

## YOUR HEALTHIEST BODY STARTS NOW

SEPTEMBER IS THE NEW JANUARY, say health and wellness pros, who see a flood of new patients and clients when the anything-goes dog days of summer are over and the back-to-school vibe kicks in. Set yourself up to finish the year strong. **BY JESSICA MIGALA**

### 1. TO FEEL YOUNGER: DROP AND DO 40

A STUDY OF more than 1,100 firefighters found that those who could crank out more than 40 pushups had a lower risk of a cardiovascular event, like a heart attack or stroke, over

the next decade compared with guys who could do fewer than ten. The ability to hammer out those reps is a sign of total-body muscular strength, which is associated with good blood pressure and metabolic health. **Can't do 40 in a row? Do as many as you can in a row, then rest 10 seconds;** repeat this until you've done 40 total reps. Do this three times weekly; you'll build the strength to do 40 straight.

#### ► PRO TIP:

"I start most days with 150 pushups," says John P. Higgins, M.D., a professor of medicine at McGovern Medical School at UTHealth in Houston. He uses the Perfect Pushup tool. "It has handles that rotate on a base, which helps me be more stable and use correct form," he says. "Ever since doing 150 a day, my upper body, breathing, and abs are better. And it really wakes me up."

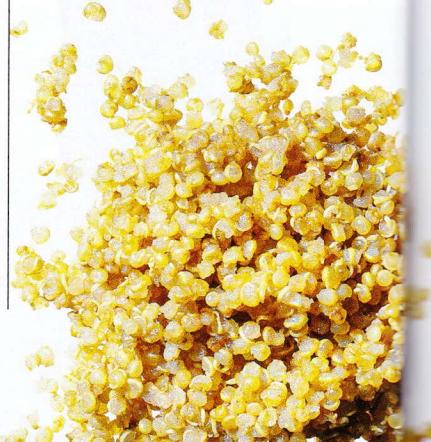
### 2. TO DO RIGHT BY YOUR HEART: FOCUS ON HIGH-IN-FIBER CARBS

**YOU MIGHT LOVE doughnuts and cookies, aka simple, or refined, carbs—ones that are low in fiber and nutrients and raise your blood sugar quickly—but your heart does not.** A new study in *The New England Journal of Medicine* showed that people whose diets contained the most of these foods had a 14 percent higher risk of a major cardiovascular event over ten years (and a 25 percent higher risk of death from any cause) than people whose diets had the least. What this has to do with your heart:

**Too many simple, low-in-fiber carbs may lower "good" HDL cholesterol and increase triglycerides and unhealthy LDL cholesterol.**

#### ► PRO TIP:

Spencer Kroll, M.D., a fellow of the American Board of Clinical Lipidology, noticed that his patients with unhealthy blood sugar and insulin function also had more dangerous blood fats. So he revised his own diet, taking out simple carbs like bread and pasta to cut carbs from 40 to 20 percent of his calories. The remaining carbs are high in fiber. For instance, at breakfast, "I'll eat a small bowl of nuts, berries, and a barley cereal," he says. Other meals include higher-fiber grains like quinoa. "I've seen significant improvements in my LDL cholesterol," Dr. Kroll says. "My triglycerides are better, and my insulin function is, too."

