



Stay
Healthy
for the
Holidays

Nutritious & Delicious Holiday Treats

We all like to indulge in festive treats during the holidays.

However, that doesn't mean we have to pitch healthy choices out the window or settle for treats without taste. Transform traditional holiday recipes into nutritious delights by using a range of alternative ingredients and substitutions. This year, create baked goods that are satisfying to the palate and kinder to your health.

When you opt for alternative choices, you can reduce the intake of unhealthy fats, refined sugars and processed ingredients. These substitutions can help enhance the nutritional profile of your treats, making them more nutrient-dense while still retaining their delectable flavors.

Wildly Organic encourages people to not think of these changes as reducing calories or a pathway to losing weight, but a way of making foods more nutrient dense, of adding something, not taking it away.

FLOUR POWER

Replace traditional all-purpose flour with whole grain flours such as whole wheat, spelt or oat flour. These options provide more fiber, vitamins and minerals. For those with gluten sensitivities, gluten-free flour blends such as almond, coconut or rice flour can be excellent alternatives.

Experiment with these options to add unique flavors and textures to your baked



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goods.

SWEETNESS REDEFINED

Swap refined white sugar with natural sweeteners like pure maple syrup, honey or dates. These alternatives add depth of flavor and provide additional nutrients. Stevia or monk fruit sweeteners can also be used as zero-calorie alternatives for those looking to reduce calorie intake without compromising on taste. This might take some experimenta-

tion and adjusting the amount of sweetener from traditional recipes.

Another alternative is coconut sugar or coconut syrup. It is still a sweetener, but it has some nutritional value and is lower on the glycemic index than white sugar.

FAT FANTASTIC

Seek out healthier fats and oils. Butter and vegetable shortening can be replaced with healthier fats like avocado

or coconut oil, which are rich in beneficial nutrients. Greek yogurt or applesauce can replace some or all of the fat in certain recipes, reducing overall calorie content while keeping baked goods moist and delicious.

REINVENTING RECIPE FAVORITES

Transform beloved holiday treats by incorporating the substitutes mentioned above. Search out recipes for such

things as whole wheat chocolate chip cookies, gluten-free gingerbread or banana-oat muffins sweetened with honey.

With these healthier baking substitutes, you can elevate your holiday baking and savor guilt-free treats. Embrace the joy of experimenting with alternative ingredients, knowing that you are nourishing your loved ones with wholesome delicious delights. Let your kitchen become a hub for both indulgence and wellness.

Fun Holiday Fitness Routines

With the rise of virtual fitness options, it is increasingly possible to stay active and energized without leaving the comfort of home.

