

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2019

FREE

# AT HOME

NEW JERSEY

THE BEST OF LIFE WHERE YOU LIVE

*Play  
with  
color*



**Cooking comfort :** The meals we crave when it's cold outside

**You can win:** A programmable Crock-Pot just for casseroles

**What's in:** This year's kitchen design trends





At Home New Jersey photo illustration

Your library's website can offer links to free information and entertainment, including ebooks and movies, even when you're on the road.

## So much for free at the library

If you think the library is only about borrowing books and remembering to get them back on time to avoid fines, it's time to take a good look at your local library's website.

While book lending is, of course, an awesome and valuable library service, New Jersey libraries continue to evolve to serve modern users in many other ways. Increasingly, libraries have become places that encourage learning for adults as well as children.

In addition to the books and other printed materials, area libraries benefit from partnerships that facilitate transmission of digital information and entertainment beyond their walls and doors. And if you are a computer novice, your library likely has a program to help expand your skills along with public computers that will allow you practice them.

A library's home page or resource page often links to sites where your library card gets you free access to video that includes thousands of contemporary and classic movies, documentaries, concert videos, television shows and short films. You can get foreign language instruction or courses to improve job readiness and work skills. Test prep features can help with the ACT and SAT (Fanwood library) or all levels of driving tests, including commercial (Summit library).

Library cards and renewable passes for library patrons can offer access to electronic and audio books, and digital issues of current magazines and comics books.

Scotch Plains cardholders have home access through their library's website to the Star-Ledger's full-color daily digital pages and archives back to 1989. Fanwood Memo-

rial Library cardholders can get free online access to the New York Times, both at the library and at home. The renewable passes are available in 72-hour increments.

Because libraries are funded by local property taxes, some of their programs are only available to local residents. However, if you see a program, event or online app at another library, it's a good idea to check in with your own to see if it can be made available. Additionally, those who lead library programs and workshops are often enthusiastic volunteers or business people who share their expertise hoping to generate new business. If you're interested in what they do, ask the person if he or she would be willing to propose a similar event for your library.

### Real-world connections

Library programs also can encourage social interaction. Meet new people and compare techniques while working on your own projects in a craft group. The Knitting Club meets Mondays and Thursdays at Garwood Free Public Library, for example. Patches and Stitches, a quilting group, is scheduled to meet at noon every Tuesday in January at Clark Public Library. If you're a competitive word nerd, the Scrabble Club convenes at noon on Wednesdays at Fanwood Memorial Library. For evenings, mix the tiles at Springfield Public Library most Mondays at 7 p.m.

Want to get out to see a movie without buying a ticket? Many area libraries run them. "Monday at the Movies" in Summit has both day and evening showings. "Totally New Tuesdays" brings evening movies in Clark.

Those who love the books that are at the root of every library can enjoy intellectual stimulation by joining book discussions. Several area libraries have discussion groups, but for those adult readers who must gather after work, the Berkeley Heights, Cranford, Mountainside and Springfield libraries are among those hosting evening book discussion groups.

Another library perk is the Museum Pass, which can be borrowed to gain free or discounted admission to a number of New Jersey and New York museums and gardens. Passes are available for a limited number of days on a first-come, first-served basis. Check for your library's policy.

As for live entertainment, Westfield Memorial Library often has weekend music and more. (There's a magic show Feb. 23.)

On Feb. 3 at 2 p.m., Scotch Plains Public Library will host singer Stephen Fuller, who will perform and discuss Motown history. Go to the library's calendar for more information, and you'll not only learn that Fuller is an accomplished R&B, jazz, calypso and occasional gospel singer whose performance experiences include opening for Stevie Wonder, you'll find a thoughtfully composed event listing with links to learn more from several books on Motown, including Berry Gordy's memoir.

And if you happen to have your own life stories to write, libraries can help with that. Memoir writing groups meet regularly on selected Thursday mornings at Plainfield and Springfield public libraries. Jan. 10 is the first 2019 meeting date at both libraries.

## The passions of an empress

The fine taste of Joséphine de Beauharnais informed 18th and 19th century style, from couture fashion to interior design, all based on her Caribbean heritage, her narrow escape from the guillotine, and her legendary love of flowers.

On Tuesday Jan. 22 at 7 p.m., garden historian Lesley Parness will present "Josephine — The Empress Gardened," a free lecture about the French empress at the Cranford Community Center, 220 Walnut Ave. in Cranford.

When she divorced from Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte, the powerful style-maker and lifelong fashionista known as Empress Josephine focused her energies on her own estate, *Château de Malmaison*. There, her passion for plants grew and bloomed, stopping a war, costing a fortune, setting explorers to sail and starting a floral industry that endures today.

Parness, a retired superintendent of horticultural education at Morris County Park Commission, has five decades of



A portrait of the Empress Josephine Bonaparte as painted by François Gérard.

travel, academic studies and work to provide a rewarding context for her own love of plants. She oversaw programming at the Frelinghuysen Arboretum, Willowood Arboretum and Bamboo Brook Outdoor Education Center. Parness is a member of the Herb Society of America, the Council on Horticultural and Botanical Literature, and Garden State Gardens, a consortium of New Jersey's public gardens of which she is a founding member. She now offers illustrated lectures and hands-on workshops on topics that connect "people and plants with science and story."

Seating for "Josephine — The Empress Gardened," is first-come, first-served. It is a program of the Hanson Park Conservancy; more at HansonParkConservancy.com.





## Slow cooking re-formed

Crock-Pot's rectangular Casserole Crock Slow Cooker is the perfect shape for lasagna, casseroles, and other one-dish meals. It's available in manual and fully programmable models that have a control panel to set cook time at low or high temperature, from 30 minutes to 20 hours. A digital timer counts down cook time, and the cooker automatically shifts to the warm setting when cooking is finished. At gatherings, when there's so much cook, it offers the beloved Crock-Pot benefit of doubling as a warmer that frees up stove and oven space. Assembled, Casserole Cocks are 6-3/4-inches high, 19 inches wide and about 11-1/2 inches deep.

The 9-by-13-inch dishwasher-safe stoneware has a 3-1/2-quart capacity and can be removed for oven use. With its locking lid, it's also ready to transport without spills. At Crock-Pot.com, prices range from \$25.99 to \$51.99, with some models sale priced for inventory clearance.

**Win a programmable model:** Email us at Win@AtHomeNJ.com with your name, address and phone number by Feb. 17 for your chance to win a Casserole Crock. Make "Crock-Pot" the subject, and tell us where you found your copy of At Home.

*Congratulations to our November–December winner: M. Tenten of Fanwood wins the Wüsthof knife and cutting board.*

## The content of our character

Every January, in honoring Martin Luther King, Jr., many will reference his Aug. 28, 1963 speech at the March on Washington, where he detailed a vision for racial equality and brotherhood in statements that began with "I have a dream." It is a powerful speech worthy of revisiting annually and in full, and there are others that we should read, hear and highlight as well.

One that always resonates was made on Oct. 26, 1967, when he advised students in Philadelphia: "If it falls your lot to be a street sweeper, sweep streets like Michelangelo painted pictures." Also, "If you can't be a pine on the top of the hill, be a scrub in the valley, but be the best little scrub on the side of the hill ... For it isn't by size that you win or you fail. Be the best of whatever you are."

For me, this has always meant to aim high and to work at any job as I would want my own employee to work for me. It means being on time. It means never standing or sitting idle, because there is always work that can be done.

In my experience, this type of dedication can earn the recognition and honors that help with moving up to a better position or a better job. If you want more, stepping up to do more can sometimes help you get it.

As we honor and remember Dr. King, think of him not only as "The Dreamer" but as a leader whose words and actions still can instruct us. So, do volunteer on Jan. 21 for the annual MLK Day of Service, but also read or listen to at least one of his speeches. Within them are ideas to carry with us in a new year. May we bring our best in all ways, with much good in return.

Kimberly L. Jackson, Editor@AtHomeNJ.com

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**On the cover:** Sherwin-Williams color of the year, Cavern Clay, pairs with complementary blues.



# Pet friendly

## *Many roles of service dogs*

It's not unusual for people to be unaware that service dogs are not pets, but working animals.

Service dogs can provide stability for a person who has difficulty walking, pick up items for a person who uses a wheelchair, prevent a child with autism from wandering away, or alert a person with hearing loss when someone is approaching from behind. Dogs can be trained to perform many important tasks that assist people with disabilities, helping them gain greater independence and the confidence to safely leave their home. A person who has epilepsy, for example, might have a dog trained to detect a seizure's onset and then help the person remain safe during the seizure.

Because service dogs are trained to perform quantifiable tasks that directly ease the challenges associated with their owner's physical, psychiatric, sensory and/or developmental disability, they are typically allowed to accompany a person anywhere the general public is allowed. The most common types of service dogs include guide, hearing, medical alert, mobility, autism service and psychiatric service dogs, such as those assisting veterans dealing with post-traumatic stress.

### A helping paw

The Americans with Disabilities Act protects the right of people with disabilities to bring service dogs with them to most public places, including restaurants, theaters, shops, hotels and other businesses. Likewise, service dogs may travel with their owners on airplanes under provisions of the Air Carrier Access Act. Additionally, the Fair Housing Act requires rental homes and other housing that excludes pets to make an exception for service dogs.

However, a survey by American Humane suggests that employees of businesses that serve the public have not been sufficiently educated about the unique needs of customers with service dogs. Nearly seven in ten retail employees surveyed (69 percent) said they had never received training on the questions they are legally allowed to ask customers to verify that a dog is a service animal.

Adding to confusion is a lack of understanding (among business owners, patrons and some dog owners themselves) of the difference between service dogs and other assistance animals.

Emotional support, therapy, comfort or companion animals are not considered service animals under the ADA. While these support animals provide affection and comfort, and can help people in their daily lives, they do not have the responsibilities of service animals. Accordingly, they do not have the special rights that service dogs do to



Michael Darby; Mars Petcare; Paul Brennan; Skeeze

**Service dogs come in all shapes, sizes and breeds. They are more easily identified as working dogs when outfitted with vests or tags.**

access buildings or public areas.

The ADA defines service dogs as those that have been trained to perform a specific job or task to assist a person with disabilities. However, some state or local governments have laws that allow people to take emotional support animals into public places.

In situations where it is not obvious that the dog entering a business is a service animal, owners and their staff may ask only two specific questions under the ADA guidelines: "Is the dog a service animal required because of a disability?" and "What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?"

Owners and staff may not ask about the nature of the person's disability, request documentation for the service dog or ask that it demonstrate its training.

At times, innocent misconceptions can lead to discrimination against those who rely

on the support of a service dog.

To combat this problem, American Humane, which works to ensure the well-being of animals, has worked with Mars Petcare, a leading pet nutrition and health care business, to create resources, such as training videos, to help businesses better accommodate patrons who have service dogs.

### 'Incredible abilities'

Aligning with the Mars Petcare Better Cities For Pets initiative, these resources help highlight the many roles of service dogs.

"Dogs have incredible abilities, including saving lives and making the world a better place," said Angel May, corporate citizenship lead at Mars Petcare. "Service dogs are animals that should be celebrated for the good they bring to society, and we hope that increased awareness of their working nature

leads to a deeper understanding of their important role."

At the same time, those who rely on service dogs have a responsibility to be sure that their canine assistants are well behaved and under control in consideration of others who must share spaces with them. The ADA requires that service animals be under the control of their handler at all times. "Under control" means that a service animal should not be allowed to bark repeatedly in a lecture hall, theater, library or any other place where the noise would be a disruption.

If a service animal is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it, staff may request that the animal be removed from the premises.

For additional information on service dogs, visit [ADA.gov](http://ADA.gov), [AmericanHumane.org](http://AmericanHumane.org) and [BetterCitiesForPets.com/ServiceDogs](http://BetterCitiesForPets.com/ServiceDogs).



# Vinegar for what ails you

By Gabriel Neal, M.D.

When my brother and I were kids back in the '80s, we loved Long John Silver's. But it wasn't just for the fish.

It was for the malt vinegar. We would uncup a bottle at the table and swig that tangy, delicious nectar of the gods straight.

Are you repulsed? Probably. Were we way ahead of our time? Apparently.

