

# Healthy U @ Work

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 **Franciscan**  
**WORKING** Well

## Help Your Garden Thrive with Composting

If you are getting your garden prepared for planting, consider composting as well. Composting will provide organic material that will reduce your need for fertilizer and improve your soil so your plants will thrive. If you don't have your own garden, composting is still a great way to make your 'trash' someone else's treasure. Look into curbside compost services in your area, make friends with a gardening neighbor, donate to a local farm or community garden, or give it away on Craigslist

Composting follows a relatively simple formula. In a designated shady area of your yard - or in a compost bin - add brown and green materials. Brown materials would include branches, dead leaves, straw, wood chips and green materials would include fruit and vegetable waste, coffee grounds, tea bags, and eggshells. Water your materials and keep moist by putting the lid on the container or covering with a tarp. Every time you add materials, add enough water to keep moist. Occasionally mix materials using a shovel. Some bins may have a spinning function that will mix the materials. When the material at the bottom is dark, it is ready to use.



The compost can take 2 weeks to over a year to be ready to use, depending on the amount of material, the moisture, and the mixing. By choosing to compost, you will reduce the amount of waste that goes into the landfill and provide your garden and potted plants with important nutrients!





## Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis is a disease that results in decreased bone strength and increased risk of fractures and is often called a “silent disease,” one that doesn’t present symptoms until the bones are weak and break from even normal activity. It’s important to know the risk factors and screenings available for osteoporosis.

The risk of osteoporosis increases with age, and the disease affects women more than men.

Approximately 53 million people in the United States are currently diagnosed with osteoporosis or have a low bone mass, putting them at risk for the disease. Though the disease can affect all adults, there are higher rates for Caucasian and Asian women as well as anyone with a family history of bone weakening or osteoporosis. Men and women who have a smaller body frame are also considered at increased risk. Certain medical conditions and medications can increase the risk of osteoporosis, including overactive thyroid, decreased estrogen levels, celiac disease, gastric reflux, cancer, inflammatory bowel disease, and long-term use of corticosteroid medications. The risk for the disease is also increased by diets low in calcium, use of tobacco or alcohol, and sedentary lifestyles.

Your health provider can look at your risk factors to determine whether you need to be screened for osteoporosis. The DEXA scan is a type of x-ray that can measure the strength of your bones. If needed, medications can be prescribed, but these may have additional risks. It’s important to weigh the pros and cons of the screening and treatment before making a decision.



## Produce of the Month

# Cremini and Portobello Mushrooms

A cremini (or crimini) mushroom is a type of button mushroom, easy to find in nearly every grocery store. But did you know that a cremini mushroom is actually an immature portobello mushroom? In fact, they are often called baby bellas. Usually brown, cremini mushrooms are a type of fungus with an intense flavor and are an excellent source of vitamin B and potassium. The more mature portobello mushroom is frequently used as a meat substitute, providing an earthy and filling alternative to beef and poultry.

**The Basics:** Because mushrooms are grown on organic compost, it is recommended to buy organic mushrooms. Look for firm mushrooms with an earthy color. Store mushrooms in the refrigerator for 3-5 days. To maintain their freshness, it is recommended to store them in a single layer, covered with a damp paper towel. When ready to use, wipe or rinse off the dirt (be careful since mushrooms absorb a lot of water) and prepare according to your favorite recipe.

**Try This:** Roast or sauté mushrooms with onions and sweet potatoes. Add salt and pepper to taste. Brush with olive oil and grill the larger portobello mushroom for a vegetarian version of a hamburger; add your usual hamburger toppings and enjoy!

**The Facts:** Mushrooms are very low in calories and are an excellent source of vitamins B2, B6, vitamin D, folate, potassium and fiber.

# Benefits of Apple Cider Vinegar

If you like to read about the latest in health recommendations, you've probably seen more than a few articles about apple cider vinegar. Considered a benefit for a variety of concerns - digestion, weight, skin, and more - many people have begun adding apple cider vinegar to their daily diet. If you want to know what it may do for you and how to consume it, here are some thoughts.



Apple cider vinegar is vinegar made from apple cider. The fermentation process that makes vinegar ultimately changes the sugar into an acid. There are limited studies that prove the effectiveness of apple cider vinegar, but it does seem to help stabilize blood sugars, especially in those who are prediabetic or who have type 2 diabetes. There are some anecdotal studies that found that apple cider vinegar can also reduce appetite and help with weight loss.

