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ARE YOU UP FOR A CHALLENGE?

FOCUS ON FITNESS FOR 30 DAYS

Everyone's done it. We've rung in the new year on the promise that this is our year to get healthy. We're going to finally lose the weight, eat healthier, and feel better than ever. Sadly, many of us fail at this endeavor *every single year*.

Let's make 2021 different! Work toward your wellness goals by trying monthly challenges. These challenges allow you to focus on one area of your wellness each month, which will ultimately ensure you create sustainable habits. Here are three challenges to get you started!

January: Step Up

Getting extra steps in during the day is the quickest way to introduce more activity into your life. Start easy and just track your regular steps for one week. Then, set a goal to get 1,000 more steps than that in the following week and build from there. Keep going until you're

regularly hitting a number that is at least 5,000 steps beyond your baseline! (If you don't have an Apple Watch, Fitbit, or other fitness tracking device, find an old-fashioned pedometer and get to work!)

February: Drink Up

Tracking your water intake and challenging yourself to drink more can help you feel more energized and make progress on your other goals. Start by calculating how much water you need to consume. Experts suggest taking your body weight, dividing it by two, and drinking that many ounces of water each day. (For example, a person who weighs 150 pounds should drink 75 ounces of water.) Can you drink that much water each day for 30 days? If not, drink more each day throughout the month until you reach your goal. Give it a shot. We guarantee you'll have more energy!



March: Bulk Up

Choose one area of your body to focus on this month. Want to improve your arm strength? Work your way up from five to 50 pushups throughout the month. Follow the same formula with squats if you want to focus on your legs. Or, try planking to strengthen your core. Start the month by holding the plank for 30 seconds and work your way up to 2-3 minutes! As you progress in each challenge, you'll notice significant improvement. For the best results, rest whatever area of your body you're focusing on during your regular exercise routine. (That's how muscle grows!)

DO YOU HAVE YOUR PRIORITIES STRAIGHT?

2020 HAS A BRIGHT SIDE: IT TAUGHT ME WHAT'S IMPORTANT

My husband likes to make his New Year's resolutions on Jan. 1. Without fail, he sits down to contemplate how the last year went and what he can do better in the coming months. I love that he's so forward-thinking, but honestly, when the New Year comes around, I just want to enjoy it! I'm all about sipping champagne while the ball drops. The last thing I want to do is sit and think.

Still, I do like to set New Year's goals. My solution is to extend Jan. 1 into more than a month of goal-setting. I use the first six weeks of the year to test out my new aims and strategies, and then I follow up with my resolutions on Valentine's Day. Sometimes I end up reaffirming the resolutions I made the month before, and sometimes (like the time I tried intermittent fasting) I realize they don't benefit me or the people I care about. When that's the case, I reevaluate and find something new to work toward.

This method has worked for me for years, and I love the symbolism of following up with my resolutions on Valentine's Day. Feb. 14 is all about love, including loving yourself! It's the perfect day to find resolutions that resonate.

This year, I won't be going to any big New Year's parties, but I am still planning to set goals. I think it will be easier than ever because if there's one silver lining to 2020, it's that it helped me see what's important in my life. With all of the extras stripped away, I realized that my real priorities are my family, my health, and my passions.

My parents have always been there for me, but they had a rough time with their health this year. It hit me hard that they won't always be around, and I can't take them for granted. The same goes for my husband and kids! Spending more time with them is at the top of my 2021 to-do list.

2020 also reinforced how important it is to prioritize my health. Learning about COVID-19 and how to protect my team and patients reminded me that it's vital to get regular check-ups at the doctor, eat well, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep, and drink lots of water. I also saw up close what happens when people take their oral health for granted and don't maintain it. A lot of my patients skipped dental appointments during the pandemic, and when they finally came in 3-6 months down the road, their teeth were in bad shape. Their cavities had turned into root canals, and their root canals had gotten bad enough that teeth needed to be pulled! I know I'm going to factor that lesson on the importance of prevention into my New Year's resolutions.

I'm also going to keep pushing forward on my dream of educating patients, parents, doctors, other dentists, behavioral therapists, and day care workers on the importance of pediatric airway and sleep issues. These things can significantly impact the development of our kids, and one of my big goals is to raise awareness about it. Last year, I co-founded a study group for dentists called ASAP Pathway to do just that, and I'm planning to take it to the next level this year!



