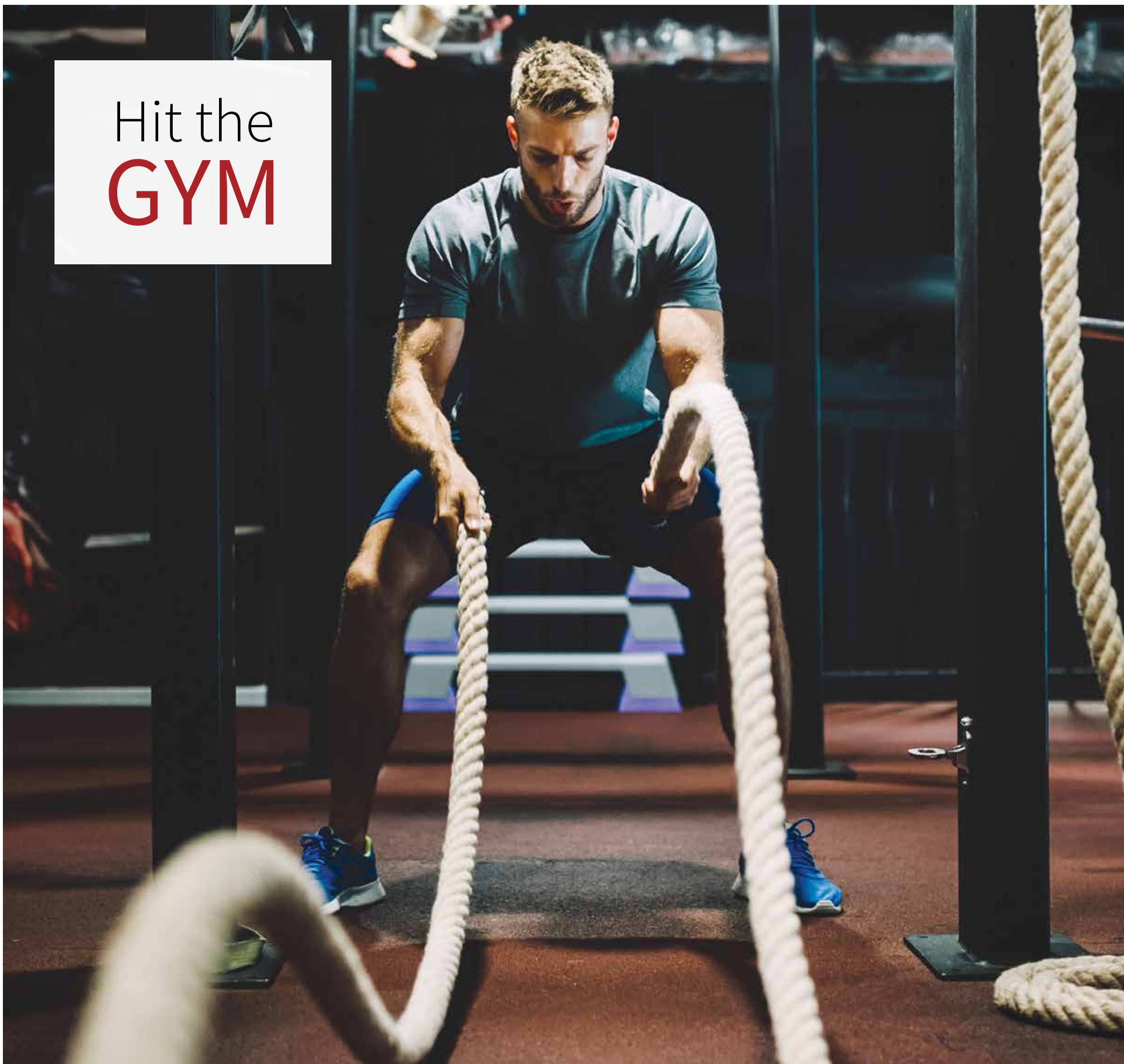


Hit the
GYM



Exercising after Pregnancy

A lot changes during pregnancy, but one thing that stays the same is that everyone, even new moms, need regular exercise to maintain their physical and mental health.

The Mayo Clinic says staying physically active can reduce mom's stress levels, promote better sleep and reduce symptoms of postpartum depression.

