

The Buzz



FITNESS DURING THE HOLIDAYS

With all the gift shopping, party planning, and general hustle & bustle of this time of year it can be difficult to find time to do anything but the bare essentials. Add to that the colder weather and shorter days, and many of us just want to stay in and start hibernating. It can be difficult to keep fitness a priority during the winter. Here are some ways to help you stay on track this holiday season.

Move your workouts indoors. If you've been running or biking outdoors all summer, you can keep that up during the winter in other ways. Try the treadmill, stair climber or stationary bikes. These machines can also be used to conduct High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT). HIIT is a great way to not only keep up your cardio conditioning but all build muscle and burn fat.

[One study](#) found that after two-weeks of HIIT women of all ages were able to build skeletal muscle & improve aerobic capacity. Here is an [8-minute HIIT workout](#) for the treadmill from [Self Magazine](#) for you to try.

If you are a member of [Mansfield Community Center](#) or [UConn's Recreational Facility](#) and don't like these machines, you can try swimming or running the indoor track.

Try something new with a class. In addition to the treadmills and weights, many fitness centers offer classes in things like Yoga, TRX, boot camps and more. Just their websites for the monthly schedule.

Look outside a tradition fitness center. There are many local martial arts centers that offer a range of styles and classes, including cardio kickboxing and

Tai Chi. If that is not your thing, what about dancing. Zumba is popular and offered at dance studios like [Dance Express of Tolland](#) and [the Mansfield Academy of Dance](#) (MAD).

MAD even offers adult tap, adult ballet, traditional & aerial yoga. If you have never heard of aerial yoga it uses soft fabric hammocks to allow you to refine and advance traditional yoga poses and it is also offered at [Super Future Fitness](#).



No gym membership? Don't worry. You can work out at home with body-weight exercises. These are the type of exercises that do not require anything more than your own body to complete, no dumbbells, barbells or any special equipment. Some examples are planks, push-ups, squats, and lunges. These can take as little as 10 to 15 minutes, so you can do anywhere and anytime. [Joe DiBernardo](#) is a former NFL linebacker turned Primal Health Coach/personal trainer, developed this simple, [quick, full-body workout](#) that you can try. There are also a lot of other of fitness expert and YouTube videos you can find that will provide great workouts.

Embrace winter sports. Activities like snowboarding, ice skating and cross-country skiing are great ways to burn calories, build muscle mass, and have fun while you're at it. They can be a new challenge that get you out of your comfort zone and exploring new fitness options.

Maybe you are happy with your current

fitness routine and have no interest in trying something new. That is great, keep it up!

Just be sure to be safe and prepare for the weather. Here are some tips:

- When the air gets colder, it also get dryer so remember to hydrate.
- Wear lotion and lip balm with SPF, as the snow can reflect up to [80 percent of UV rays](#).
- Wear layers.

Base Layer: Wicking fabric to keep your skin dry.

Insulating Layer: Fleece or wool, vest or shirt to be added or removed depending on how cold you feel.

Windproof and Water-Resistant Outer Layer: A jacket, to keep out the elements.

Don't forget your head: Hats reduce the amount of body heat that escapes

Gloves or mittens: Gloves are a great option; mittens allow your fingers to sit next to each other, increasing warmth and circulation

Other Tips:

If you are having problems blocking out 45 minutes/an hour for a workout. Try exercising for 10-15 minutes 2-3 times a day can be just as beneficial.

Sneaking in physical activity while you are at work can help you be more active. Try standing for a little while rather than sitting, deliver the message in person rather than sending an email or making a phone call, try a few push-ups off your desk, or knee-lifts while sitting.

HAPPENINGS AROUND TOWN

[Artists' Open Studio](#) - Multiple locations, Saturday & Sunday, December 2nd & 3rd, 10am-5pm.

[The Fifth Annual Winter Welcome](#) - Saturday, December 2nd, Storrs Center. Events are happening all day including Stuff-A-Cruiser toy donation.

[Ugly Sweater 5K Run](#) - Saturday, December 9th, 11am. Bushnell Park, Hartford Saturday.

[A Winter Stroll, Bike or Scoot Along](#) - Sunday, December 17, 1pm- 2:30pm. St. James School on Route 12, Danielson. Free.

