

# on the Light Side

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## Keep produce fresh and safe

Summertime offers us a bountiful supply of fresh fruits and vegetables. Whether you have your own garden, shop at the farmer's market or make purchases at your local grocery store, it is easy to consume the recommended five to nine servings of fruits and vegetables each day.

Another important thing in the consumption of fruits and vegetables is how properly wash and store them.

### Tip No. 1: Know which fruits ripen after they're picked.

Apricots, bananas, cantaloupe, kiwi, nectarines, peaches, pears, plantains and plums continue to ripen after they're picked. The tomato, which is actually a fruit, also continues to ripen after picking.

Fruits that you should pick or buy ripe and ready-to-eat include apples, cherries, grapefruit, grapes, oranges, pineapple, strawberries, tangerines and watermelon.



To speed the ripening of fruits such as peaches, pears and plums, put them on a windowsill or in a loosely closed brown paper bag at room temperature. Plastic bags do not work for ripening.

### Tip No. 2: Wash fruits & vegetables.

To extend the life of fruits and veggies, wash and cut immediately before eating. The more exposed the produce is to air, the quicker it will deteriorate.

*The Food and Drug Administration recommend the following preparation tips for fresh produce:*

- Many pre-cut, bagged produce items like lettuce are pre-washed. If so, it will be stated on the packaging. This pre-washed, bagged produce can be used without further washing. However, as an extra measure of caution, you can wash the produce again just before you use it. Pre-cut or pre-washed produce in open bags should be washed before using.
- Begin with clean hands. Wash your hands for 20 seconds with warm water and soap before and after preparing fresh produce.
- Cut away any damaged or bruised areas on fresh fruits and vegetables before preparing or eating. Produce that looks rotten should be discarded.
- Even if you plan to peel the produce before eating, it is still important to wash it first.
- Scrub firm produce, such as melons and cucumbers, with a clean produce brush. All unpacked fruits and vegetables, as well as those packaged

and not marked pre-washed, should be thoroughly washed before eating. This suggestion includes produce grown conventionally or organically at home, or produce that is purchased from a grocery store or farmer's market. Wash fruits and vegetables under running water just before eating, cutting or cooking.

- Washing fruits and vegetables with soap, detergent or commercial produce washes is not recommended.
- Drying produce with a clean cloth towel or paper towel may further reduce bacteria that may be present.

### Tip No. 3: Keep fruits and vegetables separate in the refrigerator.

Store fruits in a refrigerator crisper drawer separate from the one in which you store vegetables. Fruits give off ethylene gas which can shorten the storage life of vegetables. Some vegetables give off odors that can be absorbed by fruits and affect their quality.

### Tip No. 4: Refrigerate fruits and vegetables in perforated plastic bags.

This helps maintain moisture yet provides for air flow. Unperforated plastic bags can lead to the growth of mold or bacteria. If you don't have perforated bags, use a knife to make several small holes in a food-grade plastic bag (about 20 holes per medium-size bag).

For additional information on fruit and vegetables online, check out [www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/). The site is loaded with information on serving sizes, recipes & tips on how to include adequate servings every day; there's even a fruit and veggie calculator!

