

# Cardiovascular Wellness Program Newsletter

Issue 29 -  
March 2025

## Comments from Linda

We are at the mid-point of the spring semester and things are humming along very nicely. Our students this semester are interested, interesting and engaged in things. I am enjoying seeing them getting more & more involved. We continue with new people on our client roster, mostly from UC Davis and others from the general community. Welcome everyone!

Our program schedule has adopted a typical routine: Debbie with us twice monthly, getting big help from John with cooking demos the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday. Linda Larsen continues with us once/month and now Sharon and Cari are regular parts of our teaching schedule. Rob rounds out our nursing staff and we are blessed he has recruited Sandy to come over from the Betty Irene Moore nursing program once/month to help out. Thanks! Our two physicians, Dr. Bukkapatnam & Dr. Lopez come when they can and luckily we see them almost monthly. We truly have a rock star staff. One new thing this semester is our former dean, Dianne, stepping away from that chair and taking on a development role that will ultimately help our future. Time will tell!

Everyone's continued involvement is the best thing you can do to help out. Find your niche with our offerings and take good advantage of them, please. We are always open to ideas about classes and activities, so be sure to speak up with things you'd like to try. Do your best to keep active, eat right, and do the things you need to do to take care of yourself and others please. Spring is often the time for new beginnings, yet in our world we are hoping to just keep the wheels in motion; we don't have so much that is new, yet are striving for the mere continuation of good things. *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>

## Included in this issue:

Program Coordinator Notes, Linda Paumer, MA

CWP Projects

Exercise Reminders, Linda Paumer

Nutrition Notes, Debbie Lucas, RD

Recipe Corner

Universe in Rose Petal, Linda Larsen, RN

Special Reports: Types of Lentils



## CWP Projects

The continued interaction of our older adult clients with the younger generation, the Sac State students, is an integral part of our program. Your involvement with the students is always requested (in whatever fashion suits you) and is greatly appreciated.

### Current projects (Spring 2025):

- 1) Lizbeth, our of our gero interns, has fun community art projects for us this semester. Later this month we will be scrapbooking and another idea that might happen is a yard art project -- decorated poles, possible grabbing devices to install in your yard. Lizbeth is on the shy side but her creative skills are ever evident.
- 2) Leanne has been collecting information about elder abuse awareness for her gero project. We look forward to seeing her final compilation of that. Jessica is a 3<sup>rd</sup> year gero year student who has mentioned a pet therapy project this semester and I await final plans for that.
- 3) We have a host of PT students, led by Jasmine, coming in on Friday afternoons for our 2:30 pm balance activities session. Very helpful and greatly appreciated.
- 4) We continue to have student involvement with research students (D201) as well as community nutrition and psychology students. A schedule for sleep habit activities is being created.
- 5) We have two nursing students, Tim & Cassie, with us this semester from a public health class. They will be giving a Tuesday presentation for us and they also are going to lead a journal club discussion for us in April, a bit of a revival of our "Research Says What?" meetings. Should be very worthwhile.
- 6) Several of our clients are participating with me and gero students in both gero 101 and gero 103 service learning. Your input to these students is greatly appreciated.

### Past Projects



In February, Dr. Bukkapatnam went all the way to New Orleans to present our poster on Music and Memory in Older Adults at a neuropsychology meeting - that poster is now on the wall in our space. Anand Mepperla collected sleep tracking data with us two summers ago and is now working on a poster to present at his school in Virginia. Kim Roberts will be presenting a poster in Las Vegas in May that deals with sleep habit data collected with us the past two years – look to see that on the wall soon. These projects perk along in our periphery and we are grateful for the added exposure they create.

*THE SOUNDS OF SPRING*

# Exercise Reminders *from Linda Paumer*



Earlier this month I talked about fitness & function and things about aging. A take home from that was the importance of hip flexor fitness, both strength and flexibility. I thought I would share those notions again.

The hip flexors are the muscles responsible for lifting your knees and bending at the waist. These muscles include the iliopsoas, rectus femoris, and sartorius, among others. Strengthening and stretching the hip flexors can improve posture, prevent injuries, and is essential for maintaining mobility

In our stretching/strength routines, we do many things that help these muscles:

Hip bridges

Leg lifts

Single-leg knee to chest

Supine 4-stretch (foot over knee/knees to chest)

Happy baby!

