The new year is upon us, a time when many of our homes, offices, and friend groups are full of talk about new year’s resolutions. Most of these declarations boast sweeping changes to lifestyle, but we’re taking a bit of a different approach. This month, we’re focusing on new years evolutions - small ways you can modify your current lifestyle to improve your health and happiness.

A Peek Inside:

**MIND**
How to make habits work for you, not against you.

**BODY**
A beginner’s guide to hot yoga, spin and kickboxing.

**FOOD**
How to turn boxed mac and cheese into a healthy meal.

**RESEARCH**
How your new year’s resolution can change your DNA.

**MYTHS DEBUNKED**
Why being inside is worse for contracting the cold this winter.

On the Goga is a workplace wellness company guided by one, simple principle: Happy People Do Great Things.

Learn More About Mindful Wellness Programs
www.onthego.com

Special Thanks To
Tompkins Insurance Agencies, an On the Goga Wellness Partner
The C25K (Couch to 5k) app coaches first time runners through an eight week program that gets you from the couch across the finish line of a 5k. It combines a simple, easy to follow running program with audio coaching during your run. It only takes 30 minutes a day, 3 times per week for 8 weeks.

**Cost Free + In App Purchases**

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**office holidays**

**THE OFFICIAL JANUARY LIST:**

1st: New Years Day
3rd: Festival of Sleep Day
10th: Cut Energy Costs Day
19th: Popcorn Day
24th: Compliment Day
31st: Backwards Day

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**wellness in 2**

This month’s 2-min wellness tip: **SET UP A FRIEND DATE**

New year’s resolutions don’t have to be massive undertakings. This month, take two minutes to set up coffee, lunch, or a movie with a friend who inspires you.

Spending time with friends who positively influence us boosts happiness and confidence, and helps us to develop new habits, according to the **Mayo Clinic.**
MYTH: BEING OUTSIDE IN THE COLD WEATHER MAKES YOU SICK

FACT: While it’s true that the winter season brings more sick days, it’s probably not for the reasons you’re expecting. Here are a few reasons why chilly days come along with colds and flus:

You’re indoors more. Yep, being indoors actually increases your chances for contracting common winter illnesses by increasing your exposure to germs. When we’re inside all day, we’re exposed to more germs from our co-workers and family members, as well as on surfaces like keyboards, doorknobs, faucets, etc. Research also suggests that it’s easier for germs to spread in the dry, indoor air. There’s additional research that shows that the cold weather may have an effect on our immune system functioning as well as the ease at which viruses spread.

So how do we protect ourselves from getting sick during the winter? The fail-safe answer is the same one our parents imparted to us as little children: wash your hands often and keep your hands away from your eyes and mouth.

NEW RECIPE, SAME CLASSIC MAC

healthified boxed mac and cheese

A resolution to eat healthier can simply mean modifying your favorite recipes. Take boxed mac and cheese to the next level by adding fiber and protein.

INGREDIENTS:
- 1 box of macaroni and cheese (try an organic, low processed brand like Annie’s over Kraft)
- ½ cup low fat, small curd cottage cheese
- 1 tablespoon almond milk
- Salt to taste (1/2 teaspoon max)
- ½ cup chopped broccoli

INSTRUCTIONS:
- Prepare the pasta according to package.
- While the pasta is cooking, steam the broccoli on the stove (or in the microwave).
- When pasta is ready, drain and return to pot.
- Stir in the powdered cheese, cottage cheese, almond milk, and salt until well combined.
- Add the broccoli and stir until combined.

2 SERVINGS | TOTAL TIME: 15 MIN

Adapted from A Duck’s Oven blog
your choices change you
HOW A NEW YEARS RESOLUTION CAN CHANGE YOUR DNA

When we exercise, our bodies change. Many of these changes occur in plain sight, like weight loss and muscle strengthening. Some of these changes can simply be felt: better sleep, lowered anxiety and depression, and increased productivity. But research shows that your new year’s resolution to exercise more can actually change your DNA.

THE RESEARCH
A study in the Journal of Epigenetics conducted by the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm had a group of healthy men and women to bike for 45 minutes a day for three months using only one leg. By testing each leg before and after the 3-month training program, scientists were able to use each subject as their own control group. The results of the performance tests and biopsies pointed to something very exciting. The exercised leg showed over 5,000 sites where DNA presented new methylation patterns. Methylation is the process in which clusters of atoms attach to our genes and modify how they send signals to our body, without changing the DNA itself.

