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The multitalented
Neil Patrick Harris
swaps TV for the stage

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Stage Might

“Suit up!” is one of the catchphrases **Neil Patrick Harris’** *How I Met Your Mother* character is known for. And that’s exactly what Harris has done to prep for his switch from starring in one of TV’s most popular shows to premiering in one of the hottest shows on Broadway. Harris worked hard for his new role and is in the best shape of his life—which is especially good for keeping up with the two 3-year-olds who are at the center of his world.

Clock Wise

Women have long heard about their biological clock and the relationship between age and having a baby (yes, there is one). But recent research shows it’s not as cut and dried as you might think. We talk to fertility experts to dispel common myths and set the record straight.



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“
THE KIDS HAVE A LOT OF ENERGY, BUT IT’S CALMING ENERGY.
”



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IN EVERY ISSUE

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EDITOR’S NOTE

A new way to interact with our magazine

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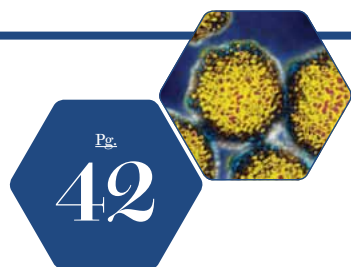
TAKE 10

Regina Hall is having a moment. The actor talks about 40 being the new 30, how her parents’ health ultimately pushed her to shape up, and more.

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WEBMD CHECKUP

HEALTH HIGHLIGHTS: It's Men's Health Month. Get expert tips to improve your prostate health. • **BY THE NUMBERS:** We take a closer look at mental health. • **HEALTH CHECK:** Do you get enough zzz's every night? Take our sleep-smarts quiz to see how good your bedtime habits are.

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When I first became a mom, the advice I got most often was to enjoy time with my kids because it flies by. At a time when the nights could seem excruciatingly longer than some of the days, I had a hard time believing that. But then I blinked and 13 years went by and my oldest child is a teen.

Now, I count the number of weekends and the number of spring breaks we have when we are all together as a family and I understand what everyone meant. And, like so many things in life, it's the quality of the time we spend together, not the quantity, that matters.

This month's cover star, **Neil Patrick Harris**, talks to *WebMD Magazine* about balancing it all as he stars as *Hedwig* on Broadway while raising two 3-year-olds. We also talk to reporter **Lisa Ling**, who manages her career while raising a toddler by alternating immersive periods of work and time with her daughter. There's truly no right or wrong way to balance it all. As Harris says, you just have to find a way to make it work for your family.

In the end, it's not about the number of minutes but the memorable moments—and I hope you enjoy making some with your family this summer.

Kristy Hammam
Editor in Chief
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"I love this magazine; not only is it full of a variety of information, it is information I can trust. It has helped me get my husband's allergies under control, given my family useful tips for going 'green' at home, helped with questions I should be asking my doctor. I find something useful in every issue!"—vbindac, iTunes review

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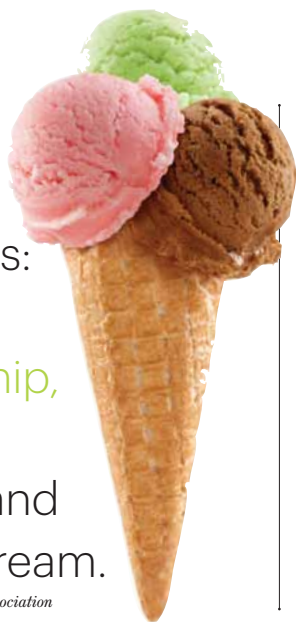
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HOT TOPICS!

FACTS AND NEWS YOU CAN USE

Americans' favorite ice cream flavors: vanilla, mint chocolate chip, chocolate, strawberry, and cookies 'n' cream.



Source: International Dairy Foods Association

UTAH has the lowest smoking rate (12.2%); Kentucky has the highest (30.2%).

Source: Gallup

3–4 million cats and dogs are adopted from animal shelters each year.

Source: The Humane Society of the United States



72% of households have a grill, and men use it more than women.

Source: Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association



Percentage of Internet-using adults who searched online in the past year for others who share the same health issues

Source: Pew Research Center

Adults ages 50 and older don't always stay close to home. On average, they take about six overnight trips each year.

Source: AARP



It's summer camp season!

The top food options camps offer: vegetarian (77.5%), healthy snacks (72.4%), salad bar (66.6%), gluten-free (58.2%), and peanut-free/soy nut butter (57.2%)

Source: American Camp Association

The number of balls used in the longest match at Wimbledon. The 2010 match lasted 11 hours and 5 minutes.

Source: Wimbledon





Sleep Talk

Can't sleep? A few sessions with a psychologist could improve your slumber and lower your health care costs. In a study of adults with insomnia, more than 85% of those who completed three or more sleep-focused psychology sessions were able to nod off faster and stay asleep longer. Six months later, those who'd had therapy spent significantly less on health care and had fewer doctor visits compared with the six months before treatment. The weekly psychology sessions included relaxation exercises and education on topics such as things to avoid two hours before bedtime (like exercise, heavy meals, and smoking).

Source: Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine

June
is the
only month
this year
with **Friday**
the 13th.



STATE OF PLAY

North Dakotans are the happiest Americans, says a 2013 Gallup poll. The Peace Garden State bested Hawaii, which had held the No. 1 spot for four years but moved down to eighth place. Well-being scores are based on life outlook, emotional health, work environment, physical health, healthy habits, and access to necessities. South Dakota and Nebraska took second and third place, while West Virginia was in last place for the fifth straight year.

Source: Gallup



STAND UP

Feeling low? Stand up! Women who sit seven hours or more each day are more likely to have depression symptoms than those who sit four hours or less, a study says. Researchers suggest that the lack of interaction with the environment that comes with sitting for long stretches may contribute to depression. Excessive sitting can also limit the activity of endorphins (feel-good chemicals in the brain) and may reduce blood flow to parts of the brain that control emotions.

Source: American Journal of Preventive Medicine

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Hot Hits

What's trending on WebMD.com right now*

Best foods to fuel a workout

What is medical marijuana?

Types of thyroid problems

What makes you gassy?

Common skin conditions

What does vitamin D do?

Why do my eyes twitch?

How to stop snoring

What causes ovarian cysts?

Foods for healthy hair

*as of April 1, 2014



Babble On

“Aren’t you cute? Yes, you are!” We all do it: raise our pitch and elongate our words when we talk to babies. Don’t feel silly. Baby talk may help infants learn language, according to a study of 1-year-olds. Babies whose parents spoke to them in made-for-baby speech showed more signs of language development than tykes whose parents used standard speech with them. The babies babbled more—a precursor to talking—at a year and had larger vocabularies at age 2 than their peers.

Source: Developmental Science



MUG SHOT

Lots of people grab a coffee for a jolt of energy before cramming for a test, but having a cup after studying might help, too. In an experiment, people who took a 200-milligram caffeine pill after studying a series of images had better recall of the images the next day than those who took a placebo pill. Researchers believe the caffeine helped consolidate memory after the study session. A cup of coffee has 100 to 200 milligrams of caffeine.

Source: Nature Neuroscience

CHILDREN ARE USUALLY ABLE TO FLOSS EFFECTIVELY BY AGE 10 OR 11.

Source: American Dental Association



Americans in Vermont, Montana, **Hawaii**, and Alaska were most likely to report having exercised three or more days in a week for at least 30 minutes.

Source: Gallup

JUMP START



I love health because it is fascinating, evolving, often surprising, always interesting. But it can be confounding, too. It has shades of gray and even uncertainty where you might expect black and white. A few health headlines of late: Coffee is good for you—or maybe not. Naps are a great way to catch up on lost sleep—or a really bad idea. That glass of wine you just poured? You’ll find all kinds of opinions around that. The point is that health depends—on all kinds of things.

I thought about this while working on our women’s fertility story (page 32). A popular headline goes along the lines of “Time’s running out! Hurry, hurry, or you’ll miss out on a baby.” But the real story about conception involves a whole bunch of “it depends”—your age is just one piece of the puzzle. Your family (especially your mom), your health habits, your stress level, even your partner may be more crucial factors.

We can’t do much about hysterical headline writers. But we can set the record straight, or give you the information you need to understand your health right now. These are the stories we love to tell at WebMD.

Colleen

Colleen Paretty
Editorial Director
colleen@webmd.com

PERSONAL BEST

HEALTHY
START

Alison Sweeney

THE ACTOR AND AUTHOR SHARES HER HEALTHY LIVING TIPS



Skin Smarts

"The most important thing is sunscreen—I use Coppertone Sport—because I burn easily even on cloudy days. We also need to use the right moisturizer for our skin and the time of year."

*Sweeney's second novel, **Scared Scriptless**, arrives in bookstores June 3.*



Pantry Picks

"I keep eggs for breakfast or dinner and for cooking and baking, and I keep tons of fruits and vegetables for cooking and eating—cantaloupe, blueberries, strawberries, and bell peppers."



Trailer Stash

"There's always oatmeal or steel-cut oats. I also keep different flavored waters. I make a trail mix with raw almonds, dark chocolate, dried blueberries, cranberries, and sunflower seeds."



Makeup Musts

"Lip gloss! I like lots of different kinds, and I think Chanel has beautiful colors. I like a black pencil eyeliner to get that nice line around the eye without looking like I'm using too much makeup. I use Covergirl Perfect Blend. Oh, and I keep an eyelash curler, too."

"Remember that your health applies to any goal you're striving to attain."



Fitness Fix

"I do as much cardio as I can during the week—I shoot for five days. Because of my schedule, I don't always make that goal, but I try. I also take spinning classes. If there's something in my routine I don't like, I'll change it, because I don't want to do something I don't enjoy."

Alison Sweeney can be in several places at once and make it look easy. Take her two TV shows. She wrapped her 12th consecutive season as host of NBC's *The Biggest Loser* early in February. And after 21 years as troublemaker Sami Brady on the popular NBC daytime soap *Days of Our Lives*, she's leaving at the end of November. She's been on the set of both shows at the same time for seven years while honing her skills as a producer, director, and author. Now 37 and a mom of two, she looks forward to the launch this month of her second novel, *Scared Scriptless*, on the heels of last year's fiction debut, *The Star Attraction*. Sweeney reveals how she strives to be the biggest winner at living a healthy life.—Stephanie Stephens



Road Rules

"I make sure I get plenty of water when flying to prevent dehydration, and I supplement with vitamin C. And I work out when I get where I'm going; it helps put me into the right time zone."

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: JULICHKA/GETTY IMAGES; CHICTYPE/GETTY IMAGES; NINA SHANNON/GETTY IMAGES; CARLOS GAWRONSKI/GETTY IMAGES



WebMD[®] Allergy

Take Control of Your Allergies.

Based on the allergies you have, the free WebMD Allergy app for iPhone will help you prepare for each day with a personalized allergy and weather forecast along with doctor-approved tips that can be customized to your and your family's specific allergies.

