

Spring Happenings

HEALTH AND WELLNESS COACHING FREE

one-on-one personalized health and wellness planning for long-term behavior changes to improve well-being and health. Board-certified coaches can help with weight management, fitness planning, lifestyle changes, stress management and recovery. Sessions are offered in person, via video, or by phone. Call 240-964-8424 for more information.

FITNESS CLASSES

Join a **FREE** fitness class offered in locations around the region.

- **Chair Yoga**, Tuesdays at 2:15 p.m., at the South Cumberland Library. To register for the in-person or online class via ZOOM, contact Christina Collins-Smith at collinssmithcd@upmc.edu or call 410-967-9112.
- South Cumberland Library **Yoga Classes**, Wednesdays at 11:00 a.m.
- LaVale Library **Yoga Classes**, Fridays at 10:30 a.m.

ONLINE SMART RECOVERY

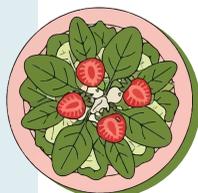
Tuesdays at 7:30 a.m., Wednesdays at 6:00 and 7:30 a.m., and Thursdays at noon. **FREE** self-help support group assists in recovering from all types of addictions and addictive behaviors. For more information, contact Carey Moffatt at moffattcl@upmc.edu or call 240-964-8418.



Stacey Blank, MS, BTPS, RRT
Manager, UPMC Community Health and Wellness

WELCOME TO THE SPRING EDITION OF OUR HEALTH & WELLNESS NEWSLETTER!

Springtime in beautiful Western Maryland is a season of renewal—rolling mountains turning green, fresh air filling the valleys, and trails inviting us outdoors. It's the perfect time to embrace healthy habits and reconnect with nature, no matter your age or ability.



As the days grow longer, refresh your plate with seasonal produce like asparagus, spinach, and strawberries—packed with vitamins and flavor. Simple swaps, such as adding a colorful salad to your lunch or blending a fruit smoothie, can boost energy and support overall health. Staying hydrated is just as important, so keep a reusable water bottle handy during your outdoor adventures.

Spring offers countless ways to get moving at your own pace. Take a brisk walk along the C&O Canal, enjoy a gentle hike at Rocky Gap, or try chair yoga and stretching exercises in the comfort of your home. Gardening, birdwatching, and neighborhood strolls are wonderful low-impact options for older adults to stay active while soaking up the beauty of the season.

I hope you enjoy this edition as our coaches share their insight and expertise to help us all succeed in our very own health journey. Whether you're savoring fresh flavors, joining a community walking group, or simply enjoying the blossoms from your porch, let's make this season a celebration of health and vitality—together, for every generation!

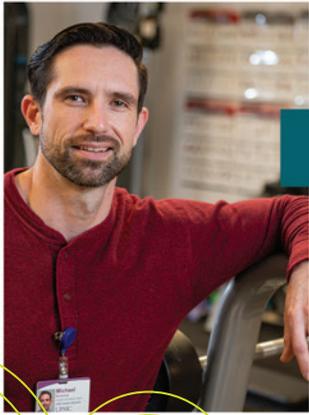
Stay happy and well,

Stacey

In this Edition...

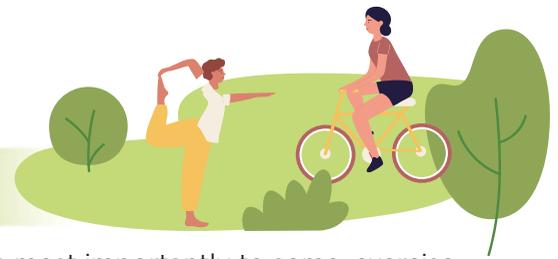
- Benefits of Outdoor Exercise
- Ready to Change? From Autopilot to Awareness
- Strength Training During Menstrual Cycle Phases
- Using Breath as a Guide in Movement
- Featured Recipes
- Safety First
- Laughter is the Best Medicine

Visit our UPMC Western Maryland Community Health and Wellness Coaching Website at
UPMCWesternMaryland.com/Wellness



Benefits of Outdoor Exercise

Michael Browning, MA, NBC-HWC



Budding trees, the melody of bird song, the warmth of the sun, the season of renewal. Spring is truly a renewal of many things, which I hope includes your motivation to exercise outdoors! The benefits of exercising outdoors are quite unique and while it may not be ideal for everyone, for most people it can be a breath of fresh air.

