

The York University Staff Association Health & Wellness News & Views

It's April and we can officially wave goodbye to the winter blues and welcome -warmly-the arrival of spring! It might still be cold, it might still be wet, but the days are getting warmer, the evenings longer and the eternal optimism of spring is in the air. No matter what life throws your way the warm spring time air and greener landscapes are sure to get your blood flowing. With each spring comes a gift, a restorative bundle of energy that helps us brighten up, lighten up, clean up and most importantly shape up. It might just be the best gift you receive all year, but... what do you do with it? Spring is mother nature's wake-up call. So wake up! It's time to rise and shine!



Spring cleaning is a time honoured and natural ritual. After months of accumulating food and extra pounds for protection during our harsh and unpredictable winter months, spring is the time to lighten up the load (no pun intended). Throw open the windows and let in some fresh air. Do a good old fashioned spring cleaning to rid the house of accumulated dust and stale musty smells. Exchange the flannel sheets for cotton ones. Wash the woolies and pack them away until fall. Pick up some fresh flowers or even better, a plant from the market to brighten up your space and bring the fragrance of spring inside. Not only will they look lovely, they will also improve your general well-being—plants can improve indoor air quality, brighten your mood, and (some believe) boost your creative energy. Not a bad way to start the new season. Move your things around. your furniture, your art, your knickknacks, and your treasures. With a small change in surroundings comes a fresh prospective for a new season.



Tis the perfect season to “spring clean” your diet as well. If you've somehow managed to stockpile enough junk food to sustain you for an apocalypse while in hibernation, and what you deem "healthy" in the grocery store has become more and more vague. It's time to clean out the crap. Trash high-calorie dips, spreads, and condiments. Bye-bye, nacho cheese, french onion chip dip, blue cheese dressing, and mayo. In their place, swap a couple of varieties of salsa, vinaigrette dressings, yogurt dip, mustard, and other low-carb BBQ, and cocktail sauces that are free of added sweeteners. General rule of thumb, if you can't pronounce something in your food, then you shouldn't eat it. Shop for smarter snacks. Raw almonds, walnuts, pecans, and pistachios are good for you in small doses, and plain microwave popcorn (without butter) is a good guilt-free option too. Strive to eat things with one ingredient, the food itself. In-season produce reaps the most nutritional value. "GORGE" yourself on the gorgeous, fresh new greens, & make good use of the fresh, vibrant new veggies and fruits coming to a market near you!

Spring is a time for new beginnings. Make the effort to lighten your mental load as well. Exhale deeply to rid yourself of all that you don't wish to carry forward with you, negative attitudes, grudges, resentments, guilt, and bad habits. Release all the fears and doubts that have been holding you back and weighing you down. Exhale again, and once more. Lightened now on every level. We are eager to greet what awaits us in the new season.

With Spring comes revitalized energy. So how can we best take advantage of spring's boundless energy? Sometimes “spring fever” fills us with such vigor that we don't know what to do with ourselves. It's time to leave our winter den and run out to meet spring, let the sun touch you with cheer, take a deep breath and enjoy. Watch the world come alive as friendly faces emerge from their lairs. Take a walk to the park, visit a botanical garden. Pack a healthy lunch and grab your family and a blanket for a picnic. Listen to the rain, watch bumblebees at work, notice the trees budding, listen to the birds, go bare-legged, leave your windows open to catch a spring breeze, send someone other than your mom a Mother's Day card, wear open-toed shoes, buy a fun umbrella, visit the zoo. Need I go on? Just get out, get energized and enjoy. Whatever you do, may your spring be filled with the promise of new life with countless blessings!