Want to get started programming your own DNA? Try one of these endurance exercises:

BIKING
Biking is a fantastic, relatively inexpensive way to add endurance exercise into your lifestyle this year. When it’s nice out, biking outside is a great way not only to get exercise, but to breathe fresh air and soak up some Vitamin D.

WALKING/JOGGING
Don’t fall victim to the myth that if you’re not running fast, you’re not really working out. Walking and jogging are effective, low-impact ways to get aerobic exercise and improve endurance. Oh, and they’re free!

POWER YOGA
Power yoga (also known as power vinyasa yoga) is a type of yoga that moves quickly through poses, keeping your heart rate up through the class. It’s a great way not only to build endurance, but to improve strength, balance and flexibility.

The takeaway? Introducing even moderate endurance training into your lifestyle, not only creates performance results, but can change the way your genes affect your health, fitness, and quality of life.

INSTRUCTOR SPOTLIGHT
anna
Founder of On the Goga

HOW TO MAKE HABITS WORK FOR YOU

Creating new habits is challenging, and not always because they’re complicated. In fact many healthy habit goals are simple, like “eat healthier” or “exercise more.” The key is knowing how to approach the process of habit creation in a way that makes healthy choices easy.

Quickly, let’s address what a habit is. Habits are thoughts or behaviors that we repeat so often that they become nearly or entirely subconscious. A good habit might be checking your blind spot when you switch lanes. A not-so-great habit might be opening the fridge when you’re bored. These habits, good and bad, become second nature and our brains tend to slip into them without us noticing.

The great thing about this, is that when you truly create a habit, it starts to work for you subconsciously. Here are two simple tools for creating lasting habits:

REMEMBER IT’S A PROCESS - A habit is not a noun, it’s a verb. It’s a pattern of actions. When you’re forming a new habit, you don’t have to get it “right” from the start. Start small, and know that making small mistakes and having small victories consistently is the key to success.

SET Tangible, Easy To Meet Goals - Instead of a vague goal of “eat healthier” or a large goal of “lose 10 lbs” opt for small, measurable goals that can truly become habits. For example, you can set a goal to “eat 2 servings of vegetables each day”, or “walk/jog 3 times a week.”

**what’s in season**

**FRUITS**
Clementines, pomegranate, lemons, kiwi, grapefruit, blood oranges, cherimoya, papaya, and passion fruit

**VEGETABLES**
Brussel sprouts, leeks, parsnips, turnips, broccoli, fennel, collard greens, peas, and celery

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**how to: try something new.**

**TRY A WINTER WORKOUT YOU’VE NEVER DONE BEFORE**

Check out our guides below to find out what to do at your first hot yoga, spin, or kickboxing class:

**HOT YOGA**
- Wear: Stretchy, fitted clothing
- Bring: A water bottle, towel, mat if you have one (most studios have rentals), and change of clothes
- Do: Tell the teacher it's your first class so they can give you adjustments, find a spot in the middle of the room so you can see in front and behind you, modify poses that are too hard, break for water when you need.

**SPIN**
- Wear: Moisture-wicking clothing
- Bring: A water bottle, hand towel, sneakers, and change of clothes
- Do: Tell the teacher it's your first class so they can help you adjust your bike, focus on the music and breathing when things get challenging, stay hydrated, keep your weight over the pedals - not the handle bars.

**KICKBOXING**
- Wear: Stretchy clothing
- Bring: A water bottle, boxing gloves and hand wraps (most studios have gloves/wraps to rent or buy)
- Do: Tell the teacher it's your first class so they can help you wrap your hands, focus on form over speed, keep moving gently even when you're resting, stay hydrated throughout class.

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**THIS MONTH’S your question, answered.**

Have a health or wellness related question you want answered?

Email us at info@onthegoga.com use the subject line ‘MY QUESTION ANSWERED’

**QUESTION: “Is a matcha latte in the afternoon better than a second coffee?” - Emily H., Philadelphia, PA**

Thanks for the great question Emily! The short answer to your question is, yes.

- **Caffeine** - A serving of matcha has about half the caffeine of an average cup of coffee. This could be helpful if you're trying to cut back on drinking caffeine late in the day to improve sleep.
- **Antioxidants** - According to a study by the Journal of Agriculture and Food Chemistry, Matcha has one of the highest ORAC of any superfood. The higher the ORAC count, the more antioxidant affects on the body.