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EMMA ROBERTS

THE ACTOR
MAKES THE
GRADE ON SET
AND OFF

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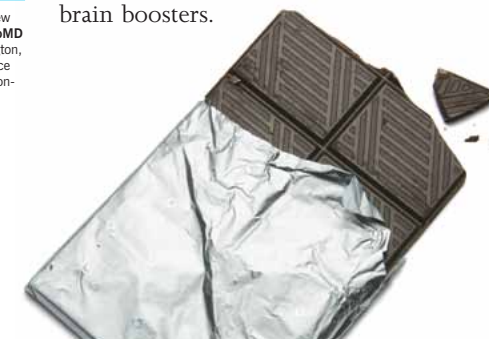
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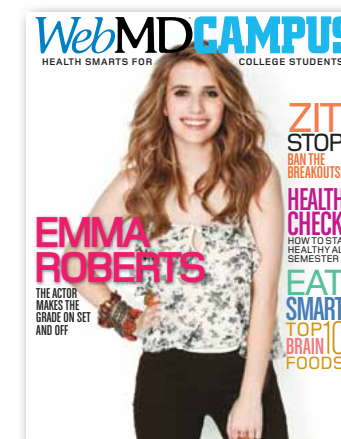
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fitness A to Z

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Can music change your mood? What about certain foods? Take **WebMD's quiz on myths and facts about moods** to find out.



mood myths

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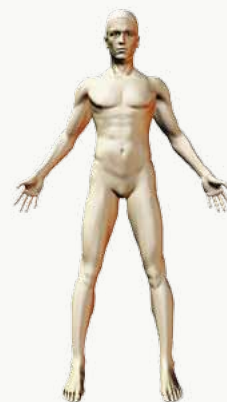
Pneumonia

TOP SYMPTOMS INCLUDE

- ▶ Cough with sputum
- ▶ Fever
- ▶ Fast breathing or feeling short of breath

Pneumonia, caused by either viruses or bacteria, is an infection of the lung's tissue and a potentially serious illness. In addition to the symptoms above, you may have chills, fatigue, or sharp chest pain, especially when you breathe in. Nausea, diarrhea, and vomiting are also common. Some pneumonias have milder respiratory symptoms—in fact people might not know they have the condition at all (this is sometimes called "walking pneumonia"). Doctors can diagnose pneumonia just by doing a physical exam, listening to your lungs, and asking a few questions. They may order lung X-rays as well. Treatment includes rest, drinking lots of liquids, and, if your pneumonia is bacterial, antibiotics. If the illness is severe, you might need to be hospitalized.

symptomchecker



Key in your symptoms

Snack Attack

Do you need to eat before hitting the gym?



Q ▶ What's the best snack before working out? How long before my workout should I eat it?

A ▶ First, be sure you really need a snack. Generally, you don't need to eat before exercise unless you tend to run low on energy during your workouts or it's been more than a couple of hours since your last meal (think an early morning workout—how long ago was dinner?).

The best time to eat is about 30 minutes before you begin to exercise, and the best snack is one that combines carbohydrates and protein, with an emphasis on the carbs. You don't need a lot of food, by the way. For carbs, aim for the equivalent of half of a bagel or a large banana; for protein, consider a couple tablespoons of peanut butter or a small cup of low- or nonfat yogurt. If fresh food isn't an option, look for energy bars with 25 to 40 grams of carbohydrate and about 10 grams of protein.

Best foods to avoid? Go easy on caffeine and warm fluids (which tend to speed food through your intestines) as well as milk and high-fat or high-fiber foods, all of which can upset your stomach. Eating too much fat can also slow down the absorption of carbs and leave you feeling sluggish. Avoid high-calorie snacks if you're watching your weight—you may end up consuming more calories than you burn.



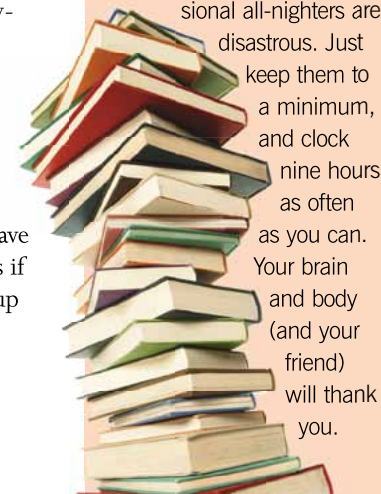
Richard Weil, MEd, CDE
WebMD FITNESS EXPERT

My friend says I'm ruining my health by pulling all-nighters, but I say it's no big deal. Who's right?

You're kidding, right? People do vary slightly in their sleep needs, but the idea that a person can exist on three or four—or no—hours of sleep a night is FALSE. In fact, you're in the crowd of college students who are chronically sleep-deprived—which research links to a variety of health problems.

