

# BALANCE

WELLNESS MAGAZINE OF THE MANITOBA TEACHERS' SOCIETY

DECEMBER 2016 | VOLUME 2 | NUMBER 2

Getting to Better™:

## Wellness & the Culture Connection

Financial Wellness  
of Our Seniors

Tension Negatively  
Affects Your Voice

Exploring the  
"I AM" Principle

Extend Your  
Cycling Season



# editor's MESSAGE



**Congratulations everyone!** Balance was just nominated for a National Award, and has recently been informed the decision is in .....and....we are being awarded the **2016 GoodLife Fitness Health & Wellness Leadership Award** which recognizes that Balance, the Manitoba Teachers' Society wellness initiative is ahead of the curve and playing a key role in the overall health & wellness movement for employees across Canada. Your embrace of the wellness program is helping to implement change throughout our communities, our province, and throughout our Country. Your support of the program is not going unnoticed!

The award will be presented in Toronto in front of 300 summit participants from across the country later this month. We would not have received this incredible recognition had it not been for the support of the program by our members. Thank you for your continuous support.

Only a few months into the new school year and we are happy to report that Balance has participated in over 50 wellness events with our members. In the last issue we introduced you to Wendy Sutton, a new addition to the Balance Team who is providing support in the area of Caregiver Fatigue. We are excited to announce that the team is now working with Mitch Bourbonniere, a new presenter for the Balance team as the program and team continues to grow in our desire to provide our members with the best support and wellness options for their events.

Mitch worked with the Balance Team at the 4th annual Wellness Forum. He provided members a workshop on *the impact of stress, anxiety, anger and depression on mental health and wellness, while promoting protective factors such as resiliency, empathy, perspective, faith, serenity and humour. He uses a Medicine Wheel approach to looking after one's body, mind, emotions and spirit.*

Please join us in welcoming these new Balance team members, we hope we can provide the opportunity to share their expertise at a wellness event for you in the near future.

**Robyn Braha**

Wellness Coordinator



The  
Manitoba  
Teachers'  
Society



**BALANCE**  
mind body spirit  
THE MANITOBA TEACHERS' SOCIETY

DECEMBER 2016, VOLUME 2, NUMBER 2

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Published five times a year (September – June) by The Manitoba Teachers' Society. Articles and views published herein do not necessarily represent the policies nor the views of the Society.

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## PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT

40063378

## Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:

Information Management

The Manitoba Teachers' Society

191 Harcourt Street, Winnipeg, MB R3J 3H2

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Educational  
Press  
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16

## enjoy life more DAY 9

What or who has helped you through difficult times in the past? Make a list. Now, add to this list what you do for yourself when feeling stressed. Keep this list for "when needed". We all have difficulties from time to time, but knowing what helps us can make a difference in how quickly we get through it.

— Courtesy of Winnipeg Regional Health Authority,  
Mental Health Promotion Team WRHA

Vocal  
Hygiene:

6

Tension negatively  
affects your voice

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# *Getting to Better™:* Wellness and the culture connection



By **Stephen de Groot, Myriad Consulting** [www.stephendegroot.com](http://www.stephendegroot.com)

This article attempts to make an important connection between work culture and wellness. It makes the case that culture may be the greatest mechanism available to schools for enhancing the social, emotional and mental wellness of its members. We know that when teachers and education professionals are doing better so too are the students they are responsible for. It is in this light that strengthening workplace culture may represent a tour de force for not only enhancing member wellness, but for optimizing

student well-being and performance simultaneously.

## **Culture simplified**

Culture is a concept used to describe a set of shared beliefs, values and practices of a specific group as they live and/or work together towards a common goal. From an organizational perspective, culture is a pattern of thinking, behaving and working that characterizes a certain workplace.

Workplace culture is different from workplace climate. While culture represents patterns of work behavior, the

“how we do things around here”, climate is simply a person or group’s psychological perception (thoughts and feelings) of their work environment as positive or negative. Climate can be shifted, much easier than culture. For instance, spirit week, post-report card week, professional development days and/or even a snow day can impact the perception and feeling professionals experience momentarily within a school. Climate is much more variable and easier to change than culture. Changing culture takes a great deal more effort and time, because it involves a shift

in thinking, behaving and working.

Like workplace climate, culture is often referred to as being predominantly positive and/or negative. However, many school members may refer to their workplace culture more specifically. Positive culture references reflect attitudes and behaviors that are positive and preferred; a culture of "collaboration", "openness", "high performance", "health and wellness". Negative culture references often reflect less than preferred behaviors and/or are the result of negative behaviors; a culture of "entitlement", "individualism" "apathy" or "fear". A culture that is "toxic" is usually one where the attitudes and behaviors of staff members are perceived to have negative and potentially detrimental impacts on others.

### Culture, engagement, performance and outcomes

A wealth of scholarship and research demonstrate unequivocally that positive, healthy and/or strong cultures have a positive and profound impact on the level of staff engagement and overall performance. Education professionals that have a positive culture are more likely to be motivated, engaged and outperform those that would define their culture as negative. In addition to this, research also demonstrates that great workplace culture decreases negative attitudes and behaviors as well as substantially lowers absenteeism; workplaces with good to great culture record less sick time and/or fewer mental health days.

Great culture is positively correlated with better wellness overall and, as a matter of fact, can simultaneously foster great physical, social and mental health while buffering the stresses and strains of some of the challenges inherent in the important work of developing young hearts and minds.

### Great culture – direction, connection and protection

Great culture operates as a mechanism with three very important components; Direction, Connection and Protection.

All great cultures evolve and/or arise from a direction offered in the Vision, Mission and Guiding Values of a school. Clear purpose and goals, why we do what we do and what is it that we want to accomplish provides all members with clearer direction. Direction provides members with answers to

some very important questions like; who am I; where and how do I belong; why am I doing what I am doing? and; how should I behave so that I can connect to others and contribute to the community purpose? Direction offers members clarity regarding individual and group behaviour including roles, responsibilities and expectations. Direction offers members opportunity to connect and contribute to the collective needs, values, goals and strengths of the community.

Connection is a very powerful human necessity which operates in two ways. People in a group come together and connect because they have a common purpose. This connection also reinforces identity and a sense of belonging, thereby strengthening relational connection and group cohesion. Connection is all about relationships, collaboration, support and collective efforts towards a very important end.

Workplace environments that consistently promote direction and foster meaningful connections offer members protection. Protection is about significance, and safety. Great workplace cultures provide an environment conducive to feeling valued and foster a sense of purpose and trust; which contribute to a greater sense of psychological safety.

### Strengthening workplace culture – getting started

The following suggestions will assist a great jump start on the journey towards improving workplace culture.

**Have the Conversation:** The first step is to have an open dialogue about culture; with everyone. It is important for the collective to discuss things like; How do we define culture? What is the state of our culture currently? What do we want? What do we have? What attitudes, behaviors and ways of working (in the classroom, the department, the school) will get us closer to our preferred culture?

**Gauge the Climate:** Look to the moments when/where people are feeling and doing better, even just briefly. As suggested in the last article, "It takes a village", look to the areas where you are already experiencing positive and supportive moments. Can those moments and/or situations be fostered and or promoted further to happen



### Great culture – tips for leaders

1. Make great culture a priority
2. Start a "Great Culture" Conversation with everybody
3. Identify great culture attitudes and behaviors.
4. Always role model what is expected.
5. Hold self and others accountable to great culture attitudes and behaviors.

consistently as patterns, ceremonies and/or rituals of preferred behavior?

