

December is **Safe Toys and Gifts Month, HIV/AIDS Awareness Month, Universal Human Rights Month, and Dresember**

You can find the best resources by clicking the names above.

December 1 - World Aids Day

On World Aids Day, we unite in the fight against HIV, **show support for people living with HIV**, and commemorate those who have died from an AIDS-related illness.

December 13 - National Cocoa Day

Cocoa has many health benefits. It can help reduce inflammation, lower blood pressure, and improve blood flow! It's also one of the richest sources of naturally occurring antioxidants.

December 18 - First Day of Hanukkah

Bring on the [Potato Latkes](#) or a [Zucchini](#) or [Cheese and Red Pepper](#) version. Can't decide? Make all three! **Hanukkah lasts through December 26th.**

December 21 - First Day of Winter

Take a drive and admire the holiday lights or stay in and make some [Wassail](#).

December 25 - Christmas

May your heart be filled with all the joys of the season. **Merry Christmas!**

December 26 - Kwanzaa Begins

Kwanzaa blessings to you and yours!

December 31 - New Year's Eve

"The new year stands before us, like a chapter in a book, waiting to be written."

~ Melody Beattie

FOOD & DRINK

What's in season? Parsnip, turnips, celery root, winter squash, cauliflower, romanesco, Brussels sprouts, chestnuts, horseradish, kumquats, ugli fruit, kiwi, mandarins, Meyer lemons, beets, collard greens, kale, and rutabaga.

Our in-season pick is parsnips! With its unique fruity and nutty vibes, it's a versatile dish that goes with just about anything. [Try this easy, roasted recipe.](#)

Post for December 4th - It's no surprise that [Chocolate Chip Cookies](#) are everyone's favorite. Preheat your oven and start baking! It's #NationalCookieDay

What traditional foods bring you good luck in the New Year? **Share your recipes with us!**

National Maple Syrup Day is December 17th. Did you know maple syrup contains more than 20 antioxidants? And you can use it in [everything from appetizers to desserts.](#)

It's hard to believe 2023 is upon us. We can't think of a better way to **ring in the New Year** than to create this outstanding [Winter Charcuterie Board!](#)

Game day food swap. Instead of Queso, make Guacamole and serve it with vegetable strips. Avocados have healthy fats and anti-inflammatory benefits.

Start the new year by creating a [healthy grazing board](#) for your New Year's Eve Party.

It's the time of year to turn to cozy soups to warm yourself up. [These easy, delicious, and comforting recipes](#) will satisfy you all winter.

Lighten things up at your Christmas Dinner with [a healthy recipe](#) from Good Housekeeping.



LIFESTYLE

Ready or not, winter is upon us. If you haven't done so, check or replace your furnace filter to ensure your heating system is working correctly and to avoid contributing to indoor allergens.

When it comes to holiday decorating, you could be [making some dangerous mistakes](#). **Be merry but wary, and read this now!**

'Tis the season of holiday parties and loss of self-control. [Here are some ideas to help you keep the holiday weight gain down this year.](#)

Host a cookie decorating party! Start with a [simple sugar cookie](#), set out an array of colored icing, sprinkles, and candy, and spend an afternoon decorating.

Have an eco-friendly holiday! Ditch the paper and wrap your gifts with fabric. [Here's how!](#)

It's easy to blow off your workouts when there are so many holiday movies to see. Try these [simple exercises](#) while watching your favorite winter flicks!

Make time for yourself and **take a break from social media** this holiday. Research shows that a disconnect can help alleviate anxiety and stress.

Latest buzzword: Adaptogens - types of plants with certain biochemical compounds that may boost the body's resilience to stress. Where can you find them? Shitakes, Garlic, Gingerroot, Dried Turmeric, Cumin, Allspice, Maca Powder, and Curry Paste.

Holiday Savings Tip: Use timers indoors and out to give your holiday decorations and your electric bill a break. You can save even more by switching to LED lights. They use 80% less energy than traditional bulbs.



COMMUNITY

Post for 12/3 - International Day of Persons with Disabilities

Pledge to celebrate diversity, value accessibility, and serve your disabled friends and co-workers by donating to charities, revising discrimination policies, or improving ADA compliance at the workplace. #idpwd #disabilityawareness #disabilityrights

*Post for 12/7 - **Today is Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day.*** Fly your flags at half-staff until sunset to honor those who lost their lives serving at Pearl Harbor.

You can help domestic violence shelters become pet-friendly so survivors and their pets can stay together! How? Visit purpleleashproject.com for more details.

Ways to give back to your community this holiday season:

- Donate your old winter gear to a local shelter
- Discover some new local attractions your family can visit
- Attend local events, craft shows, and festivals
- Do your holiday shopping in your town's shops
- Purchase your holiday pies, cookies, and desserts from a local bakery
- Set up a holiday food drive
- Volunteer!
- Run a race for a good cause
- Make a [blanket or quilt](#) for someone in need
- Donate a [Christmas Tree](#) to a military family
- Help those who have been in a natural disaster
- Donate [video game consoles](#) to a children's hospital
- Adopt a military family through [Operation Christmas Spirit](#)
- Give an animal the gift of a forever home
- Donate to [Toys for Tots](#)
- Visit an ice skating rink
- Pay someone's layaway balance



HEALTH

Fitness tip: Pack your sneakers and resistance bands when traveling for the holidays. You never know when you can sneak in a walk or workout when everyone else is napping!

Flu season is in full swing, and **it's not too late to get your flu shot.** Even getting one as late as February can still help protect you from outbreaks that occur late in the season.

