

Cardiovascular Wellness Program Newsletter

Issue 26
September 2024

Comments from Linda

Fall semester is well underway now. Many new faces in our gym –staff, student and client. Activities of course abound and we've got high hopes for everyone newly starting getting underway figuring out their choices for healthy behaviors. Debbie & John are doing great things in our kitchen. We have lost Ivan but Leanne has stepped up and is a huge asset, helping with both our webpage and data management, and also filling in on the exercise floor. She's a big help in the kitchen, too. Our nursing staff has expanded and that bolsters our resources greatly. Cari and Sharon help set goals for everyone and keep us thinking. Rob and Sandy round out our nurse coverage and expand our horizons. Rumbings are going on in the background to expand our financial support through the SSIS development office; we still manage mostly on program donations and the support from clients there is always greatly appreciated. (This is NOT a solicitation but an acknowledgement of gratitude for many prior donations.) Our dean Dianne announced recently she will be stepping aside in her dean's role after this semester—please see her note below.

Regarding client growth: we continue to get referrals from the UC Davis cardiac rehab program and also many folks are coming to us from the Renaissance Society. The greatest referral source continues to be the ripple effect – those coming in recruiting their family, friends and neighbors to join us. Thank you for that! We are truly a wonderful community and everyone's input for activities and programs is valued and appreciated.

Linda



Dianne Hyson, PhD, Dean
College of Social Sciences
and Interdisciplinary Studies

While I am transitioning out of my role as Dean of the College of Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies in January 2025, I am not yet retiring! My hope is that this change will give me more time to work with the Cardiovascular Wellness Program, and I'm looking forward to engaging with everyone while helping the University strengthen its ties to the Sacramento community. With new University leadership continuing to grow our programs and enhance our connections, and with Associate Dean Marya Endriga stepping up after eight years of close partnership, I'm confident that we are in excellent hands. After 13 years in the Dean's Office and administration, I'm hopeful that my experience, history, connections, and knowledge will help support the program's continued success and impact. We have already started looking at grants and funding. Thanks again to everyone who supports this wonderful program!



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Hispanic Heritage Month

Redacted from [here](#) and Medical Interpreting Services Department Newsletter at UC Davis



PreventionForward

Javier López, MD
Medical Director, UC Davis
Cardiac Rehabilitation Program

Hispanic Heritage Month is a month-long celebration of Hispanic and Latino history and culture, giving extra recognition to the many contributions made to the history and culture of the United States, including important advocacy work, vibrant art, popular and traditional foods, and much more from this population.

The Latino presence in America spans centuries, predating Spain's colonization of what is now part of the United States, and they have been an integral part of shaping our nation since the Revolutionary War. Through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and the Treaty of Paris that followed the Mexican-American and Spanish-American wars, the United States gained territories in the Southwest and Puerto Rico. This incorporated the people of this area into the United States and further expanded the presence of Hispanic Americans.

Today, the Latino population in the United States is over 60 million. This makes up 18.9% of the total population and is the largest racial or ethnic group. Latinos continue to help fuel our economy and enrich our nation as entrepreneurs, athletes, artists, entertainers, scientists, public servants, and much more.

What is the difference between Hispanic and Latino?

Hispanic and Latino are the two most used terms to describe Americans with Latin American and Caribbean ancestry. You may often see these terms used interchangeably, but different people understand and use these terms differently. The National Museum of the American Latino uses the term "Latino" to describe the diverse residents of the United States with cultural or ancestral ties to Latin America or the Caribbean. For many, the term "Latino" also creates room for acknowledging Black, Indigenous, Asian, and other heritages on equal terms with European ancestry. The term "Hispanic" is used to signal a connection to Spain or the Spanish language.



When is Hispanic Heritage Month?

Hispanic Heritage Month is celebrated each year from September 15 to October 15. It began as a week-long celebration in 1968 under President Johnson and was expanded to a month by President Reagan 20 years later in 1988. The month-long celebration provides more time to properly recognize the significant contributions Hispanic/Latino Americans have made in the United States. Hispanic Heritage Month begins in the middle of September and ends in the middle of October. The timeframe of this month is significant because many Central American countries celebrate their independence days within these dates, beginning on September 15 with Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. By aligning with these independence dates, Hispanic Heritage Month honors the resilience and determination of the Hispanic.