**Look to Vision, Mission and Guiding Values:** Vision, Mission and Values offer a type of road map for understanding which attitudes and behaviors are more in or out of line with the purpose and preferred goals of our work together?

**Focus on the Strengths:** Not all cultures are totally bad. Look for the attitudes and behaviors that are fully congruent with and support the Mission, Vision and Values. Acknowledge and reinforce these preferences. Even celebrate them, so you can make them stick.

**Identify areas for Development:** Areas for development simply put, requires the identification and elimination of the behaviors that are incongruent and/or antithetical to building and sustaining the preferred culture of the collective.

### The role of leaders

While culture is the responsibility of all members in the school, it is leaders that hold the most important role. Because they are responsible for enhancing well-being and developing the potential of all members to succeed, leaders must operate as "Culture Champions". Leaders function as the most important variable for influencing and impacting attitudes, behavior and culture over all. Leaders must be purposeful in their efforts to promote, role model, moderate and shape, both formally and informally, great workplace culture; so that staff can feel better, perform better and attain better results. <sup>(B)</sup>

*Vocal hygiene:*

# Tension negatively affects your voice



By **Caitlin Buchel, RSLP, SLP (C), M.Cl.Sc. , Buchel Speech & Language Group**

You look at the stack of report cards in front of you and wince. You have to get them all finished, as well as mark the pile of history tests, before Monday. As you lean over to get back to work, you can feel the muscles in your neck and shoulders tensing. It is going to be a long night!

What does tension in your neck and shoulders have to do with your voice? Well, the voice is produced using a number of different body systems. In order to produce a healthy voice, all of these systems must work together with the least amount of effort and tension. When we introduce tension to any part of the voice production system, it can cause an imbalance that will negatively affect our voice. You have two vocal cords in your larynx, or voice box, which vibrate as air passes through them to make a voice. When muscle tension develops in your chest, throat, neck, face, or shoulders, it can affect how your vocal cords vibrate. With this tension you may notice a change in the quality of your voice, with it sounding as though you have laryngitis even when you are not sick.

So, what can cause muscle tension? Some people develop muscle tension as a result of general stress. Most of us have probably had that moment when we realize our shoulders are up around our ears! However, it seems that certain people tend to regularly hold their stress and tension in muscles that affect their voice.

For others, their muscle tension actually starts with a sore throat or voice loss. Just like you might limp if you sprain your ankle, some people force their voice when they are sick or have laryngitis. When you do this, you can create muscle tension so that,



even once your cold passes, your voice continues to sound different because you have developed an incorrect pattern of muscle use.

The first step in addressing muscle tension is becoming aware that it is present. Take a moment and just notice what is happening in your body. Is your jaw clamped shut? Are your shoulders hunched forward? Is your chin stuck out? Posture can also play a big role in a healthy voice. You want to aim for a neutral spine position with your head, spine and pelvis vertical. Activities such as yoga and pilates can be very helpful in achieving good posture and reducing overall stress.

In our next issue, we will discuss specific stretches that can help alleviate tension in those muscles that have a tendency to affect the voice.

## **Muscle tension and your voice:**

1. Muscle tension in your chest, throat, neck, face or shoulders can negatively affect your voice.
2. Muscle tension can be caused by general stress or by forcing our voice when it is weak.
3. Awareness is the first step to dealing with muscle tension. Take a moment and pay attention to your body. Is your jaw clenched shut? Are your shoulders around your ears?
4. Activities that promote good posture and body awareness, such as yoga and pilates, can help reduce stress and muscle tension. **B**

*Caitlin Buchel is the owner and managing clinician of the Buchel Speech & Language Group, a private speech-language pathology (SLP) practice offering services in Winnipeg, and throughout Manitoba.*



# Organized incase of emergency

By Susan Macaulay, Clarity over Clutter



In the event of a time sensitive or emergency situation, it is important to be able to retrieve pertinent papers in a timely manner. Knowing that your documents are easily accessible and in some cases safely stored is beneficial for yourself, your family and/or heirs. An emergency can happen to anyone at any time.

In the summer of 2014, a family friend passed away quite suddenly. We were able to go into his home and locate very quickly all the documents that we needed to start the process of dealing with the lawyers, clearing out the house, disbursal of items, and listing the house for sale. The reason being, our friend had all his documentation organized and stored in binders. We were able to locate with ease the information required. We did not have to spend time looking through the house for pertinent papers. He created binders for various categories: House Information, Personal, Automobiles, Purchases, and Financial. It was not an elaborate system, but it worked well.

There are a number of documents that should be completed and filed for safe keeping. Some are:

- A Will, Health Care Directive, and Power of Attorney
- House/Tenant, Automobile, and Life Insurance
- Employee benefit plans, and health & disability insurance
- Financial documents: investing, retirement plans, pay stubs, and credit card statements
- Utility statements (at least one statement for referencing)
- Vehicle loans/leases, loan agreements, and mortgage papers or house deed
- Storage Rental agreements

For safe keeping, store important documents in a fireproof Home Safe. Many people have a Bank Safety Deposit Box for irreplaceable documents like: original wills, life insurance, cemetery deed, funeral or cemetery pre-arrangements, original certificates for birth, death, marriage, divorce, adoption,

citizenship, property deeds, investment documents, and any other relevant documents for you or your family.

Emergency Response Information Kit (E.R.I.K.) is a great way to have all medical information readily available in the event of emergency.

It is a document that is to be completed by someone who is: a senior, chronically ill persons, those who live alone or who have caregivers, and others who have speech difficulties or communication barriers. You may also want to take a copy of E.R.I.K. and your complete Health Care Directive with you when you are away on a trip. It is important to update the information form as your information changes.

Taking the time to get these important documents in order can bring clarity to your life. **B**

*Susan Macaulay of Clarity Over Clutter is a Professional Organizer who works with individuals, and families to create and enjoy a functional home. Susan specializes, as well, working with those who are dealing with Chronic Disorganization and/or Hoarding.*



# Keith's corner: Exploring the "I AM" principle

By Keith Macpherson [www.keithmacpherson.ca](http://www.keithmacpherson.ca)



Two of the most powerful words in our thoughts and language are the words "I AM". There is no denying the fact that you are! You are! When we use the words "I AM" there is a neutral aspect to the statement. There is no judgment or perspective attached to the words. They simply suggest that something is in existence. Variations on the neutral words "I AM" also apply to this concept. For example, **this magazine is, the chair you are sitting on is or, the school you teach at is.** These are all very neutral statements that hold no opinion or perspective. In the mindfulness practice these neutral statements that stem from the words "I AM" are very important in helping us become aware of how we have been looking at the different aspects of our lives. Many of us have regular tapes playing in our mind and in the words we speak, these tapes don't often align with what it is that we truly want in our lives. For example, you may find yourself truly wanting more time for yourself, however when someone asks you how you are doing, you answer with a statement such as, "I am so busy these days. There just doesn't seem to be enough time".

I was recently conducting a mindfulness workshop with a wonderful group of people and we were playing with this mindfulness principle that I refer to as the "I AM" Principle. We got to discussing the topic of money in relation to the "I AM" Principle and one of the participants stated that money is hard to come by. As she announced this to the group, I asked her if this was something that she wanted to keep believing to be true. She insisted that money was just not available in her life in the amounts that she wanted. I continued to ask her if there might be an alternate statement that would begin to shift her current perspective on how

she was looking at money. She wouldn't budge! I asked her to close her eyes and imagine herself standing under a tree that was filled with leaves made of dollar bills. It took her a few moments to truly connect to the image. When she finally did imagine herself standing under a tree of money she exclaimed, "Well this would be nice!" The group all began to laugh. I asked her to complete the following statement based on what she was seeing in her imagination with this money tree. The statement was, "Money is..." She immediately answered, "Money is everywhere!" As she stated this new perspective, I placed a five-dollar bill in her hand. She quickly opened her eyes and was brought to tears. "I get it!" she exclaimed. This was the first step towards shifting her current perspective around money.

