

A monthly wellness newsletter from Better You

A better you: Mind, body, and spirit

As we go about our daily lives, it's easy to focus on one part of our health at a time. Maybe it's trying to eat healthy food, exercise more, or manage stress, especially around the holidays. What if we told you there's a way to take care of your entire self – body, mind, and spirit – all at once? This approach is called whole person health.

What is whole person health?

Whole person health looks at all the factors that affect your well-being. It considers your physical, mental and emotional health, your relationships with others, your environment, and your spiritual life. It emphasizes restoring health, promoting resilience, and preventing disease.

The benefits of this approach

Research has shown that taking a whole person health approach can have many benefits. For example, people who practice this approach tend to have lower blood pressure, healthier weight, and a lower risk of chronic diseases like heart disease and diabetes.

How to practice

- **Take care of your physical health:** Eat healthy food,



exercise regularly, and get enough sleep.

- **Practice mindfulness and meditation:** Take a few minutes each day to focus on your breath, relax, and manage stress.
- **Connect with others:** Reach out to friends and family, join a club or group, and build strong relationships.
- **Explore your spirituality:** Think about what's important to you and find ways to connect with something bigger than yourself.

Getting started

Taking care of your whole person health is a journey, where health is at one end, and disease is at the other. Move toward better health by making small changes to your daily routine and see how it feels. Don't be afraid to ask for help along the way. Talk to a doctor, a therapist, or a trusted family member or friend for support and guidance. By taking this approach, you may feel better, be healthier, and live a happier life.

Resources: ¹[NIH.gov](https://www.nih.gov); ²[NIH.gov](https://www.nih.gov)

The mood-boosting power of exercise

Do you know that exercising can make you feel better physically *and* mentally? When you move your body, you help your brain, too. Activities like walking, running, swimming, and dancing release natural chemicals called endorphins, which lift your mood and ease pain. These chemicals help reduce stress and can make you feel happier.

The benefits of exercise

Just 30 minutes of moderate exercise a few times a week can improve your mood and reduce feelings of anxiety and depression. Exercise also helps your brain work better, improving your memory, focus, and sleep. It keeps your brain healthy as you get older.

Resource: [NIH.gov](https://www.nih.gov)



Scientists have found people who exercise regularly have a lower risk of mental health problems.

You don't have to be a superstar

You don't have to do anything extreme to get the benefits of exercise. A walk with a friend, a bike ride, or even dancing to your favorite song can make a big

difference. Exercising outside can be especially helpful, as fresh air and sunlight can boost your mood and energy.

Unlock a healthier, happier you

Take the first step toward a stronger, more vibrant you and discover the incredible benefits of daily exercise for yourself!

Stuffed Sweet Potato with Hummus Dressing (Serves 1)

Ingredients:

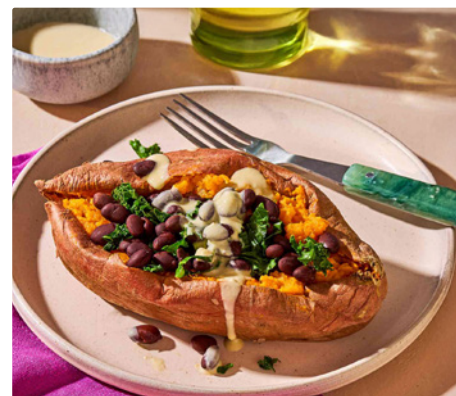
- 1 large sweet potato, scrubbed
- ¾ cup chopped kale
- 1 cup canned black beans, rinsed
- ¼ cup hummus
- 2 tablespoons water

Directions:

Prick sweet potato all over with a fork. Microwave on high until cooked through, 7 to 10 minutes. Meanwhile, wash kale and drain, allowing water to cling to the leaves. Place in a medium

saucepan; cover and cook over medium-high heat, stirring once or twice, until wilted. Add beans; add a tablespoon or two of water if the pot is dry. Continue cooking, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until the mixture is steaming hot, 1 to 2 minutes.

Split the sweet potato open and top with the kale and bean mixture. Combine hummus and 2 tablespoons water in a small dish. Add additional water as needed to reach desired



consistency. Drizzle the hummus dressing over the stuffed sweet potato.

Recipe courtesy of [Eatingwell.com](https://www.eatingwell.com); for nutritional information click [here](#).

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