Dr. Weddle's Mom and Dad
with the grandkids

Has your lifestyle and thought process changed in the last 12 months, too? What did 2020 teach you about your priorities? I hope you came to some of the same conclusions I did — that your family, your health, and your passions are more important than the daily grind.

Now that we've finally kicked 2020 to the curb, I have a challenge for you: Look around at the things life has pushed to the back burner and ask yourself, "Do I need to refocus on that?" Maybe you haven't had a dental checkup in six months (call me!), or maybe it has been a few weeks since you talked to your grandparents or spent an uninterrupted hour with your kids. It's not too late to fix it. **Make a list of new goals and start 2021 off right!**

To your great smiles and better health,

-Dr. Michelle Weddle

WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT YOUR PELVIC FLOOR HEALTH

It can be awkward to talk about, but pelvic floor health can have a significant impact on your lifestyle and happiness. For many, the pelvic floor is a source of pain and incontinence, but it doesn't have to be that way! Your pelvic floor is just like any other body part; with proper strength, it can function normally and pain-free.

The pelvic floor consists of the pelvis and the muscles and organs that protect it and are housed within it. It functions with the urinary, reproductive, digestive, and



musculoskeletal systems, so any time you eat, use the restroom, or simply sit or walk, your pelvic floor is working.

But when it's not working properly, many patients — primarily women, but men can struggle with pelvic floor health, too — experience pain during bathroom visits and sex (or an inability to do either), pain in the lower back, digestive issues, and leaking. This can happen for a variety of reasons. For women, pelvic floor weakness or prolapse is often the result of labor, but age, traumatic injury, and genetics can also affect your pelvic floor.

Though pelvic floor issues are relatively common, patients may be embarrassed by the associated symptoms, and as a result, many avoid seeking treatment.

The good news is that strengthening the pelvic floor often involves simple exercises and stretches, like glute

bridges, squats, and cat/cow pose. While improving your pelvic floor health, try to avoid doing other exercises that can strain it, such as running or heavy lifting. (As your pelvic floor gets stronger, you can slowly add these exercises back into your routine.) Consulting with a physical therapist and developing a regimen to improve or maintain your pelvic floor health is a great way to treat or prevent pelvic floor weakness.

The best part? As your pelvic floor health improves, other components of your life will too. You'll see improvement with your digestion, you'll never have to worry about sneezing or coughing too vigorously, and your personal relationships can improve. It's worth having a discussion with a professional. Contact your physical therapy team today to learn more about how to improve your pelvic floor health, and, ultimately, get your life back.

SOUP'S ON!

PERFECT YOUR SOUP RECIPE WITH THESE 3 TIPS

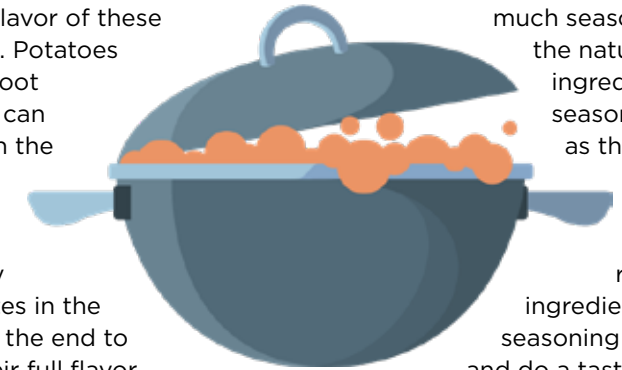
Soup is perfect for sick days and alongside grilled cheese, and Grandma always seemed to have a recipe to make everything better. For as simple and comforting as soup can be, re-creating those memories from your stovetop includes a few tedious steps. Become a soup master with this go-to guide to winter's favorite dish.

Mind your peas and carrots.

The magic of a hearty minestrone or old-fashioned chicken noodle soup comes from the flavors of vegetables to create the perfect blend of comfort and taste. However, overcooking or undercooking vegetables can ruin this delicate balance. So, consider the vegetables you want in your soup and plan accordingly.

