



Cardiovascular Wellness Program Newsletter

Issue 38

September 2026

Comments from Linda

3rd week into the fall semester – things are going full force and have been very fun. We have many new students, all showing interest and enthusiasm and I am looking forward to seeing what other great ideas they will come up with. We also have lots of new participants, our circle is ever spreading. Everyone is on their own to figure out what parts of our program work the best for them, but please ask for guidance and assistance along the way. We have several projects unfolding this semester, and as our participant circle widens, so does our circle of inter-departmental collaborations. These projects we do with other disciplines (physical therapy, nursing, social work, nutrition, psychology) all go toward ensuring our continued viability as an asset to the academic institution. The more students we serve, the more valuable we are. Program participants contributing to these projects are always greatly appreciated and a win-win in terms of fulfilling everyone's sense of purpose. As always, thank so much for your continued support.

I have tried to describe as many of the ongoing projects as I could in this newsletter. Likely something else will come along before the ink has dried, but we have essentially figured out good ways to stay in touch by now.

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: csuscwvllness@gmail.com

Prior issues are archived on our webpage
<https://cardiovascularwellnessprogram.org/newsletter>

Included in this issue:

Program Coordinator Notes, CWP Projects,
Outside Resources: Linda Paumer, MA
Nutrition Notes: Debbie Lucas, RD
Exercise Reminders: Linda Paumer, MA
Recipe Corner
Puzzle fun



CWP Fall Projects

List compiled by Linda Paumer

Summer Recap

We had several high school students working with us this past summer. We were very grateful for their help and enjoyed their interest and enthusiasm. Especially endearing were the big sisters who were with us last summer, bringing their younger brothers in this summer. All in the family – how fun!

Fall Happenings

I am always looking for support with my introductory gerontology course, gero 11. I have a schedule of Tuesday evening Zoom sessions posted and if you can ever join in those, you hopefully will enjoy being in a mentor role. The students this semester seem quite involved; our first session, on older adult learning, went well. Again join in if you can please.

Many things going on related to fall prevention:

1) Matter of Balance: this is an 8-week course we try to offer once/semester. We have a session scheduled to start October 1st – Thursday mornings up until Thanksgiving. Sign-up sheet in the gym – or just send me an email. Focus is on addressing fear of falling, home safety, and of course some exercise to improve fitness for fall prevention.

2) Several of you are enrolled in a PT clinic with Dr. Lazaro, a Monday pm thing, addressing fall risk issues, and any other PT concerns you might have. Thanks for helping them out.

3) Our Friday 2:30 pm balance activity session is now a constant on our schedule. The PT students have become very dedicated to this session, and we are blessed to have their help. Justin has arranged to be with us almost every Friday and Madison joins when she can; they often recruit classmates too – how blessed are we!

Thriving Together. We are very excited about this newest collaboration. Physical therapy students and nursing students will be working together this semester on Fridays, doing assessments on CWP clients using the 5M geriatric model: what matters most, mind (mentation), mobility, multi-complexity, and medications. The dream to have this be an on-going “clinic”, and every semester assessing will be done, for new and continuing clients (getting assessed twice/year the dream of Dr. Dias (PT), just like getting your teeth cleaned). This fall semester this project is in a “proof of concept” mode, and we are excited to see where it goes from here. In terms of that widening circle of viability I mentioned earlier, this project is rife with potential – serving us, serving students, and serving several faculty member. One of our biggest win-win-wins ever!

Nutrition Research Projects. Three nutrition grad students are currently doing projects with us. Maribeth is collecting data about vegetable consumption and food insecurity; her survey is relatively simple and thankfully many of you have already completed this. If you haven’t seen it yet, please ask. Ana is holding “focus groups” – discussion sessions to learn about awareness of ultra processed foods. Silvana is a 3rd student, still working out details for her project, recipe use a part of it. Stay tuned!

Cooking. Our kitchen activities aren't really projects, but the kitchen is almost always in use. Leanne comes up with new ideas weekly and it is fun to see the students get involved. Debbie, our dietitian, and John, our resident chef and plant-based guru, continue to set the tone with their monthly cooking demos. Please feel free to offer suggestions for things you'd like to try, keeping in mind our whole-food, plant-based goals.

Monthly Potlucks. We continue to have a whole-food, plant-based potluck the last Friday of every month. These are great opportunities to share some healthy food and also have fun social interaction. Bringing a dish is definitely not a requirement! Please do try to attend; September 25th this month.

Outside Resources

Attached here is a link to the [Agency on Aging monthly newsletter](#). September is fall prevention month, so many good items in their newsletter.

