory. Just two sessions a week are enough to build strength, protect bones, and boost daily energy.<sup>2</sup>

1. False. 2. True. 3. True. 4. True. 5. False.

### Examples include:

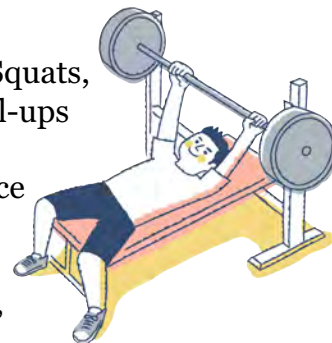
• **Bodyweight exercises:** Squats, lunges, push-ups, planks, curl-ups

• **Weight lifting** or resistance band exercises

• **Chores** that involve lifting, pulling, or pushing

• **Standing up** from a chair repeatedly

• **Carrying** bags, kids, or groceries



Strength training (like weight lifting or bodyweight exercises) can improve muscle strength, balance, mobility, and even brain health.

# This is What Strength Training Looks Like

*Aim for at least two days of strength training exercises per week*

Strength training is any activity where your muscles work against resistance.



That could be your own body weight, free weights, resistance bands, or even everyday activities like lifting groceries or carrying a backpack.

**STRENGTH ►**



*Strength training helps you build a stronger body & mind*

Strength training goes beyond muscle. Here are some proven benefits backed by current research:<sup>3</sup>

## 1. Maintain muscle and strength with age

Adults naturally lose muscle over time, but resistance training slows this decline and helps preserve independence.

## 2. Improve bone health

About 54 million Americans have low bone density. Strength training increases bone density, lowering the risk of fractures and osteoporosis.<sup>4</sup>

## 3. Prevent injuries

Strong muscles and bones protect joints and

improve balance, cutting fall and injury risk by more than half.

## 4. Boost brain health

Studies show strength training improves mood, reduces symptoms of depression, and supports cognitive function.<sup>5</sup>

## 5. Protect against disease

Strength training can help:

- Control blood sugar
- Lower blood pressure
- Reduce body fat
- And lower risk of heart disease and certain cancers.

## 6. Better sleep, posture, and confidence

Many people report feeling stronger, standing taller, and sleeping more soundly after adding strength training.

**STRENGTH** ➔

# Get Strong: 4 Steps to Strengthen Your Body

*Want to build strong bones and muscles, improve your mood, and live longer? Follow these four steps.*

## ✓ 1. Choose exercises that work all the major muscle groups

This includes: Chest, back, shoulders, arms, legs, core

- **At home:** Push-ups, planks, squats, lunges, curl-ups.
- **At the gym:** Use the machines or free weights for exercises such as bench press, squat, deadlift, shoulder press, arm curls.

## ✓ 2. Use the right weight & reps

- Choose a weight you can handle for 8 to 12 reps.
- Perform 2-3 sets of 8 to 12 reps per exercise.
- Rest up to 1 minute between sets.
- If you are doing bodyweight exercises, keep reps manageable when you are just starting. You don't need to crank out 100 push-ups or lunges for results.
- A good strength-training workout can be completed in 20-45 minutes.

## ✓ 3. Practice good form

Proper technique protects you from injury and helps you get stronger faster.

If unsure, ask a trainer, check a video tutorial, or start with bodyweight only.



## ✓ 4. Make it routine

Aim for at least 2 strength training days per week.

Balance it with 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity like walking, cycling, or swimming.

Strength training isn't just for bodybuilders and athletes. It's something everyone should do. Just ask Bridie Wilkins, strength training is still part of her routine years later.

### More Ways to Strengthen Your Body

Strength training tips to get stronger & healthier

<https://tinyurl.com/mr27cjm5>

5 benefits of strength training

<https://tinyurl.com/ycc2debx>



Try this strength training workout for beginners

<https://tinyurl.com/y778sp6f>

#### References

1. Cleveland Clinic. (2022). Sarcopenia. From: <https://tinyurl.com/36tc37zp>
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023). Physical activity: Recommendations for adults. From: <https://tinyurl.com/4yxdmc8u>
3. Singh, F., et al. (2024). Resistance training for health. American College of Sports Medicine. From: <https://tinyurl.com/ybwg8joz>
4. Hong, A.R., et al. (2018). Effects of resistance exercise on bone health. Endocrinology and Metabolism, 33(4): 435-444. From: <https://tinyurl.com/y5eqt9oq>
5. Gordon, B. R., et al. (2018). Association of efficacy of resistance exercise training with depressive symptoms. JAMA Psychiatry, 75(6):566-576. From: <https://tinyurl.com/y9qj3x73>

# Strengthen Your Body

*Build stronger bones & muscles*

Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™:

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily. Try your fridge, bathroom mirror, desk, or set a daily reminder on your phone.
2. Create a plan to practice strength training at least two days a week to build stronger bones and muscles. Track your progress.
3. Use the calendar to record your strength training activities and workouts.
4. Review your progress at the end of each day, each week, and at the end of the month. And keep the habit going for better health, strength and energy.



