

# UNC Comprehensive Stroke Center: Stroke Awareness Month Wellness Challenge

*May 2021*



02.24.2020

# MAY Wellness Challenge

## Swap your snack

Today, swap your snack for something healthy.

If you are craving something crunchy, try:

- Apples
- Carrots
- Roasted chickpeas
- Nuts and seeds

If you need a snack to fill you up, try a fruit and veggie smoothie or whole grain toast with nut butter

If you're looking for something sweet, try a frozen banana or fresh fruit salad.

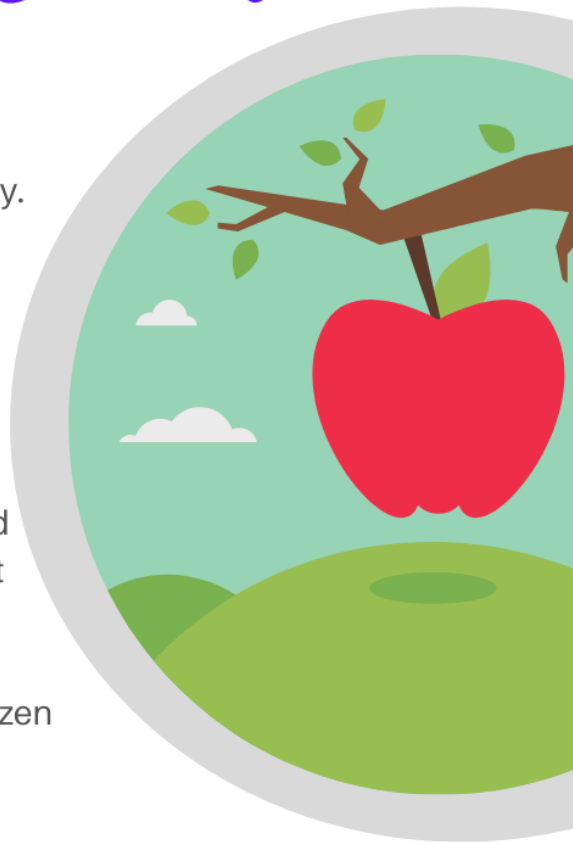
Healthy snacks don't have to be boring. Use your imagination to create something delicious and good for you!

(American Heart Association, 2016)

## Day 1 – Swap Your Snack

Today is May 1st, the first day of our Stroke Awareness Month Wellness Challenge! Today's challenge is to swap your snack. Snacking is not bad for you if you keep in mind moderation and making healthy choices. Fruits like apples can help curb your craving for crunchy or sweet foods. Check out some of these apple ideas here:

<https://www.heart.org/.../add-color/meet-the-apple-family>



# MAY Wellness Challenge

## Replace Added Sugar

Excess sugar intake can increase your risk of obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes. All of these can contribute to your risk of stroke and heart disease.

For today's challenge, investigate if there are places where extra sugar is sneaking into your diet. For many of us, extra sugar comes from sugar sweetened beverages like sweet tea and soda, baked goods like cakes and pies and sweet treats like ice cream and candy.

Once you've found where the extra sugar is in your diet, challenge yourself to make small changes to reduce the amount you're taking in. For example, choose water with cut fruit over sugary beverages. Or try living up your food with spices like cinnamon, nutmeg, mint or ginger instead of extra sugar.

(American Heart Association, 2016)



## Day 2 – Replace Added Sugar

Today is day #2 of our Stroke Awareness Month Wellness Challenge. Today's challenge is a spoonful of sugar (free). Adding extra sugar in your diet is not so sweet and can increase your risk for heart disease. Use today's challenge to look at nutrition labels and find where excess sugar is hiding in your diet. For many of us, it hides in sugar-sweetened beverages and sweet treats. Once you've found where the extra sugar is hiding in your diet, try swapping it out for healthier alternatives.

# MAY Wellness Challenge

## Set a Fitness Goal

Regular physical activity can have many benefits including lower your blood pressure, improving your levels of good cholesterol, weight control, and mood boosting.

For today's challenge, let's begin by finding a way to start tracking your physical activity. There are many ways to do this including using technology such as apps for your smart phone or fitness tracking watches. You can also do it more basic by track your minutes or distance with pen and paper.

Once you've found your tracking method, let's set a goal to begin to increase your activity. If you haven't exercised in a while, a great place to start is 15 minutes a day and then increase over time to a goal of 150 minutes a week. Walking is an easy place to start. If you have mobility limitations, check out some chair exercise options. Let's move together to decrease the risk of heart disease and stroke!

(American Heart Association, 2017)



## Day 3 – Set a Fitness Goal

Today is day 3 of our Stroke Awareness Month Wellness Challenge! Today, your challenge is to find a way to track your physical activity and set a fitness goal. Regular physical activity is a great way to not only make you feel better, but over time to reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke. If you haven't exercised in a while, start small and work your way up. Walking is a great place to start. Are you a stroke survivor with mobility limitations?

Check out this option for a seated chair workout:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nN-wqey1Q0>

As always, consult your health care provider before beginning a new exercise regimen.

# MAY Wellness Challenge

## Goal Setting

Yesterday, our challenge was to set a fitness goal. Today's challenge is to take that one step further and think about your short and long-term wellness goals.

An active and healthy lifestyle is important to reducing your risk of heart disease and stroke. One key to making lifestyle changes that will last in the long-term is setting goals and sticking to them.

For today's challenge, let's think about your fitness goal from yesterday to increase physical activity and add on 2 other short-term goals into your plan for a healthy lifestyle. Some ideas of goals to think about include:

- Adding a vegetable to each meal
- Swapping your drink for water
- Trying a new exercise this week
- Incorporating a mindfulness exercise into your wellness routine

Incorporating small, healthy changes into your routine during this month can help you stick to them and help make a healthier YOU the long-term. What goals are you setting today?

