

# 2021

*A Fresh Start*

**living  
better**



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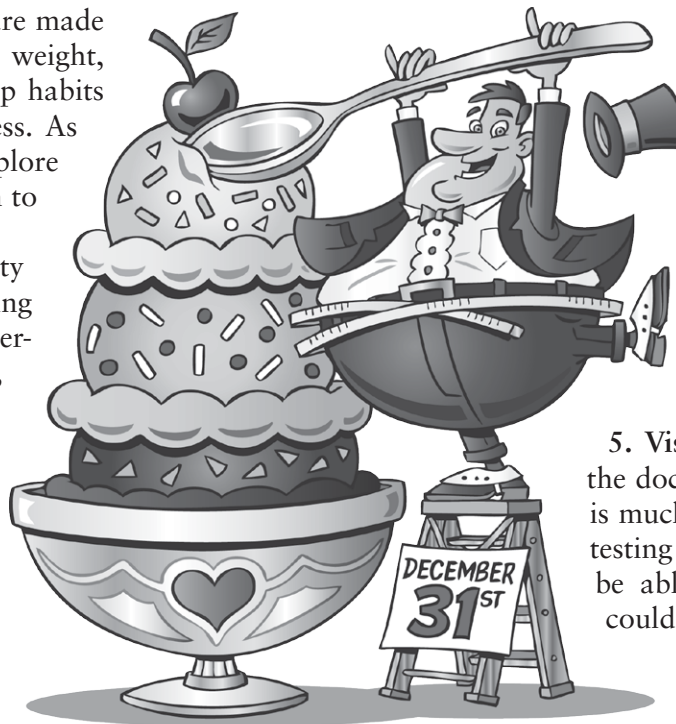
# 6 popular health-based resolutions

Resolutions that focus on health and fitness are made each year. Numerous people are eager to lose weight, improve their physical fitness levels or even stop habits that can hinder their mental or physical wellness. As the new year ticks closer, individuals can explore these popular resolutions as they get on the path to better health.

**1. Commit to quit.** The American Cancer Society says about half of all Americans who keep smoking will die due to the habit. Smoking kills more Americans than alcohol, car accidents, guns, HIV, and illegal drugs combined. Smoking not only causes cancer, it also damages nearly every part of the body, including the bones, reproductive organs, mouth, skin, eyes, and blood vessels. Quitting can help reverse the effects of years of smoking.

**2. Limit alcohol intake.** The phrase “everything in moderation” applies to alcohol consumption. Excessive consumption of alcohol can lead to liver and kidney damage. When these organs are not functioning properly, they cannot filter toxins out of the body, resulting in potentially irreparable damage. Resolve to cut down on alcohol consumption if you are drinking more than two drinks per day.

**3. Address stress.** It’s easy to underestimate the effects of stress on the mind and body. Left unchecked, stress can contribute to heart disease, obesity,



...For tomorrow, we diet!

diabetes, and high blood pressure, says the Mayo Clinic. Resolving to reduce stress by adopting certain techniques can improve self-esteem and mood.

**4. Exercise more readily.** Physician Partners of America states that exercise can improve mood and sleep, help people control their weight, reduce the risk of heart disease, improve bone and muscle strength, and potentially extend their lives. Resolving to exercise doesn’t require drastic changes. Small steps can add up to big results.

**5. Visit the doctor.** Too often people put off going to the doctor until something is wrong with their health. It is much better to be proactive and avoid illness through testing and conversations with a physician. Doctors may be able to recognize symptoms and risk factors that could be indicative of future illness. Routine physical exams also will check cholesterol and glucose levels, monitor blood pressure and include other preventive care options.

**6. Improve your diet.** Eating more meals made at home and incorporating more fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains and lean protein into your meals can improve overall health.

Healthy changes top the list of New Year’s resolutions each year. Certain resolutions can greatly improve overall health.

## 12 of the most commonly broken New Year’s resolutions

**1. Lose weight/exercise.** Everybody’s #1 goal, especially after adding a few holiday pounds. Unfortunately, it’s also the resolution most quickly broken. Researchers say 60 percent of gym memberships signed in January never get used and most of the rest are ignored by mid-February.

**2. Quit smoking.** Only an estimated 15 percent of people who try to quit remain cigarette-free after six months.

**3. Learn something new.** Learning French is harder than it sounds and becoming

a gourmet cook requires actually knowing your way around a kitchen. On the plus side, discovering these realities is like learning something new.