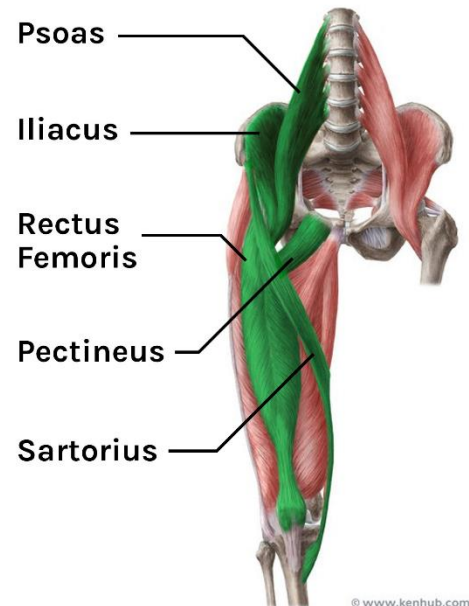
Warrior pose Butterfly stretch

Seated foot over knee

Seated knee lifts

Standing with knee lift

Striding with knee lift



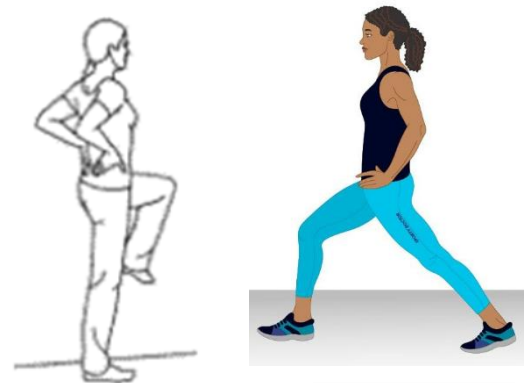
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Usual admonition: if you aren't doing these things with me, please think about your own routines and how you can include some of them.

## Step Length

- The more distance between your legs while walking (i.e., longer step), the greater balance you can achieve.
- Therefore, it is important to improve the ability of your legs to take longer steps by maintaining flexibility in the muscles of your legs.



# Spring into Fresh Produce

by Debbie Lucas, MS, RD, CDCES

I enjoy the changing seasons and one of my favorites is the change from winter to spring. I love it when the hills around my house turn green instead of the usual brown we see all summer. It is so fun to see the lambs jumping around on the farms and I've even seen a few ponies. Spring offers a diverse array of fresh, nutrient-packed produce that we may not have seen since last year and are perfect for our plant-forward lifestyles. As the weather warms, farmers' markets and grocery stores brim with an abundance of seasonal fruits and vegetables, making it an ideal time to incorporate more plants into our meals. If you aren't fully on board with the whole food, plant-based diet, this is the perfect time to try to expand your meal line-up. Here are some spring standouts:



**Asparagus:** High in fiber, vitamin K, and antioxidants. It can be roasted, grilled, or added to salads and soups. You want to buy it with tight heads and you'll need to cut off the woody ends. Here is a fun pasta recipe using asparagus: <https://blog.fatfreevegan.com/2020/04/vegan-asparagus-and-mushroom-pasta.html>

**Spinach:** Rich in iron, folate, and vitamins A, C, and K. It's a versatile green for smoothies, salads, soups and stir-fries. I try to throw it (or any other green for that matter) into everything I make, and if I'm reheating a dish, I add spinach to my bowl before I add the food I'm heating. You can use spinach instead of basil in your pesto. This recipe uses pecans instead of those expensive pine nuts and is oil and dairy free. <https://thevegan8.com/spinach-pea-pesto-2/>

**Artichokes:** You can tell these are in season because they are on sale in the grocery store. They are a great source of fiber, potassium, and antioxidants. They can be steamed, grilled, or turned into dips like vegan artichoke and spinach dip. If your question is 'what do I dip my artichoke in?', you can try cashew cream or hummus or balsamic vinaigrette. If I have any vegan yogurt around, I'll add a little curry powder to it and use that.

**Peas:** These include sweet green peas and snap peas which add a natural sweetness and crunch to dishes, while also providing protein, fiber, and vitamins A and C. You can eat peas on their own, in soups and stews, or blend them up into various dips. I like to dip snap peas into hummus. You can try pea-mole (a recipe we have at CWP) or try this green hummus recipe. <https://www.forksoverknives.com/recipes/vegan-sauces-condiments/green-pea-hummus-with-fresh-mint/>

**Strawberries:** These haven't hit the produce stands in Placer County yet, but we'll be seeing them soon. Full of antioxidants and vitamin C, they can be enjoyed fresh, added to smoothies, or used in desserts. I like to blend frozen strawberries with frozen bananas for my 'nice cream'. I'm anxious to try this strawberry salad recipe: <https://www.forksoverknives.com/recipes/vegan-salads-sides/strawberry-mint-salad-with-easy-maple-dijon-dressing/>

**Citrus fruits:** You can tell by the big bowls filled with citrus at CWP, these fruits are in season. Thank you to everyone who shares the bounty with us! Full of vitamin C, fiber and potassium



among other nutrients, these are a nutrition powerhouse. What to do with the plethora of citrus? You can juice them and then freeze the juice in ice cube trays to have for future citrus fruit needs. My ice cube trays hold about 2 Tablespoons, which is perfect for a lot of recipes. Be sure to zest those fruits first. Citrus zest is a great way to brighten up your recipes. Use a microplane to zest the fruit, then lay the zest out on a piece of parchment and put in freezer. Once frozen, put it into a resealable bag for future use.

