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# Skagit County Ideas for Healthy Living

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION

Increasing Food Access and Health in Skagit County

NEWSLETTER

January / February 2018

January can be a challenging time of year. After the busy holiday season, many people are facing the burden of weight gain and additional debt. Losing weight and reducing debt are difficult on their own, but the winter adds a new layer of challenge. Some factors make it tough to pay off holiday debt. For instance, January and February is a period when workers in industries like retail, service, construction, and farm work may face a reduction in hours or layoff. Household expenses like utilities and produce costs are higher in the winter, which means less money for credit card payments.



Although most people stop gaining weight in early January, it can be difficult to shed extra pounds gained over the holidays in the first few months of the new year. We often allow the cold weather and short days to reduce our amount of daily exercise. Additionally, we tend to eat warm, filling meals filled with fats, carbs, and sugars in the winter. Too much food and too little exercise are not a good combination when trying to lose extra pounds!

This newsletter is full of strategies to stay happy and healthy through the coldest months. Take advantage of local events to increase your physical activity, and try to get in some winter walks. Warm and filling food is perfect for cold weather, and by making the choice to prepare healthier versions of some classic winter comfort foods, you can enjoy delicious meals without weight gain. Check out our debt reduction strategies and free energy efficient upgrades from PSE!

## Walking in a Winter Wonderland

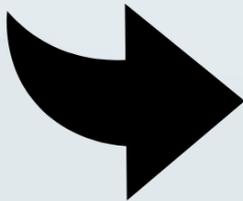
Walking is a great way to meet the 30 minutes of recommended daily physical activity. Be safe walking outdoors with these tips:

- \* Be aware of the wind chill factor before walking. When it's windy, think about whether you want to walk into the wind when you are returning & warmed up from exercise or when you begin & are warm from your home.
- \* If you can, select a route with no snow or ice.
- \* Dress warmly in several layers of loose -fitting, tightly woven clothing. Wear a waterproof coat, hat, gloves, a scarf, or knit mask to cover your face, & waterproof boots. Be careful you aren't so bundled up that you can't hear or see what is going on around you!
- \* Share your planned route with family or friends in case of an emergency and carry a cell phone, if you have one.
- \* Take a break when you begin to feel fatigue. Watch for signs of cold weather health problems such as hypothermia & frostbite.
- \* Walk with a friend! It will help keep you motivated.

Adapted from: "Words of Wellness" Newsletter, Dec. 2011, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach



# Tips for a Healthy Winter



get plenty of  
**SLEEP**

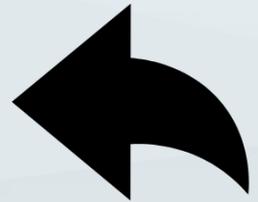


With the shorter, colder days and longer nights, our bodies naturally want to sleep more. To take advantage of the daylight, try going to bed 30 minutes earlier. More sleep helps a body be in better shape to fight off winter colds and flu.

Eat foods high in protein, and make sure half of your plate is made of fruits and veggies. Protein foods will keep you full for a long while, and help stabilize blood sugar. Avoid simple carbs and sugars in the winter months!



Eat healthy  
**FOOD**



Exercise  
**OUTSIDE**

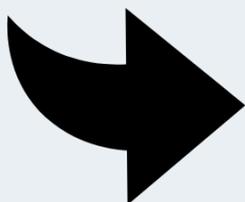
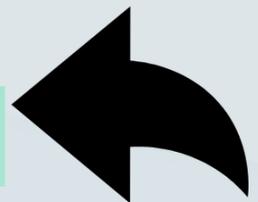


Bundle up and get outside! Exercise is a great mood elevator, and even a short walk can offer health benefits. Shovel snow, go for a winter hike, or just take a stroll around the block!

It's easy to become more isolated in the winter months. Staying social keeps your mood elevated, which will help you stay happy and healthy. Make a weekly activity date to see friends or family, or attend a local event with community members.



Stay  
**SOCIAL**



Remember  
**VITAMIN D**



Beat the winter blues! Foods rich in Omega 3 Fatty Acids are a great source of Vitamin D and include salmon, tuna, milk, orange juice, whole grain cereals, egg yolks, yogurt, and almond milk. And make sure to get outdoors on every clear winter day!