(Fiore, 2010)



## Day 4 – Goal Setting

Today is day 4 of our Stroke Awareness Month Wellness Challenge! Today's challenge builds off of yesterday's fitness goals. Setting goals to incorporate 3 small lifestyle changes into your routine this month, will help you stick to those changes long-term. Let's work together to reduce our risk of stroke and heart disease and create a healthier YOU! What goals are you setting today?



# MAY Wellness Challenge

## Mindfulness & Meditation

The practice of mindfulness and meditation may help you to cope with stress, manage high blood pressure and improve sleep.

Mindfulness and meditation practices are as simple as taking a few minutes quietly to focus on your breathing. This can help you to let go of stress and help you to feel more calm overall.

For today's challenge, let's give mindfulness and meditation a try! All you need is 5 short minutes today to try a calming breath meditation exercise from the UNC Wellness Center. Follow along with the instructor who will guide you through the practice here:

<https://youtu.be/EO-y9v8AyxU>

Regular practice of mindfulness and meditation can be a great addition to an overall healthy lifestyle with regular physical activity and healthy eating. If calming breath meditation is not for you, there are many other types you can explore such as loving-kindness, or Vipassana. Once you find a type you like, gradually increase your time.

(AHA, 2021)



## Day 5 – Mindfulness & Meditation

Welcome to day 5 of our Stroke Awareness Month Wellness Challenge! Today's challenge is to take a few minutes to yourself to try a mindfulness practice. Are you ready to take a few minutes to focus on YOU today? Let's all take a 5 minute mini-vacation together with today's challenge!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EO-y9v8AyxU>

# MAY Wellness Challenge

## Know Your Numbers

One critical step in reducing your risk for stroke and heart disease is to know your health numbers. For some people, numbers like blood cholesterol, blood sugar and blood pressure can be elevated without early warning signs.

Many of us have put off regular health screenings and checkups during the pandemic. If you don't know your numbers, use today's wellness challenge as motivation to take a few steps towards assessing your health risks:

- If you do not have a primary care provider, take a step today to find one that fits your needs. Visit [online.uncpn.com](https://online.uncpn.com) for a searchable database of UNC Primary Care providers.
- If you have a primary care provider but you are overdue for a visit, take a moment today to call and make an appointment. Hold yourself accountable and make keeping the appointment a priority for your health.
- When you visit with your provider, ask about your numbers: blood pressure, blood sugar, blood cholesterol and body weight. Work with your provider to make a plan if your numbers are out of range.

These small steps can make a big difference in your overall health, wellness and risk of stroke and heart disease. Let's improve our wellness together!

(AHA, 2015)



## Day 6 – Know Your Numbers

Welcome to Day 6 of our Stroke Awareness Month Wellness Challenge! Today's challenge is to know your numbers. Knowing your numbers is a critical first step to making a plan to improve your overall health, wellness and reduce your risk of stroke and heart disease. Many of us have put regular health screenings and check ups off as a result of the pandemic. But, it's as important as ever to maintain your health with regular wellness visits and screenings as well as to get continued care for any chronic health conditions. At UNC, there are a number of procedures and appointment options in place to help make sure you get the care you need safely. Visit [online.uncpn.com](https://online.uncpn.com) for more information on finding a primary care provider if you need one. Let's use today's challenge to take one small step to reduce your risk of stroke!

# MAY Wellness Challenge

## Avoid the Elevator

If you lead a busy lifestyle, it can sometimes be hard to find time in your day to reach your physical activity goals. If you are having a hard time finding ways to schedule regular exercise sessions, find ways to incorporate short spurts of physical activity into your routine. Some easy ways to do this are to take the stairs instead of the elevator or parking further away so that you increase your walking time.

If you're a stroke survivor with mobility limitations, try incorporating a short, simple activity into your routine such as the sit to stand exercise available here:

[youtu.be/chZryRzvJnY](https://youtu.be/chZryRzvJnY)

Or some of these seated chair exercises here:

[youtube.com/watch?v=azv8eJgoGLk](https://youtube.com/watch?v=azv8eJgoGLk)

As always, consult your health care provider before starting a new exercise regimen.

Are you ready to start? Let's get moving together today!

(AHA, 2017)



## Day 7 – Avoid the Elevator

Today is day 7 of our Stroke Awareness Month Wellness Challenge! For today's challenge, find ways to fit in short bursts of physical activity into your daily routine. Try taking the stairs instead of the elevator today. If you have mobility limitations, try some of these seated exercises here:

[youtu.be/chZryRzvJnY](https://youtu.be/chZryRzvJnY)

<https://youtu.be/azv8eJgoGLk>



# MAY Wellness Challenge

## Cook Healthier for Less

Eating healthy has to be expensive, right? Wrong. There are ways to eat healthy on a budget. Check out some of the cost saving tips from the American Heart Association including:

- Limit red meat in lieu of healthier and less expensive protein choices.
- Swap frozen vegetables and fruits (make sure to check the labels for hidden salt and sugar)
- Avoid eating out
- Don't go grocery shopping hungry
- Grow your own herbs and produce
- Look for coupons before you shop
- Buy seasonal produce
- Plan your meals each week



For today's challenge, see if you can save some money while making healthier choices the next time you hit the supermarket!