Some social media and online searches would have us believe that drinking vinegar is a cure-all. Our friends and colleagues will regale us with stories of the healing power of apple cider vinegar for whatever problem we may mention. "Oh, that backache from mowing? Vinegar." "That last 10 pounds? Vinegar will melt that right off."

As a practicing physician and professor of medicine, people often ask me about the benefits of drinking apple cider vinegar. I enjoy those moments, because we can talk about vinegar's extensive history, and then distill the conversation to how it might help.

Historically, vinegar has been used for many ailments. The famous Greek physician Hippocrates recommended vinegar for the treatment of cough and colds, and the Italian physician Tommaso Del Garbo, during an outbreak of plague in 1348, washed his hands, face and mouth with vinegar in hopes of preventing infection. Vinegar and water has been a refreshing drink from the time of Roman soldiers to modern athletes who drink it to slake their thirst. Ancient and modern cultures the world over have found good uses for "sour wine."

But what does medical research have to say on the subject of vinegar and health?

The most reliable evidence for health benefits comes from a few humans studies involving apple cider vinegar. One study demonstrated that it can improve after-meal blood glucose levels in insulin-resistant

subjects. In 11 "pre-diabetic" people, drinking 20 milliliters, a little more than a tablespoon, of apple cider vinegar lowered their blood sugar levels 30-60 minutes after eating more than a placebo did. That's good, but it was only demonstrated in 11 people.

Another study on obese adults showed a significant reduction in weight, fat mass and triglycerides. Researchers selected 155 obese Japanese adults to ingest either 15 ml, about a tablespoon, or 30 ml of vinegar daily, or a placebo drink, and followed their weight, fat mass and triglycerides. In both the 15 ml and 30 ml group, researchers saw a reduction in all three markers. While these studies need confirmation by larger studies, they are encouraging.

## More research needed

Studies in animals, mostly rats, show that vinegar can potentially reduce blood pressure and abdominal fat cells, but any benefit claims based only on animal studies are premature. The health benefits we suspect need to be confirmed by larger human studies. This will certainly happen as researchers build on what has been studied to date.

Is there any evidence vinegar is bad for you? Only if you drink excessive amounts or a high acetic acid concentration such as distilled white vinegar used for cleaning (consumable vinegar is only 4 to 8 percent acetic acid), or rub it in your eyes, or heat it in a lead vat as the Romans did to make it sweet. (Don't heat any food in lead vats; that's always bad.)

So have your fish and chips and vinegar. It may not do all the good you hope; and it certainly is no cure-all. But people all over the world will be enjoying with you.

Now raise high that bottle of malt vinegar with me, and let's drink to our health.

*Gabriel Neal is clinical assistant professor of family medicine at Texas A&M University. Reprinted from TheConversation.com.*



Mike Goat

Apple cider vinegar is known to lower blood sugar levels, but more research is needed.



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# Let's get physical: All activity counts

By David E. Conroy and Sherry Pagoto

It's that time again. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recently released a new edition of the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. That sound you hear is Americans collectively sighing.

Let's be honest: Physical activity guidelines can be tough. As behavioral scientists with expertise in exercise motivation, we will be the first to admit that maintaining a physically active lifestyle isn't easy. This is what we do, and we don't even always hit the goal. Life is messy and often gets in the way of even the best intentions. Let's take a deep breath, unwrap these new guidelines and talk strategy.

The guidelines recommend that all adults do at least 150 minutes per week of physical activity at an intensity that elevates the heart rate. Older adults should add balance exercises. And with the exception of women who are pregnant or nursing, adults should lift weights using all major muscle groups at least twice a week.

The guidelines also recommend that school-aged children and adolescents be active for 180 minutes per week. Preschoolers should be active throughout the day. Right now you might be thinking, who has time for all this exercise?

The good news is that the guidelines now recognize that fitting in big blocks of time for exercise is not necessary to get health benefits. For the first time, the guidelines don't require that physical activity occurs in bouts of 10 consecutive minutes or more to be valid. All activity counts. So, that climb up and down the stairs at work every day counts toward your goal (as long as you're raising your heart rate).

The new guidelines also emphasize a "move more, sit less" message to encourage everyone to do just a little more physical activity and to spend a little bit less time sitting. Physical activity isn't all or nothing. Every little bit comes with health benefits, so if reaching the guideline seems overwhelming, that's OK. Just try to do a bit more than you did yesterday. Improvement counts as success whether you meet the guidelines or not.

## A word of caution

Be careful not to push too hard too soon. Exercising hard can feel unpleasant. Most people don't repeat activities that feel unpleasant. Find something you enjoy and keep it fun if you want that behavior change to stick. When you hear all the news about the new physical activity guidelines, try not to let it discourage you. Set the numbers aside for now and just ask yourself, "How can I move a little more and sit a little less than I do now — and how can I make it fun?"

If you feel the guidelines are overwhelming, you are not alone — this is one of the most common complaints about the guidelines we hear from the thousands of people we have studied and counseled in exercise programs. People often feel hopeless about changing their lifestyle dramatically. One way to tackle a large goal is to break it down into smaller pieces.

Consider a marathon runner. No new runner starts off running 26 miles; each one has to build up to it. They break monstrous goals into smaller pieces that increase steadily over many months. You can approach the new physical activity guidelines in the same way.

## A strong investment

The experts call physical activity the "best buy" in public health. And the guidelines are based on evidence from thousands of studies.

Based on this evidence, an expert panel concluded that exercise increases our lifespans, prevents that sneaky annual weight gain and reduces the risk of almost every chronic disease: cardiovascular disease, diabetes and many cancers. No other single behavior can do as much good for your health.

By investing some time into exercise now, you get to cash in later. Think of it as the 401K for a long, healthy and happy life.

Of course, we don't always make decisions in our long-term self-interest. We are wired more toward immediate rewards, and many health benefits of physical activity take years to appear. Some may be hard to notice at all, like preventing heart disease.

Fortunately, exercise has many immediate benefits. One of the biggest is the "feel good" effect afterwards. People consistently feel more focused, less stressed and more energized after physical activity. In fact, studies now show that regular physical activity can actually reduce anxiety and depression — with effects equal to antidepressant medication or psychotherapy. We are all just one workout away from feeling better than we do right now.

By tracking your progress, using incrementally more challenging goals, and celebrating milestones of achievement, you can move yourself closer to reaching the big goal.

The first goal you set should be a pretty easy goal — so easy you should be thinking, "Oh, come on! That is too easy!" Say, for example, you get about 30 minutes of exercise per week. Could you increase to 35 minutes per week for the next three weeks?

Once you've nailed 35 minutes for two to three weeks, bump it up to 40 minutes. The idea here is that you are building slowly, getting used to each step before moving on to the next step. Each step is also enhancing your physical fitness and conditioning so the next step won't feel much more difficult than the one before.

From a time management perspective, sneaking in an extra five minutes here and there is also far easier than finding time blocks of 30 to 60 minutes.

If you are far from 150 minutes right now, forget about 150. Come up with a goal that is "Oh, come on!" easy and then go from there. You can track your progress with wearable devices, smartphone apps or good old-fashioned pen and paper.

However you track your progress, it is important to have a plan that you can track and keep trying to raise the bar for yourself — ever so gently.

You got this.

*David E. Conroy is a professor of kinesiology and human development at Pennsylvania State University. Sherry Pagoto is a professor of allied health sciences at the University of Connecticut. This article first appeared on TheConversation.com.*

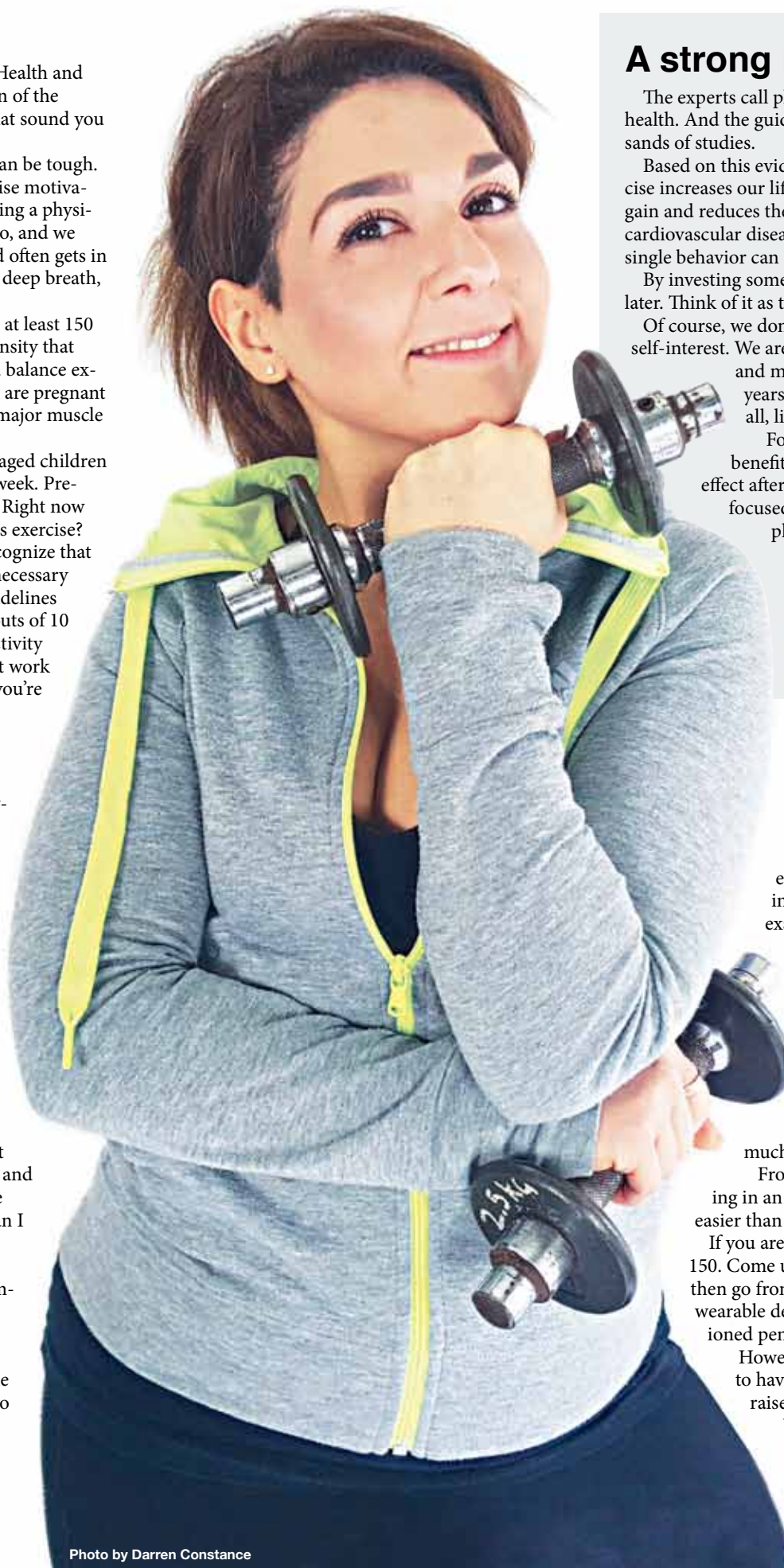


Photo by Darren Constance



# Design guidance from a color enthusiast

There's a lot going on in this room, but somehow the exuberant colors and patterns all come together harmoniously. We wanted to understand why, with so many varied, vivid elements, the space doesn't feel chaotic.

So we got in touch with Sue Wadden, director of color marketing at Sherwin-Williams. She works with color constantly, has an interior design background and outfitted the room as part of Colormix 2019, a campaign that aims to make it easier for customers to use 42 trend colors. Grouped in six compatible palettes, these "color personalities" can guide selection of accents and trims as well as furniture finishes and accessories.



In the room, Wadden used the "Enthusiast" colors shown above. "Without it looking like a rainbow, I wanted to capture a full riot of colors but have them work together. It's really about layering pattern and texture and color." A challenge, she admits. "If you don't do it right, it looks like a mess."

To begin, Wadden had the room painted in the palette's Argyle green. As a backdrop, it illustrates her advice to create places where the eye can rest. That helped explain how this room can be both energizing and relaxing.

