

A MONTHLY HEALTHLETTER FROM THE WELLNESS COUNCIL OF AMERICA

Tips to Find & Maintain Friendships

It's never too late to find and improve friendships! To be sure, you can expand your network of friends for as long as you live.

Here are just some of the options available for staying connected:

Reframe social engagements. Instead of rolling your eyes and viewing social engagements as an obligation, reframe the situation and view it as an opportunity to meet new people and strengthen existing friendships. Pursue social activities, like wine tastings, lecture programs or traveling with friends.

Make friends while improving your health. Join a walking or biking club, take a fitness class or sign up for a healthy cooking class.

Sign up for an intriguing class or workshop. What better way to find friends than being in a class (photography, art, graphic design, etc.) that you have a mutual interest in!

Show interest and support. Be inquisitive and ask questions—it's one of the best ways to show you care and are interested in maintaining friendships.



Get Connected

Strong Social Connections Are a Key to a Happy, Healthy Life

Turns out, you really do get by with a little help from your friends! Mounting research confirms that having a solid social network and close friends boosts your health and well-being by leaps and bounds. Here's what the science is saying.

Friends help you...

Stay mentally sharp. Maintaining healthy friendships can actually help keep your brain healthy. A major public health study involving more than 116,000 participants found that people with strong relationships had less mental decline. Moreover, a Harvard School of Public Health study found that older adults with strong marriages, friends and social integration experienced delayed memory loss when compared to their isolated counterparts.

Relieve and reduce stress. Many experts believe that social isolation may create a chronically stressful condition within your body that accelerates aging. On the other hand, researchers find that people with strong social connections have less stress-related health problems, lower risk of mental illness and faster recovery from trauma or illness. A landmark UCLA study found that women with a close circle of friends released more oxytocin—a hormone that has a calming, feel-good effect on your body.

Maintain a healthy sense of identity. Friends help you tap into your true self and potential. Good friends and family can also encourage and support you in healthy lifestyle habits.

Feel happier and healthier. Researchers have found that those with strong social connections are happier and healthier overall. One 2009 study found that individuals with the fewest friendships were those most likely to be dealing with depression, anxiety and heart disease.



This flavorful dish is a hit on a cold, winter's night. Plus, when using pre-cooked rotisserie chicken, you can whip it up in a flash!

INGREDIENTS

- 1 large yellow onion, chopped
- 3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 rotisserie chicken, pulled from bone
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 (12-oz) jar Tandoori-style Indian cooking sauce
- ½ cup fresh cilantro, chopped
- ½ (14-oz) bag baby frozen peas
- 1 ½ cups whole wheat cous cous prepared as per package directions

DIRECTIONS

In a large sauce pan, sauté onion in olive oil over medium heat until tender. Add pulled chicken, garlic, and cooking sauce. Stir and heat over medium/high until just boiling (3-4 minutes). Add frozen peas and chopped cilantro. Stir until peas thaw and serve immediately over cous cous.

SERVES: 4-6



Dr. Ann
Ann Kulze, M.D.

