



MEAP Quarterly Spring 2022

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Special points of interest:

- *Taking care of the aging brain.*
- *Taking time to strengthen our backbone.*
- *Taking care of your physical health*
- *Taking care of your fur-kids*
- *Taking time to enjoy dessert.*

As we age, we all start to notice changes in our cognitive processing abilities. Not being able to recall or delayed recall is frustrating, especially as we have to juggle daily responsibilities. Listed below are some proven strategies to keep your memory sharp.

1. Keep learning! Read, join a book club, work on cross word puzzles, Sudoku puzzles, and or volunteer utilizing a skill you don't necessarily use or develop a new skill to keep the connections strong. Try taking a new route home or to work, challenge your brain.

2. Use your senses. The more your senses are engaged in learning, the more the brain is engaged in retaining that memory. The olfactory, taste, and hearing senses are strong when paired with memory recall. So, while eating, play the game of guess the ingredients.

3. Economize your brain. Take advantage of planners, calendars,

address books etc., to keep routine information accessible, so your brain can focus on the more important information you want to learn.

4. Repeat what you want to learn. If you want to remember an idea or what you just read, or heard, write it down or repeat it out loud. Are you a visual learner? If so, write it down. Are you an auditory learner? If so, say it out loud or record it on your phone. Reinforce those connections.

5. Space it out. Spaced rehearsal improves the ability of recall. Don't just try to cram information like your studying for a test you forgot about, instead study the essentials over longer increasingly periods of time—once a hour, then every few hours, then every day, etc.

6. Make a mnemonic. Who remembers E, B,G, D, F from music class? It's a creative way to remember something and it works!

7. Socialize regularly. By socializing, our brains are actively engaged and we make

new connections. Socializing also helps decrease depression and or stress, which are all contributors to memory loss.

8. Become more physically active. Physical activity increases the blood flow to the body's organs, including the most important organ, your brain.

9. Eat brain healthy foods. Try to increase the consumption of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and healthy fats. If fruit and or vegetables go bad before you eat them, buy frozen. Frozen fruit and vegetables saves you money in the long run (no waste) and you can portion out your fruit and or heat up your vegetables for the day.

By making these small changes to our lives, we can improve neurotransmitter health and produce dopamine, serotonin, norepinephrine, thus increasing the chances of living a longer healthier life.



Four Easy Strengthening Exercises to Reduce Lower Back Pain.

According to a 2020 study by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), one in four people had experienced lower back pain in the past three months. To help alleviate pain, doctors often recommend, aerobic exercises, such as walking, swimming, yoga or bicycling. However, if you are not able to do any of the above exercises, there are additional back strengthening exercises that can be done and are relatively easy to do at home and or work.

1. **Supine leg rocking.** Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet on the floor. Gently rock your legs

back and forth from left to right. This loosens the hips and lower body. Do two sets of 10 reps. (From one side to the other would be one rep.)

2. **Cat Pose.** This pose, commonly used in yoga, is great for stretching the lower back. Start on your hands and knees with your fingers pointed straight ahead. Inhale and slowly arch your back. Hold for three seconds, then exhale and round your back (cat), dropping your head and raising your shoulders. Repeat at minimal seven times.

3. **Supine heel slides.** Lie on your back with your knees

bent. Slowly slide out one leg to a straight position, then slide it back up. Do the same with the other leg. Don't hold your breath on these. To facilitate the slide, wear socks or put a towel under your feet. Do two sets of 10 reps for each leg.

4. **Bird dog.** Get on your hands and knees and keep your back flat. Lift one arm so it forms a straight line with your back, return to starting position, then lift the other arm. With both hands on the ground, extend the legs, one at a time. Then try to

combine the moves—raising left arm and right leg together, then right arm and left leg together. Do one set of eight reps, each rep being arm and opposite leg together or one arm or leg at a time (depending on ability). Hold each lift for three seconds. Stop if you have pain or trouble holding a position.



Nearby Parks Await Your Visit....

Are you looking for a change in scenery or maybe a new Park to discover this spring? Well, we got some for you!

The Friendship Botanic Gardens located in Michigan City, IN., is nestled off Rt 12 and contains four walking trails, children's discovery play area, and multiple garden sites from around the world. Please be sure to check them out at: <https://friendshipbotanicgardens.org/>.

The Madeline Bertrand County Park located over the border in Niles, MI has it all! The park has trails for walking, biking, covered shelters, picnic areas, children's playground and a challenging 18-hole disk golf course. Did I also mention it's pet friendly? Yes, pets are welcomed, but must remain on a leash. Please visit their website for more details: <https://berriencounty.org/1298/Madeline-Bertrand-County-Park>.

Looking to canoe, kayak, hike and or camp? Well, Tippecanoe River State Park is just for you! Located in Winamac IN., this park features 23 miles of trails, 12 miles for hiking and 9 miles for hiking/horse riding. The park also has a boat ramp and plenty of fishing spots. Please be sure to check out the State DNR website at: <https://www.in.gov/dnr/state-parks/parks-lakes/tippecanoe-river-state-park/>.