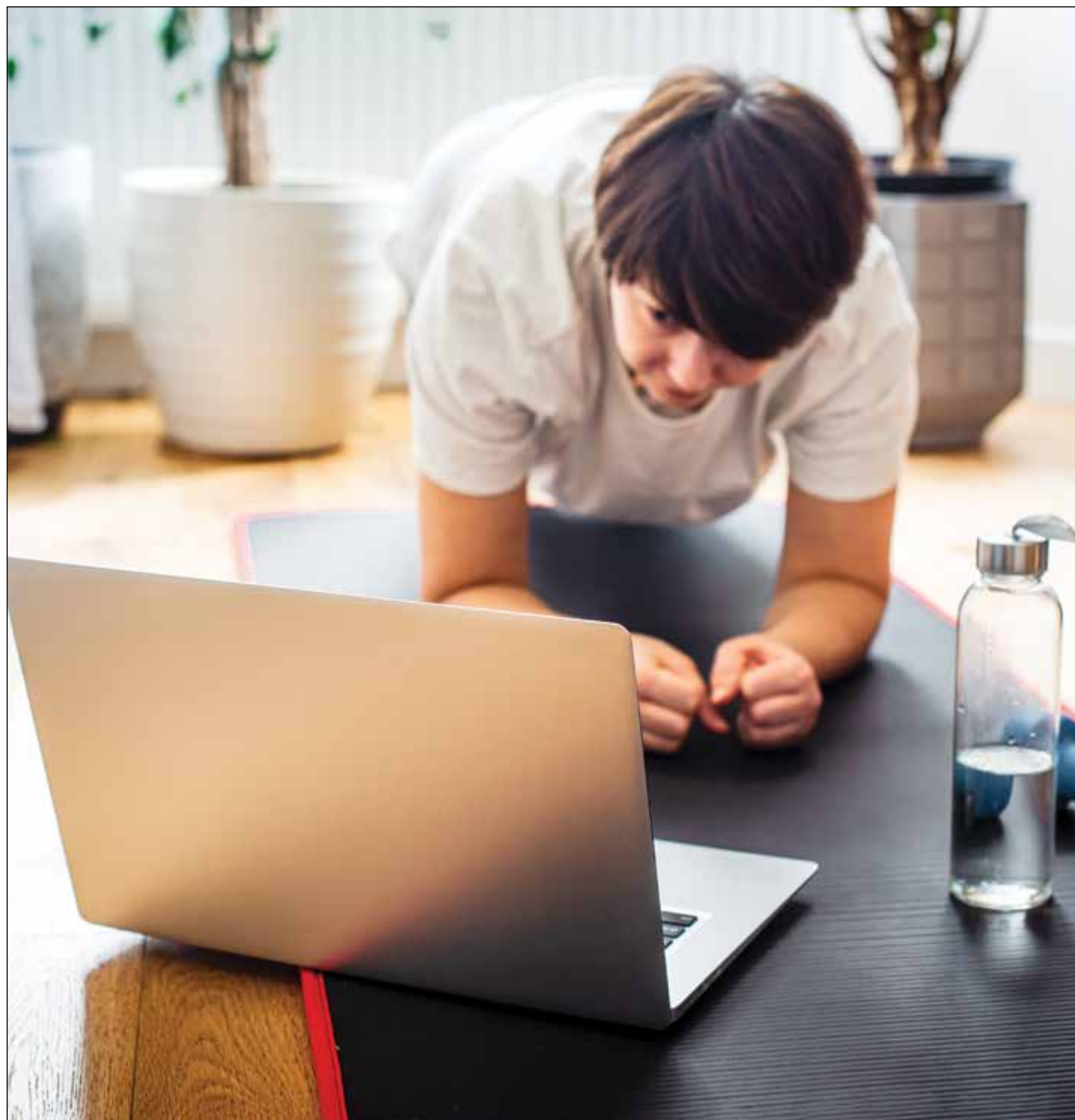
Nor does working out have to be dull or routine. Infuse your holiday workout regimen with a healthy dose of fun with holiday-themed yoga and virtual fitness classes.

ONLINE WORKOUTS

Gone are the days when fitness enthusiasts were limited to traditional gym settings. Virtual fitness classes have taken the wellness industry by storm, offering an array of exercise options accessible from anywhere with an internet connection.

During the holidays, when time may be limited or the weather unfavorable, virtual fitness classes provide a convenient solution. Explore online platforms that offer a variety of classes, including cardio, strength training, dance and yoga. Join live sessions or access pre-recorded workouts at your convenience.

Not only will these classes keep you active, but they can also introduce you to a supportive virtual community that helps you stay motivated. It's also possible to find classes that celebrate the holidays by incorporating holiday



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music or creating specific exercises or dance steps related to holiday themes.

HOLIDAY-THEMED YOGA

The practice of yoga provides a sanctuary of peace and mindfulness, which can be particularly valuable during the bustling holiday season.

Embrace the spirit of the holidays by incorporating holiday-themed yoga into your workout routine. Explore poses and flows inspired by holiday symbols, such as the Five-Pointed Star Pose, Christmas Tree, Snowflake or Reindeer.

Sites like Yoga International

have articles where they teach holiday-related practices such as breathing exercises, poses, flows and variations. Shiningkidsyoga.com recommends a Yoga Dreidel Game that combines the traditional Hannukkah game with yoga cards and Hebrew letter cards. The yoga cards are linked to

each symbol on the dreidel and whatever symbol it lands on, everyone does the pose.

Consider integrating deep breathing exercises and meditation into your practice to cultivate a sense of calm and gratitude amidst the holiday hustle.

FITNESS CHALLENGES

Create some new healthy traditions this year by participating in festive fitness challenges. Sign up for an advent calendar run online where you complete 12 runs in the days leading up to Christmas. Participate in a Santa Race where you run enough miles to cover the distance from the North Pole to your house.

Piedmont offers instructions on how to do such exercises as the Santa Claus Shuffle, the Sugar Plum Squat, Candy Cane Crunches and hot cocoa calf raises.