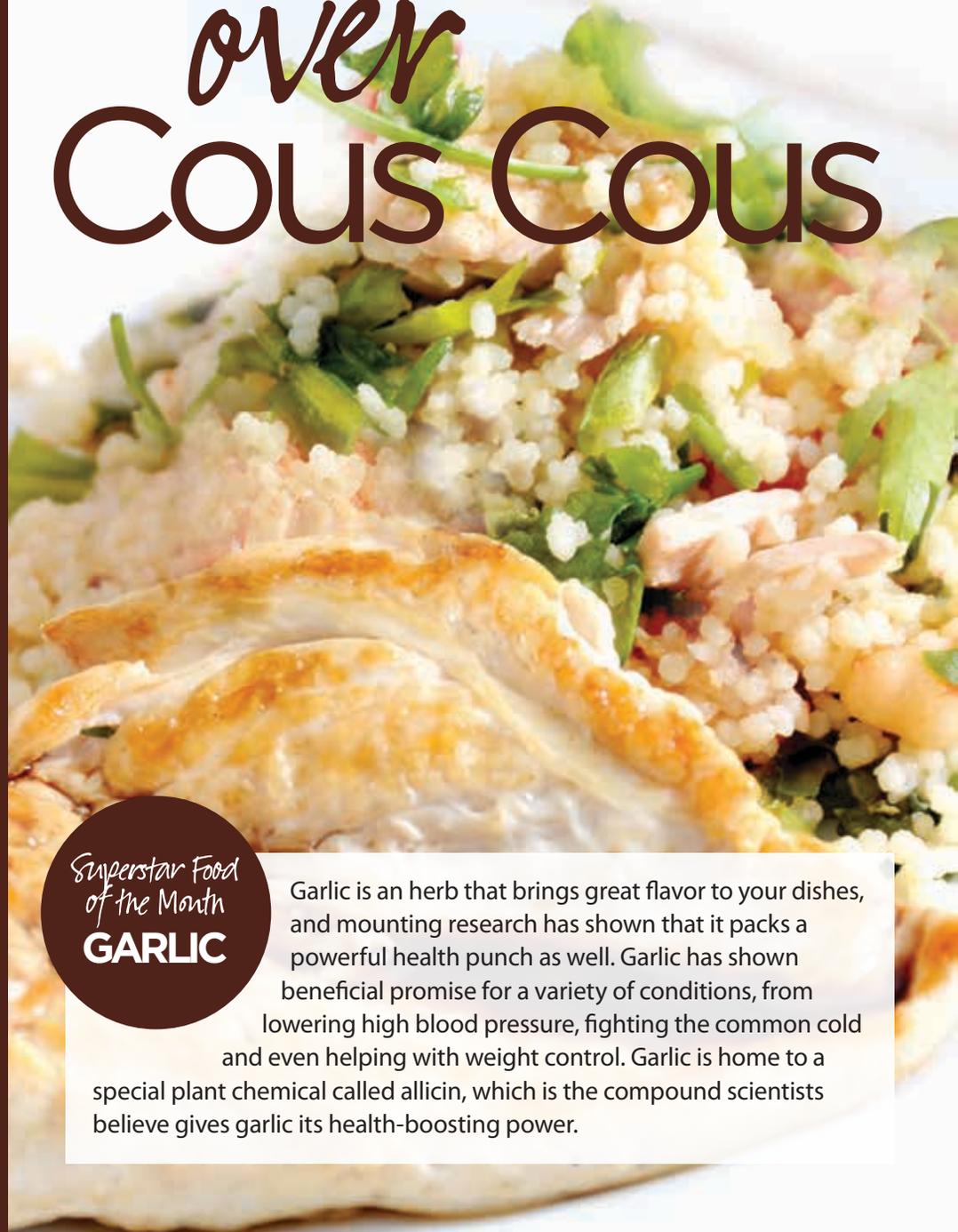
With formal training in nutrition and medicine, plus hands-on experience as a mother of four and family physician, Dr. Ann is a unique nutrition expert for the real world.

The whole food ingredients found in Dr. Ann's recipes are the right foods for health and vitality. Nutritional excellence naturally follows.

For more, visit DrAnnWellness.com.



Indian Chicken *over* Cous Cous



*Superstar Food
of the Month*
GARLIC

Garlic is an herb that brings great flavor to your dishes, and mounting research has shown that it packs a powerful health punch as well. Garlic has shown beneficial promise for a variety of conditions, from lowering high blood pressure, fighting the common cold and even helping with weight control. Garlic is home to a special plant chemical called alliin, which is the compound scientists believe gives garlic its health-boosting power.

TAKE A BITE OUT OF THE Cold+Flu

Unlikely Foods that Battle Your Sniffles & Aches

Whether you've already become victim to the common cold or influenza or are trying to prevent it, there are superfoods at your fingertips that can fight these annoying and sometimes even serious illnesses.

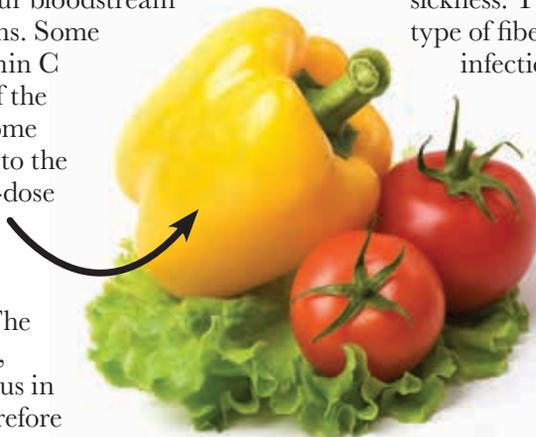
Have some stir fry. And add vitamin C rich veggies like bell peppers, broccoli and tomatoes. Vitamin C delivers a powerful antioxidant into your bloodstream which can help fight infections. Some studies have found that vitamin C could shorten the duration of the common cold and provide some symptom relief, possibly due to the anti-histamine effect of high-dose vitamin C.