Exercise in general is well known for its mood boosting impact; heading outdoors for exercise is like a cup of coffee for our mental health. Not only does exercise in nature reduce anger and depression, exposure to sunlight enhances our vitamin D production further boosting a positive effect on mood. Proximity to water and greenery in particular has been supported in research to increase self-esteem in as little as 5 minutes of low to moderate intensity exercise. Connection to nature also improves our gratitude as we wonder at the beauty and mysteries of our environment in which we live and depend upon. You also get to explore your community in a much more up close and personal way - who knows, you may meet a friend or two along

the way. Perhaps most importantly to some, exercise outdoors is free and for many, easy to access.

There are many places in most communities to exercise outdoors. If you live in the city or a neighborhood, you probably have access to sidewalks and public schools with walking trails and outdoor exercise equipment. Local parks are usually conveniently located and have many exercise opportunities such as wooded trails, swimming pools, and playgrounds. If you are into hiking, check out your state park websites for trail maps. Whatever you choose, be safe exercising outdoors. Always carry your cell phone and let someone know where you will be and when you are expected to return. Exercising outdoors with a friend is a great way to stay safe and enjoy your time better. Make sure to stay hydrated, wear proper footwear, and check the weather before you venture out. Get outdoors and reap the rewards of both exercise and nature!

[Get Outside! 5 Benefits of Outdoor Exercise | ACE Blog](#)

READY TO CHANGE?



From Autopilot to Awareness



Carey Moffatt, MS, NBC-HWC

Did you know we make thousands of decisions every day, most on autopilot? When stress hits, those automatic reactions can steer us away from what matters. Mindfulness offers a simple way to pause, notice what is happening, and choose with intention.

Mindfulness is not about long meditations or quiet retreats. It is about noticing the present moment while making coffee, walking to your car, or taking a breath before responding. These small pauses help us stay grounded and make choices that support the life we want.

When we create space between impulse and action, we see our options more clearly. Instead of pushing away discomfort or reacting automatically, we can take an honest look at what a behavior gives us and what it takes away. For example, before an impulsive purchase, a mindful pause lets us ask, "Is this worth it?" That moment of awareness helps turn automatic habits into intentional decisions.

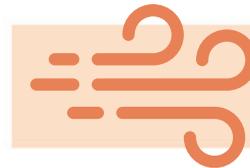
TRY THIS WHEN YOU CATCH YOURSELF RUSHING TO DECIDE:

- **What am I feeling right now?**
- **What choice do I have in this moment?**
- **How would this choice support the life I want to build?**

Start with one mindful breath. Notice what changes.

Source: [Mindfulness](#)

Using Breath as a Guide in Movement



Christina Collins-Smith, MLA, E-RYT 500, LMT, Health + Wellness Coach



As the world shifts from winter stillness into springtime energy our internal landscape shifts as well. During this transition the body may feel unsettled, the mind might be easily distracted, and our energy and focus might feel unbalanced as we flow out of hibernation into the warmth of regeneration. Practicing regular self-care with breath-centered movements can offer a steady path through seasonal and other life transitions as it grounds the body and sharpens the mind to fuel our sense of wellbeing.

When we allow the breath to lead movement, something subtle but profound happens. We gently move through change, instead of pushing through it. Inhaling expands the body as the ribcage widens, posture lifts, and space is created. Exhaling softens the effort as shoulders drop, tension releases, and grounding returns. The breath becomes a guide, a quiet rhythm reminding the nervous system *You are safe. You are balanced. You are complete.*

TRY THIS GROUNDING FLOW OF BREATH AND MOVEMENT:

- 1. Inhale — Circle Arms Out and Up**
Feel expansion.
Exhale — Slow Side Bend
Soften and lengthen.
- 2. Inhale — Return to Center**
Lift the spine.
Exhale — Switch Sides
Stay rooted through the feet.
- 3. Inhale — Stand Tall**
Lift arms overhead.
Exhale — Hands to Heart
Let the breath settle.
- 4. Take three slow breaths.**
Notice grounding. Notice focus. Notice yourself.

