



Vital!

VITAL INFORMATION FOR A VITAL LIFE®

Take Control of Your Health

A Decade by Decade Guide

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Room No More**

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MAY 2021



Every once in a while, it's worthwhile to simply close your eyes and be thankful just to be alive. Yes, there are trials and tribulations, and as a friend of mine and I laughed about just this morning, there's a reason "the grass is always greener" is a cliché, but for the most part, if you have your health, things are pretty good right now (especially if you've had a COVID shot).

The fact that it's National Women's Health Month, is, of course, a reminder to take control of your health, too (even if you're a man). If you've been following Paul Bohannon's story of surviving a 6-month cancer diagnosis and how he refused to take a back seat to his doctor's treatment recommendations (it's on page 7), then you know what I'm talking about. For me, taking control means forcing myself to get out and get more exercise. If I'm not strict about it, an entire day can slip by without making time to care for myself. The result? I finally made an appointment for a physical, and turns out I have high cholesterol, likely because of family history and a job that doesn't require a lot of activity. So that's my new focus. What would yours be?

If you need some reminders of what to do, check out pages 8 and 9. Everything you need to know for every stage of your later years is right there on two pages. And I love Hearing Service's article on page 3 comparing how we care for our hearing vs. our vision. Now that the world is opening up again, it's no time to hinder your socializing—because of course, finally, it's the Unofficial Start to Summer!

Happy May!

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Getting Over Your Fear of the Weight Room

By Whitney Carlson

It's true you can get an amazing workout at home, but having access to all the equipment a gym offers is a great benefit, so if you can join a gym, make the most of it. Use these tips to build your confidence to go into the weight room (or even the gym, for that matter).

1 Join a small(er) gym. While a small gym may not have all the fancy machines and equipment that a larger gym has, and may not offer as many classes or even a pool, for someone who is shy, this can actually be a good thing. Being shy myself, I like that in a small gym there isn't as much space to "learn my way around" and I know where everything is and how to use it. Can't join a smaller gym? No worries.

2 Go when it's not crowded. Even though it might feel like everyone is watching you, trust me, they're not. Still, if you're able to go off-peak, that will help. Peak times are usually before work, during lunch, and right after work. If your schedule allows, go late morning or early afternoon to beat the crowds.

3 Go at the same time every day. Any time that you can work out is the best time to work out. If this means morning some days

and evening others, that's fine, as long as you go. However, for someone who has a fear of the weight room, going at the same time each day is the best option. You'll start to see the same people, and getting to know others (even just by face) will make you feel more comfortable while also making it easier to ask questions if needed.

4 Find an empty room. Even though our gym is small, we do have one class room. If it isn't being used, I like to get what I need and do my workout in there. If your gym doesn't have a separate room, find an out of the way area that allows you some privacy to familiarize yourself with the equipment and workouts in general. This way, you'll be able to focus on your workout instead of worrying about what other people think (although, again, they're really not paying attention to you).

5 Take a friend. While a partner isn't necessary, and can actually be a distraction, having a friend along might take some of the pressure off. You can navigate the machines and not feel like you're alone. If you do want a workout buddy, try to find someone who has your same intensity, goals and schedule.

6 Book a session with a personal trainer. I'm a Certified Personal Trainer and even I don't believe that everyone needs a personal train-



er. However, even if you don't plan to work with a trainer all the time, see if you can book a session or two so that they can show you around and explain how to use all of the equipment. Some gyms offer this for free. Learning properly from the start will help prevent frustration and possibly injury down the road.

Everyone has a bit of shyness when they first start. Just remember: everyone had a Day 1 at some point.

www.heandsheetclean.com

Is Hearing Loss like Vision Loss?

Why do we pay more attention to our vision than our hearing?

Both senses are important, and both cause us great difficulties if they don't work effectively. But due to the way we use them, their loss affects us in different ways. Many adults get their vision checked regularly, so why do so many people ignore their ears?

Addressing vision loss

When you go to an optician, you look at a letter chart. If you have a loss of vision, you may not be able to read the lower lines of smaller letters, because they become blurry. Your eyes can't focus on them.

Another way to understand vision loss is to think of how we age. Over time the eyes gradually lose their ability to focus so close objects become blurry. If you are farsighted you know that seeing things close to you, as when reading, becomes more difficult. This loss of sensitivity to nearby objects does not vary; it is uniform.

Comparing to hearing loss

Like vision, our ears often gradually lose the ability to hear high frequencies, both through damage

and aging. However, unlike with vision loss, the actual effects of this are not uniform.

Speech is made up of many different frequencies and tones. If we can't hear high pitched sounds, we find it hard to understand specific letters such as f, s and t. This is because they contain high frequencies. Such letters can also be drowned out by louder, low-pitched vowels like a, o and u.

In contrast to vision loss where we miss chunks of vision (such as the lower rows on a vision chart), the loss of hearing sensitivity affects many different parts of speech that are scattered throughout the conversation, so random bits of conversation get lost.

Are there similarities with vision and hearing loss?

There are clear differences between hearing loss and vision loss. But there are many similarities too:

- Healthcare professionals offer solutions for both.
- Both have stylish and discreet options to overcome the loss.

- Treatment makes it possible to live life fully.
- The consequences of not treating the problem are similar for both, including feeling tired and suffering social isolation and mental decline.