Explore online resources to learn more about American Latino experiences and how you can join the Hispanic Heritage Month celebration:

- [Latino Culture](#): Learn about the diverse Latino culture and how it has contributed to the society and culture of the United States.
- [Latin Independence Days](#): Learn about the different Independence Days across Latin America and how they are celebrated and honored each year.
- [Latin Food](#): Explore Latino recipes and learn about special events that Latino dishes are a central part of.
- [Famous Latinos](#): Learn about famous Latinos and Latinas who have helped to shape the history and culture of the United States.
- [Latino Art](#): Discover Latino artists who have used their unique experiences to help shape American culture through creative forms.
- [Hispanic Heritage Month Educational Resources](#): Find all the Hispanic Heritage Month resources you need to teach yourself and others about Hispanic heritage and culture

CWP Projects

List compiled by Linda Paumer

This fall semester has just started. Thanks so much for helping students and the program out by interacting with our interns when you can. A recap of some of our projects:

PT-assessments. Thanks so much to those of you who worked with Henry and Dan this summer and did the physical fitness tests with them. They are now compiling that data and will share with us soon.

PT students at Balance Activities. Very exciting to have Javier O. back with us at the Friday 2:30 pm Balance Activities sessions. He has been recruiting several classmates and this group is growing in popularity. Thanks to those of you coming out for the students and don't forget you can join via Zoom if that works out better for you (of course, much better in-person).

Cooking Classes. There is a full semester schedule posted for the nutrition education that Debbie Lucus is graciously sharing with us this semester. She continues with a nutrition presentation on the 1st Tuesday of every month and a cooking demonstration, with John's help, the 3rd Tuesday. Potlucks will be the last Friday of the month. These are great opportunities to share some healthy food and also have a fun social interaction. Bringing a dish is definitely not a requirement, but if you do, keep in mind our whole-food, plant-based goals.

Fall Prevention. Cari and Linda, with help from Leanne and Sharon, will be presenting a "Matter of Balance" class on Fridays in October and November. This is an 8-session class focusing on group discussions and education about fear of falling, with a little exercise thrown in. We have sponsorship from the Agency on Aging Area 4 as part of their county grant; the class is limited to 12 people. If interested, please talk to Linda or put your name on the sign-up sheet on the shelf by the door.

Student Interns. Undergrads are somewhat slowly starting to come back this semester, but we do expect our usual cohort of nutrition, psychology, kinesiology, gerontology and health science students to get more and more involved as the semester unfolds. There is an art project brewing, a project looking at legal issues older adults deal with, and other projects yet to be determined. We will have a new cohort of graduate nutrition students this semester as well who have a "nutrition intervention" assignment. Doesn't that sound like a challenge for us all? We also have nursing students who are learning what a great place to visit we have.

Mah Jong on Fridays. Judy & Freddie have really started something fun here. Friday mornings there is a good group getting some mental exercise doing the various steps of this game. Come check it out! If you don't know how to play, no worries – they'll guide you.



Favorite Fall Plant Proteins

By Debbie Lucas, MS, RD, CDCES

As I write this it is over 100 degrees, and certainly doesn't seem like fall is on its way, but it will be here before we know it. Since protein is on our agenda this month, I thought I'd continue with the theme and write about a few proteins to include in your menus this fall. Plus, you'll find some cooking ideas here that are just a template – not a specific recipe. I need to work on this skill myself – learning to cook by putting together various ingredients but not following a specific recipe.



I do love fall-- as the weather cools, it makes me want to cook more! I don't mind heating up the kitchen and want to make all those fall favorites: soups, stews and apple or pumpkin anything. Fall provides a great opportunity to use the plant-based proteins we talk about a lot in class. These foods align perfectly with the season's harvest of legumes, grains, and vegetables. While they are available year-round, they are the stars in a number of fall favorites.

Lentils are a fantastic source of protein packed with iron and fiber. They can be used in various dishes, from soups to salads. Why not try preparing a *Lentil Pumpkin Stew* by sautéing onions, garlic, and diced carrots, adding cooked lentils, canned pumpkin, low sodium vegetable broth, and a mix of autumn spices like thyme and cinnamon. Simmer until thickened, and serve with crusty bread. Prepare the lentils in advance by boiling 1 cup lentils with 2 cups water and boil for about 30 minutes. Why not double that and then you'll have some extra for other meals or to freeze for the future? If you want to save time, you can find cooked lentils in most stores. You'll find them in the produce section near the tofu.