"The eye isn't stressed out," she said. "The larger blocks of color that aren't blocks of pattern are resting places. The walls are resting places." So are the solid-color chair seats, aspects of the painting and the sofa. These visual resting places allow the Enthusiast palette's bold colors to bring "maximum attitude and yet produce harmonious results."



Courtesy Sherwin-Williams

**The Enthusiast palette in action, using Argyle green, Majestic Purple, Oceanside, Positive Red, Gold Crest, Porpoise and Nebulous White.**

**Pattern play:** The use of patterns in the room is controlled — none too large, and they're confined to certain areas: sofa pillows, draperies and the multi-hued flower arrangement inspired by draperies. The animal print rug and striped pillows are quieter patterns with lines that seem more textural.

**Blending well:** "If you know you want patterned drapes, pick a solid-color couch," Wadden advises. "With patterned drapes, a patterned sofa would be too jarring. If you have all neutral furniture, then that's really the green light to have some fun with color."

**Color harmony:** "I have white for balance, but all of the colors are of the same intensity," Wadden notes. "It's a green room, but the other balance color is red. They are complementary colors, so they are going to look good together." Wadden is steeped in color theory, but for the novice, she explains that complementary colors are those opposite on a color wheel. The Sherwin-Williams room on our cover illustrates complementary colors from the Wanderer palette, with blue furnishings and orange-tinged paneling in Cavern Clay, the Sherwin-Williams 2019 color of the year.

**Quiet partners:** For a subtler analogous color palette, Wadden suggests consulting a color fan deck, often found at paint stores. Pick a favorite color, then select options in the same position from the three cards to the left or right. Picking colors in the same position on the cards, say the fourth color down, will give you colors of the same intensity.

Wadden applauds the emergence of design "maximalism," which the Enthusiast palette taps, defying neutrals. "We need some color back in our lives," she says. "There's nothing wrong with color. It makes you feel great."

## Too much stuff? Try an estate sale

Pieces of Time began in 1997 as a West Orange antiques store. Over the years, the business has evolved, with owners Amina Lee and Renee Banks selling antique, vintage and newer items through their home content sales and estate liquidation services.

Pieces of Time Estate Sales brings sellers the highest possible price with an eco-friendly goal of finding buyers for unwanted heirlooms, furnishings, decorative accessories, collectibles and other quality items.

"We design a plan to effectuate the most successful sale and removal of personal property from a home," says Lee. The owners

remain on site to manage the sale for clients who are moving, downsizing or liquidating an estate. Their professional affiliations include the New Jersey State Society of Auctioneers and the International Society of Appraisers. "Our services are based on years of experience, knowing the market, and research," says Banks.

As collectors themselves, they bring an added level of care, Banks notes. "We understand that it is not always easy to let go of items that have sentimental value, but our compassion can make doing so as easy and painless as possible."



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# Five fun craft ideas to try right now

Winter is the perfect time to get crafty.

When cold weather encourages us to enjoy cozy quarters inside, we can do that while exploring our own creativity.

Here are a few fun ideas that tap the season's holidays, events and sentiments. Make your resolutions visual, plan for that Super Bowl party spread or think of loved ones and self care, too, for Valentine's Day.

The luscious red home-made body scrub below reminds us that cranberries are available frozen in the months after Thanksgiving. The recipe below from CanolaInfo.com can be a starting point to explore the fruit's skin-care benefits. Cranberries contain malic acid, which is often included in skin care formulations for its exfoliating quality. Additionally, cranberries are a source of antioxidant vitamins C and E. And research continues to show that cranberries are effective in preventing certain infections. This means it's smart to enjoy them in foods and drinks. Some of the benefits might just carry over in a skin care blend that you make for your Valentine or yourself.



**Cranberry-date body scrub:** In a blender, process until smooth 8 dates (pits removed), 1/3 cup frozen cranberries, 1/2 cup orange juice, 1 teaspoon wheat bran and 1 teaspoon canola oil. Pour into a resealable container to store. While showering, massage this mixture onto skin to exfoliate and moisturize. Use all the scrub within one week.



**Words to live by:** Back in the day when kids declared themselves “BFF” or best friends forever, the craft brand Plaid came up with this project idea for a canvas celebrating friendship. We like the finished piece because it emphasizes, in a format meant to be displayed, some of the most important qualities of a strong friendship (you can lean on me, laugh, share good times). This wordy method is great for winter crafting because it also can be used as a reminder to stay on track with our resolutions and the ways we want to grow better and stronger. The beauty of it is that decoupage can be done on a variety of surfaces. Plaid makes its Mod Podge glue and sealer in a variety of formulations for paper, fabrics, furniture and even outdoor surfaces. There are matte, gloss, glittered and other finishes. So grab a magazine and clip out inspiring words and images to make yourself a crafty vision board — a beautiful, visual reminder of your dreams and what it takes to be the very best you.

**Touchdown table:** How fun would this table cover be for your Super Bowl party spread? The turf table project from Lowes.com uses Green Top Sail turf cut to table length. When used for tailgating, it can do double duty as a game table. Beyond the cut-to-measure turf, the only tools required to make the turf table cover are utility scissors, a tape measure to mark equal distance between the 1-inch-wide spray-painted yard lines, and stencils for perfectly shaped numbers. The six-step Lowe's project also includes instructions to construct a goal post at one end of the table. Made from sawed lengths of PVC pipe, the goal can be used for games of finger football with a folded triangular “ball.”



## Drawer boxes reimaged

Turning an old drawer into a shelf can be as simple as painting it and anchoring it securely to a wall. The inside can be covered in patterned adhesive paper (left), or with chalk paint to make it a wall-hung message board. Attach a magnetic back, and decorative magnets can hold photos or notes.

Beginners who want to learn woodworking can build a shelf box or polish up an old drawer, as in the Dremel.com project shown left. Three hand tools are used in the “Up-cycled Drawer Shelves” project. A cordless rotary tool with a sanding drum removes paint or stain, another tool sands larger areas for smooth refinishing. A small circular saw cuts the dividers. Search for the project by name at Dremel.com.

At right, floating shelves begin with picture frames in a Lowes.com project. For the “Picture Frame Shelves,” 1-foot-by-8-foot lumber is cut to length for each side. Sides are held in box shape by wood glue and then nailed. The frame is then glued on and nailed in place before finishing with paint or stain. Search online with Lowe's and “Picture Frame Shelves.”





# Measure to get a perfect light fixture

Lighting is the finishing touch to a room's design. It is the element that can change the mood of a room and give life to the space.

There are many options for home lighting, and it can be intimidating to begin the search for the right choice for a given room.

Before visiting a showroom, be prepared with basic information about your space. Some of the most important questions the showroom sales staff will ask are about size. Take as many measurements as possible. Preparation will ensure that you select the perfect fixture for your space. The American Lighting Association offers the following measures to take before leaving home.

**Ceiling height:** When shopping for a hanging light for a high ceiling, make a note of the room's ceiling height and the length and width of the room. Bring pictures of the space, making sure that the pictures give some perspective on the room's size.

**Fixture size:** If a fixture is already hanging in the space, give an estimate of its size. Keep in mind that a new fixture will need to fit appropriately in the space. A grand chandelier, for example, will not fit in a foyer with an 8- or 9-foot ceiling height. If you have an 8-foot ceiling, consider a flush mounted fixture to achieve clearance requirements for the room.

**Consider clearance:** Depending on the room or placement of the fixture, the hanging length or height of a fixture is as important as its size. As a rule, keep 7 feet of clearance from the floor up to the bottom of the fixture in a space like a foyer, living room or bedroom, where people will walk beneath the fixture. In an open foyer or hallway, hang chandeliers or pendants with the bottom at least 6 inches higher than the door.

**Brightening bathrooms:** Ceiling height measurements are extremely important here. Hanging chandeliers and pendants over a bathtub adds a touch of elegance. Measure the height from ceiling to floor and measure the space between the top of the tub and the bottom of the fixture. At least 8 feet of clearance is required. If the bathroom is small and cannot accommodate this rule, consider

## Multiple impact

Larger kitchen islands can typically accommodate a series of small pendants or a grouping of large pendants. Start by measuring the length and width of the island and take note of the shape (square, rectangle, peninsula, etc.). Measurements are very important here because with smaller pendants, equal space needs to be accounted for around each one. With larger pendants, hang even numbers (two versus three, for example). Plan for the size of each fixture to be about one third the island's width.

using a smaller fixture. Or, do not hang the fixture directly over the tub; instead, install it at least 3 feet away from the tub.

**Table matters:** Other measurements to take to the lighting showroom include those for fixtures that will hang above a dining room table or kitchen island. Measure the table length and width. The length of an appropriately sized fixture will be at least one foot shorter than the length of the table. Also bring basic information about the size and shape of the table. It is a good idea to bring a picture of the table in the space. It's a good reference for the showroom salesperson.

For both dining tables and islands, measure the height from the floor to where the bottom of the fixture should be. A good rule of thumb is to hang mini or medium-sized pendants 66 to 72 inches from the floor to the bottom of each fixture.

In addition to fixtures, many lighting showrooms carry a wide variety of bulbs. Buying bulbs at a showroom means having access to a knowledgeable sales person who can educate their customers on light sources.

*The experts at American Lighting Association-member showrooms are a resource for all lighting decisions, including design inspiration and the latest technology. To learn more, visit [ALALighting.com](http://ALALighting.com).*



An appropriately sized chandelier should be at least one foot shorter than table length. Crystorama's Bleecker, above, is among lighting options at [FergusonShowrooms.com](http://FergusonShowrooms.com).



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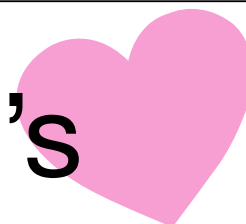
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## HOME THEATER

# Many faces of love for Valentine's



## 'The Big Sick' (2017)

Kumail Nanjiani and Emily V. Gordon have the ultimate "meet cute": He's a struggling stand-up comedian, she heckles him one fateful night. Kumail, a real-life Pakistan-born comedian playing himself, is smitten, while Emily (played by Zoe Kazan) is something of a commitment-phobe.

Meanwhile, Kumail's parents (Anupam Kher and Zenobia Shroff) work overtime to fix him up with his mother's idea of the perfect Pakistani bride, to Kumail's marked discomfort.

When Emily learns that Kumail hasn't mentioned her to his parents, she dumps him. Then fate strikes again: Emily is hospitalized and her parents (Ray Romano and Holly Hunter) keep vigil, joined by an awkward third party: Kumail.

Based on the real lives of Nanjiani and Gordon, "The Big Sick" will make you laugh, cry and do both at the same time. It's a study of culture clash — more like culture head-on collision — that wrings laughs even when going to dark places.



## 'Bonnie and Clyde' (1967)

He's a charming bank robber with a ready smile and a gun to match. She's a beautiful waitress who craves escape from a Depression-ravaged town. As real-life outlaws Clyde Barrow and Bonnie Parker, Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway had a chemistry perfect for the time in Arthur Penn's fatalistic "Bonnie and Clyde." It's a road picture, and Penn is adept at capturing winding, desolate locations that, even when filmed in color, evoke the 1930s. Bonnie and Clyde become folk heroes as they cut a swath through the Heartland, emptying banks and assembling a motley entourage: a dim-witted mechanic (Michael J. Pollard), Clyde's loutish brother (Gene Hackman) and his prim sister-in-law (Estelle Parsons).

Drama comes in when Clyde — an exciting partner in crime — proves to be a disappointment to Bonnie behind closed doors. But these two are meant for each other, even if both seem to recognize that this giddy romp won't end well.



## 'The Apartment' (1960)

Billy Wilder's romantic dramedy "The Apartment" depicts what would be a MeToo nightmare wherein managers prey on typists; an executive gropes an elevator operator in front of a dozen witnesses without reprisal; and the married CEO engages in revolving affairs with employees, firing anyone who pushes back. And yet, there *are* innocent souls in this story about corporate bean-counter C.C. Baxter (Jack Lemmon), who lends his apartment to his superiors for their clandestine liaisons. Said superiors promise to "put in a good word" with big boss Mr. Sheldrake (Fred MacMurray). Meanwhile, Baxter falls hard for Miss Kubelik (Shirley MacLaine), an adorable but somehow sad elevator operator with a pixieish haircut who gestures precisely in crisp white work gloves.