Planning to do a white elephant gift exchange? See if your friends and family are willing to turn it into a fitness event in which you have to do exercises from a “nice list” in order to pick a gift and exercises from a “naughty list” to earn the right to steal a gift.

The Slimming Clinic has several holiday-themed fitness activities. Do sit-ups while hanging ornaments on the lower branches of your trees. Listen to a Christmas playlist and every time a chosen word is sung, everyone gets up and does ten jumping jacks. For every present a person opens, they have to run up and down a flight of stairs.

Holiday Wellness

It is easy to get caught up in the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, leaving little time to experience true joy.

It's why it may be time to take a page from the Danish and Norwegian culture and incorporate the concept of hygge into our holiday celebrations. Doing so lets us cultivate cozy and stress-free environments that promote well-being and relaxation, environments that are healthier and offer us a more fulfilling holiday season.

Originating from Denmark, hygge (pronounced "hoo-gah") represents the appreciation of simple pleasures, creating a warm and cozy atmosphere. It encompasses elements of comfort, togetherness and mindfulness, offering a respite from the hectic pace of daily life. Understanding the essence of hygge allows us to prioritize moments of relaxation, connection and self-care during the holiday season.

SETTING THE STAGE

Embrace hygge by transforming your surroundings into a haven of warmth and comfort. Dim the lights or opt for soft, warm lighting through candles or fairy lights. Add cozy textures with plush blankets, cushions and rugs.

Create a playlist of soothing, festive music to evoke a sense



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of relaxation. Consider incorporating natural elements like pinecones, evergreen branches or seasonal flowers to bring the beauty of nature indoors.

Don't forget to fill your home with cozy, wonderful aromas. While candles can provide scents, so can more natural options such as simmering potpourri on the stovetop, baking an apple pie, putting out fresh greenery

with orange pomander balls.

HYGGE-FRIENDLY ACTIVITIES

Engage in activities that promote relaxation and togetherness. Enjoy a cup of hot cocoa or tea while curling up with a good book or watching a holiday movie with loved ones. Embrace the art of slow cooking by preparing comforting meals together or bak-

ing seasonal treats.

Engage in mindful practices such as meditation, journaling or expressing gratitude to cultivate a sense of contentment and well-being.

The holiday season offers an opportunity to strengthen bonds with family and friends. Foster meaningful connections by engaging in activities that promote togetherness and genuine conversa-

tion. Arrange game nights, craft sessions or cozy gatherings around a fireplace. Disconnect from technology and be present in the moment, cherishing the company of loved ones.

Spend time outdoors — especially if you live somewhere that gets snow. Dress warmly and go cross-country skiing or snowshoeing. Take the family sledding. Breathe in the crispness of the cold air and let the fresh air melt away your stress.

EMBRACE SELF-CARE

Amid the holiday rush, set aside time for self-care to maintain balance and reduce stress. Carve out time for activities that nourish your mind, body and spirit. Engage in gentle exercise, practice mindfulness or indulge in a self-care routine that includes warm baths or pampering sessions. Allow yourself moments of solitude and reflection to recharge and find inner peace.

While hygge has become trendy in the United States over the past several years, it is important to emphasize that it isn't just another decorating aesthetic or something to get stressed about establishing with long to-do lists or checklists. Rather, it is a feeling, a commitment to well-being and having a deeper appreciation for life's joys in the simplest of moments.

Embrace hygge this holiday season and discover the transformative power of cozy contentment.

Stay Healthy and Thriving

Will you be heading over the river and through the woods to grandmother's house this holiday?

While cars, trains and planes have mostly replaced the horse-drawn sleigh of the traditional holiday song, it's the time of year when many people embark on journeys to reunite with loved ones and celebrate the time off that holidays afford.

However, travel can take a toll on our well-being. No one wants to spend the holiday sick, so it's worth the extra effort to take care of one's health while traveling. From managing jet lag to boosting immunity, here are some simple strategies to help you maintain your well-being and make the most of your holiday travel experience.

PREPARE YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM

Boosting your immune system before and during your travels helps you stay healthy.

Start by getting adequate sleep, maintaining a balanced diet and staying hydrated in the days leading up to your trip. Consider incorporating immune-boosting foods and supplements, such as vitamin C and zinc, into your routine.

Additionally, practice good hygiene by washing your hands frequently, using hand sanitizers and avoiding contact with sick people.

