

# TAKE CHARGE!



July 2023

## Stay Cool in Extreme Heat

### Rising temperatures and extreme heat can result in many illnesses and deaths each year.

The CDC reports that more than 700 people die from extreme heat every year in the U.S. We can suffer from heat-related illness when our bodies are unable to properly cool themselves. Older adults, young children and people with chronic medical conditions are at increased risk for heat-related illness and death.



### How hot is dangerously hot?

In the 90°F to 105°F range, people can experience heat cramps and exhaustion, depending on general health and length of exposure. Between 105°F and 130°F, heat exhaustion becomes more likely. At these ranges, consider limiting physical activities.

**Warmer temperatures can produce higher ozone levels.** If you have asthma, bronchitis or emphysema, ozone exposure can increase your symptoms. Check the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Air Quality Index when planning outdoor activities, especially if you have lung disease.

**Beyond what a thermometer shows,** *humidity* increases the feeling of heat; a combination of the two can become hazardous.

### Signs of heat-related illness:

- Heavy sweating.
- Cold, pale, clammy skin.
- Fast, weak pulse.
- Nausea.
- Vomiting and muscle cramps.
- Weakness.
- Dizziness.
- Headache.

Call 911 for help and confirmation of the illness.

### Cool down basics:

- Take cool showers or baths.
- Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated.
- When outside, find shade; wear a hat wide enough to protect your face or use an umbrella.
- Never leave people or pets in a closed car on a warm day.
- Make sure your home and car air conditioners are in working order (if you have them).
- If you don't have an air conditioner, check to see if your city or county offers cooling centers (or cooling shelters). These may include libraries, community centers, spray parks, pools and other public facilities, as well as businesses and places of worship.

Learn more at [ready.gov/heat](https://www.ready.gov/heat).

The **Smart Moves Toolkit**, including this issue's printable download, **At Risk: Heat-Related Illness**, is at [personalbest.com/extras/23V7tools](https://personalbest.com/extras/23V7tools).

## city events

### Social Media Privacy

**Tuesday, July 11**

11:30 am – 12:00 pm

Register [here](#)

### Self-Care: Don't Forget Your Social Life

**Thursday, July 13**

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

Register [here](#)

### How to Cultivate Compassion and Empathy in the Workplace

**Tuesday, July 18**

11:00 am – 12:00 pm

Register [here](#)

### Taking Sleep Seriously

**Wednesday, July 19**

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

Register [here](#)

### Power of Volunteering

**Tuesday, July 25**

11:00 am – 12:00 pm

Register [here](#)

## Deferred Compensation Webinars

### Online Tools & Tips (offered twice)

**Wednesday, July 12**

9:00 am – 9:45 am

Register [here](#)

12:00 pm – 12:45 pm

Register [here](#)

### Loans (offered twice)

**Thursday, July 20**

9:00 am – 9:45 am

Register [here](#)

12:00 pm – 12:45 pm

Register [here](#)

### ■ In July, the U.S. celebrates Park and Recreation Month

— a good time to explore, enjoy and celebrate your local recreational centers and parks. These services are often cited in surveys as one of the most important ways to make communities livable and provide public gathering places for families and social groups. Parks are shown to improve air and water quality, produce habitat for wildlife, and provide a place for children and families to enjoy nature.

# Basic Stretching Guide

**At its most basic, stretching feels good.** But there's more to this activity than you may realize. Adopting a stretching routine offers many benefits:

**1. It can help you build a good range of motion,** which is especially important if you're frequently strength training — or want to play golf, ride a bike or continue other exercise.

**2. It becomes especially important as you age.** Flexibility naturally declines over time, as muscles lose strength and tone, and ligaments and tendons get tighter. In fact, research has shown that men's flexibility often drops sharply around age 70 — or sooner among those carrying 20 to 30 pounds (or more) overweight.

**3. It helps get your heart rate back to a normal level after you've been physically active.** Stretching will correctly and safely help your heart return to a normal rate.



**We typically lose flexibility in the shoulders, hips, spine and knees,** making many everyday movements more troublesome, such as reaching overhead, squatting, twisting and bending over. Reduced flexibility also can lead to other problems, especially chronic low-back pain, neck pain, poor posture and general discomfort.

**How often do you need to stretch?** A helpful stretching plan does not take much time. Basic stretches can be done multiple times a day; it's especially helpful for people spending most of their work time seated. You might try doing these on a five-minute break just to move your body. Consistency is key, whether you are doing five-minute workouts three times a day or an hour of stretches three to four times a week.

**When you stretch, you might feel a little tingling, but never pain.** Ideally, stretching should be relaxing and feel good. Never force your body into shapes that hurt. Harvard Health recommends these stretches:

## Sitting side bend

1. Sit up straight (you can use a chair).
2. Reach overhead with your left arm. Bend from the hip to the right as far as possible without pain or discomfort.
3. Hold for 5 to 10 seconds.
4. Reach overhead with your right arm. Bend to the left and hold for 5 to 10 seconds. Go back and forth several times, if desired.



