

Completely Well



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Know Your Numbers: TSH and Thyroid Panel

Thyroid function is important to how you feel and your general health. Fortunately, treating thyroid disease is an effective way to avoid the unpleasant symptoms of the condition. Discuss with your doctor whether screening for thyroid function is right for you.

TSH (Thyroid Stimulating Hormone): Measures the TSH hormone. This is the hormone that the Pituitary gland creates that stimulates Thyroid function. Your thyroid makes hormones that regulate the way your body uses energy. It also plays an important role in regulating your weight, body temperature, muscle strength, and even your mood.

Thyroid Panel: Evaluates thyroid gland function and can help to diagnose thyroid disorders or to monitor treatment of thyroid disorders. A thyroid panel usually includes tests for: TSH (thyroid-stimulating hormone), Free T4, Free T3 or total T3. The thyroid creates triiodothyronine (T3) and thyroxine (T4). These hormones travel throughout your body to regulate blood pressure, body temperature, heart rate, metabolism, and how the body reacts to other hormones.

Why be tested:

Thyroid disease is relatively common and can create a variety of symptoms. If the thyroid doesn't produce enough hormones, the body's functions slow down, possibly causing fatigue, constipation, weight gain and muscle cramps. If the thyroid produces too much hormone, the body's metabolism increases, often resulting in nervousness, a rapid heart rate, excessive sweating, and weight loss. In both cases, the thyroid is not functioning normally and will need medical attention.

If you are experiencing any of the symptoms of thyroid disease, discuss these with your doctor. Make sure that they know of any family history of the disease as well. Thyroid disease is diagnosed through a physical examination and blood tests. The blood test will measure TSH, a hormone produced by the pituitary gland designed to stimulate the thyroid's production of hormones. A Thyroid Panel measuring the thyroid's hormones (T3 and T4) may also be ordered.

Thyroid disease can and should be treated by a medical professional. Both hyperthyroidism and hypothyroidism can have a serious impact on your health if left untreated.

T4

T3

TSH



Fascia Training & Foam Rolling

Fascia training refers to exercise and movement that targets the body's fascia, a connective tissue that surrounds muscles, bones, and organs. Fascia plays a crucial role in providing support and stability to the body, as well as facilitating movement. A good description is to think of the fascia as the white fibers that you find beneath the rind of an orange. It's the stuff that helps to give the body its shape! The Fascia can shorten and stiffen, especially with repetitive movement. It can also become tight and painful from inactivity.

Fascia training often involves specific exercises, stretches, and techniques aimed at improving the health and function of the fascia. These may include movements that focus on dynamic stretching (movements done at a slow pace intended to stretch your body), myofascial release (such as foam rolling or using massage balls), and exercises that focus on body awareness and control. Bouncing movements such as skipping, hopping, and burpees also help to increase the elasticity in your fascia. The type of training used for the Fascia can also help to move lymphatic fluids and reduce swelling in your body.

Fitness practices such as yoga, Pilates, strength training and rehabilitation exercise programs often integrate Fascia training into their activities. This training is meant to help increase flexibility, reduce muscle tension, improve mobility and prevent injuries.

Research on fascia and its response to training is still emerging, but regardless of what a trainer may believe about fascia training in general, many fitness professionals believe that incorporating fascia-focused techniques into fitness routines can lead to better overall movement quality and physical health.



Here's a basic guide on how to foam roll effectively:

Foam rollers come in various densities and sizes. Beginners may prefer softer foam rollers, while more advanced users may opt for firmer ones for deeper tissue massage. Start with a medium-density roller if you're unsure.

Identify the specific muscle groups you want to target. Common areas include the calves, quadriceps, hamstrings, glutes, back, and shoulders. It's generally a good idea to warm up your muscles before foam rolling.

1. Position yourself on the floor with the foam roller beneath the targeted muscle group.
2. Use your body weight to apply pressure onto the foam roller.
3. Slowly roll back and forth along the length of the muscle, from one end to the other.
4. Focus on any tight or tender spots ("trigger points") and spend extra time rolling over these areas.
5. You can adjust the pressure by shifting your body weight or by using your hands and legs to support yourself.
6. Roll each muscle group for about 1-2 minutes.

While foam rolling, remember to breathe deeply and try to relax as much as possible. Tension can hinder the effectiveness of the technique. Avoid rolling over joints, bones, or areas with acute injuries or inflammation. If you experience sharp pain, stop immediately.

Foam rolling can be done as part of your warm-up routine, cool-down, or even as a standalone session. Aim to incorporate it into your regular exercise routine a few times per week for best results. Remember, consistency is key with foam rolling. It may feel uncomfortable at first, especially if you have tight muscles, but over time it can help improve your overall mobility and reduce muscle stiffness and soreness.

Taco Tomatoes

BY LENA ABRAHAM from:

<https://www.delish.com/cooking/recipe-ideas/recipes/a54559/taco-tomatoes-recipe/>

These stuffed tomatoes are a taco salad with a healthy twist. Great for a quick, light meal on busy summer nights.

Tomatoes are considered in season from July to September. Tomatoes are low in calories and high in key nutrients, including lycopene, the cancer-fighting pigment that gives the tomato its red color. Tomatoes are also high in vitamin A, vitamin C and vitamin K. In addition, they provide fiber, potassium, chromium, vitamins B1, B2, B6, folate, and iron.



Ingredients:

- 1 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 3/4 lb. ground beef
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 (1-oz.) packet taco seasoning
- 4 large, ripe beefsteak tomatoes
- 1/2 c. your favorite shredded or crumbled cheese for tacos
- 1/2 c. shredded iceberg lettuce
- 1/4 c. sour cream

Top with sliced green onions, jalapeno slices, chunks of avocado. Whatever you usually put on a taco salad.