Boosting your immune sys-



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tem increases your body's defenses against germs and reduces the risk of falling ill.

BEAT JET LAG

Traveling across different time zones can disrupt your sleep patterns and leave you feeling fatigued. To minimize the effects of jet lag, gradually adjust your sleep schedule a few days before your trip to align with your destination's time zone.

During the flight, stay hydrated, avoid excessive caf-

feine and alcohol and try to sleep or rest based on your destination's local time.

Upon arrival, expose yourself to natural sunlight to help reset your internal clock. If necessary, use over-the-counter melatonin or seek medical advice for specific strategies to manage jet lag that fit your needs.

STAY ACTIVE

Traveling often involves long periods of sitting, whether in planes, trains or cars. Counteract the sedentary

nature of travel by injecting physical activity into your itinerary. Take breaks during your journey to stretch and walk around whenever possible. If flying, perform simple exercises while seated, such as leg stretches or shoulder rolls. Once you've arrived, make time for physical activities that fit you, whether that is walking, hiking or practicing yoga.

Regular exercise improves blood circulation and boosts energy levels while enhancing overall well-being during your

holiday travels.

SELF-CARE

Balance the busy holiday season with rest and self-care. Make time in your travel schedule to relax and rejuvenate. Take short breaks to unwind, practice deep breathing or meditation and engage in activities that bring you joy and peace. Adequate rest and self-care help reduce stress levels, support mental well-being and strengthen your resilience during this holiday season.

Intentional Choices for Holiday Eating

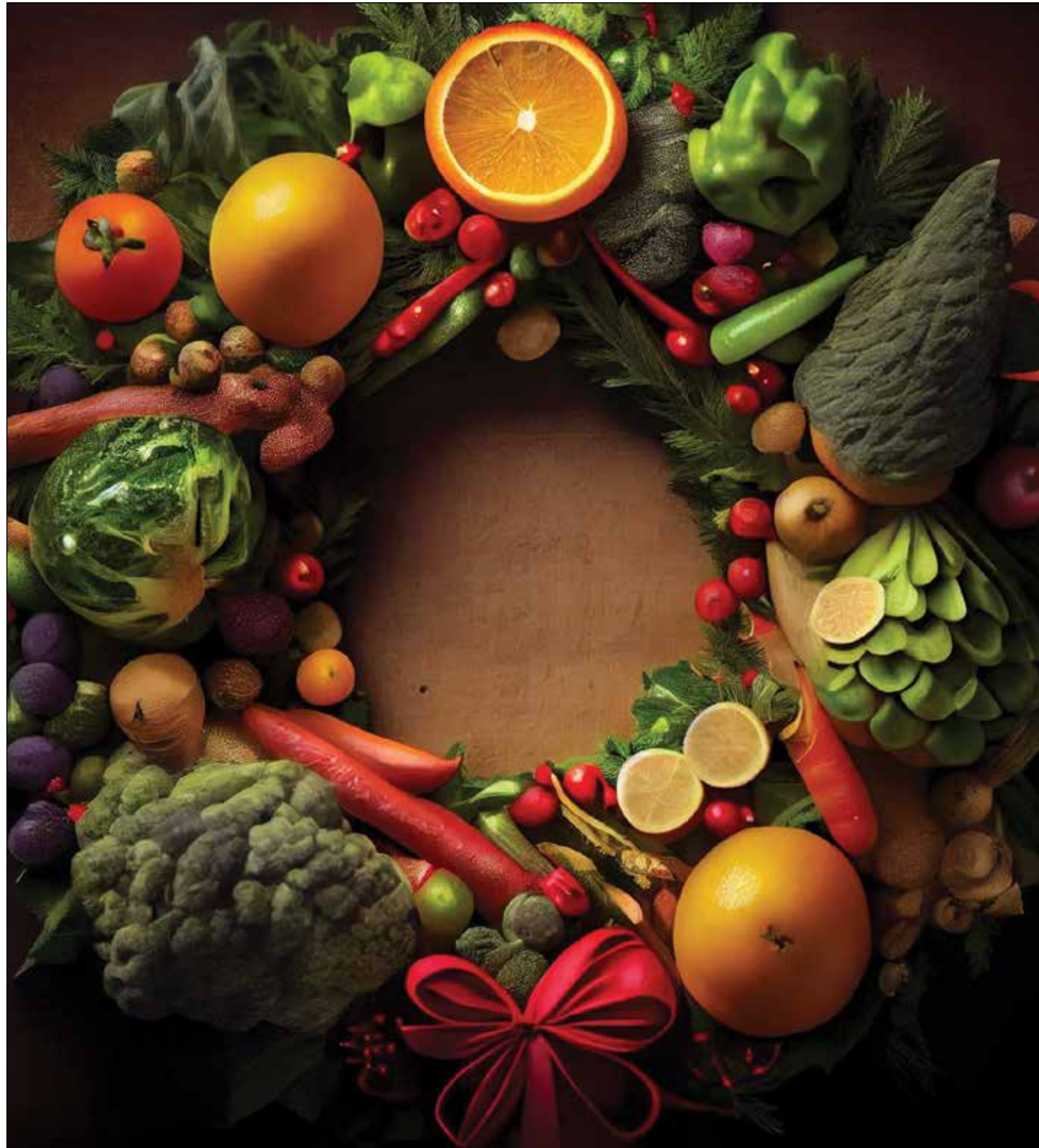
The holiday season is filled with an abundance of delicious treats and festive feasts.