## Lying down knees to chest

1. Lie on your back and wrap your hands around your bent left leg below the knee.
2. Slowly pull your left knee toward your chest.
3. Hold for 10 to 15 seconds, then switch leg positions.
4. Repeat, pulling your right knee toward your chest.



**Note:** If you have a chronic condition or an injury, you might need to adjust your stretching techniques. For example, if you are coping with a strained muscle, stretching it may cause further harm. Check with your health care provider or physical therapist about the most appropriate way to stretch if you have any health concerns.

**Ready to add more stretching into your fitness routine?** Consider taking an in-person or virtual stretching class with a fitness instructor.

# Helping Someone with Dyslexia

By Eric Endlich, PhD

**Individuals with dyslexia have difficulty with word recognition, typically impacting reading comprehension and spelling.**

While these challenges can lead to discouragement or low self-esteem, dyslexia's effects largely depend on the type of support people receive. The **neurodiversity model** views dyslexia not as a deficit, but as a difference that can provide uniquely valuable perspectives.

**If you know someone with dyslexia, here are some ways to help:**

- Encourage and let them know they can succeed despite their challenges.
- Celebrate milestones of progress. Cheer them on every step of the way.
- Help them discover their strengths. Expose them to a variety of learning opportunities.
- Break tasks down into smaller chunks to make them more manageable and less overwhelming.
- Provide technology tools. Assistive technology, such as audiobooks or text-to-speech software, can make a big difference.
- Create a comfortable environment. Reassure that you won't judge or ridicule them.
- Offer visual aids. Diagrams, pictures and videos can help those who struggle with reading.
- Listen. Allow them to vent their frustration or other feelings, and tell them you understand.
- Educate yourself. Know that challenges in school related to dyslexia are not an indicator of laziness or lack of intelligence.
- Help them help others. Those who find a sense of purpose and usefulness tend to feel more confident and fulfilled.

With patience, understanding and flexibility, you can help those with dyslexia learn and thrive.





**July is UV Safety Month.**  
Ultraviolet (UV) radiation

is especially strong in July. So, it's a good time to learn about protecting yourself against UVA and UVB rays. Heavy UV exposure damages skin; it raises the risk of skin cancer, including melanoma and premature aging. While melanoma isn't the most common skin cancer, it is the deadliest. Anyone can develop melanoma, but fair skin, freckles and having many moles raise your risk.

**Protect your precious skin:** Avoid tanning beds, wear sun-protective clothing, use broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen with at least SPF 30, and wear sunglasses labeled 100% UV protection. When you can, avoid being out in the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. — and enjoy shade instead of baking in the sun.



## TIP of the MONTH

### Air Fryers

More than 25 million air fryers have been sold in the past two years. What's the allure of this popular countertop appliance? It makes foods crispy with minimal or no oil, meaning the foods are lower in fat and calories. From potato wedges to "fried" chicken, the air fryer works by using circulating hot air, rather than deep frying in oil. The only downside? They tend to have a small capacity, so they are best for cooking small portions of food, rather than feeding large groups.

# Summer Picnic Advice: How Long Can Food Stay Fresh?

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

**Warm, sunshine-filled days are perfect for summer picnics**, but hot temperatures are the enemy of many of the foods in your picnic basket. To enjoy your summer food adventures, make sure to keep your cold foods cold.

**Foods that contain protein** — think meat, fish, eggs, cheese, cooked grains and anything made with mayonnaise — have a small safety window when removed from refrigeration:

- Don't keep perishable foods out of the refrigerator for more than two hours.
- If the temperature outside is more than 90°F, food should not be left unrefrigerated for more than one hour.



**After that time frame, bacteria multiply quickly, and the food can spoil.** In fact, rates of food poisoning from bacteria, such as *E. coli* and *Salmonella*, increase in the summer because bacteria grow fastest in warm temperatures. Not sure how long something has been sitting out? Always remember the motto: "When in doubt, throw it out." Food waste is always unfortunate, but food poisoning is not worth the risk.

**Avoid food waste by keeping foods safe for longer.** Use insulated coolers and ice packs that can ensure a steady temperature below 40°F.

**Whole fruits and vegetables, such as an apple or tomato, don't grow bacteria very rapidly and will not require refrigeration.** However, once you've cut or diced the vegetables or fruit, the clock starts ticking. FDA recommendation: Refrigerate cut, peeled or cooked fruit and vegetables in a sealed container, and don't leave them at room temperature for more than two hours.

**Bread, crackers, cookies and other shelf-stable snacks** are not a concern for rapid bacterial growth and can remain at room temperature.

## Grilled Corn Salad with Mustard Vinaigrette

EASY recipe

- |                                    |                               |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 4 ears of corn, husks removed      | 3 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil |
| 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved      | 1 tsp honey                   |
| 1 ripe avocado, diced              | 2 tbsp apple cider vinegar    |
| 1 cup shelled edamame              | 1 tsp Dijon mustard           |
| ¼ cup crumbled feta or goat cheese | Pinch salt and pepper         |
| 2 tbsp diced red onion             |                               |



**Preheat** grill to medium high heat. **Place** corn on the grill and turn every 3-4 minutes until charred (about 10-15 minutes). **Set** aside to cool, then cut corn niblets into a serving bowl. **Add** tomatoes, avocado, edamame, feta and onion to serving bowl. **In** a small jar with lid, combine oil, honey, vinegar, Dijon, salt and pepper. **Shake** to combine. **Pour** dressing over corn, toss and serve.