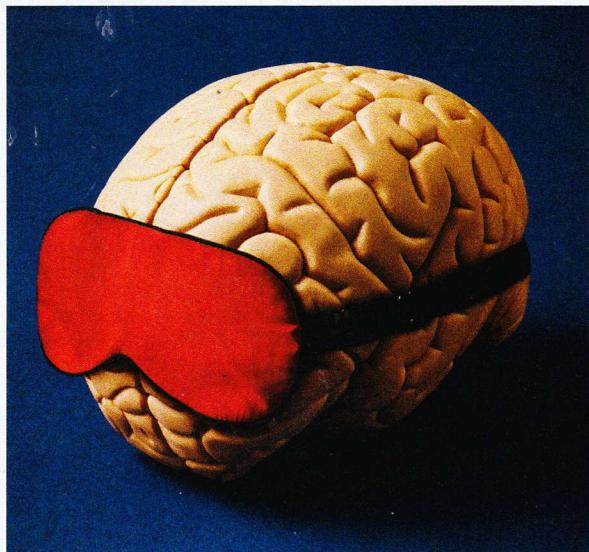


## 3. TO CONTROL YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE: TACKLE STRESS

ONE OF THE best ways to be healthier is to get your blood pressure under control. When it's high, it can damage nearly every organ in your body. And one of the most overlooked ways to help it stay low is to manage stress. All-day stress may push your BP high while you're awake, says cardiologist Christopher Kelly, M.D., of UNC Health Care in Raleigh. Even if it becomes normal overnight, it still taxes your system. Stress may also lead to overdrinking, smoking, and other choices that don't help BP, he says. **In addition to seeing a doctor about high BP, carve out time to reduce stress.** Meditation isn't the only way to do it. Lean into your own stress shedders, even if they're quirky, like making playlists or solving a Rubik's cube.

### ► PRO TIP:

"I love going to Costco when I need a break," says Jamin Brahmbhatt, M.D., a urologist with Orlando Health. "Something about that place is calming. I look at the new TVs and might buy something that I may not always need. It's been a ritual since high school, when my friends and I would go once a week. It brings back memories of those times."



## 5. TO STOP LANGUISHING: FIND WHAT FOCUSES YOU

THINGS MIGHT BE looking up with Covid, but maybe you feel...absolutely effing blah. You're stagnant. Aimless. You're not depressed but not excited, either. The term for this is languishing, and "I'm seeing an

epidemic of it in my practice," says New York City psychotherapist Allison Abrams, L.C.S.W. Recognizing and naming it is important and helps validate what you're feeling. **One way to help clear it up is to do something that gets you into a state of flow**—when you're fully absorbed and focused on something outside yourself, she says. Take a step toward whatever gets you there: Maybe it's fly-fishing, rock climbing, painting, or planting.

### ► PRO TIP:

"I kiteboard once a week," says Alex Dimitriu, M.D., founder of Menlo Park Psychiatry & Sleep Medicine in Menlo Park, California. He considers it "wind therapy," which is his oceanic version of forest bathing, a tradition in Japan of recharging by spending time in the woods. It requires focus, and "the feeling of wind against my body makes me feel fresh and alive, especially during days of working from home," he says.

## 6. TO STICK WITH YOUR WORKOUTS: HAVE A TWO-MONTH PLAN

IF YOU DON'T know why you're going to the gym today, it's going to be harder for you to get there than for the guy who knows he wants to deadlift 200 pounds by November and has a plan to do it. You want a workout plan that sets you up for progress, explains MH fitness director Ebenezer Samuel, C.S.C.S.

**"Too much workout deviation keeps you from mastering moves and movements."** And a sense of mastery is what helps keep you coming back to the gym. "A good progressive eight- or 12-week program will have you doing at least three key exercises or movements on a weekly basis," Samuel says.

### ► PRO TIP:

Random exercises and some walking on the treadmill? "That haphazard way of training doesn't work at all. Follow a progression that has a prescribed number of sets and reps," says Charlie Seltzer, M.D., C.S.C.S., an obesity-medicine physician in Philadelphia. "The positive reinforcement you get from knowing you're getting stronger—as in 'I could only curl 20 pounds for five reps last week, and now I can do eight'—makes you more likely to be consistent." And stay that way. ■



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COOL DAD



► THIS MONTH'S COOL DAD: MARLON WAYANS is a comedian and an actor. Watch him in Respect, and in the stand-up special Marlon Wayans: You Know What It Is, on HBO Max this month.

# DIALING BACK THE DESPERATION

Acceptance seems like a simple concept, but sometimes it's the hardest thing in the world. **BY MARLON WAYANS**

I'M A SUPER touchy-feely kind of guy, and before I had kids, I had all these dreams about being around them constantly. With my 19-year-old son, Shawn, I hoped that we'd be going to ball games, playing video games, and just hanging out all the time. With my 21-year-old daughter, Amai (aka "Sweetness"), I had dreams of meeting her boyfriend and the three of us all being cool, with him almost becoming like a surrogate son. But you know, life throws you curveballs. My daughter's gay. My son doesn't think I'm cool.