**Kale, collards, chard:** These generally grow well in winter and into the cool spring temperatures (I can attest to this from my winter garden). They are hearty, versatile and full of nutrients including vitamins A, C and K, fiber, folate, iron, and calcium. They are full of nitrates which turn into nitric oxide when we chew them, which is a powerful vasodilator (expand our blood vessels). Eat as many greens as you can. They are perfect for soups, stews, just steamed and eaten on their own. John and I had a “Green Food Party” demonstration on 3/18. Linda sent out the recipes if you’d like to expand your repertoire. This recipe with greens (which I can only find on YouTube) was what got me into savory oatmeal:

<https://www.youtube.com/@JaneEsselstyn/search?query=oats>

These spring fruits and vegetables not only bring color and flavor to our whole food, plant-based diets but also offer a wide range of health benefits, making them essential ingredients in any meal plan. Enjoying the season's bounty ensures that your meals are fresh, flavorful, and packed with nutrients!



*"My trick for enjoying kale? I put in blueberries, a banana, a scoop of vanilla ice cream and ice. Then I throw the kale in the trash and blend."*



# Asparagus and Mushroom Pasta

*Feel free to use your choice of pasta,*

Recipe  
Corner

## Ingredients

- 8 ounces pasta rotini (preferred)
- 1 ½ lbs asparagus
- 8 ounces baby bella or regular mushrooms sliced
- 4 cloves garlic pressed or minced
- 1 tsp vegetable bouillon
- 2 tsp dried basil
- 1-2 Tbs nutritional yeast
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 pinch red pepper flakes
- ½ cup soymilk or other unsweetened plant milk
- 2 tsp cornstarch (or potato starch or arrowroot)

## Optional

- 1 cup soy curls (dry)
- 1 tsp vegetable bouillon



**To Make Almond Parmesan** Process ¼ cup nutritional yeast + ⅓ cup whole raw almonds in a blender or food processor until crumbly. Store in refrigerator.

## Directions (4 servings)

1. Boil the pasta according to package instructions. Just before it's done, scoop out and reserve 1½ cup of the pasta water. Drain pasta and return to pan.
2. While pasta is cooking, discard the ends, and then cut the asparagus into pieces ~1 ½ -2 inch long.
3. Cook the asparagus in large, covered skillet 1-2 minutes. Add ¼ cup water and quickly cover. Steam for 2 minutes. Add the mushrooms with a splash of water if it seems dry. Cover & cook for ~ 2 minutes or until mushrooms exude their juices. Add the garlic, and cook for 1-2 minutes more.
4. Add the vegetables to the pasta and combine well. Keep warm on low heat. Put 1 cup of the pasta water into a small saucepan. Place it over medium high heat and add the bouillon, basil, nutritional yeast, garlic powder, and red pepper. As it comes to a boil, whisk together the milk and starch and add to the saucepan. Cook, stirring, until it boils and thickens slightly. Pour it over the pasta and vegetables, and stir to coat. If it seems dry, add a little of the remaining pasta water. Season to taste.

**Optional Soy Curls.** Place soy curls and bouillon in a small saucepan and cover with water. Bring to a boil and simmer until soy curls are tender, about 5 minutes. Drain well and press excess water out of soy curls. Add to the pasta just before serving.

## Options:

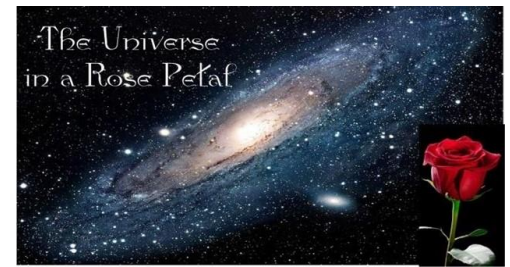
- Instead of soy curls, add 1 cup cooked chickpeas or frozen (thawed) green peas.
- Toss a few leaves of fresh basil into pasta just before serving.
- Sprinkle with Almond Parmesan just before serving.

<https://blog.fatfreevegan.com/2020/04/vegan-asparagus-and-mushroom-pasta.html>

# Mindful Self Compassion and Love

By Linda M, Larsen, RN-BC, RYT

Our intention this month is to use Mindful Self-Compassion.  
There are three Components of Mindful Self-Compassion:



- Mindfulness – “Paying attention to our present moment experiences with openness and curiosity and a willingness to be with what is” – Diana Winston
- Loving-kindness - Treating yourself with care & loving understanding. When in any pain, actively soothing & comforting oneself. Loving-kindness includes a desire to ease one’s own suffering = compassion vs. empathy.
- Common Humanity – Recognizing that one’s own experience is part of the larger human experience and recognize that life is imperfect *for everyone*.