The WebMD Allergy app helps you to control your allergy symptoms by showing you the allergy levels in your area before you start your day. Whenever. Wherever.



Timely Alerts

One of the keys to managing allergies is knowing when your triggers will be at their highest. WebMD Allergy makes it easy through customizable notifications based on your allergies. With the ability to create alerts based on the severity of the allergy forecast, you have complete control.

Allergy Forecast

The WebMD Allergy app delivers up-to-date allergy information from Accuweather based on your location. Traveling? You can look up the allergy forecast in your destination and even save locations that you frequent.

Allergy 101

Want to learn 12 natural ways to defeat allergies? Or maybe you're not sure how to keep your home allergy-free? WebMD Allergy can help you figure it out! Browse through WebMD's rich library of allergy content that's been broken out into 7 categories: Outdoor, Indoor, Skin, Drug, Food, Insect Bites or Stings, and Latex. Or use search to find exactly what you're looking for.

Personalized Content

Based on the allergies you select, the WebMD Allergy app will give you tips on how to best manage those allergies. Have kids with allergies? You can add them to your app, too! Manage your entire family's allergies from one place, anytime, anywhere.



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QUIZZES



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Lean In

Health and happiness are always within reach

LIVING HEALTHY



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EXPERT TIP

"People often criticize themselves for being disorganized. Having clutter is part of being human and doesn't make you a bad person."—**Melva Green, MD, MBA, MPH**

ON THE FLY

We pound the pavement to get expert answers to your pressing health questions

Photograph by Isaac Lane Koval

Want to be the next WebMD on the Street star? Tweet us your health issues at @WebMD. We might come to your city!

LIVING HEALTHY

SODA SMARTS

"Water is your best choice for hydration, and I include tea and coffee under the 'water' umbrella. Up to three cups a day is as hydrating as water. Even with cream and sugar (go easy on both) coffee is a better option than soda. Both coffee and tea contain plant compounds credited with fighting disease and promoting longevity. You won't find any such benefits attributed to soda."



David Grotto, RD
president, Nutrition Housecall consulting firm, and author of *The Best Things You Can Eat*

DAUGHTER DYNAMICS

"You're right: Your relationship with your daughter will change. So, as best you can, embrace it. Give her space to grow while also letting her know you're there for her. And make the most of the time the two of you have. Try creating a ritual you do together. It could be something as simple as sitting with her at bedtime to chat on the nights you're home. You might also stay in touch through texting—not instead of having time together, but as a way to extend that time."



Leslie Becker-Phelps, PhD
psychologist and author of WebMD's *Art of Relationships* blog

WEBMD ON THE STREET

Lance Kreiter

Vice president of licensing and merchandising, 41
Portland, Ore.

Father. Exec. Musician. Lance Kreiter is all of those things and works hard to find balance. Like many dads, Kreiter is worried about what's ahead now that his daughter has officially entered the teen years. "I have a great, really close relationship with Mina, who just turned 13, but I'm afraid that will change soon. What can I do to prepare myself?"

He's also wondering how best to prepare for his international travels. His job in the comics industry often takes him abroad, and he is unsure about what to do in-flight to stay healthy. "What length of time is safe to remain seated? Does it help to move my legs in my seat, or should I get up and take a few laps?" Also, he asks, "What snacks should I take to stay full and avoid the typical sodium-laden meal choices?" Aside from travel, another part of Kreiter's job is entertaining clients, but it can keep him up late and sometimes involves dinners where wine is plentiful. "Is there anything I can do before going to bed that might help me feel less sluggish in the morning?" Kreiter, who works from his home office when he's not traveling and plays drums in a band, tries to make good choices when he needs a midday boost. "I'm assuming that coffee and soda are equally bad for you, but if I had to choose one, is coffee with sugar and cream a better choice?" —**Andi Gabrick**

Read more expert advice in our free iPad app!

PLANE FARE

"First rule: Stay hydrated, as pressurized cabins and the altitude are dehydrating. Bring bottled water and drink often. As for airline meals, I usually eat them but also order an orange juice over ice—the potassium in the juice helps balance sodium levels. A banana is a good potassium source as well. I travel with a bag of unsalted roasted nuts—almonds, walnuts, or pecans—for a high-protein snack. Milk is also high in protein, so I often grab a container at the airport to refuel on long flights."



Carolyn O'Neil, MS, RD
author of *The Slim Down South Cookbook*

FLIGHT PLAN

"Overall, the risk of developing a significant leg clot from a long-distance flight is low. But sitting motionless for hours can increase your risk somewhat. Staying hydrated and avoiding alcohol may help, but moving around frequently is proven to be effective. Avoid socks with tight elastic at the top, keep your legs uncrossed, and, if you can, go for an aisle seat so you can get up without disturbing others. Walking is best, but even stretching your muscles while seated will help."



Brunilda Nazario, MD
WebMD lead medical editor

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WOMEN'S HEALTH

Ready to Order

HAVE A CLUTTER PROBLEM? GET TO THE ROOT OF IT AND LEARN
HOW TO CLEAN UP YOUR ACT FOR GOOD

By Colleen Oakley

● Take a look around
● your house. Do you see
papers piled on counters?
Clothing stuffed into
drawers? Linen closets that
look like war zones?

You may have a clutter problem, and it could be affecting you more than you know. A recent Princeton University study found that a cluttered environment can limit your ability to focus and process information. Scientists used functional magnetic resonance imaging to map responses in the brain while people looked at a computer screen with pictures arranged in various levels of organization. They found that the more disorganized the images, the more divided the brain's attention became, leading them to conclude that being organized could help increase productivity.

Sounds great, right? But getting organized isn't so easy. That's because your clutter is about more than just stuff, says Melva Green, MD, MBA, MPH, and co-author of *Breathing Room: Open Your Heart by Decluttering Your Home*. "Physical clutter is often an outward manifestation of emotions like fear, grief, shame, and guilt," she says.

To deal with clutter, you also have to deal with the



emotions your clutter represents. Green suggests three steps to get started.

Identify your end goal.

Time to put your bedroom in order? Think about what you want to get out of the space, says Green. "Romance? Rest? Women might say they want more intimacy, but first you have to get the clutter off your bed!" Naming the goal helps you be intentional about creating the space that you desire.

Enlist a friend. When you're ready to start going through your stuff, ask a friend to come over. "A third

party can help you when you feel stuck, motivate you when you feel overwhelmed, and encourage you to let go of things you're holding on to that you don't need—physically and emotionally," Green says.

Ask three questions. As you're cleaning, with each item you pick up, ask yourself: How does this serve me? Can I live without this? How does it keep me from being content with who I am now? "The key," Green says, "is to be grateful for the things you have—and then be willing to let them go."

FROM WEBMD.COM

Q&A

"My fiancé's home office is a mess and it drives me crazy. Every time I ask him to clean it up, he says he knows where everything is. But wouldn't he be more efficient if things were tidier?"



Sarah Turcotte, 33
writer, New York City

EXPERT'S
ANSWER

"Not necessarily. While clutter poses a problem for most people, some creative types can be inspired, according to a University of Minnesota study. What to you looks like absolute mayhem could be magical for your fiancé. It may be that he is one of the few people who views clutter as a stimulus rather than a distraction, so it may be best to leave him to it—and just ask him to keep the door closed."



Melva Green, MD, MBA, MPH
co-author of
Breathing Room: Open Your Heart by Decluttering Your Home

Reviewed by
Patricia A. Farrell, PhD
WebMD Mental Health Expert



Are you a pushover or a drill sergeant? To find a balance, read **6 Ways to Discipline Children That Work**, a top Parenting Center article.

WebMD.com

MEN'S HEALTH

Father Time

WANT TO BE A BETTER DAD? LEARN HOW TO BUILD A STRONGER RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR KIDS

By Matt McMillen



● For Father's Day this year, give yourself a gift: more time with your kids. In fact, make it a daily gift for both you and your children. It's the best way to build loving and meaningful relationships.

"All the research—and there's a lot of it—says the same thing: The more time dads spend with their kids, the better it is for the kids and the better it is for the dads," says psychologist Jerrold Lee Shapiro, PhD, a professor at Santa Clara University in Santa Clara, Calif., and author of *When She's Pregnant: The Essential Guide for Expectant Fathers*. Here are Shapiro's tips for making your time together really count.

Be with them, not just for them. "Most men live with the 'provide and protect' prime directive," Shapiro says. "Their attention is often focused away from their kids, at least in a direct way." Instead of communicating with their children, dads, as protectors, too often slip into problem-solving mode. For example, when they call home, dads often ask, "Are you OK? Do you need money?" and then pass the phone to Mom. Don't do that, Shapiro

says. "Listen and talk to them. It's what they want—and need—from you."

Work on a project together. Got something that needs fixing? Tell your son or daughter you'd like some help, even if your child's job is as simple as handing you a wrench while you work. That quiet, physical closeness as you accomplish your task as a team can be quite meaningful. "The way that dads spend time with kids, which can be very nurturing, often doesn't involve many words," says Shapiro.

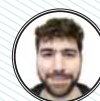
Make friends with fellow dads. Fathers rarely have what Shapiro calls the emotional language for communicating with their young children. Fluency will come with a little help from your guy friends. Does your son or one of the children in his playgroup have a birthday party coming up? Be sure to go and make friends with the fathers there. "That's a great way for dads to get involved," Shapiro says.

Reviewed by Patricia A. Farrell, PhD
WebMD Mental Health Expert

FROM WEBMD.COM

Q & A

"I have a 3-year-old son and an infant daughter. What's one big difference in how I will relate to them emotionally as their father?"



Jeremy Steinhauer
37, computer science
research assistant,
Portland, Ore.



EXPERT'S ANSWER

"As a dad you're not likely to hold back when it's your son. But dads are often less confident when it's a daughter who is upset. If your daughter feels hurt by a friend, for example, that's a social, emotional conundrum that many dads will leave to Mom. Instead, tell her that you know she's upset, that you know what it's like to have your feelings hurt, and that you will help her feel better."



Kyle Dean Pruett, MD
clinical professor,
Child Study
Center, Yale School
of Medicine,
and co-author
of *Partnership Parenting*

HEALTHY BEAUTY



17 You Asked
Men's expert
grooming tips and
product picks

19 Your Smile
Are you using the
right toothbrush?

Star Power

Get glowing
this summer



EXPERT TIP

"Toothbrush handles come in different shapes and sizes to fit the contour of your hand, so find one that allows you to keep a good grip on the brush (but use a light touch as you brush)." —*John T. Grbic, DMD*



YOU ASKED

Groom Service

STEP UP YOUR GAME WITH OUR EXPERT
PRODUCT PICKS AND TIPS FOR MEN

By Ayren Jackson-Cannady

**Eye Spy****Anthony Continuous Moisture Eye Cream**

(\$33) "Men often show the first signs of aging around the eyes. A good moisturizing eye cream like this can help plump up the skin, reduce the appearance of wrinkles, and decrease puffiness. Apply a dot around each eye in the morning and before bed."