Too often, we enter into a mindset of deprivation, telling ourselves we can't have anything if we want to stay healthy and then splurging and over-indulging when faced with those delectable once-a-year goodies. The thing is, the anxiety is often unfounded. According to a 2015 study by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, people actually gain little to no weight between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day, even when making no effort to control their weight.

Adopting a mindful approach to indulgence can let you savor the holiday flavors without compromising your health goals. Instead, avoid deprivation, savor each indulgence and foster a healthy relationship with food during the holidays.

Sarah Hays Coomer, a Mayo Clinic health coach, told Forbes Magazine, "Make a list of indulgences that you really love, that make you feel good and that you want more of. Make sure you have those in the pipeline throughout the holidays. If you build it in and you know it's there and that you're allowed to have it, then there's not 'I'll eat now and have none tomorrow.'"

Focusing on intentional



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indulgences lets us make thoughtful choices about what and how much we consume. It's important to shift our mindset from "all or nothing" to one of moderation and self-care.

POWER OF MINDFUL EATING

Mindful eating encourages us to engage all our senses and be fully present with our food. Instead of mindlessly devouring indulgent treats, take a

moment to pause and appreciate each bite. When selecting what to indulge in, be discerning and choose your favorites—the foods that truly bring you joy.

Slow down and savor the fla-

vors, textures and aromas. Pay attention to your body's signals of satisfaction — trust your gut instinct, literally. This lets you better gauge when you are truly full and avoid overeating. Mindful eating lets us connect with our food, fostering a sense of gratitude and pleasure without guilt.

POWER OF CHOICE

During the holidays—and all year round—it's important not to feel deprived. Restricting ourselves too much can lead to feelings of resentment and ultimately result in overindulgence. By consciously selecting our indulgences, we can strike a balance between enjoyment and maintaining our health goals.

Take the time to choose what you genuinely desire and let go of any guilt associated with those choices. Whether it's one of Grandpa's famous snickerdoodles or a festive holiday cocktail, allow yourself to savor the experience without judgment. By honoring our cravings in moderation, we can create a positive relationship with food and fully embrace the joy of the season.

Approach food with kindness and compassion, focusing on nourishing our bodies and nurturing our souls. Instead of fixating on calories or restrictions, shift the focus to the quality and enjoyment of our indulgences.

The holidays are about more than just food. They're about cherished memories, shared laughter and creating lasting memories.

Embrace Mindful Moments

Incorporate a mindfulness advent calendar into your daily routine as a way of infusing the season with a renewed sense of gratitude and present-moment awareness.

