

# LIVE WELL WORK WELL

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## Positive Psychological Well-Being Can Improve Overall Heart Health

Maintaining positive thoughts and feelings through intervention programs can help patients achieve better overall outcomes when it comes to their cardiovascular health, according to a review paper published in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*.

"We addressed how social environment, psychological well-being and the effectiveness of intervention strategies can help strengthen a patient's outlook," said Darwin R. Labarthe, MD, MPH, PhD, professor of Preventive Medicine at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine and the reviews lead author. "We focused on whether psychological well-being can be consistently related with a reduced risk of heart disease."

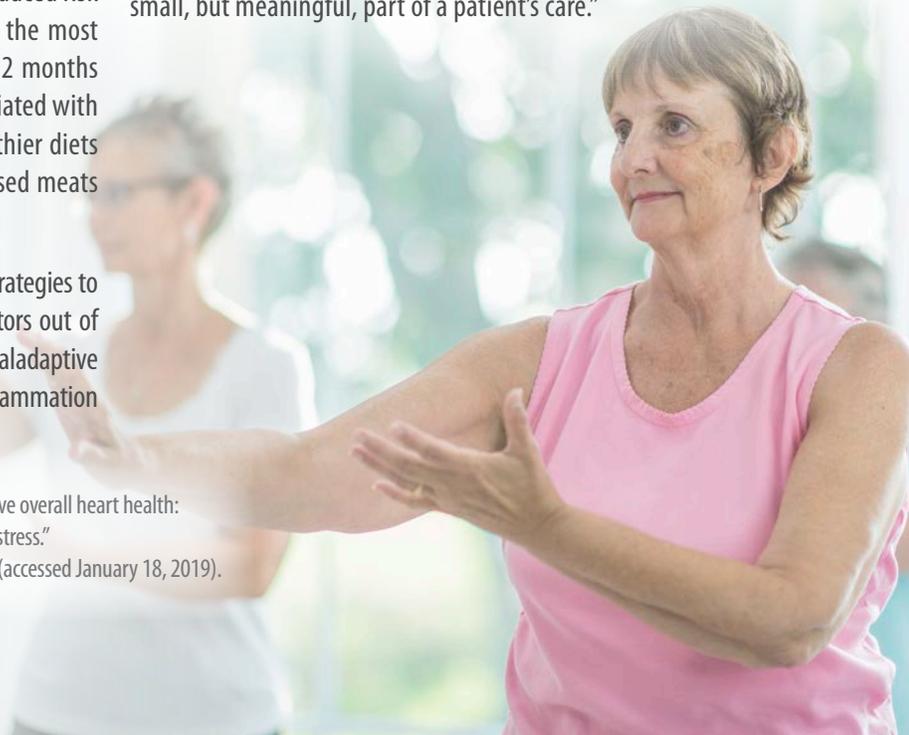
In this review, the authors looked at a growing body of research to examine whether psychological well-being might lead to reduced risk of heart disease. In the four health behavior components, the most optimistic patients were less likely to be current smokers 12 months later, and high levels of psychological well-being were associated with regular physical activity. Optimistic patients sustained healthier diets by consuming more fruits and vegetables and fewer processed meats and sweets, leading patients to maintain a healthy BMI.

"Optimists persevere by using problem-solving and planning strategies to manage stressors," Labarthe said. "If others are faced with factors out of their control, they begin to shift their goals and use potentially maladaptive coping strategies, which would ultimately result in raising inflammation levels and less favorable overall heart health."

The authors said intervention programs may strengthen psychological well-being. Mindfulness programs have been shown to improve anxiety, quality of life, smoking cessation, healthy eating, and more. Yoga and tai chi, often incorporated in mindfulness-based interventions, have improved outcomes in heart failure patients and lowered blood pressure. Life purpose programs for palliative care patients have led to improvements in mental health, distress from physical symptoms, and overall well-being.

"It may seem challenging to help patients modify psychological well-being in the face of a new medical diagnosis, but these events can represent a 'teachable moment,'" Labarthe said. "Just having patient-centered discussions surrounding sources of psychological well-being and information about specific activities to promote well-being are a small, but meaningful, part of a patient's care."

American College of Cardiology. "Positive psychological well-being can improve overall heart health: High levels of optimism may lead to a better diet, regular exercise and lower stress." ScienceDaily. [www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/09/180910142500.htm](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/09/180910142500.htm) (accessed January 18, 2019).