Vision aids vs. hearing aids

When people struggle to see, they wear glasses. These "vision aids" help a broad range of people. Whether you wear them for distance, computers, reading or a combination, they work best when an optometrist or ophthalmologist checks your vision, writes a prescription and a professional, such as an optician, orders lenses specifically addressing your individual needs—whether you are near-sighted, far-sighted, have astigmatism or a combination of challenges.

The same holds true with solutions for hearing. Since modern hearing aid designs are discreet and stylish—and come in a range of subtle colors—many people find any stigmas to be silly. Besides, if you hear and see well, your entire world is brighter.

For more information contact Hearing Services of Delaware, a HearingLife company at 302-376-3500 or heardelaware.com.



How to Protect Your COVID-19 Vaccination Card

By Adam Tanner

www.consumerreports.com

Once you have received your coronavirus vaccination, you have completed an important medical step for protecting yourself and your community. In addition to peace of mind and a sore arm, you will receive a COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card that carries the seal of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Here are some tips on how to protect the card and what you can do with it.

Protect Your Card

Since your proof of vaccination is just a paper card that would not survive a mistaken cycle in the wash, experts recommend making a digital copy. “First, take a picture of it, both sides, and then write down the lot numbers in a safe place because that is going to be important information at some point,” says Tom Frieden, a former head of the CDC.

Drug companies routinely keep track of medications made at the same time at the same facility using batch or lot numbers. Such identifying numbers, which are also used for goods as diverse as food and toys, allow the manufacturers to track expiration dates, and to better trace and coordinate a response if contamination or other problems are detected.

If you feel safer with a more solid card, several office supply stores will laminate the paper certificates for free. But don’t be too eager! If you are getting the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines—which require two doses, three or four weeks apart, respectively—do not laminate your card until after the information from your second shot is recorded on it.

Get the App(s)

A number of organizations and coalitions are putting together digital apps to let you prove that you’ve been vaccinated. “There will be some form of COVID vaccine certificate, it is inevitable,” says Frieden, who is currently president and CEO of Resolve to Save Lives, a group that aims to prevent deaths from cardiovascular disease and epidemics.

Digital vaccine passports are a fast-developing field, and you may need more than one app, depending on what you are trying to do. For example, you could use New York State’s Excelsior Pass (which remains valid for 180 days) to attend a Knicks basketball game at Madison Square Garden, but a different app for travel abroad. An app may also serve as a good backup for the paper vaccination card.

Be Cautious With Travel

The CDC says that those who have been fully vaccinated can travel safely in the United States, but should continue to wear masks, maintain social distancing, and wash or sanitize their hands frequently. For domestic travel, each state sets its own rules as to any testing requirements or restrictions for incoming visitors, and the guidelines change frequently. It is best to check prior to your departure on this CDC travel planner, which has links to every state.

Health experts are more cautious in discussing international travel. “Fully vaccinated travelers are less likely to get and spread COVID-19,” the CDC says in its latest advice. “However, international travel poses additional risks and even fully vaccinated travelers are at increased risk for getting and possibly spreading new COVID-19 variants.”

For vaccinated Americans who decide to travel anyway, the options are growing. Some popular destinations don’t require negative test results for those who have been vaccinated, and the list of nations allowing entry to inoculated visitors is expected to continue to expand. However, you will need a negative test to return to the United States, even if you’ve been vaccinated. Self-quarantining post-trip isn’t necessary unless your state and city require it. But you should get tested again three to five days after you return.

Enjoy Other Perks

Here’s one of the more unusual incentives: Some Krispy Kreme locations are offering one free donut per day to anyone who shows their COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card, no purchase necessary. And other companies are offering their own

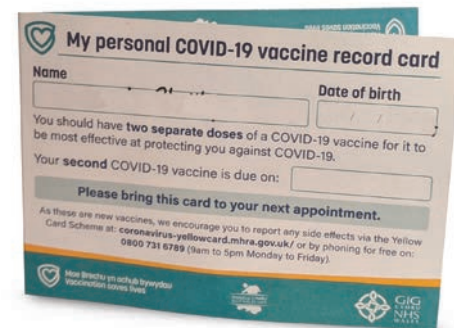
freebies and perks, from game to-kens to popcorn.

How to Replace a COVID-19 Vaccination Card

If you lose your card, it can be replaced because both the pharmacy or entity that gave the vaccination and your state keep track of immunizations.

“The procedure here is for the person to go back to the original provider who can easily look up the patient’s record in ImmTrac2, the [Texas] vaccine registry, and print a copy or fill out a new card for the person,” said Douglas Loveday, a spokesman for the Texas Department of State Health Services.

The process is essentially the same in other states. If you lose the card while in a different city and cannot get the replacement card from the original source, don’t lose hope. “The local public health department and/or [California Department of Public Health] may have this information if the vaccinated individual is unable to locate it through the provider or clinic,” says Ali Bay, a CDPH spokesperson.



The CDC maintains a list of different state health department immunization registries and contact details.

Military veterans vaccinated at facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs can access their COVID-19 vaccine records through My HealtheVet, the agency’s online personal health record system.

The process is more complicated for those who lose their card while traveling abroad. Asked if U.S. embassies abroad could help replace cards lost while traveling, a State Department spokesperson sidestepped the question and said: “We urge U.S. citizens to follow current travel guidance to reconsider travel or not to travel to a number of countries due to COVID-19 considerations.”

Because some U.S. states allow online access to your vaccination history, you may still be able to demonstrate your status for travel purposes even if you are unable to immediately replace a lost CDC card.

10-Digit Dialing is Here

The official start for 10-digit dialing in Delaware was Saturday, April 24.