I am happy to report the Agency on Aging is on our presentation schedule. One of their outreach coordinators on October 13th will tell us all about the many services this agency provides.

Since it is fall prevention month, a good resource is the Sacramento StopFalls Coalition, now coordinated by the Agency on Aging (used to be Sacramento County Public Health). A way to find classes community wide that deal with fall prevention and also find other posted resources <https://www.agencyonaging4.org/stopfalls-sacramento-coalition>

Sacramento Aging Resources.

A website we use a lot in my gero 11 course is the Sacramento aging resources directory <https://www.sacagingresources.org/>

A listing of a plethora of available resources, covering all aspects of older adult living. If you've not seen this before, you are encouraged to check it out.

And – some resources shared by Katie DeKorte, the librarian who joined our older adult learning session last week:

- E-Bike and E-Trike pilot program ended on Dec 31, 2025 ([news item](#))
- [Adult Tutoring Volunteers](#) – Apply to become an adult literacy volunteer to help adults with their basic reading, writing, and math skills.
- [Library of Things](#) – Nontraditional library items available for checkout at the Arcade, Fair Oaks, and Valley-Hi North Laguna libraries. Items include gardening equipment, kitchen equipment, musical instruments, and a telescope!
- [Creative Spaces](#) – 3 library locations with equipment and software to make music, 3D printed items, and other artistic projects.
- [Volunteering](#) – Minimum age of 13, although there may be additional opportunities for teens.



Snack Attack

By Debbie Lucas, MS, RD, CDCES

Our cooking demonstration last month was on Travel foods – especially sandwiches or handheld foods. When I asked people what they brought for travel, most gave me snack ideas. Since we usually want healthy snacks whether traveling or not, I thought we could discuss some ideas here. The best snacks are easy to prepare, travel well, and provide enough staying power to keep hunger at bay.



If you don't want snacks, that is fine. Some people need to have a snack to keep the hunger away during the day. For others, their meals are satisfying enough. A snack is very appropriate if you are hungry, or it is going to be so long until your next meal that you will be overly hungry. No one wants to be 'hangry'. If you have diabetes, you may have learned that you always need a snack – it could be that your medication needs to be adjusted so that you don't have to always snack. Talk with your doctor, diabetes educator or me if that is an issue for you.

A snack should be a mini-meal, not an excuse to eat junk food. We usually wouldn't eat a meal of potato chips, so that isn't what we need as a snack either (even though it is fun!). What foods are you a little low in today? Fruit? Veggies? Protein? Carbs? That is what should be in your snacks. A simple plan for snacks is to combine **protein, fiber, healthy fats, and whole grains**. Nuts and seeds, beans, oats, fresh or dried fruit, whole grains, and nut or seed butters make excellent building blocks for snacks that are both nutritious and convenient.

Easy Quick Snacks for Home

When you're home, fresh snacks can be as simple as sliced apples (fruit is nature's to-go snack) with peanut or almond butter, vegetables or crackers with hummus, avocado toast, or a small bowl of berries topped with nuts and seeds.

For something you can prepare ahead, try **homemade energy bites**. Dates, oats, nut or seed butter, nuts, seeds, and a few extras such as cocoa, coconut, or dried fruit can be transformed into bite-sized snacks without turning on the oven. Minimalist Baker has a number of energy bite recipes – I love the Orange Cardamom bites. <https://minimalistbaker.com/easy-homemade-energy-bites-bars/>

Another great make-ahead option are **granola bars**. Cookie and Kate has a great recipe for No Bake Granola Bars. They're portable, use ingredients you already have on hand, and are easy to adapt for allergies. You'll want to get the food processor out for this recipe!
<https://cookieandkate.com/best-granola-bars-recipe/>

Snacks for Your Next Adventure

Going for a longer walk or hike? Traveling for the day? Taking a road trip? Choose foods that are easy to carry and won't make a mess in your bag.

Travel snacks need to survive a little jostling—and ideally shouldn't need refrigeration.

Homemade trail mix is one of the easiest solutions. This is a classic for a reason. Remember when we used to call it gorp? Combine almonds, walnuts, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, dried cranberries or raisins, for a sweet-and-savory mix. If it isn't going to be too hot, maybe throw in some dark chocolate chips. Make individual portions in reusable bags or small containers so they're ready to grab.

Roasted chickpeas or soy beans are another awesome travel snack. They're crunchy, flavorful, and provide plant-based protein. Try Love & Lemons for an easy recipe. You won't just want it for a snack – you'll want to add it to salads and bowls, too. Keep an eye on them when you are roasting. They can go from too soft to too crunchy in minutes!

