

# The York University Staff Association Health & Wellness News & Views

Is it just me, or did 2017 roll out and we all jumped on the wellness bandwagon? Last year more than ever health and wellness were at the front of people's minds. From fitness to meditation apps to green cosmetic products, from paleo to keto. In 2017 the definition of "wellness" shifted. Now it's the start of a new year and the health and wellness industry is predicted to continue its upward trajectory. While as usual there is lots of hype about new fads, with false promises, there are also lots of scientifically proven, powerful and innovative trends/products entering the market. Many of which are not only better for you, but set the stage for a world in which wellness is more accessible than ever. Here are a few exciting trends that will likely grow in 2018.

Tumeric is the sunshine yellow spice often used in Indian cuisine and is expected to continue its climb in popularity. However, another natural ingredient set to grab the limelight in 2018 is Moringa. Moringa comes from a tree in South America. While it looks and tastes like spinach it has twice the protein and three times the iron of spinach. It is most commonly ground in to powder and used in soups, smoothies, drinks or taken as a supplement. It is used as a traditional remedy for many ailments, such as diabetes, heart disease, anemia, arthritis, liver disease, and respiratory, skin, and digestive disorders. Whether in the produce, health or wellness aisle, you can expect get acquainted with this prodigious plant.

First there was low fat, then low carb, then there was paleo, - so 2017, now there is keto. The ketogenic diet is a derivative of the well-known low carb diet focusing on protein and GOOD fats like avocado, olive oil, coconuts and fatty fish to induce a metabolic state of ketosis. Opposed to the old Atkins low carb diet which promoted fats such as bacon, red meat and cheese. Ketosis is a normal metabolic process. When the body does not have enough glucose for energy, it burns stored fats instead, this results in a build-up of acids called ketones within the body. On a ketogenic diet your entire body switches its fuel supply to run almost entirely on fat. Insulin levels become very low and fat burning increases dramatically. Ketosis has many potential benefits related to rapid weight loss, health and/or performance. But there are side effects and we also do not know much about its long-term effects. It is also important to remember that "yo-yo diets lead to rapid weight loss fluctuation and are particularly unhealthy. Before starting any diet/eating plan, you should speak to your health care provider. A balanced diet, rich in very colorful fruits and vegetables, lean meats.

healthy fat, whole grains, nuts, and lots of water seems to have the best evidence for a long, healthy, vibrant life.



Turns out black is the new black in 2018. From purifying masks to hangover diminishing cocktails and tooth-whitening toothpastes, activated charcoal is leaving its carbon footprint just about everywhere lately. Unlike regular charcoal, which is a known carcinogen, activated charcoal is considered medicinal. The main claim to fame for activated charcoal comes from its popular use in emergency situations in dealing with ingested poisons. Recently more and more potential uses for activated charcoal have arisen. Stained teeth? Activated charcoal helps whiten teeth by changing the pH balance in the mouth, helping prevent cavities, bad breath and gum disease. It works to whiten teeth by absorbing plaque and microscopic tiddits that stain teeth. This activated charcoal use is cost-effective and an all-natural solution for a bright smile. Charcoal is known to fight acne, detoxify and lighten skin, purify clogged pores and more. The list doesn't stop there, activated charcoal can also soothe irritated bug bites, aid in digestion as well as remove toxins from the body. Whether it's in a tooth whitening product, or frozen yogurt, or face masks, there is no doubt about it activated charcoal is growing in popularity.