"Lack of sleep impairs your ability to learn, remember, and process new facts," says Donna Arand, PhD, DABSM, clinical director of the Kettering Sleep Disorders Center in Dayton, Ohio. That sort of defeats the purpose of trading sleep for studying in the first place.

That's not to say occasional all-nighters are disastrous. Just keep them to a minimum, and clock nine hours as often as you can. Your brain and body (and your friend) will thank you.



true or false?

Q ▶ I figure I'll pick up a cold or the flu at some point from all the sniffing, coughing students in my classes. How do I know when to seek medical help?

A ▶ You're right. Because you spend a lot of time around other people, your chances of getting a cold or the flu this winter are high.

What's the difference? A typical cold causes a runny nose (the discharge is usually clear, but it could be yellow or green in the mornings), body aches, coughing, and sometimes a mild fever (usually for the first three to four days). By day four or five, you should be well on your way to recovery.

Flu, on the other hand, can produce all those symptoms, plus headaches, fatigue, and a higher fever—and it lasts longer.

Both colds and flu are caused by viruses, not bacteria, so it's really just time that will make them go away. That said, both ailments can morph into more serious conditions, including sinus infection, bronchitis, pneumonia, and strep throat.

How to tell? Go to the clinic if you have sinus pressure or pain, a persistent or worsening sore throat, a deep cough that's making you hack up yellow or green phlegm (all day, not just mornings), fast or difficult breathing, ear pain, or a high fever. If you think you have the flu—and it's diagnosed quickly enough—a health care provider can give you an antiviral drug to help ease symptoms faster.



Rod Moser, PA, PhD
WebMD EAR, NOSE, & THROAT EXPERT

Get expert answers to all your health questions.



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Health Check

By Linda Formichelli
WebMD Contributing Writer

Kick-start
this semester
with expert
strategies for
staying well

You're studying for exams, playing sports, socializing on weekends, perhaps even working at a part-time job. Who has time for health?

Well, let's put it this way: How do you think it will affect your cramming, working, and relaxation time if you're under the covers with the flu or low energy from eating nothing but corn chips and pizza?

Take care of your body and you'll rock in school and at work, not to mention in your social life. We talked with David Rosenthal, MD, director of Harvard University Health Services, to create a primer for lasting health all school-year long.

CRUSH IT ON CARDIO

Regular cardio exercise will fend off stress and give you energy to make it through a marathon class load, plus it's good for your heart and just about every other part of your body. The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) recommends

moderate cardio for 30 minutes, five times per week.

No time? Two 15-minute sessions are as good as one half-hour stint. Take your pick of exercise, from walking and swimming to kickboxing and rowing. If you want more bang for your cardio time,

pump up the intensity so the exercise feels somewhat hard to very hard. The ACSM says you can get the same benefit from 20 minutes of vigorous cardio just three times a week as from those five 30-minute moderate workouts.

DE-STRESS WITH STRETCHING

Exams are stressful. Work is stressful. And loads of homework? No question—stressful. That's why Rosenthal suggests a gentle, relaxing practice like yoga, tai chi,



Reviewed by
Michael W. Smith, MD
WebMD CHIEF MEDICAL EDITOR

or qigong two to three times per week. These exercises combine deep breathing with stretching and movement and are excellent at melting away built-up stress. If your campus doesn't offer classes, check out what's available in the nearest town, spring for a DVD, or download an app.

GET YOUR BEAUTY SLEEP

Chances are you're not getting enough sleep. Rosenthal suggests college students log six to eight hours per night. When you must pull an all-nighter, try to take a one-to two-hour nap the next day to make up some of the difference. If you have roommates who are up all night, make a contract that outlines quiet hours or create sleeping arrangements that let the quiet roomies bunk in the same room, Rosenthal says.

TAKE FIVE

Hunching over a computer keyboard all day can strain your wrists, eyes, neck, and back. And that hunchback look? So not attractive. Take a time-out every half hour to stretch, walk around, deep-breathe for five minutes, or otherwise move away from the screen.

EAT SOME GREENS

Fruits and veggies are bursting with phytonutrients that help keep infection and disease at bay, so you want plenty on your plate, says Rosenthal. In fact, a good (and easy) rule of thumb is to make sure half your plate is fruits and vegetables. Most college dining services offer an array of salads and other greens, so availability shouldn't be a problem. Mix it up: spinach salad one day, mixed greens the next. No need to get stuck in a one-note fruit or veggie rut—unless you want to eat an apple a day. That bromide still holds true.

FIGHT THE FLU

To avoid being laid up in bed with a raging fever for a week, get a flu shot this fall. The vaccine is usually available by early October, though you can benefit from a vaccination as late as early December, when there are still several months left in the flu season. This is especially important for college students who are in close quarters with roomies and classmates. Many colleges offer flu shots for free or

for a small charge that's typically covered by insurance.