<https://www.loveandlemons.com/roasted-chickpeas/>

For longer travel days, pack up a little of everything. A few energy bites, a homemade granola bar, trail mix, whole-grain crackers and hummus, and sturdy fresh fruit such as apples or oranges can give you different flavors and textures throughout the day.

5 Snacks to Pack

1. **Energy bites** — Small, satisfying, and easy to customize.
2. **Homemade trail mix** — A perfect blend of salty, sweet, crunchy, and chewy.
3. **Roasted chickpeas** — Your answer to the crunchy snack craving.
4. **Fresh fruit + nut butter** — Simple, nourishing, and delicious.
5. **Homemade granola bars** — Great for hikes, road trips, and busy days.

A Simple Snack-Prep Routine

Spend 30–45 minutes once or twice a week prepping your snacks. Make a batch of energy bites or granola bars, roast some chickpeas, wash fruit, and portion trail mix into grab-and-go containers.

Store everything where you can see it—and where it's easy to grab.

A little preparation today means better choices tomorrow.

READY TO SNACK?

Pick **two recipes** from this article and make them this week. Keep one batch at home and pack the other for your next adventure.

Your future hungry self will thank you!



Orange Cardamom Energy Bites (No-Bake!)

Sweet, zesty, decadent energy bites infused with orange zest and cardamom! Author Minimalist Baker

Ingredients

- 1 cup (packed) pitted dates* (measured after pitting // 11 medjool dates yield ~1 cup or 200 g)
- 1/2 cup raw unsalted cashews (if nut-free, sub seed of choice, such as hemp or sunflower)
- 1/2 cup desiccated or shredded unsweetened coconut
- 1 pinch sea salt
- 3/4 - 1 1/2 tsp ground cardamom (depending on the freshness of your cardamom, and your personal preference)
- 1/2 tsp (packed) orange zest*

TOPPING *optional*

- 1 tsp (packed) orange zest
- 3 Tbsp desiccated coconut

Directions

Servings 16 (Bites)

1. To a food processor add pitted dates, cashews, coconut, sea salt, cardamom, and orange zest. Note: If you don't have a food processor you can try using a blender, but dates can be tough for blenders due to their sticky nature, so use a low speed if possible and pulse rather than blending.

2. Pulse until the mixture is broken down and crumbly — we like to stop before it becomes completely dough-like so that the bites maintain some texture. It should stick together when pressed between two fingers; if still dry and crumbly, continue processing until it is sticky enough to form into a ball. Taste and adjust as needed, adding more cardamom, orange zest, or salt to taste.

3. If using the coconut coating, prepare that at this time. In a small bowl, combine the orange zest, desiccated coconut, and coconut sugar. Now it's time to roll the balls!

4. Scoop out 1-Tbsp amounts and roll into balls. As the original recipe is written, ~16 balls. If using the coating, roll the balls in the coating until generously covered.

Enjoy immediately or store leftovers covered in the refrigerator up to 1 week, or in the freezer up to 1 month. We enjoy these right out of the fridge or after sitting at room temperature for 5-10 minutes.

Notes

*If your dates are especially dry and stiff, soak them in water for a few minutes, then drain thoroughly and pat dry before use (they shouldn't be watery when added).

*1 orange yields ~1 tsp orange zest.

Nutrition (1 of 16 servings) *Nutrition information is a rough estimate calculated without optional ingredients.

Serving: 1 energy bite
Calories: 76 Carbohydrates: 11.4 g Protein: 1.1 g Fat: 3.6 g Saturated Fat: 1.8 g
Polyunsaturated Fat: 0.4 g Monounsaturated Fat: 1.2 g Trans Fat: 0 g Cholesterol: 0 mg Sodium: 6 mg Potassium:
126 mg Fiber: 1.4 g Sugar: 8.7 g Vitamin



Crispy Roasted Chickpeas

Make crispy roasted chickpeas for a protein-packed snack.
Also good in salads or on sandwiches and bowls!

Ingredients

- 1½ cups cooked chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- Extra-virgin olive oil, for drizzling
- Sea salt
- Paprika, curry powder, or other spices, optional



Directions

Serves 1 1/2 cups

1. Preheat the oven to 425°F and line a large baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Spread the cooked chickpeas on a kitchen towel and pat them dry. Remove any loose skins. Transfer the dried chickpeas to the baking sheet and toss them with a drizzle of olive oil and pinches of salt if desired.
3. Roast the chickpeas for 20 to 30 minutes, or until golden brown and crisp. Ovens can vary, if your chickpeas are not crispy enough, keep going until they are! Remove from the oven and, while the chickpeas are still warm, toss with pinches of paprika, curry powder, or other spices, if using.

