

# Cardiovascular Wellness Program Newsletter

Issue 11  
March 2022

## Comments from Linda

Spring is about new beginnings, and after the two-year hiatus we've had, I would say we are more than ready. We soldier on with our efforts in Folsom Hall and little by little we do seem to be returning to somewhat normal operations. We have had a couple of cooking demonstrations that have gone well and we've got more in store. We have a host of student involvement going on, and that does keep us accountable. We have several new clients, thanks to continued partnerships with the UC Davis Cardiac Rehab program. Be sure to read about all the many projects in store for this semester, as of course you will be asked to join in on those.

As the world opens up more & more, likely our COVID protocol will relax, but, for now, it remains as initially started: to attend in person we ask that you be fully vaccinated, we continue to wear masks, and luckily we have the room to maintain distance. As soon as the campus relaxes any of these rules, we certainly will drop these requirements. I send out tons of emails and hopefully you see wind of these here and there. I think some of you actually even read them--thanks for that! Keep checking to see when any of this changes.

And don't forget to talk to me about parking when you are ready to return. Easy process but there are few steps to take to get your vehicle registered. Hope to see you soon.

*Linda*



Painting flower pots turned out to be a quite fun non-eating group activity. Next step will be to plant an herb garden!



### Included in this issue:

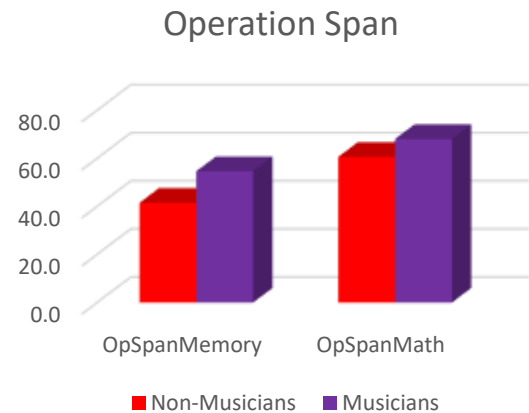
Program Coordinator Notes, Linda Paumer, MA  
CWP Projects  
Exercise Reminders, Linda Paumer  
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Universe in Rose Petal, Linda Larsen, RN  
Recipe Corner

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## CWP Projects

Thanks so much for helping students and the program out by joining the various projects that continue. We have students from multiple disciplines currently and the projects are as varied as their majors. We have both in-person and virtual interactions in store. Some highlights:

♥ The Maturity, Memory & Music project is wrapping up and it is pretty exciting to report that our findings actually support our hypothesis that musicians will maintain their cognitive ability better than non-musicians. One of the tests completed was called Operation Span and here is a graph showing the difference between musicians and non-musicians. The numbers are not phenomenal and our sample size was small, but we still feel good about reporting positive results. We should have an official write-up for that before too long.



- ♥ Zoom Success. Our project for this semester is a focus on technology and some assessments to determine what has enabled success for many of you in adapting to our Zoom world. We are developing a comprehensive survey with many questions about using technology and also some personality/trait assessments. You will all be asked to complete this survey—it can be done on-line and if you prefer, it can also be done with pen & paper. We hope to do it in person or via phone call for those of you not using Zoom. Please keep it in mind—our projected rollout date is in March.
- ♥ Gero 101 Interactions. This is our 3<sup>rd</sup> semester of this interaction that continues as Zoom sessions. Thirty introductory gerontology students and as many of us as possible—sharing and teaching them about how older folks get by. Do join in if you can. By the end of the semester, I anticipate you will be seeing some of these students in-person in our facility. The schedule for these was emailed last week; please let me know if I should send it again.
- ♥ We still like the idea of group activities that don't center on food. We made ornaments in December. Last week we painted flower pots and we are gearing up for trying our thumbs out at growing herbs. Some photos are included with this newsletter.
- ♥ We have nearly a dozen students who will be doing individual projects before the end of the semester. You will see some online surveys and of course your participation is always valued, and totally voluntary. I am always hoping someone will work on collecting 6 minute walk data, there are food ideas, dance ideas, alternative therapy ideas, and many ideas still being worked out!



## Exercise Reminders *from Linda Paumer*

Debbie wrote about the value of starting a garden to stay green in your eating and environmental management. Of course I would talk about the value of gardening as a physical activity. Beyond its caloric benefits, gardening can also help improve dexterity and strength, muscle mass, aerobic endurance, and functional movement. Digging in the dirt can help enhance bone density as one study by the University of Arkansas revealed. Out of 3,310 women aged 50 years old and older, those who gardened or did yard work at least once a week had higher bone density measurements than those who were sedentary or jogged, walked, or swam or did aerobics. Digging in the dirt is also very therapeutic and there are many mindful, stress reducing aspects of gardening that could make a separate article.

