

Wellness Advocate



Balance Is a Beautiful Thing

Another year has flown by and the holiday season is here. This time of year presents a dizzying array of demands—parties, shopping, baking, cleaning and entertaining, just to name a few. But with some practical tips, you can minimize the stress that accompanies the holidays. It's all about staying balanced and focusing on what really matters.

Tips for Keeping the Holidays In Perspective

- 1. Reach out.** If you feel lonely or isolated, seek out community, religious or other social events. Volunteering your time to help others also is a good way to lift your spirits and broaden your friendships.
- 2. Be realistic.** The holidays don't have to be perfect or just like last year. As families change and grow, traditions and rituals often change as well. Choose a few to hold on to and be open to creating new ones.
- 3. Stick to a budget.** Before you go gift and food shopping, decide how much money you can afford to spend. Then stick to your budget. Don't try to buy happiness with an avalanche of gifts.
- 4. Plan ahead.** Set aside specific days for shopping, baking, visiting friends and other activities. Plan your menus and then make your shopping list. That'll help prevent last-minute scrambling to buy forgotten ingredients. And make sure to line up help for party prep and cleanup.
- 5. Learn to say no.** Saying yes when you should say no can leave you feeling resentful and overwhelmed. Friends and colleagues will understand if you can't participate in every project or activity.
- 6. Don't abandon healthy habits.** Don't let the holidays become a free-for-all. Overindulgence only adds to your stress and guilt. Remember to have a healthy snack before holiday parties so that you don't go overboard on sweets, cheese or drinks. Get plenty of sleep and incorporate regular physical activity into each day.
- 7. Take a breather.** Make some time for yourself. Spending just 15 minutes alone, without distractions, may refresh you enough to handle everything you need to do. Find something that reduces stress by clearing your mind, slowing your breathing and restoring inner calm. Options could include practicing yoga, listening to soothing music, getting a massage or reading a book.

The Great American Smokeout: Work It!

Learning how to quit smoking may seem daunting. In fact, it's a journey with twists, turns, rewards, and surprises. Every journey begins with one step. And for many people, that first step is quitting for one day, followed by another, then another.

You can explore quitting during the American Cancer Society's [Great American Smokeout](#) on Thursday, November 20, 2014, with the support of others around the nation. The idea is to quit smoking on that day and begin to enjoy the rewards of a lifetime of smoke-free living.

Quitting smoking is an important step toward a healthier life. From the first day, you'll learn to recognize your own smoking triggers, which may surprise you. Perhaps just seeing a gas station cigarette ad, talking on the phone, or watching an exciting sporting event may prompt a craving. Soon, you can learn how to outsmart your smoking triggers. In 24 hours, you will have boosted your chances of quitting for good.

HealthSmart has the resources to support your decision to quit. [Click here](#) to talk to a health coach.



Recipe: Quinoa with Roasted Squash, Dried Cranberries & Pumpkin Seeds

Main Ingredients

3 cups peeled, cored and diced butternut squash

1 tablespoon olive oil

1/4 tsp nutmeg

pinch of salt

1 cup quinoa

2 cups water

1/2 cup dried cranberries

1/2 cup toasted pumpkin seeds

For the Vinaigrette

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar

1/2 teaspoon water

1 tablespoon maple syrup

pinch salt + pepper

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 400. Place butternut squash on a large baking sheet lined with parchment paper or foil. Drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with nutmeg. Toss until squash is well coated. Roast the squash for 30 minutes, stirring once, until tender.
2. While the butternut squash roasts, cook the quinoa. In a medium pot, bring quinoa and water to a boil, reduce the heat and simmer, covered until all the water has been absorbed, about 20 minutes. Remove from the heat and fluff with a fork.
3. In a large bowl, combine quinoa, roasted butternut squash, dried cranberries, and toasted pumpkin seeds.
4. In a small bowl, whisk together the olive oil, cider vinegar, water, and maple syrup. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Drizzle over quinoa salad. Toss until ingredients are well dressed.

Serve warm or chilled.

Nutrition Information per serving (makes 8 servings): 350 calories | 9.7 g fat | 73 mg sodium | 56.6 g carbohydrates | 4.9 g dietary fiber | 8 g sugar | 8 g protein