## Events and Activities



Did you know that local athletic clubs offer discounts to low income households, seniors, and others? YMCA offers a free 12 week program for cancer patients and survivors. In addition to a range of low cost classes, the YMCA's low cost membership for families may be further reduced with a scholarship based on need. Riverside Health Club offers a 65 and older club for \$22 per month which includes use of facilities at both locations. Planet Fitness offers a \$10 per month membership with no commitment and \$0-40 joining fee. The Mount Vernon Senior Center offers a wide range of physical activities at no charge, and does not have an age requirement—they welcome people of all ages to attend the free classes!

### January

- ♥ January 2nd: Zumba for Kids, free with admission, 11-11:30am, Children's Museum of Skagit County
- ♥ January 9: Self Defense for Women at the Skagit Coop. Free, 6:30-8:30pm
- ♥ January 9: Community Free Day at the Children's Museum of Skagit County
- ♥ January 18: Wildcrafting with the Seasons - Herbal medicine that Rewilds our Hearts & Lands with Natasha Clarke, 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm Skagit Coop, free
- ♥ January 21: Glaciers of the North Cascades, talk at 11 with hike at noon in Rockport 360-853-7626
- ♥ January 22: Beyond Eating Less and Exercising More with Dr. Alethea Fleming 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm Skagit Coop, free.
- ♥ January 27: Native Plants of the Upper Skagit, talk at 11 with hike at noon in Rockport 360-853-7626
- ♥ January 28: Winter Birds of Skagit County, talk at 11 with hike at noon in Rockport 360-853-7626
- ♥ January 28: McIntyre Hall Family Concert, 1:30pm, \$10 adult, \$1 child

### February

- ♥ February 6: Zumba for Kids, free with admission, 11-11:30am, Children's Museum of Skagit County
- ♥ February 13: Community Free Day Children's Museum
- ♥ February 27: Jazz at the Lincoln Theatre, 7pm, free

### Ongoing

- ♥ Beginning Line Dancing, Tuesdays from 7-8, \$5 drop in fee, Burlington Parks and Rec
- ♥ Skagit River Bald Eagle Interpretive Center opens every Saturday and Sunday in January from 10am to 4pm, with Guided Hikes every Saturday and Sunday at 11am, led by US Forest Service Field Ranger or Interpretive Center Coordinator. Plus weekly talks <https://skagiteagle.org/upcoming-events/>
- ♥ Wednesdays 11-12 Chair Yoga, free, MV Senior Center
- ♥ Thursdays at 9am and Wednesdays at 1:30pm Tai Chi, free, MV Senior Center
- ♥ Mondays and Fridays at 10am, Low Impact Exercise, free, MV Senior Center



## Holiday Weight Gain

London, Tokyo, and Topeka – across the globe, this past week was the worst week for our diets. In no single week does our planet gain more weight.

### HEAVY HOLIDAYS

ACROSS THE GLOBE PEOPLE GAIN WEIGHT DURING THEIR COUNTRY'S MAJOR HOLIDAY THAT CAN TAKE 5 MONTHS TO LOSE!



© HELANZER, KORHONEN, CHEN, AND WANSINK (NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL OF MEDICINE, 2018)

Here's the good news: That all ends on January 3<sup>rd</sup>. That's when our collective worldly weight peaks and starts to decline, according to a Cornell Food and Brand Lab study in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. To determine this, researchers tracked the weight patterns of 10,000 owners of wireless scales, eventually focusing on over 2800 individuals from the US, Germany, and Japan.

"It doesn't matter if you live in Tokyo or Topeka, your weight keeps climbing until January 3<sup>rd</sup>," said Brian Wansink professor and director of the Cornell

Food and Brand lab and author of *Slim by Design: Mindless Eating Solutions for Everyday Life*. Besides the 3<sup>rd</sup> being the last heaviest day of this holiday season, the study also has another silver lining according to Wansink: "People who weighed themselves at least four times a week, lost half of their holiday weight by the end of January. If you don't hide from the bad news, it won't be bad news for very long."