My kids are so aloof. It's bad, man.

On their birthdays, I'll post a photo of them on Instagram and say so many beautiful things about them that I wind up running out of characters. But with me, on Father's Day, my daughter might post eight measly words. *Happy Father's Day, Dad. You a good dude.* My son gives me three letters: #HFD. I didn't know

what it was—Houston Fire Department? I told myself, next Father's Day Ima write six measly words: *Dear kids, Fuck you. Love, Dad.*

But that was me being sensitive.

I just wanted my kids to be more like me. I grew up getting a bunch of affection from my mom, who was all kisses and coddling and sweet words, while my dad was the disciplinarian. But my children's mom, she's more emotionally neutral. And because I worked so much, my kids turned out to be 65 percent her, 35 percent me—almost like they didn't get the affection part.

When me and their mom split when they were younger, they lived with me. For a while, it was great. I would bathe them and there would be bedtime stories. I would sit up with them, hang out and play with them in the yard. But then when they went to live with their mom, I could

have only so much influence. On the one hand, it was so frustrating. But on the other, I was working so much—and you know me, I don't just have one job—it was like, *The nerve of me to think that I actually have time to be an overbearing dad.* But that wouldn't stop me from coming off as desperate anyway.

I just felt like I always had to be "on" for them. I'd put all this energy into all these plans, flying back and forth across the country to be with them for a day, maybe two. And then you look, and I'm knocked the hell out on the ride at Disney or in the movie theater or at my son's game or at Christmas, after filling the room with gifts. At a point, when they got to be teenagers, they were like, "Thank you, Dad—we love you, but this is a lot."

That's when I started to take my foot off the gas and realize that not only are these kids with good hearts who love and trust me but that God gave me exactly the kind of children I needed to accomplish the things I wanted to in life. I'm realizing that just a little can go a long way. Now that I've accepted how they love me and that their love language is understatement, I can sit down with my son and my daughter and her girlfriend—who's like a surrogate daughter—and have a nice dinner and talk about school or relationships or flaws or bare our souls.

We're, like, great friends. It's so cool. ■

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## FIRST: GATHER YOUR INGREDIENTS

The must-haves, the good-to-haves, and the one thing you don't really need.



**Gold Plum Chinkiang Vinegar**  
Chinese black vinegar is known for its malty-earthy taste. "It has a deeper flavor than white vinegar, but it's a bit lighter than balsamic," says Jason Wang of Xi'an Famous Foods in New York City. It helps cut the heft of fat in heavier dishes.



**Juan Cheng Pixian Douban**  
This fermented spicy broad-bean paste is cured with chile peppers, flour, and salt. Choose one that comes from Pixian, the district where the paste originated, for a deep, unique umami that's earthy, salty, and sweet.



**Pagoda Shaoxing Huadiao Cooking Wine**  
The Chinese equivalent of dry cooking sherry, Shaoxing wine adds complexity to marinades and stir-fries.



**The Mala Market Sichuan Peppercorns**  
These provide a tongue-numbing sensation in dishes, says Harvey Liu of Duck House. The Mala Market insists on fresh, quality peppercorns.



**Kadoya Pure Sesame Oil**  
Sesame oil is usually added at the end of cooking and provides a nutty finish. It is also fantastic with desserts—try adding a drizzle of it over vanilla ice cream. Really.



**Lee Kum Kee Hoisin Sauce**  
The best stuff contains soybeans, sesame, chile peppers, and garlic and tastes incredible in smoky meat marinades.

**Where to Buy:** You can find most of this at your local Asian grocery store. If you don't have one near you, order online:

- [sayweee.com/en](http://sayweee.com/en)
- [freshgogo.com](http://freshgogo.com)
- [themalamarket.com](http://themalamarket.com)

# GET COOKING ➤

We took **FOUR AMAZING RECIPES** from some of the top modern Chinese restaurants in America and had them simplified for the home cook. Each one will completely alter how you think about Chinese food. And, put together, they make a spectacular four-course meal.

## GATHER YOUR TOOLS

You could get by with what you already have, but Chinese-inspired cooking requires the right arsenal of kitchen utensils.



