



Wellbeing

Insights

Living a Better, More Vibrant Life



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Cool Down Inflammation

We often think of inflammation as the redness, burning and swelling that occurs when we cut our skin, burn our mouths eating something hot or get sunburns. These are external signs of inflammation, and we immediately know to cool this inflammation with ice, water, aloe vera or any other number of known remedies.

However, we do not always see or feel inflammation that occurs inside the body until

extensive damage has been done. Inflammation is at the core of nearly every chronic disease, including heart disease, high blood pressure, digestive disorders, acid reflux, all autoimmune conditions (e.g., arthritis, Type 1 diabetes, irritable bowel disease, multiple sclerosis, thyroid disease), eye disease (e.g., glaucoma and macular degeneration), Alzheimer's disease, Type 2 diabetes, many cancers and several other conditions.

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Cool Down Inflammation

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Nutrition and lifestyle can be integral in soothing and preventing inflammation. Even in the case of chronic disease, which requires medical intervention, nutrition and lifestyle can complement an individual's medical treatment to mitigate the effects of the condition and possibly prevent further damage. Here are some ways to cool your inflammation:

- Eat a primarily plant-based diet, rich in non-starchy vegetables and some fruit. Plant-based diets reduce biomarkers of inflammation, such as C-reactive protein (CRP).
- Reduce grain and sugar-based carbohydrates. Diets that are overly abundant on grains (whole grains and refined ones) and sugar (real and artificial) are highly inflammatory, causing insulin levels to rise, eventually keeping the hormone from getting the byproduct of glucose (blood sugar) to cells for energy.
- Eat more monounsaturated fats (found in nuts, seeds, avocados, legumes, olives, olive oil) and Omega-3 fatty acids, which are

available in fatty fish (e.g., cod, herring, salmon, sardines), fish oil and plant sources such as walnuts, chia seeds, flaxseed and others. Omega-3 fatty acids, in particular, have a marked impact on reducing inflammation throughout the body. Americans typically have a 14:1 ratio of Omega-6 fats (found in meat and many grains) to Omega-3 fats. The ratio should be closer to 1:1 to 4:1.

- Diets high in antioxidants help reduce inflammation as they preserve healthy cells throughout the body. Berries, dark green leafy vegetables, and other colorful fruits and vegetables are good sources of antioxidants.
- Protein is critical to the body's ability to maintain its blood sugar and insulin levels and, thus, helps prevent inflammation. Aim for efficient sources in grass-fed meats and free-range poultry and eggs.
- Incorporate anti-inflammatory herbs including turmeric, cinnamon, ginger and parsley.
- With autoimmune conditions especially, consider avoiding major immune system aggravators, including dairy, sugar, gluten and most grains, to reduce the inflammatory cytokines that tend to spike with their consumption.

- A minimum of 30 minutes of daily, purposeful movement is essential to regulate insulin, cortisol and eicosanoids, the hormones that cause inflammation in the body.
- Get adequate sleep, aiming for at least eight consecutive hours. Lack of sleep often results in sugar cravings and poor metabolism and can induce insulin resistance.
- Lift your spirits and manage chronic stress through mindfulness exercises, laughter, music, physical activity and connectedness to family and friends. Remove stress triggers where possible. Insulin, cortisol and inflammatory cytokines spike during periods of stress; these interventions can act as buffers.

Reducing inflammation in our bodies can have a profound effect on how we feel in terms of our physical health and brain/mental health. While it takes daily, deliberate actions and choices to support one's wellbeing, the impact is often well worth it with reduced symptoms, improved mood, reversal of disease and overall better quality of life. If you have a chronic health condition, please consult your physician before making any significant diet and lifestyle changes.



On the Menu

Crazy for Coconut

The coconut is possibly the most versatile fruit in existence. From providing extremely hydrating water and calorie-dense meat to their shells being used for charcoal or spun into rope by cultures around the world, the uses for coconut are seemingly endless. In fact, in the Sanskrit language, coconut is referred to as kalpa vriksha, meaning “the tree which provides all necessities of life.”

Besides the fact that coconuts can be extremely handy if stranded on a desert island, their nutritional benefits are also worth noting when eating them in the comfort of your own home. Surprisingly, coconut oil, which was once deemed dangerous to heart health due to its high percentage of saturated fat, is now making a comeback in the kitchen due to more recent studies that found coconut oil contains a mixture of fatty acids, many of which are actually beneficial to heart health.