(AHA, 2015)

## Day 8 – Cook Healthy for Less

Today is day 8 of our Stroke Awareness Month Wellness Challenge! Challenge yourself today to cook healthier for less. It will help you feel better and save some money in the process! Check out more tips from the [American Heart Association](https://www.heart.org/.../how-to-eat-healthy-on-a-budget) here:

<https://www.heart.org/.../how-to-eat-healthy-on-a-budget>

# MAY Wellness Challenge

## Family Meal Time

Meal time as a family (or as a group of friends) can not only be a great way to reconnect with your loved ones but eating together three to five times a week for at least 20 minutes can have additional benefits such as:

- Less behavioral issues in young kids
- Better vocabulary and more academic success for children
- Less likelihood for teens to smoke cigarettes, use marijuana or abuse alcohol
- Eating healthier foods

Encourage your family to unplug and make it an electronics-free zone. Planning your meals ahead of time can be a good way to hard-wire family meal time into your routine.



(AHA, 2018)

## Day 9 – Family Meal Time

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Welcome to Day 9 of our Stroke Awareness Month Wellness Challenge! In honor of Mother's Day today, take a few minutes to plan a family meal. Did you know that eating together 3-5 times a week is not only a great way to connect but also has added health benefits? Bon appetite!

Learn more here: <https://www.heart.org/.../meal-planning-benefits--how-tos...>

# MAY Wellness Challenge

## Make a Sleep & Wake Up Routine

If you are feeling lethargic or groggy throughout the day, sleep (or lack thereof) may be part of the problem. For today's challenge, try some of these Ready-Set-Go techniques from the American Heart Association for a better, healthier tomorrow!

### Ready:

- **Timing counts:** Make sure you leave enough time for 7-9 hours of sleep each night. This may mean setting an alarm to make sure you get to bed on time each night.

### Set:

- Hitting the snooze button can make it harder to wake up and leave you feeling groggy. Waking up to natural sunlight can help you wake up quicker. Skip checking your electronics and start the day with a short walk or exercise to get your day started off right.

### Go:

- If you have trouble squeezing breakfast into your routine, plan a healthy meal the night before so it's ready to go. Once your ready to tackle the day, take on the hardest tasks first and get them out of the way. This will help the rest of your day feel like a breeze!

(AHA, 2018)

## Day 10 – Sleep & Wake Up Routine

Today is day 10 of our Stroke Awareness Month Wellness Challenge! Do you wake up groggy, feel lethargic throughout the day and cranky in the afternoon? A good sleep and wake up routine can help you feel energized, motivated and ready to take on the day. Try some of these techniques tonight and let's all get some better Zzz's!

Learn more here: <https://www.heart.org/.../how-to-establish-a-wakeup...>



# MAY Wellness Challenge

## Make time for your hobbies

Doing something you love can not only focus your mind away from the daily grind and stress, but it can also be good for you physically and mentally. Engaging in a hobby can help reduce your stress and may even have a positive effect on your heart rate and blood pressure.

So, if you have a hobby that you already love, make time for it today!

If you are looking for something new to try, drawing, coloring or making music can help to focus your mind. Gardening can help get some extra physical activity and may even help you eat healthier if you plant some veggies in your garden bed. Swimming can also be a great way to add physical activity and is a little gentler on your joints if they bother you.

If you have physical or cognitive limitations, check out the Triangle Aphasia Project, Inspiration Golf or the Adaptive Surf Project of North Carolina for some inspiration to get you started! Let's do something today that makes us healthier and happier!



(AHA, 2020, Psychology Today, 2015)

## Day 11 – Make Time For Hobbies

Welcome to day 11 of our Stroke Awareness Month Wellness Challenge! We are 1/3 of the way through our challenge - how is everyone feeling so far?

Today's challenge is to find time in your day for your hobbies. Do something today that motivates you, challenges you, or helps to relax your mind. Finding time for your hobbies can help to improve your overall physical and mental wellness.

Are you a stroke survivor with physical or cognitive limitations? Check out the inspiring ways these organizations are helping those with disabilities either reconnect with their hobbies or find new hobbies they love!

[Inspiration Golf](#)

[Triangle Aphasia Project, Unlimited](#)

[Adaptive Surf Project - North Carolina](#)

# MAY Wellness Challenge

**Laughter is good medicine!**

**Today's challenge is to find some humor!**

Laughter makes us all feel good, which can help with stress and anxiety reduction. If you're really good at laughter, it can even burn a few calories and tone your abdominal muscles!

So today, find something that makes you laugh - a funny joke, a newspaper comic or your favorite funny TV show. Better yet, call up a friend or family member and share a laugh together - you'll both get the benefit!



(AHA, 2020, Healthgrades, 2020)

## Day 12 – Find Something That Makes you Laugh

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Today is day 12 of our Stroke Awareness Month Wellness Challenge! Find something that makes you laugh today, laughter really is good medicine!



# MAY Wellness Challenge

## Gratitude

**Today's challenge is gratitude!**

This week is neuroscience nurses week and we are especially thankful for the neuroscience nurses that touch the lives of our patients with stroke from arrival through recovery and beyond!

Today, we encourage you to find something that you're grateful for. Regular practice of gratitude can help improve your overall wellness, lower blood pressure and improve immune function. Some simple ways to get started:

- 1) What did you do today that you really enjoyed?
- 2) Think about what your body has done for you today.
- 3) Are their loved ones in your life you are thankful for? Call them and let them know!

Celebrating  
**Neuroscience  
Nurses**  
Dedicated. Resilient. Inspiring.



May 9-15, 2021

(AHA, 2020)

## Day 13 – Gratitude

Welcome to day 13 of our Stroke Awareness Month Wellness Challenge! Today's challenge is gratitude. This week is neuroscience nurses week and we are especially grateful for all of our nurses that care for our patients with stroke each and every day!