**▲ Taylor & Ng Natural Non-stick 14" Carbon Steel Wok**  
Its steep, sloping walls can handle large amounts of ingredients. This model is lightweight and comes preseasoned, which helps it retain its nonstickiness. \$65; taylorandng.com



**▲ Wüsthof Classic 7" Chinese Cleaver**

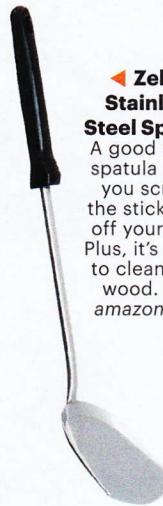
This heavy-duty blade cuts through thick chunks of meat and bone with ease. Made out of high-carbon stainless steel, it's an investment, but you can also use it to scale fish or smash garlic cloves. \$200; wusthof.com



**▲ Joyce Chen 10" Bamboo Steamer**  
The wooden steamer coaxes dumplings and seafood to moist perfection. \$21; amazon.com



**▲ Zojirushi Neuro Fuzzy NS-ZCC10 Rice Cooker**  
This micro-computerized cooker will cook your rice perfectly in 40 minutes. Every time. \$220; zojirushi.com



**▲ Zebra Stainless Steel Spatula**  
A good metal spatula helps you scrape the sticky bits off your wok. Plus, it's easier to clean than wood. \$12; amazon.com

## ➤ AND DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE MSG

While you don't need the flavor enhancer to make delicious Chinese food, it's a popular way to add that distinct umami taste to your dishes. And despite carrying a bad rap for decades, based on racist misconceptions lacking scientific support, it's considered safe by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration.



## THE FIERY FIX: SLICED BEEF IN HOT AND SPICY OIL

**From:** Sichuan Province

The lip-tingling, slow-build burn of this entrée has made it a best seller at Duck House Chinese Restaurant in Portland, Oregon, where it's most often eaten over rice. Duck House co-owner Harvey Liu recommends washing it all down with either a harder cider or an IPA.

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 2 TBSP SHAOXING COOKING WINE
- 1 TBSP SOY SAUCE
- ½ LB THINLY SLICED BEEF BRISKET
- 2 TBSP CORNSTARCH
- 1 CUP BEAN SPROUTS
- 2 LARGE LEAVES FROM A NAPA CABBAGE, CUT INTO 2-INCH PIECES
- 2 TBSP VEGETABLE OIL
- 1 TBSP MINCED GINGER
- 2 CLOVES GARLIC
- 1 SCALLION, CUT INTO 2-INCH PIECES
- 4 DRIED CHILE PEPPERS
- 1 TBSP SICHUAN PEPPERCORNS, FINELY GROUNDED
- 3 TBSP SPICY BROAD-BEAN PASTE
- 1 TBSP WARMED VEGETABLE OIL, FINELY MINCED SCALLION, MINCED GARLIC, AND CRUSHED RED-PEPPER FLAKES FOR GARNISH

### HOW TO MAKE IT

1. In a large bowl, stir together the cooking wine and soy sauce. Add the brisket and marinate for 15 minutes. Add 2 Tbsp water and stir in the cornstarch. Set aside.
2. In a large pot of boiling water, cook the bean sprouts and cabbage till slightly wilted, 2 to 3 minutes. Strain and rinse under cold water. Place in a serving bowl.
3. In a wok over medium heat, heat the vegetable oil. Add the ginger, garlic, scallion, chile peppers, and Sichuan peppercorns until aromatic, about 1 minute. Add the spicy bean paste and 2 cups water. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low and cover for 10 minutes.
4. Strain out the solid ingredients and add the beef, simmering until just cooked through, about 1 minute. Transfer the beef to the serving bowl with bean sprouts and cabbage. Ladle in some broth. Garnish and serve. Feeds 2

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## THE BEST BARBECUE YOU'VE NEVER HAD: **SMOKY AND SWEET CHAR SIU PORK**

From: Hong Kong

This protein-rich meal comes from chef Johnny Lee of Pearl River Deli in Los Angeles. It's inspired by the fast-casual Chinese-barbecue shops of Hong Kong, where glistening cuts of roast pork and poultry hang in window displays. "My memories are eating this out of Styrofoam boxes over rice," Lee says. "This recipe works with most cuts of pork, including pork loin, tenderloin—even ribs."

