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# Wise & Well

Welcome to the Wise & Well Newsletter, where we promote whole-person wellbeing each month and highlight health-related topics to help you be your best.

## Celebrating the Holidays: The Ease of Belonging

**For many of us, December is a chance to finally step away from the fast pace of deadlines and meetings and reconnect with the people and traditions that give our lives rich meaning. It's the time of year when lights twinkle in windows, laughter fills kitchens and dining rooms and festive, familiar songs stretch softly across the twilight.**

Among cultures and faiths, there are countless versions of this, each unique in tradition yet sharing the same instinct to gather close, show kindness and mark the passage of time with love and generosity. Whether it's lighting a candle, trimming a tree, exchanging gifts or simply sitting down for a shared meal, these moments remind us of something universal: human connection is at the heart of every celebration. And at the core of that connection is the sense of belonging, an ease that comes from being part of something bigger than ourselves.

Before we take a break from work, that's a good reminder we all need to hear. That we're not just marking the end of another calendar year, but setting aside at least a moment to pause and recognize the connections and experiences that made it meaningful. Before we head home to our families and loved ones, it's important to say thank you to coworkers who stepped up, to teams that collaborated through change and to leaders who helped everyone thrive. Simple gestures like a thoughtful note or a few kind words of appreciation, or yes, even lunch, can strengthen bonds and build trust that carries into the year ahead.

The Wise & Well team recommends that you carry some of that spirit home with you this holiday season. Whether your traditions involve faith, food, family, or a little bit of all three, remember to stay present and connected to what and who matters most to you and your loved ones. **That's belonging.** And belonging doesn't come from one event or initiative; it comes from consistency, empathy and recognizing the fact that we're all just flawed humans doing our best. Our best at work, our best at home, our best to show up, to be cooperative, to enjoy one another, and, if we're lucky, to carry that spirit of belonging into the year ahead.

So before you dive into the 2026 round of to-dos, take this as your official permission slip from the Wise & Well team: you've worked hard enough this year and you don't need a long newsletter to state a simple thing: enjoy this opportunity for rest and reflection, and do your best to recharge as December (and 2025) fades into memory.

Here's to quiet mornings, delicious food, good company and a new year filled with meaning. From all of us: We wish you the happiest of holiday seasons, and thank you for being part of this community.

Source: [pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov)



## 2026 Wise & Well Webinars — Register Now!

### January 2026

**Topic:** From Goals to Growth: Habits That Stick

**When:** Tuesday, January 13 | Noon - 1:00 p.m. ET

Have you ever set a goal only to fall short within days or weeks? You're not alone!

Kick off 2026 with this interactive workshop that will help you turn good intentions into lasting habits. You'll explore how habits form, identify patterns that help or hinder your progress and discover strategies to stay motivated. Walk away with a clear plan to build habits that support your personal and professional goals.

### Get ready to empower your journey as you:

- Explore the science behind habit formation
- Harness powerful tools to create positive, sustainable habits
- Learn how to apply habit strategies to daily life
- Ignite your personal motivation and follow through with confidence

To register, [click here](#).

## Additional Resources

### Looking to plan ahead?

The additional 2026 Wise & Well Webinars will take place on the following dates from noon – 1:00 p.m. ET. Reserve your spot today by registering at the following links:

- March 10 | [Register Here](#)
- May 12 | [Register Here](#)
- July 14 | [Register Here](#)
- September 8 | [Register Here](#)
- November 10 | [Register Here](#)

## New Website: Now Live!

We have transitioned away from the Wise & Well Training Center to the new, refreshed **Wise & Well Digital Experience website**.

Here you can find our Wise & Well newsletters (with exercises and delicious recipes), register for our upcoming wellbeing webinars that are hosted by leading industry experts and replay past webinar recordings. Check it out today!





# Monthly Moves

## Six Strength Exercises That Fight Aging Better Than Cardio

Once you hit a certain age, your body starts to naturally lose muscle mass and bone density. This process can significantly accelerate if you stay inactive.

That's why strength training becomes one of the best things you can do to stay strong, mobile and independent for the long term. Unlike traditional cardio, these six simple moves build the kind of functional strength that supports healthy joints, boosts metabolism and improves balance.

Try them this week and feel the difference in your energy, posture and confidence.

### **Bodyweight Squats**

Stand tall with your feet shoulder-width apart. Extend your arms in front of you or place your hands on your hips. Bend at the knees and hips to lower into a squat, keeping your chest lifted. Press through your heels to return to standing.

