

# Cardiovascular Wellness Program Newsletter

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## Comments from Linda

This past fall semester was fun, busy, engaging; many worthwhile things happening per usual. I am pleased to see everyone figuring out approaches for our program – clients working to their own limits and abilities, being together, and finding their niche with the activities that work for them. Keep it up please!

We had our usual involvement with PT, nursing, psychology, nutrition, health science and gero majors this past semester. They completed some good projects and led some really fun activities.

As our program continues to grow and as administrative things move along in the background to ensure our sustainability, I look forward to seeing a continuation of great things in 2026. Thanks for being a part of it!

Best wishes for a warm and wonderful holiday. With Christmas & New Year's Day falling mid-to-end week, we have a complete 2-week break this year. The whole campus is shutting down during this period; hopefully you can take good advantage of the break, using some of our recorded sessions as you'd like. I know I'll be seeing you soon!

*Linda*

## CWP Newsletter

This newsletter is created quarterly with a primary intent of reaching those we have not seen lately. If you would like to receive a hard copy in the mail, please let me know. Call and leave a message (916-278-4402) or send an email:

[csuscwvwellness@gmail.com](mailto:csuscwvwellness@gmail.com)

Prior issues are archived on our webpage

<https://cardiovascularwellnessprogram.org/newsletter-1>

## Included in this issue:

Program Coordinator Notes, Linda Paumer  
CWP Projects, Linda Paumer  
Nutrition Notes, Debbie Lucas, RD  
Recipe Corner  
Exercise Reminders, Linda Paumer, MA  
Universe in a Rose Petal, Linda Larsen, RN  
PsychoSocial Wellness, Linda Goode, LCSW  
Crafts/Fall Risk, Monica Flores  
Christmas Trivia -- back page



## **CWP Projects** *List compiled by Linda Paumer*

*Likely you are aware of the excellent job we do fulfilling our mission of serving students. Everyone's involvement in student interactions is a cornerstone of our success.*

### **Highlights of the Fall 2025 semester:**

**1) Gerontology.** *Our participation in gero courses is one of our best accomplishments. Our program provides service learning for several students taking gero courses and our viability is helped now that I instruct Gero 11, "older adult services & strategies." I again will be seeking Zoom interactions for anyone interested who can join in giving the students exposure to concepts we face. We had two Gero 131 students this past semester: Pheonix, who helped with fraud awareness, and Monica, who provided some really fun interactive crafts. This coming semester we have at least two new Gero130/131 students.*

**2) Matter of Balance class.** *We ran our 3<sup>rd</sup> session here during Oct/Nov. Our next session likely will be Feb/Mar. I'm trying to figure out how to manage that on a Thurs schedule. This course addresses fear of falling as well as a mild exercise program. It is an outreach endeavor, open to 'outsiders'. Please mention it to anyone you think might benefit.*

**3) Balance activities.** *Our Friday 2:30 pm class continues, initially set up by PT students. Justin is now the primary student running it and he hopes to bring in more of his classmates in the coming semester. These activities are a good continuation of things learned in the Matter of Balance class and generally good things to keep doing.*

**4) Survey Projects.** *Qualtrics surveys are a very helpful tool that enables those of you not coming in to help out. This past semester the biggest one dealt with gaming habits and several of you also complete a MOCA (cognitive assessment) as part of that. There will possibly be more coming on that next semester. Any time you can help with these surveys, your efforts are greatly appreciated. We are not going to win Nobel Prizes for the things we learn but we do create a nice collection of the positive outcomes that come from participation in our program.*

**5) Spring 2026 outlook.** *Our biggest and likely most important student involvement is a course called ID201, which is an internship/research experience. We are looking to see this grow next semester. The usual cohort of community nutrition and psychology students is expected and also possibly an audiology project. Your continued involvement with any/all of these is still requested and greatly appreciated. Stay tuned!*



# Let's have less waste this holiday season

By Debbie Lucas



Happy Holidays!! I hope you all are enjoying this holiday season. I recently listened to a podcast all about food waste in our country and since low waste has been my goal this past year, I thought it would be a perfect topic for the newsletter. With a little help from that podcast, ideas from my walking partner, Nancy (who is as frugal as I am) and, full disclosure, some help from AI, I've got some ideas for you.

Do we need to be concerned with food waste? I'd say yes, as nearly 40% of the food we spend our hard-earned money on is thrown straight into the trash. That includes food in all parts of the food chain from growing, to harvesting, to processing, to shipping, to our grocery stores/restaurants, to refrigerators and freezers, and ultimately to our plates. That is heart-breaking. Not only does it affect our bottom-line financially, but it affects the climate – as food waste at the dump develops methane, a powerful greenhouse gas. There are a lot of things we can do about this, but I'm going to focus here on what to do with leftovers.