**4. Eat healthier.** Here’s a simple tip: Eat more food with one name and one ingredient, i.e. a tomato is always a tomato. Cut back on foods that come wrapped.

**5. Get out of debt/save money.** Related to #4: Fresh food is more expensive, but it costs less than a hospital bill.

**6. Spend more time with family. Friends too.**

**7. Watch less TV, spend less time on Facebook.** Doing either with family or friends doesn’t make it OK. Go outside. See actual people.

**8. Travel. Take your family. Go with friends.**

**9. Be less stressed. OK,** traveling with the kids might not be the best way to reduce stress, which plays a huge role in many medical conditions and chronic diseases. There are other options: exercise, yoga, meditation, taking a moment to chill each day.

**10. Get more sleep.** You probably need it. The Centers for Disease Control says one in three adults don’t get enough. That’s means at least seven hours each night if you’re between ages 18 and 60.

**11. Volunteer.** Now get out of bed and go do something useful. Helping others helps you too. Need a start? Try UC San Diego Volunteer Services, who assist in patient care, education and research.

**12. Drink less.** Sure, a lot of research suggests alcohol consumption may confer distinct health benefits in moderation. That last word is key. Stay minimal, my friends.

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*New*  
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# Getting outdoors really is good for you

Being outdoors is fun, but even more importantly, it's good for the brain, body, and soul. Get up close and personal with Mother Nature.

## 1. BEING OUTDOORS BOOSTS YOUR ENERGY.

Craving another cup of coffee? Maybe you should skip the caffeine and sit outside instead. One study suggests that spending 20 minutes in the open air gives your brain an energy boost comparable to one cup of joe.

## 2. IT FEELS EASIER TO EXERCISE OUTDOORS.

Does it seem noticeably easier to exercise outside? This might be thanks to your verdant surroundings. In one small study, researchers had cyclists pedal in front of green, grey, and red video footage. The bikers who exercised in front of the green reported feeling less physical exertion and more positive moods—meaning that grass, trees, and plants might add a psychological energy boost to your workout.

**3. THE OUTDOORS IS GOOD FOR YOUR VISION.** Research shows that elementary school students who spend more time outdoors are less likely to develop nearsightedness.

**4. NATURAL SUNLIGHT HELPS MITIGATE PAIN.** In one study, surgery patients who were exposed to high-intensity sunlight reported less stress and marginally less pain, and therefore took less pain medication.

**5. THE OUTDOORS BOOSTS YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM.** Scientists think that breathing in phytoncides—airborne chemicals produced by plants—increases our levels of white blood cells, helping us fight off infections and diseases.

**6. THE OUTDOORS PROVIDES YOU WITH FREE AROMATHERAPY.** According to science, you really should stop and smell the flowers. Research



Saying so long to television binging sessions will boost your energy, help mitigate pain and boost your immune system

shows that natural scents like roses, freshly cut grass, and pine make you feel calmer and more relaxed.

## 7. THE OUTDOORS ENHANCES CREATIVITY.

If you're struggling with writer's block, you might want to ditch your laptop for the great outdoors. Psychologists found that backpackers scored 50 percent higher on creativity tests after spending a few days in the wild sans electronics.

## 8. THE OUTDOORS HELPS WITH SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER.

In the winter, shorter days and lower light levels can trigger Seasonal Affective Disorder, or SAD—a reoccurring condition that's marked by symptoms of anxiety, exhaustion, and

sadness. Doctors say spending time outside can lessen SAD's severity—even if the weather's cold or overcast.

## 9. BEING OUTDOORS GIVES YOU YOUR DAILY DOSE OF VITAMIN D.

Vitamin D is essential for a well-functioning body. It helps us absorb calcium, it prevents osteoporosis, and it reduces inflammation, among other things. Although vitamin D is present in some foods, like salmon and fortified milk, we get more than 90 percent of our vitamin D from casual exposure to sunlight.

**10. THE OUTDOORS RESTORES YOUR FOCUS.** Can't concentrate at work? Leave your office for a few minutes and go stroll in a nearby park. Studies show that walking in nature helps restore our focus.

**11. THE OUTDOORS MAKES US BETTER PEOPLE.** According to psychologists, exposure to nature helps us shrug off societal pressures, allowing us to remember and value more important things like relationships, sharing, and community.