The change—also affecting residents of 15 other states and territories—is needed to start 988 as a new national suicide hotline number. The National Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Crisis Lifeline remains at 800-273-TALK until it moves to 988 on July 16, 2022.

Seven-digit calls between 302 numbers will work for only the next six months.

Reprogram your automatic dialing equipment

In addition to changing the way you dial local calls, all services, automatic dialing equipment, or other types of equipment that are programmed to complete calls to seven-digit local numbers will need

to be reprogrammed to complete calls to 10-digit (or 1+10-digit) numbers, including the area code.

Some examples are: life safety systems and medical monitoring devices, PBXs, fax machines, Internet dial-up numbers, fire or burglar alarm systems, other security systems or gates, speed dialers, mobile or other wireless phone contact lists, call forwarding settings, voicemail services, and other similar functions.

Be sure to check your website, personal and business stationery, advertising materials, personal and business checks, contact information, your personal or pet ID tags, and other such items to ensure the area code is included.

The change affects 84 area codes, including 856 in South Jersey, but no area codes in Maryland or Pennsylvania.

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Cancer's Blessing: A Patient's Perspective

(5th in a series)



In January we introduced you to our friend, Paul Bohannon. Eight years ago, Paul was diagnosed with prostate cancer, and given 6 months to live. Yet here he is to tell his story, eight years later, cancer free. How did he do it? What was his path? What did he learn? What can you or a loved one learn if you are going through a cancer diagnosis? We invite you to follow Paul's story each month, although if you don't want to wait, you can read more of his story at www.vitalmagonline.com/cancers-blessing-a-patients-perspective right now.

Last month we talked about establishing a treatment plan. This month we talk about organizing your affairs then getting down to healing.

Organize Your Affairs

While it sounds ominous, the goal of “putting everything in order” is to eliminate stress and worry. The last thing you need is to stress your mental facilities. Instead, simplify.

Plan for the worst; plan for the best. Set goals for the best outcome and do everything you can to achieve your goals. Follow your treatment plan as best you can and get the what-if scenarios under control.

Part of organizing your affairs is to have the hard conversations with your loved ones about a life without you. It is challenging, and while no one wants to do this, it's important to all involved. Too often, people do not get a proper chance to say their goodbyes. Do it. If you live many more years, then guess what—you both got to realize how much you feel for the other.

Finalizing any outdated documents can also help to relieve the scary thoughts you may have to entertain down the road (regardless of cancer outcome). Only 32% of Americans have a will or estate plan in place. The tragedy here is that by the time the need becomes urgent, you may not be in the right state of mind to handle it. In addition to professionals, there are a lot of great online resources to help you.

Focus on Healing

At this point, your planning is done and you have an advocate to deal with the doctors and the research. It is now time to do your ONLY job.

You have ONE JOB—get better. Help your body overcome the can-

cer or adapt to living with the cancer. This means strip away as much “noise” in your life as possible, whether emotionally, mentally, physically, or financially. It's a massive ask, so let's break it down into some simple tasks.

Compartmentalize

Start thinking about your world, your problems, in a compartmentalized approach. In his book, “How to Win Friends and People Too,” Dale Carnegie introduces a concept called “Living in Day-Tight Compartments.” While I no longer work for the Dale Carnegie Organization, I would absolutely recommend a course like this for anyone suffering with cancer. Here's why: you'll learn to address your deep inner fears and build a better you. There is a lot of debate as to the cause of cancer or its catalysts. I'm a strong believer that causation is a factor, but the inner you—the part you can control—is a key contributor. These types of courses push you outside of your comfort zone and help you to learn about your inner self and what's important to you.

If you don't have the means, don't worry. There are lots of forums for cancer patients where the focus isn't on getting peer-review-approaches to curing your cancer, but to give you the support you need.

Be Open to Broader Approaches

Our Western society's approach to medicine was developed by Descartes' reductionism/dualism theory. Without going down a rabbit hole, let's just say that modern science and treatment are based on the theory that all pieces of the human body are separate parts of a “machine” that can be taken apart, studied independently, then reassembled.

In the 1920's, Walter Cannon revealed the connection of different functional systems to one another,

such as stress and our adrenal systems. Modern society is constantly in fight or flight mode, “draining the system” or causing it to “run hot.” The most important relationship we have is with our brain. Studies have shown the enormous ability our brain has to help us repair, rebuild and heal.

While learning more about my disease, I discovered the ancient medical practice of Ayurveda and consider it a critical part of my recovery. It has been called the original medicine and espouses three basic principles: movement, transformation and structure. Two aspects, meditation and yoga, promote moving, relaxing and focusing on the inner parts of yourself in order to unleash the power of the brain. To be clear: By no means am I suggesting someone move to India or give up on traditional medicine, or stating that it is even a viable option, because everyone is different. However, I believe focusing my brain on healing is why I'm alive today.

As an example, I used to spend twenty minutes in the parking lot of my oncologist's office with my eyes closed and I thanked the universe for the opportunity to undergo my treatment. I told myself that my treatment was medicine, and my body would allow the treatment to do its work. I told myself that this was going to be an amazing experience and that the people I would meet were saving me.

Meditate

Whether you're religious or not, it's important that you make peace with your possible outcome—death. For many, prayer and meditation provide the moments to go inside yourself to discover and understand your fears and concerns.

At night when you lay your head on the pillow and the emotional roller-



coaster starts to kick in, it's imperative that you distract the mind. Meditation was immensely important for me. Meditation and/or prayer are amazingly helpful to your brain's and body's healing. First, you put a pause on the stress button. Second, you achieve a state of calm and focus. Third, and possibly most important, you'll find a path to connect with hope, faith and belief in yourself.