The goal: 3 sets of 12-15 reps

### **Pushups**

Start in a high plank with your hands under your shoulders. Bend your elbows, lowering your chest toward the floor while keeping your body straight. Press back up to the high plank.

The goal: 3 sets of 10

### **Glute Bridges**

Press through your heels to lift your hips, forming a straight line from shoulders to knees. Squeeze your glutes at the top, then lower slowly.

The goal: 3 sets of 15 reps

### **Plank**

Place your hands under your shoulders and step your feet back to hip-width. Engage your abs, squeeze your glutes and keep your body in one straight line from head to heels.

The goal: 3 sets of 20-45-second holds

### **Bent-Over Rows**

Hold a dumbbell in each hand. Hinge at your hips until your torso is nearly parallel to the ground. With a flat back and soft knees, pull the weights toward your ribcage, squeeze your shoulder blades together and slowly lower.

The goal: 3 sets of 10-12 reps

### **Step-Ups**

Stand tall facing a sturdy step or low bench. Step up with your right foot, pressing through your heel as you bring your left foot to meet it. Step back down and repeat, alternating legs.

The goal: 3 sets of 10 reps per leg

Source: [eatthis.com](https://eatthis.com)



# Cozy Holiday Breakfast Strata

If there's ever a perfect time for a breakfast casserole, it's the quiet morning after the holidays. The gifts are unwrapped, the coffee's brewing and the pace has finally slowed. That's where this cozy holiday breakfast strata comes in: a hearty, make-ahead dish that turns yesterday's bread and a few simple ingredients into something special.

Loaded with Italian sausage, cheese and your favorite seasonal veggies, it's the kind of breakfast that brings everyone back to the table, pajamas, stories and all. And like any great post-holiday tradition, it's wonderfully flexible. Swap in mushrooms for spinach, sourdough for brioche or whatever's left from your holiday spread. However you make it, it's warm, comforting and perfect for sharing on those slower, cozier days of December.

## Ingredients

- 1 tbsp. butter
- 1 lb. ground Italian sausage
- 10 large eggs
- 2 cups whole milk
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 4 cups cubed bread
- 1 1/2 cups shredded Fontina, divided
- 1 cup frozen spinach, defrosted, drained and chopped
- 1 cup sliced baby Bella mushrooms
- 1 cup halved grape tomatoes
- 1/4 cup torn basil, for garnish



# Cozy Holiday Breakfast Strata

## Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350° and grease a 9"-x-13" baking dish with butter. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, add sausage and cook, breaking up large pieces with a spoon, until golden, for about 7 minutes. Remove from heat and let cool.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together eggs and milk and season with salt and pepper. Gently fold in bread, 1 cup cheese, spinach, mushrooms, tomatoes and cooked sausage.
3. Pour mixture into prepared baking dish. Top with remaining 1/2 cup cheese and bake 50 to 55 minutes, until cheese is golden and no liquid remains. Garnish with basil before serving.

Source: [delish.com](https://www.delish.com)

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## December Is Finding Ease and Belonging Month

December is a season of reconnection with loved ones, traditions and ourselves. As the year winds down, small moments of mindfulness and gratitude can help us feel grounded and at ease. Try one of these tips each week to carry that sense of belonging through the holidays and into the new year.

December 5

### Start with Connection

Reach out to someone you haven't spoken to in a while. A simple text or short call can bridge months of silence and rekindle warmth. Reconnecting reminds us that belonging isn't about proximity, it's about presence.

December 12

### Simplify the Season

Before the holiday rush peaks, pause and ask: *What actually brings me joy?* Cross one unnecessary thing off your list. Whether it's skipping a second cookie exchange or saying no to over-scheduling, simplicity leaves more room for peace and people.

December 19

### Express Gratitude Out Loud

Take a moment during a gathering or team meeting to thank someone who made this year brighter. Spoken gratitude not only strengthens relationships but also reinforces your own sense of belonging and purpose.

December 26

### Know Your Body

After the flurry fades, permit yourself to rest. Sleep in, read, linger over breakfast. True belonging includes belonging to yourself, i.e., honoring what your body and mind need most: restoration.



Source: [pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov)

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## Four Ways to Nurture Belonging This Season



### 1. Pause

Take a breath before the next task or conversation. Presence creates connection.



### 2. Appreciate

Say thank you, out loud. Gratitude turns moments into memories.



### 3. Include

Invite someone in, whether to lunch, a project or a simple chat. Belonging grows through small gestures.



### 4. Restore

Rest without guilt. When you recharge, you return ready to connect with care.

Small actions. Big impact.  
That's belonging in motion.