Do you like leftovers? I know many people will not eat leftovers, but I love them and plan on them in my menu every week. You have heard me tout batch cooking (making large amounts of a few key ingredients to save time later in the week). The items you make can be used in multiple ways throughout the week, and I'd challenge you to think of them as 'planned overs' rather than left overs. We talk about that so much, I'll just talk about what to do with our holiday leftovers for this article. If you aren't familiar with batch cooking, I'd encourage you to look into the CWP archives for our batching cooking talks and demonstrations.

Transforming a vegan holiday feast into next-day magic is all about layering flavors, refreshing textures, and repurposing the holiday's best dishes in creative, low-effort ways. Start with the star of the table—whether it's roasted vegetables, lentil loaf, stuffed squash, or a plant-based roast. These can become the base for hearty sandwiches or grain bowls. Slice leftover mains and tuck them into sourdough with cranberry sauce, greens, and a swipe of vegan aioli, or chop them into bite-sized pieces and serve over warm quinoa or farro (or other whole grain) with toasted nuts and herbs for a quick, nourishing lunch. That lentil loaf or tofurkey can also be used to make tacos, pasta sauce or chili.

Stuffing (or dressing) is especially versatile the next day. Press it into a hot skillet with a spray oil to create crisp 'stuffing cakes'—perfect topped with sautéed greens or a drizzle of leftover gravy. Alternatively, crumble it into a pot of vegetable broth with carrots, celery, and rosemary for a comforting, rustic stuffing soup.

Mashed potatoes and sweet potatoes can be revived with minimal fuss. Make cold mashed potatoes into small patties and pan-sear until golden for easy potato pancakes. Leftover sweet potatoes blend beautifully into smoothies, oatmeal, or muffin batter, adding natural sweetness and creaminess. An additional benefit to leftover potatoes is that the next day, the cold potatoes

have developed a more resistant starch – excellent for the gut microbiome. Combine leftover veggies, mashed potatoes, mains and gravy into a comforting shepherd's pie: Layer chopped roasted veggies and diced vegan roast in a baking dish, spoon over any leftover gravy or a splash of vegetable stock, then top with fluffy mashed potatoes. Bake until warm and crisp around the edges for a hearty dinner. Here's a link to a recipe: [Vegan Holiday Shepherd's Pie recipe \(guide\)](#).

Roasted vegetables are perfect for repurposing. Toss leftover Brussels sprouts, squash, or green beans into a warm pasta dish with a dash of olive oil and garlic, or mix them into a tofu scramble for a protein-packed breakfast. For something lighter, combine cold roasted vegetables with fresh greens, citrus segments, and toasted seeds to create a yummy salad. What about those leftover veggies from your veggie trays? They are perfect for stir fries or just chop them up into a soup.

Finally, don't forget the sauces. Cranberry sauce makes an awesome spread for sandwiches or a tangy swirl in morning yogurt alternatives, while leftover gravy adds so much to grains, soups, or simple sautéed mushrooms.

If you're craving something more playful, consider making a vegan leftover pizza (I plan to try this soon!). Use your favorite pizza crust, spread on cranberry sauce in place of tomato sauce, then top with bits of roasted vegetables, stuffing, and dollops of vegan gravy or vegan cheese. This fun twist on holiday leftovers is great for lunches or family movie nights. You can follow this vegan leftover pizza idea and adapt it with whatever you've got.

<https://makeitdairyfree.com/vegan-thanksgiving-leftover-pizza/>

Turning those leftovers into hash or soup is a fun way to use extras year round. Here are a couple of recipes from AI:

### 1. Festive Leftover Hash (serves 2)

#### Ingredients:

- 2 cups mixed roasted vegetables (carrots, parsnips, sprouts, potatoes)
- 1 cup chopped leftover nut roast or stuffing
- 1 small onion, diced
- 1 tbsp olive oil (optional)
- Salt, pepper, smoked paprika
- Optional: leftover gravy or cranberry sauce

#### Method:

Heat oil in a large pan over medium heat. Add the onion and sauté until soft. Roughly chop the leftover vegetables and add them to the pan along with the nut roast or stuffing. Season with salt, pepper, and a pinch of smoked paprika. Press the mixture down lightly and cook until crisp on one side, then flip to crisp the other. Serve hot with a drizzle of warm vegan gravy or a spoonful of cranberry sauce for extra depth.