I found keeping a journal by my bed to help. When your mind wanders to random to-do items, write them down. Then start over. Start your prayer/meditation over. Keep doing this until you feel relaxed. Reducing your stress is the most important part of your treatment you can control. You'll give your body the chance to heal and calm down the phytochemicals your brain is producing.

Control Your Variables

The goal of this article is to open you to the notion of approaching treatment from a variety of angles. Be open to innovative approaches or combine them with your treatments. There are some basic variables you can control without causing any harm or interruption to your treatments. Learn to relax and connect with the inner You. Do this daily, often multiple times a day. Make this time sacred. Let your brain do its work.

NWHW

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HEALTH WEEK

MAY 9 – 15, 2021



It's never too early or late to work toward being your healthiest you! This National Women's Health Week, we want to help you take control of your health. Take the first step! Join the National Women's Health Week celebration (www.womenshealth.gov/nwhw) and make a pledge to take at least one step for better health.

Whether you're in your 50s, 60s, 70s or beyond, do you know what you can do to live a healthier life? Pledge to follow one or all of the steps below. Then get the conversation started at your next well-woman visit with this list.

A well-woman visit is a checkup. During your visit, you'll discuss the steps you need to take, as well as the screenings and shots you need, based on your age, health habits, risk factors, and family history. It's a time to check in on how you're doing, how you'd like to be doing, and what changes you can make to reach your health goals. In addition to talking with your doctor or nurse about your health, you may also get a physical exam and perhaps certain shots and medical tests. You do not need every test every year!

And the good news is you don't have to worry about cost. Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, most private health plans must cover your annual well-woman visit along with many other preventive care benefits. That means the visit will be free for you, even if you haven't met your yearly deductible. If you don't have insurance, you can still see a provider by finding a health center near you that will charge you what you can afford, based on your income.

You're in your 50s!

Take these steps for better health.

General health

- Get an annual well-woman visit
- Get my blood pressure checked
- Eat healthy
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Get at least 30 minutes of physical activity most days
- Quit smoking or don't start
- Limit alcohol use
- Get a seasonal flu shot
- Ask what other shots I need
- Ask about daily aspirin use (55 and older)
- Talk to my doctor about any domestic and interpersonal violence

Reproductive and sexual health

- Choose the right birth control if I still get my period
- Talk to my doctor about when I need a Pap test and HPV test
- Talk to my doctor about menopause symptoms
- Talk to my doctor about my risk for sexually transmitted infections and need for screening
- Get an HIV test at least once in my lifetime

Diseases and conditions

- Talk to my doctor about getting my cholesterol checked if I have a family history of heart problems
- Get tested for diabetes if I am overweight or obese
- Talk to my doctor about my family history of cancers
- Get a mammogram every other year
- Get screened for colorectal cancer
- Ask about lung cancer screening if I am a current or past smoker (55 and older)
- Get screened for hepatitis C if I was born between 1945 and 1965
- Talk to my doctor about getting screened for hepatitis B
- Talk to my doctor about stress, depression, and other mental health concerns

You're in your 60s!

Take these steps for better health.

General health

- Get an annual well-woman visit
- Get my blood pressure checked
- Eat healthy
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Get at least 30 minutes of physical activity most days (65 and older who are fit and have no limiting chronic conditions)
- Talk with my doctor about a physical activity program that is appropriate (65 and older with low fitness levels or chronic conditions)
- Quit smoking or don't start up again
- Limit alcohol use



- Get a seasonal flu shot
- Get a shingles shot
- Get pneumonia shots (65 and older)
- Ask what other shots I need
- Ask about daily aspirin use
- Talk to my doctor about preventing falls
- Talk to my doctor about any domestic and interpersonal violence
- Talk to my doctor about when I need a Pap test and HPV test (65 and younger)
- Talk to my doctor about my risk for sexually transmitted infections and need for screening
- Get an HIV test at least once in my lifetime (65 and younger)

Diseases and conditions

- Talk to my doctor about getting my cholesterol checked if I have a family history of heart problems
- Get tested for diabetes if I am overweight or obese
- Talk to my doctor about my family history of cancers
- Get a mammogram every other year
- Get screened for colorectal cancer
- Ask about lung cancer screening if I am a current or past smoker
- Talk to my doctor about osteoporosis screening
- Get screened for hepatitis C if I was born between 1945 and 1965
- Talk to my doctor about getting screened for hepatitis B
- Talk to my doctor about stress, depression, and other mental health concerns

You're in your 70s!

Take these steps for better health.

General health

- Get an annual well-woman visit
- Get my blood pressure checked
- Eat healthy
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Get at least 30 minutes of physical activity most days (women who are fit and have no limiting chronic conditions)
- Talk with my doctor about a physical activity program that is appropriate (women with low fitness levels or chronic conditions)
- Quit smoking or don't start up again
- Limit alcohol use
- Get a seasonal flu shot
- Get a shingles shot if I haven't had one before
- Get pneumonia shots if I haven't had them before
- Ask what other shots I need
- Ask about daily aspirin use
- Talk to my doctor about preventing falls
- Talk to my doctor about any domestic

- and interpersonal violence
- Talk to my doctor about my risk for sexually transmitted infections and need for screening
- Talk to my doctor about any hearing or vision problems

Diseases and conditions

- Talk to my doctor about getting my cholesterol checked if I have a family history of heart problems
- Talk to my doctor about my family history of cancers
- Get a mammogram every other year (74 and younger)
- Get screened for colorectal cancer (75 and younger)
- Ask about lung cancer screening if I am a current or past smoker
- Talk to my doctor about osteoporosis screening
- Talk to my doctor about getting screened for hepatitis B and hepatitis C
- Talk to my doctor about stress, depression, and other mental health concerns

You're in your 80s and Beyond!