When Baxter finally gets a face-to-face with Sheldrake, he turns out to be just another rat holding out his hand for Baxter's apartment key.



## 'Adam's Rib' (1949)

Fierce competitors by day, pillow-talking spouses by night — it sounds like Kellyanne and George Conway.

That's George Cukor's "Adam's Rib," a presciently proto-feminist comedy starring Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn as battling barristers who happen to be married.

Tracy plays a prosecuting attorney assigned to a case that has captured the public's imagination: When a distraught woman (Judy Holliday) catches her philandering husband (Tom Ewell) in the act, she gets a measure of revenge.

And if you can't guess who signs on to represent her, you just don't know Hollywood romantic comedies.

Though the case seems open-and-shut, Hepburn puts forth an unconventional but surprisingly effective argument and garners headlines, putting her own marriage to the test.

"Adam's Rib" is a harbinger of Women's Liberation, which couldn't have a more convincing spokesperson than Hepburn.



## 'Now, Voyager' (1942)

Movie buffs love discussing mean movie moms played by Margaret Wycherly ("White Heat"), Angela Lansbury ("The Manchurian Candidate") and a withered dummy ("Psycho"). It's high time that list included Gladys Cooper, who, in "Now, Voyager," does a number on her onscreen daughter Charlotte, played by Bette Davis in a defining performance.

Charlotte couldn't look more frumpy with her caterpillar eyebrows and cheerless attire. She might have remained a prisoner in her mother's mansion, if not for a saintly psychiatrist (Claude Rains) who encourages her to invest in a stylish wardrobe and embark on a pleasure cruise.

Charlotte meets an enchanting, albeit married, fellow traveler (Paul Henreid). As the two grow closer, they both let down the curtain on their troubled lives. This is the one with the famous scenes in which Henreid puts two cigarettes in his mouth, lights both, and hands one to Davis. *Smooth.*



## 'Shall We Dance' (1937)

Those frothy Fred Astaire-Ginger Rogers musicals of the 1930s are often predicated on a misunderstanding that prevents the meant-to-be couple from being. In "Shall We Dance," Astaire plays Pete Peters of Philadelphia who masquerades as Petrov, a great "Russian" ballet dancer. Pete longs to tap dance to swing music, to the consternation of his promoter boss (Edward Everett Horton). Pete also wants to marry a fellow dancer he's never met, Linda Keene (Rogers), based only on seeing her face in an advertisement.

When Pete first foists himself on Linda, it is in the guise of the imperious Petrov. When the two meet again on a ridiculously art-deco cruise ship, she catches him in the act of being a mere American, and trust is broken. "Shall We Dance" has Astaire and Rogers dancing on roller skates in Central Park ... well, a Hollywood set meant to *look* like Central Park.

— Mark Voger, [MarkVoger.com](http://MarkVoger.com)



# Design: This is your garden on paper

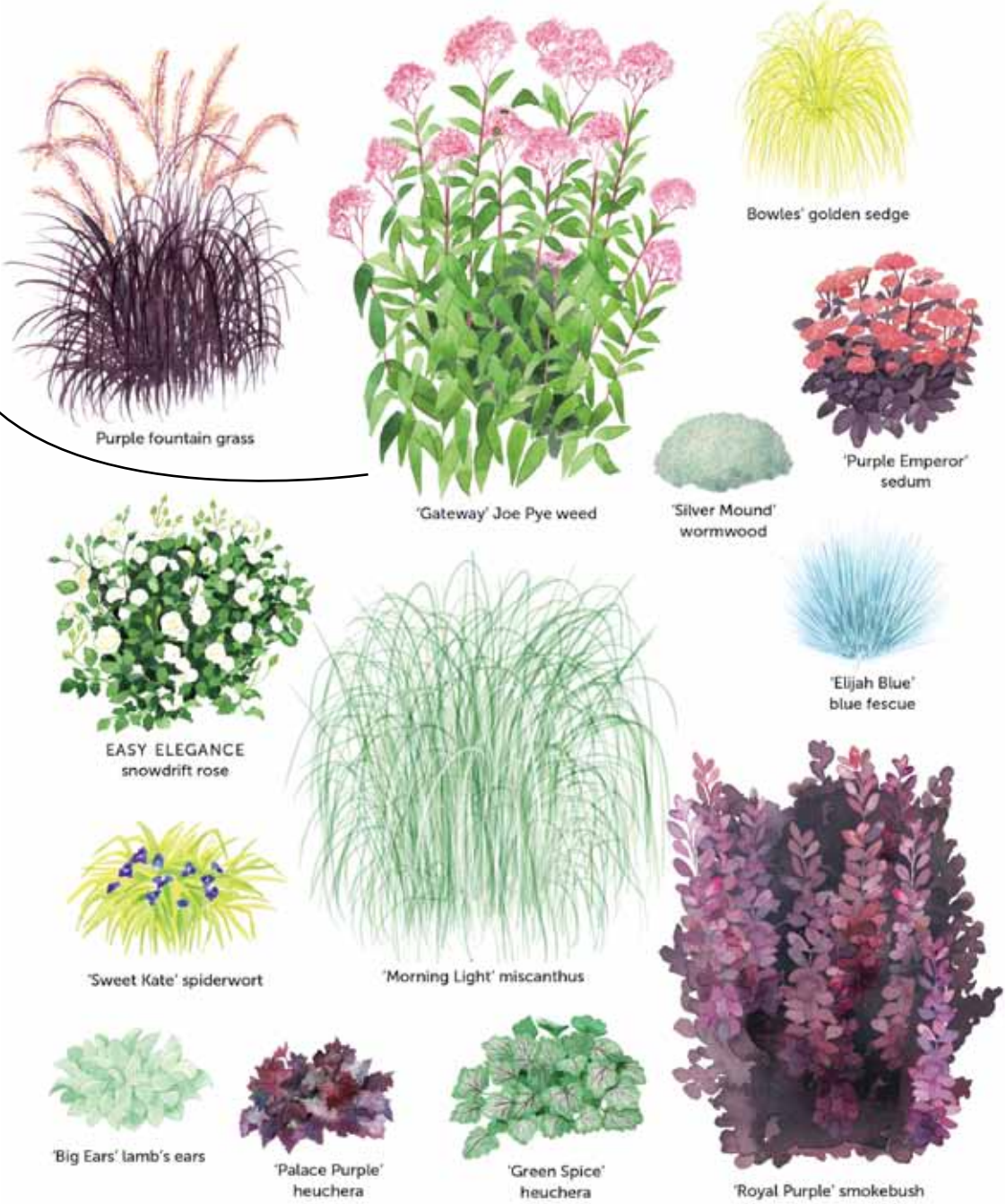


Winter makes time for gardeners to dream. When the ground is frozen, no plants can be tucked in, and few landscape chores can be accomplished. That means lots of thought time to imagine and plan the perfect garden. “Design Your Garden Toolkit” (Storey Publishing, \$19.95) by Michelle Gervais makes it easier to map out goals for the next growing season.



The book includes 150 reusable cling stickers representing popular plants. The bulk of them can be grown reliably in USDA hardiness zones 3 through 8 (Union County includes Zones 6a and 6b). Plant stickers can be arranged in innumerable combinations on the fold-out board included for garden planning. Gervais, who was an editor at Fine Gardening magazine for 15 years, gives profiles for 128 plants to rein in choices. In terms that are easy to comprehend, she covers important garden design principles such as effective color use in foliage and flowers, harmony and contrast, form, texture and ratios.

For Gervais, foundation plants are “all-season” choices — “those that catch the eye all season long due to their unusual foliage color, fantastic texture, striking form or all-season flowers.” These are the first plants selected for the book’s design board. After all-season plants appropriate to a garden’s sunlight level are selected and assembled, Gervais guides selection of flowering accent plants and optional focal points such as a large planter or stone.



Illustrations © Scott Jessop, used with permission of Storey Publishing  
The plants above are among 128 popular garden options recommended in “Design Your Garden Toolkit.” Reusable vinyl plant stickers allow users to assemble idea gardens on a board, as shown top left.

## Monitor heat and humidity in winter

The heat that keeps the house warm in winter’s icy temperatures can also be the root of dry skin, dry hair, chapped lips, a dry itchy throat and dry nasal passages, which can cause nose bleeds. During heating season, home humidity can drop to as low as 10 percent, where even wooden furniture suffers, losing moisture to crack and warp. For health and comfort, the winter humidity level indoors should be about 40 percent. (Humidity can be measured indoors with a humidity monitor.) A humidifier can increase home humidity levels, and some heating systems have them built in.

For a less permanent solution, consider a portable model. Humidifiers gradually add moisture, and cool-air types are usually preferred for safety. They can also cost less to buy and operate than warm-air types, which require a heating element. Always keep humidifiers clean and watch moisture levels to prevent mold growth. **Another winter tip:** Don’t forget to turn off your bathroom and kitchen exhaust fans. According to energy officials, as these fans work to remove excess moisture and odors, they also can waste energy by sucking heated air out of your home.

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# When the weather outside is frightful, cook up a dish that's just delightful

# Casserole comfort

The cook, and those who enjoy the cooking, will always fall for a casserole. These often meaty, cheesy assemblies deliver the flavors and satisfying textures they need to become frequently requested family favorites. Here, we've had some fun with familiar dishes that have been deconstructed and turned into easy, one-dish meals. Chile relleno, stuffed cabbage and stuffed peppers are even more delicious with the reduced effort — and dishes — that come with making them in casserole form. Beefy taco flavors pair surprisingly well with sturdy whole-wheat pasta to make an irresistible slow-cooker lasagna. Want meat-less options? You'll get one in a casserole that basically crosses a luscious broccoli-cheddar soup with the high-protein goodness of quinoa, and another in the Wisconsin tomato and cheese gratin. It's savory baked beans glorified by sun-dried and fire-roasted tomatoes, pesto and a panko-Parmesan topping.



## Chile relleno bake

(8 servings)

4 large Italian frying peppers (Cubanelle)  
8 ounces Monterey Jack cheese, shredded  
8 ounces Cheddar cheese, shredded  
3 large eggs, beaten  
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour  
12-ounce can fat-free evaporated milk  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
1/4 cup sliced almonds, toasted

1. Broil peppers, turning every 5 minutes, until charred and softened, about 15 to 20 minutes. With tongs, place peppers in a covered bowl for 15 minutes to steam. Peel and discard charred skin.

2. Heat oven to 350 degrees. Split peppers, remove seeds. Tear and arrange two peppers over the bottom of a 2-quart-square baking dish. Combine cheeses, spread half over peppers. Top with remaining peppers, then remaining cheese.

3. Whisk together eggs, flour, milk and salt. Pour evenly over cheese. Bake, covered, 40 minutes. Top with almonds and bake 5 minutes uncovered.

**Nutrition information** (per serving): 313 calories; 21g fat (12g saturated); 135mg cholesterol; 437mg sodium; 10g carbs; 1g fiber; 7g sugars; 21g protein

— Adapted recipe, photo courtesy Almond Board

**Cabbage roll casserole:** In a Dutch oven, heat 1 tablespoon **canola oil** and saute 1 large chopped **onion** over medium heat. Add 1 pound **extra-lean ground sirloin** (or **ground turkey**), 3 minced cloves **garlic** and 1/2 teaspoon **salt**. Cook, breaking meat in pieces, until no longer pink. Stir in 4 cups shredded **cabbage**, about 29 ounces canned **crushed tomatoes** and 1 cup **reduced-sodium vegetable broth**. Bring to boil. Reduce heat and stir in 1 cup **instant brown rice**. Cover and simmer 15 to 20 minutes, until rice and cabbage are tender. Remove from heat, let stand five minutes. Season to taste with salt and **pepper**.

— Adapted recipe, photo courtesy CanolaInfo.org.