Consider that money, like anything else in our world, is a neutral variation on the powerful statement "I AM". Money simply is. We have attached our perspective to this word along with many other neutral words in our world however what is important to understand is that the way we choose to look at these neutralities is going to play a major role in determining how life shows up for us.

To truly get into this principle of mindfulness, I would like to play a game with you. In a moment, I am going to list several "I AM" statements which will appear to be half sentences. I invite you to finish each sentence with your current perspective. This will be done most effectively by not overthinking or pre-determining your answers. The more impulsively you complete these statements, the better. Are you ready? Here we go!

Time is \_\_\_\_\_  
Money is \_\_\_\_\_

Love is \_\_\_\_\_  
The weather is \_\_\_\_\_  
Work is \_\_\_\_\_  
Life is \_\_\_\_\_  
I AM \_\_\_\_\_

If you did this correctly without overthinking it the immediate responses you answered are most likely the tapes that have been playing in your unconscious mind regarding these neutral aspects to the world. For example, if you said, "Time is hard to come by", you are most likely seeing a lack of time in many areas of your life right now.

Wayne Dyer often quoted, "When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change." In mindfulness, our perspective plays a major role in determining our reality. We are at the center of our lives, constantly making decisions about how we choose to see the world.

To conclude this practice of understanding the powerful words "I AM", I invite you to revisit your statements above and modify any of the answers you first gave that you want to change. Then begin regularly repeating these statements to yourself and others around you. Feel into the resonance of each one. If there is any resistance to believing the new statement, it is likely that you will have a bit of work to do. Repetition of the new statements along with feeling into their resonance will be helpful to move closer towards the life you desire for yourself. Remember that all things are possible. The thoughts we think are truly shaping the life we are experiencing. The world is what you think it is based around the powerful words "I AM". **B**

*Keith Macpherson is a motivational speaker, yoga instructor, life coach and recording artist. For more information and to sign up for Keith's daily inspiration emails visit <http://www.keithmacpherson.ca>*



# Seven listening saboteurs



By **Danielle Fullan Kolton, PhD, The Manitoba Teachers' Society**

*Our meetings are focused and productive.*

*Our meetings are a gong show.*

*Everyone around the table has a voice.*

*Some people dominate the conversation.*

*We talk about things that matter even when it is uncomfortable.*

*We avoid conflict.*

*I leave collaborative work feeling energized, effective, satisfied.*

*I leave collaborative work feeling discouraged, disengaged, needing therapy.*

Which of these statements ring true? While many dynamic and energizing collaborative spaces exist throughout schools across the province, there are also professionally dysfunctional spaces where

teachers experience dread, stress, and ineffective outcomes. Knowing how to diagnose and repair personal and collaborative habits is important to both individual and group wellness.

The working culture of teachers – how we dialogue, collaborate, and learn together – impacts trust, belonging, commitment, motivation, and student learning within a school community. Yet, simply forming a group such as a PLC, grade level team, or department does not mean that members are skilled in functioning together. In fact, “group smarts”, or collective intelligence, is not a sum

of the talent and brainpower of the people in the group (von Frank, 2013). Rather, productive focus and results require specific communication skills and deliberate strategies for working together.

A recurring obstacle within working cultures is the ability to listen for understanding. In professional dialogue, group members can become so focused on responding, refuting, or commenting that they miss the ideas being offered and leave little air space for processing. With so many moving parts in a dialogue such as priorities, needs, work styles, and personalities,

it is important to continually check in with one another about understandings and rules of engagement.

### Seven listening saboteurs

Reflect on recent professional conversations or collaborative work you were involved in. Did you witness or participate in any of these seven listening saboteurs?

1. **So, this one time...** Injecting a narrative from our own experience to identify with the speaker, shifting the focus to ourself, interrupting the speaker's thinking-aloud process, or missing the point of what was actually being said.
  2. **Yeah, but...** Searching for something to disagree with, pushback at, challenge, or argue about without supplying alternate ideas. Channeling our inner judger.
  3. **It's his/her/that fault...** Channeling our inner judger 2.0 with a blame/shame detour in the conversation instead of focusing on exploring, interpreting, and moving to action.
  4. **You shoulda, coulda...** Interjecting suggestions of "have you tried?" or "you should..." without letting the speaker fully explore the issue.
  5. **Let's sing Kumbaya...** Pretending to agree with others just to placate them, avoid confrontation, or because "it's just not worth it."
  6. **I'll be with you in a moment...** Being distracted by checking cell phone or email, looking at a passerby, daydreaming, or having an out-of-body experience.
  7. **What's your problem?...** Telling ourself a story about how/why someone is feeling/acting and responding based on incorrect assumptions and conclusions instead of facts.
2. **Check for understanding:** A.K.A. paraphrasing (not to be confused with parrot-phrasing). We often assume that our message is received as it was intended and that just isn't true.
  3. **Be a learner:** Get curious by asking "what happened?" or "what's possible?" instead of "what's wrong?" Assume the positive (Adams, 2009).
  4. **Step up:** Share thoughts and ideas with honesty and self-management. Be clear about the intent behind your comments.
  5. **Step back:** Consider postures, gestures, voice tone, inflection, facial expressions, power, and status in the room. Monitor your air time: What are the contributions and consequences of your participation (Garmston & Wellman, 2009)?
  6. **Talk about how you are talking:** As a group, create norms to establish a common agreement about how to work together, including expectations for:
    - a. Logistics: structure of meetings, record keeping, hospitality;
    - b. Individual functions: technology interruptions, work plan accountability, being on time, using "I" statements; and
    - c. Group functions: guidelines for conflict, processes for decision making, giving and receiving feedback, confidentiality (Kaser, Mundry, Stiles, & Loucks-Horsley, 2013).
  7. **Embrace diversity:** Embrace a wide range of experiences, work-style preferences, and perspectives; you will be smarter and more creative because of it (von Frank, 2013). Group think is sometimes more comfortable but always less effective.

### Seven team remedies

Becoming better at listening and responding to one another requires self-awareness and self-management as well as open conversations about how to have conversations. Consider the following seven team remedies that can make a big difference in your collaborative outcomes:

1. **Stop talking:** Just stop. Not forever, but long enough to hear all the voices in the room, consider what was said, and respond thoughtfully. FYI: it is impossible to do all three at the same time.

These seven listening saboteurs and seven team remedies are just as applicable to the work that we do with and among students as we teach them global skills for communication and collaboration. In her video, "Collaborative Habits of Mind," Lucy West (2012) describes how talk patterns are replicated in schools: She says, "The quality, depth, and rigor of the talk and learning among educators at all levels in a school is mirrored in the quality, depth and rigor of the talk and learning among students in that school." This is compelling evidence for the importance of modeling and learning



It is easy to assume that adults, and teachers in particular, know how to collaborate, but that is false: effective dialogue and collaboration require a specific set of skills, the most important of which is listening. There are no shortcuts in collaboration and it doesn't just happen because people are well-intentioned or given time to wrestle with a task.

these skills as teachers. Imagine how much more impact we have as cohesive and learning-focused teams!

