



# Diabetes Wellness Newsletter

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*The winter months bring unique challenges to those of us who are trying to improve our health. In this newsletter, our MGH Dietitians share helpful tips for staying physically active and setting effective goals to achieve lasting, healthy habits. We've also included a delicious healthy soup recipe for you to enjoy on those cold evenings. As always, please reach out to us or any of your healthcare providers with any questions.*



## FINDING SUCCESS THROUGH EFFECTIVE GOAL SETTING

By Alicia Pabilona, RD

Whether you want to learn a new skill, get organized, or make a lasting health or lifestyle change, setting goals is a great first step in getting there. Before jumping in, take a moment to reflect and consider a few things that could be the difference between success and disappointment.

- 1. What is your motivation for making the change?** The desire or reason for setting a goal may come from outside yourself. For example, your doctor may tell you it would benefit your health to lose weight, be more active, eat less salt...These goals might be more difficult to achieve if you've never thought of making a change in this area or if you don't see the need, the desire, or the capacity to tackle a change at this time.
- 2. How confident are you that you will be able to make the change?**
- 3. What level of importance do you place on making this change?** Are you having thoughts about rationalizing yourself out of making the change? If so, perhaps now isn't the best time, or some reframing needs to take place before setting "change" goals.
- 4. What is your overall mission, aspiration, and purpose for making the change?**

Once you've considered these important changes, you should be ready to set your goals. We've probably all heard about making **S.M.A.R.T.** goals. *(Continued next page)*

### MASON HEALTH DIABETES WELLNESS NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS:

Sarah Fulkerson, Diabetes Wellness Coordinator, RD, CDCES

Carmen Eucker, RN, CDCES

Zachary Chomicki, MS, RD

Alicia Pabilona, RD

Sarah Hazen, Scheduling Representative

Arla Shephard Bull, Marketing Coordinator, Editor

Sherie Ellington, Designer

## EFFECTIVE GOAL SETTING

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The acronym **SMART** helps create goals with a higher probability of success than something more generic like, “I’m going to get more sleep this year,” or “I plan to exercise more often.”



- **Specific** – What are you wanting to achieve or establish?
- **Measurable** – What can you track to know you’ve achieved your goal or are making progress towards it? It can be a great motivator to see your progress.
- **Attainable** – While making big goals can be empowering, they can also set us up for failure. Instead, make goals more attainable, especially when starting out and gaining momentum.
- **Realistic** – Is this something you have the required skills/tools to achieve? Consider your current motivation, resources, and environment.
- **Time-based** – Give yourself a reasonable target or timeframe to achieve your goal.

Keep in mind, establishing a new habit can be difficult and can vary between people, so don’t compare yourself to others. The longer you stick with a goal - and remember why you started - the more likely you will be to make a lasting change. Be sure to celebrate your progress, and give yourself grace when it’s time to get back on track.

For more information, several websites, apps, and books help people set goals and change habits. Here are a few:

- <https://positivepsychology.com/goal-setting-exercises>
- <https://jamesclear.com> (Atomic Habits)

## STAYING ACTIVE IN THE WINTER

*By Zachary Chomicki, MS, RD*

**Physical activity is a lifestyle factor that can help improve general health, as well as resulting in improvements in blood sugar control.**

An estimated 30% of adults do not participate in physical activity during their free time and this number increases with age. About 33% of adults aged 45-64 years old, 36% of adults aged 65-74 years, and 53% of adults ages older than 75 years are inactive.

A lack of physical activity can increase the risk of chronic disease and death, and it also can lead to impaired circulation, a greater need for assistance from others to complete tasks of daily living, decreased ability to partake in social situations, and an overall decreased quality of life.

The American Heart Association recommends at least 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity (cardiovascular exercise), 75 minutes per week of vigorous activity, or a combination of both spread throughout the week. Moderate or vigorous intensity, muscle strengthening activity is recommended at least 2 days per week.

This can be easier to do in the warmer months, but what about winter when it’s cold, wet, and icy? Keep reading for ways to keep active during colder months.

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## STAYING ACTIVE IN THE WINTER

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### Gym/Fitness Center Membership

In the winter when it is cold and rainy, one way to stay active is by joining a gym or fitness center. Many gyms have cardio machines and resistance training equipment such as weights, resistance bands, and kettlebells.

Cardio equipment includes treadmills, ellipticals, and stationary bikes. Doing cardiovascular exercise can help improve heart health, circulation, and improving heart rate and blood pressure.

Resistance training can build and strengthen muscles and joints. Some facilities might also have amenities such as basketball courts, tracks, pools, and exercise classes for all ages and fitness levels.

Joining a gym does involve a fee; however, and some insurance companies may offer free or reduced memberships for members.

Make sure to check with your insurance company for any program that might be offered! The **Shelton Senior Center** ([www.mcsac.net](http://www.mcsac.net)) also offers several fun class options. Contact them at 360.426.7374 for an up-to-date schedule.