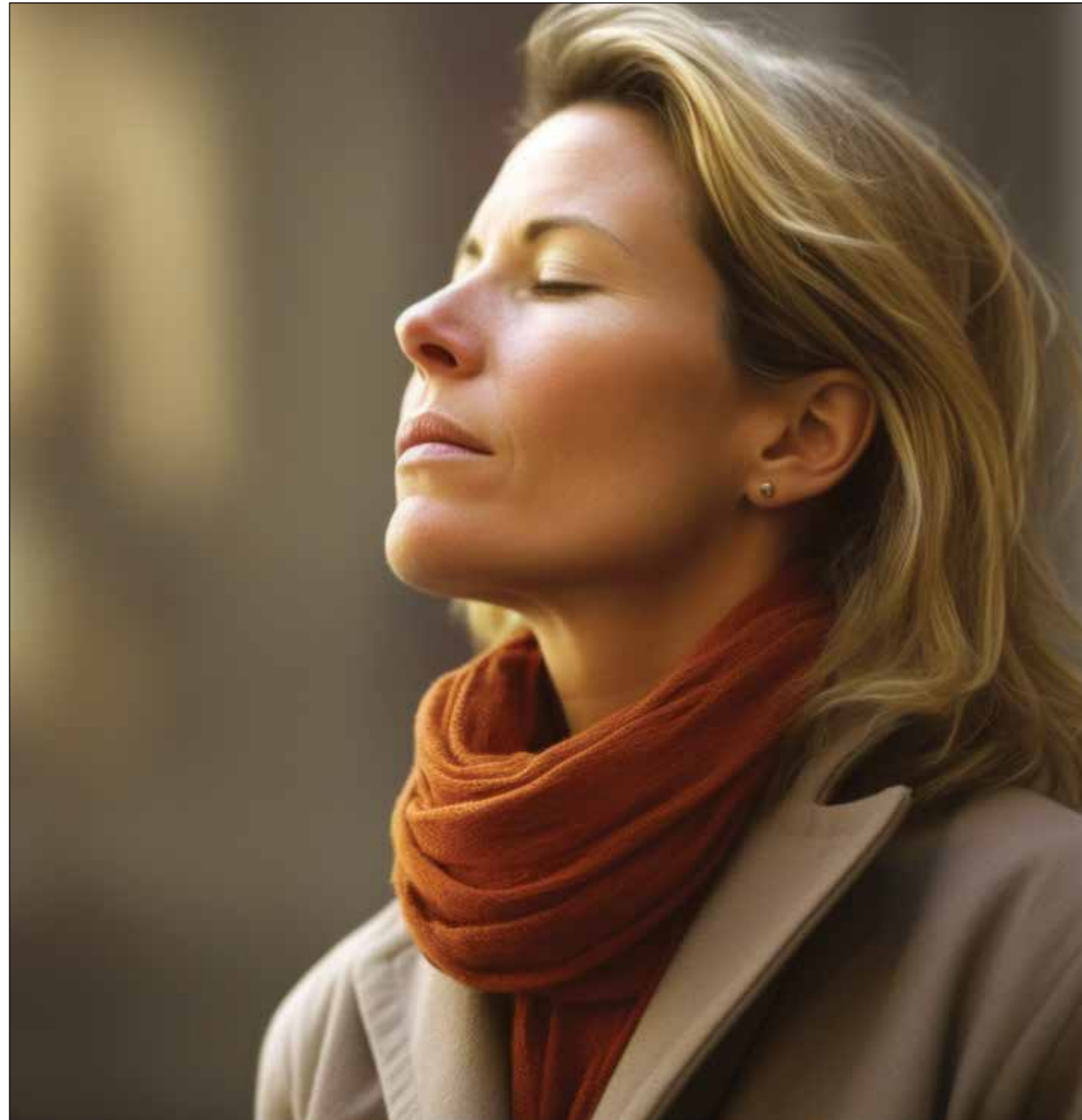
It's all too easy during the holidays to get caught up in the whirlwind of preparations and festivities, but creating a daily mindfulness practice can promote well-being and serenity throughout the holiday season.

BENEFITS OF MINDFULNESS

The National Institutes of Health report that being mindful can contribute to good health. They cite evidence that it reduces anxiety and depression, lowers your blood pressure, improves sleep and helps people cope with pain. Being mindful also helps people develop healthier habits.

Mindfulness is the practice of intentionally focusing on the present moment without judgment. It involves being fully present and aware of our thoughts, feelings and surroundings.

By cultivating mindfulness, we can reduce stress, enhance emotional well-being and foster a deeper sense of grati-



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tude. During the holidays, it can allow us to fully appreciate the joys and blessings even amid all the stress of trying to make everything happen.

CREATING A CALENDAR

A mindfulness advent calendar is a daily practice that introduces moments of mind-

fulness into your holiday routine. Start by designing a calendar with 24 or 25 days, beginning on Dec. 1 and counting down to Christmas Day.