Gardening incorporates all four types of exercise: endurance, strength, flexibility, and balance. It can be done in both mild and vigorous manners. Approach it as a whole body exercise, working all of the major muscle groups--legs, buttocks, back, abdomen, neck, arms, and shoulders

**5 ways to make your gardening more vigorous.** Jeffrey Restuccio, author of two books on gardening for fitness, has a few ideas for making gardening a true workout:

**1. Increase your range of motion.** When raking or hand-weeding try increasing the sweep or arc from your starting position to your ending position. At first, this will take some conscious effort and practice, but it will increase the stretch, caloric expenditures, and the muscles used/

**2. Learn the "lunge and weed."** To do this stance, you want to rest your left arm on your left knee when weeding with your right hand. Alternate this motion if you're left-handed. A tool with a long handle is essential for this one, as you need to be able to dig in the dirt from a crouching position with your knee bent and back muscles straight. Restuccio says that performing gardening tasks in this stance for 30 to 40 minutes can be roughly equivalent to walking or riding a bike in terms of calories burned. Doing it just 10-20 reps provides good flexibility as well as quad strength training.



**3. Use large muscles whenever possible.** Always strive to engage your largest muscles (think quadriceps, buttocks, and torso) when gardening. Transferring the effort from the small muscles of your arms and lower back to the large muscles of your legs and buttocks will help you burn more calories *and* feel less sore the next day.



**4. Remember to balance everything out.** As you garden, pull one arm in as the other moves out, like you would if you were curling dumbbells. This technique can help balance the muscles used, increase your power, and raise your heart rate into the aerobic training zone.

**5. If you want to really commit, think of gardening in terms of repetitions and sets.**

While raking and digging a hole aren't the same as doing a leg press, the concepts are pretty similar. Try grouping raking and cultivating motions first into repetitions and then sets. For example, raking 10 to 15 sweeps briskly can be one set. Rest or continue doing something else for a minute, then continue raking. This type of thinking is most effective for difficult activities like picking up bags of soil, digging, raking, or turning a compost pile.



We had a nice surprise visit from Den Marie & Peter, two very favorite former student interns, now in their 3<sup>rd</sup> semester of the BS nursing program.

### **Dancing for Fitness**

If gardening doesn't work, how about some dancing? One of our interns, Megan, is hoping to start some dance moves on Friday mornings, to help with fall prevention, general fitness, and for fun. Look for that in the emails!

Along that note, I remembered some of you were doing a Kaiser sponsored fall prevention program through the Sacramento Ballet Company. They have resumed Monday afternoon sessions at their studio at 24<sup>th</sup> & N Streets, and also have Zoom classes. For more information, check out their website:

<https://www.sacballet.org/fall-prevention-through-movement-for-seniors/>

## Going ‘Green’ with Plants *By Debbie Lucus, RD, CDE*

I generally think of greens in March, mostly eating more greens, which goes perfectly with a whole food, plant-based diet. We can also save ‘green’ by following this eating style and focus on reducing food waste which makes for a greener planet.

According to the USDA, the United States wastes 30-40% of the food supply. That is in the production and transportation of food as well as how we waste it at home. As we have often discussed in class, the price of food is going up, so we don’t want to waste a morsel. Here are seven ways to save money and waste as we consume a diet that is good for our health, our heart, our environment and our bank accounts!



1. **Only buy fruits and veggies that are in season.** Check out your local Farmers’ markets to see what is available now. Talk to the farmers and find out what to do with the interesting produce of the season. In the winter, that is often lots of greens, but we will be seeing more spring produce very soon. That doesn’t mean you can’t have the produce you like if not in season – just buy frozen instead. This is more economical and limits waste.