## One-pot stuffed bell peppers

(6 servings)

1 pound 90- to 96-percent lean ground beef  
1/2 cup diced onion  
2 large bell peppers, one green and one red, chopped  
3 cloves garlic, minced  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
14-ounce can diced tomatoes  
2 cups beef broth  
1 tablespoon chili powder  
1 teaspoon cumin  
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
1/2 cup fresh cilantro leaves  
1 cup instant brown rice  
4 ounces Wisconsin cheddar cheese, shredded  
4 ounces Wisconsin Monterey Jack cheese, shredded

In a large skillet with lid, brown ground beef with onion, bell peppers, garlic and salt. Stir in tomatoes, broth, seasonings and 1/3 cup of the cilantro leaves. Bring to a boil. Stir in rice, return to boil. Reduce heat, simmer 10 to 15 minutes until rice is cooked. Top with cheeses. Garnish with remaining cilantro before serving.

**Nutrition information** (per serving): 426 calories, 21g fat (11g saturated), 85mg cholesterol, 721mg sodium, 31g carbs, 3g fiber, 4g sugars, 29g protein

— Adapted recipe, photo courtesy Wisconsin Dairy Farmers



# Slow cooker taco lasagna

(10 servings)

- 1 pound 90- to 96-percent lean ground beef
- 2 tablespoons taco seasoning
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 16-ounce tub Wisconsin ricotta cheese
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 8 to 10 strips whole-wheat lasagna, uncooked
- 3 cups salsa (see notes)
- 4 ounces Wisconsin Monterey Jack cheese, grated
- 4 ounces Wisconsin *queso blanco* cheese, grated
- 4 ounces Wisconsin sharp cheddar cheese, grated
- 4 ounces Wisconsin *cotija* cheese, grated
- 2.25-ounce can sliced black olives
- Optional toppings: diced red onion, cilantro, avocado

1. Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add ground meat and taco seasoning, stirring and breaking up for even browning. Stir in tomato sauce and continue to brown meat until no longer pink.
2. In a medium bowl, blend ricotta with egg until combined.
3. Layer 4 to 5 uncooked whole-wheat lasagna noodles in the bottom of a casserole-style rectangular slow cooker or a 6-quart oval slow cooker. (Break some noodles as needed to fit slow cooker shape). Spoon half the ricotta mixture over noodles as evenly as possible. Sprinkle half the meat over ricotta. Pour half the salsa over the meat.
4. Blend grated cheeses; sprinkle half over salsa. Repeat layering, ending with remaining cheese. Top with olives. Cover slow cooker; cook on high 2 to 3 hours or low for about 4 hours. Serve lasagna with toppings as desired.

Tester's notes: We recommend Savory Spice Shop taco seasoning for this recipe. Whole-wheat lasagna is hearty and holds up with slow cooking. Select a salsa with less than 200mg sodium per 2 tablespoons to avoid an overly salty dish. Area ShopRite stores sell Mexican cheeses such as *cotija*, a crumbly, salty type that can be a bit like feta, and *queso blanco*, which translates as "white cheese." It is often similar to mozzarella in flavor and texture. For convenience, feta and mozzarella cheeses can be substituted in this fun and flavorful cross-cultural recipe.

**Nutrition information** (per serving): 368 calories, 21g fat (12g saturated), 103mg cholesterol, 1014mg sodium, 21g carbs, 4g fiber, 6g sugars, 27g protein

— Adapted recipe, photo from 365DaysOfCrockPot.com; courtesy Wisconsin Dairy Farmers



# Wisconsin tomato and bean gratin

(6 servings)

- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1 medium onion, peeled and diced
- 2 cans (15-ounces each) garbanzo beans or cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
- 1/2 cup sun-dried tomatoes, roughly chopped
- 14-ounce can fire-roasted diced tomatoes
- 1 large carrot, grated
- 3 tablespoons pesto
- Cooking oil spray
- 2 ounces Wisconsin Parmesan cheese, grated
- 1/2 cup panko bread crumbs
- Chopped fresh parsley, optional

1. Heat oven to 375 degrees. In a large skillet, warm olive oil over medium-high heat. Stir in onions and cook until softened and slightly browned, about 5 minutes. Stir in beans, sun-

- dried and tomatoes and canned tomatoes, carrot and pesto. Set aside.
2. Lightly coat the inside of a baking dish with cooking oil spray. Transfer bean mixture to the baking dish.
  3. In a medium bowl, stir together cheese and bread crumbs. Spread topping evenly over beans. Bake uncovered 25 to 30 minutes until heated through and topping is browned. Garnish with parsley, if desired.
- Nutrition information** (per serving): 586 calories, 18g fat (5g saturated), 14mg cholesterol, 854mg sodium, 81g carbs, 20g fiber, 18g sugars, 29g protein
- Adapted recipe, photo courtesy Wisconsin Dairy Farmers; WisconsinCheese.com





## CASSEROLE

### Cheesy broccoli bake

(8 servings)

1-1/4 cups uncooked quinoa  
2 tablespoons unsalted butter, plus more for pan  
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour  
2 shallots, diced  
1/4 teaspoon garlic powder  
1/4 teaspoon dry mustard  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper  
2 cups reduced-fat milk  
8 ounces sharp Cheddar cheese, shredded  
16-ounce bag frozen broccoli florets, thawed

1. Heat oven to 400 degrees. Rinse and cook quinoa according to package directions.

2. Make cheese sauce: Melt butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Whisk in flour, shallots, garlic powder, dry mustard, salt and cayenne. Continue whisking the mixture until it is lightly browned, 1 to 2 minutes. Slowly whisk in milk. Simmer, stirring frequently, until sauce bubbles and thickens, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in cheese until melted and smooth. Stir in drained broccoli, and then quinoa until evenly combined.

3. Transfer mixture to a lightly buttered casserole dish. Bake uncovered until top is lightly browned, about 25 to 30 minutes. Serve warm.

Notes: For best results, use freshly shredded cheese. Pre-shredded cheese is coated in additives (to prevent clumping) that can affect sauce texture. If desired, 2 cups of shredded roast chicken can be added to this recipe with the quinoa.

**Nutrition information** (per serving): 296 calories, 15g fat (9g saturated), 42mg cholesterol, 292mg sodium, 27g carbs, 3g fiber, 4g sugars, 15g protein

— Adapted recipe, photo courtesy Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board via EverydayAnnie.com



Wisconsin Dairy Farmers/EverydayAnnie.com

Broccoli-cheddar soup meets quinoa : This cheesy broccoli bake is a modern take on the classic rice casserole.



Inset photo: Jeffrey Martin

When cooked, spaghetti squash has stringy flesh. It's shown fork-shredded in its shell, above right, with seeds removed.

## Get 'spaghetti' from a squash

Long before the spiralized veggie craze, there was spaghetti squash. When cooked, this unassuming yellow gourd has stringy flesh that makes it a stand-in for its namesake pasta.

It has only 42 calories and 10 grams of carbohydrate per cup, compared to 200 calories and 43 grams of carbs per cup for spaghetti. And, of course, spaghetti squash is gluten-free.

Try it in our featured recipes where this nutritious veggie bulks up a frittata and stands in for noodles in an Asian-style stir fry. When spaghetti squash is cooked, the oval shell becomes a firm bowl that's fun to stuff in a variety of ways. A tip: If you cook the squash whole, it can be challenging to separate seeds from "noodles." Use kitchen shears to cut around the seeded area, and it will be easier to scoop out.

A 2-1/2-pound squash yields about 5 cups of strands. Use a fork to shred the flesh into strands. Four ways to cook it:

**Oven (whole):** Heat to 375 degrees. Place squash on a

baking pan. Bake 30 minutes to an hour, depending on size. Squash is ready when tender enough to pierce with a knife.

**Oven (cut):** Heat to 375 degrees. Halve squash lengthwise; scrape out seeds with a spoon. Place halves cut-side-down in a baking pan with about an inch of water. Cover pan with foil; bake 30 to 50 minutes, depending on size, until tender enough to be pieced with a knife.

**Slow-cooker:** Pick a squash that fits your slow cooker (trim stem, as needed). Place squash and a cup of water in slow cooker. Cook on low until tender, 5 to 6 hours.

**Microwave:** Cut a 2-1/2-pound spaghetti squash crosswise into 1-inch thick rings. Remove seeds. Place on microwavable plate with 1/4 cup water. Cover with plastic wrap. Cook at high heat for 7 minutes or until tender. Let stand in microwave 10 minutes. Carefully remove from microwave. Peel off squash skin and discard before separating the flesh.

## Caprese-white bean spaghetti squash

(2 servings)

1 spaghetti squash (about 2-1/2 pounds)  
1 tablespoon olive oil  
2 garlic cloves, minced  
2 cups cherry tomatoes, quartered  
1 cup drained and rinsed no-salt-added cannellini beans  
1/3 cup chopped fresh basil  
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt  
3 ounces fresh small mozzarella balls, quartered  
Equipment: oval or oblong casserole-style slow cooker

1. Cook squash according to slow cooker instructions (see above). Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high. Add garlic and tomatoes; cook, stirring often, until tomatoes begin to soften, about 3 minutes. Remove from heat. Add squash, beans, basil and salt. Stir to combine; gently fold in mozzarella.

2. Spoon mixture evenly into squash shells. Place in oval or oblong slow cooker. Cover and cook on low until heated through and cheese is melted, about 1 hour.

Note: Filled squash halves can be oven-baked at 425



degrees until heated and browned, about 10 minutes.

**Nutrition information:** (per stuffed half): 375 calories; 19g fat (7g saturated); 39g carbs; 40 mg cholesterol; 593 mg sodium 10g fiber; 11g sugars; 17g protein

— Excerpted from "Everyday Slow Cooker" by the Editors of Cooking Light © 2018 Oxmoor House. Reprinted with permission from Time Inc. Books. All rights reserved.



## Oven chicken Parmigiana

(4 servings)

1 spaghetti squash (about 2 pounds)  
 1/2 cup whole grain flour  
 1 tablespoon dried oregano  
 3/4 cup whole grain bread crumbs  
 1/2 teaspoon black pepper  
 1 large egg, beaten  
 4 chicken breasts tenderloins (3 ounces each), pounded to a half-inch thickness  
 Canola oil cooking spray  
 2 cups marinara or arrabiata sauce  
 1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese  
 1/2 cup fresh basil, chopped

**1.** While squash is cooking (see methods on opposite page), combine flour and oregano in shallow bowl. In second shallow bowl, combine bread crumbs with pepper. In third bowl, add whisked egg.

**2.** Dip chicken into flour, then egg, then bread crumbs. Shake off excess with each step. Mist breaded chicken with canola oil spray on both sides and place on baking sheet.

**3.** Heat oven to 400 degrees. Bake 15 minutes, top with sauce and Parmesan. Bake 15 minutes until heated and cheese melts. Serve over cooked squash with fresh basil.

**Nutrition information** (per serving): 437 calories, 9g fat (3g saturated), 110mg cholesterol, 881mg sodium, 57g carbs, 9g fiber, 18g sugars, 32g protein

— Recipe courtesy CanolaInfo.org



Courtesy CanolaInfo.org

**"Bake-frying" is the secret to this crisp oven-made chicken parm. The recipe cooks at 400 degrees, and canola oil is used because of its high heat tolerance (its smoke point is 468 degrees), which makes it ideal for a very hot oven.**



## Spaghetti squash shrimp lo mein

(6 servings)

1 cooked spaghetti squash (about 2 pounds)  
 1/4 cup reduced sodium soy sauce  
 2 tablespoons honey  
 2 teaspoons McCormick garlic powder  
 1-1/4 teaspoons McCormick ground ginger  
 2 teaspoons vegetable oil  
 1-1/2 cups matchstick carrots  
 1 medium red bell pepper, thinly sliced  
 1 pound shrimp, peeled and deveined  
 1/4 cup thinly sliced green onions

**1.** Use a fork to shred cooked spaghetti squash into long thin strands. (See cooking methods on opposite page.) Place squash noodles in large bowl.

**2.** Mix soy sauce, honey, 1-1/2 teaspoons of garlic powder and 1 teaspoon of the ground ginger in small bowl until well blended.

**3.** Heat 1 tablespoon of oil in a large skillet on medium-high heat. Add carrots and pepper; stir-fry 3 minutes. Add shrimp and sauce mixture; stir-fry 2 minutes or just until shrimp turn pink. Remove shrimp mixture from skillet.