| SUNDAY        | MONDAY        | TUESDAY       | WEDNESDAY     | THURSDAY      | FRIDAY        | SATURDAY      | NOTES |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------|
| HC<br>■       | HC<br>■       | HC<br>■       | HC<br>■       | HC<br>■       | HC<br>■       | HC<br>■       |       |
| ex. min. ____ | ex. min. ____ | ex. min. ____ | ex. min. ____ | ex. min. ____ | ex. min. ____ | ex. min. ____ |       |
| HC<br>■       | HC<br>■       | HC<br>■       | HC<br>■       | HC<br>■       | HC<br>■       | HC<br>■       |       |
| ex. min. ____ | ex. min. ____ | ex. min. ____ | ex. min. ____ | ex. min. ____ | ex. min. ____ | ex. min. ____ |       |
| HC<br>■       | HC<br>■       | HC<br>■       | HC<br>■       | HC<br>■       | HC<br>■       | HC<br>■       |       |
| ex. min. ____ | ex. min. ____ | ex. min. ____ | ex. min. ____ | ex. min. ____ | ex. min. ____ | ex. min. ____ |       |
| HC<br>■       | HC<br>■       | HC<br>■       | HC<br>■       | HC<br>■       | HC<br>■       | HC<br>■       |       |
| ex. min. ____ | ex. min. ____ | ex. min. ____ | ex. min. ____ | ex. min. ____ | ex. min. ____ | ex. min. ____ |       |
| HC<br>■       | HC<br>■       | HC<br>■       | HC<br>■       | HC<br>■       | HC<br>■       | HC<br>■       |       |
| ex. min. ____ | ex. min. ____ | ex. min. ____ | ex. min. ____ | ex. min. ____ | ex. min. ____ | ex. min. ____ |       |

\_\_\_\_\_ Number of days this month I practiced strength training  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Number of days this month I exercised at least 30 minutes

**Other wellness projects completed this month:**

---



---



---

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

# How can I create healthy snack habits?

*Follow these five steps for healthy snacking*

Snacking isn't the problem. It is what you snack on and when you do it.<sup>1</sup>

✔ **Done right**, snacks can help keep your energy up, prevent overeating at meals, and even support weight management.

✘ **Done wrong**, snacks can add hundreds of empty calories and increase your risk for weight gain and health problems.<sup>2</sup>

**Ready to create healthy snack habits?** Follow these five steps to get started.<sup>3</sup>

## Step 1: Pause before you snack

Ask yourself: Am I really hungry, or just bored, stressed, or tired?

**Tip:** Keep a simple log of when you snack and why.

This can reveal patterns like late-night eating or stress-snacking that derail healthy intentions.



Skip the candy bars, chips and cookies, and create a healthy snack habit. Try fresh fruit, veggies with hummus, a handful of nuts, or a smoothie.

## Step 2: Follow the 'smart snack' rules

- **Limit snacks** to 1–2 per day if you are hungry.
- **Aim for around 100 calories** per snack (check the label or look it up).

- **Choose foods** with a balance of protein, fiber, and healthy fats to keep you full.
- **Fresh is best:** fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, and legumes.

## Step 3: Avoid late-night snacking

Research shows eating after dinner can slow metabolism, raise blood sugar, and increase fat storage.<sup>4</sup>

**Tip:** Try to finish your last snack at least two

**SNACK ►**



▼ **SNACK**

hours before bedtime.

🤔 **Step 4: Prepare for 'snack attacks'**

When cravings hit, you will grab whatever is handy.

Stock your home, office, or car with better-for-you options:

- **Protein power:** String cheese, Greek yogurt, a hard-boiled egg, or a handful of nuts.
- **Crunch & munch:** Sliced veggies with hummus, whole-grain crackers, or air-popped popcorn.
- **Sweet treats:** Fresh fruit, a small banana, or berries.
- **On the go:** Trail mix, unsweetened cereal, or rice cakes with nut butter.

⚡ **Step 5: Get back on track quickly**

If you give in to chips, cookies, or candy, don't let it throw you off track.

Enjoy it, then move on to



Hungry for a healthy snack? Start by being prepared. Keep your favorite snacks on hand to satisfy your cravings when you have a snack attack.

healthier choices for your next snack or meal.

**Snack on this...**

Healthy snacking is less about strict rules and more about small, consistent habits.

Plan ahead, keep healthy foods close by, and listen to your body.

With a little preparation, you can satisfy cravings, fuel your day, and support your long-term health.

**References**

1. Harvard University. (2021). The science of snacking. From: <https://tinyurl.com/ys5s5xc3>
2. Enriquez, J.P., et al. (2023). Snacking consumption among adults in the United States: A scoping review. *Nutrients*, 15(7): 1596. From: <https://tinyurl.com/y722tw4e>
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2024). How to have healthier meals and snacks. From: <https://tinyurl.com/5frj4xmv>
4. Allison, K., et al. (2018). Timing of eating in adults across the weight spectrum: Metabolic factors and potential circadian mechanisms. *Physiology & Behavior*, 192: 158–166. From: <https://tinyurl.com/33ur8k47>



Head Office: 502 Old Wonderland Rd. London, ON N6K 1L6  
info@ewsnetwork.com | www.ewsnetwork.com