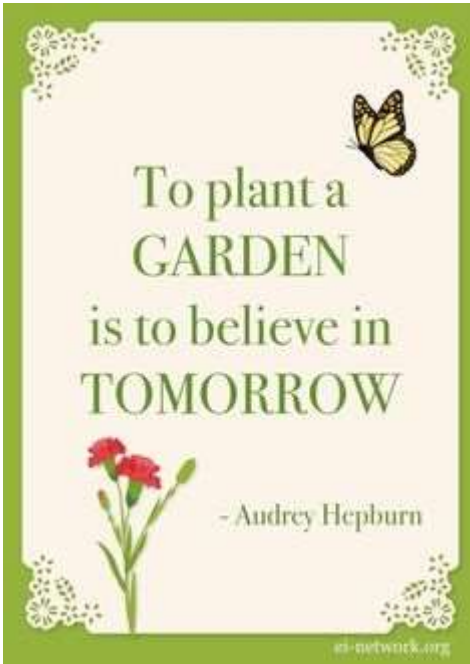
2. **Limit processed plant proteins.** Beans, tofu, lentils, split peas are incredibly economical compared to the faux meat products. Plus they are generally higher in fiber, protein, and nutrients and lower in fat and salt. Not sure how to make tacos without your faux ground meat? Here is a great recipe I like to use. I’ve made the entire line up which is supposed to be similar to the taco bowl at Chipotle. I leave out the oil, and sometimes use cauliflower rice instead of the walnuts to save money and increase my veggies. And a note on not wasting, if you use the canned chipotle peppers, you typically need only one or two, so then freeze the rest for future recipes.

<https://sweetpotatosoul.com/ultimate-vegan-burrito-bowl/#recipe>

3. **Buy in bulk.** You will save a lot of money if you purchase your grains, oats, beans, nuts, and spices in bulk. Store them in jars at home that you have recycled from other uses (ie. your empty peanut butter jar). When you are down to just a few beans or grains in each of your jars, throw them all together for an amazing soup but use your own leftover dried beans instead of a package, and it really does not need the oil! Freeze the leftovers. <https://www.budgetbytes.com/vegetarian-15-bean-soup/>

4. **Repurpose produce scraps.** Cook the greens on your beets, blend up the tops of your carrots for a pesto, make soup from the stalks of your broccoli. Here is a great recipe for Broccoli Stem Soup – I leave out the oil. (Recipe included in “Recipe Corner”). Also, a recipe for making vegetable broth out of your kitchen scraps. <https://www.loveandlemons.com/vegan-broccoli-soup/#wprm-recipe-container-52841>

<https://www.garlicandzest.com/scraps-vegetable-broth/>



5. **Cook at home more.** It does take a little planning, but once you have some go-to recipes that you like, you can always have the ingredients on your shelves to throw together a quick meal, or pull one of your awesome dishes out of the freezer. Here are three quick meals:

Breakfast: Overnight oats

<https://minimalistbaker.com/peanut-butter-overnight-oats/#wprm-recipe-container-35529>

Lunch: Sandwich

<https://www.forksoverknives.com/recipes/vegan-burgers-wraps/vegan-no-tuna-salad-sandwich/>

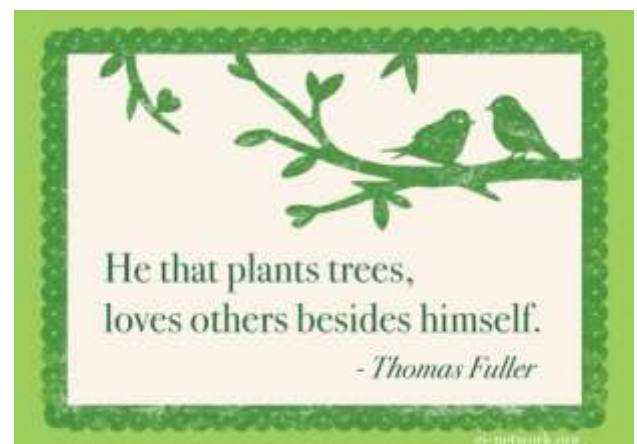
Dinner: Veggie casserole – this recipe makes a lot!!

<https://www.forksoverknives.com/recipes/vegan-baked-stuffed/indian-spiced-cauliflower-potato-easy-vegan-casserole/>

6. **Grow your own food.** Start small with herbs or go big with an entire garden. This saves money and working in the garden is a great sense of accomplishment! You can get a lot of advice from your friends in the Cardiovascular Wellness Program.

7. **Compost.** Instead of throwing away the produce scraps you can't use, try composting. There are numerous ways to compost, but the end result is amazing soil that you can use in your new garden.