Store roasted chickpeas in a loosely-covered container at room temperature. They are best used within two days.

<https://www.loveandlemons.com/roasted-chickpeas/>

Solutions to puzzles on back pages:

Puzzle 15 solution	
18. High Seas	1. Falling
19. Words of wisdom	2. Two Under Par
20. All dressed up and	3. Fat Chance
21. Split two ways	4. Broken Heart
22. High chair	5. Hot Under
23. Flat tire	6. Head in the Sand
24. Wake up,	7. Over my
25. little Suzie	8. Dead Body
26. Bags Under	9. Right Under
27. the Eyes	10. Looking Out for
28. Snake in the Grass	11. See Eye to Eye
29. One Step Ahead	12. the Nose
30. Within Reason	13. Number One
31. More to it	14. Be-Line
32. than Meets	15. Home is Where
33. Loss for Words	16. the Heart Is
34. No Fun Without U	17. Somewhere Over
35. Side Order	18. the Rainbow
36. Skating on Thin Ice	19. X Marks the Spot
37. An Inside Job	20. Put two and
38. Sign on the	21. two Together
39. Dotted Line	22. Just Right
	23. I Before E
	24. Except After C

FALL RHYMING SOLUTION	
1. Rain when it lands on your wool garment	Sweater wetter
2. Autumn dance	Fall Ball
3. Phantom's morning bread	Ghost toast
4. Foliage robber	Leaf thief
5. Corn labyrinth	Maize maze
6. Silly person with an orange squash	Pumpkin bumpkin
7. Unhurried black bird	Slow crow
8. Classroom law	School rule
9. Pretend to gather leaves	Fake rake
10. Red fall fruit growing near a church	Chapel apple
11. Mark on clothes from precipitation	Rain stain
12. Camouflage for an arachnid	Spider hider
13. Squash that is not entertained	Bored gourd
14. Nighttime search by a wise bird	Owl prowl
15. Fancy ride for trick or treat night	Halloween limousine



Exercise Reminders *from Linda Paumer*

I recently shared some reminders about balance and encouraged folks to participate in more activities that reinforce eye-hand coordination. They're good for your brain, good for your balance, and hopefully fun in the meantime.

I am sharing further insights on this concept that I adapted from the Harvard Health Letter.

Think of all the things you do with your eyes and hands at the same time—such as drive a car, cook a meal, pick up an object, or grab a handrail. They're made possible in part by the coordination of the information your eyes take in and the signals your brain sends to your arms and hands. This eye-hand coordination is key to maintaining your independence (and balance!).

Unfortunately, eye-hand coordination declines as we age. Reflexes, speed, and accuracy dull — possibly because of vision loss, poor health, or changes in brain wiring. Disuse fits in here too.

The good news: You can improve eye-hand coordination by exercising, practicing skills, and treating underlying conditions.

An eye-hand workout

All exercise is good for your brain, and the following may be especially helpful for eye-hand coordination.

Racquet sports. In tennis, racquetball, or pickleball, your eyes watch the ball, and your brain instructs your body to meet up with it. Table tennis too.

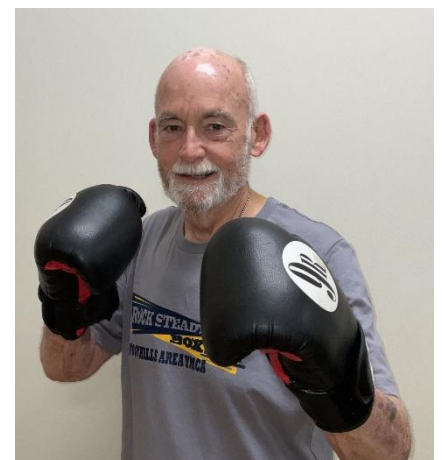
Swimming. In swimming, you often use your arms and hands outside your field of vision, forcing the brain to use its mind's eye. Plus, the sensory input is different in the water, which challenges the brain."



Tai chi. This ancient martial art uses a series of slow, flowing motions and deep breathing. You gradually shift your weight from one pose to another, which improves your reflexes, balance, strength, flexibility, and range of motion. Tai chi reinforces all of these components of movement.

especially challenging for your brain as you quickly aim left with your right hand, or aim right with your left hand. (I don't see us adding a boxing ring, although I guess we've got room. And I am aware this is often encouraged for those with Parkinson's.)