These findings are important for those who are trying to lose weight because they show that the more weight you gain during the holidays, the longer it takes to lose. "So, instead of beating yourself up for not shedding holiday weight this year, make a resolution to keep weight gain down during the next holiday season," said Wansink. *Reprinted from Cornell University <https://foodpsychology.cornell.edu/discoveries/good-news-your-weight-starts-dropping-tuesday>*

## Foodkeeper App

The FoodKeeper app helps you understand food and beverages storage. It will help you maximize the freshness and quality of items. By doing so you will be able to keep items fresh longer than if they were not stored properly. It was developed by the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service, with Cornell

University and the Food Marketing Institute. It is also available as a mobile application for [Android](#) and [Apple](#) devices. <https://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/foodkeeperapp/index.html>

"Are these leftovers still good?  
There's an app for that."

FOODKEEPER





## Get a free overview of how your home uses energy

When you sign up for PSE's home energy assessment program, a certified member of our Energy Assessment team

will help you find ways to lower your energy bill and identify efficiency upgrade opportunities all the while focusing on improving the comfort and value of your home.

### Energy efficiency survey

A free, at-home evaluation of how your home uses energy, as well as:

- ◆ A customized summary of recommended energy efficiency upgrades
- ◆ Information about energy-efficient equipment rebates from PSE
- ◆ Contractor referrals for future energy efficiency upgrades or energy-efficient equipment installation.

### Free energy-efficient fixtures

You may also qualify to receive free energy-efficient fixtures:



- ◆ On-the-spot installation of up to 20 LED light bulbs\*
- ◆ High-performance showerheads (up to two per qualifying home)\*\*
- ◆ Water-conserving kitchen and bathroom aerators (up to four per qualifying home)\*\*

*LED bulbs to replace existing incandescent or halogen bulbs; for PSE residential electric customers only. \*\*Water-conserving products require customers to heat their water with an energy source provided by PSE.*

**For more information, go to <https://pse.com/savingsandenergycenter/Rebates/Pages/Home-energy-assessment.aspx> or contact 1-855-973-1575**

## Reduce Debt in the New Year! Here are some tips for reducing debt and lowering monthly expenses to improve financial health:

1. Have a regular meeting about debt and budgets. Set aside a time each month to look at finances to set goals and check in. Even in households with one adult, this is a great way to stay on track and keep your eye on the goal.
2. Debt snowball. Whether you like to pay the highest interest rate first, or the smallest balance, focusing on paying off one debt entirely helps you reach an attainable goal and gain confidence to tackle the remaining debts or save for the future.
3. Ask for a lower interest rate. If you have made your payments on time, credit card companies will often reduce interest rates and it is worth a call!
4. Make a plan and get a debt reduction buddy. Accountability and encouragement go a long way in helping you attain your goals.
5. Tighten your household budget. Meal planning is a must for those looking to reduce their food cost, evaluate your cell phone plan, reduce consumable habits such as coffee, alcohol, and tobacco, try a month without fast food or restaurants...there are many ways to cut costs. Use this money to reduce your debt!

WSU extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of noncompliance may be re-reported through your local WSU Extension Office. This material was funded in part by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. S.N.A.P. provides nutrition assistance to people with low income; it can help you buy nutritious food for a better diet. To find out more, contact <http://foodhelp.wa.gov> or Basic Food Program at 1-877-501-2233. Reasonable accommodations will be made for persons with disabilities and special needs who contact Valerie DeKok at 360-428-4270 or [vdekok@wsu.edu](mailto:vdekok@wsu.edu) at least two weeks prior to the event.



## Crock Pot Vegetable Lentil Stew

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 teaspoons salt (optional)
- 1 large onion, sliced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup carrot, chopped
- 2 cups kale, chopped
- 2 cups chard, chopped
- 2 cups dried lentils
- 8 cups vegetable broth (or stock)
- 1 can chopped tomatoes (16 ounces)

Sauté onion and garlic with olive oil. Combine sauté mix with the rest of the ingredients in a crock pot. Cook on low for 8 hours or high for 4 hours. Spoon stew into bowls to serve and top with a dollop of fat-free or low-fat plain yogurt (optional). Serves 8



## Healthy Slow Cooker Enchilada Bowls

- 3 clove – garlic
- $\frac{1}{2}$  medium – onion
- 1 medium – bell pepper, red
- 14.5 ounce – diced tomatoes, canned
- 1 – cooking spray
- 2 pound – chicken breast
- 2 cup – enchilada sauce
- 1 teaspoon – cumin, ground
- 1 teaspoon – chili powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon – oregano, dried
- 1 teaspoon – salt
- 15 ounce – black beans, canned
- 1 cup – corn, frozen