CHUG SOME WATER

Be sure to down plenty of (non-alcoholic) liquids each day, Rosenthal says—more if you exercise or tend to perspire a lot. Dehydration can make you more vulnerable to illness and infections, not to mention that feeling that you've been run over by a truck. By the time you notice you're thirsty, you're probably already dehydrated, so don't get to that point. How much water is enough? If your urine is light yellow, you're well-hydrated. If H₂O isn't your thing, don't worry—juice, tea, and other beverages count as well.

BACK OFF THE DRINKS

Once you hit 21, your inclination may be to make up for lost time by drinking more than you should. But Rosenthal says drinking too much alcohol is a risk factor for accidents, injuries, and regrettable behaviors (which then end up on Facebook), not to mention a host of serious conditions from high blood pressure and liver disease to cancer. Stick to the recommended daily limit: no more than two beers or glasses of wine for men, and one for women.

FIND YOUR BFFS

Having someone you can talk to and count on is important for your mental health, and the right friends will encourage healthy habits. But it can be hard to develop a circle of buds when you're new on campus, overloaded with studying, and working to boot. Seek out campus groups, play a sport, get to know your dorm mates, and otherwise put yourself out there to attract friends who will support you, and vice versa, during the college years and beyond.

KICK THE HABIT

Even though the risks of smoking—like heart disease, lung cancer, and emphysema—will elicit a big “duh” from almost any college student, some still light up. If that's you, look into the smoking cessation programs offered by your college wellness center. No luck? Check out public health departments for help. Kicking the habit isn't a maybe—it's a must-do for your health, today and long-term. ■



Dorm P.T.

No gym? No problem. For a workout you can do in your dorm room with zero equipment, we talked to Melina Christidis, a certified personal trainer and group instructor at the Student Recreation and Wellness Center at California State University, Long Beach.

Do this full-body strength and conditioning workout two to three times per week. Three times through the circuit is one workout.

1. Push-ups (25 repetitions): If you can't do a full push-up, or you tire in the middle of the set, you can do them on your knees.

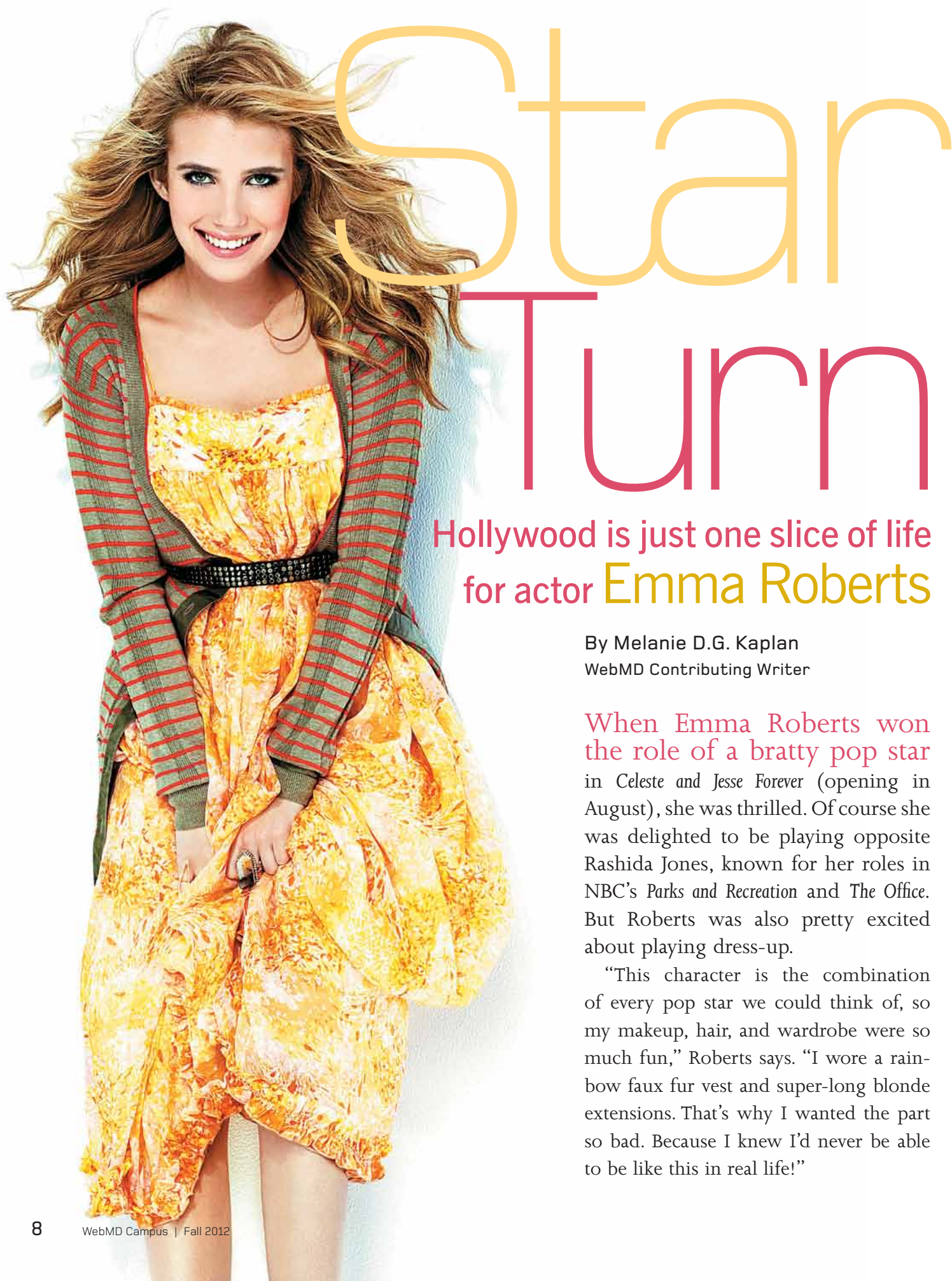
2. Squat jumps (25 reps): Stand with your feet slightly wider than hip width apart. Drop your bottom down, shifting your hips back and keeping your back straight and chest lifted. Try to lower to a 90-degree angle, keeping your knees over your ankles (make sure your knees don't go farther than your toes). After you complete the squat, jump up. Land in the starting position and repeat.

