

healthhappiness&harmony



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Did you know?

Peanut butter is a nutritious food that can be served in sandwiches, as a dip or as an ingredient for flavorful sauces. Peanut butter also can be enjoyed by the spoonful right out of the container. Peanut plants are rather interesting. Unlike many plants, the peanut flowers form above ground, but the fruit - the peanuts - grow below the soil by the roots. Peanuts do not grow on trees and really aren't nuts at all. They're actually legumes. The National Peanut Board says that it takes about 540 peanuts to make a 12-ounce jar of peanut butter. The world's largest peanut butter factory can produce 25,000 jars each day. That means millions of peanuts must be harvested and transformed to create those delicious jars of creamy and crunchy peanut butter.



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How to improve flexibility

Static stretches at the end of a workout can help lengthen muscles that may have tightened during strength training sessions.

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Many men and women become less flexible as they get older. That loss of flexibility can make performing everyday tasks more difficult while also increasing the risk of injury when working out. Fortunately, there are many steps men and women can take to improve their flexibility.

■ Embrace dynamic stretching before a workout. Static stretching was once the rage, but research has indicated that static stretching is not as beneficial as people once thought. Static stretching is a blanket term used to describe several techniques that stretch muscles while a body is at rest. When a person is performing a static stretch,

done while a body is moving. Push-ups, squats and lunges are just a few examples of dynamic stretching techniques, and these exercises can warm up your body and prepare it for the workout to come.

■ Reconfigure your workout. When you want to improve flexibility, it's beneficial to examine your existing workout routine. Are you lifting as much weight as possible during your strength training workout but don't really know why? If building muscle mass is not your goal, you can probably improve your flexibility by lifting less weight. Lifting less weight

he or she gradually lengthens the muscle until it reaches an elongated position, which is then held for 30 seconds or more. But recent research has indicated that static stretching is not as effective before a workout as dynamic stretching, which are stretching exercises

can be a great way to tone your muscles, and you won't be sacrificing the benefits associated with strength training.

■ Drink water. Properly hydrated muscles are more capable of responding to flexibility training than poorly hydrated muscles. Make an effort to drink more water throughout the day, and bring your own water with you to the gym so you can stay hydrated during your workouts.

■ Find ways to unwind. Your workout may not be the culprit behind your inflexibility. Stress can cause muscles to tighten, and it also increases your risk for a host of ailments, including heart disease and stroke. If your workout routine is already one that promotes flexibility but you are still dealing with tightness, then you might be falling victim to stress. If that's the case, find time to alleviate that stress throughout the day, whether it's taking a relaxing walk during your lunch break or embracing yoga at the end of a long day.

■ Perform static stretches at the end of your workout. Static stretches may be ineffective and contribute to injury at the beginning of workout, but that does not mean they can't help you improve flexibility once your workout is complete. Static stretches at the end of a workout can help you lengthen muscles that might have lost some of their flexibility during strength training.

Men and women who can't seem to improve their flexibility no matter what they do may benefit from working with a professional trainer or discussing their concerns with their physicians.

Forget fad diets and focus on health**(Family Features)**

If you recently committed to managing your weight or dieting, it may be time to change your approach. For long-term results, ditch fad dieting and adopt a balanced approach to eating with a focus on healthy foods.

Being healthy isn't just about fitting into skinny jeans. According to a recent national survey, there are many reasons why women consider dieting: 68 percent want to improve their health, 51 percent want to look their best, and 39 percent want to have more energy.

With these goals in mind, it may not come as a surprise that survey participants reported being on an average of nine diets in their lifetimes. In fact, 76 percent of American women who have dieted admit to having tried a fad diet.

However, nearly two out of three women believe fad diets are difficult to maintain. What's more, these diets may even be unhealthy, according to the Weight-control Information Network (WIN).

Some fad diets fail to provide your body with the nutrients your body needs. In addition, sustained rapid weight loss can increase your risk of gallbladder problems, and heart problems can result from consuming too few calories for too long.

To maintain a healthy weight and healthier lifestyle, the experts at WIN suggest focusing on establishing these healthy habits:

■ Choose healthy foods, with a diet rich in fruits and veggies.

■ Manage calorie intake and portion size. Keep on track by using a smaller plate, paying close attention to nutrition labels and weighing portions on a scale.

■ Make exercise part of your daily life. Even activities such as gardening or taking the stairs can make a difference.

Managing your metabolism - how your body uses calories - is another key to healthy eating. Eating foods that deliver plenty of protein and fiber are all keys to maximizing your metabolism.

When it comes to healthy food, look for wholesome, nutritious options, even when you snack. For example, new Great Grains Granolas and The Bar Undone snack mixes are the first non-cereal Great Grains offerings. Made with less processed ingredients for more wholesome nutrition in every handful, each serving of Great Grains The Bar Undone snack mix has at least 8 grams of protein and 4 grams of fiber. One half-cup serving of new Great Grains Granola contains at least 26 grams of whole

grains.

"At Great Grains, we believe when it comes to healthy eating, the secret is, there is no secret," said Mangala D'Sa, Senior Director of Marketing for Post Foods. "A fad-free diet, complete with wholesome, nutritious foods is key to healthy eating."

A balanced approach to eating, coupled with a few lifestyle changes, are all the tools you need to succeed on your weight control quest. For more smart eating tips and recipes, visit www.great-grains.com.



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