Chickpeas (AKA garbanzo beans) are another high protein and high fiber versatile option. Roast them for a crunchy snack by tossing with your favorite seasoning and cooking for about 45 minutes at 350 degrees. Watch them closely as they go from too soft to too crunchy in a matter of minutes. You can also blend chickpeas into a creamy *Chickpea Pumpkin Hummus*. Simply combine a can of chickpeas (low sodium, rinsed and drained), a cup of pumpkin puree, tahini, garlic, lemon juice, and spices in a blender. Serve with pita and fresh veggies. That just screams fall!

Quinoa, a quick-cooking, high protein grain, is perfect for salads, stuffing or a tasty side dish. Create a hearty *Quinoa Stuffed Acorn Squash* by baking halved acorn squash and then filling it with a mixture of cooked quinoa, cranberries, walnuts, and a splash of maple syrup. Bake until everything is warmed through. Quinoa is one of the fastest grains to prepare – just boil one part quinoa to two parts water for about 15 minutes. Make extra, so that you might reheat for a tasty breakfast- just add some fruit and cinnamon.

Black beans often make an appearance in fall dishes. You can use canned beans (low sodium preferred) or make your own from scratch. If you have an Instant Pot, that can save a lot of time. If you like chili, try using these in a *Black Bean and Sweet Potato Chili*. Sauté onions, garlic, and bell peppers, then add cubed sweet potatoes, black beans, diced tomatoes, and chili spices (I'm thinking chili powder, cumin, cayenne, garlic and onion powder). Let it simmer until the sweet potatoes are tender.

Mashed beans are a star in *7 Layer Dip* – an awesome appetizer when watching fall football. You can use low sodium canned refried beans or mash up some beans of choice that you have cooked. Spread them on the bottom of Pyrex pan. Try these additional layers: salsa, plant-based cheese &/or homemade cashew cheese, sliced olives, avocado, diced tomatoes, jalapenos. Serve with raw veggies – jicama cut into 'planks' make a fun dipper – or some baked corn tortilla chips.

Pumpkins are not a fall protein food, but certainly something we think about eating this time of year. They, along with other winter squash, are rich in vitamins, minerals, and fiber. They certainly make a good addition to any dishes you make using the protein foods described above. Some suggestions: pumpkin quinoa salad, squash soup with lentils, pumpkin and black bean chili, squash breakfast bowls. Embrace the seasonal bounty with these wholesome plant-based proteins, ensuring your fall meals are not only delicious but also fulfilling and good for you!



Pumpkin Pie Spice

- 3 tablespoons ground cinnamon
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger
- 1 ½ teaspoons ground nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 teaspoon ground allspice
- pinch ground black pepper (< ⅛ teaspoon)

Lime, Chili and Roasted Squash, Quinoa Salad

Servings: 4 servings

Author: [Oh My Veggies](#)

Ingredients

- 1 butternut squash
- salt and pepper to taste
- olive oil
- ¼ cup sunflower seeds
- 1 ½ cups cooked white quinoa
- 1 ½ cups mint and parsley leaves roughly torn
- 1 red chili pepper deseeded and finely chopped
- zest and juice of 2 limes



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400° F. Cut squash into bite sized cubes and place on a large tray and toss with enough olive oil to coat and if desired, season with salt and pepper. Roast for 20 minutes, or until tender and slightly caramelized on the edges. Remove the pan from the oven and leave to cool.
2. Place a small frying pan over a low heat and toast the sunflower seeds, stirring occasionally. Leave to cool.
3. Fluff up the quinoa with a fork, season to taste, and place on a large serving plate. Top with the parsley and mint leaves, or whatever salad greens you like. Place the butternut squash on top, sprinkle with the chili and sunflower seeds. Finally, grate the lime over the top and finish with the juice of the limes.



Pumpkin Pie Smoothie

- 2 cups unsweetened plant milk
- 2 bananas
- 2 dates (to taste)
- 1 Tbs vanilla extract (alcohol free)
- 1 14 oz can pumpkin (not pie filling)
- 1 Tbs pumpkin pie spice
- Ice cubes

Place all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth.



Anxiety: We Got This!

From Sharon Myers, RN, MA

In talking with participants in the Cardiovascular Wellness Program (CWP), many express feelings of being a little anxious or having a general feeling of worry. Having some anxiety is very common and most of us are affected by it at some point in our life. Anxiety is a worry or focus on what may or may not happen in the future. It is driven by the “what ifs” of a situation. The “what ifs” are things that are in the future and are therefore uncertain and difficult to plan for or manage.



It is estimated that 42 million Americans suffer from some type of anxiety disorder (<https://www.mhanational.org/mentalhealthfacts>). And anxiety disorders are continuing to show an upward trend (Goodwin, Weinberger 2020). There are many things going on in the world and in our personal lives that can cause us to feel some anxiety. If you are feeling anxious, it is important to remember that you are not alone; many of us are feeling this way.

