

# Heart WELLNESS

Live life with a full and healthy heart

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February 2020



Take charge of your health and put yourself on the path to wellness. Health and wellness means living life fully with vitality and meaning. Wellness looks different for each individual and evolves as our lifestyles change.

Heart Health is something that we can continually work to improve on a daily basis. From the food we eat and our physical activity, to the stress we experience and how we manage it. They are all factors that contribute to our long term heart health.



[www.WellnessAtoZ.org](http://www.WellnessAtoZ.org)

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Understanding the stress connection for a healthy heart

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Dr. Shaista Malik, a cardiologist with UCI Health and director of the Susan Samueli Integrative Health Institute shares, "To optimize physical wellness, it is critical to pay attention to the mind."

Behaviors and factors such as high blood pressure, cholesterol levels, smoking, physical inactivity, and overeating increase chances of heart disease. While researchers are further exploring if there is a direct relationship between stress and heart disease, stress does affect the behaviors and factors that lead to heart disease.

When we experience stress, it activates more than 1,400 biochemical responses including a rise in blood pressure and increased heart rate. When the part of the brain that is triggered by stress is fed by stress responses, it causes more stress, creating a cycle of stress.

Common stress symptoms can appear in different ways such as a headache, back strain, stomach pains, low energy, or you could feel sleepy, moody, forgetful, and out of control. So, next time you are experiencing these symptoms, take a moment to reflect on your stress levels.

If you are not naturally a calm person, nor can you change the events in your life that make you feel stressed, you can learn techniques to help manage how you react to stressful circumstances. Some ways that have been scientifically proven to reduce stress include the following: acupuncture, tai chi, yoga, meditation and "4-7-8" breathing techniques. Something that tai chi, yoga, and meditation all have in common are deep breathing. Deep breathing helps the brain's flight or fight responses shift to a relaxation response.

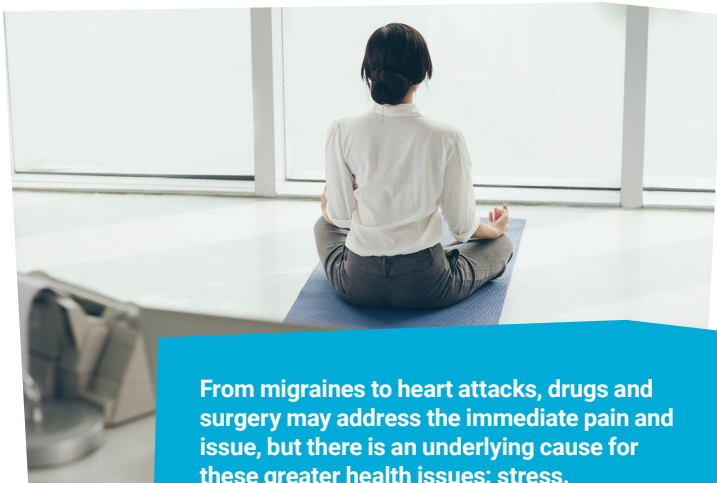
**4-7-8 Breathing Exercise:** Learn how to calm yourself with this simple technique that you can do anywhere!

1. Inhale for a count of 4
2. Hold your breath for a count of 7
3. Exhale for a count of 8

Other ways to manage your stress for a healthy heart are:

- Exercising
- Maintaining a positive attitude
- Not smoking
- Limit caffeine intake
- Healthy diet
- Healthy weight

*Information derived from [heart.org](http://heart.org) and [ucihealth.org](http://ucihealth.org)*



From migraines to heart attacks, drugs and surgery may address the immediate pain and issue, but there is an underlying cause for these greater health issues: stress.



## PlayWELL

### Exercises that boost heart health

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Being physically active is a good way to maintain a healthy weight, strengthen your heart muscle, and ward off artery damage from high cholesterol and high blood pressure that can lead to heart attack or stroke. According to exercise physiologist Kerry Stewart, Ed.D., aerobic exercise and resistance training are the most important exercises for heart health. Flexibility also plays a significant role because while there is not a direct correlation to heart health, flexibility is important for good performance in aerobic exercise and resistance training. Check out more details about how these exercises positively impact your heart health:

#### Aerobic exercise

**What it does:** Aerobic exercise improves circulation, which results in lowered blood pressure and heart rate and how well your heart pumps blood. Aerobic exercise also helps to reduce the risk of Type 2 diabetes and, if you already live with diabetes, can help you maintain.

**How much:** Ideally, you should get 30 minutes of aerobic exercise a day, at least five days a week.

**Examples:** Brisk walking, running, swimming, cycling, playing tennis, and jumping rope. Doctors recommend doing 180 minutes of aerobic exercise each week.

#### Resistance training

**What it does:** Resistance training can be helpful for people who carry a lot of body fat, especially around the belly area, which could be a risk factor for heart disease. Resistance training also helps reduce fat and have leaner muscle mass.

**How much:** "At least two nonconsecutive days per week of resistance training is a good rule of thumb," according to the American College of Sports Medicine.