Noncontact boxing. This is a type of exercise program that involves wearing boxing gloves and shadow boxing or hitting soft pads. It's



Eye-hand activities

You don't have to break a sweat to sharpen your eye-hand coordination; lots of fun activities can help. You could

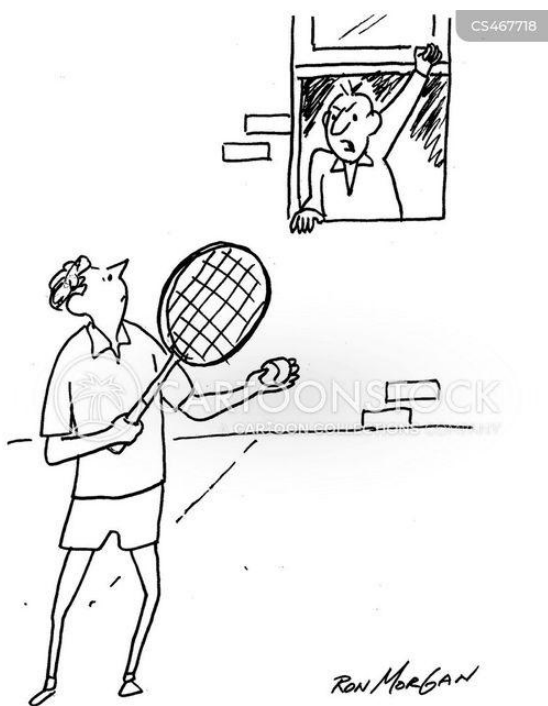
- play catch with a friend
- bounce a ball against a wall
- play cornhole (a beanbag game)
- take up juggling
- play darts (magnetic darts are a safe choice)
- sew or knit
- paint or draw a picture
- play a video game.



Adapting activities

If any of these activities seem too challenging, you may be able to modify them to make them easier. For example: If a ball is too small for catch, blow up a balloon and hit it back and forth. Play pickleball instead of tennis, since the pickleball court is smaller and you don't have to cover as much ground to hit the ball. Or play Ping-Pong with a pickleball or a light plastic baseball, which may be easier to hit than a Ping-Pong ball. If playing catch, shorten the target distance if reaching it is difficult.

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/healthy-aging-and-longevity/activities-to-sharpen-your-eye-hand-coordination>



"I'm trying to take a nap so hold down the racquet!"



"This isn't part of the exam anymore: I do it to sharpen my hand/eye coordination."

Puzzle 15

Bamboozables

solution on page 25

The object is to try to figure out the well-known saying, person, place, or thing that each bamboozable is meant to represent.

1.

TEMPERATURE

2.

PAR
2.

3.

CHANCE

4.

HEART

5.

COLLAR
HOT

THE HEAD SAND

7.

DEAD BODY
MY

8.

NO NO
RIGHT

9.

Ci ii

10.

LOOKING
1111

11.

BBBBBB

12.

BRAIN
KIDNEY
HOME
HEART

13.

WHERE WHERE WHERE
RAINBOW

14.

SXOT

15.

2TO

16.

JUST

17.

I E
C except

18.

CCCCCCCC

19.

intelligent
smart
wise

20.

Dressed Dressed Dressed
place STOP
place WAIT
GO

21.

WE IGH
WH EY

22.

chair

23.

TIRE

24.

WAKE
suzie

25.

iii
BAGS

26.

FIRING FIRING FIRING

27.

GRASS

28.

STEP
STEP
STEP
STEP

29.

REA WITH SON

30.

MORE
IT IT
THAN I

31.

LOSS
WORDS
WORDS
WORDS
WORDS

32.

NO F_N

33.

ORDER

34.

SKATING
| | | | |

35.

J O B
AN

36.

SIGN



Fall Rhyming



DIRECTIONS: Read each clue carefully. Think of a two part answer that matches the clue. The two parts should rhyme with each other. Write your answer on the lines.

1. Rain when it lands on your wool garment

SWEATER

WETTER

2. Autumn dance

3. Phantom's morning bread

4. Foliage robber

5. Corn labyrinth

6. Silly person with an orange squash

7. Unhurried black bird

8. Classroom law

9. Pretend to gather leaves

10. Red or green fall fruit growing near a church

11. Mark on clothes from precipitation

12. Camouflage for an arachnid

13. Pumpkin that is not entertained

14. Nighttime search by a wise bird

15. Fancy ride for trick-or-treat night