**Block & Tackle****CeraVe AM Facial Moisturizing Lotion** (\$14)

"Using an SPF lotion, wearing UV-blocking sunglasses, and wearing a hat are all ways to protect against the sun. Research shows that an SPF like this not only protects from the sun but also helps reduce wrinkles, hyperpigmentation, and the risk of skin cancer."

**Dry Spell****Cetaphil Moisturizing Cream** (\$14)

"Men—who tend to have extremely dry skin—should look for body lotions like this one. Glycerin and hyaluronic acid attract the water and moisture under the surface of your skin, helping hydrate the top layer. Dimethicone helps trap water in the skin."

**David E. Bank, MD**

dermatologist and founding physician of the Center for Dermatology, Cosmetic & Laser Surgery, Mount Kisco, N.Y.

**Finish Lines****SkinMedica Retinol Complex .25** (\$60)

"A good retinoid applied at night before bed can slow aging by increasing skin cell turnover, thickening the skin over time and giving skin a more even tone. I like this one because, while it has one of the highest concentrations of retinoids available without a prescription, it's still very gentle."

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FROM WEBMD.COM

Q&A

"What's the best way to trim nose hairs?"



Brandon Bundy
25, retail manager,
Springfield, Va.

EXPERT
ANSWER

"First and foremost, it is never a good practice to pluck nose hair. It's painful and can lead to infections. Your best bet is to purchase a nose-hair trimmer, which has blades that are covered by guards to prevent cutting the delicate skin inside the nose. Concentrate on the areas directly inside the nostril that may have hair protruding. Also remember that when trimming inside the nose, it's wise not to go too deep. Nose hair has a protective purpose, helping to filter and prevent particles and other things from being sucked into the nasal passages when you breathe."



Michael O'Connor
celebrity style expert,
New York City



Bump Patrol

Tend Skin (\$20) “Starting one day after shaving, use a soft-bristle brush, washcloth, or Buf-Puf to exfoliate the skin and to help keep curly hairs from growing back into the skin. Alternatively, use a daily moisturizing product like this that contains salicylic acid to gently exfoliate the skin and encourage hairs to grow in the right direction.”



Raise the Bar

Dove Soap (\$5) “As much as I love the fragrance of Irish Spring soap, it is often too harsh for men who don’t use lotion regularly. For the low-maintenance man, hydrating soaps like Dove can help add moisture to his regimen.”



Michelle Henry, MD
dermatologist at Sadick Dermatology,
New York City



Blades of Glory

Gillette Fusion Razor (\$13) “If you have sensitive skin, using a razor with three or more blades is important to decrease the amount of pressure necessary to cut your facial hair. Shaving should be done in a downward motion on the cheeks and in an upward motion on the neck, in the direction of the hair growth.”



Foam Run

Neutrogena Men Razor Defense Shave Gel (\$5) “Shave while your hair is wet and use a moisturizing shaving cream or gel. This allows you to cut the hair cleanly with less force, causing less irritation and reducing irregularly cut hairs that are prone to becoming ingrown.”

Reviewed by **Karyn Grossman, MD**
WebMD Skin Care Expert



AISLE DO

PRODUCT PICK

Organix Moroccan Argan Oil Shampoo (\$8)

EXPERT

Christine Cassel, MD, dermatologist, Hummelstown, Pa.

“I love that this shampoo is a source of vitamin E and antioxidants like cacao, argan oil, avocado, and aloe, all of which help leave hair shiny and soft. It’s very slippery, so you only need to use a very small amount—less than a dime-sized dot. This shampoo claims to be sulfate-free, but it has a similar ingredient—disodium laureate sulfosuccinate. Keep in mind that it’s hard to completely avoid sulfates or sulfate-like ingredients, and, if you do, you end up with a non-sudsy shampoo that is difficult to rinse. One other tip: Shampoos formulated to boost volume intentionally leave residue behind. That’s the thickening agent, but it often dulls the appearance of hair’s shine.”



How's your dental hygiene? Watch **Avoid Tooth Brushing Mistakes**, the No. 1 video on the Oral Health channel.

WebMD.com

HEALTHY
BEAUTY



YOUR SMILE

Brush Up

DO YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TOOTHBRUSH? GET A GRIP
ON THE KEY FEATURES YOU NEED

By Jodi Helmer

● Your toothbrush removes plaque, prevents tartar buildup, and reduces the risk of gum diseases. It's a small tool with a big job. But if you've wandered into the oral care aisle at the drugstore lately, you know how many choices confront you. How important is brush size? Does the shape of the handle matter? Which bristles are most effective?

"A lot of patients tell me that choosing a toothbrush is overwhelming," says John T. Grbic, DMD, a professor at Columbia University College of Dental Medicine and member of ColumbiaDoctors. He offers some tips for finding the ideal brush:

Pick the correct size. Peek into the package to get a closer look at the toothbrush head. Manufacturers make models in multiple shapes and sizes to accommodate variations in people's mouths. Choose a toothbrush that is small enough to reach your back molars.

Opt for soft bristles. "It's a myth that the harder the bristles, the better they remove plaque," Grbic says. Rigid bristles can't bend

to get between teeth or under the gum line, which means plaque is often left behind. They may harm your gums, too: Research published in the *Journal of Periodontology* found that using a toothbrush with hard bristles increased the risk of small tears on the gums.

Ignore bristle design. No research shows that bristle length or formation makes much difference in how well a toothbrush removes plaque or gets into hard-to-reach areas. Instead, focus on brushing your teeth at least two minutes, Grbic advises.

Consider electric options. A power toothbrush with a rotating, oscillating head is better at reducing the risk of gum disease and removing plaque than a manual toothbrush, according to research published in the *Journal of Dental Hygiene*. The reason: The rotating head does a better job of getting between the teeth.

Replace often. A toothbrush isn't forever. Replace yours every three or four months, Grbic says.

SAFE STORAGE

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO STORE TOOTHBRUSHES PROPERLY? "YOUR TOOTHBRUSH IS A MAGNET FOR BACTERIA," SAYS GERRY CURATOLA, DDS, FOUNDER OF REJUVENATION DENTISTRY AND CLINICAL ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AT NEW YORK UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF DENTISTRY.

Reduce the risks. Rinse the bristles of your toothbrush and dry them thoroughly after you brush to help keep bacteria at bay.

Don't cover up. Skip plastic covers, which trap moisture and create a breeding ground for bacteria, advises the CDC. A better option is a breathable fabric shield that wicks moisture and provides a barrier against bacteria. These disposable shields are available at most drugstores.

Store upright. When you lay a toothbrush on its side, the bristles come in contact with germs on bathroom surfaces. If you share a toothbrush holder, make sure the bristles aren't touching so bacteria won't jump from brush to brush.

Find another spot. No one likes to think about it, but "your toothbrush is contaminated with every flush" if you keep it in the bathroom, Curatola says. Close the toilet lid before you flush, or store your toothbrush in the bedroom or a kitchen cabinet instead.

Reviewed by
Eric Yabu, DDS
WebMD Oral Health Expert

PARENTING

New World

Globetrotting reporter Lisa Ling, famed for her curiosity about the plights and pursuits of everyday people, talks about how becoming a mom changed her views of work and herself

By Lauren Paige Kennedy

FAMILY & PARENTING



22 Kids' Health
Concussions require plenty of recovery time

23 Baby Talk
Is sharing a bed a good idea?

24 Pet Health
Are stem cell treatments the answer?



EXPERT TIP

"Three to five weeks is about how long it takes kids with concussions to fully recover. About 90% of children are fully healed at around four weeks."—*Michael O'Brien, MD*

"I was so excited to have a girl because I'm hoping to raise a little feminist."

PARENTING

Mom View

● Your daughter, Jett, turned 1 in March. Any major milestones to report?

She's not walking yet, but she's crawling at a furious pace. She's hard to keep up with—she's pulling herself up all over the place! And she's such a hilarious dancer: The second you turn on music she starts dancing.

You say the world looked different as you drove home from the hospital with Jett. How so?

Life as I knew it was not the same. I had this life that I'd become responsible for. The way I drove, the billboards I was seeing with scantily clad women... everything was about *her*. And I felt this desire to protect her from the world. I hope I can do it well.

You had two miscarriages before having Jett. How did you cope?

When I was pregnant with Jett, I was terrified every time I went in for an ultrasound. I braced myself to hear: "There's no heartbeat." Until the eighth month I never really calmed down. The miscarriages were hard. But the way I look at it is Jett is the baby we were supposed to have.

What has surprised you most about motherhood?

That I would enjoy it so much, frankly. I never had a desire to be a mother. I've always been career-driven—I felt like [my work] was my purpose. But having a child has changed my life. It's brought me incredible fulfillment, a new perspective and purpose. I love it.

How do you find balance?

It's very, very challenging. I've worked out a system: I'll travel for maybe 10 days, and then I'm home the rest of the month. I prefer that to 9 to 5, because when I'm home it's totally immersive.

The final season of Ling's TV series Our America is airing now on OWN.

Read the full Q&A with Lisa Ling in our free iPad app!

Reviewed by **Hansa Bhargava, MD**
WebMD Medical Editor



ER or doctor? Read a top Children's Health Channel article to find out **6 Serious Symptoms in Children.**

WebMD.com

KIDS' HEALTH

Head Game

CONCUSSIONS ARE SERIOUS. IS YOUR CHILD READY TO RESUME SPORTS—OR SHOULD HE STAY ON THE SIDELINES?

By Heather Hatfield



● With their young minds still developing, kids with concussions need to take time-outs—both mentally and physically—to fully heal, new research shows.

“After a concussion, kids need three to five days of mental shutdown to let their brain rest and recover,” says Michael O’Brien, MD, associate director of the Sports Concussion Clinic at Boston Children’s Hospital and an author of a recent study published in *Pediatrics*.

A concussion is also called a traumatic brain injury (TBI), caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head. Whether caused by sports mishaps or other types of accidents, TBI is to blame for about 630,000 emergency room visits, more than 67,000 hospitalizations, and 6,100 deaths in children and teens each year. Symptoms such as confusion, memory loss, fatigue, or mood swings can happen immediately or even days after a concussion occurs.

In the study, which included 335 children and young adults ages 8 to 23, recovery times were different between kids who immediately

re-engaged in thinking-intensive activities versus those who gave their brains a break. Kids who did homework, played video games, read books, or watched TV or movies took the longest to fully recover from their symptoms—about 100 days, on average. Kids who had mental rest recovered within 20 to 50 days.

If possible, parents should aim to keep their child’s mind in low gear for at least a few days. There should be no school, homework, or reading. Kids with concussions should also abstain from texting, Web surfing, and listening to loud music. While unplugging your child might seem impossible, it’s for all the right reasons: Any energy her brain spends on cognitive activity means less energy that can be dedicated to the recovery process, O’Brien explains.

After a few days, you can start to slowly introduce easy mental activities. But watch to see if concussion symptoms, like fatigue or confusion, reappear. If they do, don’t push it—take another few days of downtime.