Take these steps for better health.

General health

- Get an annual well-woman visit
- Get my blood pressure checked
- Eat healthy
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Get at least 30 minutes of physical activity most days (women who are fit and have no limiting chronic conditions)
- Talk with my doctor about a physical activity program that is appropriate (women with low fitness levels or chronic conditions)
- Quit smoking
- Limit alcohol use
- Get a seasonal flu shot
- Get a shingles shot if I haven't had one before
- Get pneumonia shots if I haven't had them before
- Ask what other shots I need
- Talk to my doctor about preventing falls
- Talk to my doctor about any domestic and interpersonal violence
- Talk to my doctor about my risk for sexually transmitted infections and need for screening
- Talk to my doctor about any hearing or vision problems

Diseases and conditions

- Talk to my doctor about stress, depression, and other mental health concerns



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*Vaccine subject to availability. State-, age- and health-related restrictions may apply.

Reduce and Rehome: What's Your Life's Theme?

By Jamie McPherson, Your Own Home

Laura Gilbert, a professor and author from Minnesota, recently retired to help take care of her mother. Traveling frequently between her home and her mother's in Florida, Laura had plenty of time to think about something she had put off for a while: "What are we going to do with all this STUFF?"

Preserve Your Life's Legacy

Laura's mother, a 95-year-old Big Band-era musician, didn't get rid of anything. In fact, she is the type of hoarder so "paralyzed by her relationship with stuff" that many visits from her daughter were also attempts to begin paring down the volume of items collected over the years. Unfortunately, with her mother's age has come a failing memory. Seeing her triggered by objects from the past and recollecting a story or person's name, Laura knew she had to preserve the history, but not the clutter.

Three years ago, Laura published "The Stories We Leave Behind," a book detailing her "legacy-based" approach to the sometimes daunting task of helping a loved one reduce and re-home items acquired over a lifetime. She urges everyone to

find a few themes for their life, focus on retaining things related to those themes, then let go of the rest. Downsizing and decluttering are the outcome, but the real goal is embracing the possessions you want to leave behind.

When the time comes, Laura envisions a Discovery Half-Day for her family. After the funeral, when they walk into her mother's home, they will be able to find exactly what they need (like important documents) and discover the themes of her mother's life, so any big decisions can be made in a half day. By focusing on the themes of her life, her mother is leaving a legacy of her passions and hobbies instead of boxes filled with old receipts. Unburdening her family like this will give them plenty of time to reminisce while looking through photo albums rather than being overwhelmed searching or organizing old "stuff."

What's Your Story?

Tackling this much work is best done over time. Start with a drawer or a cabinet, and think about what story you want told when you are through. If you don't know where to start, ask the team at Your Own Home! We have the experience to help you inventory your belongings, plan themes to guide your cleanout efforts, rehome items to fam-



ily members, and finally, organize the remainder so it is more accessible to you. This can be the first big step towards leaving a legacy reflecting your life and accomplishments, instead of just a box of old receipts.

At Your Own Home, we care about you, your family and your legacy. Your Own Home, LLC provides personalized In-Home Care Plans that meet a person's every need. Call us today at 302-478-7081 or email info@yourownhomecare.com to find out how we help make your time together enjoyable and not a chore. We're here for you!

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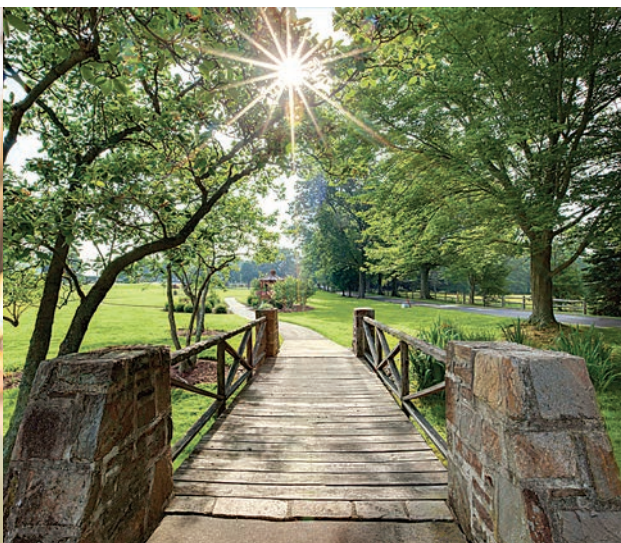


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Start a Keyhole Garden



By Camryn Rabideau
food52.com

I'm always looking for ways to make gardening more streamlined, so when I stumbled across the concept of a keyhole garden, my interest was officially piqued. These garden beds look like raised beds—and it's no secret we *love* a raised bed—but they have an ingenious added feature that makes them even more efficient and easy to care for.

Naturally, I needed to know more about keyhole gardening and whether it's as game-changing as it seems, so I reached out to a few master gardeners to pick their brains. Here's what I learned.

What is a keyhole garden, exactly?

At first glance, keyhole gardens might look like your average raised bed, but there are some key (sorry, I couldn't resist!) differences—starting with the shape. Keyhole gardens are often circular, and they have a cut-out that leads to the center of the garden—if you looked at it from above, it resembles a keyhole, hence the name.