It is easy to assume that adults, and teachers in particular, know how to collaborate, but that is false: effective dialogue and collaboration require a specific set of skills, the most important of which is listening. There are no shortcuts in collaboration and it doesn't just happen because people are well-intentioned or given time to wrestle with a task. Combatting habits that sabotage vibrant dialogue and teamwork involves an all-hands-on-deck, intentional commitment to building skills while constantly re-evaluating the how and why of the work. This is messy and vulnerable and doable work that is well worth the effort for everyone in the school community.

Want to learn more about High Impact Teams? Book a TLLT for a workshop at your school <https://www.mbteach.org/professional-development/tllt.html>. <sup>B</sup>

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# *northern* BALANCE



## What do sunshine, salmon, and egg yolks have in common? Vitamin D!

By Carla D'Andreamatteo, RD, MSc [www.thefoodlady.ca](http://www.thefoodlady.ca)

This vitamin has taken the spotlight for a number of reasons over the past decade or so. The list of health benefits that have been associated with Vitamin D includes strong bones, teeth, and immune system. In addition, reduced health risks for heart disease, type 1 diabetes, multiple sclerosis, colorectal cancer and more have been investigated. Research in this area is evolving and we continue to learn more about these possible links and whether they even exist.

### How much Vitamin D do you need?

The amount of Vitamin D needed each day for adults appears to vary depending on the source of the recommendation. For example, the Canadian Cancer Society supports a supplement of 1000 IU (International Units) daily during the fall and winter months (only after checking with your physician). However, Osteoporosis Canada states that healthy adults 19-50 years of age should receive a daily

supplement of 400 – 1000 IU. They further recommend that once over the age of 50 years the daily supplement amount should be 800 – 2,000 IU. Ultimately, trying to determine who and what to believe becomes confusing. My guess is that most people are not interested in having cancer or osteoporosis, so what should one do with all this information? Recommendations supported by Dietitians of Canada, weigh the evidence from numerous research studies before making a decision. At this time, the recommendations from Health Canada and supported by Dietitians of Canada are as follows for healthy Canadians:

**Adults 19-70 years old:** 600 IU daily (from food and supplements)

**Adults > 70 years old:** 800 IU daily (from food and supplements)

**All adults:** Do not exceed 4000 IU daily (from food and supplements)

As we age our skin is less able to produce Vitamin D. As a result of this

fact, Health Canada has identified that adults over the age of 50 should consume 400 IU Vitamin D supplement daily. When purchasing a Vitamin D supplement, select D3 versions instead of D2. Research supports that the body is better able to use supplements in the D3 form.

### Sources of Vitamin D

**Sunlight:** Sunlight and certain foods provide the body with Vitamin D. Sun exposure activates Vitamin D in our bodies through interactions with the body's skin, liver, and kidneys. If obtaining all Vitamin D from the sun, a specific amount of daily exposure is needed. The time duration may range from several minutes to a few hours a day, depending on skin color. The darker the skin pigment, the longer the sun exposure required to make Vitamin D. This is further complicated by the fact that wearing sunscreen prevents the body from being able to produce the vitamin from the sun. The



## \* nutrition tips

### Benefits of Vitamin D!

Health benefits associated with Vitamin D include strong bones, teeth, and immune system. Plus, reduced health risks for heart disease, type I diabetes, multiple sclerosis, and colorectal cancer.

### Here's an idea!

Eating one egg a day will provide you with approx 10% of your daily Vitamin D needs.



Canadian Cancer Society, due to skin cancer risks, does not advise being outside without sunscreen. Based on the sun exposure factor, individuals living in northern locations of Canada are considered one of the most at risk for Vitamin D deficiency. This is where food sources of Vitamin D can be used to meet one's daily needs.

**Food:** The following list identifies key foods that will provide higher amounts of Vitamin D than other foods.

- Milk (all varieties of cow's milk)
- Fortified beverages: soy or goat's milk, rice beverage, almond beverage, orange juice
- Egg yolks
- Fish (salmon, tuna, herring, trout, mackerel, sardines, halibut)
- Margarine

#### Recipes high in Vitamin D

Recipes for this article are from Canola Growers. They include food sources of Vitamin D and foods that should typically be available in many

northern communities:

- **Traditional pan fried trout** <http://www.canolainfo.org/recipes/details.php?detail=744>
- **Curried corn and pepper chowder** <http://www.canolainfo.org/recipes/details.php?detail=20>
- **Baked acorn squash with cranberry orange sauce** <http://www.canolainfo.org/recipes/details.php?detail=252>

This article has hopefully shed some (sun)light (bad joke...I know) on this situation for you. Navigating nutrition facts from fiction is a tough task for many. After many years practicing in the field of nutrition I often live by the adage; too much of a good thing always becomes a bad thing for the body. This is likely the case with Vitamin D, as well as any other nutrient.

Enjoy your food! **B**

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Carla D'Andreamatteo owns and operates a nutrition consulting company, *The Food Lady*, since 1999. Based in Winnipeg, the team of dietitians offers a variety of nutrition services provincially and nationally.

# Retirement planning: What's your dream for retirement?



By Peggy Prendergast

When asked, "What is the best thing about being retired?" the enthusiastic answer received was, "I get to do what I want 24/7" from three different women in their late eighties and early nineties living in an assisted living retirement home. Is that your dream for retirement?

What is retirement and what do you want to do? Is it what the name implies, a time to be "tired"? Or is it a time to retire to the sidelines of life for a time, to pause and become the real you, the person you were meant to be; a time for you to dream and discover your true potential; to reach out and discover what in your life gives you energy, makes you excited and want to live each day to its fullest?

What is it I want to do in retirement? Why plan? Why not just let life happen? Right now when you go to work you have a curriculum to follow, the bells ring to tell you when to start and finish, you are basically told what to teach and how to teach it and how much time you have to cover all of the subjects with all of the students given no matter what their ability. It is your ability as a teacher that determines the success of your students in combination with the supports you are provided. How do you provide success for yourself in retirement to be and what does success look like when your dreams come true?

Who are you going to be in retirement? Now you are identifiable. You are a teacher, a consultant, a principal, a somebody in your work world. Ask yourself, "Who am I meant to be, what is my purpose in life when retired?" What is important in your life now? When you go to work each day there are students that you won't miss when you retire, and there are staff members that you will be glad you don't have to encounter anymore but how about those people you will miss? How will



you replace them in your life? Teaching, after all, is a people business. How do you replace relationships when they are not forced into your life? This is an important question to answer at all times because as we age we lose lifelong friends and loved ones and must resolve this challenge. People are now living more years in retirement than they taught. At the end of 2015 there were 118 retired teachers over 100 receiving TRAF pensions. One third of all retired teachers are 75 years of age and older. What will your dreams be when you are 90? When will you be old?

The day you retire the world will see you as "old." What does this mean? The old stereotype that getting older is about decline, that it presents only challenges, that older people are a burden society has to contend with, a drain on our community resources, is

thankfully becoming outdated. Instead more and more "older" people are seen as contributors, not burdens. A volunteer study commissioned in 2013 by the Retired Teachers' Association of Manitoba (RTAM) revealed that 82% of its members volunteer on average over 40 hours of their time per month. Older people are contributors, not burdens. The new reality about aging is living; it is about growth not decline. Yes, life presents challenges but it also presents opportunities. The possibilities are endless, find your creative side in art, music or writing for instance, start a business, pursue a new career. What are your dreams for retirement? **B**

*Formerly a teacher and administrator in the Winnipeg School Division and now as a Director on the Retired Teachers' Association (RTAM), I currently chair the Wellness Committee and the Educational Advocacy Committee which includes the Awards program administered by the Winnipeg Foundation.*

# Financial literacy: Financial wellness of our seniors



By **Brian Denysuik, Creditaid** [www.creditaid.ca](http://www.creditaid.ca)

By 2021 22.8% of Canadians will be 65 years of age and older. Do we feel prepared as children and grand-children to help guide and protect them and their finances through their later years of life?