BACK TO IT

KNOWING WHEN YOUR CHILD IS READY TO RE-ENTER SCHOOL AND PLAY SPORTS AGAIN IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF CONCUSSION RECOVERY, SAYS SPORTS INJURY EXPERT MICHAEL O’BRIEN, MD.

She’s ready to start transitioning back to school when she can muster the mental focus required for academics without showing any concussion symptoms, for example, confusion, headache, fatigue, or memory loss.

When she does return, go slowly. Request accommodations like half-days or more time for tests.

Say no to sports until your child can handle a full school load comfortably. Before she takes to the field, she’ll also need a passing grade from her doctor, who will test her brain to make sure it’s healed.

When she gets the OK to play, take things one step at a time. Try low- and medium-intensity exercise, and then no-contact sports, to make sure the physical stress doesn’t cause a setback.

If there’s any reason to doubt your child is ready to return to sports—such as lingering symptoms—keep her off the field. A good rule of thumb: When in doubt, sit her out.

Reviewed by
Roy Benaroch, MD
WebMD Kids’ Health Expert

BABY TALK

Sleep Sense

DOES YOUR LITTLE ONE SNOOZE WITH YOU?
HERE'S WHY SHARING A BED IS NOT THE
BEST STRATEGY

By Stephanie Watson



For some new parents, there's nothing like the feeling of having baby snuggled next to them in bed to heighten the feeling of closeness. Sharing a bed can also make breastfeeding more convenient. Whatever the reasons, bed sharing (also called co-sleeping) is on the rise. A study reported in *JAMA Pediatrics* found the percentage of infants sharing their parents' beds more than doubled between 1993 and 2010.

While no one wants to discourage a little snuggling between parents and baby, bed sharing is a risky practice, says Eve Colson, MD, the study's author and professor of pediatrics at Yale School of Medicine. "There's no way to keep the sleep environment safe in an adult bed," she says.

Sharing the bed with baby multiplies the risk for sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) fivefold, according to a 2013 study. The American Academy of Pediatrics cites the dangers of SIDS and suffocation, and recommends that parents keep baby out of their bed especially during the first three months of his or her life.

Colson encourages room sharing. To reduce SIDS risk, follow two rules when you do put baby down in his crib or bassinet. "The most important thing is that the baby is always put to sleep on his back, and that there isn't anything around the baby like pillows, heavy blankets, or bumpers."

Reviewed by **Hansa Bhargava, MD**
WebMD Medical Editor

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PET HEALTH

Bright Side

STEM CELL THERAPY FOR ANIMALS? IT'S A PROMISING OPTION FOR SOME PET CONDITIONS

By Sonya Collins



For decades, researchers have touted stem cells as a potential treatment for a number of diseases. Doctors already use stem cells to treat people with leukemia, lymphoma, and other blood disorders as well as for some solid cancer tumors.

Pets can also take advantage of stem cell therapies. "Used for appropriate conditions, I think this therapy will significantly help a large number of animals. In the right instances, the results have already been astounding," says Sean Owens, DVM, DACVP, associate professor at UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine and medical director for the school's Regenerative Medicine Laboratory.

The most common and successful veterinary use of stem cells treats osteoarthritis in dogs as well as injuries to bones, joints, tendons, ligaments, and the spinal cord. Preliminary research also shows that stem cells might successfully treat dry eye in dogs and stomatitis—a severe, painful oral disease—in cats. In the future, pets and people could benefit from stem cell therapy for chronic diseases such as diabetes and autoimmune diseases such as lupus, Owens says.

A stem cell is an undifferentiated cell. This means that unlike, for example, a lung cell or

a liver cell, a stem cell is a blank slate that can become any type of cell, with the potential to regenerate tissue in a part of the body where disease has damaged it and caused it to lose function.

Pet stem cell therapy uses stem cells from the bone marrow, umbilical cord blood, or fat of either your pet or another animal of the same species. A veterinarian injects the stem cells into the diseased area, such as a knee joint damaged by osteoarthritis. The cells move to the inflamed or damaged tissue, suppress the inflammation, alleviate pain, and cause new tissue to grow. This new tissue is more like the original tissue than the scar tissue that would typically grow in an untreated inflamed area, Owens explains.

Stem cell therapy is not for every pet or every condition. Beware of veterinarians who claim it's a cure-all. It's not for every budget, either. A course of two to three injections can run \$2,000 or more. If you have the resources and your pet still has several good years ahead of him, stem cell therapy might be a good option. Find a veterinarian who has experience with the therapy and ask lots of questions, including not only if your dog or cat would be a good candidate but why.

FROM WEBMD.COM

Q&A

"My dog, a 9-year-old blue heeler mix, has cataracts. I feel for him, but is surgery necessary and worth it?"



Katie Smith
34, instructional technology specialist, Athens, Ga.



EXPERT'S ANSWER

"A veterinary ophthalmologist should examine your dog to see if surgery makes sense. Sometimes the lens looks cloudy because of aging. Also, many breeds get cataracts due to inherited retinal degeneration. Cataract surgery wouldn't work for them. Without the surgery, most dogs adapt well to vision loss and continue to have a good quality of life, but for appropriate candidates, cataract surgery can help restore vision."



Nancy Bromberg, VMD, DACVO
Veterinary ophthalmologist, VCA Southpaws Veterinary Specialists & Emergency Center, Fairfax, Va.

Reviewed by
Will Draper, DVM
WebMD Pet Health Expert

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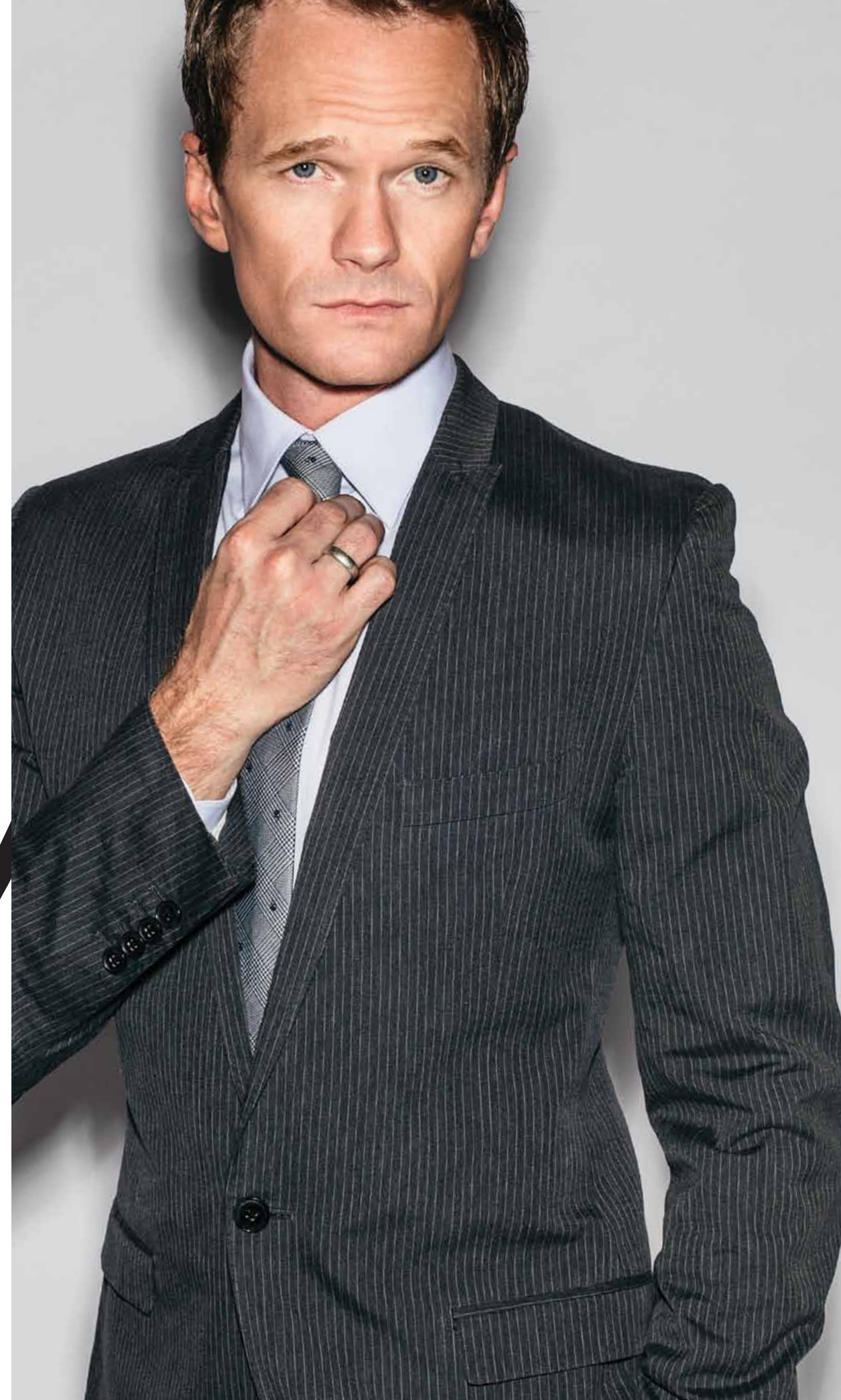
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Stage Might

The multitalented
Neil Patrick Harris
switches gears, trading Hollywood
for Broadway, while making time
for his most demanding but
rewarding role: dad

BY LAUREN PAIGE KENNEDY



Trading one character (a buff womanizer) for quite another (a lipstick-and-stiletto-wearing transgender singer) is no easy task, especially when both roles are fan favorites.

Just ask TV, film, and theater star Neil Patrick Harris, who recently shed Barney Stinson, his *How I Met Your Mother* small-screen persona, after nine seasons to don drag for the role of punk rocker Hedwig on Broadway in *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*.

The rock musical first garnered acclaim back in 1998 when its creator, John Cameron Mitchell, performed the title role off-Broadway. He also starred in and directed the independent film version in 2001, which quickly earned cult classic status. Now, with Mitchell working behind the scenes, *Hedwig* just recently hit the Great White Way and has already earned eight Tony nominations, including one for Harris as Best Leading Actor in a Musical.

Stage Coach

While Harris certainly has the Broadway chops—his résumé includes turns in *Cabaret*, *Proof*, and *Assassins*, and he's won three Emmys for hosting the Tony Awards—Hedwig requires a kind of feminine gauntness he can't simply emote. This former child star shot to fame more than 20 years ago as a scrawny kid doctor in *Doogie Howser, M.D.*, but he's 40 now and stands a strapping 6 feet tall.

Under the direction of a trainer, Harris, who is also starring in the recent release *A Million Ways to Die in the West*, spent “the last four months restructuring my body to have less bulk and more softness, which is a pretty intense workout change, from lifting weights to doing hot box yoga, stretching, and cardio.”