# MAY Wellness Challenge

## Tai Chi

Today's challenge is Tai Chi! Tai Chi is a low impact, slow mind-body practice. Do you know that Tai Chi also has benefits for stroke survivors? It can help with activities of daily living, balance, limb motor function and walking.

Are you new to Tai Chi? Check out the UNC Wellness Center's video on Tai Chi.

Are you a stroke survivor with mobility limitations? Check out the video on chair yoga as an alternative.

As always, please consult your health care provider before beginning a new exercise routine.



## Day 14 – Tai Chi

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Today is Day 14 of our Stroke Awareness Month Wellness Challenge! Tai Chi can be a great way to help with your balance and strength. If you're a stroke survivor with mobility limitations, chair yoga is a great alternative!

Tai Chi:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W-LsWEtfe9A&feature=youtu.be>

Chair Yoga:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2UeNebRKzX8&feature=youtu.be>

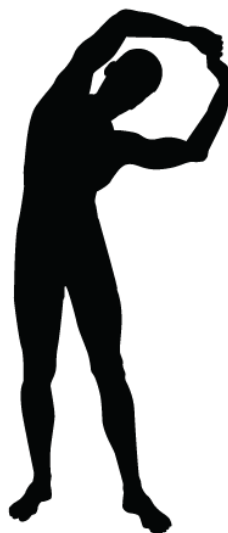
# MAY Wellness Challenge

## Stretching

Today's challenge is stretching! For stroke survivors, stretching can have benefits of preventing joint contractures and muscle shortening, decrease spasticity, reduce joint stiffness, and improve a post-stroke patients overall function. For everyone, stretching can help with tension and stress relief, posture and injury prevention.

Check out UNC Wellness Center's video on stretching to get started. If you're a stroke survivor with mobility limitations, check out the seated chair exercises from the American Heart Association.

As always, check with your health care provider before beginning a new exercise regimen.



## Day 15 - Stretching

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Today's challenge is stretching! Stretching can have great benefits for everyone! Check out the UNC Wellness Video to get started:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LhKf4eKBD0Y&feature=youtu.be>

If you're a stroke survivor with mobility limitations, check out these seated stretching and flexibility exercises to get started:

<https://www.heart.org/.../stretching-and-flexibility...>

# MAY Wellness Challenge

## Dancing

Today's challenge is dancing! Dancing can be a fun and easy way to burn calories, improve strength, flexibility and balance. Dancing can have benefits for people of all ages and it can be a fun, easy way to get the kids involved!

Need inspiration to get started? Check out the UNC Wellness Center's video for inspiration.

Are you a stroke survivor with mobility limitations? Check out the seated dance routine video to get started.

As always, check with your healthcare provider before beginning a new exercise routine.



## Day 16 - Dancing

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Welcome to Day #16 of the Stroke Awareness Month Wellness Challenge! Today, find your favorite song and dance! It can be an easy way to burn calories while you have some fun!

Need some inspiration? Check out this video from the UNC Wellness Center to get started:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bj5sVyHllxg&feature=youtu.be>

Are you a stroke survivor with mobility limitations? Check out this seated dance routine for inspiration.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QgRw6okXYwg>

Let's get moving together with today's challenge!

# MAY Wellness Challenge

## Core Strengthening

Today's challenge is core strengthening!

Did you know that strong core muscles can improve balance and can make you feel steadier on your feet? For all of us, including stroke survivors, a stroke core is one important part of preventing falls.

New to core exercise?

Begin by trying to incorporate 15 sit-ups into your routine today.

Looking for something with a little higher intensity?

Check out the UNC Wellness Center's video on Core Conditioning.

Are you a stroke survivor with mobility limitations?

Check out the UNC Wellness Center's seated workout or the American Heart Association's at-home exercises for stroke survivors.

As always, please check with your health care provider prior to beginning a new exercise regimen.



## Day 17 – Core Strengthening

Welcome to day 17 of our Stroke Awareness Month Wellness Challenge! Today's challenge focuses around core strength, an important part of preventing falls. Check out these resources to get started on today's challenge!

UNC Wellness Center's Core Conditioning:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vqd4AJ5u6HA&feature=youtu.be>

UNC Wellness Center's Seated Workout:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-2D6m\\_Zvz0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-2D6m_Zvz0)

American Heart Association's exercise videos for stroke survivors:

<https://www.stroke.org/.../post-stroke-exercise-videos>



# MAY Wellness Challenge

## Lunges

Today's Challenge is to try 10 lunges!

Lunges can help make your back, hips and legs stronger. They can also help with improving mobility and stability which can decrease your risk of falling.

Need some help getting started?  
Check out the video on how to do a lunge.

Do you have joint/knee issues?  
Check out the video on how to modify squats and lunges

Are you a stroke survivor?  
Check out the video on the mini-lunge post-stroke exercise or single leg mini squats with support as an alternative

As always, consult a health care provider before starting a new exercise routine.



## Day 18 – Lunges

Today is Day #18 of our Stroke Awareness Month Wellness Challenge! Today's challenge is to try 10 lunges. Lunges are a great way to strengthen your back, hips and legs as well as to improve your overall stability. Check out these video resources to get started!:

How to do a lunge:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QOVaHwm-Q6U>

Some ideas to modify lunges:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w\\_-CP21-Ljs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w_-CP21-Ljs)

How to do a mini-lunge for stroke survivors:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R3YEDs3Y7MI>

Single-leg mini squats with support for stroke survivors:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L7wvxXBvnzc>

# MAY Wellness Challenge

## Reading

Today's Challenge is to read for 30 minutes!

Reading can be a quick and easy way to wind down after a stressful day. Did you know that reading as a part of your bedtime routine can help calm your mind and reduce your stress? Reading can decrease your stress by 50% in about 6 minutes (AHA, 2018).