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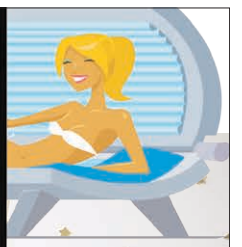
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## Video conferencing security tips

Though Zoom first launched its video conferencing software in 2013, that software did not become a fabric of many people's daily lives until 2020, when a global pandemic was declared and the world suddenly shifted to remote working and virtual learning en masse.

Video conferencing apps like Zoom helped people of all ages maintain connections with their families, friends and professional colleagues throughout the pandemic. In the rush to maintain those connections, security might have been placed on the back burner.

- Make each conferencing session unique. The FTC notes that some conferencing services allow users to use unique passwords and/or identification numbers for each conferencing session. These features are typically set up by session hosts and can reduce the likelihood of strangers entering meetings and accessing users' personal information. If you are not hosting sessions, urge hosts to utilize features that make passwords unique for each session.

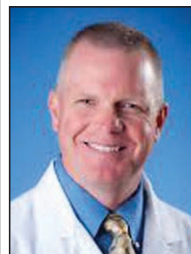
- Install conferencing app updates the moment they become available. Updates are typically designed in response to vulnerabilities discovered since the most recent version of a software was made available. Installing updates when they become available is a good way for video conference users to protect themselves against cyber criminals.

- Don't open invitations you don't recognize. The FTC notes that hackers are sending emails that mimic video conferencing invitations. When clicking on such invitations, users may unknowingly be downloading malware that can make their computers and personal information vulnerable to cyber criminals. If you receive an unexpected video conferencing invitation, contact the host separately before opening the invite.

- Protect your privacy at all times. Before using a video conferencing app, familiarize yourself with its privacy policies to determine how your information will be handled. Some apps may record conferencing sessions, so it's imperative that users read privacy policies prior to using an app.



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# Herbs and spices that can promote healthy hearts

A nutritious diet is a key component of a healthy lifestyle. When paired with regular physical activity, a nutritious diet can help people dramatically reduce their risk for various diseases, including heart disease.

Though some people may associate healthy diets with bland foods that lack flavor, people can incorporate various heart-healthy herbs and spices into their favorite dishes to make them more nutritious and flavorful.

- **Garlic:** Garlic has long since earned its place on the kitchen spice rack. However, botanically, garlic is neither an herb or a spice but a vegetable. Regardless of how it's classified, garlic is loaded with flavor and can be used to improve just about any recipe, all the while benefitting heart health. The United States-based health services provider Mercy Health notes that garlic can help lower blood pressure and reduce bad cholesterol levels.

- **Cayenne pepper:** Few ingredients may change a recipe as quickly as cayenne pepper. The addition of cayenne pepper can instantly make dishes more spicy. But cayenne pepper brings more than a little extra kick to the dinner table. Healthline notes that various studies have shown that capsaicin, the active ingredient in cayenne pepper, can provide a host of health benefits. One such study published in the *British Journal of Nutrition* found that adding capsaicin to a high-carbohydrate breakfast significantly reduced hunger and the desire to eat before lunch. Eating less can help people more effectively control their body weight, which in turn reduces their risk for heart disease.

- **Turmeric:** Garlic and even cayenne pepper may already be staples in many people's kitchens, but that's not necessarily so with turmeric. A yellow spice often used when preparing Indian foods, turmeric has anti-inflammatory properties thanks to curcumin, the part of turmeric responsible for giving it its yellow color. Experts acknowledge that turmeric needs to be studied more to definitively conclude its effects on heart health, but WebMD notes that one small study indicated that turmeric can help ward off heart attacks in people who have had bypass surgery.

- **Coriander:** A popular herb used across the globe, coriander is sometimes mistaken for cilantro. Though the two come from the same plant, cilantro refers to the leaves and stems of the coriander plant, while the coriander in recipes typically refers to the seeds of that plant. Mercy Health notes that coriander seeds may help reduce bad cholesterol and high blood pressure, both of which are significant risk factors for heart disease.



# Easy Tips for Growing Herbs in Containers

Herb container gardens are popular for many reasons. Even if you have miles of property and gardens galore, it's still convenient to be able to step just out your door and pick a handful of fresh herbs from a beautiful container garden. Plant maintenance is also more convenient with containers, and there are fewer problems with weeds and critters getting into your crops.