As of press time he'd lost 20 pounds for the role. “I've been trying to curb and change my cravings,” says the actor, who's repeatedly declared his enduring love for L.A.'s In-N-Out burgers, chips and guacamole, and Red Bull. “I used to be able to eat burritos at 11 or 12 at night,” he laments. “Now, I stop eating at 7 p.m., my main meal is lunch—and it's a salad.”

Healthy weight loss is just one challenge; there are other, more nuanced requirements to master if he's to

pull off Hedwig's waifish physique. “My trainer has been spending time with me on core flexibility and scapular retraction” for the shoulders, Harris says. “As the more macho Neil”—he's referring to his character on *How I Met Your Mother*, and also to himself, off-screen—“I tend to have my shoulders forward, almost in a boxer's stance, which isn't great for my posture. I need a long feminine neck [for Hedwig], and I need to keep my back down so that my shoulders are deep in their sockets, with my belly and butt tucked in. ... I need a lot of length.”

Acquiring length may be easy compared with performing in custom-made heels. “I'm not just walking in them,” he says. “I'm spinning and dancing and kicking in them, too! I don't want to blow out my ACL!”

What has surprised Harris most about the training process is how much healthier he feels. “I had to be in good shape for *How I Met Your Mother*, because I never knew if I'd be sunning shirtless or sitting in a hot tub or killing it in laser tag. It was in my best interest to be in shape, but it was more about looking fit, as opposed to being fit. It's easy to do crunches and have a nice outer frame, but for Hedwig I have to be in shape, inside and out. My posture, my core, my flexibility—right now I'm in the best shape of my life.”

As for his dismissal of junk food? “Detox is good as a lifestyle choice—and for a drag queen,” he jokes.

Pitch Perfect

The character of Hedwig is both angry and lovelorn; she belts out her heartache loudly in song. Harris knows that, above all, he must protect his vocal cords (even if shredding them might add realism to the role). With seven shows to do each week—four of them every weekend—the



Neil's Deal

The triple-threat actor offers his healthy living tips

Get enough sleep.

Harris is a big believer in catching his eight hours. “Thankfully, I have the genetic code to sleep anytime,” he says. “I can drink a full Red Bull, put my head on the desk, and be asleep in 20 seconds.”

Encourage creativity with your kids.

“David [Burtka] and I create a positive environment for Harper and Gideon, filled with fun, immersive, educational things. Imagination is everywhere. We play at all times.”

Strike a balance.

When it comes to the push-pull between home and work life, Harris doesn't “think my circumstance are unique. I'm busy a lot, but millions of couples work and have families. You have to reassess your time and make choices that are effective for your family.”

If you can partner with someone who cooks, do.

Burtka, Harris' partner for the last decade, is a theater actor who once trained at legendary cooking school Le Cordon Bleu, and who also ran his own L.A.-based catering company. “David's palate weaned me off processed foods,” Harris says.

PREVIOUS PAGE: AARON FALLON/CPI

VRIENS-McGRATH/TRUNK ARCHIVE

Surrogacy:

Tips for hopeful parents

Using a surrogate to start a family, as Neil Patrick Harris and his partner, David Burtka, did, can be a complicated process. For starters, every state has its own rules about the legal rights of surrogates and intended parents, and many differ on whether payment can be exchanged for the service. Judy Sperling-Newton, director of the American Academy of Assisted Reproductive Technology Attorneys, and a member of the board of The Surrogacy Center in Madison, Wis., suggests a few tips for intended parents seeking a surrogate's help.

Gestational surrogacy is less risky than traditional surrogacy.

Sperling-Newton is not a proponent of traditional surrogacy, where the surrogate carrier is also the biological mother. "If she changes her mind at any point, before or after the child is born, she's the mom," Sperling-Newton says. Regardless of signed contracts, "no state in the country will terminate a biological mother's rights." She advises pursuing gestational surrogacy, where the egg comes from a donor collected by a surrogacy center, and the surrogate is a third party. (Harris and Burtka chose this route to have their two kids, 3-year-old twin half-siblings, Harper and Gideon.)

Use professionals who know the law.

"Both Washington state and New York criminalize compensation for surrogacy. In countries like France, Spain, and Japan, surrogacy is illegal," says Sperling-Newton. This is why it's so important, she says, "to use experienced, legitimate professionals" when pursuing surrogacy. "Don't go to the Internet looking for a match! There are many programs and services out there without any regulation or standards."

Discuss every possible outcome—before conception.

What happens if the fetus has major birth defects? What if the intended

parents wish to terminate a pregnancy and the carrier does not? What if the carrier is in an accident that leaves her on life support? While no state would force a carrier to terminate a pregnancy she didn't want to end, "there are major issues that need to be resolved before anybody signs anything," if only to prepare "for every possible circumstance," Sperling-Newton says.

Work out all the emotional details, too.

Do intended parents get to attend pre-natal doctor visits? If so, how many? How about being in the delivery room? Can they dictate nutrition and exercise? What about the carrier's existing children? Will they be involved in any way? Sperling-Newton says: "Talk about it now and get on the same page, before conception."

For more information, visit surrogacycenter.com or The National Infertility Association at resolve.org.

performer is doing everything he can to strengthen his instrument.

"Cracked notes and gravel are not a bad thing when you're a rock 'n' roll singer," Harris muses. "That frees me a bit about tone. [But] people are paying to hear me sing. I can't rely on the idea 'bad singing is good' for this show."

With this in mind, he turned to Liz Caplan, the go-to vocal coach for theater, television, film, and recording stars including Olivia Wilde, Stephen Colbert, Sara Bareilles, The Goo Goo Dolls, and a roster of Broadway regulars.

Harris has chosen to forego the use of an understudy, which adds to the pressure to stay healthy. "My face is the image on the poster," he says. "To have a Plan B is not fair to audiences. It would give me an escape clause that I don't need mentally. I won't be 100% all the time, but I imagine that a certain percentage of the audience would just get up and leave [due to his absence], and then I'd feel bad for the understudy. Plus, I need to be in Hedwig's headspace. If I'm sick, then for that show Hedwig is under the weather and carrying on—that's in her spirit and

Harris and Burtka each fertilized an egg from the same anonymous donor. Both successful embryos were implanted into a surrogate, a woman they knew and trusted, who carried the siblings to term. Harper and Gideon are therefore twin half-siblings, sharing the same biological mother but different fathers.

"Surrogacy allowed us unequivocal rights for the future," the actor says. "Our surrogate is an amazing woman. My one regret? She lives in a different city, and we missed those wonderful months before the babies come, when you put hands on belly, speak into the skin, and brace yourself for what's to come. We got a lot of emails. That was a little strange, but not a bad thing. We recorded ourselves reading children's books and asked her to put speakers to her

"A theater structure gives me more quality time with the kids and will calm me down regardless of how crazy they're being."

"The first thing was to make sure he's healthy overall," Caplan says, which means "nutrition, hydration, exercise, sleep, and maintaining good blood sugar levels to keep his energy up. Neil needs to be thin for the role, but I told him he shouldn't look like a photonegative. I advise him to eat small portions of protein throughout the day. And to make up for all that sweating on stage, to drink at least two quarts of water—this could include tea or coconut water—each day."

Caplan also counsels Harris to avoid dairy products like milk and cheese, which she says can coat the vocal cords. And she bans acidic foods—tomatoes and citrus fruits—because they can cause reflux. "Acid kicks back from the stomach onto the larynx and vocal cords," she explains, "which, much like mucus, leads to a constant clearing of the throat. The cords really take a beating. Lemons are the citrus exception; they have alkaline to soothe the throat, so I recommend lots of water with lemon in it." Fish oil supplements, too, can add much-needed moisture, she says.

nature. My ailments will be terrific character choices for any given performance. I have to embrace the imperfections."

Play Time

With two toddlers at home, Harper Grace and Gideon Scott, both 3, Harris won't spend his time off stage doing much, if any, relaxing.

"The kids have a lot of energy, yes!" he says. "But it's calming energy. I'm looking forward to having time at home. I've spent six years in a car rushing from meeting to voiceover recording to audition to taping to filming—and it keeps me away from my family. A theater structure gives me more quality time with the kids and will calm me down regardless of how crazy they're being."

When Harris and David Burtka, his partner of 10 years, decided to start a family in 2011, they chose gestational surrogacy, an approach using an anonymous donor egg fertilized with the intended father's sperm, then planted in a surrogate carrier who is not the biological mother. (In contrast, with traditional surrogacy, a man supplies his sperm to fertilize a surrogate's egg; the carrier is the biological mother.)

belly so the kids could hear our voices."

As Father's Day approaches, he and Burtka are definitely enjoying the milestones. "Their vocabularies are exploding; their sentence structure is complex; they're more self-sufficient," Harris beams. "This morning I was on a conference call, and they were able to create a fort under the table with flashlights and growl like tigers for an hour and a half. A wonderful thing to bear witness to—or, should I say, 'tiger' witness to."

He continues to proudly gush: "Harper is the extrovert who likes to sing. Gideon's creativity is expressed more in imaginative ways. For example, he'll demand we call him 'Tony' for four days. He simply won't respond unless we call him Tony." He laughs at the thought. "So, he's the storyteller, she's the songsmith. He can write the songs and she'll sing them."

Harris admits to tackling "a massive learning curve" for parenthood. "For the first couple months, you worry [if any little thing goes wrong] they're forever broken. But by age 3, they crack each other over the head with the fireplace poker and you know they're fine. They recover and right themselves with remarkable precision."

Clock WISE

There's been a lot of talk about women's biological clocks—yes, you do have one—and the relationship between age and having a baby. But it's not as cut and dried as you might think. *We talk to fertility experts to set the record straight.*

BY CHRISTINA BOUFIS



A woman's chances of having a baby decrease after age 35.

You've probably heard that, right?
But what exactly does that mean?
And what else do you need to understand about fertility?

"From [ages] 28 to 33, your fertility doesn't change all that much," says Nicole Noyes, MD, professor and director of reproductive surgery at New York University School of Medicine and Medical Center. But after that, it does start to decline rapidly, particularly between the ages of 35 to 40. That doesn't mean you can't get pregnant in your late 30s or even early 40s. As with much in health, fertility depends on many factors, and age may not always be the biggest culprit when a woman has difficulty conceiving.

A three-month study of nearly 3,000 Danish women found that women ages 35 to 40 had a nearly 77% chance of getting pregnant if they timed intercourse during fertile periods. But the women studied were not known to have fertility issues. That makes a difference, Noyes explains. Fertility studies don't tell the whole story because they often use different populations of women: women who have fertility problems, versus women who have had a child and whose fertility is established, versus those who've never tried and whose fertility is unknown. "The problem is, if you wait until you're 38 to try [to have a baby], you don't know which group you're in," Noyes explains.

What else do you need to know about your fertility? Our experts tell the real story behind a few popular myths.

1 Getting older is the main reason women can't conceive.

Not necessarily. Age is certainly the biggest factor, Noyes says. But ovulation problems, endometriosis, and fibroids can also affect a woman's fertility. Or the Fallopian tubes, where the sperm and egg meet, can be damaged by an infection or disease. "There can be problems that you can't see or feel or have any idea are influencing your situation," Noyes says. "For instance, 50% of chlamydia infections are completely asymptomatic, so you could have had a chlamydia infection that went untreated in college for a year and it was damaging your Fallopian tubes, and you would have no idea."