## 2. Creamy Vegan Christmas Soup (serves 3–4)

### Ingredients:

- 3 cups leftover vegetables (any mix)
- 1 cup leftover mashed potatoes (for creaminess)
- 3 cups vegetable stock
- 1 tbsp olive oil (optional)
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- Salt, pepper, thyme

### Method:

Warm the oil in a pot and sauté the garlic. Add the vegetables, mashed potatoes, and stock. Simmer for 10 minutes, then blend until smooth. Season with salt, pepper, and thyme. Serve with crusty bread.

Don't think of the leftovers this season as something that will go to waste! Recycle them into more seasonal meals by eating them the same way as they were originally intended, or repurpose them into an exciting taste sensation.

Wishing you an amazing, healthy, fun-filled holiday season!

### Celebrate the season with less waste and more joy!:

- Give experiences instead of physical gifts
- Wrap gifts in reusable fabric or recyclable paper
- Repurpose last year's decorations
- Donate unwanted items to spread holiday cheer
- Plan meals & compost food scraps to minimize food waste



### From Back Page

Christmas Trivia Answers	1
2 Blue Christmas	2
3 White Christmas	3
4 Rudolph the red-nosed Reindeer	4
5 Paris	5
6 Jingle Bells	6
7 Egg nog	7
8 Four	8
9 Cupid	9
10 North Pole	10
11 Three times	11
12 Black	12
13 Ebenezer	13
14 364 Gifts	14
15 Feliz Navidad	15
16 Cupid & Comet	16
17 St. Nicholas	17
18 Professor Hinkle	18
19 Evergreen Trees	19
20 Christmas Pudding	20
21 Elves	21
22 All I Want for Christmas is You	22
23 Germany in the 16th century	23
24 First electric Christmas light display	24
25 Austria or Salzburg	25
26 Tom Hanks	26
27 Poinsettia Plant	27
28 A Magical Hat	28
29 A Nutcracker	29
30 Olat	30

# Exercise Reminders from *Linda Paumer*



Walking is crucial for successful aging, contributing to fall prevention by boosting strength, balance, and coordination. How you walk is very important in this picture though. Very slow or excessively fast walking can actually increase risk, especially for those with existing issues. Leg strength, core strength, hip and shoulder flexibility all contribute to fitness that helps with walking ability, and hence fall prevention. Specific, balanced exercises (like Tai Chi, strength training, balance activities) are key to improving gait stability for a truly safer walk. Maintaining your ability to walk briskly but safely throughout the years is one of your smartest endeavors.

## How Walking Improves Fall Risk

- **Builds Foundation:** Regular walking strengthens leg, hip, and core muscles.
- **Enhances Balance:** It improves dynamic balance and sensorimotor function, helping you react to uneven surfaces.

## When Walking Can *Increase* Fall Risk

- **Slower Gait Speed:** Walking very slowly (<1.8 mph) is a significant fall predictor; if you're slow, you're at higher risk.
- **Faster Gait Speed (Paradoxically):** Pushing to walk very fast (>2.9 mph) can be risky, especially outdoors, as it uses different strategies than normal walking.
- **Gait Instability:** Poor walking patterns (high variability, low complexity) show instability, a major risk factor.
- **"More Exposure" Risk:** For those already high-risk, simply walking *more* outdoors increases chances of environmental hazards causing a fall.

## The Solution: Smart Exercise

- **Focus on Quality:** Aim for *better* walking, not just *more* walking.
- **Combine Exercises:** Integrate balance activity, strength training, and moderate walking.
- **Address Weaknesses:** If you're slow or unsteady, specific training to improve *gait quality* and *balance* is more effective than just walking.

In essence, walking is great, but *how* you walk and *what* you do to support your walking matters most for preventing falls.

Things to be mindful about to ensure walking safety:

- Medication state – do any of your medications affect your blood pressure, blood sugar levels, perception, sensation –know how they treat you so you don't increase risk.
- Wear the right shoes. Outdoors, be seen to stay safe.
- Be aware of environmental conditions and act/dress accordingly. Be mindful of hyper- and hypothermia. Stay hydrated.
- Be aware of surroundings – know your route and the trip hazards (curbs, uneven pavement, and yard debris) to avoid.
- Use assistive devices if needed.
- Safety precautions – people know where you're going, you have your cell phone or call device with you.