Start by chopping vegetables into bite-size pieces that will easily fit on a spoon. No one wants a spoonful of soup that's just carrots after all! Then,

add vegetables to your soup based on cooking time and flavoring. Carrots, onions, and celery should "sweat" in the pot with oil and seasoning *before* you add the broth to capture the fullest flavor of these ingredients. Potatoes and other root vegetables can be added in the boiling phase, while leafy greens only need minutes in the pot toward the end to capture their full flavor.



Simmer to blend flavors.

Simmering is the key to a great soup. Once all your ingredients are in the pot, reduce the heat to a low simmer. This allows the flavors to play together without overcooking. If a soup is boiled for too long, the vegetables, meats,

and/or pasta can become mushy and underwhelming.

Season gradually — but generously.

No one enjoys a bland soup, but too much seasoning can overpower the natural flavors of your ingredients. Add your seasoning to vegetables as they sauté in the pot before adding the stock. Then, add the stock and the remainder of your ingredients. Only add more seasoning as the soup simmers and do a taste test. Add a bit of salt and pepper until it's perfect! If you over-salt, don't panic. Adding more stock, potatoes, noodles, or cream can fix your soup in a pinch.

Bonus Tip: Always serve your soup with bread, toast, or crackers. It's the perfect vehicle to soak up all the flavors!

THESE CELEBRITIES ARE SOBER BY CHOICE

AND HERE'S HOW YOU CAN BE, TOO!

Making a conscious decision to live a sober lifestyle can be powerful. For some, it's a necessity spurred on by addiction, while others choose to stay sober for their health. Alcohol has been linked to skin damage, cognition issues, high blood pressure, sleep dysfunction, and weight gain. So, if you're considering making Dry January more of a year-round habit, get started with these three steps.

Step 1: Consider your motivations.

In 2019, Anne Hathaway announced she was giving up drinking for her son. She wanted to add more value to the mornings she got to spend with him instead of nursing a hangover.

Finding a reason to stop drinking can make you more motivated to stick with it. In moments when you want to drink, write down your motivations and really dig into them. Why do you want to give

up drinking? Why do you want better skin or fewer hangovers? Why do you want more time with your family? These reminders can help you keep going!

Step 2: Don't quit cold turkey.

Jennifer Lopez isn't one to toast with water. The pop star is often seen taking a sip of alcohol after "raising a glass," but that's as far as she goes! J-Lo reportedly doesn't like the adverse effects alcohol can have on the skin.

According to researchers at Harvard Medical School, moderation might be better for your overall goal than quitting altogether. One study found that when drinking was so ingrained in patients' daily lives, they found better success weaning off over time or practicing moderation. By creating your own plan to lessen your alcohol intake, you can improve your relationship with alcohol and better strive for your sobriety.

Step 3: Celebrate with a mocktail!

Alcohol does not equate with fun! Just look at Kate Moss, who often abstains from drinking and has been known to have just as much fun — if not more! — while sober. Moss has even mentioned that she orders mocktails.

Why not have all the fun of cocktails without the adverse effects? The best way to enjoy the moments traditionally filled with alcohol is to find a new way to appreciate them. Find a new hobby or make a fun, alcohol-free drink for your celebrations. There are plenty of ways to partake in these moments while staying sober!



TAKE A BREAK!



EASY ONE-POT LENTIL SOUP

Inspired by MinimalistBaker.com

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tbsp coconut oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 shallots, diced
- 4 large carrots, sliced thin
- 4 stalks celery, sliced thin
- Sea salt, to taste
- Black pepper, to taste
- 3 cups red potatoes, cubed
- 4 cups vegetable broth
- 2-3 sprigs fresh rosemary or thyme, chopped
- 1 cup uncooked green lentils, rinsed and drained
- 2 cups chopped kale

DIRECTIONS

1. In a large pot, heat oil over medium heat and sauté garlic, shallots, carrots, and celery for 4-5 minutes, adding salt and pepper to taste.
2. Add potatoes to pot, along with more salt and pepper. Sauté for 2 minutes.
3. Add vegetable broth and herbs, then bring soup to a simmer.
4. Add lentils, stirring until soup returns to a simmer. Then, turn the heat to low and cook soup uncovered for 15-20 minutes.
5. Finally, add kale and additional salt and pepper as needed. Cook for 3-4 minutes, thin soup with additional vegetable broth as needed, and serve!