[Ellington Farmers' Market Holiday Extravaganza](#) - Saturday, December 16th, 2-4 PM at the YMCA, 11 Pinney St., Ellington. Locally produced items including farm products, seafood, baked goods, specialty foods, home & body products, pet treats & toys.

[Chanukah in Tolland](#) - Monday, December 18th, 6pm. Tolland Town Green.

[Scrooge Scramble 5K Run](#) - Monday, December 25th, 10:30am, Cornerstone Foundation Prospect and School St, Rockville, donations requested.



Sources: ConnPRIG, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Prevent Blindness.org, KidsHealth.org, Journal of Applied Physiology, Skin Cancer Foundation, Self Magazine, Primaljoe.com

Healthier Sugar Cut-Out Cookies - click link for nutrition information

Ingredients:

2 C all-purpose flour, plus more if needed	½ cup PLUS 1 tbsp granulated sugar
2/3 C white whole-wheat flour*	1 large egg
1½ tsp baking powder	Finely grated zest of 1 medium lemon
¼ tsp salt	¼ cup PLUS 1 tbsp honey
½ C canola or corn oil	2½ tsp vanilla extract
4 tbsp unsalted butter, slightly softened	½ tsp almond extract or lemon extract

Directions

1. Whisk all-purpose flour, whole-wheat flour, baking powder & salt together in a medium bowl. Beat oil, butter, granulated sugar, egg & lemon zest in a mixing bowl with an electric mixer on low speed until well blended. Beat in honey, vanilla and almond (or lemon) extract until evenly incorporated.

2. With the mixer on low speed, then medium speed, beat about half the flour mixture into the wet ingredients until incorporated. Beat in the remaining flour mixture until just incorporated.

3. Divide the dough into thirds. Place 1/3 on a 12-inch-long sheet of parchment paper & shape into a disk. Top with a second sheet of parchment. Roll the dough out between the parchment into an 8-inch circle about ¼ inch thick. Place the dough in the paper on a baking sheet. Repeat with the remaining dough. Freeze on the baking sheet until cold & firm, at least 30 minutes and up to 1 day.

4. Position a rack in middle of oven; preheat to 350°F. Line a large baking sheet(s) with parchment paper.

5. Working with one portion of dough at a time, remove from the freezer. Remove the top sheet of parchment and cut out cookies with 2½ - to 3-inch cookie cutters. Transfer to a prepared baking sheet with a wide, thin spatula, spacing about 1½ inches apart. Repeat with the remaining dough.

6. Bake the cookies on the center rack, one pan at a time, until browned on the bottom, 6 to 12 minutes. Let stand for 5 minutes, then transfer to wire racks to cool.

* White whole-wheat flour has the same nutritional value as whole-wheat flour. Available at large supermarkets & natural-foods stores and online at bobsredmill.com or kingarthurfLOUR.com. Store it in the freezer.



December is Safe Toys & Gifts Awareness Month



For the 32nd year, the non-profit, non-partisan research and advocacy group ConnPIRG has been distributing the "[Trouble in Toyland](#)" report. This focuses on toys that have been recalled, contain dangerous chemicals, or pose a choking hazard to children. This year the report shows a growing concern about items that are not toys at all. These include things like hoverboards, balloons, dishes and magnets.

According to the [U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission](#) the U.S. had 251,800 toy related injuries in 2015, with 44% of the injuries to the head and face area. An estimated 84,400 of all toy-related injuries(34 %) happened to children younger than 5 years of age.

[Prevent Blindness](#) and [KidsHealth](#) offers tips on how to purchase safe toys for kids:

- Always dispose of uninflated or broken balloons immediately.

- Avoid toys that shoot or include parts that fly off.
- Consider whether other smaller children may be in the home that may have access to the toy.
- Avoid purchasing toys with sharp or rigid points, spikes, rods, or dangerous edges.
- Look for the letters "ASTM." This designation means the product meets the national safety standards set by ASTM International.
- Magnets, like those found in building sets and other toys, can be extremely harmful if swallowed.
- Don't give toys with small parts to young children. Young kids tend to put things in their mouths, increasing the risk of chok-

ing. If any part of a toy can fit in a toilet paper roll, the toy is not appropriate for children under the age of 3.

- Do not purchase toys with long strings or cords, especially for infants and very young children as these can become wrapped around a child's neck.

Be Well is an employee wellness program provided through the Eastern Highlands Health District with funding from The CT Department of Health. The goal of the program is to make the healthy choice the easy choice.