According to the latest American Psychological Harris Poll 2024- We are anxious about the following:

- 73% U.S. election
- 79% The economy
- 68 % Keeping ourselves or families safe
- 63% Our health
- 63% Paying bills
- 69% Gun violence
- 63% Keeping identity safe
- 57% Climate change
- 50% Opioid epidemic
- 45% Emerging technologies



One of the ways we can strengthen our ability to manage anxiety is to get better at dealing with uncertainty. It can be especially hard to accept that we can't control everything that happens to ourselves or those we love. However, accepting that uncertainty is a natural and inevitable part of life is a skill we can develop to help reduce our anxiety. Very little in our lives is constant, but despite this fact many of us feel responsible when things don't go well or as expected. Improving our ability to accept that things are uncertain can help us let go of the responsibility to make everything go well all the time. Letting go of things we can't control is a big step in feeling less anxious.

Accepting Uncertainty:

- Explore uncertainty- Ask yourself if x, y or z happens can I cope with that?
- Accept that many things in life are uncertain. Acceptance is about meeting life where it is and moving forward from there.
- Don't assume bad things will happen just because the outcome is uncertain. And be aware that when hard or bad things do happen, many times good things happen unexpectedly too.
- Plan for what you can control, and let go of the rest.
- Reflect on your past ability to get through uncertain times.
- Don't believe everything you think.

The good news is, there are some advantages to facing uncertainty. Having to face uncertainty and having even small successes doing so, gives one improved confidence and self-efficacy. Facing and getting through uncertainly can increase your resiliency, strength, and growth as a person.

Although we may not be able to control uncertainty, we can control how we deal with it and the emotional reactions we choose to have. Using mindfulness techniques such as meditation, changing our negative self-talk, exercising, maintaining social connection with our community, and talking with a therapist are all helpful tools to consider in managing uncertainty and anxiety.

With the current high levels of uncertainty about our health, finances, climate, world leaders, and many other issues, it's possible to strengthen our ability to handle uncertainty and to find strength and a way forward.

The CWP offers many resources for better managing anxiety.

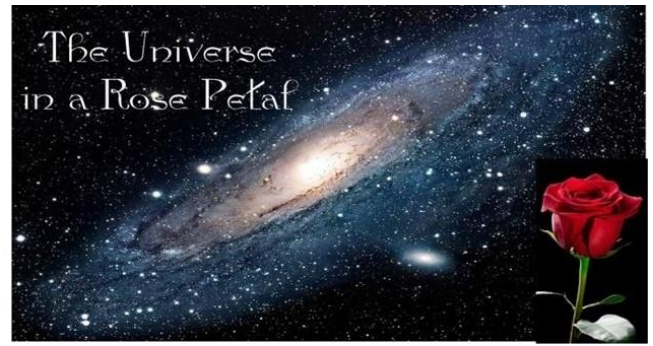
- **CWP You Tube-** Sept 12th, 2024 -- [Lecture on Anxiety and Coping Tools](#):
- **CWP Website:** [Stress Management-Recordings on Meditation](#)- (posted on Linda Larsen's page)
- **Mindfulness Practice with Linda Larsen-** Offered once a month (on zoom and in person). The next class is Sept 26th @ 11:45 am.
- **Tai Chi with Dave-M-T-Th-Fri @ 9:00 am**

The staff in the CWP are also available to talk with you. Please reach out to us if you feel like it would be helpful for you to talk someone about how you are feeling.

Mindful Practices

By Linda M, Larsen, RN-BC, RYT

There is an ancient quote, *Repetitio mater studiorum est*, which means ‘repetition is the mother of all learning.’ The main reason I named the Cardiovascular Wellness Program class *Mindfulness Practice* is because every time you practice something, you strengthen new neural pathways and lead to having skills that are automatic. Skills that you repeat over and over get moved to a different part of the brain where you don’t have to consciously think about executing that skill every time. That’s why during class we *always* practice the deep abdominal or diaphragmatic breath, a body scan, meditation of some kind, and deep relaxation.



Those who have attended my class or read previous articles here have often heard me discuss the many benefits of mindfulness and that the practices I share are evidence-based practices. I offer many types of practices so that ideally each participant can find a couple of mindfulness techniques to practice regularly that resonate with their own personal values and preferences. The only practice that I highly encourage for everyone is the deep abdominal, belly or diaphragmatic breath. This deep exhalation activates the vagus nerve, which stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system—decreasing heart rate, lowering blood pressure, releasing muscular tension and it can even lower emotional reactivity.