This path allows you to access all areas of the bed, but it serves another purpose as well: “Unlike regular raised beds, keyhole gardens use the center of the garden bed as the compost area where plant debris from

yard waste and vegetable scraps are decomposed right in the garden,” explains Angelo Randaci, Master Gardener and Horticulture Expert at Earth's Ally. “This provides a central composting and watering area.”

Just like raised beds, keyhole gardens can be built from a variety of materials. “A keyhole garden can be constructed from many different types of inexpensive materials such as bricks, concrete blocks, rocks, and other inexpensive stackable materials,” says Randaci. If you opt to build one using wood, he recommends avoiding treated lumber and adding a plastic liner to prevent the wood from rotting.

As for the composting area in the center, most people simply form a cylinder using chicken wire, vertically placed sticks, or another porous material. (If you use wire, you may need to place support stakes around the edges to ensure the form doesn't collapse under the pressure of the soil around it.) You also want the composted material to be able to mingle with the bed's soil: “Make sure your composting container has plenty of holes to allow water, worms, and other beneficial creatures access,” says Randaci. He also recommends putting a lid on the basket to prevent the compost from getting too wet or dry, and putting a layer of rocks at the bottom of the compost chute to promote drainage.

A few other things to note when designing your keyhole garden:

- ✿ Make sure the bed isn't too big, otherwise the nutrients from the compost basket may not reach the edges when you water. In general, your bed should be six feet or less in diameter so nutrients only have to travel three feet in any direction.
- ✿ Slope the soil down away from the compost cage to help nutrients flow all the way to the outside edges of the bed.
- ✿ Choose a location that's level and not prone to flooding.

What are the benefits of keyhole gardening?

Traditional raised beds offer plenty of benefits on their own—fewer weeds, no tilling, and less bending, to name a few—and keyhole gardens offer all these same perks, plus a few extras.

“Since the composting and the growing plants share the same garden space, they create an easy-to-manage garden that uses less water, continually feeding the plants by adding micronutrients,” explains Randaci. This is particularly beneficial if the soil around your home lacks nutrients—plants will love the fertile keyhole garden!

That's not the only benefit, either. Venelin Dimitrov, Senior Product Manager at Burpee explains that keyhole gardens also make it easier to tend your plants: “A wedge-shaped path is cut through the center of the raised bed to provide easy access to all areas of the garden—no need to bend over when planting, tending, and harvesting.”

What should you plant in a keyhole garden?

In general, our experts recommend

placing your keyhole garden in a full-sun area that receives at least six hours of sunlight a day. If this is the case, you'll be able to plant any sun-loving flowers or vegetables, but there are a few caveats to keep in mind.

“You'll want to plant smaller varieties in a keyhole garden, as larger crops may overtake the space and not do as well,” says Dimitrov. “Leafy greens like lettuce and kale, plus small root vegetables like carrots and radishes do well. Tomatoes and strawberries are great options as well!”

But won't the compost smell?

In theory the compost basket in the center of your keyhole garden shouldn't smell, but there's always a chance it gets a little stinky if it's out of balance. (Don't worry, it's easy to fix!)

“A foul smell is a sign that your compost pile is out of balance,” explains Dimitrov. “There could be a number of things causing this—too much green material, not enough aeration, or too much moisture. You'll want to make sure to have a proper balance of browns, including dry leaves, newspaper, wood chips or cardboard, and greens, including food scraps, grass clippings or weeds in your pile. A 3-to-1 ratio of browns to greens is recommended.”

It's also important to get in there and turn the compost pile every three or four weeks to ensure proper aeration. Try to keep the compost level at the same height or slightly above the soil for optimal results.

If you follow these design and maintenance tips, your keyhole garden will thrive with minimal intervention on your part, and I'm betting you'll never want to go back to traditional raised beds!

1	8	9	5	3	2	6	4	7
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8	9	1	4	2	6	5	7	3
4	2	5	3	1	7	9	8	6
7	3	6	8	5	9	2	1	4
9	1	8	2	7	3	4	6	5
2	5	4	6	8	1	7	3	9
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YOUR VITAL FAMILY



Celebrating Parents

By Cathy Propst

If you're over the age of 40, chances are that you've heard a friend complain about his or her parents and/or children. It's a well-known fact that, as we age, our relationships with our parents change drastically. Often times, our roles actually become reversed! Recently, I asked a woman in her 80's if she had any children. Her response made me laugh: "I used to have three daughters, now I have three mothers." An older gentleman confided in me that his children were unhappy with his decision to remain in his home alone. He wondered if one day they would understand by "walking a mile in his shoes."

It's normal for children to worry about their parents as they age. A middle-aged woman once tearfully admitted to me that she would surely die before mother due to the stress associated with caring for her! Many children of elderly parents worry that their parents will fall and injure themselves or otherwise hurt themselves while living alone in their own homes.

While these are legitimate concerns, it doesn't warrant treating our aging parents as if they were our children. While it's normal for our roles to change, they do not have to be reversed. My advice?

Parents, remember this: You've been telling your children what to do their entire lives—why stop now? Tell them *why* you feel the way you do and give them reasons for the decisions you are now making. Tell them clearly, perhaps in writing, what your wishes would be should you become incapable of making decisions on your own, but assure them that, at least for now, you are capable of making your own decisions. Knowing your wishes for the future may spare them the stress and heartache of wondering whether or not they did the right thing during that difficult time.