WHEN TO START EXERCISING

If your pregnancy and delivery were uncomplicated, the clinic says it's OK to exercise a few days after giving birth or as soon as you feel ready. If you had a C-section or a more complicated birth, talk to your health care provider about when it's safe to start exercising.

STAYING HYDRATED

Everyone should do their best to stay hydrated, but it is especially important for breastfeeding moms. Adding exercise to your routine may mean you should drink even more, but otherwise, Mayo says exercise isn't thought to affect breast milk quantity or quality. If you plan on exercising vigorously during the first few months of breastfeeding, the clinic advises feeding baby before working out or pumping before the workout. Or, experts say,



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exercise first, shower, express a few milliliters of breast milk and, after a half hour or so, feed the baby.

EXERCISES TO TRY

Mayo offers these guidelines for starting working out after pregnancy:

- Allow time for a proper warm up and cool down.
- Begin slowly and increase

the pace gradually.

- Wear a supportive bra and nursing pads if breastfeeding.
- Stop exercising if you feel pain.

New moms should start out slow with low impact, simple exercises such as a daily walk or a postpartum exercise class at a local gym or community center. Some specific exercises to try are:

Pelvic tilt: Lay on your back with knees bent. Flatten your back against the floor by tightening your abdominal muscles and bending your pelvis up slightly. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat five times initially and work your way up to 10-20 repetitions.

Happy baby pose: Lie on your back and bring your knees toward your chest. Open

your knees slightly wider than your hips. With your arms inside your knees, hold on to the outside of your feet or ankles. Bend your knees so the bottoms of your feet face up and gently pull your feet downward to lower your knees toward the floor. Focus on relaxing the pelvic muscles and hold the pose for about 90 seconds.

The ABCs of Supplements

Many people — more than half of U.S. adults, the CDC says — take vitamins or other dietary supplements such as amino acids, enzymes and minerals.

The National Institutes of Health says products sold as dietary supplements come with a label that lists the active ingredients, the amount per serving or dose, and any other ingredients.

The FDA established Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs) to ensure the identity, purity, strength and composition of dietary supplements. These practices can prevent adding the wrong ingredient or other contamination. The FDA periodically inspects facilities that manufacture supplements.

SUPPLEMENT SAFETY

Supplements can help with a variety of conditions, the NIH says. Calcium and vitamin D, for instance, can help keep bones strong and reduce bone loss. Omega-3 fatty acids from fish oils can help some people resist heart disease. But people who wish to start taking a supplement should discuss it with their health care professional before taking anything new.

Supplements can interact with medications you're already taking or exacerbate conditions you have. Vitamin K, for instance, can reduce the



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ability of some blood thinners to prevent clotting. St. John's wort can speed up the breakdown of some medicines and reduce their effectiveness. Some antioxidant supplements, such as vitamins C and E, may reduce the effectiveness of some types of cancer chemotherapy.

Also be careful of dosing.

Too much of even things such as vitamins and minerals can have adverse effects. Taking too much vitamin A, for instance, can cause headaches and liver damage. Too much iron causes nausea and vomiting.