### Toppings:

- 8 medium – tortillas, corn
- 4 cup – brown rice, cooked
- 2 medium – avocado
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup – cilantro
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup – Mexican cheese blend,



Mince garlic, and dice onion and red bell pepper into small pieces. Partially drain diced tomatoes by pouring off excess liquid from the top of the can. Spray slow cooker with cooking spray. Drop in diced onion, then chicken breasts, then pour  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of enchilada sauce so that it coats the chicken. Next, pour in diced tomatoes, spices, salt, garlic, black beans, red bell pepper, and corn. Finally, pour 1 cup of enchilada sauce over everything and give a quick stir to the top ingredients. Turn slow cooker on "low" for 7-8 hours. Once chicken is tender, mix everything well. Use the mixing spoon to help shred or break up chicken into pieces of desired size. Serve over corn tortillas and/or cooked brown rice. Top with avocado, cilantro, cheese, and remaining  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup enchilada sauce, as desired.



# 14 SIMPLE SALADS FOR WINTER

There may not be as much fresh produce in the winter, but salads can be brightened up with crunchy vegetables and sweet and tart citrus fruits.

## BASIC VINAIGRETTE

- 1 ½ tsp vinegar (balsamic, apple cider, sherry, red wine)
- 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- 2 tsp sweetener (jam, sugar, honey, maple syrup)
- 2 tsp oil (cooking, avocado, grapeseed, olive)
- Salt and pepper

## ASIAN VINAIGRETTE

- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 2 ¼ tsp soy sauce
- 2 ¼ tsp rice vinegar
- ½ tsp brown sugar
- ½ tsp toasted sesame oil
- 2 ½ tsp oil

## LEMON YOGURT DRESSING

- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 2 tsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 2 tsp yogurt
- 2 tsp oil
- Salt and pepper

## CITRUS VINAIGRETTE

- ¼ bulb shallot, minced
- 2 tsp citrus juice (orange, lemon, lime, grapefruit)
- 1 tsp red wine vinegar
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp honey
- 3 tsp oil
- Salt and pepper

## SPICED VINAIGRETTE

- ½ tsp spices (paprika, cumin, coriander)
- 2 tsp red wine vinegar
- 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp honey
- 2 tsp oil
- Salt and pepper

## SALAD KEY

DRESSING

BASE

INGREDIENTS

1



- Balsamic Vinaigrette
- Shredded Brussels Sprouts
- Dried Cranberries, Walnuts, Goat Cheese

2



- Balsamic Vinaigrette
- Baby Spinach
- Persimmon, Fresh Mozzarella

3



- Apple Cider Vinaigrette
- Mixed Greens
- Apple, Celery, Walnuts

4



- Apple Cider Vinaigrette
- Mixed Greens
- Fennel, Edamame, Oranges, Walnuts

5



- Red Wine Vinaigrette
- Baby Spinach
- Baby Carrots, Kalamata Olives, Feta Cheese

6



- Red Wine Vinaigrette
- Cooked Broccoli
- Chickpeas, Shallot, Cherry Tomatoes

7



- Asian Vinaigrette
- Iceberg Lettuce, Shredded Cabbage
- Edamame, Dried Cranberries, Oranges, Almonds

8



- Asian Vinaigrette
- Baby Spinach
- Rotisserie Chicken, Shredded Carrot, Cucumber, Cooked Quinoa

9



- Lemon Yogurt Dressing
- Shredded Cabbage
- Dried Cranberries, Celery, Green Bell Pepper, Green Onions, Almonds

10



- Lemon Yogurt Dressing
- Kale
- Parmesan Cheese, Pine Nuts

11



- Lemon Yogurt Dressing
- Butter Lettuce
- Rotisserie Chicken, Celery, Walnuts

12



- Orange Vinaigrette
- Arugula
- Oranges, Pomegranate, Walnuts

13



- Orange Vinaigrette
- Kale
- Roasted Beets, Oranges, Pomegranate, Fresh Tarragon

14



- Lime Vinaigrette
- Butter Lettuce
- Mango, Hearts Of Palm