Children, remember that your parents have been making decisions and assuming risks for longer than you've been alive. Work toward understanding, honoring, and respecting their decisions, even if you don't agree with them. Now you know how they have felt all these years! Next, talk to your parents. Tell them you need their help in navigating this part of life's journey together. Finally, celebrate each other and the time you have together. You'll cherish these memories for years.

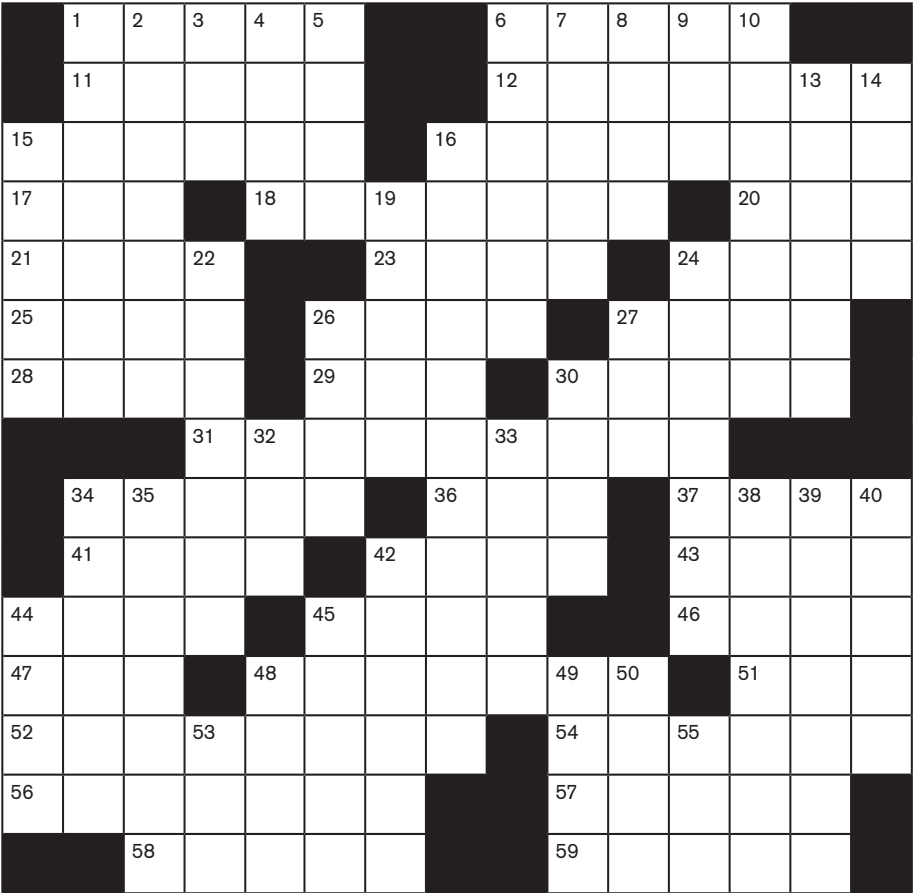
Cathy Propst is an RN and the owner of Guilford Medical Supply in Greensboro, NC.

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Crossword

By Dave Fisher



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Answers on page 12

ACROSS

- 1. A steel wire rope
- 6. Corrosives
- 11. Submarine
- 12. Piece of furniture
- 15. Very sad
- 16. Relaxation
- 17. American Sign Language
- 18. Opportunities
- 20. Request
- 21. Cow sounds
- 23. Auspices
- 24. Anagram of "Seek"
- 25. Sea eagle
- 26. District
- 27. Ends a prayer
- 28. Colors
- 29. Be victorious
- 30. Beach
- 31. Powerboat
- 34. Anagram of "Diets"
- 36. Shade tree
- 37. Small island
- 41. Ship's front
- 42. Broth (Scottish)
- 43. Not closed
- 44. Scheme
- 45. Operatic solo
- 46. Badgers
- 47. 52 in Roman numerals
- 48. One who bestows
- 51. 19th letter of the Greek alphabet
- 52. Hardworking
- 54. Disprove
- 56. Celebrated
- 57. Young woman
- 58. Answer
- 59. Jaegers

DOWN

- 1. Perfunctory
- 2. Snail
- 3. Mire
- 4. Nonclerical
- 5. Carve in stone
- 6. Sweet wattle
- 7. Crates
- 8. Nile bird
- 9. Cacophony
- 10. A canvas shoe
- 13. Ancient ascetic
- 14. Sounds of disapproval
- 15. Domesticated
- 16. Generating
- 19. Eagle's nest
- 22. Conference
- 24. Feeling
- 26. Blown away
- 27. "Eureka!"
- 30. A few
- 32. Church bench
- 33. Sheep sound
- 34. Broken bone support
- 35. Betrayer
- 38. Food turner
- 39. Emissaries
- 40. Follow as a result
- 42. Cognac
- 44. Add
- 45. Disney mermaid
- 48. Handle
- 49. Spheres
- 50. Need a bath badly
- 53. Fury
- 55. Grippe

CHIPOTLE CHICKEN TOSTADAS WITH PINEAPPLE SALSA

Delicious chipotle chicken tostadas topped with a colorful, fresh pineapple salsa. These healthy chicken tostadas are easy to make and have an incredible sweet and savory flavor from chipotle chicken, sweet pineapple, creamy avocado and a kick of heat from jalapeño. A fun and flavorful weeknight dinner!