The downside of apple cider vinegar is that it is highly acidic. Choosing to drink it straight - even by the teaspoon - can damage your teeth and throat. Instead, experts recommend to try mixing a small amount (1-2 teaspoons) into a large (12-ounce) glass of water or cup of tea and if desired add a small amount of honey or lemon juice. Many people choose to use organic, unfiltered apple cider vinegar 'with the mother' as it is thought to have more probiotic benefits. Pay attention to your stomach, since apple cider vinegar can also cause stomach upset. You can also use apple cider vinegar in your favorite salad dressing recipe or marinade for pork or asparagus. If you are diabetic or take regular medications, consult your doctor before adding apple cider vinegar to your diet as a curative. Dosing depends on age, health, and other conditions.

- 1) [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/7796781](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/7796781)
- 2) [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19661687](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19661687)
- 3) [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19630216](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19630216)

## Osteoporosis

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A healthy lifestyle can help lower your risk for osteoporosis. With your doctor's permission, a regular exercise routine that includes strength training could help decrease the risk of osteoporosis. Additionally, eating a diet that provides at least 1200 mg of calcium each day and plenty of vitamin D. It is recommended to consume 400-800 IU or 10-20 mg of vitamin D daily while some health professionals and more recent studies suggest 1000-4000 IU or 25-100mg daily.

The best way to get more calcium is from the foods you eat. Grass-fed dairy such as milk, cheese, yogurt, and kefir provide calcium as well as spinach, kale, okra, collard greens, soybeans, white beans, and certain fish like sardines, salmon, perch, and rainbow trout. Certain foods are fortified with calcium and vitamin D such as dairy-free milk alternatives, orange juice, oatmeal and breakfast cereals.

# Busting Fitness Myths

## Fitness Myth:

### Women Will “Bulk Up” With Strength Training

It is highly unlikely that women will bulk up lifting weights without going to extreme measures. Women have 1/15<sup>th</sup> to 1/20<sup>th</sup> of the amount of testosterone as men, which means building bulky muscle is very difficult for women.

There are many benefits to lifting weights. Lifting weights is an excellent way to improve bone density, joint mobility, and body composition. Daily tasks such as carrying groceries, moving furniture, and climbing stairs become easier. Muscles need more calories to maintain themselves; therefore, your metabolism increases with stronger muscles. Additionally, lifting weight can improve mental wellbeing, sleep, and overall stress.

Fitness recommendations assert that strength training at least twice a week is the most beneficial. After talking to your doctor about starting a new workout program, consider starting with low weights and higher reps. Reps refers to the number of times you complete a specific movement such as a bicep curl. Avoiding strength training due to a fear of ‘bulking up’ may be keeping you from your fitness goals as well as a stronger body and mind.



## Fitness Myth:

### No Pain, No Gain

“No Pain, No Gain” was a common phrase used in the gym for many decades. Unfortunately, this attitude is more likely to help you gain a hospital bill than attain your fitness goals. This is not to say that there isn’t reward in pushing past comfort zones or gaining the confidence to go for something “hard.” Discomfort can be a good thing, but discomfort is very different from pain. Pain during a workout could indicate poor form, which could cause an injury. Pain can also indicate an imminent medical emergency such as a heart attack.

It is imperative to learn how to listen to your body and recognize when you are challenging your body and when you are pushing your body too hard. Our intuition is usually a good place to start. If you feel something is beyond uncomfortable and instead painful, stop and talk to an educated resource such as a certified personal trainer, your physician, or a physical therapist. Take some time to learn the warning signs of medical emergencies such as a heart attack, stroke, dehydration, or heat exhaustion and be well aware of your own medical history and risks. A general rule of thumb is to stop exercise if you feel sharp, acute pain. This pain will happen quickly, rather than building gradually, and will last for days after the workout. Pushing through the pain will only intensify risk of injury and severity of injury.



# Sports Drinks and Energy Drinks

A message from your Healthy U @ Work Wellness Champion:

Pamela Johnson, BS, HHP-AADP, CFMP, RYT



## Recommendations from Franciscan Working Well's Functional Medicine Clinic:

Because the goal of Functional Medicine is to reverse disease by getting to the root cause, we look at the impact that sugar and other chemicals in sports and energy drinks have on the systems of the body.

