



Winter 2016

## Your news

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### Keep active this holiday season: Take a walk in the mall

Eggnog, cookies, candy canes and stuffing with extra gravy ... yep, the holidays are here again! These amazing flavors also come around a time when many people start to make plans to stay in shape or start losing that extra weight. But outside may be too cold or icy to run or take a walk. What about making your way to your nearest mall for a morning walk? It might even give you a head start on your holiday shopping!

#### Here are some advantages to making your way to your local mall for that power walk:

- It's mostly protected from harsh weather.
- It's always well lit.
- You'll find flat and even walking paths.
- Restrooms are always available.
- There are plenty of seats/benches to take breaks.
- It's a safe place to keep active during the colder months.
- You'll get your recommended workout time while enjoying the mall's holiday decorations and music.

Working out often can help lower your risk for heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, depression and even some cancers. It can also help you keep a healthy weight, improve sleep, help keep your independence, lower the risk of falling down and help your memory.

Are you ready to give it a try? Don't wait. Although mall walking may be more popular with the middle-aged and older crowd, mall walking can be for almost anyone. It's also something you can do by yourself or with a couple of friends. Some malls have official walking programs that can help you set up a routine to motivate you to start walking. You can also become a walking champion and work with mall leadership to help establish one.

### Happy and healthy holidays to you!

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity. *Mall walking this winter.* (December 7, 2015): [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov).

## Valentine's Day health

Love and friendship can be a wonderful thing. But what about celebrating loving yourself by making healthy choices part of your everyday life? Let's make this Valentine's Day all about keeping you healthy.

### Be active and eat healthy:

- Plan something that includes [physical fitness](#). [Regular physical activity](#) can help control your weight, lower your risk of heart disease and even some cancers, improve mental health and mood, and help you live longer. Adults need 2 hours and 30 minutes (150 minutes total) of activity each week. You can break it up into smaller chunks of time during the day. It's all about finding out what works for you, as long as you're working out at a healthy pace for at least 10 minutes at a time.
- Treat yourself and loved ones to a meal that includes [healthy options](#), like foods low in saturated fat and salt. And be careful with sweets! Nutrition plays an important role in maintaining your overall health.
- Limit how much alcohol you drink. Abusing alcohol can lead to long-term health problems, including heart disease and cancer. Want to have a drink? Then do so in moderation, which is no more than one drink a day for women and up to two for men. Do not drink at all if you are having a baby, under the age of 21 or have health problems that could be made worse by drinking.

### Celebrate American Heart Month

The idea of a heart in love can be exciting. But the reality of a healthy heart can be even better. When was the last time you checked your blood pressure? [Blood pressure](#) is the force of blood pushing against the walls of your veins, which carry blood from your heart to other parts of your body. It's important to keep track of your numbers so you know when your blood pressure goes up or down. Uncontrolled high blood pressure is the leading cause of heart disease and stroke. Work with your doctor to come up with a plan to control your blood pressure.

Another way to take care of your heart is to quit smoking. Smokers can get free help to quit by calling the quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) or by visiting the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's *Tips from Former Smokers* at [cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/](http://cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/). **And if you don't smoke, don't start!**

It's also a good idea to learn how to spot the most [common symptoms](#) of a heart attack, so you'll know when to call 911. The major signs of a heart attack are:

- Pain/discomfort in the jaw, neck, back, arms or shoulders.
- Feeling weak or light-headed, or fainting.
- Having chest pain or trouble breathing.

### Prevent the spread of germs and infections

You can help make sure you, and your loved ones, stay healthy throughout the year by keeping a few tips in mind. After all, keeping healthy can be a gift you can give throughout the year.

- [Wash your hands often](#), [get a flu vaccine](#) and avoid close contact with anyone who is already sick.
- [Prevent sexually transmitted diseases](#) and [unintended pregnancies](#). Abstaining from sex or using [protection when having sex](#) can help lower risks.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Valentine's Day health*. (Accessed June 2016): [cdc.gov/features/valentine/](http://cdc.gov/features/valentine/).



## What is resilience?

Resilience is being able to bounce back after facing a hard situation. It's also keeping a healthy state of mind during stressful times. Some people are born with a strong sense of resilience, while others may need to learn skills to develop it.