New year, new you. **Exercise at least 3 hours a week.** Starting with smaller exercise commitments helps with long-term success.

No other month says peppermint like December. Did you know sniffing peppermint can help reduce fatigue while driving? And drinking peppermint tea can make you more alert and complete mental tasks faster.

Getting outside is just as important in December as it is in June. **Take advantage of all the fun winter activities in your area,** or bundle up and have an outdoor picnic!

New Year's Goal - cook a new recipe once a week. Try recipes from all across the globe. Bonus! It can be a great educational moment for the entire family.

Self-care is the gift that keeps on giving! It's ok if you can't get to the Y during the holiday hype. Get creative and do laps in the kitchen, **stretches while watching a holiday movie,** or go on a walk while dinner is in the oven.

Are you looking for ways to boost your productivity? Break up your work day with a snack, walk, or meditation. Your brain will reward you by being more efficient with your tasks.

Need some help surviving the holidays? These [10 simple tips](#) will come in handy!



PARENTING

Looking for a great holiday gift that your kids can make? Brighten up a loved one's desk with this [Marbled Rock Paperweight](#). Bonus! It also makes a terrific piece for the garden.

Get ready for Santa with these [FREE downloadable coloring pages](#) featuring Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner, or Blitzen!

Making holiday cookies is a Christmas tradition for many of us. And [these easy cookie recipes](#) you can make with your kids are just what Santa wants with his glass of milk.

It's the most wonderful time of the year! Take a stroll or drive through your neighborhood and admire the show of lights, trees, wreaths, candles, and other seasonal displays.

Grab those glue sticks! [These super cute holiday crafts](#) will keep your kids entertained for hours. They also make great gifts!

Parents - you'll want to know these practical [ways to help your kids make realistic goals](#) for the new year. **Resolutions aren't just for adults!**

What are some Christmas traditions your kids still remember from years past?

"There are three stages of man: he believes in Santa Claus; he does not believe in Santa Claus; he is Santa Claus." ~ Bob Phillips #neverstopbelieving

December 6th is St Nicholas Day. Be sure your kids **leave their shoes by the fireplace or door** so Saint Nicholas can fill them with goodies.

Looking for some good Christmas books for kids? This [comprehensive list](#) should do the trick.

MEMBERSHIP

It's only cold if you're not moving! **Warm up at the Y this winter.**

Here's an Idea for your **Ask the Nutritionist** Q&A video segment - "Which is healthier? Bone broth or chicken soup?" and have them explain the nutritional differences.

Friendly Reminder: It's time to start collecting those coats, hats, gloves, and scarves for local shelters. Put up signs, advertise on your social channels, and spread the word!

No excuses! It may be cold and dark, but you can always work out and get warm at the Y. Check out our winter class schedule. (*Link to URL with your YMCAs class schedule*)

Here's an Idea for your **Ask the Trainer** Q&A video segment - "How can I unkink my body when I wake up in the morning?" Have your trainer show stretches to ease into a morning routine.

What's your favorite holiday movie?

Is joining the Y part of your New Year's resolution? You'll have access to state-of-the-art equipment, fitness classes, youth development programs, childcare services, personal trainers, and so much more! Learn more by visiting (*insert your Ys website link to the page with more information on services*)

Bust the Myth! Advice from our experts at the YMCA - "You can lose belly fat with crunches. **Myth or fact?**"

Are there any new fitness classes you would like to see added to the mix in 2023? We want to hear your suggestions!



TRIVIA

What are the names of the reindeer that pull Santa's sleigh?

Answer: Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner, and Blitzen. And the most famous reindeer of them all, Rudolph!

Snowflakes usually have how many sides? A. 4 B. 5 C. 6 D. 8

Answer: All snowflakes have six sides or points, owing to how they are formed.

How thick should ice be before you can skate on it safely?

Answer: Four inches. [Read up and stay safe!](#)

How many ghosts show up in "A Christmas Carol"?

Answer: Four. Jacob Marley and the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Future

Which winter sport evolved from skateboarding and surfing?

Answer: Snowboarding.

In the movie How The Grinch Stole Christmas, what three words describe The Grinch?

Answer: Stink, stank, stunk

What kind of pizza does Kevin dream of having all to himself in the movie Home Alone?

Answer: Cheese.

On which planet in our Solar System other than Earth have scientists observed snow falling?

Answer: Mars

Where did eggnog originate?

Answer: England



INSPIRATION

Be so busy loving your life that you have no time for hate, regret, or fear. ~ Unknown

“Just remember, **the true spirit of Christmas lies in your heart.**” ~ The Polar Express

“We elves try to stick to the four main food groups: Candy, candy canes, candy corn, and syrup.”
~ Buddy the Elf

“May your walls know joy, may every room hold laughter, and every window open to great possibility.” ~ Mary Anne Radmacher

“**You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step.**” ~ Martin Luther King

“Remember, George: no man is a failure who has friends.” ~ It's a Wonderful Life

“Bless this highly nutritious microwavable macaroni and cheese dinner and the people who sold it on sale.” ~ Home Alone

“**Every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end.**” ~ Seneca

“Christmas will always be as long as we stand heart to heart and hand in hand.” ~ Dr. Seuss

“You can tell a lot about a person by the way they handle three things: a rainy day, lost luggage, and tangled Christmas tree lights.” ~ Maya Angelou

Every year you make a resolution to change yourself. This year, **make a resolution to be yourself.** ~ Unknown