



SWAIN COUNTY EXTENSION

# HEALTHY AT HOME

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## Spring Tune-up

### **Activate your Mental and Physical Maintenance**

Most of us engage in the tradition of spring cleaning and organizing, so why not tune-up your physical and mental health at the same time?

Although we know that physical exercise is important for the health of your body, it also keeps your brain sharp. New research suggests that exercise can help protect your brain against mental decline that occurs with aging. In fact, researchers found that a brisk 30-minute daily walk can delay mental aging by five to seven years.

With regular exercise your brain functions better, your memory improves, you have a brighter outlook on life and you have more energy.

Keep your walking or running shoes and exercise gear with you so you are ready. Make sure to schedule time for exercise on your calendar so it becomes a regular part of your day.

# Put Some Pep in Your Step

## How to Walk Faster

There are several reasons why you might want to speed up your pace. By going faster and further during the same amount of time you will burn more calories. Walking faster will boost your heart rate to a more vigorous intensity. There are three keys to walking faster: practice good posture, use your arms to power forward and control your walking stride.

Having good posture is important to walking easily and comfortably. When you focus on being tall and straight, and avoid arching your back, this will help your posture. Keep your chin parallel to the ground and avoid looking down. You can look forward about 20 feet ahead and this will naturally align your chin. Tighten your stomach, tuck in your behind and rotate your hips forward.

Using your arms correctly can help to boost your walking speed. Avoid carrying anything in your hands while walking. Bend your elbows at 90 degrees and relax your hands. You will notice that your arms will work opposite of your legs. Avoid crossing your arms in front of your body since diagonal motion is a wasted motion. As your arms move forward, keep them straight in front of you and avoid crossing your body.

The key to perfecting your walking stride and to increase your pace is to take more steps in a shorter amount of time instead of lengthening your stride. Most experts agree that landing on your heels and then roll forward on your foot to push off with your toes is the most effective way to strike the ground.

The next time you are walking, try these techniques and challenge yourself a bit and soon you will notice a gradual increase in your walking pace.

## Join the Walkie Talkies

Staying physically active is a great way to keep your mind and body healthy. Walking is an easy exercise that is suitable for almost everyone. **Join the Walkie Talkies on Wednesdays (weather permitting) at 11:00 a.m. We meet at the Deep Creek picnic area.**

Walk at your own pace in a safe environment. We will maintain the recommended physical distancing guidelines and we encourage everyone to wear a mask while outdoors. We ask that if you aren't feeling well to stay at home. We want to gather and keep everyone safe. The weather can be unpredictable, so make sure you dress in layers. Wear comfortable walking shoes.



## *Check Your Posture*

Whether you are sitting or standing, good posture has many benefits. When you are walking, check your posture. With good walking posture, you can walk farther and faster, and be able to breathe easier.

Each time you come to a stop during your walk, check your posture. Start by standing up straight and avoid leaning forward or backward, except when on a hill. Keep your eyes forward and focus your eyes about 20 feet in front of you so you can see your path.

Walking with the chin pointed down is a common mistake that can be hard on your neck. Keep your shoulders back and relaxed and don't forget to tighten your core muscles.

Your stride should feel natural.



*Pets can  
help ease  
stress.*

## *Give Yourself a Break!*

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought lots of questions and uncertainty and also created additional stress and anxiety for many of us. Follow these recommendations to help ease some of your anxiety related to COVID-19.

- Maintaining or creating a routine can ease the anxiety and help to navigate your day.
- Focus on what you can control.
- Rely on the things in your life that you can count on to be stable. Dwelling on what you think should happen might cause you to become frustrated.
- Manage stress by being physically active, eating healthy, and getting enough sleep.
- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including those on social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.
- Avoid excessive alcohol and drug use. Make time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
- Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling. Connect with your community or faith-based organizations. While social distancing measures are in place, consider connecting online, through social media, or by phone or mail.

## L.I.F.T. Strong and Move More

Are you wanting to learn and practice exercises that are designed and evidence-based to help improve strength, flexibility and balance? Would you like to make new friends and build community connections?

L.I.F.T. is the Lifelong Improvements through Fitness Together program designed by Virginia Tech. This program promotes team building and healthy lifestyle behaviors for adults of all ages and fitness levels. We will meet twice each week for 8 weeks. The exercises are easily modified to be easier or more difficult depending on your physical ability.

To join this exercise group is easy! Just complete the necessary paperwork that includes Informed Consent and an individual Function Fitness Test. Call the Swain Extension (828) 488-3848 to set up a time to complete the forms.