Sprinkle some cayenne pepper on your entrée. The active ingredient in the spice, capsaicin, can help thin mucus in your nasal passages, and therefore help relieve congestion.

Add flavor to your dishes with fresh garlic. Although research is not conclusive, there is some evidence that garlic may help ward off colds and infection. Some scientists believe that allicin, the active component of garlic, blocks enzymes that play a role in developing bacterial and viral infections.

Throw some mushrooms in your salad. Mushrooms are rich in selenium, which helps your white blood cells fight sickness. They also contain beta glucan, an antimicrobial type of fiber, which can also help your cells destroy infections.

Put some ginger in your tea. Ginger is a tried and true remedy to help soothe upset stomach and nausea. Moreover, some studies have found that sesquiterpenes, a chemical found in ginger, may target and fight rhinoviruses. Grab some fresh ginger root in your local grocer's produce section and shred some pieces into your tea.



WELCOA's spark16... Simple NEW YEAR



1 Start every morning off with water, with a twist. A glass of cool or warm water with some freshly squeezed lemon is hydrating (say goodbye to morning dry mouth) and it delivers a nice dose of vitamin C.

2 Adjust your rearview mirror. Tilt it up just far enough so that you must sit up straight to see what's behind you. This is great for your posture and lower back.

3 Search youtube.com for quick meditation tips and techniques. Unwind from a long day with meditation advice from experts.

4 Look before you flush. If your urine is dark yellow, you probably need to drink more water. If you're hydrated your urine is pale or almost clear.

5 Put a palm print on your computer screen. You always want to be an arm's length away from your screen or device to help prevent eyestrain and neck and shoulder pain.

6 Rediscover your kitchen. Cook more meals at home. A study published by *Public Health Nutrition* evaluated 12,000 participants and concluded that those who ate at a fast-food or full-service restaurant consumed an average of 200 additional calories a day.

7 Take 30 seconds every day to recognize one thing you're thankful for. It's quick and simple and will help give you a sense of purpose and appreciation for the things you have.

8 Eat or shower with your eyes closed. It will force you to slow down and truly engage your senses. And according to the Franklin Institute this trick can help improve your memory.

9 Hug someone. Research has shown that a good squeeze raises oxytocin, a hormone that induces calmness and can lower stress levels.

Remember to talk with your doctor if you have any concerns about your health.



Ways to Kick Off the **YEAR RIGHT** *in 10 minutes or less!*

10 Give into your yawns. When you yawn you fill your lungs with oxygen and remove a build-up of carbon dioxide. This in turn can increase alertness.

11 Visit www.serve.gov to learn about volunteer opportunities. Volunteering can give you a sense of deep purpose and personal fulfillment.

12 Grab a salad plate for all of your meals. Cornell University's Food and Brand Lab found that people ate 22 percent less if they put their food on a 10-inch plate instead of a 12-inch one.

13 Take a 10 minute walk in the cold. When you're in the cold, your body works harder to stay warm (translation: you'll burn more calories). The crisp air will also give you a quick jolt and help you stay alert.

14 Make your own coffee. You won't be tempted by your local shop's goodies while grabbing your joe—making your own will save you ample money and calories.

15 Form one habit at a time. Focusing on more than one habit

at a time can prove overwhelming. Keep it simple!

16 Take off your shoes when you get home. So much icky stuff lingers on your shoe soles! You won't drag in dirt, germs and allergens into your carpet when you check your shoes at the door.

If a typical dinner is **800 calories**, switching to a smaller plate could mean a weight loss of about **18 pounds in a year** for an average adult.



When to See a Doc for Stomach Pain

Most stomach aches are the result of eating a certain food, too much food, or stress. However, you should seek medical attention right away if:

- The stomach pain is so severe that you can't move without causing more pain or you can't sit still or need to curl into a ball to find relief.
- The stomach pain is accompanied with worrisome symptoms like bloody stools, fever, persistent and severe nausea and vomiting and/or severe tenderness when you touch your abdomen.

If you don't experience any of the symptoms above, but your pain doesn't subside within a few days or you're worried about your stomach ache, call your doctor for an appointment.