Women are born with all the eggs they'll have in their lifetime—1 million to 2 million, says

Margareta D. Pisarska, MD, director of the division of reproductive endocrinology and infertility and director of the Center for Fertility and Reproductive Medicine at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles. Though that sounds like a lot, most eggs never mature but die in the ovary before being released. By the time she hits puberty, a woman has approximately 300,000 eggs left, and only around 300 that she'll ovulate during her reproductive years. In her late 30s, a woman may have only 25,000 eggs remaining, Pisarska says. That's still plenty to get pregnant, though, if you have no other fertility issues.

What about women, including some celebrities, who have babies well into their 40s? There's a chance they did get pregnant, or they might have used donor eggs from a younger woman to become pregnant, Noyes says.

2 Stress affects fertility.

Maybe. "It's difficult to test for stress," Pisarska says. "Stress might play a role, but, for the most part, women who deal with very stressful lives get pregnant as well."

Indeed, research is contradictory. One recent study found that self-reported stress was not a factor in a woman's ability to get pregnant with IVF, Pisarska says. Another small 2010 study that measured stress hormones in women's saliva found that those with the highest levels of stress were less likely to conceive in a given month than those who had lower levels.

On the other hand, physical stresses, such as malnutrition or excessive exercise, "may play a role in fertility," Pisarska says. "They can lead to problems such as anovulation [meaning no ovulation], which can affect a woman's ability to conceive."

But telling someone who's trying to conceive to "just relax"? "I don't think it's a good idea," Pisarska says, "because there may be an underlying issue, and if we can treat that, then maybe [a woman will] be more successful getting pregnant."

3 You menstruate like clockwork, so you'll have an easier time getting pregnant.

True, but that depends, Noyes says. "If you're having regular menstrual periods, odds are that you're ovulating. But it's not a guarantee," she adds. The bigger factor? Age. "If you're over 40 and menstruating, you should definitely not assume you're fertile." But women do conceive in their 40s. It's just not a given, Noyes says.

Perhaps a better indicator of your fertility? Take a look at your family history, Noyes says. "When you're from a very fertile family, where women are [having babies] into their late 30s and 40s, you can rest a little more easily," she says. "But if you're not [from a fertile family] or if you have anything in your family history that sounds risky—like a mother going through early menopause—that could be a problem."

4 Being too thin or overweight affects your fertility.

Absolutely, Noyes says. "Women who are either excessively overweight or excessively underweight have more difficulty getting pregnant," Pisarska says. About 12% of women



ODDS GAME

Want to improve your chances of getting pregnant? Consider this expert advice.

Track your ovulation. Keep a record of when you have your period, including any changes in your cervical mucus. "Cervical mucus thins out [becoming more watery] around the time of ovulation," Noyes says. You can also buy over-the-counter ovulation kits to help you keep track.

Quit smoking—and have your partner do the same. "Women who smoke undergo menopause a few years earlier than women who don't smoke," Pisarska says, and that influences your biological clock. Smoking can also damage male sperm.

Ask your mother about her fertility. Fertility runs in families, Noyes says. "So if your family is very fertile, you're probably more fertile as well." Polycystic ovarian syndrome, endometriosis, and fibroids can also affect multiple women in a family, she adds, so talk to your doctor if this is part of your family history.

who have difficulty conceiving fall into this category, according to the American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM).

When you're too thin, your body goes into survival mode and starts conserving energy, which can cause you to stop ovulating, Noyes explains.

"Women who are overweight or obese can have a condition known as polycystic ovarian syndrome, where the hormone balance isn't quite right, so a lot of times those women will stop ovulating," she says. "If they can get down to an ideal body weight, ovulation can come back."

What's best for fertility? A balanced, nutritious diet and a healthy weight, both experts say.

5 Fertility problems are usually the woman's fault.

Not true. If a couple has difficulty conceiving, 40% of the time the male partner contributes partly or entirely to this problem, according to ASRM. "Many times we find things are not working right in both the male and the female," Pisarska says. Male fertility also seems to decline after 35, according to recent studies. "We don't want to blame anyone, but it's important for both to get evaluated," Pisarska adds.

Bottom line: If you're under 35 and have been trying to get pregnant for a year or over 35 and trying for six months, see your doctor to get evaluated, experts recommend.

6 The best time to have intercourse is after you've ovulated.

Not necessarily. "It's ideal to have sperm in the female reproductive tract before the egg is released," Pisarska says, "because the egg doesn't stay alive for a very long time [about 12 to 24 hours], whereas sperm has the ability to live up to three and as many as five days in the female reproductive tract." Pisarska advises couples to have intercourse at least once before ovulation, "and every other day around the time of ovulation."

Reviewed by Brunilda Nazario, MD
WebMD Lead Medical Editor

IN SEASON

Seeing Red

The humble cherry enjoyed a prominent place in Roman, Greek, and Chinese cultures. In the 1600s, colonists brought the fruit to America.

Today, the United States is the third largest producer and the largest exporter of cherries, both sweet and tart varieties. Washington state, California, and Oregon grow 97% of the sweet variety while Michigan produces about 90% of the tart kind. Sweet cherries include Bing, Lambert, and Rainier, and together they make up 95% of the production in the Northwestern U.S. Cherries can be consumed fresh, frozen, canned, juiced, brined, or dried. Seventy-five percent of sweet cherries are eaten fresh, while the majority of tart cherries are used for processing, mostly as frozen products. Cherries are packed with antioxidants, powerhouse nutrients key to a healthy diet. A cup of fresh sweet cherries contains 97 calories.

FOOD
& RECIPES



37 Three Ways
Get ready for
grilling season



THREE WAYS TO COOK

Grill Seekers

GET FIRED UP WITH THESE LIGHT AND
FAMILY-FRIENDLY RECIPES

By Erin O'Donnell

Recipes by Kathleen Zelman, MPH, RD, LD



Nothing says summer like a sizzling grill. But too often, the all-American cookout involves a lot of red meat.

Eating too much red meat on a regular basis can increase the risk of colorectal cancer, studies show, and when that meat is grilled, a new problem arises. Exposing any type of meat to high temperatures or direct flame creates heterocyclic amines (HCAs) and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), which are known carcinogens. "They could theoretically increase the risk for cancer, so it's prudent to avoid them," says Alice Bender, MS, RDN, associate director for nutrition programs at the American Institute for Cancer Research.

One solution is to marinate meat for at least 30 minutes in an acid-based marinade (vinegar, lemon juice, or wine), which appears to reduce HCA formation. Trim visible fat that might drip into the fire, and keep the grill heat low. "Make sure the flames are not leaping and charring the meat," Bender says.

Another is to expand your menu to grill more veggies and even fruit.



An estimated 71% of adult Americans own an outdoor grill or smoker. Most use gas grills.

PANTRY PICKS

For tasty results with our three grill recipes, **Kathleen Zelman, MPH, RD, LD**, suggests these healthy ingredients, which are staples in her own kitchen.



Great Greens: Zelman likes her greens easy, so she shops for lettuce brands that are triple-washed and ready to eat, including **Organic Girl Baby Spring Mix** and **Fresh Express 50/50 Mix**.



Glaze Amazing: Zelman uses just a squirt of balsamic vinegar glaze to give dishes a brilliant, sweet-tangy flavor. Her picks include **Trader Joe's Trader Giotto's Balsamic Glaze** and **Acetum Blaze Balsamic Glaze**.



Tiny Tomatoes: Every pantry should have canned diced tomatoes, a convenient addition to soups, stews, and casseroles. Try **Hunt's Original Diced No Salt Added Tomatoes** and **Del Monte Petite Cut Diced Tomatoes**.

Reviewed by **Hansa Bhargava, MD**
WebMD Medical Editor

THE OPINIONS EXPRESSED IN THIS SECTION ARE OF THE EXPERTS AND ARE NOT THE OPINIONS OF WEBMD. WEBMD DOES NOT ENDORSE ANY SPECIFIC PRODUCT, SERVICE, OR TREATMENT.

1
Life's a Peach

When fruit hits the grill, something magical happens: The high heat causes the sugars to caramelize, creating a delectable smoky-sweet flavor. This summer salad features grilled peaches, but you can also grill pineapple, pears, and bananas.

Grilled Peach Salad

Makes 6 servings

Ingredients

- 3 firm, ripe peaches, cut in half and pitted
- 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tbsp white balsamic vinegar
- 1 tsp honey
- dash of salt
- freshly ground pepper
- 8 oz baby mixed greens or arugula
- 2 tbsp crumbled goat cheese
- 2 tbsp chopped pistachios

Directions

1. Heat grill to medium-high. Coat grill rack and peach halves with cooking spray. Place peaches on grill about 1 minute or until grill marks appear. Remove from grill and set aside.
2. In a large bowl, combine oil, vinegar, honey, salt, and pepper, and whisk to mix. Add greens and toss until leaves are lightly dressed. Divide greens onto six plates. Top each with a grilled peach half, and sprinkle with goat cheese and pistachios. Serve immediately.

Per serving

150 calories, 4 g protein, 16 g carbohydrate, 8 g fat (2 g saturated fat), 3 mg cholesterol, 2 g fiber, 8 g sugar, 292 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 49%

2

Pizza Party

Baking pizza crust on your backyard grill gives it a delicious flavor, and kids love to help choose the toppings. Use your favorite pizza dough recipe, or save time with premade whole wheat pizza dough from your supermarket.

Grilled Veggie Pizza

Makes 4 servings

Ingredients

- ½ lb asparagus, tough ends removed
- 1 small red pepper, deseeded and cut into quarters
- 1 small sweet onion, cut into quarters
- 1 8-oz portion whole wheat pizza dough
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil, divided
- ½ cup no-salt-added petite diced tomatoes, drained and patted dry
- ½ cup basil, chopped
- 3 oz part-skim mozzarella cheese, shredded
- optional garnishes: garlic, salt, pepper, red pepper flakes

Directions

1. Heat grill to medium-high. Coat grill rack with cooking spray. Lay asparagus, red pepper, and onion on rack and cook until tender and grill marks appear. Cut grilled veggies into bite-sized pieces and set aside.
2. Roll dough into 12-inch circle (using rolling pin, or your hands) on a lightly floured board. Stretching dough and allowing it to rest can make it easier to handle.
3. Brush dough with 1 tbsp olive oil on each side, and place directly on rack 2 minutes or until grill marks appear. Remove dough from grill and place on cookie sheet. Reduce heat to low, and return dough to grill, raw side down. Top with grilled chopped veggies, tomatoes, basil, and cheese. Close grill lid and cook until cheese melts, about 3–5 minutes.
4. Remove pizza from grill using cookie sheet. Top with optional garnishes, if desired. Cut into slices and serve.