Through the busyness of our own lives, we need to keep in mind that managing finances will become increasingly difficult for our parents and grandparents as they age. When a person ages they can easily lose sight of how to handle money, and even a financially astute person can quickly move to a state of being unable to cope with their finances. If this isn't recognized it can be very stressful and costly for the elder.

Older adults who have recently experienced a loss of a spouse, and are lonely, can be vulnerable. In many situations they had previously had a partner to review and discuss money matters, to protect each other, and to make good common sense decisions. Alone they can be easily victimized.

It may be hard to believe, but it is most often those close to the elder who take advantage of them financially. It could be a multitude of people in the individual's life: a child who feels they have been unfairly treated and want their fair share sooner than later, a grandchild needing money to support a habit, a neighbor who is struggling with their finances, or even a care provider. The concern is that it can be anyone.

Once we are aware of just how vulnerable a senior can be, we need to put some checks and balances in place.

The starting point is to have a family member who can act as the point person or "go to person". The senior needs to feel comfortable to divert calls from sales people etc. to the point person to respond. This provides the senior with a simple, stress free way to pass on the



situation without being pressured into quick decisions that can be difficult to reverse with costly consequences.

Personally, I have seen just how many calls a widowed spouse gets after her husband's obituary is posted in the newspaper, and how a nephew can easily swindle \$100,000 out of an elderly uncle who was once very astute with his finances.

Another key check and balance that should be considered is a monthly or quarterly review of the elder's finances. This can include reviewing their bank statement, credit card statements, etc. If

they are apprehensive you may have to simply say that you are looking for errors to ensure that none of their money has gone missing, and to ensure that all the purchases on credit belong to them.

It is also very important to put together a Will and Power of Attorney while the elder is still competent. Our ultimate goal is to help our parents and grandparents feel safe in all aspects of their life, including their finances. <sup>B</sup>

*Brian Denysuik is a local credit counsellor and registered insolvency counsellor at Creditaid who has been in the financial services industry for over 30 years.*



# Extending your cycling season

By Dave Elmore and Jessie Klassen, Green Action Centre

Riding your bike is a great way to get a bit of exercise while you enjoy some fresh air and a mental break. If you've been riding your bike this fall, either to work, to run errands or for leisure, you may just be having too much fun to pack your bike away in the cooler weather. Riding through the fall (or even much of the winter) can be enjoyable, but it does mean a few adjustments. Here are some ideas to help you prepare.

## It's getting dark out there

The first thing to consider is the reduced daylight hours that you are likely going to be cycling through. One of the most important aspects of safe cycling is being visible and at this time of year that means having lights and reflective materials on you and your bike. The rules require cyclists to have a white or amber light on the front and a reflector on the rear of their bikes. Reflectors don't really provide the kind of visibility you need so it's a good idea to have a flashing LED light on the back. They greatly improve your visibility and are relatively inexpensive. Add some reflective clothing or reflective tape to your bike, and you'll be ready for the ride home from work.

## Ice and leaf alert

Fall riding can present some challenging road conditions, especially in the early morning when the temperatures fall below freezing. Watch out for wet leaves piled up along the edge of the roads, they are very slippery.

## Let's stay warm, but not too warm

Dressing for fall riding is really no different than any cool weather activity. Dress in layers and, if possible, follow the basic principle of a perspiration wicking undergarment, an insulating layer, and a wind-proof shell. If you have a longer ride you need to remember that you will build up some heat as you ride. If you are toasty warm when you walk out the door, you'll be cooking hot when you arrive at your

destination. Make sure that you keep your head and torso warm. If you don't, they will rob your extremities of heat and you'll end up with cold hands and feet.

## Route planning

Re-think your route. The route that you used all summer long might not be the best fit for the winter. Main arteries are plowed, but can become very slippery when polished up by heavy traffic. Plan your route considering the conditions on that day, and allow extra time both to get dressed and for the ride itself.

## Dress

- Wearing a balaclava, toque, mask, neck tube or combination to keep your head and face warm. Ski goggles are a great addition and generally don't fog up like glasses do.
- Taping over the vents on your helmet or adding a helmet cover. There are also ski helmets and other helmet options that have less venting that work very well.
- Wearing gloves or mitts that allow for some dexterity to operate your brakes. There are lots of options for your hands, including "pogies", which attach to your bike handlebars and keep your hands from being exposed to the elements while still giving you access to your brakes and gear shifters.

## The bike

The types of bikes used for winter riding are as varied as the riders themselves. Here are a few things to consider:

- The wet sand and salt of winter are hard on your bike, so you might want to use an older bike.
- Whatever bike you choose needs to be prepared and maintained to ensure it performs well under winter conditions. Check with your local bike shop for advice and/or service.
- Consider converting your bike to a single speed. Derailleurs seldom work for long under winter conditions

without constant care and lubrication.

- Studded tires are not always necessary in winter but there are times when they can be a great benefit, especially on the front wheel. They perform considerably better on ice, but can be expensive and will wear quickly on bare pavement. There are a number of different types of studded tires, including some that bike shops make themselves.
- Narrower tires tend to cut through the snow rather than float on top, making them well-suited for a plowed, packed surface. Wider, under-inflated tires are better suited for floating on loose snow.
- Full fenders will help for those sloppy days.
- If you are considering a new bike or components, make sure to ask about the best options for winter riding. Options like sealed cartridge bearings can save you a lot of maintenance and reduce the potential for costly repairs.

## Maintenance

- Light lubricants specific to bicycles work best in colder temperatures.
- Lubricate liberally and regularly.
- Make sure to wipe off the excess lubricant as it will only attract more salt and sand.
- Multi-gear systems will need to be cleaned more frequently. Make sure to lubricate all the moving parts on the derailleurs so they continue to function.
- Never use solvents to clean your chain. In winter it's enough to simply wipe off any build-up.
- Keep your bike clean (and rust-free) by brushing away snow and ice from the brakes and drive train after each ride. Wipe your bike down regularly to reduce salt build-up. **B**

*Green Action Centre is a non-profit organization based in Winnipeg, serving Manitoba. For more information visit [greenactioncentre.ca](http://greenactioncentre.ca).*

## Where Next? A Path for Caregivers

Information and support for Manitobans caring for seniors

Home About Where Next? Workshops Finding Help Money and Taxes Home Care, Housing, Transportation Legal  
Health Care Support Groups Links/Resources Where Next? Presentations 4Teachers

### Finding Help

#### Resources for Caregivers of Seniors in Manitoba

1. Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat
2. Caregiving with Confidence
3. Regional Health Authority Senior Services
4. Manitoba Institute of Patient Safety

#### 1. Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat

The Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat is part of the department of Health, Healthy Living and Seniors. It acts as a central point of contact for seniors, their family members and organizations.

**Don't Miss:** The publications page. You will want to have your own hard copy of *A Guide For Caregivers*. Order it. Read it. Fill it full of Post-It notes.

