

# Welcoming Wellness

## In Rural Transit

Vol. 2 Issue 1

### Daily Reading Challenge

January - March 2022 Wellness Challenge

An activity that may get pushed to the side due to the lure of social media or binge-watching a TV show is reading a physical book. According to [Healthline](#), there are many benefits of reading, and there are even more benefits of reading a physical book versus reading on a tablet.

#### Strengthens brain & reduces cognitive decline

The brain has a complex network of signals that activate when reading, and those signals mature along with you and your reading ability. Reading is also a way to keep your mind active and engaged as you age which could help prevent dementia and similar diseases.



#### Reduces stress & depression symptoms

Studies have found that just 30 minutes of reading each day can lead to lower blood pressure, heart rate, and distressed feelings. Reading books, especially fiction, provides an escape which can lessen the effects of depression, as those suffering may feel isolated or estranged from other people.

#### Prepares you for a good night's sleep

Reading is excellent to incorporate into your sleeping routine, as it calms the mind and gets you ready for bed. In this case, it is best not to read on a tablet or phone because the light from the screen could keep you awake. In general, reading a print book leads to higher reading comprehension and information retention than reading material in a digital form, so it might be time to bust out that old library card!

#### Participation

Individuals or agencies who wish to participate should sign up by Friday, January 14. The challenge will run from January 17 to March 25. Participants will track the number of days they read at least 30

#### Issue Highlights

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minutes for leisure. There will be a supplemental tracking document available on the [Nebraska Public Transit Website](#).

At the end of the quarter, participants will be asked to email tracking materials. The participant who reads the most days out of the quarter will win a prize! If you have any questions about the challenge, please reach out to us.



# Zucchini Pizza Boats & Guacamole Dip

Instead of traditional Super Bowl snacks, try munching on these healthy recipes instead!

## Zucchini Boat Ingredients:

- 4 large zucchinis
- 1lb Italian sausage
- 1 cup marinara sauce
- Pepperoni slices (optional)
- Shredded mozzarella cheese (or cheese of your choice)



## Directions:

Step 1 – Preheat oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit.

8 servings  
292 calories/serving

Step 2 – Brown sausage in a pan over medium heat until cooked through. Once cooked, pour marinara sauce on top of sausage and stir together. Once mixed, remove from heat.

Step 3 – Slice zucchini in half lengthwise and scoop out the seeds. Leave 1/4 to 1/2 inch of flesh around the outside of the zucchini. Place zucchini on a baking sheet.

Step 4 – Place several spoonfuls of sausage mixture into each zucchini half until they are full. Top with cheese and (optional) slices of pepperoni.

Step 5 - Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, until tender and crisp. For softer zucchini, bake a few extra minutes.



## Guacamole Ingredients:

- 3 ripe avocados
- 1/2 small onion, diced
- 2 roma tomatoes, diced
- 3 Tbs. cilantro
- 1 jalapeno pepper, seeds removed & diced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 lime, juiced
- 1/2 tsp. salt

4 servings  
185 calories/serving

## Directions:

Step 1 – Slice avocados in half, remove pit, and scoop into mixing bowl. Mash with fork and make as chunky or smooth as you like.

Step 2 – Add remaining ingredients and stir together. Add more salt or lime juice as needed.

**Have a Healthy Recipe to Share?**

Email us along with photos of you and your agency enjoying the recipe for the chance to be featured in an upcoming issue of Welcoming Wellness!



# Alternatives to Buying a Gym Membership

You don't need to spend money on a gym membership to start living a more active life in 2022



Gym memberships often rise at the beginning of the new year as people join determined to start living a healthier and more active life. While joining a gym is certainly not bad because they do provide many resources, it can put a dent in your wallet, and it is easy for people to "fall off the wagon" for a variety of reasons.

If you want to start making active changes in your life and are on a budget, or want to create a set routine before committing to a gym membership, here are some alternatives according to [Credit.org](#):

**Walking** – starting a regular walking practice can help form a routine and it will get you up out of your chair! You can invite friends or neighbors to join you, and you can walk at a variety of public spaces, like parks or trails to mix things up. In the winter you could go to a large public building, like a community center or mall, and walk around indoors.

**Public Parks** – Parks may offer a variety of free activity space for people to utilize, such as a basketball or tennis court. Although, you will most likely have to provide your own equipment. Also, newer additions to some parks include outdoor exercise equipment for the public to use.

**Smartphone apps/YouTube** – There are a variety of free or low-cost apps that can be downloaded to your phone. Often, you can set it up so the app will notify or remind you to be active. Some apps to consider are Nike Training Club, 7 Minute Workout, and Yoga for Beginners. Another option is to download the YouTube app and search for workout videos to follow along with.



**Community Centers/YMCA** – Another free or low-cost option, especially if you like group classes, is to check out a local community center or YMCA. Sometimes classes may be offered for free, and if they are not, both options are generally cheaper than a regular gym membership.



# Creating Manageable Resolutions this New Year

Grandeur goals can be difficult to obtain, so it is important to make a success plan along with your resolution



"New year, new me" is not an uncommon mindset to have around the new year. While having a growth mindset is great, change does not happen overnight. Creating manageable, goal-oriented resolutions will set you up for achieving those resolutions in 2022. Here are some tips from the [Rescue Time Blog](#) about setting up your resolutions for success:

- 1. Remember the power of SMART goals.** SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. By defining each part of SMART, you are creating a system of how you plan on achieving your overarching goal. It is important to re-visit your spelled out SMART goal every month to make sure you are still on track to complete it or adjust as needed.

- 2. Track your progress!** Big changes don't happen overnight, so it is important to track your progress and celebrate the small steps you're taking. It can also help you stay committed to your goal and form that goal into a habit. You can track progress a variety of ways, like using a calendar or creating an accountability group with friends.
- 3. Meaningful goals are the ones that stick.** You are more likely to form habits and stick with your resolution if it aligns with your core values or are something that you care about. Ask yourself why you want to achieve that goal. If you want to go even deeper, you can use the 5 Whys method where you ask "why?" you want to achieve your goal and then use

that answer as the basis for the next question. This assures your resolution is personal and something you care about which will make it easier to stick with.

There is still a possibility of falling off the wagon after all the time and consideration put into your resolution. It is important to remember that it is okay! It's better to have tried and failed than to never have tried at all. Plus, one study suggests those who create New Year's resolutions are ten times as likely to actually change their behaviors than those who don't. Just remember to learn from past mistakes, use positive self-talk, and jump back on that wagon when you're ready!



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