

HEALTHY LIVING

10

*feel-good things
to do this August*

No. 1

HAIL THE TOMATO SALAD

A recent study in the *American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine* is singing the praises of summer's tastiest crop. In addition to being high in antioxidants, tomatoes are the most-consumed nonstarchy vegetable in the United States. Although previous studies have focused on lycopene, a possible cancer fighter, emerging research is exploring how nutrients in tomatoes may ward off cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, and other conditions. Since tomatoes are at their peak right now, biting into a ripe, juicy one doesn't require much convincing. Basil and mozzarella are the classic tomato sidekicks, but there are many other herbs and cheeses worth putting into the rotation. Here, we've combined parsley with ricotta salata. Other enticing variations: feta and mint, goat cheese and oregano, and Cotija and cilantro. Drizzle all with olive oil, and sprinkle with salt.



No. 2

SWEAT FOR A GOOD CAUSE

Signing up for a charity race can help refocus your exercise efforts, shifting the emphasis from calories burned and workouts you “have” to do to the cause you’re supporting, says Marjorie Albohm, president of the National Athletic Trainers’ Association. Now is a good time to register for a fall race and still have time to train and raise money. The website *active.com* has searchable listings of local races.

No. 3

POWER DOWN, SLEEP SOUNDLY

One more reason to tackle the stack of good books on the nightstand: Texting or watching TV before bed may make it difficult to sleep.

“The glow from electronics suppresses sleep-promoting melatonin production,” says Lauren Hale, an associate professor at Stony Brook University Medical Center.



No. 4

SHRUG OFF THE SLOUCH

According to a study in the journal *Psychological Science*, standing tall activates our sense of power, making us feel more confident. To build up to better posture, try this stretch from Fred DeVito, a trainer at Exhale spa in New York City: Interlace fingers behind your back, and pull your arms up as far as they can go, letting your shoulders roll open. “You’ll retrain your muscles and improve posture over time,” he says.



No. 5

SIP A HEALTHIER PIÑA COLADA

Our version replaces sweetened cream of coconut with pure coconut water for a cocktail with less than a quarter of the calories of the traditional blender drink (120 versus 600): Purée 2 cups *pineapple chunks*, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup *pure coconut water*, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup *ice cubes*, 1 tablespoon *sugar*, and 1 teaspoon *fresh lemon juice* in a blender. Stir in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup *rum*. Garnish glasses with *toasted coconut*. Serves 4

No. 6

TRY A NEW USE FOR ICED TEA

To treat a painful sunburn, fill a spray bottle with chilled green tea, and spritz onto burned areas twice per hour, says New York City dermatologist David Goldberg. “Green tea is a natural anti-inflammatory, so it will cool skin and relieve irritation.”

No. 7

GRAB A WATERING CAN

People who garden tend to be more optimistic and satisfied with life than those who don’t, according to a study in the journal HortScience. Watching your garden grow provides a sense of accomplishment and pleasure, upping your joy quotient.

No. 8

GET SMART, WORK OUT

Exercises that challenge your balance strengthen the mind, not just the muscles, says Michael Gonzalez-Wallace, author of *Super Body, Super Brain*. Think of this one-legged move as the sudoku of fitness: Holding three-pound weights, stand with feet together. Raise right arm straight overhead; simultaneously raise left knee to a 90 degree angle. Return to start. Switch sides. Do three sets of 15 reps.

No. 9

ROCK (WITH) THE BOAT

If you’ll be spending time paddling a kayak this summer, keeping your hips loose as you go will help you stay steady, says Dave Olson, owner of Kayak Chicago.

“As your kayak wiggles underneath you, allow your hips to move with it, which will help you absorb its movement.” At the same time, this will strengthen the muscles in the lower back and engage the core, helping protect you from injury.

Acadia kayak, \$679, perceptionkayaks.com.

No. 10

TOWEL OFF FOR SOFT SKIN

One of the simplest exfoliants is hanging in the bathroom—your towel. It can be used for a post-shower buffing session to remove dead skin cells and allow healthy, young cells to reach the surface, says Gerald Imber, a cosmetic surgeon in New York City. Start at your feet, moving all the way to your shoulders. “Working in an upward direction will keep skin taut; moving downward encourages sagging,” he says.