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED

1½ CUPS SUGAR  
¼ CUP HOISIN SAUCE, PLUS 1 TBSP  
2½ TBSP CHU HOU PASTE (OR ADD  
2½ TBSP MORE HOISIN SAUCE  
IF YOU CAN'T FIND THIS)  
½ CUP DARK SOY SAUCE,  
PLUS 1 TBSP  
¼ CUP SHAOXING WINE  
¼ TBSP CHINESE FIVE-SPICE POWDER  
2½ LB PORK BUTT, CUT INTO 1-INCH-  
THICK STEAKS  
¾ CUP HONEY

### HOW TO MAKE IT

1. In a large bowl, stir together the sugar, ¼ cup salt, ¼ cup hoisin, the chu hou paste (or more hoisin), ½ cup dark soy sauce, the Shaoxing wine, and the Chinese five-spice powder. Add the pork and marinate overnight, or for at least 3 hours.
2. Preheat your grill to medium high. Place the pork on the grill over indirect heat, close the lid, and roast until a meat thermometer inserted into the thickest part of each steak registers 155°F, about 45 minutes.
3. In a small pot, stir together the remaining hoisin and soy sauce, the honey, and 1 cup water. Bring to a boil over low heat and reduce until the glaze is slightly sticky. Cool to room temperature. Brush this glaze over the pork and serve.  
Feeds 4



## THE LIGHTNING-QUICK ANYTIME MEAL: TOMATO AND EGG OVER RICE

From: Hong Kong

"There are limitless variations to this recipe," says Lucas Sin, the head chef of Junzi Kitchen in New York City. "I grew up in Hong Kong, and my father ambitiously grew tomatoes. I remember those fresh tomatoes being cut up and stir-fried with eggs. It's one of those perfect tomato dishes, sort of like spaghetti and meatballs."

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 2 EGGS
- 3 TBSP VEGETABLE OIL
- 3 SCALLIONS (SMASH THE WHITE PARTS WITH THE FLAT SIDE OF A KNIFE AND SLICE INTO 1-INCH SEGMENTS; MINCE THE GREEN PARTS FINELY FOR GARNISH)
- 2 MEDIUM TOMATOES, PEELLED, CORED, AND CUT INTO ½-INCH-WIDE WEDGES
- SUGAR, TO TASTE
- STEAMED RICE, FOR SERVING

### HOW TO MAKE IT

**1.** In a small bowl, beat the eggs well with  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp salt, 1 Tbsp vegetable oil, and 1 Tbsp water. In a large pan over medium-high heat, add 1 Tbsp vegetable oil. Mov-

ing quickly, add the eggs and cook, pushing and folding constantly with chopsticks until just set, about 10 seconds. Remove from heat and transfer to a plate.

**2.** Wipe out the pan and return it to medium high. Heat the remaining 1 Tbsp oil. Add the scallion whites and cook, stirring, until aromatic and just beginning to brown, about 15 seconds. Add the tomatoes and cook, stirring constantly until they begin to break down, about 3 minutes. Season with salt and sugar to taste.

**3.** Add the cooked eggs to the tomato sauce. Stir to combine, about 15 seconds. Remove from heat and garnish with the scallion greens. Eat with warm, steamed rice. Feeds 1

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uilt on balance—refined yet simple,” says Allman, the owner of Dumpling Daughter Letts. “The acid, sugar, and salt all play an e and bring out the best in cucumber.”

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED

### HOW TO MAKE IT

1. In a medium bowl, toss the cucumber with  $\frac{1}{2}$  Tbsp salt. Allow to sit for 1 hour.
2. In a large bowl, stir the sugar and vinegar until the sugar dissolves. Rinse the cucumber well, add it to the vinegar mixture, and refrigerate for at least 12 hours.
3. Strain the cucumber, discarding the marinade, and toss in a large bowl with the garlic, oils, and soy sauce. Serve chilled. Feeds 4