Coconut & Chia Seed Pudding

Ingredients:

- 1½ cups full-fat coconut milk (canned)
- 1 cup coconut water
- 1 cup fresh berries or other fresh fruit of choice
- ½ cup shredded, unsweetened coconut
- ½ cup chia seeds
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ½ tsp salt

Directions:

In a small bowl, combine all ingredients except for the fruit until well combined. Place in the refrigerator and allow to chill for at least 2 hours. Serve in glass cups or mason jars by layering the pudding with berries or other fruit like a parfait.



Here are three types of coconut to include in your diet:

1. Coconut oil is solid at room temperature and a great substitute for butter in high-heat cooking. It contains high levels of lauric acid, which has been shown to raise good cholesterol, also known as HDL.
2. Coconut milk is made from a mixture of coconut meat and water and makes a great replacement in recipes that call for cream or milk. It is high in vitamins C, E and B and is popular among vegans and those with lactose intolerance.
3. Coconut water is different than coconut milk in that the water is the clear liquid that is derived from the center of a young, green coconut. Coconut water is low in fat but rich in easily digestible carbohydrates. It is also high in electrolytes, which is beneficial for rehydration during hot months or after intense exercise.

Keep It Fresh

To store fresh coconut meat, simply cover it tightly and refrigerate for up to four days. It can also be grated and covered with coconut juice and put in the freezer for up to six months. A quality coconut oil will keep up to two years on the shelf without going rancid.

For canned coconut milk, look for the expiration date on the can. Once opened, it will stay good in the refrigerator for seven to 10 days.


Nutrition Info

Per Serving (¼ of batch)

Calories	399
Total Fat	33.3g
Carbohydrates	24g
	Sugar 4.9g
	Fiber 14.3 g
Protein	8.8 g
Sodium	105 mg



Mindful Minute



As we go through life, we set goals, think about what we want to achieve and have plans of what we expect to accomplish. But what happens when things don't go according to plan? Maybe life got in the way, and we don't get around to completing some of the items on our to-do list. If it is something important, we tend to dwell on it and think of what might have been. Thinking about the past or things that you regret doing or not doing can feel heavy and occupy a lot of our brain space. Live in the present, and let go of things you don't have control over.

If you are dwelling on the past, try this:

- Think about your accomplishments, even all the small ones. By focusing on accomplishments as opposed to

failures, you can boost your self-esteem and sense of self-worth.

- Redirect thought. Past actions will creep in from time to time. Think about how you can move forward, how you have grown since then and what you can do to continue to grow.
- When you find yourself ruminating on past events you cannot change, turn your attention to those things that are within your control in the present, using past lessons as your guide.

The likelihood of making every right decision in life and having everything go exactly how you planned it is slim to none. The past is the past. Move forward not backwards. In the words of the great Princess Elsa, let it go! let it go!

Summertime Sleeping

Getting enough sleep can be a struggle, and no matter how much you love the heat, the summer months pose extra challenges that can leave you tossing and turning. Here are some ways to combat summertime sleep hazards.

Keep the light out. Light disrupts our natural sleep/wake cycle, which can make it nearly impossible to get restful sleep no matter how long you are in bed. Make your bedroom as dark as possible at night with blackout curtains. Avoid electronics with lights and turn your TV off before going to bed (or better yet, don't keep a TV in the bedroom at all).

Stay cool. Nighttime is not when you want to be dialing up to 80 degrees. If you do insist on keeping it warm, you can compensate by using a fan for extra air circulation (the white noise it creates is an added bonus),

wearing lightweight pajamas and swapping your quilt/comforter for a lightweight blanket.

Wind down. Of course it's hard to fall into a restful sleep when your blood is still pumping from your 9:00 p.m. softball game. In the heat of summer, many of us put off our activities until it cools down late in the evening. If you find yourself in this group, be sure to take some time to consciously wind down before bed. Dim the lights and turn off your electronics an hour before bed. For a fast track to sleep, try some deep breathing; inhale for a count of 4 and then exhale for a count of 4 (all through your nose) for a few minutes to slow your heart rate and help let go of other thoughts.



Going Greek

Decrypting Yogurt's Latest Craze

Greek yogurt has staked its claim in the dairy aisle, but is it worth all the hype? Let's start with the basics. Greek and regular yogurts are products of the same initial process; bacterial cultures are added to fermented milk and then left to breed more good bacteria and lactic acid. Eventually, the milk proteins gel together and create regular yogurt.