Per serving

270 calories, 10 g protein, 30 g carbohydrate, 13 g fat (3 g saturated fat), 13 mg cholesterol, 5 g fiber, 3 g sugar, 375 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 43%



The most popular holidays for grilling are July 4, Memorial Day, and Labor Day.



To prevent carcinogenic HCAs from forming, partially cook meat or fish before placing on the grill.

3

Fish Tale

Salmon's firm flesh works well on the grill, and the fruity salsa adds bright summery color and flavor.

Sizzling Grilled Salmon With Mango Salsa

Makes 4 servings

Ingredients

- 2 plum tomatoes, diced
- 1 small cucumber, peeled and diced
- 1 large ripe mango, peeled and diced
- 1 jalapeño pepper, seeded and finely chopped
- ½ cup chopped fresh cilantro, plus 2 tbsp for garnish
- 2 tbsp fresh lime juice
- 3 tbsp minced red onion
- 4 6-oz salmon filets
- dash of salt
- freshly ground pepper

Directions

1. In a small bowl, prepare mango salsa by combining first seven ingredients. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate 20–30 minutes before serving.
2. Preheat grill to medium-high. Coat salmon on both sides with cooking spray and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Place salmon skin-side down on grill rack. Grill 3–5 minutes on each side or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork.
3. Serve salmon with mango salsa. Garnish with extra cilantro.

Per serving

401 calories, 36 g protein, 12 g carbohydrate, 23 g fat (5 g saturated fat), 94 mg cholesterol, 2 g fiber, 9 g sugar, 250 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 52%

WebMD.com

What's Cooking!

Thousands of people turn to WebMD.com for meal inspiration every day. Here are the most-clicked recipes.*

Oven-Fried Zucchini Sticks

No-Bake Cookies

Quick French Onion Soup

Wasabi Salmon Burgers

Lasagna Rolls

*as of May 1, 2014

FITNESS & EXERCISE



40 Work It Out
Do you have good running form?

41 Fitness Challenge
Ab-solutely easy core moves

Go Deep

Dive into summer! Make a splash with new workouts and ways to stay active



EXPERT TIP

“Many runners use walking breaks to build in rest periods during a run. Others use them as a way to start increasing mileage.”—*Anthony Luke, MD, MPH*

WORK IT OUT

Cool Runnings

PERFECT YOUR FORM TO
PREVENT INJURY

By Kara Mayer Robinson



● Good running technique can prevent injury and keep your running on track, but how do you know if yours hits the mark? Anthony Luke, MD, MPH, a primary care sports medicine specialist and director of the Human Performance Center at the University of California, San Francisco, weighs in with tips for top-form running.

Strike Properly

The way your feet strike the ground may determine your odds of getting injured. Most runners are heel-strikers, which means the heel hits the ground

just before the rest of the foot. But it's not necessarily best. Heel-strikers had more repetitive stress injuries than forefoot-strikers, according to a recent study. The research isn't conclusive, however, Luke says.

Support Your Feet

Barefoot running has surged as a way to boost performance. But research doesn't support it. "Barefoot running can lead to more Achilles and heel pain [a condition called *plantar fasciitis*] problems since it loads the calf muscles and the foot differently," Luke says.

FROM WEBMD.COM

Q&A

"How do I start running? How long will it take to work up to a 5K?"



Ekho Powell, 35,
business consultant,
Lakeland, Fla.



EXPERT'S ANSWER

"Shoot for three days a week, with a day of rest between runs. Increase your mileage or your time no more than 10% from week to week. Soon you'll start feeling better, more in shape, and less tired. That's when you can start ramping up. Walking breaks are fine. Run for four minutes, then walk for one. Gradually increase the amount of running between walk periods. Strength training and flexibility work a couple of times a week is a must and will help your running. Most people should reach a 5K within eight weeks. Start with one mile, three times a week. Then gradually increase, using the 10% rule. Within eight weeks, you should be there."



Anthony Luke, MD, MPH, director of the Human Performance Center, University of California, San Francisco

Instead, choose a lightweight shoe with a firm heel. If you have high arches, get a well-cushioned shoe. If you have flat feet, get a stabilizing shoe with arch support. If your feet get sore or you overpronate (roll too far inward) or underpronate (roll too far outward), visit a specialty running store with a knowledgeable staff who can help you find the best shoe.

Stand Tall and Strong

Good posture keeps your spine in proper alignment and boosts efficiency. Keep your shoulders back, your head balanced, and your pelvis straight. "Don't arch your back or stick your butt out," Luke says.

Flex your arms with an angle of more than 90 degrees. Let them swing freely, which helps you balance and propels you forward. Focus on tightening your abs, Luke says. A strong core is the foundation of your running and essential for proper form.

Avoid Overstriding

If you take long strides, you may want to dial it down. Overstriding puts more stress on your lower legs and can lead to foot, shin, and knee pain. You're better off with a shorter stride than a longer one. It may feel awkward at first but quick strikes—one foot striking the ground three times each second—will help reduce injury.

Reviewed by
Michael W. Smith, MD
WebMD Chief Medical Editor



Get to the point! Find out the **7 Most Effective Exercises**, a top slideshow at the Fitness Center.

WebMD.com

FITNESS CHALLENGE

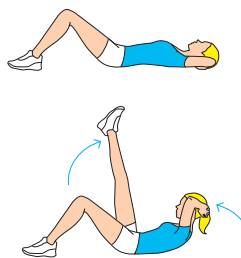
Crunch Time

IT'S BIKINI SEASON! LOOK YOUR BEST WITH THESE CORE TIGHTENING AND TONING MOVES

By Jodi Helmer

Before slipping into your bathing suit, Jennifer Cohen, a Los Angeles-based personal trainer and co-author of *Strong Is the New Skinny: How to Eat, Live, and Move to Maximize Your Power* (out in September), recommends a tummy-toning fitness regimen. "When we're showing skin, we want to be as toned as possible," she says. "A combination of cardio and strength training is essential to burn fat and calories and build muscle."

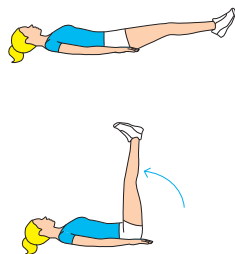
These three moves, done at least three times a week in combination with calorie-burning cardio, will help you look sleeker and stronger in your swimsuit.



Basic Crunch With Leg Extensions

Cohen loves this exercise, which works the transverse abdominals, because "it's an easy move that has more impact than a basic crunch."

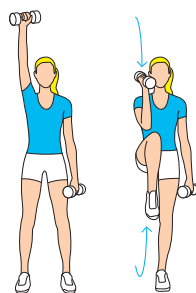
1. Lie on the floor with your fingertips behind your head (don't pull on your head) and your feet flat on the ground, hip-width apart.
2. Exhale, lift your shoulder blades off the ground, straighten your right leg, and lift it as high as possible, keeping your left foot on the floor.
3. Inhale and return to starting position.
4. Repeat with the left leg.
5. Do 12 to 15 reps.



Leg Drops

"This move forces you to engage your abs," Cohen says. It works the lower abdominals to help tighten a tummy bulge.

1. Lie on floor with your legs straight, feet together, and arms at your sides with palms facing down.
2. Keeping your back flat on the floor, engage your abs, and raise your legs to a 90-degree angle so the bottoms of your feet are facing the ceiling. (If you can't raise your legs this high, get them as high as possible.)
3. Lower your legs, letting them hover about an inch off the ground, and hold for five seconds.
4. Raise your legs back toward the ceiling.
5. Do 12 to 15 reps.



Standing Crunches

Adding weights to this move, which works the obliques, amps up the muscle-toning benefits, Cohen explains.

1. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, toes facing forward.
2. Hold a 3- to 5-pound dumbbell in each hand.
3. Extend your right arm above your head.
4. Raise your right knee toward your chest while bending your right arm and bringing your elbow down to meet your knee. Hold for five seconds.
5. Return to starting position.
6. Do 12 to 15 reps.
7. Repeat on the left side.

Reviewed by
Michael W. Smith, MD
WebMD Chief Medical Editor

Q

"I've heard a lot about stand-up paddling, a cross between kayaking and surfing. What do I need to know before I try it?"

Sonia McCutcheon, 46, stay-at-home mom, Charleston, S.C.



A

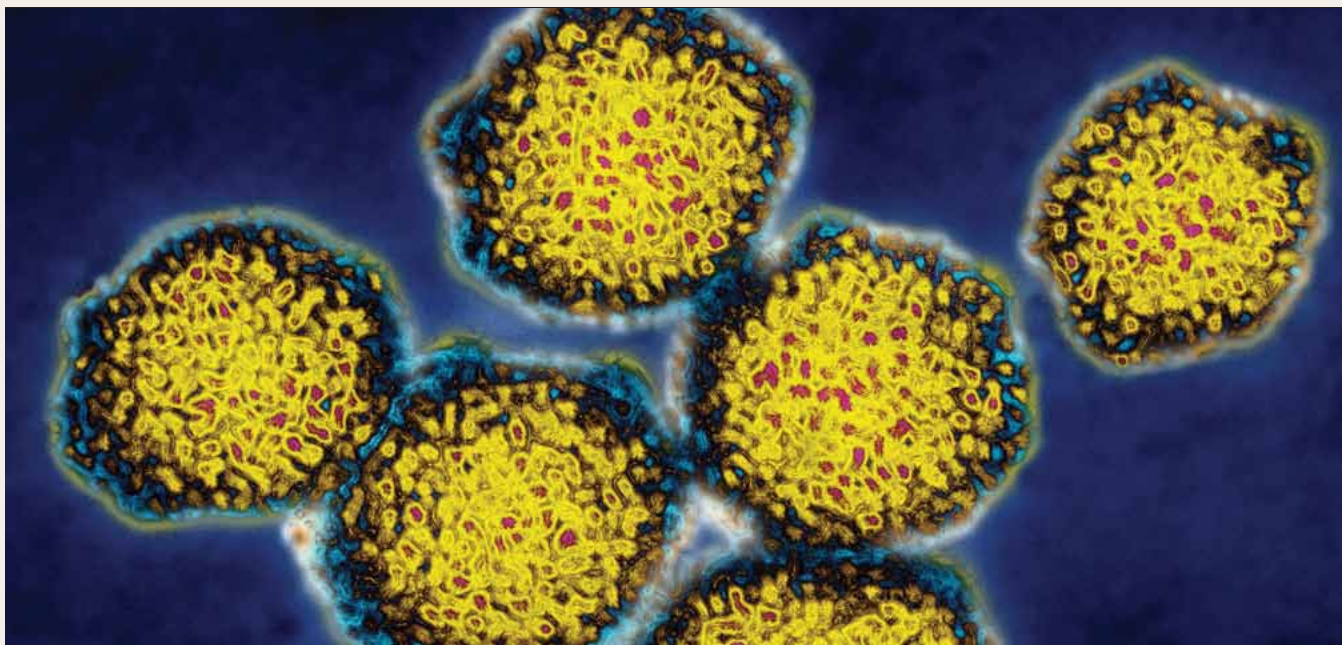
"Stand-up paddling is simple: You stand on the board and use a paddle to propel yourself through the water. The resistance of the water combined with the need to balance on the board helps build core strength, tones arm and leg muscles, and improves balance. Classes taught by certified instructors will teach you how to balance on the board and hold your paddle, how to go forward and turn, and what to do if you fall. Learning proper paddling techniques also reduces the risk of injury. A life jacket is as important as the paddle. It's also a good idea to paddle with another person."