Are you a stroke survivor that has difficulty with reading since the stroke? Check out the Reading Rehabilitation tips from the American Heart Association.



## Day 19 – Reading

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Welcome to Day #19 of our Stroke Awareness Month Wellness Challenge! Today's challenge is to read for 30 minutes. This can help with stress reduction and can be a helpful part of creating a bedtime routine to calm your mind after a busy day.

Are you a stroke survivor that has had difficulty reading since your stroke? Check out these reading rehabilitation tips from the American Heart Association:

<https://www.stroke.org/.../cogn.../reading-rehabilitation...>

# MAY Wellness Challenge

## Aerobic Activity

Today's Challenge is **30 minutes of aerobic activity**!

Aerobic or endurance exercise is one of the four key components of a well-balanced workout routine. Variety in your exercise routine can help keep it exciting and reduce boredom. Aerobic activity can improve your cardiovascular health and, over time, decrease your risk of stroke and heart disease. The American Heart Association recommends that adults "get at least 150 minutes (2 1/2 hours) of moderate to vigorous activity per week".

### Need some help getting started?

Walking is an easy aerobic activity to incorporate into your daily routine. Check out the American Heart Association's six-week beginner walking program for an easy way to get started!

Are you a stroke survivor with mobility limitations?  
Check out UNC Wellness Center's Seated PWR workout or  
The American Heart Association's At-Home Exercises for Stroke Survivors.

*As always, please consult your medical provider before starting any new exercise or activity programs.*



## Day 20 – Aerobic Activity

Today is day 20 of our Stroke Awareness Month Wellness Challenge! Today's challenge is to incorporate 30 minutes of aerobic activity into your day. Regular aerobic activity is a great way to improve your cardiovascular health and over time decrease your risk of heart disease and stroke. Need some inspiration to get motivated? Check out these resources to get started:

American Heart Association's 6 Week Beginner Walking Plan:  
[https://www.heart.org/.../doc.../downloadable/ucm\\_449261.pdf](https://www.heart.org/.../doc.../downloadable/ucm_449261.pdf)

For Stroke Survivors with Mobility Limitations:

UNC Medical Center's Physical Therapy Video with Exercise Adaptations for Stroke Survivors:

<https://www.facebook.com/.../vb.../1457862374400462/...>

UNC Wellness Center's Seated PWR Workout:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-2D6m\\_Zvz0&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-2D6m_Zvz0&feature=youtu.be)

American Heart Association's Exercise Videos for Stroke Survivors:

<https://www.stroke.org/.../post-stroke-exercise-videos>

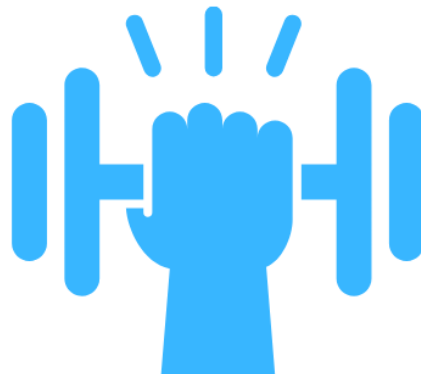
# MAY Wellness Challenge

## Strength & Resistance Training

Today's Challenge is Strength and Resistance Activity!

A well-rounded workout routine includes strength and resistance, endurance, balance and flexibility. Adding variety into your workout routine not only avoids the boredom that can come with exercise, but the variation in types of exercise can help your overall body and cardiovascular wellness. Today's challenge focuses on incorporating strength and resistance training into your exercise routine. This can mean using weights or the resistance from your own body weight to improve strength.

As always, please consult your medical provider before starting any new exercise programs.



## Day 21 – Aerobic Activity

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Today is day 21 of our Stroke Awareness Month Wellness Challenge! Today's challenge is to try a new strength and resistance activity, which can be a great way to incorporate variety into your workout routine. Need some inspiration? Check out these resources to get started!:

UNC Wellness Center's Body Strength Workout:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=69VfbcVXxmo&feature=youtu.be>

American Heart Association's Strength & Resistance Training Resources:

<https://www.heart.org/.../strength-and-resistance...>

UNC Medical Center's Occupational Therapy Video on Strength Training Adaptations for Stroke Survivors:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=591502338384401>

American Heart Association's Post-Stroke Exercise Videos:

<https://www.stroke.org/.../post-stroke-exercise-videos...>

# MAY Wellness Challenge

## Staying Hydrated

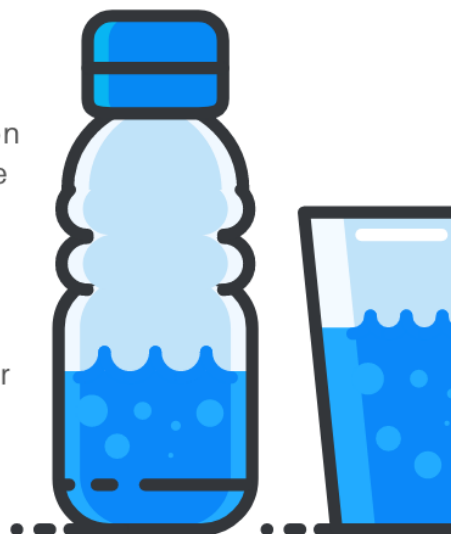
Today's Challenge is Staying Hydrated!

Did you know that staying well hydrated can make it easier for your heart to pump blood? As temperatures begin to rise, it is even more important to pay attention to your body's level of hydration. Drinking water is the best way to give your body the hydration it needs.

Interested in learning how to tell if your body is well hydrated?