There are many different forms your calendar can take. You can purchase cards on sites such as Etsy that provide holiday mindfulness activities.

You can write out 25 activities and put them in a jar that you pull out each day.

Search for "Mindfulness Advent Calendar" on Google and look at the images results for inspiration on ways you can design your calendar. This is also a great way to generate ideas on what to put on each

of the cards or calendar doors.

ACTIVITIES

Each day, set aside a few minutes for a specific mindfulness practice or challenge. These can include guided meditation, mindful breathing exercises, journaling reflections on gratitude, engaging in acts of kindness or savoring moments of sensory delight, such as enjoying a cup of tea or observing the beauty of nature.

Engage your senses mindfully, savoring the taste of holiday treats or appreciating the beauty of decorations. Volunteer for a charitable cause, spreading love and compassion during the season. Take a moment to reach out to a loved one and give them the gift of your focus and attention.

FAMILY MINDFULNESS

Involve your family in the mindfulness advent calendar to create shared moments of reflection and connection.

Encourage children to participate in age-appropriate activities such as mindful coloring or storytelling. Engage in thoughtful conversations during meals, encouraging everyone to share what they appreciate about each other or their favorite holiday memories.

Explore nature together, taking mindful walks or enjoying outdoor activities. Fostering mindfulness as a family lets you cultivate a deeper sense of togetherness and creates lasting memories.

Outdoor Winter Activities

The winter holiday season offers a unique opportunity to embrace the beauty of the outdoors while staying active and healthy.

Instead of hibernating indoors, why not step outside and enjoy the wonders of winter. There are many fun and active outdoor winter activities that can be enjoyed during the holiday season from ice skating to snowshoeing and sledding to skiing, these activities will keep you fit and allow you to revel in the enchantment of the winter wonderland.

Dress in layers to regulate body temperature. Wear appropriate footwear and consider using hand and toe warmers. Stay hydrated, even if you don't feel thirsty. Apply sunscreen as UV rays are potent even in the winter. Always inform someone about your outdoor plans and go with a partner. Stay aware of weather conditions and watch for signs of hypothermia or frostbite.

ICE SKATING

Glide through the magic of winter. Ice skating is a classic winter activity that combines exhilaration and grace. Lace up your skates and head to the nearest ice rink or frozen



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pond. Many cities where it never snows still provide outdoor ice rinks.

Ice skating provides a full-body workout, engaging your leg muscles, core and balance. Gather your loved ones and create lasting memories while twirling on the ice.

Remember to dress warmly and wear appropriate protective gear. Follow safety guidelines. Make sure the ice is solid if you are skating on a lake or pond.

SNOWSHOEING AND WINTER HIKING

Snowshoeing allows you to immerse yourself in the tranquil beauty of winter landscapes. Strap on a pair of snowshoes and venture onto snowy trails, forests or mountainsides.

This low-impact activity offers a fantastic cardiovascular workout while strengthening your leg muscles. Snowshoeing is suitable for all fitness levels and you can

adjust the intensity to match your preferences and abilities. It's an opportunity to connect with nature, relieve stress and experience the solitude and serenity nature has to offer.

Winter hiking provides a refreshing twist to a beloved outdoor activity. Bundle up in layers, don sturdy boots and set out to explore winter trails.

Winter hiking challenges your cardiovascular system and strengthens your muscles, all while enjoying the tran-

quility of winter scenery. Ensure you have the proper gear, including warm clothing, trekking poles for stability and traction devices for slippery conditions. Check weather conditions and trail safety before embarking on your adventure.

SLEDDING

Embrace your inner child—or take an actual child with you—and relive the exhilaration of sledding down snowy slopes. Grab a sled or toboggan and find a nearby hill or designated sledding area.

Sledding is a fantastic way to engage your core muscles, improve balance and enjoy an adrenaline rush. Remember to choose a safe sledding location, free from obstacles and with a gentle incline. Use a sled with proper safety features and always supervise young children.

SKIING

Whether you're a beginner or an experienced skier, the winter holidays provide ample opportunities to strap on the skis and go downhill or cross-country skiing. Skiing challenges your entire body, working your legs, core and upper body muscles while improving balance and coordination.

Take lessons if you're new to skiing and gradually progress to more challenging trails as your skills advance. Remember to wear appropriate ski attire, including a helmet and always follow safety guidelines.