If you'd like to explore the benefits of integrating breath and movement into your daily life, join my free classes offered by UPMC Western Maryland at the Allegany County Libraries (times and locations listed on page 1).



STRENGTH TRAINING DURING MENSTRUAL CYCLE PHASES

Brittany Friend, MS, NBC-HWC

Do you ever have those months where one week you swear you could lift a car off of someone, and the next you think your 10-pound dumbbell is suddenly much heavier? Don't worry, you aren't imagining things! Women have monthly hormonal fluctuations based on their menstrual cycle which can impact their strength training routines due to waning energy levels and symptoms experienced during different phases.

While studies show that there is no real change in the physiological differences of the body and its ability to build muscle during the different stages of the menstrual cycle, symptoms that women experience can impact motivation and energy levels, which can impact overall muscle performance.

There is no one size fits all approach, and every woman can experience phases differently. Therefore, maintaining consistency in exercise, as well as using progressive overload in strength training, should still be the goal. The one change?

Listen to your body. If your energy levels have dropped, lowering your weight and maintaining consistency for exercise will ensure that you are continuing to meet your goals without stressing your body. Focusing on yoga or recovery exercises when energy levels have dipped can all be incorporated to help your body continue to perform at peak performance.

All research agrees that listening to your body is the most effective way to ensure that you are making the most of your training routine. Continuing to prioritize sleep, hydration, nutrition, and stress reduction, alongside a well-rounded strength training routine through all phases of your cycle will ensure that your body is being fueled for success.

<https://www.acefitness.org/continuing-education/certified/april-2025/8846/menstrual-cycle-and-resistance-training-what-the-latest-research-say/?srsltid=AfmBOoqF44mRjVir5JomtHYXhDvVEWBtZjghWSJLZiOYZIu3SZ5WI3Ti>



SPIRITUAL WELLNESS

Rev. Seth G. Wharton
Chaplain-Hospice, Home Hospice Department of UPMC Western Maryland

IN HIS HANDS

I am thankful for this time of year. When you think of springtime, you think of new life and a fresh start. New things start to blossom and grow with bright colors of the trees and flowers. It makes me think of the scripture Isaiah 43:15 that says, "Behold, I am doing a new thing. Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?"

There are times that the Lord will speak softly and give you a song or a scripture, or like with Elijah, speak in a still small voice. As Psalm 103 says, to bless the Lord, oh my soul, and forget not all His benefits. When you give your life to Him you become a child of God. You are kept as the apple of His eye and in the palms of His hands. You can know in loving Him and serving Him nothing can touch you unless it is Heavenly Father "filtered." It has to go through Him, and to know that all things will work together for your good. As Jesus said in John 10:29, "My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand." There is no safer, better place to be than in the Heavenly Father's hands, and in His perfect will for your life.

I think of looking back and seeing God's hand on my life (although I did not realize it at the time). When I was eleven years old, I

dreamed I saw a father holding and playing with his son. The son was pretending to be an airplane. Then the dream showed me inside an airplane, and everything was going wrong. I couldn't see out, and all the gauges were out of control and smoke was all around. It looked like I was going down. Then it showed outside the airplane that God's hands were holding it up, like how the father was playing with his son. That was the year I found out I had a deadly disease. I endured multiple health emergencies during the next three years and had to have my third open heart surgery. I think back to that dream - that was a God whisper to me, saying no matter how it looks, I've got you in My hands; you're not going down. I have you, son. And He did! He brought me through, and it has worked for my good - to help comfort many others, through what the Lord has delivered me through. And what He does for one child, He will do for the others.



Left to right: Hannah (Daughter), Isaiah (Son), Kendra (Wife), Seth, Sarah (Daughter), Rachel (Daughter)

May we listen, hear and see God's signs and whispers to us, knowing He loves us and that we never have to walk alone. One of the last words Jesus spoke while on the cross were, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." There's no better place to be than in the Heavenly Father's hands. I bless you and your family. May you know everything is working for your good; that He's got you. May you hear His whispers to you; a song, a scripture, a sign that shows God knows and cares for you.

Have a blessed and safe spring, and may you know, that as you receive Him, His forgiveness and give forgiveness, that the Heavenly Father has special, awesome plans for your life.