The amount of hydration you need can be different for everyone and can vary based on the temperature outside. Check out the American Heart Association's article on staying hydrated to learn more.

Are you someone who tends to drink sugary drinks? Use today's challenge to replace your sugary drinks with water. Try adding a slice or two of fresh fruit if you're looking for additional flavor. If you're used to carbonation in your drink, give seltzer water a try.



## Day 22 – Staying Hydrated

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Today is Day #22 of our Stroke Awareness Month Wellness Challenge! Today's challenge focuses on staying hydrated. The amount of hydration needed can be different for everyone and vary based on your activity level and the temperature outside. Check out this Guide to Staying Hydrated from The American Heart Association:

<https://www.heart.org/.../staying-hydrated-staying-healthy>

Are you someone who tends to reach for sugary drinks? Try to swap out those drinks today with water. Check out these tips from The American Heart Association on rethinking your drink for some ideas to get started:

<https://www.heart.org/.../rethink-your-drink-reducing...>



# MAY Wellness Challenge

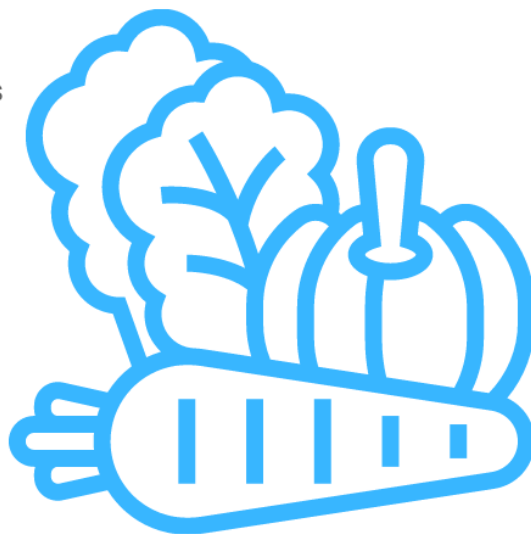
## Eat Your Veggies

Today's Challenge is to eat your veggies!

The American Heart Association recommends a healthy diet and lifestyle to reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke. A healthy diet includes a variety of foods including nutrient-rich vegetables. Today's challenge is to make sure you are incorporating vegetables into your diet. For today's challenge, try incorporating at least one new vegetable into each of your meals.

Not a fan of vegetables? Try shredding and adding them into a meal - you can eat them without even noticing them! You can also try blending them into a heart healthy smoothie.

Have fun adding a little more color to your meals today!



## Day 23 – Eat Your Vegetables

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Welcome to Day #23 of our Stroke Awareness Month Wellness Challenge! Today's challenge is to eat your veggies! Vegetables are an important part of an overall healthy lifestyle to reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke. Try incorporating at least one vegetable into each of your meals today. Need some help getting started? Check out the American Heart Association's information on adding more color to your diet:

<https://www.heart.org/.../hea.../healthy-eating/add-color...>

# MAY Wellness Challenge

## Create a Home Circuit

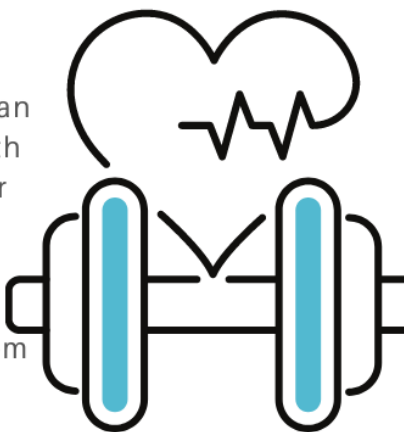
Today's Challenge is to create a home circuit workout routine!

A home circuit exercise routine can be an easy, fun way to make sure you have variety in your workout routine! A circuit routine alternates cardio and strength exercises in short intervals. One of the benefit of a circuit is that you can alternate the types of exercises so you don't get bored with your routine! When done regularly, it can also reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke.

Need some help getting started?  
Check out the 'Choose Your Own Workout' infographic from The American Heart Association to begin!

Are you a stroke survivor?  
Check out the 'At Home Exercises for Stroke Survivors' videos from the American Heart Association

As always, check with your health care provider before beginning a new exercise routine.



## Day 24 – Create a Home Circuit

Today is Day #24 of our Stroke Awareness Month Wellness Challenge! Have some fun with today's challenge and create variety in your workout routine with a home circuit routine! This can be a great way to incorporate different types of exercise into your routine so you don't get bored with working out.

Need some help getting started? Check out the information from The American Heart Association on creating a home circuit:

<https://www.heart.org/.../create-a-circuit-home-workout...>

Are you a stroke survivor with mobility limitations? Check out these videos for ideas:

American Heart Association's Post Stroke Exercise Videos:

<https://www.stroke.org/.../post-stroke-exercise-videos...>

[UNC Medical Center's April, PT Demonstrating Squats for Stroke Survivors](#)

[UNC Medical Center's Audrey, PT and Sharon, PT Demonstrating Aerobic Activity](#)

[UNC Medical Center's Hillary, OT and Tracy, OTA Demonstrating Strength Training](#)

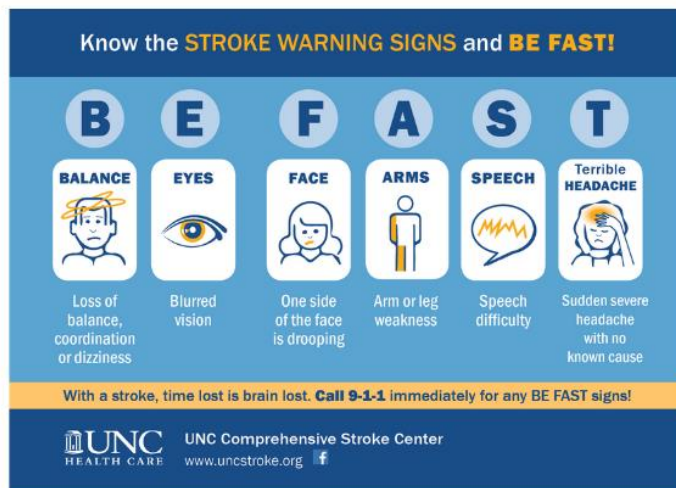
# MAY Wellness Challenge

## Know The Symptoms of Stroke

Today's Challenge is to take a moment to review the symptoms of stroke and remember the importance of calling 9-1-1.

