



a community for healthy ideas

Do-It-Yourself Health: Now Trending, April 2018



Health & Wellness

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Refer to this link to access the videos:
(<https://blog.highmarkhealth.org/do-it-yourself-health-now-trending-april-2018/>)

Do you ever feel like a new fitness or nutrition craze pops up before you even have a chance to learn about the last one? The frequency of new health trends, and how rapidly they get passed around on social media, can make it difficult to know what is truly good for you versus what is just a good money-maker for others. When in doubt, get the advice of your doctor or another informed, objective health professional. In the meantime, let's break down five popular nutrition and fitness trends to better understand which promote your health and not others' wealth.

High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT)

Let's start with a trend we have included in **other DIY Health posts**, so it's definitely in the positive column: **High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT)**. This approach to exercise focuses on alternating between periods of intense activity and periods of lighter activity or rest. Interval training can increase your aerobic capacity (even without having to run on a treadmill for what feels like a lifetime). It also provides a **great calorie burn — that can last for hours after your workout**.

One advantage of this approach is flexibility. You can choose intervals that range from 4 minutes (like the **popular Tabata workout**) to 30 minutes, which eliminates the excuse of not having enough time to exercise. And almost any exercise can be incorporated into an interval training framework — from running to bodyweight exercises. We'll include three favorite anywhere-

anytime interval exercises in this month's video, but first let's move on to a second positive fitness trend: Yoga.

Yoga

While yoga has been gaining popularity in the U.S. more recently, **it has been around for over 5,000 years — and with good reason**. Not only can it help you achieve physical benefits, such as building strength, balance, and flexibility, but you can also reap mental benefits from this mind-body practice. Yoga is an umbrella term, as there are many varieties, including **Hatha, Vinyasa, Ashtanga, Bikram, and Iyengar**, and contemporary spinoffs like **Power Yoga**. The purpose, intensity and degree of difficulty vary depending on what you practice — but the good news is that just about everyone can find yoga poses that will fit their needs and abilities.

For this month's **downloadable Move for Health fitness schedule** we'll combine two great fitness trends in one workout. Check out the video below for a demonstration of two yoga poses and three easy-to-learn interval training exercises.

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Yoga: Tree Pose

Yoga: Warrior II Pose

Interval Training: Forward Lunges

Interval Training: Burpees

Interval Training: Jumping Rope

Restrictive or Elimination Diets

Restrictive, elimination and exclusion diets represent a whole category of diet trends (one that's been expanding over the years) where we suggest caution. Whether it's one of the many "juicing" or "cleanse" programs, the newest

incarnation of **the grapefruit diet**, a variation on **the Paleo Diet**, or something else, what all these diets have in common is the premise that radically restricting or eliminating certain food groups will help you lose weight and/or promote health.

There *are* situations that require people to radically restrict or eliminate certain foods of course; individuals with **celiac disease really must eliminate gluten**, for example. But for most of us, cutting out entire food groups without a medical need is unnecessary and has many downsides, including potential nutritional deficiencies in both macronutrients (carbohydrates, fat, and protein) and micronutrients (vitamins and minerals). Furthermore, for most people such diets are unrealistic to maintain long-term and don't provide lasting benefits. The classic case is someone who loses some weight during a period of maintaining a radical diet, but then gains it all back.

Mediterranean Diet

Let's move on to a diet that's easier to adopt and maintain than most fad diets and also has scientific evidence behind its health claims: **the Mediterranean Diet**. The basics of this eating pattern include focusing on plant-based foods (a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, and legumes), limiting red meat intake, and eating fish and poultry in moderation. Relatively simple examples of putting the Mediterranean diet into action include replacing unhealthy saturated fats, like butter, with healthy unsaturated fats like olive oil, and using herbs and spices instead of salt. Another interesting thing about the Mediterranean Diet is that it goes beyond just the food itself to emphasize the value of enjoying meals with others, getting adequate exercise, and other lifestyle choices.

Research has shown that this eating pattern is associated with a **decreased risk of heart disease, as well as reduced incidences of cancer and neurological diseases**. Most people also find that this diet offers very enjoyable eating. This month's **Eat for Health meal plan, recipes and**

grocery list are all about adding healthful, Mediterranean flavor to your diet. Get a taste in the video and recipes below!

Mediterranean Frittata

Mediterranean Pasta Primavera

Mediterranean Quinoa Salad

Medjool Energy Bites

Vegetarian Wraps

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DASH Diet

The DASH Diet is one that your doctor may specifically prescribe you to follow. DASH, which stands for Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension, is based on scientific research and was developed specifically to help reduce high blood pressure. The DASH plan promotes foods rich in calcium, potassium, and magnesium (such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy). While it recommends cutting back on sodium, alcohol, and fat intake, it does not call for elimination of any food group. DASH is heart healthy, nutritionally sound, and maintainable. DASH guidelines are good to follow at any time; don't wait for **diagnosis and treatment of hypertension**, use DASH to help prevent it from developing in the first place!

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