While elite athletes may require the replenishment of electrolytes and need to refuel muscles, many do not reach for sugar and chemical laden sports drinks any more. Elite athletes know that water is the primary hydration tool and is key in performance. In addition to water, many now opt for natural and clean "sports drinks."

One example is coconut water. It has electrolytes, natural salts, amino acids, enzymes, magnesium, potassium, B vitamins, minerals, phytonutrients and so much more. Coconut water is also low in calories and sugar.

Toxins in the form of sugar, genetically modified corn syrup, dyes and the paragraphs of chemicals listed on the label of most sports drinks contribute to inflammation, disrupt hormone signaling, destroy the gut flora, cause insulin resistance and lessen the assimilation of nutrients. This is why we always recommend clean or more natural products.

One issue with sports drinks is that many people drink them instead of water when working out and many drink them without working out at all, as a "healthy alternative" to soda. The general rule is that unless you work out for 45 minutes to an hour, water is the best hydration. After an hour, electrolytes and salts may need to be replenished. For those who drink them without working out, this is not a healthy choice.

The calorie or sugar content is very high in these drinks and even endurance athletes know not to use refined sugar as fuel. Just like soda and fruit juice, sugary drinks are one of the biggest culprits of fatty liver. Sugar has the same toxic effect on the liver as alcohol which is why we now are seeing many children diagnosed with fatty liver, a condition that is associated with metabolic syndrome and type II diabetes.

It is also important to know the difference between sports drinks and energy drinks. Some energy drinks contain up to 500 mg of caffeine which can cause heart palpitations and high blood pressure. The stimulants in these drinks can create a problem when using them to keep cool in hot temperatures.

It is easy to guzzle these drinks and often drink more than the serving size. (There is generally more than one serving in bottle). This not only increases calorie and sugar consumption but also caffeine levels, which can increase dehydration. Stimulants may also interact with medications, such as some asthma medications that also have stimulants.

The last concern with sports drinks and energy drinks is tooth decay. There are high levels of citric acid in many sports drinks. This can soften the enamel on teeth. If we are hot or thirsty, we have less saliva to protect against the high acidity in these drinks.

Drink water or coconut water as an alternative to sports drinks. You can also look for recipes for making your own healthy sports or energy drink. Google the words "homemade natural sports drink recipe" and you will find many recipes to choose from. If you are looking for a healthy stimulant, green tea is a powerhouse of energy and nutrients.



**Q:** Good Day Erin. I recently found out I was pregnant, I am about 8 weeks along with my first. I haven't really worked out on a regular basis for a few months but I want to start something to make sure I am strong throughout the pregnancy. I've heard working out can help but I'm not sure if it's safe or where to start. Please let me know your thoughts. Thank you in advance!

Jillian F., 31

**A:** Congratulations Jillian! That is wonderful news, children as such a blessing. Thank you for reaching out with this question. As a trainer and a mom, I have worked out through all of my pregnancies and I truly believe it helps with labor and delivery as well as recovery, not to mention giving you some energy during pregnancy. What I would recommend doing first is consulting your doctor to see if it's okay for you start a workout program. You want to make sure you have no contraindications that would prohibit you from working out. You are early enough along in your pregnancy that will should be able to start something, but you should always ask.

When you are pregnant your workouts may not be as intense as you are used to but that's okay. You typically don't want to start an intense workout program when you are pregnant, but it is highly dependent on the person. Since it has only been a few months since you worked out regularly you should be okay to do something, you just want to make sure to avoid anything high intensity such as CrossFit. Your doctor will probably give you the go ahead to do some light strength training using dumbbells and bands along with some light cardio. If you have a Fitbit or heartrate monitor I would recommend using that to make sure your heart rate doesn't get to high. If you are unsure where to begin with strength training I would call a few local personal training studios to see if anyone has experience working with pregnant individuals. You want someone with experience because as you get further along with your pregnancy there are movements you should avoid. For instance, after your first trimester you should be staying away from lying flat on your back and doing crunches. If nothing else you can definitely do some walking and swimming along with stretching and some core stability movements. The first trimester was always the hardest for me to work out because of being so tired but making yourself go for a walk can helps boost your energy and feel better. I hope this helps give you some ideas. I wish you the best of luck with this pregnancy.

Dedicated to your success,

Erin M Long, B.S., NSCA-CPT

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