



Nourish

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Fight Winter Stiffness with Smart Moves and Smart Meals



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Do you ever feel a little achy in the winter? Some people claim they can “feel” a storm coming. Whether their joints are weather predictors or not, one thing is certain: hibernating on the couch with movies and minimal movement doesn’t do our bodies any favors.

Stay Moving

Fitness experts recommend regular physical activity year-round. That means 30 minutes of moderate activity on most days.

Keeping your body in motion helps your joints stay flexible, strengthens your muscles and even helps you stay warmer. If you head outdoors, dress in layers appropriate for the weather. In snowy areas, the smooth, gliding motion of cross-country skiing can be an enjoyable way to strengthen your heart and stay active. Go for a walk in a mall or gym, or join an exercise class.

Eat a Balanced, Varied Diet

We all want to maintain the ability to stay active throughout our lives. Here are some nutrition tips — supported by arthritis and general health research — to help support joint health and overall wellness:

- Aim for a balanced diet from all five food groups. Include two to three cups of fruits and two to three cups of vegetables daily. A hearty vegetable soup or a colorful casserole can be the perfect winter comfort food.
- Use lean meats such as poultry, lean beef and seafood instead of highly processed meats. These protein-rich foods help nourish your muscles and joints.
- Add more fish to your meals. Salmon and other fatty fish provide omega-3 fats that may help reduce inflammation.
- Avoid excess sugar. Candy bars and sweetened beverages may be tempting but can contribute to inflammation. Read and compare Nutrition Facts labels — “added sugars” must be listed.
- Choose whole grains such as oatmeal, brown rice and whole-grain breads rather than refined grains.
- Opt for low-fat dairy such as fat-free or low-fat milk, yogurt and cheese.
- Limit ultra-processed and fried foods. These items often contain trans fats and have very long ingredient lists.
- Cook more often from scratch using simple, minimally processed foods. Frozen or canned vegetables and fruits without added salt or sugar are excellent options. Budget-friendly ingredients such as dry beans, lentils, split peas and whole grains are easy to incorporate into winter meals.
- See www.ag.ndsu.edu/food for more resources and recipes.

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EXTENSION

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Question

I heard that consuming soup can help with weight management. Is that true?

Yes, soup is a good menu idea, especially during long, cold months. In a study reported in the journal “Appetite,” Pennsylvania State University researchers provided various types of soup followed by entrees to 35 women and 38 men. They wanted to see how soup consumption before a meal, which they termed a “soup preload,” affected the number of calories consumed by the participants in the overall meal.

They monitored how much food was eaten and asked the participants to rate the quality of the food and their own satiety. The researchers found that having soup before a meal can take the edge off your appetite. In fact, their research participants cut the total amount of calories they consumed by 20%, compared with participants who had no soup.

In other words, if weight maintenance or loss is a goal, consider having some soup, such as the fiber-rich recipe provided. Besides, January is National Soup Month, and it was established in 1986 – 40 years ago!



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This recipe is simple to assemble and ready to eat in under 30 minutes.



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Chicken Tortilla Soup

- 1 (14-ounce) bag whole-kernel corn, frozen
- 1 (15-ounce) can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 (15-ounce) can kidney or cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 (14.5-ounce) can no-sodium diced tomatoes
- 1 (4-ounce) can green chilies, chopped, drained
- 1 (14.5-ounce) can low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 (10-ounce) can chunked chicken, drained (or use 1 ½ cups cubed roasted chicken)
- 1 (10-ounce) can cheddar cheese soup (reduced fat and/or sodium)

Optional toppings: Crushed tortilla chips, shredded cheese, diced tomatoes or avocado slices

Open all the cans. Drain and rinse beans in a strainer. Place in a large pot on the stove and heat thoroughly.

Use leftovers to top baked potatoes, pasta or rice. Or freeze in meal-sized portions.

Makes 10 servings. Per serving: 170 calories, 4 grams (g) fat, 13 g protein, 22 g carbohydrate, 5 g fiber and 520 milligrams sodium

Meal idea: Chicken Tortilla Soup, side salad, whole-wheat roll, strawberries, fat-free or low-fat milk