3. Jumping jacks or jump rope (25 reps): You know the drill!

4. Plank (1 minute): Get into push-up position, with your hands under your shoulders and your body in a straight line (don't raise your hips up or let them sag). Hold this position for 30 seconds. Work up to 60 seconds.

5. Burpees (25 reps): Bend down and put your hands on the floor, then jump back into a plank position. Do a push-up, then jump your feet back up to your hands and jump straight up. (If you're a beginning exerciser, skip the push-up.)





Star Turn

Hollywood is just one slice of life
for actor **Emma Roberts**

By **Melanie D.G. Kaplan**
WebMD Contributing Writer

When Emma Roberts won the role of a bratty pop star in *Celeste and Jesse Forever* (opening in August), she was thrilled. Of course she was delighted to be playing opposite Rashida Jones, known for her roles in NBC's *Parks and Recreation* and *The Office*. But Roberts was also pretty excited about playing dress-up.

"This character is the combination of every pop star we could think of, so my makeup, hair, and wardrobe were so much fun," Roberts says. "I wore a rainbow faux fur vest and super-long blonde extensions. That's why I wanted the part so bad. Because I knew I'd never be able to be like this in real life!"

In real life, the 21-year-old actor habitually hits snooze on her alarm clock, oversleeps and rushes out of her Los Angeles apartment in the least time-consuming outfit possible. Today she's wearing polka-dot jeans, a T-shirt, and flip-flops (she's about to get a pedicure). But when she's on the red carpet, she's all girl. "I try to wear dresses," she says. "I feel like it's such a fairy tale."

It may seem that Roberts' life has been one big fairy tale. Her very first audition yielded the role of Johnny Depp and Penelope Cruz's daughter in *Blow*, she became a tween star as Addie Singer in Nickelodeon's *Unfabulous*, and she has polished her acting skills in a number of films, both independent (*Lymelife*) and blockbuster (*Hotel for Dogs*). This summer, she's been shooting Dito Montiel's heist drama, *Empire State*. Last but not least, she is the niece of actor Julia Roberts and daughter of actor Eric Roberts.

Growing up, Roberts visited Aunt Julia on shoots and, she says, was so dazzled by the behind-the-scenes magic that her parents had to drag her away at night. Even now, she says, she cherishes every moment on the set, where she is endlessly inspired by experienced actors and directors. After working with Jones, who not only starred as Celeste but also wrote the script for the new film, Roberts started thinking about writing and producing. Earlier this year while shooting the comedy *Adult World*, in which she co-stars with John Cusack, she got to know director Scott Coffey really well and is now eager to do more comedy—maybe something of *Bridesmaids*' ilk, she says. And her onetime dream of starting a girl band was reignited when she got to sing in her *Celeste and Jesse Forever* pop star role. "The acting part is fun," she says, "but there's so much more to explore."

Meanwhile, Roberts is exploring her own adult world—maintaining an apartment, keeping her room clean without being asked, and staying fit with yoga and SoulCycle, an intense indoor cycling workout. Although she decided to take a break from school

after attending Sarah Lawrence College last fall, she says she constantly reads on the set to help pass time.

On the side, she models for Neutrogena, joking that being a face model is perfect since she's only 5 feet 2 inches tall. She is the spokesperson for the company's annual Wave for Change campaign, which helps teens give back to their communities; the money raised goes to educational charities. And Roberts herself gives back: In early 2006, she helped build houses for families who lost theirs in Hurricane Katrina and has been involved with the Lollipop Kids Foundation, which supports children with disabilities and their families.