### YouTube Fitness Videos

YouTube can be a great resource for doing physical activity indoors. There are essentially countless videos and creators focused on guided physical activity sessions that you can do at any time.

There are videos for nearly any type of physical activity you can imagine; from yoga and tai chi to body weight exercises and recorded fitness classes for anyone to follow.

Finding a video is as easy as opening **youtube.com** on a web browser or by opening the YouTube app directly on mobile devices. Search for key terms like:

- Yoga for beginners
- Low impact exercise classes
- Beginner Tai Chi
- Bodyweight exercise routine
- Chair exercises - and many others!

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**Finding a fitness video is as easy as opening youtube.com on a web browser or by using the YouTube app on a mobile device.**

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## Indoor Exercise Equipment

Gym and exercise equipment can also be purchased for you to have in your home! While home gym equipment can add up in cost, depending on what is purchased, it can allow you to create a home gym that better matches your needs and preferences.

Having equipment at home offers greater flexibility for exercise time and can allow you to avoid going outdoors during winter weather. While weight and cardio machines may be costly up front, there are less expensive options for home gym equipment such as yoga mats/blocks, kettlebells, and resistance bands. These options combined with YouTube exercise videos provide ways to use the equipment. Used equipment can also often be found using resources such as “**Facebook Marketplace**” or “**Offer Up.**” [www.offerup.com](http://www.offerup.com)



## Public Walking Areas

Some people might not want to stay at home during the winter and still want to get out. However, you may not want to spend the money on a gym membership.

One cost-effective way to increase your movement while being able to get out of the house without spending excessive time in the winter weather can be going to walk in public spaces. Shopping centers and malls can be great way to get steps in while staying warm and dry.

## Movement video games

Thanks to today’s technology, you can play certain video games to get movement in. Some of the current most popular options use the Nintendo Switch or Virtual Reality (VR) systems.

The Nintendo Switch offers games such as Fitness Boxing, Nintendo Switch Sports, and Ring Fit Adventure. VR systems like the Oculus, Meta Quest, and PlayStation VR2 offer a more interactive and immersive experience with games like Beat Saber, Synth Riders, and Pistol Whip among many others.



However, video game systems can be quite the expense, as purchasing the system itself and each individual game is necessary. For a slightly more affordable option, you may look for used systems or games, as well as older video game systems like the Wii.

**Remember to always consult with your physician  
before starting any exercise program!**

## References:

- Anderson E, Durstine JL. Physical activity, exercise, and chronic diseases: A brief review. Sports Med Health Sci. 2019;1(1):3-10. doi:10.1016/j.smhs.2019.08.006
- American Heart Association. American Heart Association Recommendations for Physical Activity in Adults and Kids. Heart.org. Accessed January 29, 2025. <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/fitness/fitness-basics/aha-recs-for-physical-activity-in-adults>

# CREAMY ITALIAN WHITE BEAN SOUP

This hearty white bean soup is made with cannellini beans and flavored with garlic and thyme. It's a favorite with friends and family. Serve with grated Parmesan cheese.

**Prep Time:** 20 min    **Cook Time:** 30 min  
**Total Time:** 50 min    **Servings:** 4

## Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 stalk celery, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2 (16 ounce) cans cannellini beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 (14 ounce) can chicken broth or vegetable broth (can use low-sodium as well)
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
- ⅛ teaspoon dried thyme
- 2 cups water
- 1 bunch fresh spinach, rinsed and thinly sliced
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice



## Nutrition Facts

**Calories:** 245

**Total Fat:** 5g

**Saturated Fat:** 1g

**Cholesterol:** 2mg

**Sodium:** 1014mg

(use low-sodium broth to reduce sodium content)

**Total Carbohydrate:** 38g

**Dietary Fiber:** 11g

**Protein:** 12g

## Directions

- In a large saucepan, heat oil. Cook onion and celery in oil for 5 to 8 minutes, or until tender. Add garlic, and cook for 30 seconds, continually stirring.
- Stir in beans, chicken broth, pepper, thyme, and 2 cups water. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and then simmer for 15 minutes.
- With a slotted spoon, remove 2 cups of the bean and vegetable mixture from the soup and set aside. In a blender at low speed, blend the remaining soup in small batches until smooth, (it helps to remove the center piece of the blender lid to allow steam to escape.)
- Once blended, pour the soup back into the stock pot and stir in the reserved beans.
- Bring to a boil, occasionally stirring. Stir in spinach and cook for 1 minute or until spinach is wilted.
- Stir in lemon juice, remove from heat, and serve with fresh grated Parmesan cheese on top.

**Source:** [www.allrecipes.com](http://www.allrecipes.com)

To sign up for the Diabetes Wellness Newsletter via email or by mail, email [foundation@masongeneral.com](mailto:foundation@masongeneral.com) or call the Diabetes Wellness Center at 360-427-9543.



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