Tummy Trouble?

Relief is at Your Fingertips

It's a safe bet to say that at one time or another we've all experienced a stomach ache. Maybe you overate at dinner or something isn't "sitting well". Or maybe you have a burning sensation in your tummy and feel like you might throw up. Unpleasant as it is, most stomach aches like this are not serious, can be treated at home and will go away in a few hours or a day.



Drink wisely. Dehydration can cause cramping and make your symptoms worse. Drink water, ginger ale or peppermint tea. Ginger and peppermint have been found to soothe and calm nausea and upset stomach.



Eat a banana. Bananas are a superfood that can help counteract the acids that can cause an upset stomach. They're easy on your tummy and have also been found to ease conditions like diarrhea.



Avoid "danger" foods while you feel ill. Certain foods and drinks may cause or amplify an upset stomach or gas. These include coffee, anything fried and anything spicy. You should also avoid alcohol and cigarettes as they can worsen nausea.



Find relief in relaxation. Whether your ache is due to stress, a bug or something you ate, one of the best ways to relieve your symptoms is to simply stop whatever you are doing and relax. Try lying down in your bed, listening to music or taking a warm bath. Allowing your body to rest will help immensely.



Take an over-the-counter antacid if you have heartburn. Antacids help to neutralize the acids in your stomach, which can help you feel better within an hour or so. Keep in mind that antacids are for temporary relief—if you find yourself popping them after every meal, you should call your doctor for an appointment. You may have an underlying issue that needs to be addressed.

Core Values

Why You Should Focus on Your Mid-Section

Years ago, sit-ups and crunches ruled as the supreme way to tighter abs and a slimmer waistline. Now, however, you probably hear much more chatter around building a strong core. Indeed, fitness experts and exercise physiologists alike have concluded that working on your core muscles is not only the key to a slimmer, more toned mid-section, but it's also critical to performing everyday activities with ease and little pain.

What is Your Core?

In simple terms, your core is your entire mid-section (think your body minus your arms and legs). The major muscles of your core reside in your abdomen and mid and lower back.

Why is a Strong Core Important?

Weak or inflexible core muscles can hinder how well your arms and legs function. Everyday movements may be more difficult or even painful when your core isn't up to par. In fact, you may be surprised at the various benefits a strong core provides:

Makes everyday tasks easier. Dressing, twisting, bending, reaching, lifting, carrying—everyday activities from putting on your shoes to carrying in groceries are movements that pass through your core. You may not pay any attention to these tasks until they become difficult or painful.

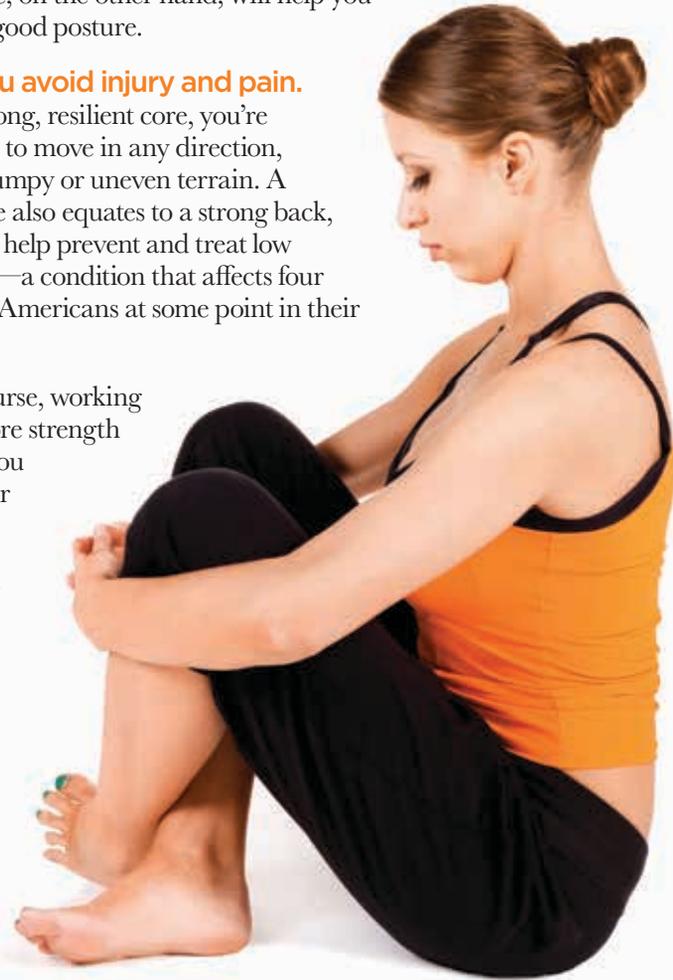
Makes you more effective at your job. Whether your job requires a lot of lifting or twisting or if you're at a desk all day, a strong core will help

you get through the day more effectively. For example, weak core muscles contribute to slouching, and if you're sitting all day your back may become stiff and sore. A strong core, on the other hand, will help you maintain good posture.