Even as she keeps busy with the Hollywood juggle, Roberts' connection with her family remains strong. "When I'm on location, I have my mom come stay with me because I get so lonely," she says. "I tell her I need her to drive me around—I'm not a very good driver."

Roberts is especially close to her 11-year-old half sister, Grace. "She visits me, or I steal her from my mom, and we go shopping," she says. "She's hilarious, and she's totally herself. She's the coolest person ever." Roberts takes pride in being a role model for Grace—and for other young girls. "I see how impressionable they are, and I want to provide a good example," she says. "But I also think it's important to still be yourself—and have your own life." ■

EMMA'S FAVORITE THINGS

- 1 **Authors:** Joan Didion, Chuck Palahniuk
- 2 **Comfort food:** toasted sourdough bread with butter
- 3 **Dream:** an all-girl band with her friends
- 4 **Exercise:** SoulCycle and yoga



Reviewed by
Hansa Bhargava, MD
WebMD MEDICAL EDITOR

“The acting part is fun, but there’s so much more to explore.”



Zitstop

Is your lifestyle causing your acne? Find out and learn how to clear it up



By Shelley Levitt, WebMD Contributing Writer

College may be good for the mind, but it can be tough on your skin. Maxine Hillman, a 21-year-old junior, can attest to this. She had struggled with acne since the fourth grade, but with the help of a dermatologist, she finally got it under control in her teens. That is, until her first year at the University of California, San Diego. Pizza, breadsticks, and ice cream, a heavy course load as a linguistics and Latin double major, and a shift in sleep patterns (“I was napping more than I did in preschool”) all led to what she calls “a monumental skin freak-out.”

“The college years are a prime time for breaking out, even for people who went through the bulk of their teen years without acne,” says Jody Levine, MD, assistant clinical professor of dermatology at Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York City. “Your skin reflects your overall health, and the disruptions in diet, exercise, and sleep, plus stress, can all lead to acne flare-ups.”

For Hillman and other young adults battling breakouts, sticking to a simple skin care routine is the best defense. Here’s what our experts recommend.

FACE

Cleanse Before bedtime, wash your skin with a cleansing bar or lotion formulated for the face, such as Neutrogena Fresh Foaming Cleanser (\$5.49), Levine says. If you have dry skin, says Adam Friedman, MD, director of dermatologic research at New York City’s Montefiore Medical Center, choose a mild non-soap cleanser like Cetaphil Daily Facial Cleanser (\$8.49) to avoid stripping away the oils your skin needs. Don’t skip this daily step! Going to sleep with the day’s accumulation of grime, dead skin cells, and makeup clogging your pores can lead to acne bacteria growth, says Friedman.

In the morning, just splash lukewarm water over your face. “Overwashing will



Reviewed by
Karyn Grossman, MD
WebMD SKIN CARE EXPERT



dry out your skin and rinse away those good oils and fats that protect skin from the nastiness in the world, like dirt and bacteria,” Friedman says.

For acne-prone skin, choose a cleanser with benzoyl peroxide or salicylic acid. These ingredients kill the bacteria that cause acne and remove excess skin cells that can clog pores.

Hydrate and Protect Every morning, year-round, smooth on a lotion with a sun protection factor (SPF). “Damaging rays come through clouds and even glass,” says Levine. “When you make using sunscreen every morning part of your routine, it becomes a habit so you don’t have to think about it.”

While your skin is still damp, apply a broad-spectrum, moisturizing sunscreen with an SPF 30 or higher. You want a broad-spectrum product because it protects against both UVA radiation (the aging rays) and UVB (the burning rays) as well as skin cancer. Make sure the label says “noncomedogenic,” which means it won’t clog pores.

Neutrogena Healthy Defense Daily Moisturizer SPF 50 (\$12.99) and Olay Complete Defense Daily UV Moisturizer SPF 30 (\$14.99) are “light feeling, don’t smell like sunblock, and have good coverage,” says Levine. Eucerin Everyday Protection Face Lotion SPF 30 (\$8.99) “is a little thicker but offers very good protection,” she adds. And she likes EltaMD UV Clear SPF 46 (\$29) because it “contains niacinamide, good for acne-prone skin.”

Exfoliate If your skin likes to hoard dead skin cells—a dull complexion is a telltale

If your skin likes to hoard dead skin cells—a dull complexion is a telltale sign—an exfoliating scrub can slough them off.

sign—an exfoliating scrub can slough them off. Fruit or nut scrubs can be too abrasive, so choose a product with microbeads that don’t feel rough against your skin.

Clinique Exfoliating Scrub (\$18.50) and Neutrogena Deep Clean Gentle Scrub (\$6.29) are both effective and won’t scrape your skin, says Friedman.

BODY

For good hygiene, all you really need is a daily shower or bath and a bar of soap. Believe it or not, on most days you only need to soap up your underarms and groin, says Friedman.