God bless, thanks for letting me share, from the Hospice Chaplain's heart,

Rev. Seth G. Wharton



IN THE KITCHEN with RACHEL

Rachel Sproat, RDN, LDN



Steak, Pepper & Sugar Snap Stir Fry

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound lean flank steak, trimmed
- ¼ cup lower-sodium soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 1 tablespoon Asian chile-garlic sauce
- 2 teaspoons grated fresh ginger
- 1 teaspoon granulated sugar
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 tablespoons toasted sesame oil, divided
- 1 cup sugar snap peas, sliced in half lengthwise
- 1 cup sliced red onion
- 1 cup sliced yellow bell pepper (about 1 medium bell pepper)
- 2 large garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup water
- 3 cups cooked brown rice
- ½ cup diagonally sliced scallions
- Chopped fresh cilantro and crushed red pepper



DIRECTIONS

Cut steak diagonally with the grain into 2-inch-thick slices. Cut slices diagonally across the grain into thin strips. Combine steak, soy sauce, cornstarch, chile-garlic sauce, ginger, sugar, and salt in a medium bowl, and stir until sauce is well blended and steak pieces are coated. Set aside.

Heat 1 tablespoon of the oil in a large nonstick skillet or a wok over high. Add snap peas, onion, and bell pepper, and cook, stirring often, until vegetables are starting to soften, about 2 minutes. Add garlic, and cook, stirring constantly, 1 more minute. Remove vegetable mixture from skillet to a plate. Add remaining 1 tablespoon oil and all of beef mixture to skillet; cook stirring often, until meat browns, about 2 minutes. Return vegetables to skillet; add water. Stir-fry until sauce is thick and coats mixture well, about 1 more minute.

Serve over cooked brown rice, and top with scallions. Add cilantro and crushed red pepper, if desired.

[Steak, Pepper & Sugar Snap Stir Fry](#)

Turkey Burgers with Spinach, Feta, and Tzatziki

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup frozen chopped spinach, thawed
- 1 pound 93% lean ground turkey
- ½ cup crumbled feta cheese
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon dried oregano
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon ground pepper
- 4 small hamburger buns, preferably whole-wheat, split
- 4 tablespoons tzatziki
- 12 slices cucumber
- 8 thick rings red onion (about 1/4-inch)



DIRECTIONS

Preheat grill to medium-high. Squeeze excess moisture from spinach. Combine the spinach with turkey, feta, garlic powder, oregano, salt and pepper in a medium bowl; mix well. Form into four 4-inch patties. Oil the grill rack (see Tip). Grill the patties until cooked through and no longer pink in the center, 4 to 6 minutes per side. (An instant-read thermometer inserted in the center should register 165°F.) Assemble the burgers on the buns, topping each with 1 tablespoon tzatziki, 3 cucumber slices and 2 onion rings.

[Turkey Burgers with Spinach, Feta & Tzatziki](#)

SAFETY FIRST

Susan Lee, Admin Assistant

Moderate temperatures and longer days beckon to many of us to get outside and get moving! If you're just getting back into the swing of things after the winter lull, plan to start slowly and boost your activity level according to your ability. Walking is safe for almost everyone but talk with your doctor if you have any health conditions prior to embarking on a rigorous exercise routine. Once your doctor gives you the go-ahead to exercise, keep these tips in mind to help avoid unnecessary injuries:

- Start slowly and build your activity level gradually.
- Listen to your body. Cut back if you suffer persistent aches and pains in joints after exercising.
- Wear activity-appropriate clothing and shoes.
- Take time to warm up and cool down.
- Hold off on exercise when you're sick or feeling fatigued.



For more information, visit [10 Tips for Exercising Safely - Harvard Health](#)

BE FAST

When You Spot Stroke Warning Signs

UPMC
LIFE CHANGING MEDICINE

Balance: Loss of coordination or balance



Eyes: Sudden double vision or vision loss



Face: Facial drooping on one side



Arms: One arm becomes weak or numb



Speech: Slurred speech



Time: BE FAST. Call 911



LAUGHTER IS THE BEST MEDICINE

From: [countryliving.com](#)



My boss said, "dress for the job you want, not the job you have."

So, I went in as Batman . . .

You are on a horse, riding full gallop. Next to you is a giraffe at full gallop, and behind you is a lion on your tail. What do you do?

Get off the carousel . . .