Practice is how you build habits. When I attended my Cardiac Yoga training, I received my first in-depth teaching on meditation. The first time I meditated, I could barely sit still and couldn’t believe how random and all over the place my thoughts were. It was hard and I didn’t like it. But I kept doing it because my teacher said that meditation was even more powerful than yoga, and I’ve always liked a “better deal.” Each time was different and gradually it was easier to sit still and (sometimes finally!) return to my focus. Over 15 years later, I meditate every day, and my mind still wanders, but I catch it and return to my focus quicker. This brings me to the crux of the matter; mindfulness is a skill. Mindfulness is a skill none of us are born with: I didn’t have the skill of mindfulness before I began practicing, and I watch myself get better at it every day. Where I really notice this is during the rest of my day: mindfulness has helped me deal with personal health concerns, stressful situations, anger, fears, and even the current election news coverage. I encourage you to start today: you can start small, even 1,2, or 3-5 minutes of a *consistent* meditation practice, 5-7 days week can have an impact on your wellbeing!

“You can’t stop the waves, but you can learn to surf.”

- Jon Kabat-Zinn

For more in depth on Mindfulness Benefits for Health, Stress Management and Anger:

<https://www.mindful.org/how-to-change-your-habits-with-mindfulness/>

<https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2012/01/mindfulness-matters>

<https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/meditation-and-mindfulness-effectiveness-and-safety>

<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2018/04/less-stress-clearer-thoughts-with-mindfulness-meditation/>

<https://mindfulness.com/mindful-living/mindfulness-anger>



Exercise Reminders *from Linda Paumer*

Lower Extremity Fitness

We talk about ‘core integrity’, focusing on the fitness of the muscles around the hips, pelvis and back. The muscles within the feet need lots of integrity too, as they are responsible for supporting the arch, absorbing load and keeping you stable when you walk or run.

These muscles within the foot, known as the foot core, are activated when we walk but become dormant and weak when we sit excessively and also wear narrow, cushioned footwear. Over time, a weak foot core alters your gait and can lead to falls and injuries, such as shin splints. Therefore, anyone who spends time on their feet — such as nurses or restaurant servers, and also people who want to walk (isn’t that everyone?) — could benefit from adding foot strengthening exercises to their routine,

The muscles in the foot are a fascinating, complicated collection. There are 20 different “intrinsic” muscles; these originate and insert with the foot itself. These intrinsic muscles are crucial for fine motor control, stability, and maintaining the structural integrity of the foot. Fitness in these muscles is essential for foot health and overall lower limb biomechanics.

Extrinsic muscles of the foot are those that originate outside the foot, specifically in the lower leg, and insert into the foot. These muscles are primarily responsible for the larger, more powerful movements of the foot and ankle, such as dorsiflexion, plantarflexion, inversion, and eversion. They play a crucial role in locomotion, balance, and overall foot mechanics. There are 12 of them.

Described here are some specific foot exercise, focusing on intrinsic foot strength, with a goal of helping balance and walking activities. Approach them like any resistance exercise – do these 2-3 times/week, focusing on 10-20 reps of each, as tolerated.



FEET EXERCISES

intrinsic Isometrics



Sit in a chair and place all five toes of one foot atop a folded towel. Press the toes down — don't grip — and raise the heel. Hold for 20-30 seconds per side; repeat as tolerated (2-3 sets)

Banded Toe Flexion



Sit in a chair with your feet flat on the ground. Loop a resistance band under your big toe to create tension. Keep the lesser four toes flat on the ground as you lift the big toe, hold for one count, then lower it.

Repetitions: 20 reps per side, then loop the band on the lesser four toes and repeat

Big Toe Mobility



This drill can be performed sitting or standing. Keep the ball of your foot on the ground as you lift your heel up. Press that foot's big toe into the ground for 10 seconds. Now, from the same position, try to lift your big toe for 10 seconds. Repeat with other foot.

Toe Push Off



This drill reinforces proper push off, initiated from the big toe. Stand and place a towel beneath the toes of your right foot. Slowly roll your foot up as you slide the towel behind you, pushing through the ball of your big toe.

Foot Intrinsic Swing



Hold a light weight in your right hand. In a staggered stance, raise your heels slight and keep your weight on the balls of your feet. Swing the weight back and forth like a pendulum to add instability to the movement. Perform the exercise next to a table or chair to help your balance