<https://edibleventuracounty.ediblecommunities.com/food-thought/composting>



# Finding Our Path As the Seasons Change

By Linda M, Larsen, RN-BC, RYT



Nowadays I can't help but notice the subtle changes of the season here in California. I clarify "in California" as I was in a Women's Conference this weekend and one of the people had flown in from Minnesota the day before. She shared how surprised and joyous she felt upon landing and seeing flowers: she just could not get over the variety of flowers already blooming here. I had to agree, we are blessed here in Sacramento: I've seen camellias, azaleas, daffodils, hyacinths, some tulips (they must have planted bulbs early!), almond and magnolia trees. Personally, I am especially grateful to see the budding leaves on my rose bushes with the promise of blooms to come.

California's transition stage seems to sum up our world right now. The dictionary defines transition as a "change from one state or condition to another." Mindful practices can help us find our path through changes with grace and resilience. Last spring I encouraged you to take a "Sense and Savoring Walk." If you wish to look to nature and observe the signs of spring that are starting to emerge by trying this practice, check out the attached links at the end of this article.

Applying mindfulness can alleviate negative associations with change and transition, as these practices help rewire your brain to cultivate hope, optimism, resilience and purpose. Research has shown that positive relationships are an important factor for building resilience. To help build up resilience this season, I suggest you try a Navy SEAL activity – "Foster Your Team." A SEAL's life is geared toward the team defending each other's back. Make an effort to reconnect with your major relationships that may have been difficult to sustain over the pandemic.

How do you foster your team? Write down the names of at least one or two important relationships in your life. Under each name, write down two things you can do to strengthen your connection with that person or organization in the next week. Maybe give a call, a text, write a quick email practicing gratitude for that person. Start small and simply be more intentional in every minute you get to be in their presence.

Each of us is a social animal to varying degrees in line with how extroverted we are and we all need a tribe. So this spring, let's look forward to a fresh new start with those we care about. I am joining you in reconnecting with my tribe: let's all mindfully begin again, and help ourselves become more resilient so we can more easily weather life's stressful moments, together.

**For more in depth on a Sense and Savor walk or on simply Savoring you can read:**

<https://cardiovascularwellnessprogram.org/> scroll down to April 2021 *Words to the Wise*

[https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/savoring\\_walk](https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/savoring_walk)

Article to read: [bryant\\_veroff\\_concepts-of-savoring.pdf](#)

**For more on building resilience:**

<https://www.mindful.org/5-ways-build-resilience-every-day/>

[https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/evidence\\_mounts\\_that\\_mindfulness\\_breeds\\_resilience](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/evidence_mounts_that_mindfulness_breeds_resilience) (includes a great video by Kristen Neff on compassion for self and others)

# Broccoli Soup

*Don't skip the dill - it's essential for rounding out this soup's savory, cheesy flavor.*

Recipe  
Corner

**Ingredients**      Serves 4

- 1 small yellow onion, diced
- ½ cup chopped celery
- ⅓ cup chopped carrots
- 1 lb. broccoli, stems diced, florets chopped
- 1 small yukon gold potato, diced (1 cup)
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 4 cups vegetable broth
- 3 cups cubed bread, for croutons
- ½ cup raw cashews
- 1½ teaspoons apple cider vinegar
- ½ teaspoon Dijon mustard
- ¼ cup fresh dill
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- ¾ teaspoon sea salt
- freshly ground black pepper
- 2 Tbs nutritional yeast (optional)



## Directions

Heat a large pot or Dutch oven over medium heat. Add the onion, celery, carrots, broccoli stems, salt, and pepper and sauté until softened, adding water to prevent sticking if needed, about 10 minutes. Add the potatoes and garlic and stir, then add the broth and simmer for 20 minutes until the potatoes are soft. Let cool slightly.

Set aside 1 cup of the broccoli florets to roast as a topping for the soup. Steam remaining broccoli florets until tender. Transfer the soup to the blender and add the cashews, apple cider vinegar, and mustard, and blend until creamy. Work in batches, if necessary. Add the steamed broccoli florets, dill, and lemon juice, and pulse until the broccoli is incorporated but still chunky. The soup should be thick; if it's too thick, add 1/2 cup water to thin to your desired consistency. Blend in nutritional yeast if using it.

**Roasting broccoli & croutons:** Preheat the oven to 350°F and line two small baking sheets with parchment paper. Place the reserved broccoli florets and the bread cubes on separate sheets. If desired, toss with a drizzle of olive oil and a pinch of salt. Roast until the bread is crispy and the broccoli is tender and browned around the edges, 10 to 15 minutes.

Season to taste and serve the soup in bowls with the roasted broccoli and croutons on top.

<https://www.loveandlemons.com/vegan-broccoli-soup>