**Who Knew?** That there is a Seniors Information Line, an information and referral line for seniors, family members and caregivers and professionals working with seniors. In Winnipeg: 204-945-6565 Toll-free: 1-800-665-8565 Email: [seniors@gov.mb.ca](mailto:seniors@gov.mb.ca)

#### 2. Caregiving with Confidence (Formerly Rupert's Land Caregiver Services)

**Description:** Caregiving with Confidence is the non-profit organization that supports caregivers in Manitoba.

When you need someone to talk to, this is *THE* organization that will give you one-on-one personal support.

Call (204) 452-9491 and talk to the caring, informed staff. Email: [rlcs@mts.net](mailto:rlcs@mts.net)

#### Services Offered:

Time-Out for Caregivers  
Telephone Support  
Information and Referral  
Ring-A-Ride  
Support Group for Caregivers: every second Saturday at 10:00 a.m. at 168 Wilton Street

### SEARCH THIS BLOG

#### GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS

[A Guide For The Caregiver](#)  
[A Legal Information Guide for Seniors](#)  
[Enduring Power of Attorney Guidebook](#)  
[Manitoba Caregiver Consultation Report 2012](#)  
[Manitoba Home Care Guide](#)  
[Manitoba Seniors Guide](#)  
[POAs and Joint Accounts \(Advantages/Risks\)](#)  
[Personal Care Home Services: A Guide to Services and Charges in Manitoba](#)  
[Questions to Ask Your Doctor and Pharmacist](#)  
[Winnipeg Housing Directory for Older Adults](#)

#### WEB RESOURCES

[Advance Care Planning Site \(WRHA\)](#)  
[Age and Opportunity](#)  
[Alzheimer Society of Manitoba](#)  
[Caregiving with Confidence \(Rupert's Land\)](#)  
[Carens Canada / Manitoba Caregiver Coalition](#)  
[Choosing Wisely Canada](#)  
[Eligible Medical Expenses](#)  
[Foot Care Nurses Manitoba](#)  
[Form 7 lease termination by tenant](#)  
[Healthy Debate](#)  
[Long Term and Continuing Care Assoc. MB](#)  
[Manitoba Health Care Directive](#)  
[Manitoba Institute for Patient Safety](#)

# A practical guide for caregivers: Lost in elderland?

*Resources available in the community  
to care for an aging parent in need*



By Wendy Sutton, *Where Next? A Path for Caregivers* [wherenxt.blogspot.ca](http://wherenxt.blogspot.ca)

It takes a village to raise a child. It also takes a village to care for an aging parent in need. This time though, it's an unfamiliar village. Seemingly overnight we find ourselves transported into the heart of Elderland.

Often the situation is critical and our needs are urgent. We need a basic understanding of housing options, home care, health care, social services and powers of attorney. We need supports now. Resources in the community are disjointed and uncoordinated.

*"The expectation is that the family will*

*pick up the ball, but we are not given any education, training or support."* - Manitoba Caregiver

We ask for directions. We encounter the frustrating "dead ends" of the bureaucratic maze. We try to maneuver around the road blocks of "I Don't Know", "I'm Not Listening", "We Don't Have the Resources", "I'm Going To Talk Over Your Head", "I Won't Even try to Get It Right the First Time", "It Can't Be Done", and "To Leave a Message Push..." MY BUTTONS!

We are not going where "no man has gone before". We are going where many

have gone before but still there is no map. Like those before us, we begin reinventing the wheel.

Our parent's illness is in the driver's seat. What's around the corner? We do not see it coming. What next? We cannot know. Fortunately, we can prepare by learning where to find support, information, resources and strategies when we need them.

### The caregiver's text

There is a basic text, *A Guide for Caregivers*, it's available as a PDF but

contact the Manitoba Seniors Secretariat to order a hard copy. Call 204-945-2127, 1-800-665-6565 or email at seniors@gov.mb.ca.

### Finding help online – start here

Rather than randomly searching, be familiar with these three sites.

- **Where Next? A Path for Caregivers:** A directory of caregiver resources, basic facts and reports on current issues.
- **Manitoba Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat:** Provincial government services and publications.
- **Caregiving with Confidence:** Personal service and support for caregivers.

### 1. Where next? A path for caregivers

Where Next? A Path for Caregivers is an information site for Manitoba caregivers. It is a directory of government, non-profit and private local services at <http://wherenxt.blogspot.ca/>.

**Articles:** Regular articles report on current issues related to caregiving and aging, local private service providers and the caregiving experience.

**Index:** The index organizes caregiver links such as:

#### **Manitoba Government publications**

- A Guide For The Caregiver
- A Legal Guide for Seniors
- Home Care Guide

#### **Web resources**

- Caregiving with Confidence
- Primary Caregiver Tax Credit
- Patient Advocate Form
- Parking Permit Program
- Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat

**Caregiver Basics:** The main pages have basic facts and links to more detailed information on the following topics.

- Finding Help
- Health
- Housing, Home Care, Transportation
- Money and Taxes
- Legal Issues

There is also a **For Teachers** page, a collaborative space for teachers to share experiences, tips and responses to this series in Balance Magazine.

### 2. Manitoba seniors and healthy aging secretariat

Manitoba is a national leader in support for family caregivers. In 2011 our legislature passed the Caregiver Recognition Act the first and only of its kind in the country. As a result the Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat

is a key resource for Manitobans. Find information at <http://www.gov.mb.ca/shas/index.html>.

#### **Information for Caregivers and Seniors:**

- Caring for a Senior
- Housing & Rent
- Transportation
- Health and Wellness
- Safety and Security

#### **Seniors Guides and Publications, the big three:**

- *A Guide for the Caregiver* is a basic text that should be in every caregiver's hands.
- *A Legal Guide for Seniors* is a booklet written for seniors about Wills and Estates, Power of Attorney and Health Care Directives.
- *The Seniors' Guide* contains information on a wide range of government and community resources.

#### **Seniors Information Phone Line:**

Caregivers can access information on seniors' programs and services across Manitoba. Call 204-945-6565, 1-800-665-6565 or email at seniors@gov.mb.ca.

### 3. Caregiving with confidence

Caregiving with Confidence (formerly known as Rupert's Land Caregiver Services) is the non-profit organization that supports caregivers in Manitoba at <http://caregivingwithconfidence.org/>.

*A caregiver having her initial meeting with Caregiving with Confidence asked why her name rather than her husband's was written on the file. The answer was, "There are other supports for your husband. We're not here for him. We're here for you."*

When you need someone to talk to, this is THE organization that will give you one-on-one personal support. There are also trained volunteers who help with respite and a wide variety of services to caregivers and their loved ones.

#### **It takes a teacher**

Ten years ago I was stunned to find there was no information, no curriculum, no organized plan whatsoever for delivering education to caregivers. I was expressing my frustrations to friends when one said, "Well you're a teacher. Why don't you do something about it?"

In the beginning it was a struggle because as a teacher I was not seen as a professional or an expert. People questioned my qualifications. "Who is she? She's not a nurse. She's not a social



## NEW!

Caregiving with Confidence has a 10 module online education program for Manitoba caregivers. Simply register to access this program.

1. Advocacy
2. Finding Care
3. Providing Care
4. Living Arrangements
5. Safe and Secure
6. Family Relationships
7. Care for the Caregiver
8. Financial Planning
9. Legal Planning
10. End of Life Care

Call 204-452-9491 and talk to the caring, informed staff or email at [rlcs@mts.net](mailto:rlcs@mts.net).

**Mark this on your calendar:**  
*Caregiving with Confidence hosts a caregiver conference in January. Check the site for details.*

worker. What does she know?" Recently, I received the following email.