You can grow almost any herb in a container. However, if you're mixing herbs in the same pot, you have to be sure you're using plants with similar growing requirements. For example, some herb plants need more water than others, and some are finicky about how much light they get. But as long as you get the conditions right, you should have thriving plants and fresh herbs at your fingertips.

## • Planning Your Herb Container

You can grow as many types of herbs in one container as you want if they share the same sun, water, and soil preferences. For example, rosemary likes hot and dry conditions while parsley needs steady moisture. Therefore, they would not work well together in the same pot.

Also, don't forget that herbs can serve as decorative elements in a container garden, adding texture and scent when mixed with annuals or perennials. Again, just be sure to pair them with plants that have similar needs. And make sure they won't choke out any other plants in the same container, as some herbs have vigorous growth habits.

## • Choosing a Container for Herbs

You can use almost anything for an herb container, as long as it has good drainage. Most herbs don't have large root systems, so you can get away with relatively small containers.<sup>1</sup> This is especially true of the herbs that don't mind drying out between waterings. However, the smaller the container, the less soil there is. This means you have a smaller margin of error when it comes to under-watering or overwatering.



ing containers.

## • Planting and Caring for Herbs

Help your container herbs thrive with the right soil, sun exposure, and fertilizer. Use a high-quality potting mix that allows for good drainage. This soil, paired with the drainage holes in your container, will make it so you don't accidentally drown your herbs.

Some herbs thrive in self-watering containers because they like a constant level of moisture. Plants, such as chives, parsley, marjoram, and mint, are particularly good candidates for growing in self-watering pots. Other herbs, including oregano, thyme, rosemary, and basil, prefer to dry out between watering, so they wouldn't be good candidates for self-watering containers.

CONTAINERS cont. pg 7

Moreover, most herbs need full sun for at least six to eight hours a day. That said, containers can really bake on a hot day. So if you live in a climate where temperatures soar, your container herbs might need to be shaded during the hottest part of the day.

Be careful not to overfertilize your herbs. Most herbs don't need much fertilizer, and some plants will simply die if they are overfed. Plus, certain herbs, such as thyme and oregano, thrive on neglect and often aren't as tasty if they are given too much food or water.

#### ✦ Harvesting Your Herbs

The rule of thumb for harvesting herbs is that the more you pick, the more you'll get. In addition, you should pinch back most herb plants to make them bushier and well-formed. But always tailor your harvesting to the plant's growth pattern. For example, basil leaves should be harvested regularly, and the flower buds should be removed. But basil plants should not be cut back all the way.



At the end of the growing season, you can bring many of your herb containers inside if you get lots of indoor sunlight. Some herb plants are easier than others to keep alive indoors during the winter, though it's worth a shot for all your container herbs.

Finally, if you've grown more herbs than you can harvest for yourself, consider giving them as gifts. You can do themed herb container gardens, such as a "pizza" garden or an herbes de Provence container garden. Combine herbs and other edible plants in a pretty basket, or just pick a handful of herbs to put in a nice vase for an herbal bouquet.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Disinfecting garden tools can help ensure the long-term health of plants and vegetables. According to the University of Minnesota Extension, plant pathogens, including bacteria, fungi and viruses, cause diseases that can damage and even kill plants. These pathogens can be transferred to plants and infect them through bits of soil and plant debris that get stuck on common gardening tools, including shovels and pruners. Pathogens are microscopic and invisible to the naked eye, which is why even tools that appear clean may still contain harmful substances on their surfaces that can prove life-threatening to plants. Disinfecting tools at the appropriate time, such as when the tools are being stored in fall or before using them in spring or after using them to remove infected plants, can prevent the damage caused by invisible pathogens. Avoid using strictly bleach to disinfect garden tools, as the UME notes that bleach corrodes metal and can therefore render tools that require sharp edges ineffective.

A homemade solution that's nine parts water and one part bleach can be used to effectively clean shovels, spades and rakes. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that isopropyl alcohol (rubbing alcohol) in concentrations of 70 percent or more can effectively disinfect surfaces for bacteria, fungi and viruses. Such a solution can be used to disinfect hand pruners and other small hand tools. Store-bought cleaners with an active ingredient that is .1 percent alkyl dimethyl benzyl ammonium saccharinate also can be effective when disinfecting small hand tools as well as small pots and saucers.



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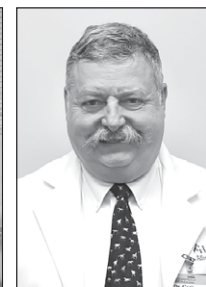
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