



**Mason Health**  
Mason General Hospital • Mason Clinic



# Diabetes Wellness Newsletter

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## SPRING INTO ACTION - GET INSPIRED THIS SPRING TO GET OUTSIDE

When it comes to warm-weather activities that are good for your health, you probably think of walking, hiking or running. But there's another beloved pastime that holds a lot of benefits with a bonus to boot: Gardening.

Even if you don't have the greenest of thumbs, there are many health benefits — both physical and mental — that come with digging into the soil and doing some planting. And that bonus? You get exercise *and* yield a basket of tomatoes, peppers or any number of other fruits, veggies or decorative plants.



Gardening can help prevent health issues like osteoporosis, a condition where your bones weaken and lose mass and strength. A healthy diet combined with other elements can help keep osteoporosis at bay. Getting regular, and safe, exposure to sunlight a few times a week is important in providing your body with the essential vitamin D that keeps bones strong and helps your body absorb calcium.

Everyone knows exercise is good for you, but gardening strikes a perfect balance, particularly for those most at risk for osteoporosis: It not only gives you a workout that can strengthen your bones, but also one that's easy for people of all ages. Gardening can also boost your mood from being outdoors and having a feeling of satisfaction when you see your plants grow and flourish.

Some tips to get started:

- Start slowly, with shorter intervals and work your way up to larger, longer intervals.
- Keep your scale manageable. Don't try to dig too much or carry too much right away.
- Use the right equipment. Make sure scissors and shovels are sharp and invest in a kneeling bench.
- Stretch afterward! Daily stretches relieve sore muscles.

Get inspired this spring to get outside and enjoy the warmer weather (when it's not wet!)

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# THE ROLE OF EXERCISE IN ARTHRITIS MANAGEMENT



**Article Source: American Council on Exercise**

Physical activity is essential to optimizing both physical and mental health and can play a vital role in the management of arthritis. Regular physical activity can keep the muscles around affected joints strong, decrease bone loss and may help control joint swelling and pain. Regular activity replenishes lubrication to the cartilage of the joint and reduces stiffness and pain. Exercise also helps to enhance energy and stamina by decreasing fatigue and improving sleep. Exercise can enhance weight loss and promote long-term weight management in those

with arthritis who are overweight.

Exercise may offer additional benefits to improving or modifying arthritis. Activating skeletal muscle has many important health benefits we are only beginning to understand.

## Physical Activity Recommendations

The goals of an exercise program for individuals with arthritis are to: 1) preserve or restore range of motion and flexibility around affected joints, 2) increase muscle strength and endurance, and 3) increase aerobic conditioning to improve mood and decrease health risks associated with a sedentary lifestyle.

## HOW EXERCISE LEADS TO SHARPER THINKING AND A HEALTHIER BRAIN

*Excerpt from April 5, 2023 Washington Post article*

New findings from 350,000 people make the strongest case yet that exercise improves cognition. To build a better brain, just exercise.

That's the message of two important new studies of how physical activity changes our minds. In one, scientists delved into the lives, DNA and cognition of thousands of people to show that regular exercise leads to much sharper thinking.

These studies reinforce the idea that “absolutely, exercise is one of the best things you can do” for your brain, said **Matthieu Boissongontier**, an associate professor at the University of Ottawa, who oversaw one of the studies.

Multiple, large-scale epidemiological studies, meanwhile, have linked more exercise to better memories and thinking skills and less risk for neurodegenerative diseases, such as Alzheimer's. The interplay of exercise and thinking was strong enough to indicate causation, Boissongontier said, meaning, in this big study, the right exercise resulted in sharper minds.

Just six minutes of intense exercise raises levels of a neurochemical known to be essential for lifelong brain health. What these results suggest is that “exercise is good for your brain and that exercising longer, or particularly, harder, may maximize the benefits,” said **Travis Gibbons**, a postdoctoral fellow at the University of British Columbia at Okanagan, who led the study.

But for now, this research tells us that exercise, fast or slow, should reliably protect our ability to think.

Here are some examples of exercise:

- playing a sport like tennis, soccer or basketball
- bicycling
- swimming
- jogging or running
- aerobics or dancing



## RECIPE SPOTLIGHT: COWBOY CAVIAR



A fresh, simple dip that can be thrown together in under 15 minutes! This Cowboy Caviar makes a great side dish for any picnic, potluck, or party, and is a great way to use up your summer produce!

**Prep Time:** 20 minutes

**Total Time:** 20 minutes

**Servings:** 12

### Ingredients (Check off what you have!)

- ☐ 3 Roma tomatoes seeds removed, diced
- ☐ 2 ripe avocados diced
- ☐ ½ cup red onion diced
- ☐ 15 oz black beans rinsed and drained
- ☐ 15 oz black eyed peas rinsed and drained
- ☐ 1 ½ cups frozen sweet corn thawed (I just usually toss it in the salad frozen unless I plan on eating it immediately, it thaws quite quickly)
- ☐ 1 bell pepper diced (I used half a green and half a red, but color doesn't matter)
- ☐ 1 jalapeno pepper seeds removed, diced into very small pieces
- ☐ ½ cup Cilantro finely chopped

### Dressing

- ☐ ½ cup olive oil
- ☐ 2 tablespoons lime juice fresh preferred
- ☐ 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- ☐ 1 teaspoon sugar
- ☐ ½ teaspoon salt
- ☐ ½ teaspoon pepper
- ☐ ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- ☐ Tortilla chips for serving

### Instructions

1. Combine tomatoes, avocado, onion, black beans, black eyed peas, corn, pepper, jalapeno pepper, and cilantro in a large bowl. Toss/stir well so that ingredients are well-combined.
2. In a separate bowl, whisk together olive oil, lime juice, red wine vinegar, sugar, salt, pepper, and garlic powder.
3. Pour dressing over other ingredients and stir/toss very well.
4. Keep refrigerated. If not serving immediately, be sure to toss/stir well before serving.