Helps you avoid injury and pain.

With a strong, resilient core, you're better able to move in any direction, even on bumpy or uneven terrain. A strong core also equates to a strong back, which can help prevent and treat low back pain—a condition that affects four out of five Americans at some point in their lives.

And of course, working on your core strength can help you look sleeker and more toned—something almost all of us seek!



BUILD A BETTER CORE

The Plank

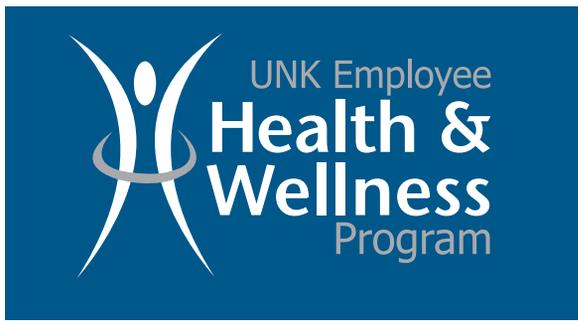
Lie down on your stomach. Lift your body off the floor with your forearms (elbows at 90° degrees) and your toes. Keep your body in a straight position (without arching your back) and hold for as long as you can (30 seconds to one minute are good goals). Rest and repeat a few times.

The V

Lie on your back and slowly bend at the waist as you extend your legs and arms into the air to form a "V." Hold this position for as long as you can. Rest and repeat.

Outstretched Arm Raises

Lie on your stomach with your arms outstretched and your palms facing one another. Slowly lift one arm a few inches off the floor, keeping it straight without rotating the shoulders and keeping your head and torso still. Hold the position for a few seconds, then lower the arm back down, moving to the other arm. Aim for a few sets of 10.



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I DID YOU KNOW?

22% CORNELL UNIVERSITY'S FOOD AND BRAND LAB FOUND THAT PEOPLE ATE **22 PERCENT LESS** IF THEY PUT THEIR FOOD ON A **10-INCH PLATE** INSTEAD OF A **12-INCH ONE**.

200 calories SOME RESEARCH HAS FOUND THAT THOSE WHO ATE AT A FAST-FOOD OR FULL-SERVICE RESTAURANT CONSUMED AN AVERAGE OF **200 ADDITIONAL CALORIES A DAY**.

30 seconds PRACTICING CORE EXERCISES LIKE THE PLANK, EVEN FOR AS LITTLE AS **30 SECONDS A DAY** CAN DO WONDERS TO STRENGTHEN YOUR MID-SECTION.

Enrich Your Network

It's never too late to build and enrich your network of friends or reconnect with old friends. Here are some tips that will help you get there:

Take the first step. Don't wait for friends to invite you to gatherings or to lunch—get on the phone and do it yourself! Make an effort to make time with friends. You'll find that after you take that initial first step, they'll reciprocate.

Don't offer judgment or advice unless you're asked. If a friend wants your thoughts on something he/she will ask. If you offer unsolicited advice, your friend will probably take offense and assume that you are judging them.

Try to avoid "one-upping". One-upping is when a friend will tell you a story or antidote and then you proceed to top or "one-up" their story. Instead of trying to out-do your friends, simply listen to what they're saying and ask follow-up questions to show you're interested.

Take it easy on social media. An occasional posting or update that includes your friend(s) is usually perfectly acceptable, but your friends may get annoyed or offended if you're constantly sharing their pictures and information on social media sites.

What's In a Number?

BEST CHOICE

\$10

An average cost for a **pound of coffee**. If you drink one cup per day, the pound should get you through the month.

\$63

If you grab your coffee every day **from a coffee shop**, you'll likely spend this much (at least). This doesn't include the extra cost of donuts or pastries if you happen to grab those too.

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