**4.** Heat remaining oil in skillet on medium-high heat. Add squash noodles, remaining garlic and ginger powders. Cook 1 minute, stirring gently to heat through. Return shrimp mixture to skillet; toss with squash noodles. Remove from heat. Sprinkle with green onions to serve.

**Nutrition information** (per serving): 139 calories, 3g fat (0g saturated), 113mg cholesterol, 487mg sodium, 12g carbs, 1g fiber, 8g sugars, 16g protein

— Recipe and photo courtesy McCormick

## Gorgonzola spaghetti squash frittata

(8 servings)

1/2 cup diced yellow onion  
 1/2 cup diced red bell pepper  
 1 teaspoon olive oil  
 2 cups cooked spaghetti squash, completely drained  
 1 teaspoon salt, divided  
 3/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper, divided  
 8 large eggs  
 1/2 cup light cream  
 4 shakes hot sauce  
 4 ounces crumbled Gorgonzola  
 4 ounces mozzarella, shredded  
 1 medium tomato, thinly sliced  
 Cooking oil spray

**1.** Heat oven to 350 degrees. In a small skillet, sauté onion and bell pepper in olive oil until soft, 2 to 3 minutes. Stir in squash, 1/2 teaspoon of the salt, and 1/4 teaspoon of the pepper. Remove from heat. Set aside to cool.

**2.** In a large bowl, whisk together eggs, remaining salt and pepper, cream and hot sauce. Stir cooled, fully drained squash into the egg mixture.

**3.** Coat a 10-inch pie plate or round cake pan with cooking oil spray. Pour in squash mixture. Top evenly with the Gorgonzola, then the mozzarella. Arrange tomato slices evenly over the cheese. Bake 25 to 30 minutes, until custard is softly set and barely browned. Let rest 10 minutes before cutting.

**Tester's note:** Avoid overcooking; the hot frittata continues to set while resting.

**Nutrition information** (per serving): 240 calories, 18g fat (9g saturated), 300mg cholesterol, 669mg sodium, 5g carbs, 1g fiber, 3g sugars, 15g protein

— Adapted recipe and photo courtesy Wisconsin Dairy Farmers





# Keeping it light in the slow cooker

Whether you regularly rely on a slow cooker or have one tucked away gathering dust, the new “Everyday Slow Cooker” cookbook can be an inspiration.

Its 130 recipes were developed by editors of CookingLight magazine who offer fresh alternatives when the slow cooker “fails to give us the vibrant, creative and healthy food we want to prepare.” They promise “the super easy slow-cooking process you love with new recipes featuring modern ingredients and global flavors.”

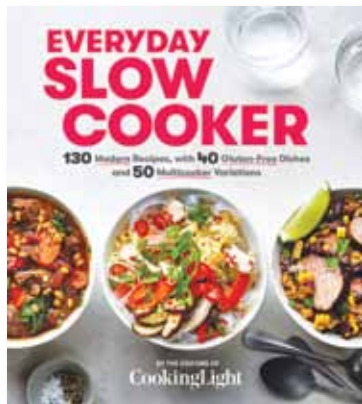
With greater interest in low-carb and gluten-free meals, this means recipes such as the stuffed spaghetti squash we feature on Page 14, and lighter takes on

slow-cooker favorites including stews and the melt-in-your-mouth meats. For anyone beginning to explore Thai cooking, lemon-

grass-coconut marinated chicken is described as a perfect starting point. An entire chapter covers seafood, and there are many meatless options. Korean, Moroccan and Spanish are among featured cuisines.

There are revelations: slow cookers use about as much power as a light bulb would over the same time period. With a platform inside, a slow cooker can be used as a steamer. Or use one as a double boiler

or for *bain marie* preparations where custard or mousse would cook gently in ramekins or a souffle dish set in a shallow water bath.



## Cornmeal-topped turkey chili

(8 servings)

6 tablespoons canola oil  
1-1/2 pounds lean ground turkey  
1 large onion, chopped  
2 garlic cloves, minced  
2 tablespoons chili powder  
1-1/2 teaspoons kosher salt  
Cooking oil spray  
2 (14.5-ounce) cans no-salt-added diced fire-roasted tomatoes with their juice  
2 (15-ounce) cans no-salt-added black beans, drained and rinsed  
3/4 cup all-purpose flour  
3/4 cup fine yellow cornmeal  
2 teaspoons baking powder  
1 large egg, beaten  
1-1/4 cup 2-percent reduced-fat milk  
4 ounces sharp Cheddar cheese, shredded

1. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, warm 2 tablespoons of the oil. Add turkey and onions; cook until browned, stirring to crumble turkey, about 7

minutes. Add garlic, chili powder and 1 teaspoon of salt. Cook, stirring often, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Coat the inside of a rectangular, oval or 6-quart round slow cooker with cooking spray. Add turkey blended with tomatoes and beans.

2. In a large bowl, whisk together flour, cornmeal, baking powder and remaining half teaspoon of salt. Stir in egg, milk, cheese and remaining 4 tablespoons of oil. Spoon cornmeal batter over chili in the slow cooker, gently spreading to cover completely. Cover slow cooker and cook on low until crust is fully baked and lightly browned, and chili is heated through, about 4 to 6 hours.

**Nutrition information** (per 1-1/4 cup serving): 548 calories; 24g fat (6g saturated); 111mg cholesterol; 494mg sodium; 50g carbs; 7g fiber; 4g sugars; 32g protein

— Adapted from “Everyday Slow Cooker” by the Editors of Cooking Light



## Easy jerk pork shoulder

(8 servings)

1 tablespoon dark brown sugar  
2 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves  
1-3/4 teaspoons kosher salt  
1-1/2 teaspoons garlic powder  
1-1/2 teaspoons onion powder  
1 teaspoon cayenne pepper  
1/2 teaspoon ground allspice  
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
3 pounds lean bone-in pork shoulder roast (Boston butt), trimmed  
2 cups chopped yellow onion  
1/2 cup fresh orange juice  
3/4 cup fresh salsa or pico de gallo  
1/3 cup finely chopped fresh pineapple

1. In a small bowl, combine brown sugar, thyme, salt, garlic powder, onion powder, cayenne, allspice and cinnamon. Rub spice mixture all over pork.

2. Place pork in a 5- to 6-quart slow cooker. Add onion and orange juice. Cover and cook on low until pork is tender, about 8 hours. Transfer pork to a platter, reserving cooking liquid in slow cooker. Let pork rest 10 minutes. Skim fat from reserved cooking liquid. Break pork into large pieces. Toss with cooking liquid.

3. In a small bowl, stir together salsa and pineapple. Serve over pork.

**Nutrition information** (per 3/4 cup pork with 2 tablespoons salsa): 236 calories; 11g fat (3g saturated); 110mg cholesterol; 559 mg sodium; 11g carbs; 1g fiber; 6g sugars; 21g protein

— From “Everyday Slow Cooker” by the Editors of Cooking Light © 2018 Oxmoor House. Recipes reprinted with permission. All rights reserved.



# Fill your freezer with time-saving meals



In “Seriously Good Freezer Meals” (Robert Rose, \$24.95), Karrie Truman offers a method to cook 50 freezer meals from 21 recipes in 12 to 15 hours. The large-scale paperback’s 150 recipes include color photos and bulk ingredient quantity guides for six to 30 batch meals. Truman includes numerous tips to simplify the process. “If you don’t want to do a ton of freezer meals in a day, consider simply making double or triple batches of the meals you make every day,” she writes. Her casseroles and one-dish meals are typically frozen for reheating. Components of other recipes are frozen, thawed and cooked for meal times. For the featured tacos, the marinating fish is frozen. Tortillas, lettuce and beans are added on cook day.



Simply doubling or tripling a recipe can mean getting more meals from the same effort. “Fix, Freeze, Feast” (Storey Publishing, \$18.95) by Kati Neville and Lindsay Ahrens includes 150 freezer meal recipes organized by meat type, with chapters included on vegetables, seafood, sides and soups. Recipes also cover sauces, marinades, snacks and desserts. Included are 49 time-saving recipes that can be successfully cooked from frozen. The surprisingly good seafood Creole kit involves seasoning and freezing store-bought vegetable juice in one bag and assorted seafood in another. Everything is thawed, the juice is heated and simmered. The thawed seafood is added, and the finished dish is served over rice.

## Lemon dill tilapia tacos

(6 servings )

1/4 cup melted butter  
1/4 cup chicken broth  
Grated zest and juice of 2 large lemons  
1-1/2 teaspoon dried dill  
1/2 teaspoon minced garlic  
2 pounds skinless tilapia fillets  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
12 corn tortillas, warmed  
1 cup shredded romaine lettuce  
1 cup canned black beans, rinsed  
1/4 cup salsa  
2 teaspoons cornstarch (optional)

In a large bowl, whisk together melted butter, chicken broth, lemon zest, lemon juice, dill and garlic. Place fish and marinade in bowl, toss to coat well. Cover and refrigerate 15 minutes.

**Cook it now:** Drizzle the olive oil into a rimmed baking sheet and place in the oven. Heat oven to 400 degrees. When oven reaches 400 degrees, remove baking sheet, add fish and return to oven. Bake 10 to 12 minutes, until fish is flaky and lightly crisped on edges. Remove from oven and chop fish in

chunks. Arrange tortillas on a work surface. Evenly divide lettuce, fish, beans and salsa among tortillas. Serve with lemon-dill sauce, if desired.

Lemon-dill sauce: In a small saucepan, blend remaining marinade with 2 teaspoons cornstarch. Bring to boil over medium-high heat, stirring constantly, until thickened, about 3 to 5 minutes. Remove from heat. Drizzle sauce over tacos.

**Make it a freezer meal:** Place fish and marinade in a gallon freezer bag. Seal bag, removing as much air as possible. Label and freeze. To prepare, refrigerate freezer bag 12 to 24 hours to thaw, then follow cooking instructions.

**Nutrition information** (per serving): 400 calories, 16g fat (7g saturated), 95mg cholesterol, 334mg sodium, 30g carbs, 6g fiber, 1g sugars, 36g protein

— From “*Seriously Good Freezer Meals: 150 Easy Recipes to Save Your Time, Money & Sanity*” by Karrie Truman; © 2017 RobertRose.ca



© Charity Burggraaf



© Alexandra Grablewski

## Seafood Creole

(3 freezer meals, 6 servings each)

3 (46-ounce) bottles vegetable juice (such as V8)  
3 large green bell peppers, diced  
3 large celery stalks, diced  
3 large onions, diced  
3 tablespoons minced garlic  
3 teaspoons paprika  
3 teaspoons salt (optional)  
3 teaspoons black pepper  
3 teaspoons dried parsley  
3/4 teaspoon celery seed  
3/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper  
4-1/2 pounds mixed seafood pieces (shrimp, scallops, crab, halibut, cod)  
3 cups cooked brown rice

Supplies: Six 1-gallon freezer bags, three 1-quart bags and three labels

**1.** Tuck the bottom of a gallon bag into a large, sturdy container (such as one that once held 32 ounces of yogurt). Carefully pour one bottle of vegetable juice into each gallon freezer bag, holding up the sides. Divide bell peppers, celery, and onions evenly among bags of juice. Into each bag, measure 1 tablespoon garlic, 1 teaspoon paprika, 1 teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon black pepper, 1 teaspoon

parsley, 1/4 teaspoon celery seed, and 1/4 teaspoon cayenne. Seal bags.

**2.** Into each quart freezer bag, measure 1-1/2 pounds mixed seafood. Place a bag of vegetable juice mixture and a bag of seafood. Label each bag.

**3.** Seal and freeze. Meals will keep for up to 2 months in freezer.

**Cook freezer meal:** Thaw one freezer meal in refrigerator. In a large stock pot, bring vegetable mixture to boil. Reduce heat, simmer 20 minutes. Add seafood and continue to simmer gently until seafood is thoroughly cooked, about 5 minutes. Serve over rice.

Tester’s note: We enjoyed this soup with the pepper, celery and onion sauteed in a teaspoon of olive oil for about 5 minutes over medium-high heat before adding them to the juice.