*I wanted to thank you so much for the workshop last Saturday. I can see why it takes a teacher to do this. On my way there I was grumbling about spending almost 4 hours on a Saturday at a caregiver workshop while my sister was out having fun. But the information was pure gold and your presentation style was engaging. So very worth my time!*

#### **Coming soon**

Don't be overwhelmed. There may be a lot to learn but you don't need to know everything today. Explore the resources that are presented but don't try to read it all. What is most useful is to know where to find information as you need it. The next article in the Where Next? series will look at financial and legal issues. **B**

*Wendy Sutton is the creator of Where Next? A Path for Caregivers. She is a retired teacher from River East Transcona School Division.*

# Enjoy your food: How to pick the best yogurt

By **Carla D'Andreamatteo, RD, MSc** [www.thefoodlady.ca](http://www.thefoodlady.ca)



After 17 years working in the nutrition field, there appears to be a consistent thread of inquiries about food that consumers want to know. And one of those threads is all about yogurt. With the more recent presence of Greek/Mediterranean products, I am even more routinely asked, "How do I pick the best yogurt?" Well, it's time for me to help you with your next journey to the grocery store to buy yogurt.

The starting point for most people would be to determine which dairy texture is most desired, for example thick Greek-style yogurt or thinner Swiss-style yogurt. Once you have made that distinction, selecting the best yogurt based on nutritional value can be accomplished by adhering to the guidelines presented in the chart below. These values should be applied to a single serving of the yogurt you are considering. The serving sizes tend to vary from 6-8oz.

<b>Calories</b>	<b>160 kcal or less</b>
<b>Sugar</b>	<b>No added sugar</b>
<b>Protein</b>	<b>At least 8 grams</b>
<b>Fat</b>	<b>2% m.f. or less</b>
<b>Calcium</b>	<b>15% Daily Value</b>

A few words regarding sugar. All dairy yogurt has naturally occurring milk sugar. It is the added sugar that may contribute significant amounts of unnecessary sugar. On the nutrition label, every 5 grams of carbohydrate represents 1 teaspoon of sugar. This starts to add up when some individual-serve yogurts provide up to 45 grams or more of carbohydrate (9 tsp sugar). Yikes! Generally speaking, I would encourage selecting yogurts that list



total carbohydrate at no more than 15g per serving.

For those of you that enjoy the sweetness that cuts the sour taste of yogurt, selecting lower sugar varieties is less than appealing. So, here are a few suggestions to add sweetness to yogurt yet keep the sugar content down. Hopefully at least one of these is engaging for you and not yet another list of lame dietitian suggestions you've seen before!

Purchase plain yogurt and add your own no or low sugar flavors:

- sliced fruit
- 1 tsp maple syrup
- 1 Tbsp canned pumpkin, 1 tsp cinnamon or nutmeg
- ½ tsp sugar and 1-2 tsp cocoa powder
- 1 Tbsp dried fruit

Purchase individual serving fruit-on-the-bottom yogurt and empty the container into a bowl. Only stir in 1tsp or less of the fruit syrup that is sitting at the bottom of the container. (Okay, this

one is bordering on lame. But I do this all the time and it tastes great! Seriously, give it a try!)

And finally, I must discuss claims about yogurt and positive impacts on bowel (gut) health. There are claims abound that suggest the presence of probiotics found in specific yogurts help improve bowel health. These probiotics act to balance the "good" and "bad" bacteria in the colon. The one claim that has been validated regarding yogurt and gut health is alleviation of symptoms caused by constipation. There is one product on the market that has been reported to contain a probiotic in the right amount to help with gut function. That yogurt brand starts and ends with an "A" and comes in green colored containers. **B**

*Carla D'Andreamatteo owns and operates a nutrition consulting company, The Food Lady, since 1999. Based in Winnipeg, the team of dietitians offers a variety of nutrition services provincially and nationally.*



## Caramelized onion & arugula quinoa

**Prep time:** 15 min

**Cook time:** 45 min

**Makes:** 4 serving

Cooking quinoa in milk creates a soft, creamy texture similar to polenta. It provides a pleasant change from the ordinary as a side dish.

- 2 onions
- 2 tsp (10 ml) vegetable oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 tsp (2 ml) dried thyme
- Pepper
- 1 cup (250 ml) quinoa, rinsed
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) whole wheat flour
- 2 cups (500 ml) 1% milk, heated
- 1/4 cup (50 ml) water
- 4 cups (1 L) chopped trimmed baby arugula

### Directions:

1. Cut onions in half lengthwise and trim out cores. Cut crosswise into thin slices.
2. In a medium, deep saucepan, heat oil over medium-high heat. Sauté onions for 2 minutes or until starting to wilt. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover and cook, stirring occasionally, for about 15 minutes or until very soft and caramelized.
3. Increase heat to medium. Add garlic, thyme and pepper to taste; sauté for 2 minutes. Stir in quinoa and flour; gradually stir in milk and water. Bring to a simmer, stirring occasionally. Reduce heat to low, cover and simmer, stirring twice, for 15 minutes or until quinoa is creamy and tender. Remove from heat and let stand, covered, for 5 minutes. Gently stir in arugula just until wilted.

*Per serving (1 of 4 servings):* Calories 263, Protein 12 g, Total Fat 6 g, Saturated Fat 1 g, Cholesterol 6 mg, Carbohydrates 41 g, Fibre 5 g, Sugars 9 g, Added sugars 0 g, Sodium 64 mg, Potassium 590 mg



## Heart smart banana bread

**Prep time:** 10 min

**Cook time:** 50-55 min

**Makes:** 10 servings

- Canola oil cooking spray
- 3/4 cup (175 ml) all-purpose flour
- 1 cup (250 ml) whole-wheat pastry flour
- 1/4 cup (50 ml) granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup (50 ml) packed light brown sugar
- 1 tsp (5 ml) baking soda
- 1/2 tsp (2 ml) baking powder
- 1/4 cup (50 ml) canola oil
- 1/4 cup (50 ml) nonfat plain yogurt
- 1 large egg
- 1 large egg white
- 1 tsp (5 ml) vanilla extract
- 3 large, very ripe bananas, peeled and mashed (1 1/2 cups/375 ml)

### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 °F (180 °C).
2. Spray 9 x 5-inch (22 x 12.5 cm) loaf pan with canola oil cooking spray.
3. In large bowl, whisk together flours, sugars, baking soda and baking powder.
4. In medium bowl, whisk together canola oil, yogurt, eggs and vanilla, then whisk in mashed banana to combine. Add wet ingredients to dry ingredients and mix until just combined. Pour batter into prepared pan and bake until wooden skewer inserted into center comes out clean, 50-55 minutes. Allow to cool, and then transfer bread out of pan onto plate.

*Per serving (2 cm slice):* Calories 210, Protein 4 g, Total Fat 6 g, Saturated Fat 0.5 g, Cholesterol 20 mg, Carbohydrates 36 g, Fibre 3 g, Sugars 16 g, Added sugars 9 g, Sodium 100 mg, Potassium 178 mg



## Lunchbox granola bars

**Prep time:** 15 min

**Cook time:** 20-25 min

**Makes:** 24 servings

A healthy snack for school, work or home.