Prep: 25 mins Cook: 20 mins Total: 45 mins

INGREDIENTS

For the pineapple salsa

- 2 cups small diced fresh pineapple
- 1/4 cup finely diced red onion
- 1 tablespoon finely diced jalapeño
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice (from 1 lime)
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh cilantro leaves
- 1 teaspoon avocado oil (or olive oil)
- Pinch of salt

For the chipotle chicken

- 1 tablespoon avocado oil (or olive oil)
- 2 pounds ground chicken
- 2 teaspoons chipotle chili powder
- Freshly ground salt and pepper
- 1/4 cup low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste

To assemble

- 6 (8-inch) grain free tortillas* (can use Siete tortillas)
- 2 avocados, mashed
- 1/2 cup shredded purple cabbage
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro leaves

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 350° F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Make the pineapple salsa: in a medium bowl, toss together the pineapple, onion, jalapeño, lime juice, garlic, cilantro, avocado oil and salt. Refrigerate until ready to serve, up to 5 days.
3. Make the chicken: in a large skillet, heat the avocado oil over medium-high heat. Add the ground chicken, chipotle chili powder, salt and pepper.
4. Cook the chicken, breaking up the meat with the back of a spoon until it is brown, about 7 minutes. Drain off any excess fat from the pan, if necessary.
5. Reduce the heat to medium and add the chicken broth and tomato paste and stir to combine. Continue to cook for about 2 more minutes.
6. Remove from heat and cover to keep warm until ready to serve.
7. To assemble: place the tortillas in a single layer on the prepared baking sheet. Lightly spray the tops of tortillas with nonstick cooking spray. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes, or until golden brown and crisp.
8. Carefully spread the avocado on top of each tortilla. Sprinkle with the shredded cabbage and a big scoop of chipotle chicken. Top with the pineapple salsa and a sprinkle of cilantro.



Sudoku

Fill in the blank squares so that each row, each column and each 3-by-3 block contain all of the digits 1 thru 9.

1					2	6		
6	4			9			5	
	7			6				
	9	1	4				7	
4								6
	3				9	2	1	
				7			6	
	5			8			3	9
		7	9					1

Answers on page 12

(courtesy of KrazyDad.com)

The Funny Bone

A kid’s grandparents take him to mass every Sunday. One day, halfway through the service, the grandma leans over and whispers in her husband’s ear, “I’ve just let out a silent fart. What do you think I should do?” Grandpa replies, “Put a new battery in your hearing aid.”

Little Karl was with his grandmom in a supermarket when he yells, “Grandma, I need to pee!” So Grandma replies, “We’re in a public place. Don’t say you need to pee, say something nice, say you need to sing.”

Later, when grandma’s sleeping, Little Karl goes in and wakes her up. “Grandma, I need to sing!”

“It’s midnight, honey, you can’t sing now.”

“But I need to sing really bad!”

“Well, ok then. Sing quietly in Grandma’s ear.”

A farmer named Clyde had a tractor accident. In court, the trucking company’s fancy hot shot lawyer was questioning Clyde. “Didn’t you say, at the scene of the accident, ‘I’m fine,’?” asked the lawyer.

Clyde responded, “Well, I’ll tell you what happened. I had just loaded my favorite cow, Bessie, into the...”

“I didn’t ask for any details,” the lawyer interrupted. “Just answer the question please. Did you, or did you not say, at the scene of the accident, ‘I’m fine!’?”

Clyde said, “Well, I had just got Bessie into the trailer behind the tractor and I was driving down the road...”

The lawyer interrupted again and said, “Your Honor, I am trying to establish the fact that, at the scene of the accident, this man told the Highway Patrolman on the scene that he was just fine. Now several weeks after the accident he is trying to sue my client. I believe he is a fraud. Please tell him to simply answer the question.”

By this time, the Judge was fairly interested in Clyde’s answer and said to the lawyer, “I’d like to hear what he has to say about Bessie.”

Clyde thanked the Judge and proceeded. “Well, as I was saying, I had just loaded Bessie, my favorite cow, into the trailer and was driving her down the highway when this huge semi ran the stop sign and smacked my tractor right in the side. I was thrown into one ditch and Bessie was thrown into the other. I was hurting real bad and didn’t want to move. However, I could hear old Bessie moaning and groaning. I knew she was in terrible shape just by her groans.

Pretty soon, this Highway Patrolman came on the scene. He could hear Bessie moaning and groaning, so he went over to her. After he looked at her and saw her fatal condition, he took out his gun and shot her right between the eyes. Then he crossed the road, gun still in hand, looked at me, and said, “How are you feeling?”

“Now tell me, what the heck would you say?”

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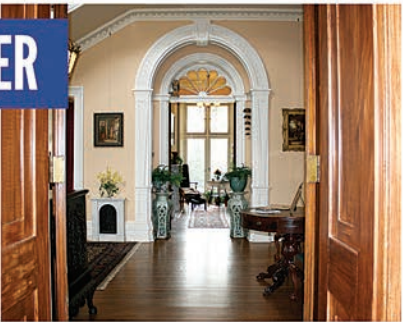


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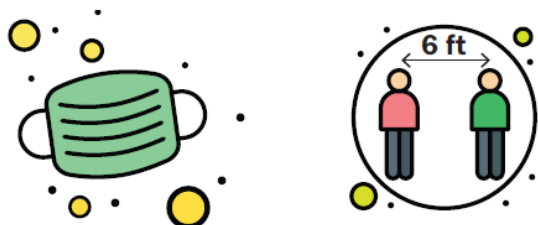
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