“Your skin is in a constant state of turnover, pushing off old skin cells, which are then replaced by newer ones,” he says. “Overwashing with soap can limit your skin’s ability to stay hydrated and protect you from bacteria. You can usually get away with using soap on your arms, body, and legs every other day and just use water in between. Areas more prone to sweating and oil production do require daily cleansing with soap.”

Dove Body Wash (\$8.99) is Levine’s favorite. “It’s very moisturizing,” she says. If your skin is extremely dry, Friedman suggests soap-free Cetaphil RestoraDerm Skin Restoring Body Wash (\$14.99).

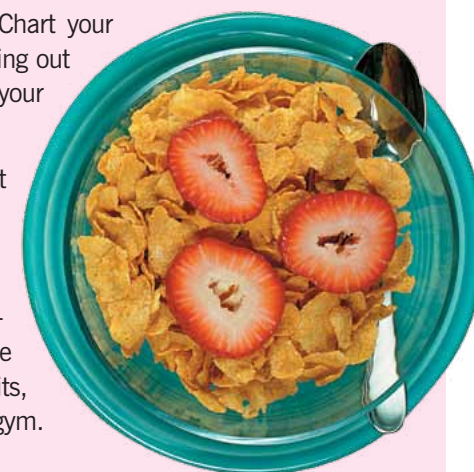
As soon as you step out of the tub or shower, pat your skin lightly with a towel and apply a moisturizer, says Friedman. Look for occlusive agents like dimethicone, petrolatum, paraffin, and lanolin that block water from being lost when the skin is exposed to dry air, he says. You also want your moisturizer to contain humectants that hydrate by pulling water from the outside into your skin.

While the weather is still warm, try a light formulation with sunscreen, such as Yes to Carrots Hydrating Body Lotion with SPF 30 (\$14.99). As soon as the cold hits, switch to CeraVe SA Renewing Lotion (\$15.99), which blocks moisture loss and repairs the skin barrier, says Friedman. That makes it a good choice for the winter months, when low humidity and blasting heaters lead to parched skin. ■

Skin S.O.S. Here’s what can worsen acne breakouts and how you can reduce the risk of bad flare-ups.

Processed food. “Sugary, starchy, highly processed foods all cause blood sugar to spike, and that leads your body to produce more insulin, insulin growth factor, and androgen,” says dermatologist Jody Levine, MD. “We now know that it’s these hormonal surges that lead to excess sebum or oil production and then to acne.” **Solution:** Chart your skin eruptions. If you notice yourself breaking out after eating, say, dairy, eliminate it from your diet and see what happens.

Stress. Whatever the cause of stress, it weakens your immune system and amps up your body’s inflammatory response. The result: an eruption of pimples, or worse, rosacea, eczema, or any other skin condition you may have. **Solution:** Counteract the stress, make sure you’re eating lots of fruits, veggies, and whole grains, or head to the gym.



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SmartFood

Keep your mind and body in shape with these top 10 brain boosters

By Matt McMillen
WebMD Contributing Writer

Poring over textbooks, organizing lecture notes, and prepping for tests take a toll on your brain. Give your gray matter the fuel it needs to help you stay focused and absorb what you learn in the classroom.

UCLA neuroscientist Fernando Gomez-Pinilla, PhD, and dietitian Marjorie Nolan, RD, a nutrition counselor and personal trainer in New York City, put on their thinking caps and came up with a top-10 list of brain foods.

1 MILK AND YOGURT Low-fat dairy products are packed with protein and B vitamins that may help you concentrate and work efficiently, says Nolan. She especially recommends plain, nonfat Greek yogurt, which is super high in protein and has no added sugar. Milk and yogurt are fortified with vitamin D, which also supports brain health.

“Vitamins and minerals follow thousands of pathways through the body to the brain, and there are so many reactions along the way,” says Gomez-Pinilla. “We don’t yet know much about the mechanism, but they are important for everything.”

2 OATS It’s hard to beat oatmeal at breakfast. You get a bowlful of B vitamins and fiber, as well as potassium, zinc, and vitamin E. “Most people don’t realize how important all that is for brain

health,” says Nolan. The B vitamins aid memory, while vitamin E works to prevent cognitive deterioration. “Vitamin B9, or folic acid, is particularly important for cognitive function, though we don’t yet know why,” says Gomez-Pinilla.

Oatmeal is a minimally processed whole grain, which you digest slowly, so it provides steady energy to your brain and body.

3 BLUEBERRIES One of nature’s perfect foods, blueberries are packed with antioxidants and phytochemicals, the compounds that make them a deep-blue color. Blueberries may help maintain peak brain performance, likely by ridding the brain of harmful molecules called free radicals. A recent study indicates that blueberries may improve both learning and working memory.

Nolan recommends two servings (about one and a half cups) of fresh or frozen blueberries a day.

4 SALMON “We need fat for our brains,” says Nolan. Salmon is the best source of omega-3 fatty acids, healthy fats that studies suggest may aid brain development, protect the brain from deterioration, and enhance brain function. “The brain can’t synthesize omega-3s, so they are an essential component for the diet,” says Gomez-Pinilla.