- 2 cups (500 ml) rolled oats
- 1 cup (250 ml) whole wheat flour
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) ground flaxseeds
- 1/3 cup (75 ml) packed brown sugar
- 1 tsp (5 ml) ground cinnamon
- 1 cup raisins (250 ml) or your favorite dried fruit
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) sunflower seeds
- 1/3 cup (75 ml) honey
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1/4 cup (50 ml) canola oil
- 1/4 cup (50 ml) applesauce
- 2 tsp (10 ml) vanilla extract

### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 °F (180 °C). Oil a 9 x 13 inch (22 x 33 cm) baking pan
2. In large bowl, mix together oats, flour, flaxseed, brown sugar, cinnamon, raisins and sunflower seeds. Make a well in center; set aside.
3. In small bowl, combine honey, egg, canola oil, applesauce and vanilla. Add liquid ingredients to well and mix. Pat mixture evenly into a prepared pan.
4. Bake 20 to 25 minutes until bars begin to turn golden at edges. Cool 5 minutes, then cut into bars while still warm. Do not allow bars to cool completely before cutting, or they will be too hard to cut.

*Per serving (1 bar):* Calories 150, Protein 3 g, Total Fat 6 g, Saturated Fat 0 g, Cholesterol 10 mg, Carbohydrates 22 g, Fibre 3 g, Sugars 12 g, Added sugars 6 g, Sodium 5 mg, Potassium 118 mg

# RECIPES FOR HEALTHY LIVING

# Posture issues: How posture effects our body

By Chelsea White, BSc (Kin), C.A.T (c)



We've all heard it a hundred times from our parents; sit up straight, stand tall, don't slouch. But really what was all the fuss about? Although annoying at times, they had our best interests at heart. Posture has an overall effect on our bodies from contributing to tension headaches, upper and lower back pain, shoulder issues, disc pathologies and nerve impingement.

Exactly how does our posture effect the rest of our body?

In this day and age it's something we've become accustomed to, students hunched over their homework, employees slumped over a computer desk, kids and adults alike at home lounging on the couch surfing the net. These poor habits cause the shoulders and upper back to become rounded, head to poke forward and lower back to flatten. Poor sitting posture can then transfer into poor standing posture as these prolonged positions create muscle imbalance and muscle inhibition.

With prolonged sitting the muscles at the front of our hips (hip flexors and quads), chest muscles (pecs) and neck become shortened and tight, while the opposing muscle on our back side can become inhibited and weak, creating the perpetual posture struggle.

How do these imbalances contribute to some of the most common overuse injuries that I see as an Athletic Therapist? Lets start from the bottom up to dissect where the problems lie.

Our lower back (lumbar spine) has a natural inward curve or slight extension. When in proper spinal alignment there is very little pressure on the disc and they can adequately absorb load, but poor sitting posture is often accompanied by lumbar flexion which compresses the discs and over time can lead to bulging or

slipped discs. On the flip side, prolonged sitting can cause hip flexor tightness, thus pulling our hips forward while standing which causes increased compression on the boney joints of our spine (facet joint irritation and low back tightness). By decreasing our sitting time, monitoring our lower back posture, strengthening our core and stretching these shortened muscle groups, we can reduce the chance of these issues developing and the pain that inevitably follows.

Take a look around while you're at work, the coffee shop or even at home and you'll notice people around you slouching over a computer, tablet or phone with the mid back well rounded, shoulders forward and heads down. The upper back or thoracic spine is the base of support for our neck and a major contributor to proper shoulder function. So what does this mean for our upper back, shoulders and neck? In this slouched position the muscles on our backside become inhibited and the muscles in the front (i.e. pecs) become tight, this relationship creates a haven for mid back pain as the muscles begin to oppose each other. This posture can repress the muscles that stabilize the shoulder blades, the base support for the shoulder, creating an opportune environment for shoulder impingement and rotator cuff injuries. As our upper back and shoulders round, our head pokes forward leading to stiffness in the neck muscles which can result in headaches, neck pain and neurological symptoms like numbness and tingling in the arms and hands.

So what does proper posture look like?

**Here's a little trick I share with my patients:**

Take a moment and stand up. Tilt your pelvis front and back until you feel a



point of ease or balance; this is your neutral lumbar spine. Take a breath and raise your hands to your collarbone, notice your upper back extend slightly and again you should achieve a sense of balance. Now tuck your chin in slightly and feel the tension lift, this is your proper posture.

Remember, poor posture is habitual, and like all bad habits it can be corrected and new habits can be formed. By being aware of poor posture and what good posture feels and looks like combined with simple corrective exercises and stretches, we can begin our path to leading a healthier, happier, pain free life. **B**

# Beauty of a warm touch

By Tally Young

We live in fast forward. Everything we do has a quickness to it that implies we have all somehow run out of time. What we really need is 20 minutes to breathe, reconnect and ground ourselves so we can remember how amazing slowing down feels. When we slow down we realize that we have literally and figuratively lost “touch” with partners, kids, friends, ourselves, and what made us truly happy. If we think back to the moments in life that fed us the most, they were the ones that included big warm embraces from those we cherish. We can recreate that feeling of touch by placing weighted sandbags onto safe areas of the body. This gentle but firm pressure grounds us and softly guides us into much needed release and rest.

Find a warm, quiet spot. If you have a 10lb sandbag hanging around great, if not, take a zip lock bag and fill it with at least 5lbs of rice or sand (double bagged). Pick your favourite relaxation pose. This can be any style of savasana or if you have someone around to put the sandbag on your back, lay on your belly. I will guide you into this from simple savasana.

1. Set your mat on your chosen quiet spot and have a pillow or folded blanket for your head. Have your weighted bag next to you.
2. Place yourself on the mat. Stay for about 10-15 breaths to see if the posture needs any tweaking. Maybe place a rolled blanket under the knees, or soft blanket under your back.
3. Feel for the top of your hips or the rib cage. You want the sandbag placed on the bony areas of the body so the weight can be supported.
4. Move sandbag if needed. If sharp pain arises, do posture without sandbag... still so good!
5. Lay and simmer for 20 minutes or until you remember to get up.

# wellness WORD SEARCH

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**“I do weights for muscle health, cardio for heart health and chocolate for mental health.”**



# *General Secretary's message:* Working together, sharing the load



By **Bobbi Taillefer**, General Secretary, **The Manitoba Teachers' Society**

In this fast paced world of education, all of the demands on our time often have us running pillar to post. In order to cope with an ever increasing workload, we often prioritize work at the expense of our personal time and well-being. We do this even though we fully understand that we are making a poor choice. We know that if we don't look after ourselves then we will never be able to look after anyone else – including our students.

So how do we make sure that we are healthy and happy and that we meet all the demands in our professional and personal lives? A successful way to do this, both at home and at work, is by working together and sharing the load! Here, at the Manitoba Teachers' Society, this practice serves us well as we involve as many people as we can to get the job done. We are very fortunate to have an expert staff that loves their work and take professionalism to the extreme. We are also very lucky to have thousands of members who are willing to volunteer their time and expertise through political positions, volunteering on committees, attending focus groups and tackling any challenge we throw their way.

We understand that, as an organization, it is incumbent on us not only to look after our profession and our jobs but also to contribute to the greater community. That is why MTS is actively involved with community groups, why we work so closely with our educational partners and why we are very supportive of our University of Manitoba colleagues during their strike. We truly understand that through our relationships we create networks that enable us to work together to get the things done.

As a member of the Manitoba Teachers' Society, you are a member of a professional family – and we are here if you need to share your load. If you need to upgrade, we have excellent professional learning opportunities; if you want to join a gym, we have member discounts on the website; if you need some professional guidance with your position or collective agreement, we have staff officers to help and if you need some counselling, we have a confidential educator assistance program. At the end of the day we are all in this together and we need to look out for each other – because it is the right thing to do and because caring is what a teacher does best.



**BALANCE**  
mind body spirit  
THE MANITOBA TEACHERS' SOCIETY

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