# Mindfulness and Hope

By Linda M, Larsen, RN-BC, RYT



This year end, as I reviewed the topics from previous articles, I was surprised to find I hadn't shared about the connection between mindfulness and kindness. Kindness is defined as being friendly, generous, and considerate. Kindness research has shown that people feel stronger and more energetic after helping others; many also report feeling less depressed, and kindness stimulates the production of serotonin which can help heal wounds and increase calm and happiness. The University of Virginia Mindfulness Center feels that kindness is so central to mindfulness that it's baked into their definition of mindfulness "intentional nonjudgmental present moment awareness with kindness". Being with our present moment experience can be hard at times. Practicing kindness toward ourselves can help when mindful awareness leads to judging our thoughts, observing pleasant experiences and sensations as something to hold on to, or unpleasant thoughts as something to push away, avoid, or find a distraction from.

Kind actions can benefit both the giver and receiver. When we are mindful - as Diana Winston of UCLA defines it, "Paying attention to our present moment experiences with openness and curiosity and a willingness to be with that experience," combined with kindness, we can stay connected to what we truly value and cultivate a warm, kind attitude towards ourselves and others. When focusing on internal feelings, one can practice forgiveness, gratitude, empathy, and compassion. Recall that mindful self-compassion has a component of loving-kindness - treating yourself with care & loving understanding, and when in pain, actively soothing & comforting oneself. Loving-kindness includes a desire to ease one's own suffering: compassion. Mindful awareness helps us recognize non-verbal body language and facial expressions which are subtle signals into the emotions someone may be experiencing. Nurturing empathy is a powerful practice that can generate a deeper connection to others through empathetic understanding and potentially help build a more compassionate society.

Coming back to the definition of kindness, we can mindfully practice generosity and consideration for yourself and others. On being generous, Jon Kabat-Zinn says that "A good place to start is with yourself. See if you can give yourself gifts that may be true blessings, such as self-acceptance, or some time each day with no purpose. Practice being generous with the feeling of being deserving enough to accept these gifts without obligation. To simply receive from yourself, and from the universe. . . Later be generous toward others with no thought of gain or return."

At the end of last year, my wish for you all was that you have hope. My wish for this year is that you may combine your Mindfulness practices with kindness. May your 2026 practices bring you joy and deep peace, allowing you to carry on and thrive.

*"How lovely to think that no one need wait a moment, we can start now, start slowly changing the world! How lovely that everyone, great and small, can make their contribution toward introducing justice straightaway... And you can always, always give something, even if it is only kindness!"*

—Anne Frank

**For more in depth on Mindfulness and Kindness:**

<https://www.mindful.org/its-not-mindfulness-without-kindness/>

<https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/the-science-of-kindness>

[https://mbsrtraining.com/attitudes-of-mindfulness/mindful-attitude-of-generosity/?srsltid=AfmBOopYYBnCnr2JMLDttgnbScZHMYbvykYrk9OC24F\\_ZghrnWyUr2Wv](https://mbsrtraining.com/attitudes-of-mindfulness/mindful-attitude-of-generosity/?srsltid=AfmBOopYYBnCnr2JMLDttgnbScZHMYbvykYrk9OC24F_ZghrnWyUr2Wv)








# Holiday Coping with Loss

From Linda Goode, LCSW

*"Every love story is a potential grief story."*      *-Julian Barnes*

Many participants have asked for tips for dealing with loss of a loved one. The holiday season can be especially challenging times for any of us missing important loved ones. With this in mind, here are a few ideas for coping with the loss of a loved one during the holiday season. These are simply suggestions, and I encourage you to only try tips you are comfortable with as you know yourself best.

-  Simplify things whenever possible and take frequent breaks. Ask for help when needed, with cooking and decorating tasks. Consider simplifying shopping and if needed; letting people know if you need to pass on that this year.
-  Spend time with people who are most supportive. Shared memories can sometimes be a source of comfort. Tips for sharing can be telling stories, framing a picture, and looking at photo albums.
-  Take care of yourself. Even if you do not feel like celebrating, and need to simplify things, try not to cancel everything because this can lead to isolation. It's okay to opt out of activities, but try to do some small things with supportive people.
-  Allow yourself to feel joy, sadness, anger – as it is important to allow yourself to grieve even during the holidays.
-  Consider adding a new activity or tradition to honor your loved one. Here are some examples:

Light a candle in honor of your loved one.

Put a bouquet of flowers on your holiday table in memory of your loved one.

Visit the cemetery and decorate the memorial site.

Have a moment of silence during a holiday toast to honor your loved one.

Place a commemorative ornament on the Christmas tree.

Play your loved one's favorite music or favorite game.

Plan a meal with your loved one's favorite foods.

You are not alone. Many of us have lost cherished loved ones, although each loss is uniquely our own experience. The most important thing is to plan ahead and take care of yourself. Your health and wellbeing are important too.