He recommends enjoying your salmon Indian style: “Curried salmon gives you omega-3s mixed with turmeric, which is also good for the brain.” Both wild-caught and farm-raised salmon provide omega-3s. The American Heart Association recommends two 3.5-ounce servings of fish per week.

5 WALNUTS While all nuts provide brain fuel in the form of protein and both omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids, walnuts are best for your gray matter, Nolan says. One study found that students who regularly ate walnuts were better at deductive reasoning. The healthy fat in nuts is still fat, so you don’t want to eat too many. Stick to a daily 1-ounce serving—just enough to fit in the palm of your hand.



6 HEMPSEED Hempseed is a real superfood, Nolan says, adding that it provides brain-powering protein, omega-3s and -6s, and a variety of antioxidants and other nutrients. Often packaged as a powder, the seeds of *Cannabis sativa*—better known as hemp—are totally versatile. Their nutty flavor blends well with lots of breakfast foods and baked goods. Stir a couple of spoonfuls into oatmeal, mix with milk or yogurt, sprinkle on cereal, or bake into muffins.

7 CHOCOLATE Yes, says Nolan, chocolate is brain food: “It’s really high in flavonoids, which may help neurological functioning. It likely works by increasing blood flow to the brain.”

But not all chocolate is created equal. Milk chocolate has too little cocoa to provide benefits, and white chocolate—which is not really chocolate—has no cocoa at all. “Cocoa,” says Nolan, “is where you are getting the nutrition and the brainpower.”

Stick to dark, bittersweet chocolate, and no more than a few squares a day, about half an ounce. Or stir a teaspoon of cocoa powder into your Greek yogurt. Avoid alkalized or Dutch processed cocoa, which has fewer antioxidants than regular cocoa.

8 DARK GREEN VEGETABLES Spinach, asparagus, broccoli, and Brussels sprouts all provide folate, which Gomez-Pinilla says appears crucial to brain function. Low levels have been linked to

cognitive deterioration and dementia. Make sure to eat a good mix of veggies rather than favoring just one or two, he adds. “Variety seems to be very important because a deficiency in just about any mineral can create problems for the brain.”


9 BEANS Bring on the burritos! Beans supply high-quality protein, magnesium, and B vitamins, all of which help your brain work as it should. Because beans also have lots of fiber and complex carbohydrates, you’ll digest them slowly and benefit from them over the course of the day. Nolan says that, across the board, all beans provide about the same amounts of protein and fiber.

They are also good sources of omega-3s and antioxidants, particularly kidney beans. Try to eat one-half to two-thirds cup of beans every day, Nolan recommends.

10 COFFEE Caffeinated coffee gives you a much-needed dose of early morning energy, and in small doses, it can also help you concentrate, Nolan says. The key word here is “small.” Stick to 8-ounce cups instead of grande-size portions to avoid caffeine jitters—and extra calories, if you’re a latte, mocha, or cappuccino drinker.

Coffee, says Gomez-Pinilla, “may be protective of many things in the brain.” Some studies suggest it might help protect against Parkinson’s disease later in life. Don’t like coffee? Do what Gomez-Pinilla does and switch to green tea, which has many of the same health benefits. ■