Stroke is the number 5 leading cause of death in United States and a disease that can be treated if you act quickly.

BEFAST is an acronym that may save you or your loved ones life. With a stroke, time lost is brain lost. If you or a loved one experiences any new BEFAST symptoms, call 9-1-1 immediately.



## Day 25 – Know the Symptoms of Stroke

Today is Day #25 of our Stroke Awareness Month Wellness Challenge! Today's challenge is an important one that may save you or your loved ones life: know the symptoms of stroke and what to do in an emergency. With a stroke, time lost is brain lost. Remember the acronym BEFAST and call 9-1-1 immediately for any new stroke symptoms.

# MAY Wellness Challenge

## 10-Minute Home Workout

Do you have trouble fitting time in to get exercise during the week?

The 10-minute home work out from the American Heart Association is an easy way to squeeze in some exercise that can be done anywhere! This can help you think clearer, feel better and even be more productive. This is a great way to keep moving and increase your heart rate even when you are really busy.

Learn more about the American Heart Association's 10-minute home work out at [heart.org/movefor10](https://heart.org/movefor10)

As always, please check with your health care provider before beginning a new exercise regimen.



AHA, 2021

## Day 26 – 10 Minute Home Workout

Welcome to Day #26 of our Stroke Awareness Month Wellness Challenge! Today's challenge is to try a 10-minute home work out routine. This can be a great way to fit in exercise even when you are short on time!

Learn more here: [heart.org/movefor10](https://heart.org/movefor10)

# MAY Wellness Challenge

## Know Your Stroke Risk

Today's challenge is to learn more about your stroke risk.

Stroke is the #5 leading cause of death in the United States and a disease that is preventable.

According to the American Heart Association, if you are between the ages of 40 and 75, you can use the online 'Check. Change. Control Calculator'. This calculator takes less than 5 minutes and can give you a valuable estimate of your risk of heart attack or stroke.

Having awareness of your risk is an important step to prevent stroke before it occurs. Take a few minutes today to assess your risk, it could save your life!

Learn more here: [ccccalculator.ccctracker.com](https://ccccalculator.ccctracker.com/)



AHA, 2021

## Day 27 – Know Your Stroke Risk

Today is day #27 of our Stroke Awareness Month Wellness Challenge. Today's challenge is an important one that may save your life: know your stroke risk. Did you know that the majority of strokes are preventable? Take a few minutes today to learn about your risk of stroke, a valuable first step in decreasing your chance of having a stroke. Learn more about your stroke risk here:

<https://ccccalculator.ccctracker.com/>

Learn more about risk factors for stroke and how to modify them here:

<https://www.stroke.org/.../about.../stroke-risk-factors...>



# MAY Wellness Challenge

## Jumping Jacks

Today's challenge is to try jumping jacks!

Jumping jacks are a good aerobic exercise that engage your abdominal, glutes, quadriceps, shoulders and hip flexor muscles. If you're bored with walking outside or running on a treadmill, jumping jacks are a good alternative to add variety to your workout routine and get your heart pumping!

Need some help getting started?

Check out the video on '20 Jumping Jack Variations' for ideas on different ways to modify the jumping jack to make it lower or higher impact depending on your ability.

Are you a stroke survivor with mobility limitations?

Did you know that you can do seated jumping jacks?

Check out the video to learn more!

As always, please check with your health care provider before beginning a new exercise regimen.



## Day 28 – Jumping Jacks

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Welcome to Day #28 of our Stroke Awareness Month Wellness Challenge! Only a few more days to go! Today's challenge is to try jumping jacks, which are a good aerobic exercise to add variety to your workout routine. There are many modifications for jumping jacks that can make them higher or lower intensity and higher or lower impact, depending on your ability.

Ready to get started? Check out these videos for inspiration to get moving today:

20 Jumping Jack Variations:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E1MLfbD5i8A>

Seated Jumping Jacks:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J8M9z63g3eI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zKZOVD30vKo>

# MAY Wellness Challenge

## Try a Challenging Puzzle or Board Game

Today's challenge is to try a puzzle or board game that challenges you!

Puzzles and board games can help with hand-eye coordination and cognitive skills like problem solving, short-term memory and pattern recognition. You may even have a little fun and laugh while you improve your overall well being!

Need some help get



## Day 29 – Try a Puzzle or Game

Today is Day #29 of our Stroke Awareness Month Wellness Challenge! Today's challenge is to try a puzzle or game that challenges you! This can help your cognitive and coordination skills.

Check out these videos for some inspiration to get started:

How to play chess:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-fSSdo6es4>

How to play connect four:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yIZBRUJi3UQ>

How to play checkers:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ScKIdStgAfU>

How to play solitaire:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAB5fsN2uA8>

# MAY Wellness Challenge

## Try a Plank Exercise

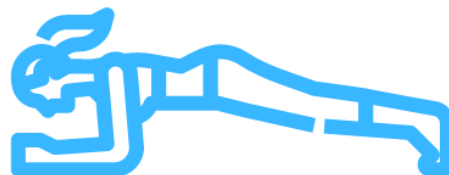
Today's challenge is to try a plank exercise!