Please be sure to get out this Spring and visit the many parks we have located here in Northern, IN. and Southwest, MI.

A body in motion stays in motion!



Healthy Spring Habits to Develop a Healthier You in 2022

It's that time again to shake off winter hibernation habits and get yourself into a healthier you. Listed below are some free and easy healthy habits to develop and implement to get a healthier you.

1. **Drink more water!** Easy, right? We know it gets boring, so add some fresh lemon or lemon juice for flavor. Zero Calories!
2. **Go to bed 10 minutes early.** 10 x 7=70 more minutes of sleep a week. At the end of the year, that will be an extra 60 hours of sleep. Amazing!
3. **Brush and floss your**

teeth. Healthier gums and teeth can lead to decreased heart and brain infections.

4. **Control your food portions.** Portion control is difficult, especially when we've been bored eating during the winter. Please visit: <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/portion-control> for more helpful tips on portion control.

5. **Take time away from screens and reconnect.**

6. **Work on your posture.** Your mom was right, sit up straight! Avoid slouching.

7. **Spend more time with family and friends.** Live,

laugh and love.

8. **Make it a habit to appreciate all that you have.** It's too easy to lose sight of all we have in front of us when we're chasing the future. Send a loved one a quick text, note, or card reminding them they are loved and appreciated. Spend that time with your loved ones (two and four legged).

9. **Mind your manners.** Let's get back to the basics with, "please and thank you". These words mean a lot in demonstrating respect and showing appreciation.

10. **Dedicate 5 minutes of your lunch break to walking.** Walking will aid in digestion and get's you moving, which is great for stress relief .

Also be sure to visit your local parks and or walking/bike paths for some additional healthy time outdoors.



Fur-Kid Corner

According to the ASPCA, over 23 million American households adopted a pet during Covid. This kind of news always makes our hearts happy. However, it can also be frustrating when trying to get your current or new furry loved one in to see a veterinarian for routine and or emergency care.

There are many wonderful local Vets who provide outstanding care to our furry ones and having a good relationship with your Vet is essential to the continuity of care provided.

However, there are unforeseen times when our furry ones need care before the established Vet can see them. So, here are some local care resources to help with preventive and emergency care services.

For preventive care services, Preventive Pet Health of Michiana, is located near downtown South Bend. Contact them at 574-355-3444, or <https://www.preventativepethealth.com>.

Emergency **after-hour** care on the **weekends** can be found at

the North Central Veterinary Emergency Center in Mishawaka on Friday's starting at 7:00 PM until Monday morning at 8:00 AM. The Mishawaka office information is as follows: 574-544-6200 or <https://ncvec.com/mishawaka>.

The main North Central Veterinary Emergency Center located in Westville is a 24/7/365 staffed emergency center. The Westville center's contact is as follows: 219-785-7300 or <https://ncvec.com/westville>

Also, don't forget to talk to your Vet and get your furry loved one microchipped and or checked to make sure your registration information is up to date .



Michiana EAP

818 E. Jefferson Blvd
South Bend, IN 46617

Phone: 574-287-1879
1-800-388-0154
Fax: 574-234-6025

We're on the web!

<https://aarcinfo.org/services/meap>

MEAP

Spring Desserts

Strawberry—Chocolate Greek Yogurt Bark

Ingredients

- 3 cups whole-milk plain Greek yogurt
- ¼ cup pure maple syrup or honey
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 ½ cups sliced strawberries (you can also add blueberries and or your favorite nut)
- ¼ cup mini chocolate chips



Instructions

- **Step One:** Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
- **Step Two:** Stir yogurt, maple syrup (or honey) and vanilla in a medium bowl. Spread on the prepared baking sheet into a 10-by-15-inch rectangle. Scatter the strawberries on top and sprinkle with chocolate chips
- **Step Three:** Freeze until very firm, at least 3 hours. To serve, cut or break into 32 pieces.

Nutrition Facts

Serving size: One 1 3/4-by-2 1/2-inch piece

Per Serving: 34 calories; protein 2g; carbohydrates 4g; dietary fiber 0.2g; sugars 3.5g; fat 1.3g; saturated fat 0.8g; cholesterol 2.8mg; vitamin a iu 19.7IU; vitamin c 4.6mg; folate 2mcg; calcium 27.7mg; iron 0.1mg; magnesium 3.1mg; potassium 44.8mg; sodium 7.6mg; added sugar 2g.

To read additional questions and comments regarding the recipe, please go to: <https://www.eatingwell.com/recipe/259080/strawberry-chocolate-greek-yogurt-bark/>

As we continue with times of uncertainty, Michiana EAP is available to you and your family members.

In our attempt to continue to limit the spread of COVID-19 our office has opted in to utilizing telehealth services, which include scheduling appointments to occur via video using the HIPPA-Compliant Platform, Doxy.

To schedule an initial appointment, simply call our office at 574-287-1879.