To maintain physical distancing guidelines, the class will be limited to 8 participants. We want to gather in a safe environment. We ask that if you are feeling sick or have a temperature to please stay home.

*Harden SM, Wilson ML, Estabrooks PA, and Members of the Physical Activity Leadership Team of Virginia Cooperative Extension. (2018). Lifelong Improvements through Fitness Together Program Manual. Blacksburg, VA: Virginia Tech.*



### L.I.F.T. STRONG & MOVE MORE

Tuesdays and Thursdays  
10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

*\*we will begin meeting when we can do so safely. We will continue to monitor the County Alert System and follow the current COVID-19 guidelines.*

If you're interested in being notified, please call  
(828) 488-3848.

Classes will be held at the  
Swain Extension office  
60 Almond School Rd.

*Registration required \* Limited to 8 participants*

- No need to wear special clothes – just comfortable, loose-fitting pants and shirt, along with sturdy, closed-toe walking shoes.
- Always start low, slow and small.
- You can expect some soreness, but we want to avoid any new pain.
- Always respect your own range of motion.
- Know and respect your limitations.
- If it hurts, don't do it.
- Exercises will be demonstrated for various physical fitness levels.



## Sweetie Pies Recipe Challenge

.For the love of pie, get your recipes out and rise to the Sweetie Pies Recipe Challenge. We are happy to partner with Swain County 4-H to offer this fun and tasty recipe challenge for all ages.

### Recipe challenge guidelines:

- Submit a photograph of the finished pie and a description of why this is your favorite pie along with the recipe you used.
- Pie entries may only be dessert pies (no savory pies such as pot pies, quiches, or meat pies).
- The pie categories will be Fruit Single Crust, Fruit Double Crust, Cream Pies and Custard Pies with either Homemade or Purchased Pie Crusts.
- Contestants can enter more than one pie.
- Contest runs from April 5th through April 29th.
- All ages are welcome to enter!
- "Family" made pie entries are encouraged and accepted.

### There are three ways to enter:

1. Post your favorite pie recipe on the Swain County Extension's Facebook "Sweetie Pie Recipe Challenge" post before 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 29th .
2. Mail your favorite pie recipe to: Swain County Cooperative Extension, 60 Almond School Road, Bryson City, NC 28713
3. Email your recipe to: [dee\\_decker@ncsu.edu](mailto:dee_decker@ncsu.edu)

### Categories:

- Fruit Pies Single Crust (Homemade or Purchased Crust),
- Fruit Pies Double Crust (Homemade or Purchased Crust)
- Cream Pies (Homemade or Purchased Crust)
- Cream Pies (Purchased Crust),
- Custard Pies (Homemade Crust or Purchased Crust)

### Pie Judging:

- Attractiveness and appeal of pie (based on photo)
- Creativeness and uniqueness of pie
- Delicious sounding/appealing pie recipe
- Pie recipe's story (why it's your favorite).
- Pies made with homemade crusts and purchased crusts will be judged in separate categories.

## Senior Adults Activity Kits

Check out these activity kits that you can pick-up between March 15th - March 30th.

- **Bird Seed Ornaments Kit.** Give the birds a gift and welcome them to your bird feeder with these bird seed ornaments. Also, included is information about common birds in North Carolina.
- **Arts and Crafts Kit.** Have fun exploring your creativity while coloring and using watercolors. Everything you need - coloring pages, pencils, watercolors and brushes are included.
- **Brain Games & Puzzles Kit.** Have fun exercising your brain while answering trivia questions, working crossword puzzles and solving sudoku challenges.

**Wildflowers Kit.** Plant pollinators and wildflowers.. Enjoy spreading the seed of joy with these kits that will keep on giving.

Supplies are limited so make sure you reserve your kit by calling the Swain County Extension at (828) 488-3848.



# Stay Connected

The Swain Extension is here for you.

Check out our website at [swain.ces.ncsu.edu/](http://swain.ces.ncsu.edu/)

Like us on facebook to view upcoming events and important news.



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## Exercise Your Brain Television Shows

Put this list of tv shows in order of when they first appeared, starting with the earliest broadcast date.

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. Bonanza
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. Dr. Kildare
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. Jeopardy!
- \_\_\_\_\_ d. What's My Line
- \_\_\_\_\_ e. Perry Mason



Television: What's My Line (1950), Perry Mason (1957), Bonanza (1959), Dr. Kildare (1961), Jeopardy (1964)

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*When  
spring is  
near ...*

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EXTENSION



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