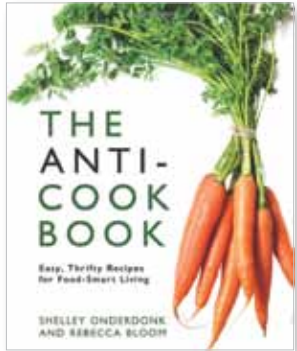
**Nutrition information** (per serving): 288 calories, 3g fat (1g saturated), 81mg cholesterol, 943mg sodium, 36g carbs, 5g fiber, 9g sugars, 27g protein

— From “*Fix, Freeze, Feast*” by © Kati Neville and Lindsay Ahrens. Reprinted with permission from Storey Publishing



# Moms on cooking

How many parents try to convince newly independent adult children to save money and eat more nutritiously by cooking for themselves? And how many parents will hear complaints that there isn't enough time to do so and then hold their tongues as they ponder what they know to be an abundance of trivial pursuits on the part of their non-cooks?



In a slender volume that eschews potentially intimidating recipes, Shelly Onderdonk and Rebecca Bloom aim to impart kitchen wisdom to young adults, including their own children.

"The Anti-Cookbook," they write, seeks "to inspire readers to think creatively about making meals and independently

about the deeper issues surrounding food and nourishment." Inspiration came from "The Anti-Coloring Book" — Susan Striker and Edward Kimmel's 1978 book that encouraged youngsters to draw from their imagination rather than coloring within someone else's lines.

Mostly, the cookbook shows how home-cooked meals can be easy and quick to prepare while costing a fraction of what would be spent on take-out or convenience foods.

Mingled with stories of their own young adulthood, the two 50-something moms who were college roommates offer numerous quick meal-prep suggestions, typically in sentence format recipes without exact measurements.

"We're hoping to provide readers with a template for thoughtfulness around the way we feed ourselves," they write in the book's introduction. "It's much more than measurements, heat and chemistry, and that's what we unfold in these pages."



Later Jay Photography

Dish-washing and other simple household chores can help kids see the relationship between their efforts and earning.

## Chores can make better kids

Spending on home maintenance, including landscaping, housekeeping and other services, can add up fast. Parents can save money and teach responsibility and financial skills when they hire their own children to do household tasks.

So says Gregg Murset, a father of six and certified financial planner who co-founded BusyKid.com to help parents hold children accountable for their familial responsibilities while also teaching them about finances.

With the help of a parent, children as young as 5 years old can begin to earn, save, invest and share with charitable organizations while learning to spend wisely.

According to the Center For Parenting Education, children who regularly do chores are better able to deal with frustration; delay gratification; have higher self-esteem; and are more responsible compared to children who don't help out with chores. Below are Murset's tips for assigning home maintenance chores to kids and teaching them critical skills along the way.

**Make a plan.** Sit down as a family and discuss all of the home maintenance that is required throughout the year and the cost for each project. Discuss the projects, the deadlines and who is tackling what. Assign children tasks that are age- and skill-appropriate.

**Schedule it.** Set a date for when the job must be completed and hold the child responsible for accomplishing it. Use a calendar or white board to help keep track of everyone's chore schedule.

**Pay up.** You obviously don't have to pay your child the hundreds of dollars you would pay professionals, but you can treat their assignments like a first job. Offer up an appropriate incentive for accomplishing each task. Let them know that if they don't complete their work, they won't get paid.

**Work together.** Instead of having each person take on individual projects, team up to make the jobs go faster. As a family, decide on one major task that everyone can work on together. Make the reward for completing this project something that the entire family can enjoy. Maybe it's dinner out,

### Tips to make it fun

No one said chores have to be boring. Make the work a game and trigger the competitive side of your kids.

Since younger children cannot help as much with cleaning, put them in charge of quality control with a pair of white gloves and a magnifying glass.

Ask friends from your neighborhood to do a cleaning swap. Take turns doing jobs at each other's homes with your kids, and set up an assembly line process. For example, if you are washing outside windows, one person can scrub while another follows and rinses. Then go to the neighbor's house and do the same. You'll cut your job time half, if not better.

If two kids want the same job, have them write down bids on paper and turn them in to you. The lowest bidder wins the job and pay upon completion.

Household chores are a great way to begin teaching children some valuable life lessons about work ethic, responsibility, time management and wage earning.

a movie or getting ice cream. Not only can this build teamwork, it can motivate everyone to do the best job possible to achieve the goal and get the reward.

**Share your talents.** Make sure to carve out a few hours to take on a community project as a family — clean up at your park, paint an elderly neighbor's fence.

**Build a fund.** Put away the money you saved by hiring your children to clean, mow the grass, paint a wall or wash the dogs. Create a special family fund that can go towards family purchases, vacations or some of the fun outings discussed earlier. This will teach children that money saved by doing certain work themselves can help them save more money to do the things they enjoy. Setting goals and keeping track of how much you have saved will help motivate children to keep up the hard work.



## Mixed messages

lechindr sumt eb gattuh  
owh ot kitnh, tno hawt ot  
nhtik. — rgamreta dema

Unscramble this American anthropologist's quote about parenting. Solution on AtHomeNJ.com.



# Recipes shared with friends



We’re among millions who can’t resist Best of Bridge cookbooks. They have the spirit of those old-school recipe collections assembled by ladies’ church groups, but with livelier design and greater sophistication. As in those beloved volumes, these recipes are tried-and-true, shared because they’re family favorites or constantly requested after being served at gatherings. “Best of Bridge Weekday Suppers” (Robert Rose, \$29.95) has 175 recipes. Authors Sylvia Kong and Emily Richards will note when a recipe comes from a friend or neighbor. An explanatory note tops each recipe, and there’s often a joke or campy saying at the end. (“The best thing about the good old days is, I wasn’t good and I wasn’t old.”) Recipes are made easy for busy lives with time-saving techniques and manageable ingredient lists. Sections cover soups, salads, sandwiches, pizza and pasta, meats, poultry, seafood, vegetarian suppers and “quick and easy sweet stuff,” such as the featured biscuits-turned-cinnamon rolls. A few other options: smoky tomato chickpea soup with grilled cheese croutons, shrimp and bacon spinach salad, Thai shrimp cakes and the curried turkey pot pies shown on the book’s cover.



Matt Johannsson

## Mark’s favorite quick cinnamon roll biscuits

(12 biscuits)

### Filling

- 1/3 cup granulated sugar
- 1/3 cup packed brown sugar
- 2-1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- Pinch of salt
- 1/3 cup melted butter

### Rolls

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 cup cold butter, cubed
- 1 large egg
- 3/4 cup whole milk

### Frosting

- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 2 tablespoons butter, softened
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup powdered sugar

- 1. Make filling:** In a medium bowl, combine all ingredients; set aside.
- 2. Make rolls:** Heat oven to 425 degrees. Lightly oil a 9-inch square baking pan or deep-dish pie plate. In a large bowl, combine flour, sugar, baking powder and salt. Using a pastry cutter or two knives, cut in butter until it resembles coarse crumbs. In a small bowl, whisk together egg and milk; pour over flour mixture and stir gently until just combined. Turn dough out onto a lightly floured surface, press and fold a few times, then roll out into a rectangle, roughly 16 by 10 inches. Spread filling over dough, then roll tightly lengthwise into a log. Pinch roll edges to seal. Cut crosswise into 12 equal pieces and place in prepared pan. Bake 20 to 25 minutes

- or until golden brown.
- 3. Make frosting:** Meanwhile, in a large bowl, blend together cream cheese, butter and vanilla. Gradually beat in sugar until smooth and spreadable. Spread over warm rolls. Tester’s notes: If all biscuits won’t be consumed in a day, frost them on demand. Unfrosted, they can be frozen and reheated. Refrigerate the excess frosting, or just make half.
- Nutrition information** (per biscuit): 429 calories, 25g fat (15g saturated), 148mg cholesterol, 209mg sodium, 45g carbs, 1g fiber, 21g sugars, 7g protein
- From “Best of Bridge Weekday Suppers” by Sylvia Kong and Emily Richards © 2018 RobertRose.ca; reprinted with publisher permission



© 2018 Oxmoor House

In a small kitchen, a mounted rod is attractive wall storage for a hanging spice rack and utensils on “S” hooks.

## A house in order

If you’re ever staring at a blank wall in your home, try imagining how you might use it to improve storage space. Many of the solutions in “The Real Simple Method to Organizing Every Room” (Oxmoor House, \$26.99) revolve around the effective use of wall space. Chic hooks, shelves racks and rods can become functional focal points with a little planning into what will be stored there. Floating shelves, including the crafty box types we show on Page 8, can be hung in multiples for an artistic display of lightweight books, pretty trinket boxes or vases. The shelves are a storage choice that uses space in a more attractive way, where “big bookcases can feel heavy,” the Real Simple editors write. The book has many small-space solutions and goes beyond order and storage advice to offer decorating ideas in its room-by-room guidance. There are numerous tips and checklists for cleaning and maintenance that can be a valuable reminder of sometimes forgotten housekeeping tasks. But perhaps the most important bit of advice from this book is that the best and easiest way to keep a clean and organized home is to give it a little attention every day so the chores don’t pile up to overwhelm us. “When you have a few extra minutes, tackle a little cleaning,” the book advises. To help, there are suggestions for tasks to complete within a certain block of time. In 15 minutes, for example, you could clear the tables. “Uncluttered surfaces make a room look instantly organized,” the book advises. Family members also can learn that it doesn’t take much time to help keep things in order. Another suggestion from the book: “Set a timer for five minutes and instruct everyone in the house to do as much as they can in that time frame to reset the space. You’ll be surprised how much you can accomplish in such a short amount of time.”





# What's cooking in kitchen design

“In our Instagram-worthy pursuit of home décor, kitchens have become a centralized location to put our lives on display within the home. There is typically a need for even a small corner of the kitchen to reflect ourselves in a personal way,” says Stephanie Pierce, MasterBrand Cabinets’ director of design and trends. MasterBrand is an umbrella to eight cabinet brands, including Diamond, KitchenKraft and Omega. Pierce stays on top of what’s happening in the nation’s kitchens. For 2019, she says we’re likely to see the following trends in new and renovated cooking spaces.



**Open but private:** “We are starting to see more utilization of glass, primarily glass with patterns or textures — rustic wire frames in glass, frosted glass and art glass,” says Pierce. Here, glass can go beyond being a pretty accent to offer the added function of obscuring what’s behind the doors.



**Minimal and sophisticated:** “Clean lines, open expanses and purposeful consideration of storage to keep kitchens clutter free, all contribute to the increased demand for a cleaner aesthetic of minimalism.”



**Mixing finishes:** “Forty-nine percent of kitchen designers reported mixing multiple paints, finishes and wood grains in 2018, and we expect this trend to continue to grow into 2019,” Pierce says. “Mixing textures enriches the luxury associated with light coming in and provides a three-dimensional warmth that is always desirable within the home environment.”





**Island life:** “Today’s island is a complex combination of utility, function and beauty,” Pierce says. “The island is a centrally located focal point responsible for storage, food prep and social aspects, including entertainment and family dining.”



**Living color:** White kitchens remain popular, and shades of gray often sneak in, but colorful cabinetry also is on the rise. “We are continuing to see more desire to embrace personal preferences through the expressive power of color.”



**The future is metallics:** Stainless steel, copper tones and brushed nickel finishes will move from appliances and fixtures to cabinets. “Rather than as just an accent, we will embrace full metal islands and large banks of cabinetry.”



**French doors:** We love them on refrigerators, so it’s no surprise that side-by-side doors would become popular for ovens. Borrowing from commercial kitchens, both doors open at once for easy access. GE’s Cafe collection features a double wall oven configuration with French doors on top and a more conventional door below. Double-door ovens also are made by BlueStar, Viking and others.





Select a shovel that fits your body in terms of your height and how it fits in your hands.

## Shoveling snow safely

“Watch your back” is a phrase to keep in mind when we pull out our snow shovels.

So says Kaliq Chang, MD, an interventional pain management specialist at Atlantic Spine Center in West Orange.

“Every year, thousands of people get hurt clearing snow — most often injuring their backs,” Chang says.

“Regardless of age or strength, we’re all susceptible to overdoing it and hurting our backs when we shovel snow. Being aware and taking precautions can ensure that our walkways are clear while our backs stay healthy.”