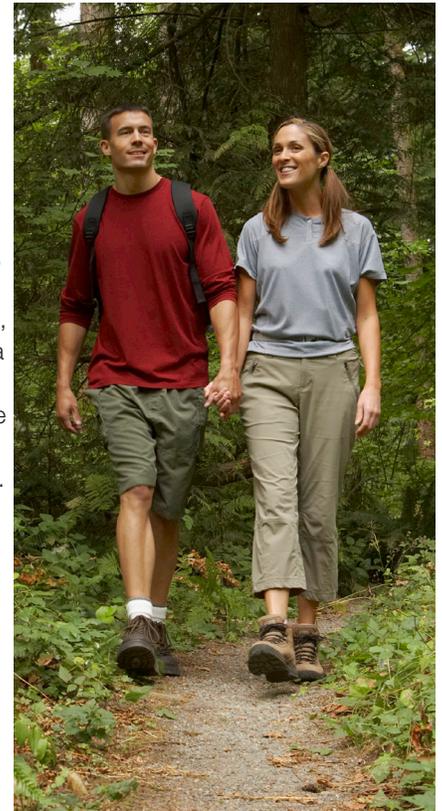


On the Light Side is written by Jenny Thompson, Registered Dietitian

# Ten ways to make walking more fun

**R**ecently the American Podiatric Medical Society ran a list of alternative activities for people who felt their walks were just too boring. A walk can provide an exhilarating workout or simply a release of tension and break from too much sitting. With such easy access and so little cost or hassle, a walk is just too good of an exercise option to, well, walk away from.

1. Keep a pair of walking shoes and socks in your car. If, during your day, you pass a tempting park or an alluring pathway, stop long enough to slip on your shoes and take a stroll. Even 10 minutes is a nice break and will boost your health.
2. Find a buddy for at least two walks a week. Meeting a friend is always a good way to cement a relationship with them and with walking.
3. Boost fitness and fat burning with interval training. This simply means: Warm up, walk steady and add increasing bursts of fast walking. Interval training increases your endurance, cardiovascular fitness and burns more fat than steady-paced walking.
4. Access hills for at least a one-day-a-week heart-healthy challenge. If the place you live is flat, find some stadium stairs or other architectural feature to include in a walk. Stair-climbing is a fast, efficient workout.
5. Seek out soothing scenery. "Breathing in" the greenery can soothe your soul and reduce the effects of stress.
6. Walk and talk. Got calls to make? Clip on your headset and take your cell phone to the road. You can talk while you walk, and swing your arms for release of shoulder tension.
7. Try a pair of walking poles. You'll burn some extra calories and get a synergistic workout without the muscle strain that can occur from walking with weights.
8. Head for town or for the mall. Sometimes nature just isn't calling. Walking errands you normally drive to can give you a different perspective on your neighborhood and having a specific destination can make the walk seem more purposeful.
9. Try out some tunes. Listening to music is always an invigorating option. Or download a podcast or pick up an audiobook from your local library and listen while you walk.
10. Don't forget the dog. Your pet needs exercise, too! And few dogs can say no to an outstretched leash. If your pet is a lousy walker, consider some obedience training classes.



## Mixed Vegetable Pasta

8 servings

- 1/2 cup reduced sodium chicken broth
- 6 oz. whole grain or whole wheat spaghetti, uncooked
- 1 cup broccoli florets
- 1 cup thinly sliced carrots
- 1 cup sliced zucchini
- 1/4 cup sliced onion
- 1 small sweet yellow pepper, cut in strips
- 1 cup sliced fresh mushrooms
- 1 small tomato, cut into eight wedges
- 2 Tbsp white cooking wine
- 1/3 cup Parmesan cheese

Cook pasta according to package directions. Drain and set aside. Coat a large nonstick skillet with nonstick spray. Place over medium heat until hot. Add the chicken broth, broccoli, carrots, zucchini and onion. Sauté four minutes. Add pepper strips and mushrooms and sauté four minutes longer. Add tomato and cooking wine. Cook until thoroughly heated. Sprinkle with cheese; toss gently. Serve immediately.

Calories: 115 • Fat: 2g • Carbohydrate: 21g  
Sodium: 91mg

## Confetti Slaw & Poppy-Seed Dressing

four 2/3-cup servings

- 2 Tbsp cider vinegar
- 1-1/2 tsp honey
- 1-1/2 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1-1/2 tsp chopped fresh dill
- 1 tsp poppy seeds
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 1/4 tsp pepper
- 1 cup thinly sliced green cabbage
- 1 cup thinly sliced red cabbage
- 1/2 cup grated carrots

Combine first seven ingredients in a bowl. Add cabbage and carrots; toss to coat.

Calories: 40 • Fat: 2g • Saturated fat: 0 • Carbohydrate: 6g  
Fiber: 1g • Sodium: 55mg

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