To make Greek yogurt, regular yogurt is strained extensively to remove liquid whey, sugar and lactose, leaving behind the thicker textured yogurt. (Ironically, in Greece, this strained yogurt is actually called straggistro.) This extra straining gives Greek yogurt an undeniable nutritional edge. Check out the differences!

- **Protein:** Greek yogurt has almost twice the protein as regular yogurt, boasting 15 to 20 grams (roughly the same amount as 3 ounces of lean meat) in one 6-ounce serving.
- **Sodium:** Greek yogurt contains about half the salt of regular yogurt.
- **Carbohydrates:** Greek yogurt contains about half the carbs of regular yogurt. Because the straining process removes some of the extra sugars and lactose, Greek yogurt is less likely to upset people with lactose sensitivities and is better for blood sugar regulation in diabetics. But beware of the sweetened varieties. It's always smart to buy plain yogurt and add your own flavor.

- **Calories:** Regular and Greek yogurt have similar calorie content. Of course this varies, depending on what is added (e.g., fruit, granola).
- **Cost:** You can pay up to twice as much for Greek yogurt. This is largely due to increased customer demand but also because it takes more milk to make Greek yogurt due to the extra straining.

A word of caution; not all Greek yogurt is created equal. The staggering boom in popularity in the U.S. over the past 15 years has the Greek yogurt global market clocking in at close to 4 billion dollars annually, and everyone wants in. Due to limited regulations on yogurts claiming the Greek label, there are plenty of knockoffs taking shortcuts to get their product to market at a lower price point. Some brands are skipping the authentic straining process that leads to the protein boost, lowered carbs and thicker texture and instead adding thickeners and artificial protein supplements. Take a look at the ingredient list, which should display milk and live active cultures as the main ingredients. If you want authentic Greek yogurt, you may pay a bit more for original brands like Fage and Chobani to steer clear of things like whey concentrate or modified food starch.

Greek yogurt isn't only an alternative to regular yogurt; its thick texture makes it an ideal substitution for less nutritious foods such as mayonnaise and sour cream. It's the perfect staple when creating homemade dips, dressings and salads.



Keep your **face toward the sunshine** and
shadows will **fall behind you.**

- WALT WHITMAN



Restoring Consistency for Better Parent-Child Relationships

Parenting is tough for many reasons. As we try to gain control and reduce the amount of haphazard punishments happening at home, we are reminded of one of the toughest parts of parenting – consistency. Several variables can make us fall short – self-doubt, guilt, sheer exhaustion and even sometimes feeling like a coward. In areas of inconsistency or where we haven’t established clear boundaries we can begin to feel control slipping away from us quickly.

Children learn that certain behaviors lead to certain outcomes. By knowing what to expect, they can make informed decisions. If we don’t follow through, what we say no longer is heard.

Here are five expert-backed techniques that I’ve found helpful in re-establishing consistency:

- 1. Establish rules.** If a set list of rules is established, you can consistently respond to unacceptable behavior. When you do make an exception, point out that it is an exception and your reasoning. This is realistic and shows that there can be planned exceptions to rules (e.g., bedtime) and that you are in charge of deciding such.
- 2. Be realistic.** Don’t overpromise on punishments or rewards, for example, “If you don’t start cleaning up your toys, we won’t go to Disney next week.” Clearly that’s too much, and odds are you will go to Disney whether toys are picked up or not. Make realistic, feasible expectations for behaviors.

- 3. Mind your mood.** A parent’s temperament is a big factor in discipline. When you’re feeling tired or stressed, you are more likely to discipline a little differently than coming off of a great day. Keep your emotions in check and push the effort a little further to respond to behavior problems consistently, despite how you are feeling.
- 4. Follow through.** Repeated threats go nowhere. You have to mean what you say and be prepared to follow through. If not, your child learns to tune out the conversation. Making idle threats only trains your child not to listen to you and doesn’t build credibility.
- 5. Be patient.** Expect the change to take time. Just because you decided to mean business, don’t expect your child to believe it. You also have to expect some pushback from kids when consistency takes hold. It’s natural to have some temporary escalation in behavior issues related to anger and emotions when you change your parenting style. Don’t give up!

Being consistent can be frustrating, exhausting and wearing. Staying calm and not giving up is key for yourself and for your child. If you are looking for a light-hearted yet insightful approach, read “Winning the Discipline Debates” by Ray Guarendi in which he tackles several of the most common discipline scenarios in a humorous fashion.

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