Directions:

In a large skillet over medium heat, heat oil. Add onion and cook, stirring, until soft, 5 minutes. Add ground beef and taco seasoning. Cook, breaking up meat with a wooden spoon, until no longer pink, 8 minutes. Drain fat.

Remove the tomato stem, and flip tomatoes over so they're stem-side down. Slice to make 6 wedges, but **do not to cut all the way through!** Carefully spread open wedges. Scoop out some of the seeds if you wish.

Divide taco meat among tomatoes, then top each with cheese, lettuce, and sour cream before serving. Don't forget that toppings add calories, so if you're watching yours choose wisely!

Alternate recipe: Make them Italian by stuffing with a little ricotta, mozzarella, and basil and bake for 15 minutes at 350°.



Meal planning strategies should involve time management, healthy eating decisions, budget-friendly choices, preparedness, and keeping the process low stress.

Why Meal Planning Matters

Avoiding take-out and processed foods: Without a plan, you may resort to take-out or processed meals, which are often high in fat, sodium, and calories, and more expensive than home-cooked meals. Meal planning helps you to provide consistently healthier meals.

Cost efficiency: Those who plan weekly menus tend to spend less on take-out and impulsive purchases of processed foods.

Steps to Create a Meal Plan

Understand your family's schedule but be prepared to be flexible when plans change.

Create a Positive Action Plan by making a shopping list, checking your pantry, refrigerator and freezer for usable food before creating your menu.

Involve the family in menu creation. Ask them to help select one new recipe to try each month. Have them help you choose a list of healthy snacks or on-the-go foods that will make them happy.

Use trusted, healthy recipe sources and check reviews. Find recipes with a variety of cooking methods: slow-cooker, sheet pan, one-pot meals, stir-fries, casseroles, soups, etc. so that you're prepared for any type of schedule.

Be kind to yourself and others in your family who do the cooking. Keep weekday meals simple and quick.

Tips for Success

Find enjoyment in the process if you can. On stressful days find a way to unwind while preparing a meal. Listen to music, enlist your family's help, breathe deeply and be mindful of the steps that you take to prepare the meal.

Prepare for those days when your schedule is disrupted. Have frozen meals prepared ahead, or lower your expectations for the perfectly executed recipe. Make sure that you have simple stand-by recipes to fall back on.

Meal planning can become a manageable part of your routine.

What Is Your BMR?

Metabolism is the body's way of breaking down nutrients like carbs, fats, and proteins for energy, to be stored for future use, or to help build essential compounds that are used by the body. Imbalances in the nutrition slow down metabolism, leading to extra body fat and weight gain.

Your Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR) is the energy used by the body at rest. It depends on factors like gender, height, weight, and age. Genetics influence metabolism, but a healthy lifestyle can modify their impact.

For Males: $BMR = 10 \times \text{weight (kg)} + 6.25 \times \text{height (cm)} - 5 \times \text{age (years)} + 5$

For Females: $BMR = 10 \times \text{weight (kg)} + 6.25 \times \text{height (cm)} - 5 \times \text{age (years)} - 161$

Note: 1 inch = 2.54 cm; 1 pound = .453592 kg

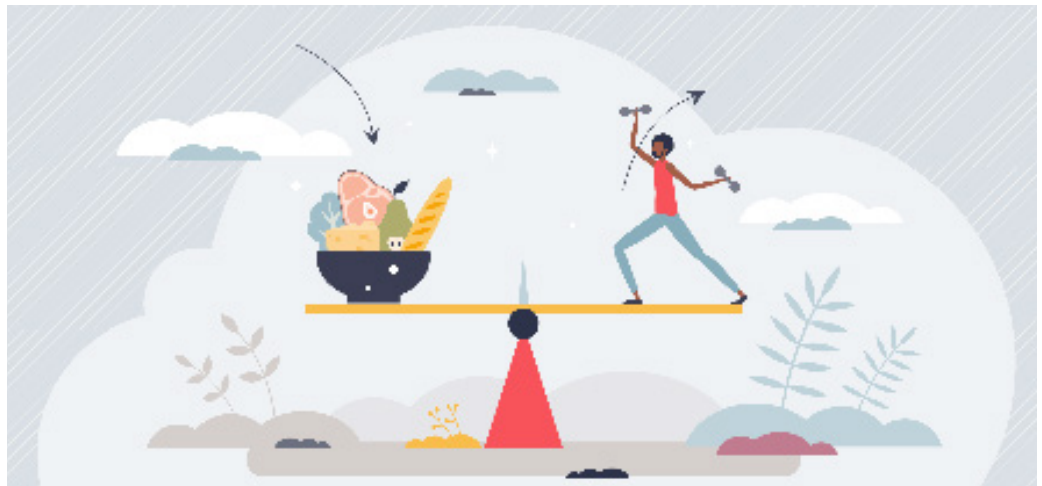
Low-calorie diets can reduce BMR by 20%. A nutritious diet with healthy fats and low in added sugars prevents inflammation, regulating hormones and maintaining a healthy BMR.

Physical activity, especially resistance training, increases BMR. Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity daily. Age-related muscle loss affects BMR, but exercise helps.

Sleep deprivation lowers BMR and disrupts hormones, affecting hunger and satiety. Adults need 7-8 hours of sleep for a healthy metabolic rate.

Stress releases hormones that temporarily boost metabolism but can lead to overeating. **Long-term stress** may disrupt hormones and cause inflammation, lowering BMR.

Adopting a healthy lifestyle empowers us to control these factors and support our well-being.



Want to know more?

Connect with New Avenues for more information on wellness programs and how they can help you reduce healthcare costs and improve employee well-being.



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