



THE Y AXIS



Why You Should Eat Like a Nordic Explorer

What if you crossed paths with Nordic explorer Erik Thorvaldsson (aka "Old Norse") back in the year 950?



He'd probably give you a few tips on how to survive in the frigid North.

Stay warm. Respect the sea. Watch the weather. And eat plenty of fish, berries, root vegetables, nuts, legumes, and whole grains. Today, it's called the Nordic Diet.

And it's a healthy way to cut your risk for heart disease, diabetes, and other chronic diseases, according to new research.⁶

Want to be healthier and live longer? Eat like a Nordic explorer.

COMMENTS?

Send comments to the editor:

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Hustle to Keep Your Brain Healthy

Exercise helps protect your brain as you age

When actress Nancy Daly started noticing her mother was having trouble remembering things, she thought it might just be old age.

But it wasn't. She forgot how to drive. She turned favorite recipes made from scratch for years into a mess. She got frustrated getting dressed (her outfit was on backwards). And eventually, she even forgot the most important people in her life.

That's what Alzheimer's looks like.

- It's a progressive disease that damages memory and brain function.
- It's the seventh leading cause of death in the United States.
- About 6 million people in the U.S. have Alzheimer's, and that may rise to 12.7 million in the next 30 years.¹

"With Alzheimer's you lose them twice," says Daly. "You lose them when they don't remember you anymore. And you lose them again when they die."

There is no cure, but Daly hopes to change that. She created the Actors and Artists Unite to End Alzheimer's foundation to organize walking events to raise money for research.

And that may be just the thing to keep your brain healthy. A recent study found that exercise can improve brain activity, function and memory, and may help slow the progress of Alzheimer's.²

What else can you do to keep your brain healthy?

- Eat a plant-based diet.
- Build strong social bonds with others.
- Keep learning.
- Get 7 to 8 hours of sleep a night.
- Manage stress in healthy ways.
- Don't smoke, or quit if you do.
- And maintain a healthy weight.

MORE

Habits to help prevent Alzheimer's disease
<https://tinyurl.com/ybr628je>

Fiber-Rich Foods Help Lower Cholesterol

Healthy diet can reduce the need for medication

What's your cholesterol level? If you don't know, or haven't checked it in a while, schedule a simple blood test with your doctor.

A normal total cholesterol level is less than 200 mg/dL. If it's higher than that, it raises the risk for a heart attack or stroke.

- About 98 million adults in the U.S. have total cholesterol levels higher than 200 mg/dL.³
- Left unchecked, high cholesterol can slowly block blood vessels and arteries without any symptoms.

Is there anything you can do about high cholesterol? Your food choices have a lot to do with cholesterol levels.

Food vs. medicine to control cholesterol

Statin drugs are widely used to control cholesterol. But new research suggests a fiber-rich diet can also be a good way to control cholesterol.⁴



- **Food to control cholesterol.** Data from the American College of Cardiology and the American Heart Association shows lifestyle medicine and nutrition can help control cholesterol.
- **Food vs. medicine.** In a University of Toronto study, researchers compared the results of a fiber-rich diet to statin drugs to control cholesterol.
- **Lower cholesterol without medication.** After a month, researchers found that eating foods high in fiber helped lower cholesterol just as well as taking medication.



Banana Nut Muffins

Who says breakfast muffins are nothing more than donuts in disguise? Make these healthy Banana Nut Muffins with whole-grain flour to start the day out right.⁷

Ingredients

- 1-1/2 C walnuts, chopped
- 5 T canola oil
- 1 T walnut oil
- 1/4 C brown sugar
- 1 egg
- 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 C non-fat plain Greek yogurt (or non-dairy alternative)
- 5 ripe bananas, mashed
- 1-1/2 C whole-grain flour
- 1-1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp salt

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350° F. Line muffin tin with paper liners.
2. Whisk oils, brown sugar, egg, vanilla, and yogurt in mixing bowl.
3. Stir in bananas and walnuts.
4. Add flour, baking powder, and salt. Mix well.
5. Place 1/4 cup batter in each muffin cup.
6. Bake for 23 to 25 minutes, or until nicely browned.

Makes 18 muffins.
180 calories per muffin.

Beat Stress: Chill Out to Avoid These 5 Health Problems

Study: Stress linked to 5 major health problems

Are you stressed out? Work, relationships, money problems, family matters, and major life events can be stressful. It happens. A little stress is a normal part of life.

But what if you're always feeling stressed out? Researchers at Northwestern University wanted to find out.⁵

They looked at 80 studies on stress and health problems. They found that people living with chronic stress also have higher levels of the stress hormone cortisol throughout the day.

Cortisol helps your body turn food into energy. It helps your body respond to stress. And it helps control blood pressure.

But instead of normal ups and downs in cortisol levels, the most stressed out people don't see a change. Levels stay high. And that's a problem.

Researchers found that people with chronic stress and elevated cortisol levels are more likely to suffer from these five health problems:

1. Depression
2. Fatigue
3. Obesity
4. Cancer
5. Autoimmune disorders



Manage stress in healthy ways

If you are stressed out, take action to manage stress in healthy ways, like:

- Get regular exercise and 7-8 hours of sleep.
- Practice relaxing with yoga, meditation, and deep breathing.
- Work with a counselor to change behaviors, develop healthy habits, and set goals to reduce stress.

MORE

Harvard: Best ways to beat stress
<http://tinyurl.com/yccxodhd>

Fiber-Rich Foods Help Lower Cholesterol (continued from page 1)

What foods are high in fiber?

In the study, people ate:

- Oats
- Barley
- Psyllium
- Okra
- Eggplant

Other foods high in fiber include:

- Avocados
- Pears
- Squash
- Berries
- Legumes,
- Nuts & seeds

Eat these fiber-rich foods to help control cholesterol, improve your health, and lower the risk for a heart attack or stroke.

MORE

11 foods that lower cholesterol
<https://tinyurl.com/s6y4j7np>

References

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7. Harvard University. (2018). Whole wheat banana nut muffins. *The Nutrition Source*. From: <https://tinyurl.com/y73mfztd>



Take the September Health Challenge!

Follow the Mediterranean Diet: Eat more fresh foods & healthy fats

Ask the Wellness Doctor:

This month Dr. Don Hall answers the question:
How can I improve my gut health?