Skipping meals to cut calories is a sure-fire way to tank your metabolism and sabotage weight loss right? Condense those food-free time periods to extended planned intervals, and watch the fat fade away. That's the principle behind the diet method known as intermittent fasting. According to Men's "Fitness," "Unlike many popular diets, intermittent fasting has the backing of scientific research (including a massive 2017 study analysis by the International Society of Sports Nutrition), which suggests that intermittent fasting is just as effective as daily calorie restriction—sometimes better—at

improving body composition. Furthermore, intermittent fasting doesn't involve any calorie counting, and may suppress hunger better than traditional low-calorie diets". To clarify, Intermittent fasting (IF) is a term for an eating pattern that cycles between periods of fasting and eating. It is currently very popular in the health and fitness community and despite being a centuries old practice in many cultures, is gaining popular ground in 2018. Humans have actually been fasting throughout evolution. Sometimes it was necessary simply because food was unavailable, and it has also been a part of several religions, including Islam, Christianity and Buddhism. When you think about it, our hunter-gatherer ancestors didn't have supermarkets, or refrigerators and food wasn't available year-round making Intermittent Fasting unavoidable. Just make sure you don't take it too far, because intermittent fasting doesn't mean you should be starving yourself, and Intermittent Fasting can be more complex for people who have issues with blood sugar regulation, suffer from hypoglycemia, have diabetes, etc. As always, it is recommended that you do not rely solely on the information presented and that you always read labels, warnings, directions and consult your health care provider before adapting any eating program, using or consuming any products. For more info on Intermittent Fasting visit <https://www.nerdfitness.com/blog/a-beginners-guide-to-intermittent-fasting/>

Our obsession with data continues in to 2018. Wearable technology is infinitely changing. From activity trackers, smart watches, GPS tracking devices, heart rate monitors, to smart eye glasses, yes, eye glasses. These wearable gadgets are designed to motivate and keep you accountable in achieving your fitness goals. This type of technology is advancing rapidly and there's no telling what we might see from this market in the next decade. Stay tuned.

Can we even call this a trend? Fitness classes have been around forever, but they appear to be making their mark in 2018. Orange Theory, SoulCycle, Piloga, Zumba, BodyPump... It seems like there's a new group Ex class every month, and with it a cult-like following that swears by its effectiveness. If you're the type that dreads slogging it out on the elliptical (and let's be honest, who doesn't), classes can inject much-needed variety and motivation in to your program. In fact, a study published in the *Journal of the American Osteopathic Association* found that people who took group ex classes reported less stress and more physical, emotional and mental health benefits than those who exercised alone. Furthermore, in a world of improper form instructors are educated to ensure a safe and effective workout. Group fitness classes promote a sense of community and are constructed to make you move in ways you most likely wouldn't on your own. They are designed to teach you something new and motivate you to reach your fitness goals.

In addition to a community vibe, the music and choreography used in group classes boost mood and push you to work out harder and longer. All the more reason to hit that YUSA fitness class in 2018! ☺



It's okay to be somewhat skeptical about meditation if you've never tried it, because there's so much hype around the practice, and meditation isn't going anywhere in 2018. Research shows that meditation can reduce anxiety, lower blood pressure, help with insomnia, and much more. Everything in our life hinges upon the mind. Making meditation a very useful practice. As we begin to gain control over our mind, we begin to gain control over our life. Meditation can change areas of your brain so that your attention span increases over time and can expand the brain's gray matter, which helps concentration and in turn change your reaction to stress. It can also help decrease inflammation and boost your immune system. These days it seems there is an app out there for everything, meditation and mindfulness apps are no exception. There are several mindful meditation apps available, promising to help users combat their anxiety, get better sleep, increase their focus, manage their weight, and more. From Calm, to Aura, to headspace, why not take advantage of these apps and make meditation a part of your wellness practice in 2018. YUSA also offers lunchtime mindful meditation sessions allowing for members to conveniently make meditation a part of their work day. Visit [yusapuy.com](http://yusapuy.com) and scroll down to the calendar for more information. Meditation won't make all this year's problems go away, but it may very well help you go into 2018 with a fresh, calm mind.

With a new year comes an opportunity to do things differently and better than before. There's always room for improvement. In 2018 those of us who are passionate about our personal wellness are going to step up our commitment to our health. Here's to a healthy happy 2018!

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