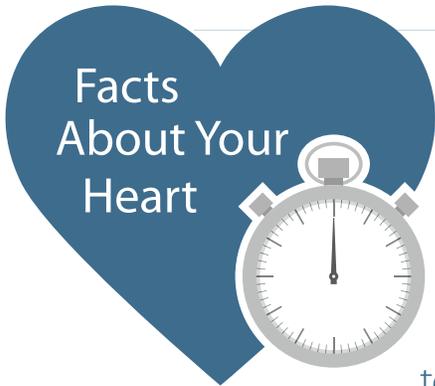
# How Mindfulness Training Affects Health

Carnegie Mellon University's associate professor of psychology, J. David Creswell, and his graduate student Emily K. Lindsay have developed a model suggesting that mindfulness influences health via stress reduction pathways.

Creswell and Lindsay highlight a body of work that depicts the biological mechanisms of mindfulness training and its effects on stress reduction. Their findings show that excessive activation of certain biologic stress responses increases the risk of diseases impacted by stress (like depression, HIV and heart disease). Mindfulness training may help regulate the physical stress response by lessening an individual's experience during stress, ultimately reducing the risk and severity of stress-related diseases.

Creswell believes by understanding how mindfulness training affects different diseases and disorders, researchers will be able to develop better interventions, understand effective treatments, and identify people most likely to benefit from mindfulness training.

Carnegie Mellon University. "How mindfulness training affects health." ScienceDaily. [www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2015/02/150212183511.htm](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2015/02/150212183511.htm) (accessed January 28, 2019).



Facts  
About Your  
Heart



Over 750,000  
Americans die  
each year due  
to heart disease.

That's one death every 40 seconds.

## Keep Your Heart Healthy Through Exercise

Did you know that exercising regularly can help you fight off chronic conditions and diseases? Exercise can help control your blood pressure, blood sugar, and weight; raise your "good" cholesterol; and prevent diseases such as cancer, Type 2 diabetes, and heart disease. According to the American Heart Association, you should do these three exercises to improve your heart health:

- 1. Aerobic activity:** Get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity (e.g., briskly walking) or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity (e.g., running) every week.
- 2. Muscle strengthening:** Incorporate muscle-strengthening exercises at least two days a week. For the purposes of general training, focus on two to three upper body and lower body exercises. Abdominal exercises are an important part of strength training as well.
- 3. Flexibility training:** Flexibility training is important, but is frequently neglected, resulting in increased tightness as you age and become less active.



# Difficult People Have Most to Gain from Practicing Compassion

The most disagreeable individuals, who are also the least likely to be kind, can benefit most from behaving more compassionately, a York University study has found.

More than 640 people who were mildly depressed took part in the study, which tracked the results of online compassion training. Researchers asked the participants, who were on average in their mid-30s, to take part in one of three online compassion intervention exercises, including a control condition. They were asked to complete their exercise and report back via an online platform every other day for three weeks.

Two months later, disagreeable participants who performed acts of kindness in close relationships showed the greatest reductions in depression and greatest increases in life satisfaction. "Implementing these new [behaviors] might have left them feeling affirmed and liked in their close social circle. This might have been the anti-depressant ingredient in this group," said lead author Myriam Mongrain, Professor of Psychology in York's Faculty of Health.

Mongrain adds that the findings are particularly noteworthy given that the interventions were administered online and only required 10-15 minutes every other day. In other words, it was easy to implement, could be administered worldwide, and had profound effects for some individuals.

"It's like at the end of the story of the Grinch," says Mongrain. "When he took people in they said his heart grew three sizes bigger, and he also became happy. You can't be an island unto yourself. Sometimes those who are hostile say they don't need people, but at the end of the day, it does affect mood."

York University. "Difficult people have most to gain from practicing compassion: Study shows acts of kindness can reduce depression in disagreeable individuals." ScienceDaily. [www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/09/180919111507.htm](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/09/180919111507.htm) (accessed January 16, 2019).



## February Recipe Gingery Quinoa with Green Beans

- 1 cup quinoa
- 1 ½ cups water or broth
- 2 cups green beans
- 2 ½ Tbsp. lemon juice
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 Tbsp. sesame oil
- 2 Tbsp. soy sauce
- ¼ tsp. ground ginger



Toast the quinoa in a dry skillet over medium heat, stirring constantly, for about 3 minutes, then move to a medium pot and add water or broth. Bring to a boil, then let simmer until all of the liquid is absorbed and quinoa is tender (10-20 minutes). Set aside and leave uncovered to cool.

While quinoa is cooling, microwave the green beans until just tender. Rinse in cold water to stop the cooking process. In a large bowl, combine the quinoa, olive oil or cooking oil, sesame oil, green beans, lemon juice, soy sauce, and ground ginger. Stir well. Season with salt and pepper. Serve at room temperature.

Yield: 6 servings. Each serving provides: Calories- 239, Carbs- 33g, Protein- 7g, Fat-9g, Dietary Fiber 6g, Saturated Fat 1g, Sodium 2486mg, Total Sugars 2g

This is for informational purposes only and is not intended as medical advice. For further information, please consult a medical professional.

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