**Makes 4 servings. Per serving:** 318 calories | 11g protein | 16g total fat | 4g saturated fat | 8g mono fat | 4g poly fat | 37g carb | 8g sugar (1g added sugar) | 7g fiber | 245mg sodium

## Stay in Touch

Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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## EXPERT advice — Elizabeth Smoots, MD

### Q: When to see a dermatologist?

**A:** A dermatologist is a physician who specializes in diagnosing and treating skin, hair and nail conditions.

Some familiar conditions they treat are acne, dermatitis, eczema, brittle nails, psoriasis, skin infections and skin cancer. They may prescribe medication or perform minor surgery, such as a skin biopsy or mole removal. Common reasons to visit a dermatologist include:

**Rashes:** Dry skin, allergies, irritants, poison ivy and medication reactions are frequent culprits. Seek care if it itches, worsens or won't go away.

**Acne:** Over-the-counter medications may keep it under control. Seek care if the meds aren't working, or any sign of scarring occurs.

**Hair loss:** Hair falling out? Seek care if you're concerned or it's getting worse.

**Warts:** Common warts and skin cancers may look alike. Seek care to confirm the diagnosis and if it's large or painful.

**Skin changes:** The appearance of moles, spots and patches may alter over time. Seek care if the area changes shape or is new, gets bigger, thicker or asymmetrical or the border or color becomes irregular or uneven.

## News & Notes

• **2nd.MD is now available to City employees** on the Most\* benefits program with an Aetna or Kaiser Permanente plan. Employees and covered adult family members can get a second opinion from a top specialist at no cost to you. Within 2-5 days, you connect virtually with the right, expert doctor to discuss a diagnosis, treatment options, surgery plans or medication that you may be feeling unsure about. Some common conditions for 2nd.MD services include cancer, heart disease, digestive problems, mental health concerns, and musculoskeletal issues. Watch for an email broadcast for more details.

• **Invest in Yourself with Reach Well-being:** The Reach well-being portal\* will be reset and refreshed on July 6. Explore your interests, find support tools, and connect with others in the City doing the same. In observance of Social Well-being month in July, try our NEW social activities and start using the built-in support network to share personal wins and inspire others. Once you've registered at [cityofseattle.limeade.com](http://cityofseattle.limeade.com), download the app and enter Program Code: Seattle to get started and track progress.

\*Not available to employees on the Local 27, Local 77, and SPOG benefits program, Seattle Housing Authority, or COBRA participants.

• **Nutritional Eating During the Summer:** Join Weight Watchers for as low as \$8.48 per month on select plans—50% off the retail price—and get a \$25 credit to spend in the WW Shop, plus free shipping. Learn more at [WW.com/CityofSeattle](http://WW.com/CityofSeattle). Then, look for an email with your WW Shop credit.

## Buying a Used Car Safely

If you're looking to buy a used car, it's important to watch out for dishonest sellers and scams. The following steps can help you avoid most scams to protect yourself and your money:



1. **Get the vehicle history report.** If the seller doesn't provide one, visit the website of the state department of motor vehicles (or licensing) where the vehicle is registered. Once you have these in hand, look for red flags, such as several previous owners, title not in seller's name, missing registration years, previous damage title (also called rebuilt title) indicating accidents or water damage, outstanding recalls, former rental car, rebuilt vehicle, many repairs or a recent major repair.
2. **Have a mechanic inspect the vehicle.** Vehicle inspections run between \$100 and \$200, but it's money well spent for peace of mind. Inspections can potentially save you thousands on a major repair.
3. **Pay with a cashier's check.** A cashier's check requires the legal name of the seller, so if you end up getting scammed, you will have the proper information. Avoid cash sales because there is no paper trail.

## Expand Your Mind with Citizen Science

**You don't have to go back to school to be a scientist.** A growing number of people who are curious and want to explore scientific subjects that interest them — from space exploration to saving endangered animals — are becoming citizen scientists in their spare time.

**Volunteers worldwide**, sometimes in their backyards, kitchens or in the great outdoors, are working with scientists to advance science. You typically only need a phone or laptop and follow project guidelines and share the information you collect.

**SciStarter ([scistarter.org](http://scistarter.org)) helps citizen scientists find projects in conjunction with researchers.** Projects can include documenting

endangered bees, reporting rainfall and measuring light pollution by stargazing — to name a few.

**Here are some places to find projects:**

- Collaborate with **NASA** on projects listed at [science.nasa.gov/citizenscience](http://science.nasa.gov/citizenscience).
- **iNaturalist**, a joint initiative of the California Academy of Sciences and the National Geographic Society, offers projects and information on how to collect data at [inaturalist.org](http://inaturalist.org).
- For health and medicine citizen research, visit the National Library of Medicine **All of Us Research Program** at [allofus.nlm.nih.gov/citizen-science-health](http://allofus.nlm.nih.gov/citizen-science-health).