



## Seasonal Flavors

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

**It's a smart idea to add more vegetables and fruit to your diet,** yet about 90% of Americans fall below the recommended intake for vegetables, and 80% don't eat enough fruit. Aim for two and a half cups of vegetables and two cups of fruit per day.

**When possible, choose vegetables and fruits that are in season,** which means they will likely cost less, and be nutrient-rich when you buy them, since they have not lost nutrients in transit from overseas. Here's a guide to buying vegetables and fruit in each season:



- **Winter:** Broccoli, cauliflower, leafy greens, citrus fruits and root vegetables, such as carrots, beets and turnips.

- **Spring:** Asparagus, peas, Swiss chard, rhubarb, radishes, leeks and lettuce.



- **Summer:** Berries, corn, cucumber, tomato, zucchini, peaches, cherries, melon and green beans.

- **Fall:** Apples, pears, butternut squash, pumpkin, sweet potato and Brussels sprouts.



**In the off-season when variety wanes,** head to the grocer's freezer for a wonderful assortment of vegetables and fruit. Frozen at the peak of ripeness, these items retain as many vitamins and minerals as fresh and sometimes more. Canned fruits and vegetables are also a good option, but try to find varieties without added sugar or salt.

**Ask the supermarket staff or the purveyors at the farmer's market** for ideas about how to prepare vegetables. If your usual diet isn't filled with produce, find ways to flavor your vegetables so you love the taste. You can add herbs, spices, salad dressing or grated cheese to bump up the flavor, and can experiment with raw, roasted, grilled, baked and stir-fried textures to see which you prefer.

**If you have a green thumb,** plant a small garden on your windowsill or in your backyard. Tomatoes, lettuce, herbs, zucchini, peas and cucumbers are among the easiest to grow.

## New Year's Health Check

**Hoping to achieve better wellness in the new year?** Move into 2022 by looking forward to strengthening your physical and mental health. This is where an annual exam can be vital for detection and prevention of medical problems.

**First, review and identify your primary goals,** such as weight loss, increased exercise, less stress and a more positive attitude. Some practical steps might include:

- Moving more and sitting less.
- Eating fruits and vegetables daily.
- Avoiding sweet beverages.
- Taking more time for self-care.
- Trying meditation.
- Avoiding eating out so much.
- Limiting screen time.
- Enjoying the outdoors.

Other changes critical to health include limiting alcohol and quitting smoking.

**A regular checkup can assess your overall health** — the frequency may depend on your age, typically starting by age 40. In a thorough physical exam, your health care provider will review your family medical history and current health risk factors; check your heart and respiration rate, blood pressure and other vital signs; and ensure your vaccinations are current.

**The exam might call for cancer screening, depending on your age and risk factors.** For men, a testicular cancer check and a prostate exam are important. Women may require a pelvic exam, a Pap smear and a mammogram (frequency varies).

**Make the most of this valuable health care benefit.** Come to your checkup with a list of concerns and questions, and the reassurance of spending time with a trusted health professional that is focused on your health and how to maintain it.

**Note:** Your annual checkup might include virtual options, such as a phone or video call.



# Wheelchair Workouts

Using a wheelchair needn't keep you from pursuing physical activities — and staying mobile is essential to your health and enjoyment of life. Regular exercise will help preserve or build muscle strength so you can do everyday tasks more easily. And it helps reduce your risk for heart trouble and weight gain, while it eases depression and anxiety.



**Just getting started?** Focus on upper-body strengthening. **Here are two simple exercises to get you motivated:**

**Ball squeeze** — Sitting up straight in your chair, hold a medicine ball or basketball up to your chest. The more you squeeze the ball, the harder you will be working your chest and arm muscles. Push the ball out in front of you until your elbows are nearly straight, and continue to squeeze the ball for a count of five. Moving slowly, repeat ten times.



**Knee rise** — With your feet flat on the ground or flat on your footplate, slowly lift one of your legs as far as you can comfortably manage and bend your knee back toward you. Hold that pose for five seconds. Then lower your foot and repeat the exercise with your other leg; do ten times with each leg.

**Alternate your activities to avoid overuse injuries**, particularly neck and shoulder pain. You might also check out online workouts and try calming yoga sessions. Before starting any new physical activities check with your health care provider; consider working with a physical therapist.

**Weekly activity goals for adults with disabilities:**

1. Aim for 150 minutes of moderate-intensity cardiovascular activity with each session lasting for at least ten minutes.
2. Do two or more sessions of moderate- or high-intensity strength-training activities involving all major muscle groups.

**If you cannot meet these guidelines**, aim for regular physical activity according to your ability and avoid inactivity whenever possible.

# Fiber Supplements: Do You Need Them?

By Elizabeth Smoots, MD



**Most Americans don't get enough fiber. Adults typically eat ten to 15 grams of fiber per day.** But the Institute of Medicine recommends adults under age 50 consume 38 grams daily for men, or 25 grams for women. After age 50, 30 grams for men or 21 grams for women are recommended.

**Food is the best way to get more fiber.** Supplements don't provide the vitamins and minerals contained in food. Excellent high-fiber foods include vegetables, fruits and legumes. Whole grains, nuts and seeds are good sources, too. In contrast, refined foods, such as white bread, pasta and juice, are much lower in fiber than unprocessed whole foods.

**Some people may need a supplement** if food is inadequate. First check with your health care provider since fiber supplements may interact with your medications or health conditions. Start them in small amounts and drink ample liquids to reduce gas.

## Q: How to cope with return-to-work anxiety?

**A:** If you've been away from the workplace while working remotely, coming back can be a big adjustment. **Here are some things to keep in mind:**

- Accept your feelings. Even if you're happy to see your coworkers again, it's normal to be anxious, too.
- Address any concerns about COVID-19 risks. Ask your employer what health measures they are taking.
- Consider how your schedule will be impacted. If you commuted before switching to remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic, allowing extra time for travel may take some adjustment.
- Explore flexible options. Perhaps you can work remotely for part of the week.
- Synchronize your sleep schedule in advance. Make sure you'll be alert and refreshed during your work hours.

— Eric Endlich, PhD



**Note:** Due to production lead time, this issue may not reflect the current COVID-19 situation in some or all regions of the U.S. For the most up-to-date information visit [coronavirus.gov](https://www.coronavirus.gov).

The **Smart Moves Toolkit**, including this issue's printable download, **Overcome Your Exercise Plateau**, is at [personalbest.com/extras/22V1tools](https://personalbest.com/extras/22V1tools).



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