Consider trying a 5-Minute Meditation to Open Your Heart and practice self-compassion:

Breathe in. Breathe out.

Breathe in. Breathe out.

Breathe in and breathe out and just let go of all that stuff that is stuck inside you.

This is a special day and we don’t want to carry any old stuff with us.

Put one hand on your heart and one hand on your belly. And as you breathe quietly, notice how comforting that feels. Be aware that you can do this anytime and anywhere and take care of yourself.

Notice how your body responds to the physical touch, the warmth of your hands. Perhaps, how you can make yourself feel better with simple gestures and your own breath. How it calms you down. It can give you a feeling of safety. You are here for yourself. And as you release situations you allow your full attention to come into this day, this hour, this time. Turn your full attention to this wonderful, wonderful moment.

Let your heart open and make room for all the good of the Universe to come in.

Remember, meditation is merely a way of you getting in touch with [your own inner guidance](#). While we are always connected with this guidance as we go about our day, it is easier for us to consciously connect when we sit quietly and listen.

**All is well.**

“To love is to risk not being loved in return. To hope is to risk pain. To try is to risk failure, but risks must be taken, because the greatest hazard in life is to risk nothing.”

- Leo Buscaglia, Living, Loving, and Learning (1985)



## Types of Lentils and their Uses!

*Ananyaa Arvind is one of our student interns, starting with us in high school and now a college graduate. She comes in from time to time while working on her med school application-most recently she brought us in well-received idly (Indian rice cakes). I asked her to share some knowledge about the so many types of lentils used and she worked this up. Thank you Ananyaa!*



Lentils are a powerhouse of nutrition and an essential ingredient in cuisines worldwide. From hearty soups to vibrant salads, these tiny legumes are packed with protein, fiber, and rich vitamins and minerals. With a variety of shapes, sizes, and colors, each type brings its unique texture and flavor to the table. We'll look at the different types of lentils and their uses!

**Mung Lentils.** These lentils can come in three ways: Green Gram Beans, Split Green Gram, and split. Whole beans can be sprouted and then used in curries or soups. The **sprouted** beans can also be eaten raw or as a base in salad. You can also use this to make an egg substitute (this is actually what Just Egg uses + a few more ingredients :)). It also has a generally low glycemic index, which means that it can help stabilize blood sugar levels.



Here is a recipe: <https://www.theedgyveg.com/2021/07/05/mung-bean-egg-recipe/>  
Debbie also shared a line for an egg substitute that has no oil – check it out too!  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7rAfnOiKaiM>

**Masoor Dal (Red Split Lentils)** These are the most common lentils that you find in grocery stores! The ones found in grocery stores are often the WHOLE version (so they are brown) but the split version of them is red! These are very versatile and can be used without soaking. The lentils cook incredibly quickly and are often used to make dals (Indian curries). This lentil is also said to have skincare benefits, as it can reduce free radicals and reduce signs of aging.



Here is a recipe to make with Masoor Dal:  
<https://www.indianhealthyrecipes.com/masoor-dal-recipe/>

**Toor Dal (Yellow Split Pigeon Peas)** This is the most common lentil to make dal with and the most common lentil used in Indian cooking. This lentil is also used to make sambar, which is a spicy and tangy South Indian lentil soup that is eaten with rice. This dal is an excellent source of protein and is low in saturated fat and cholesterol, making it a heart-healthy food choice.



Here is a sambar recipe: <https://www.rachelgurjar.com/how-to-make-south-indian-sambar/>



**Chana Dal (Split Bengal Gram):** Belonging to the chickpea family, Bengal Gram is believed to have been one of the earliest legumes ever cultivated. With its wholesome nutty flavor and earthy texture, Bengal Gram dal or Chana dal is a well-loved cereal across India's rich palette of cuisine. You can not only use it to make dals, but also Puran Poli, a well-loved flatbread from India.



Here is a recipe: <https://hebbarskitchen.com/puran-poli-recipe-make-pooran-poli/>

As you can see, there are many types of lentils and their uses are different! Try out these recipes and hopefully you too will learn to love lentils.

Resources:

<https://ministryofcurry.com/indian-pulses/>

<https://www.myweekendkitchen.in/types-of-lentils-pulses-english-hindi/>

<https://organicindia.com/blogs/recipe/bengal-gram-the-power-packed-tasty-protein#:~:text=With%20its%20rich%20fibre%20content,ensuring%20regular%20elimination%20and%20detoxification>