A 'plank' is a yoga pose designed to strengthen your core abdominal muscles as well as your shoulder, chest, neck, glute, quadriceps and back muscles. Over time, this can help with improving your overall strength, posture, balance and reduce your risk of falling.

Need some help getting started? Check out the article on 'How to do a Perfect Plank'.

Did you know that planks can be modified with a seated or standing position for those with mobility limitations? Check out the videos for modification ideas.

As always, please check with your health care provider before beginning a new exercise regimen.



## Day 30 – Try a Plank Exercise

Welcome to Day #30 of our Stroke Awareness Month Wellness Challenge! Today's Challenge is to try a plank exercise, a yoga pose that your core abdominal muscles as well as your shoulder, chest, neck, glute, quadriceps and back muscles. This is a great exercise to add variety into your workout routine!

Need some help getting started? Check out this article on how to do a perfect plank:

<https://www.womenshealthmag.com/.../plank-exercise/...>

Did you know that planks can be modified for stroke survivors and others with mobility limitations?

Check out this video on how to do a chair plank:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=66wuEksvTel>

Or this video on how to do a wall plank:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aqUsJhihsBU>

# MAY Wellness Challenge

## Know The Strategies To Prevent A Stroke

Today's challenge is to know the American Heart Association's 8 things you can do to prevent a stroke:

1. Know your risk
2. Eat a healthy diet
3. Be physically active
4. Watch your weight
5. Live tobacco-free
6. Manage your chronic conditions (ex: high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes)
7. Take your medications as directed by your health care provider
8. Be a team player: Work with your health care team to reduce your risk and improve your overall wellness

The majority of strokes can be prevented. If you are not following all of these 8 things, find a way to incorporate them into your routine to reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke.



## Day 31 – Know how to Prevent a Stroke

Today is our last day of the Stroke Awareness Month Wellness Challenge! Over the course of the month we've learned about many ways to increase your physical activity, your mental well being and ways to reduce your overall risk of stroke. Today's challenge summarizes what we've been working on over the course of this month to 8 key strategies to reduce your risk of stroke and heart disease. Most strokes are preventable. These 8 simple strategies can help to save your life. Learn more here:

<https://www.heart.org/.../prevent-heart-disease-and...>

## STROKE AWARENESS MONTH

### *Survivor & Caregiver Resources*

#### All About Seniors

- All About Seniors is the first full-sized comprehensive directory of Senior-related services in the SC Upstate, Charleston, SC and Charlotte, NC designed to provide you with all of the resource information that you need to get the answers and direction that you need.

#### American Heart Association

- The nation's oldest and largest voluntary organization dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke.

#### Atlantic Music Therapy

- Atlantic Music Therapy, LLC aims to provide quality, evidence-based music therapy services and act as a valuable therapeutic resource to our community.

#### Believe Stroke Recovery Foundation

- BELIEVE-Stroke Recovery Foundation is a nonprofit organization based in North Carolina that provides stroke and brain injury survivors with financial assistance and resources to help them better control and manage their journey to recovery.

#### Inspiration Golf

- Inspiration Golf is a 501c3 Non-profit Adaptive Golf Company dedicated to promoting health, social community skills, and personal independence through the sport of golf for people with disabilities.

#### Orange County Department on Aging

- OCDOA offers integrated aging services and programs at our two senior centers including education and wellness classes, lunches, trips, and much more. Both of our senior centers are accredited by Nat'l Council on Aging - Nat'l Institute of Sr. Centers.

#### Ossia Music Therapy

- Provides music therapy services for individuals with developmental and neurological challenges.

#### Senior Transitions of NC

- Our mission is to assist older adults to live as independently as possible in a safe environment while maintaining their dignity and self esteem.

#### Restorative Therapies

- At Restorative Therapies we design and market Functional Electrical Stimulation therapy systems to help people with a neurological impairment achieve their full potential.

#### Triangle Aphasia Project

- Triangle Aphasia Project Unlimited is committed to offering services at reasonable costs and has program options for those who need financial assistance. The project operates by the generous financial contributions of our friends, families, and the community, as well as through reasonable service fees for the programs offered.

#### Steps for Recovery

- Physical, Occupational and Speech Therapy clinic in Cary, NC specializing in Postural Restoration and Stroke, Spinal Cord Injury, Balance and Vestibular Rehabilitation.

#### UNC Therapy Services

- UNC Therapy Services provides exceptional outpatient orthopedic, sports, and spine PT to patients throughout the Triangle.

#### UNC Wellness Center

- UNC Wellness Centers are premier medical fitness facilities dedicated to helping people achieve optimal health in a safe and supportive environment.

# Keep Your Wellness Journey Going: Know Your Resources

As we wrap up stroke awareness month, it's important to know that there are many resources available in the community that are available to stroke survivors and caregivers to continue your wellness and recovery journey beyond the month of May. Some of these are listed below. Are there additional resources that have helped you in your recovery journey? Tag them in the comments below.

[UNC Therapy Services](#)

[UNC Wellness Centers](#)

[Believe - Stroke Recovery Foundation](#)

[American Heart Association](#)

[All About Seniors](#)

[Orange County Department on Aging - OCDOA](#)

[Seniortransitionsnc](#)

[Restorative Therapies](#)

[Ossia Music Therapy, LLC](#)

[Triangle Aphasia Project, Unlimited](#)

[STEPS for Recovery](#)

[Atlantic Music Therapy, Inc](#)

[Inspiration Golf](#)