Emergency departments see close to 12,000 snow-shoveling-related injuries a year, the American Journal of Emergency Medicine reports. Add in visits to doctors’ offices and clinics, and that number jumps to more than 150,000, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Heart health, understandably, gets a great deal of attention this time of year, but it’s also important to protect the rest of your body. “Most snow-shoveling injuries are musculoskeletal, with the lower back being affected the most,” Chang says.

Back awareness is especially important given the toll such injuries take. The National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke reports that 80 percent of adults will experience an episode of lower back pain, with such pain contributing to disability and missed work.

Shoveling snow brings on a perfect storm of factors that can trigger back problems: intense upper-body exertion in cold temperatures on insecure surfaces. To prevent back injuries while shoveling snow, Chang offers the following advice:

**Prepare for a workout:** “Athletes prepare their bodies for intense exercise, which is what shoveling snow is,” he says. “It’s really important to take time — say, 10 minutes — to warm up before starting to shovel.

Also, once started, we need to pace ourselves, hydrate, and take breaks. Clearing snow is not a routine chore like taking out the garbage.”

**Use the right equipment:** “Not all shovels are created equal,” Chang notes. “We need to select a shovel that fits our body in terms of our height and hands. It should be strong but not too heavy, as well as suited to properly moving snow. Just because something is labeled ‘ergonomic’ doesn’t make it so. It makes sense to check reviews and choose carefully. We also need to dress properly: breathable layers that can regulate temperature, as well as safe footwear to prevent falls.”

**Watch your form:** “Snow can be very heavy. As much as possible, we want to push it out of the way, not lift it. If lifting is necessary, we need to be careful. You want to keep your back straight and avoid bending at the waist. Instead, squat with your knees bent and your legs apart. Keep loads small and carry the snow to deposit it. Absolutely no reaching, twisting or throwing of loads, which puts strain on our backs.”

**Start early:** “We shouldn’t wait for the storm to end to get out our shovels. Regularly clearing snow as it accumulates keeps the amount we’re moving manageable, as well as hopefully keeping the surface we’re on safer.” An earlier start also avoids having to lift snow that becomes heavier and more difficult to remove as it starts to melt and then ice over.

**Know your limits:** “Plenty of people protect their backs from shoveling by having someone else do the job,” Chang notes. “Those with a history of back problems should consider getting assistance.”

*Atlantic Spine Center is a leader for endoscopic spine surgery with several New Jersey locations. More at [AtlanticSpineCenter.com](http://AtlanticSpineCenter.com).*

### ABOUT THE HOUSE

## Removing and improving

### Best places to buy fixtures

**Q.** We are going to renovate two bathrooms in our house this spring. I have several questions regarding purchasing



HENRI DE MARNE

fixtures for the job. The plumbing supply house offered to give me a 20 percent discount if I bought the fixtures — toilets, sinks, faucets and tub — from them rather than through my plumber. When I discussed this with my contractor, he said that he usually

prefers to let the plumber provide the fixtures; that way, if there are any problems, it’s the plumber’s responsibility. “It’s one phone call,” he said, instead of me having to call the plumber and the supplier if something goes wrong. I’m having trouble giving up that 20 percent, as it’s not insignificant. Any suggestions?

**A.** Also, the plumbing supply place steered me toward “contractor” grade fixtures rather than the “retail” grade at big box stores. Again, there’s a considerable price difference on, for example, what appears to be the identical model of toilet.

**Q.** Our present toilets have never worked properly. (I never used a plunger before I moved into this house, which was built in 2004. Now I’m an expert from weekly practice.) This is part of the motivation for the renovation. I want good quality toilets and plan to buy the ones top rated by Consumers Digest. I’m prepared to spend extra if the guts for contractor ones are better than big box ones.

**A.** So, is the plumbing supply house right about the grades? Is it worth the extra dollars? And can I be selective in what I get at the big boxes because, really, can there be that much difference between a contractor-grade sink bought from a plumbing supply place and what appears to be the identical make and model bought from a big box store? There’s a 56 percent price difference.

**A.** Your contractor has a legitimate point, but if you are willing to take the risk of having to deal with the plumbing-supply house if you experience a problem with one of the fixtures, don’t give up on the significant discount. The likelihood of having a problem with new fixtures is small.

The plumbing-supply house is effectively offering you the discount they give contractors who then sell you fixtures at full price. This contractor discount is the buffer contractors have to handle any problem that

may surface, and it is important to them. The term “contractor-grade” does not mean that fixtures are the top of the line. It generally means that the fixtures are the type that builders use in constructing speculative houses (known as spec houses), as opposed to building custom houses. Contractor-grade is chosen to avoid pricing spec houses too high. Plumbing-supply houses also carry top-of-the-line fixtures.

If you choose to buy your chosen fixtures from big box stores because they are considerably less expensive, you may be buying a lesser quality product specially manufactured for these stores. I am not sure that you can be assured that they are the top-of-the-line you are aiming for. Moreover, if something goes wrong, you may be facing a huge hassle dealing with such huge organizations. It is best to keep in mind “Buyer beware.”

For objective ratings of the products, you should check Consumer Reports, rather than the similarly named Consumers Digest.

According to Wikipedia: “Consumers Digest magazine has no subscribers and does not actually test the products they present their ‘Best Buys’ awards to. Instead, companies pay Consumers Digest to promote their products as ‘Best Buys.’ They rely on consumer confusion of their name with the well-known Consumer Reports magazine, published by the nonprofit organization Consumers Union. Consumers Digest Communications is a privately owned, for-profit business entity.”

Consumers Union’s Consumer Reports does test the products they rate and is, as described on their website, “an independent, nonprofit organization that works side by side with consumers to create a fairer, safer and healthier world.”

### Spiral staircase saves space

**Q.** I recently purchased a small ranch home with a spiral staircase leading to a room in the basement. I would like to remove this and replace it with a standard staircase. I have looked into this and am told that it could be done. But, I would have to lose approximately 8 feet of my kitchen. My kitchen is very small, so I cannot do this. Is there any other way to replace the staircase without loss of space in the kitchen? Please advise.

**A.** The spiral staircase was installed because of the space restrictions. Since you cannot spare the space needed for a standard staircase, the two options I see are for you to keep the spiral staircase or replace it with an attractive wooden loft ladder.

*For more than 40 years, Henri de Marne has shared his expertise on residential construction, repairs and remodeling with readers of his nationally syndicated column. Contact the author and learn more at [HenriDeMarne.com](http://HenriDeMarne.com).*



ASK DR. BARB

# Layoff hurts, but begins a new phase in life

Dear Dr. Barb:

I'm a 59-year-old who was laid off from a job with highly specialized skills. I've been in this field for more than 30 years, so I haven't had to job hunt for a long time. I now find that I'm completely out of touch.

I've never taken part in social media, but it seems to be required for every job I see listed. I've learned that "robots" now read resumes and rate them based on "keywords." At every job-hunting seminar I've attended, the advice is to "hide" my age. I have many friends and colleagues who are in the same boat. We're too young to retire, but apparently too old to get hired.

I have persistent bad dreams, clenched jaw pain, feelings of isolation, bitterness, anxiety, worthlessness, fear of going broke, and depression. I used to wake up at 7 a.m.; now I wake up between 4:30 and 5. Do you have any ideas I can apply in my day-to-day life to improve my outlook?

Dear Reader,

You should be encouraged that you realize you are not alone in your predicament. It isn't easy to accept the sad reality that older workers often can be the first to be let go and the last to be rehired. Furthermore, it is understandable that you are becoming more sad and anxious about your dilemma.

Already your sense of worthlessness, bitterness and isolation is negatively affecting your physical and mental health. Your feelings do matter and you have every right to feel worried and angry, but there is a healthier way to cope with the situation. As an example, there are ways to build up your self-esteem in order to change your negative beliefs.

First, try to be as compassionate and supportive to yourself as you would to any friend in your situation. There is nothing shameful about losing one's job. Unemployment is a fact of life. Losing your job does not make you a loser. The fact that you were at your job for 30 years suggests that you did a great job while you were there.

Although at this time you are feeling

depressed, it is important to take care of yourself and live your life as normally as possible. Of course your priority may be looking for a job, but leave time in your day for doing rewarding and effective things like exercising, eating healthy, spending times with supportive friends and loved ones and plain old having fun. You can accomplish these goals by getting active and staying active with a daily and/or weekly plan. You may not be in the mood, but acting in a way that is opposite of how you feel can put you in a better mood.

***Unemployment is a fact of life. Losing your job does not make you a loser.***

On the other hand, by not staying active, you may be leaving too much time to think in repeated negative ways. Getting stuck in the same thoughts over and over is called ruminating, whereby you spin your wheels and get deeper and deeper in negativity. Rumination can take the form of beating one's self up with internal criticism like being unable to stop thinking of what you should have done to prevent some bad thing from happening. For example, even if you did something wrong which caused you to lose your job, you can treat it as a learning experience and focus on what you can do differently in the future. You can self-correct rather than self-criticize.

Ruminating also can lead to thinking like a victim. Instead of focusing productively on the future, you keep dwelling on the past, repeatedly thinking how bad things are by blaming others who put you in this awful situation. In anger and bitterness, you sink into the "Why me?" outlook, especially if you believe that it is not your fault. Instead of empowering yourself to flexibly adapt to

the problem by developing new coping skills, you become reluctant to make the necessary changes in direction and move forward.

Another major challenge after job loss will be coping with a financial setback. If you are the breadwinner, you may feel the burden of responsibility or the guilt of not being able to take care of your family. However, it is important to remember that, although you are no longer bringing in an income, there are lots of ways that you can help out. As an example, at home you can take on more chores or be a better parent or partner. You are more than just a paycheck to your family.

Too often, loss of income can become equated with loss of self-worth, tied to one's sense of status, security and self-esteem. However, now may be an opportunity to reevaluate how money functions in your life both financially and emotionally. Although realistically, money can buy important things, there are many important things in life that might not cost that much and might even be free, like spending time with your kids, reading or volunteering to help others in the larger community. For some, this could be a good time to make a shift in values, with less emphasis on materialism and more on meaningful relationships, one's purpose in life and the things that really matter.

If money is a major problem, what good will worrying about it do? A problem-solving approach with self-discipline will provide more effective solutions. Gather information about how much money you have — savings and other sources of income — and what your expenses are. Then consider where you can budget by becoming more mindful of the difference between your needs (like your mortgage) versus your unnecessary wants (like Starbucks coffees or restaurant meals). Self-discipline, however, does not mean never spending money on enjoyable things, but that you get smart about how you spend it.

Most important, try to stay positive. Don't jump to conclusions that you will never be employed again. Almost everyone eventually



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gets a job, especially if they put the time and effort into finding one. It may require being flexible about the location and salary or even acquiring new skills. Or, it could mean, perhaps temporarily, taking one or two part-time jobs. Remember, you are an intelligent person with the capacity and motivation to work.

This can be a time to reclaim your life, take control of your destiny and make every day count. Eventually, you can develop a new way of thinking, acting and feeling that will empower you to become stronger and wiser in the face of any future challenges.

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Pia Frey's spiral-bound book can be propped up so users can flip through and create messages from its three sections of statements.

## Flip the script for Valentine's Day

Ever find yourself at a loss for words when it comes to expressing your feelings for your significant other?

Pia Frey has a little red book to help with that.

Released in time for Valentine's Day, "125,000 Ways to Say I Love You" (Atria; \$15.99) is a spiral-bound flip book with three sections of pages that can be mixed and matched to create loving, or not so loving, expressions.

Prop it up in your home and flip through each group of pages until you find the love-note combination that expresses the feeling and sets the tone for the day.

This one-of-a-kind flip book of funny, sweet and

often bold or painfully honest one-line poetry has been described as Mad Libs meets Instagram poetry.

It also includes options for a relationship's ups and downs, such as making up or breaking up. "Could you please forget everything I said last night" can take on a totally different meaning when followed by a page that says "I love you." as opposed to "We're done here!"

Frey's first book, "America Has Very Nice Legs - It's a Fact!" is a best-selling flipbook that lets users tap President Donald Trump's famous and infamous expressions, exclamations and tweets for humorous "Trumpisms."



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