**Examples:** Free weights (such as hand weights, dumbbells or barbells), weight machines, resistance bands, or through body-resistance exercises, such as push-ups, squats and chin-ups.

#### Stretching, flexibility, and balance

**What they do:** There is not a direct correlation between flexibility and heart health. However, flexibility helps to improve your musculoskeletal health. Improving your musculoskeletal health helps you to be more flexible and avoid joint pain, cramping and other issues. With strong musculoskeletal health, you can optimize your aerobic and strength training exercise.

**How much:** Daily. Before and after other exercise.

**Examples:** Check with your doctor for stretch recommendations you can do at home, there are also DVDs and YouTube videos with great stretches that you can reference; Tai chi and yoga also help with improving flexibility. Check your local community for classes.

*Information derived from [hopkinsmedicine.org](http://hopkinsmedicine.org)*



Physical activity plays an important role in having good heart health.



## EatWELL

### Strawberry Vanilla Overnight Oats

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**Calories: 321**   **Carbohydrates: 42g**  
**Sugar: 10g**   **Fiber: 9g**  
**Sodium: 87mg**   **Protein: 15g**  
**Total fat: 11g**

*Recipe and photo adapted from the recipe blog at [fitfoodiefinds.com](http://fitfoodiefinds.com)*

Are you looking for a healthy grab n' go breakfast for your morning rush? Overnight oatmeal might be your answer. It's a quick preparation, and once it's prepared, you just grab and go the next morning. The best part is that oats are a powerfood for heart health.

#### Strawberry Vanilla Overnight Oatmeal

##### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup Greek Yogurt
- 1 cup unsweetened vanilla almond milk (or any kind of milk)
- 1 cup strawberries, sliced
- 1.5 cups rolled oats
- 3 tablespoons chia seeds
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 tablespoon honey

##### DIRECTIONS:

1. Blend Greek yogurt, almond milk, honey, and strawberries together.
2. Next, place the mixture into a medium-size bowl and mix in 3 tablespoons chia seeds and 1 teaspoon vanilla. Then, mix in rolled oatmeal.
3. Place in refrigerator overnight or for at least 2 hours.



# WorkWELL

What does wellness mean to you?

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Visit [phoenixchamberfoundation.com/wellness-atoz-ambassador](http://phoenixchamberfoundation.com/wellness-atoz-ambassador) to learn more and fill out the application.

## AMBASSADOR HIGHLIGHT

### What does wellness mean to you?

One of my favorite quotes is: "If you have a body, you are an athlete." I love this quote because each of us gets the opportunity to wake up each day and make decisions that will lead to a healthier life. We get to make the choice about what health and wellness means to us. It's not "one size fits all." To me, wellness means that you are taking care of yourself through physical activity, healthy eating, getting your finances in order, having the right mind-set, getting preventive screenings/exams done, and being social. It is holistic, not just about how much you weight.

### How long have you been with U-Haul International?

I have been with U-Haul for four years now and love every single day I get to come to work!

### Do you have a wellness goal?

I do! Wellness is not always easy, even when it's your job to help others become the healthiest versions of themselves they can be. You can still have your hard days. So, my goal is remembering that and accepting that it is okay not to be perfect. My BIG goal is that I would like to do a full Ironman in the next three years. I did a half-Ironman, and that was my goal then, but now it's time to see if I can do the whole thing.

### Which challenges do you face in achieving your goal?

Time management. Every day, I preach that you need to take time for yourself and keep to a schedule that allows you to do it. For example, two days a week, I work out in the morning at 4:30 a.m. I learned that if I prep my food, clothes, and stuff for work the day before, I will make that workout. I am not ashamed to admit that to make sure I get to that workout on time, I sleep in the workout clothes I'm going to wear the next day! It works for me! You have to try different things to see what will work for you and stick with it.

### How has your workplace helped you in achieving your goal?

I don't know if I could reach my goal if I didn't work here. They are the most supportive company. U-Haul Company's mission is to create a positive, healthy environment and provide benefits to help team members reach their health goals. When I trained for my half-Ironman, I used my registered-dietitian reimbursement benefit to learn how to eat during that type of training. I also ran my first marathon with Team U-Haul at the Marine Corps Marathon in 2018. They understand the work-life balance and provide benefits to reach your health goals, no matter what the goal is.



**Monique Wantland,  
U-Haul International**

[WellnessAtoZ.org/WorkWell](http://WellnessAtoZ.org/WorkWell)

## WELLCommunity

Spend some time helping out around the Japanese Friendship Garden

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February is a month to celebrate friendships and what better way to celebrate and reflect on friendships than at the Japanese Friendship Garden. There are plenty volunteer opportunities for everyone. Check out the Japanese Friendship Garden to learn how you can support the garden. Whether its planting plants, helping at the office, raking leaves, or spreading compost, there is something to do!

**Come with a friend, coworkers, by yourself, or with a group of friends to help around the Japanese Friendship Garden in Downtown Phoenix.**



[www.WellnessAtoZ.org](http://www.WellnessAtoZ.org)  
**Greater Phoenix Chamber Foundation**  
201 N. Central Ave., Ste. 2700, Phoenix, AZ 85004