# Craft Ideas to help reduce Fall Risk

From Monica Flores

## Focusing on Dexterity and Hand-Eye Coordination

- Knitting and Crocheting: Improve dexterity
- Fabric-Scrap Wreaths: Creating a wreath by cutting and tying fabric strips onto a wire base enhances hand-eye coordination and can result in beautiful, personalized decor.
- Decoupage: Gluing decorative paper cutouts onto objects like boxes or jars helps with fine motor skills and creates unique decorative pieces.
- Nature-inspired artwork: Collect leaves, flowers, or pinecones during a walk to use in a craft. You can press flowers to make bookmarks or glue leaves and acorns onto a wreath or canvas. This activity combines light physical activity with a creative project.
- Pressed Leaf & Flower Art: A simple way to preserve involves collecting and drying colorful leaves and flowers and arranging them on cardstock to create art.

## Memory and Cognitive Stimulation – boost balance and coordination

- Scrapbooking: Gathering and arranging personal photos, ticket stubs and memorabilia.
- Gratitude Tree: Write notes of thankfulness and attach them to a decorative tree.
- Decorative Jars: Personalize mason jars and other containers with paint, fabric scraps, or natural elements for unique decorative pieces.
- Seasonal Baking: Enjoy baking treats by yourself, for someone or with someone.

## Crafts to improve dexterity and grip strength

- Beaded jewelry: Stringing large beads onto elastic cord or thick string is an excellent way to practice fine motor skills. Make bracelets, necklaces, or keychains and choose colorful, large-hole beads that are easy to grasp, especially for those with arthritis.
- Clay modeling: Working with soft, air-dry clay involves squeezing, pinching, and shaping, which helps improve grip strength and finger flexibility. Create small sculptures, dishes, or ornaments.
- No-sew fabric projects: No needles required. You can create small blankets using knotted fleece or fabric bookmarks using glue or tape.
- Knitting or crocheting: Boosts hand-eye coordination and finger dexterity. Thicker yarn and larger needles or hooks might make this craft easier to handle.
- Painted rocks: Decorating smooth river rocks with paint and glitter. These can be used as paperweights, garden labels, or decorations and provide a sense of accomplishment.
- Punch Needle: This technique creates textured art and decor like rugs and wall hangings using a special pen-like needle to punch yarn into fabric.
- Macramé: Knotted fiber wall hangings and home decor remain popular, offering a bohemian aesthetic.

## Tips for success

- Create a clear workspace. Ensure there are no tripping hazards around the craft area.
- Use adaptive tools. Opt for large-grip scissors, magnifying lamps, or foam-handled brushes to make tools easier to hold.
- Work at a table. For better balance and stability, complete projects while sitting at a table with armrests.
- Take breaks. Encourage standing and gentle stretching to avoid stiffness and fatigue.
- Make it social. Crafting with friends or family can be more enjoyable and increase cognitive and emotional benefits.

# Christmas Trivia

How many of these do you know?

1	How many Reindeer drive Santa's Sleigh?	
2	Elvis won't have a White Christmas he'll have a -	
3	What is the best-selling Christmas Song Ever?	
4	Who has a red nose?	
5	In Home Alone movie where are the McCallister's going on vacation?	
6	What was the first song played in space?	
7	Which popular Christmas punch is also called "milk punch"?	
8	How many ghosts are there in "A Christmas Carol?"	
9	Which of Santa's Reindeer has the same name as another holiday?	
10	Where does the Polar Express take kids?	
11	How many times does Santa say Ho?	
12	What color is Santa's Belt?	
13	In Dickens "A Christmas Carol" what was Mr. Scrooge's first name?	
14	How many total gifts were given in Twelve Days of Christmas?	
15	How do you say Merry Christmas in Spanish?	
16	Name 2 reindeer whose name begins with C	
17	What person was the real life Santa Claus based on?	
18	In Frosty the Snowman what is the name of the magician?	
19	Where do Mistletoe Berries typically grow?	
20	What Christmas dessert is often served on fire?	
21	According to legend, who helps Santa make toys in the North Pole?	
22	What is Mariah Carey's famous Christmas song?	
23	When & where was the 1st Advent Wreath made?	
24	What Christmas-related invention is credited to Thomas Edison?	
25	Where did the song "Silent Night" originate (country)?	
26	Who voices the conductor in The Polar Express?	
27	What plant with red & green leaves is associated with Christmas?	
28	According to the song, what makes Frosty the Snowman come to life?	
29	In "The Nutcracker" what does Clara get as a Christmas gift?	
30	In the movie "Frozen," what is the name of the snowman?	