

## Tune-Up! {The Importance of Your Annual Physical}

**We often take** our bodies for granted. However, just like your car, tune-ups (your yearly physical) help to keep your machine (you!) running well and nip any problems in the bud.



Your annual physical exam is a form of benchmarking. It allows your doctor and you to review all the pertinent aspects of your health history and use the data to coordinate a personalized care plan for you.

**The history of present illness** defines any immediate and current concerns. The past history reviews previous illness and how those problems may affect your current and future health. A family history presents genetic data which may affect you and your loved ones in the future. It updates your physician on what changes have occurred in your family's health that may affect you.

**Your social history** looks at your school and employment history as well as lifestyle choices. Are you working with industrial toxins or in a field prone to certain predictable and preventable disease? Are you smoking? How much alcohol is in your diet? Are you partaking in physical exercise? Are you in a stable relationship? All of these factors influence your health and choices.

**It is also a great time** to review your allergies and medications, both prescription and over the counter as well as vitamins, minerals, herbs and supplements.

**Last but not least**, consider vaccinations and immunizations. Are you current on tetanus shots? Do you know about the pneumonia vaccine and zostavax for shingles? Have you had your eyes checked for glaucoma? When did you last see a dentist? What about skin checks, colonoscopies, mammograms, pap smears and bone densitometry? The history session ends with a complete review of all your body systems. By asking a

laundry list of questions, your provider hopes to jog your memory to discuss all those little items you meant to ask about but may have forgotten to bring up.

**The findings of the exam**, coupled with the history session, will determine which laboratory tests, if any, your physician will choose to order. The complete exam should be followed by a consultative review session during which your doctor explains the findings of your history, exam, and lab work. A care plan should be established at that session and a defined follow-up plan suggested and scheduled.

During your physical exam the doctor is learning a great deal about you. He or she is seeing you while you are healthy. It is much easier to diagnose a problem if you have had the opportunity to see someone when everything is normal. This knowledge of your normal appearance is what allows your doctor to find a problem in its initial stages rather than a crisis requiring a visit to a hospital emergency department. Find a doctor. Schedule your yearly checkups. If you find a physician you trust and respect, stick with them.

**It just may save your life.**

# September Is National Yoga Month

If you've been wondering what the 16 million Americans who go to yoga classes are up to, the website, [www.yogamonth.org](http://www.yogamonth.org), will guide you to nearby studios that are offering free classes, free weekly passes or special events this month. And if you have sampled some yoga, this might be a good time to take it deeper.

## Yoga for Flexibility

Yoga poses work by stretching your muscles. They can help you move better and feel less stiff or tired. At any level of yoga, you'll probably start to notice benefits soon. In one study, people improved their flexibility by up to 35% after only eight weeks of yoga.

## Strike a Pose for Strength

Some styles of yoga, such as ashtanga and power yoga, are very physical. Practicing one of these styles will help you improve muscle tone. Many of the poses, such as downward dog, upward dog, and the plank pose build upper-body strength. The standing poses, especially if you hold them for several long breaths, build strength in your hamstrings, quadriceps and abs. Poses that strengthen the lower back include upward dog and the chair pose. When done right, nearly all poses build core strength in the deep abdominal muscles.

## Better Posture From Yoga

When you're stronger and more flexible, your posture improves. Most standing and sitting poses develop core strength, since you need your core muscles to support and maintain each pose. With a stronger core, you're more likely to sit and stand "tall."

## Less Stress, More Calm

You may feel less stressed and more relaxed after doing some yoga. Some yoga styles use meditation techniques that help calm the mind. Focusing on your breathing during yoga can do that, too.

## Good for Your Heart

Yoga has long been known to lower blood pressure and slow the heart rate. A slower heart rate can benefit people with high blood pressure or heart disease, and people who've had a stroke. It has also been linked to lower cholesterol and better immune system function. Stretch out of your comfort zone and give it a try!

*(article courtesy of WebMD)*

## Recipe: Peach Crisp



### Ingredients

8 ripe peaches, peeled, pitted and sliced  
Juice from 1 lemon (about 3 tablespoons)  
1/3 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg  
1/2 cup whole-wheat flour  
1/4 cup packed dark brown sugar  
2 tablespoons trans fat-free margarine, cut into thin slices  
1/4 cup quick-cooking oats (uncooked)

### Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 375 F. Lightly coat a 9-inch pie pan with cooking spray.
2. Arrange peach slices in the prepared pie plate. Sprinkle with lemon juice, cinnamon and nutmeg.
3. In a small bowl, whisk together flour and brown sugar. With your fingers, crumble the margarine into the flour-sugar mixture. Add the uncooked oats and stir to mix evenly. Sprinkle the flour mixture on top of the peaches.
4. Bake until peaches are soft and the topping is browned, about 30 minutes. Cut into 8 even slices and serve warm.

NUTRITION INFORMATION (1 serving | makes 8 servings) 152 calories | 3 g protein | 26 g carbohydrates | 3 g dietary fiber  
41 mg sodium | 2 g total fat | 4 g sugar