### **Adaptability. Flexibility. Strength.**

All of these traits are in you. It's just a matter of knowing how to wake them up and use them to keep a healthy balance in life. And like many other skills, **the more you practice, the better you get**. Being resilient can help you find easier ways to adapt to stress, crises and trauma through creativity, hope and a positive attitude. So next time life throws you a hardball, make sure you're ready to face it and keep moving on.

### **Here are some tips to increase your resilience:**

- **Keep a sense of perspective.** Ask yourself, "How big is this problem really?" and "What do I need to do?" Remember not to blow things out of proportion or be negative about the situation. Remind yourself of the good in your life and that things will get better.
- **Recognize that you have a choice in how you handle challenges.** You can't control what happens to you, but you can choose how you respond. Choose to react to changes and problems with hope and a positive attitude.
- **Accept change.** Change and uncertainty are part of life. When you accept this, reacting to change with flexibility can be easier.
- **Anticipate challenges.** Focus on the positive ways in which you can meet them rather than possible negative outcomes. This will help you feel more in control and less overwhelmed.
- **Learn how to calm yourself.** When you feel yourself reacting to a challenge with lots of stress and anxiety, take a step back and try to calm yourself.
- **Overcome your fear.** All of us feel fear, especially when faced with a change. But fear can hold you back from new experiences and opportunities to keep growing. If you are faced with a challenge that feels scary or overwhelming, start with the simplest thing you can do and focus on the direction you want to go. Ask yourself, "What's the smallest thing I can do to get started?"
- **Let go of your anger.** A difficult challenge can cause you to feel angry and upset. These feelings are normal, but they won't help you move forward. Work through your anger and try to let go of negative feelings by writing about them or talking with a trusted friend.

- **Take action.** Don't let your problems control the situation. Focus on solutions instead. Figure out what you can do and then do it, one step at a time.
- **Laugh.** Even when things seem to be falling apart around you, try to find time to smile and laugh. It can be very healing and help you forget your worries for a few moments. Rent a movie that makes you laugh or spend time with a friend who has a good sense of humor.

State.gov. What is resilience? (Accessed June 2016): [state.gov/m/med/dsmp/c44950.htm](http://state.gov/m/med/dsmp/c44950.htm).





## How to build a \$1,000 emergency fund in 10 months

Do you have \$1,000 set aside for emergencies? If you already do, you could probably use another \$1,000. Experts recommend keeping at least three months of expenses in a safe and easy-to-access account. But finding \$1,000 to save is easier said than done. Here are four steps to get you started:

- 1. Find a safe place to save your money.** Save your money in an account that you can access easily in case of an emergency. But make sure it's a different account than the one you usually use. Keeping savings in a checking account is not a great idea because that pays no, or a very low, interest. Also, try not to keep these savings in a U.S. savings bond or in mutual funds. Consider a traditional savings account or a short-term certificate of deposit (CD).
- 2. Save \$100 a month.** If you already save \$100 a month, great! Skip to step 3. If not, earning an extra \$100 a month or cutting back in order to find that \$100 is a good way to start. It's also best if you save the \$100 at the beginning of the month so you know that money's not available for spending that month.
- 3. Make your savings an automatic transaction.** Setting up an automatic way to save is one of the easiest ways to save. Once you set it up, your savings account will get money on the day you choose. Here are two ways to set up automatic savings:
  - Ask your employer to take money from your paycheck and transfer it to your savings account each time you get paid so it adds up to \$100 a month. Make sure you ask your human resources representative for more details about setting it up.
  - Or ask your bank or credit union to transfer \$100 from your checking account to a savings account every month. Talk to your local bank or credit union about setting it up.

- 4. Watch your savings grow for 10 months.** Has it ever happened to you that you look at the calendar and get amazed at how quickly time passes by? Well, this might help you in this final step. This is when you sit back and watch your savings grow. Before you know it, you'll have that \$1,000! The key is not to touch the money unless you have an emergency — after all, that's what your savings are for.

But don't stop once you have at least \$1,000 in your emergency account. Keep growing your savings and that emergency fund. Set a new savings goal each time you reach that amount.

USA.gov Blog, *How to build a \$1,000 emergency fund in 10 months.* ((2014, July 22, 2014): [blog.usa.gov](http://blog.usa.gov).