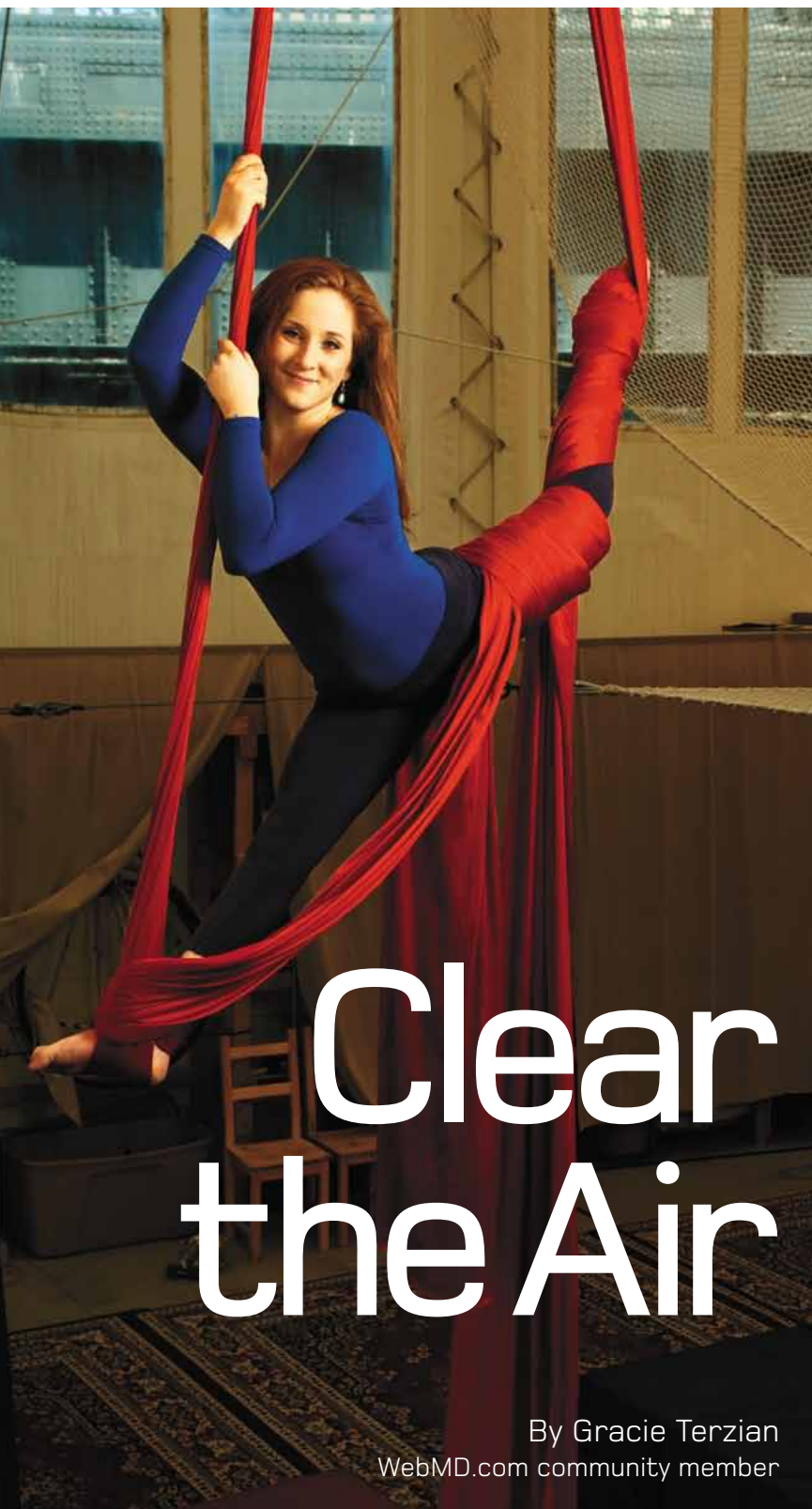
 Reviewed by
Kathleen Zelman, MPH, RD, LD
WebMD DIRECTOR OF NUTRITION

FROM LEFT: ANDREW G. HOBBS/GETTY IMAGES; KEVIN SUMMERS/GETTY IMAGES; CHUNG LEE

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Clear the Air

By Gracie Terzian
WebMD.com community member

I think my mother was more

worried about my going to college three years ago than I was. I've had asthma since I was very young. It was worse when I was younger. I used to have to use an inhaler before I ran the mile in PE. One time, I had a big role in a play and developed pneumonia. My asthma got really bad then. I remember using my nebulizer—it's a machine that creates a medicated inhalable mist—backstage before I went on. I hid cough drops on the backs of set pieces to help me get through.

Now I'm 21. I'm a senior at the University of Virginia, majoring in drama. I've gotten good at keeping my asthma under control. It mostly only acts up when I'm sick, especially when I have a cold or a cough.

The biggest thing I've had to learn is to carry an inhaler with me wherever I go. That can be hard to remember. My solution is to have a bunch of inhalers and leave them in my bags. That way, no matter which bag I pick up—my backpack, my purse, whatever—I know I have an inhaler. Every time I go back to my home in Northern Virginia, I get my prescription refilled from my family doctor. I also have my own nebulizer, which I keep in my dorm room and use occasionally.

My advice for teenagers with asthma who are at college is to take it seriously. Keep an inhaler with you all the time. That includes when you go out at night. You might think you don't have to pay attention because your parents aren't around, but you have to pay attention more because they're not there to remind you. If you start drinking and dancing and having fun, you might not notice your asthma is acting up. There are lots of cigarettes at college parties, which can trigger some people's asthma.

Also, try your best to keep your allergies under control—that keeps your system calmer, so it's less likely the allergies will erupt into asthma. Know what you're allergic to. Take preventive steps, whether it's wrapping your bedding in allergy-protective covering or avoiding dust and mold. For me, it has meant doing daily nasal irrigation and starting up immunotherapy shots again. I think I've learned to take a little better care of myself than other people my age do.

I would also say to stay positive and don't hold back. Last fall I interned at *Saturday Night Live*, and I hope to be there this fall, too. This summer I interned at a recording studio and wrote music with my piano teacher.

I also am very active. I take lots of dance and aerial acrobatics classes. This past spring I taught other students how to do aerial acrobatics and co-wrote a comedy that included aerial silks, aerial hoops, juggling, and partner balancing. The audience loved it!

Being fit is part of prevention, and that's not a bad thing at all.

ANDREW HUST