Brody Welte, paddle coach, owner of PaddleFit, and board member of the Stand Up Paddle Industry Association

WebMD[®] Checkup

TAKING CARE, LIVING WELL



What you need to know about **hepatitis**

Hepatitis B and hepatitis C are the most common hepatitis viruses in the U.S. Both can clear up in a few weeks or become lifelong chronic diseases. More than 4 million Americans have chronic hepatitis, but most do not know it because they don't feel ill.

Worldwide, chronic hepatitis is the leading cause of cirrhosis and liver cancer. Hepatitis B and C are spread through infected blood—for example, when people share intravenous needles. Both can be sexually transmitted or passed from mother to baby during childbirth.

Most of the 3 million Americans with hepatitis C were born between 1945 and 1965. Since the disease can be symptomless, the CDC advises everyone born during those years to get a blood test for the virus.

Half the U.S. cases of hepatitis B infect Asian-Americans or Pacific Islanders. The CDC recommends testing for anyone who was born, or whose parent was born, in East or Southeast Asia or the Pacific Islands, except for Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. Treatments and a vaccine are available.

Natasha Lyonne, who stars in the Netflix series *Orange Is the New Black*, told *Entertainment Weekly* she was admitted to the intensive-care unit of a New York hospital for a variety of ailments, including hepatitis C, in 2005. Country music singer Naomi Judd retired in 1991 after her hepatitis C diagnosis. She has helped raise millions of dollars for research.



—Sonya Collins

43 Health Highlights

It's Men's Health Month. Learn more about prostate health.

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A look at mental health: the facts, stats, and figures.

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How good are your sleep habits? Take our quiz to find out.

HEALTH HIGHLIGHTS

WORK FLOW

TIPS FOR PROSTATE HEALTH

By **Matt McMillen**

1 *Get active*
Regular exercise may reduce your risk of prostate growth.

2 *Define benign*
Remember benign prostatic hyperplasia, or enlarged prostate, does not increase your risk of prostate cancer.

3 *Be patient*
Your enlarged prostate can slow the flow of urine, so keep trying until your bladder empties.

4 *Go herbal*
Talk to your doctor about beta-sitosterol, pygeum, and other supplements that may help relieve urinary symptoms of enlarged prostate.

5 *Trim the fat*
Choose healthy fats such as olive oil, fish oil, and nuts to help prevent inflammation.



6 *Ask about screening*
Wondering about prostate cancer testing? Ask your doctor what's right for you.

7 *Don't wait*
If your urination habits have changed, talk to your doctor about treatments to help curb your toilet trips.

8 *Raise a glass*
Red wine may help protect against prostate cancer, so enjoy a few glasses each week.

9 *Perk up*
Enjoy coffee and reduce your risk of prostate cancer. Decaf does the trick, too.

10 *Eat well*
Cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, tomatoes, soy, and legumes may help cut your prostate cancer risk.

EXPERT TIPS



Kirsten Greene, MD, MS
associate professor of urology, University of California San Francisco

"Trouble emptying your bladder? Urinate as much as you can, relax, wait a few minutes, then try again."

"Failure to empty your bladder regularly can predispose you to infections or bladder stones. Empty it every four hours while awake."



Christopher Saigal, MD, MPH
professor and vice chair, department of urology, UCLA

"Try stopping all fluids three hours before going to bed. Skip wine and other alcohol in the evening as well, as these can make you urinate more."

"If you find that you often have to run to the bathroom to make it in time, minimize the amount of alcohol you drink to avoid irritating your bladder."



Sheldon Marks, MD
urologist and microsurgeon, International Center for Vasectomy Reversal, Tucson, Ariz.

"If you see blood in your urine, if it burns when you pee, or if you suddenly have to go urgently and often, see your doctor right away. If you can't urinate at all, go to the emergency room."

"If you have prostate issues, avoid over-the-counter medications such as antihistamines and decongestants, which often worsen prostate blockage."

BY THE NUMBERS

MENTAL HEALTH

FACTS, FIGURES, AND STATS ON TOP HEALTH CONDITIONS

By Heather Hatfield

450 million

People who live with **mental disorders** worldwide



350 million

People who live with **depression** worldwide



17%

Adults in the U.S. considered to be in a state of **optimal mental health**

1

Ranking of depression among **most common mental illnesses** in the world



61.5

MILLION

Adults in the U.S. who have a mental illness in a **given year**



5% to 8%

Adults in the **U.S.** affected by depression



Men who have depression in the U.S. in a given year

6 million



Women who have depression in the U.S. in a given year

12 million

Adults in the U.S. who will have an episode of **major depression** this year

25 MILLION



50%

Percent who will **receive treatment** for their depression



Average **length of hospital stay** for major depression: 6.5 days

People in the U.S. **hospitalized with major depression** in a given year

395,000

less than 50

Percentage of people living with depression who **receive known, effective treatments**

People in the U.S. who **see a health care provider** or go to an ER for depression in a given year

eight million



Percentage of people who **die by suicide** who have depression

50%





HEALTH CHECK

SLEEP MATTERS

GSDlady, a member of the WebMD sleep disorders community, has never been a “great sleeper.” But as she gets older, she writes, “I seem to wake up more often during the night. I sleep for about two hours, then I wake up every hour after that and sometimes two to three times each hour. I only get about six hours sleep anyway and by the end of some days, I’m exhausted.” It’s not unusual to develop sleep problems as you age. That’s why forming good shut-eye habits is important. How good are yours?



ASK YOUR DOCTOR

1

Do my sleep problems indicate that I may have a sleep disorder? If so, what type?

2

Are my sleep problems caused by an underlying medical or mental issue?

3

Will a sleep medication help? Are prescription sleep medications addictive?

4

Should I see a sleep specialist? Will I need to undergo overnight testing?

QUIZ

1. Do you watch TV or use a computer before going to bed?
☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Do you smoke or drink alcohol or caffeine before sleeping?
☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Do you exercise before bedtime?
☐ Yes ☐ No
4. Does your pet sleep with you?
☐ Yes ☐ No
5. If you work the night shift, do you take steps to improve your sleep?
☐ Yes ☐ No

Answers: **1.** Getting involved in a movie or Internet search can steal time from your sleep. Plus, the light from a TV, computer, or other electronic device can suppress the production of melatonin, which signals your body to prepare for sleep. **2.** Nicotine is a stimulant and can disrupt sleep. Caffeine is also a stimulant, so avoid it after 3 p.m. (According to the National Sleep Foundation, it takes six hours for your body to metabolize one-half of any caffeine you ingest.) Alcohol may help you fall asleep, but it alters your sleep stages and increases the number of times you wake up during the night. One study found that alcohol affected the quality and duration of women’s sleep more than men’s. **3.** Regular exercise contributes to sounder sleep. Doctors used to recommend avoiding exercise too close to bedtime, but new research shows that evening exercise doesn’t disrupt sleep for those who don’t have a sleep disorder. **4.** Pets can disrupt your sleep by jumping on the bed, playing, scratching, snoring, meowing, barking, or triggering your allergies. Keep them out of the bedroom or at least off your bed. **5.** People who work nights are at risk for developing “shift-work sleep disorder,” a type of insomnia. In the short term, this disorder can cause concentration problems, accidents, irritability, and depression. In the long term, it can cause heart and digestive problems. Doctors recommend using heavy shades or eye masks to block light when you’re sleeping and maintaining the same sleep/wake schedule every day of the week, even on days off.

DID YOU KNOW?

INFANTS REQUIRE ABOUT
16 HOURS OF SLEEP
A DAY; TEENS NEED ABOUT 9 HOURS.

SOURCES:

National Sleep Foundation; National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; WebMD Sleep Disorders Health Center

Regina Hall

Actor

1 You had two releases last fall—*The Best Man Holiday* and *About Last Night*—and soon the premiere of *Think Like a Man Too* and a new FX television series, *Married*. How does that feel? This is when they say a woman's career is winding down, so it's been great to see mine spring forward. I think that's a testament to how we're appreciating women and age.

2 Before becoming an actor, you were on track to be a journalist. Are you drawn to news? I like stories. I still watch *Dateline*, and I love *Frontline*. I just finished filming a PBS documentary on trafficking and domestic violence. I went to Atlanta with Nicholas Kristof, who writes for the [New York] Times. We looked at women who suffer from domestic violence and the activists trying to make a change.

3 Your mother was diagnosed with scleroderma, a chronic connective-tissue disease. What have you done to promote awareness? Sometimes I write for *Ability*, a disability magazine. Many people and doctors have become more aware of it. But it's been hard to raise money.

Read the full Q&A with Regina Hall in our free app!

Hall stars in *Think Like a Man Too*, which premieres in theaters June 20.



4 Your father died from a massive stroke, and your mother had a mild stroke a few years ago. How has this affected you? It's taught me a lot about the brevity of life—not just about being alive but thriving while you're here. Knowing I have a history of strokes makes me much more conscious of what I eat. It puts a real spotlight on taking care of yourself.

5 Do you have a health philosophy? I eat good stuff and bad stuff, but I try to eat more good stuff. I think people don't realize that your body tells you what it really likes—what makes it feel good and work at an optimum level. I love raw shakes. If I make it myself, I'll do kale and coconut water with maybe some spirulina, a couple of berries, ginger. I make it up.

6 What's your best health habit? I have a few rituals. Water—lots of water. I think it flushes out toxins and it's good for your skin. I also take a lot of oils: olive, omega, borage. I like to do it in liquid form. Oh, and my probiotics.

7 What's your worst health habit? French fries and chips. I am one big piece of salt. It's

terrible for cellulite. I love anyone's fries but I do love McDonald's fries. When you get them from a place that makes them just right, I mean, it's just wrong!

8 Which health habits were most helpful when you filmed *Think Like a Man Too*? The whole thing took place in Vegas! It's easy to be healthy in certain cities—L.A.!—but in others it's harder. I can't say that was my healthiest point. I struggled just to stay good.

9 You're launching a new line of earth-friendly animal waste pick-up bags, Puff Puff Paws—when? My partner Alma and I want to launch it this year. We just got a manufacturer. We want people to have the option of a green bag to be a little more earth-conscious and -friendly.

10 You bought a house in L.A.'s San Fernando Valley. Why? In L.A., there's so much traffic. And the whole feeling of Hollywood—sometimes I don't want to think of the business. Instead of living closer to Hollywood, I live in Tarzana. When I go home, it's like my brain can really declutter. —Kara Mayer Robinson