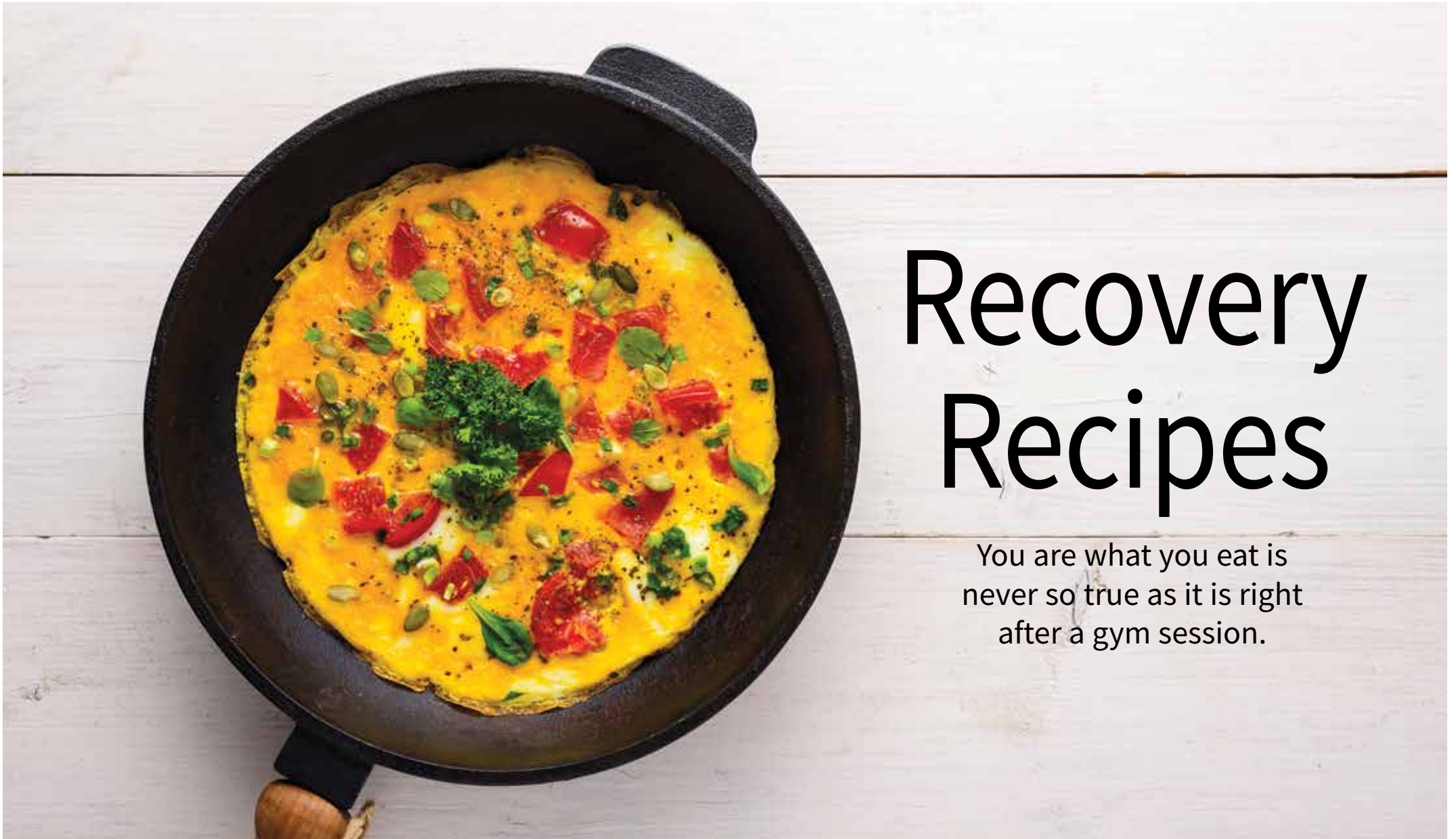
NATURAL IS NOT ALWAYS SAFE

The term natural on a label,

NIH says, doesn't always mean a product is safe. Some botanical products, such as comfrey and kava, can cause liver damage. Be sure your health care professional knows what supplements you're taking or are considering and discuss with them the safety risks, proper dosages and side effects.

Bear in mind that while the

FDA oversees supplement manufacture and sale, there are different guidelines than the agency enforces for drugs. Unlike medicines, supplements do not require FDA approval before sale and the companies that make supplements are responsible for proving their products are safe.



Recovery Recipes

You are what you eat is never so true as it is right after a gym session.

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Here are some recipes recommended by nutritionists to help your body recover from working out.

MEAN GREEN SCRAMBLE

Recipe is from the Food Network. Makes four servings.

Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons salted butter
- 1 cup mixed greens such as spinach, kale and chard
- 3 scallions, both green and white parts, sliced
- 1 jalapeno, seeded and diced small
- Salt and pepper
- 1/4 cup half-and-half
- 2 tablespoons prepared pesto
- 6 large eggs

- 1/2 cup shredded Monterey Jack cheese
- 2 ripe tomatoes, sliced thick
- 2 tablespoons chopped chives

Directions

1. Melt the butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the greens, scallions and jalapeno. Season with salt and pepper, to taste, and cook until the greens have wilted, about 2 minutes.
2. To the half-and-half, add the pesto and eggs. Whisk with a fork until well combined. Add the egg mixture to the skillet and season again, if needed. Cook, stirring frequently, until creamy curds begin to form, about 2 minutes. Add the cheese and continue to cook, stirring, until the eggs are cooked and the cheese has melted.

3. Serve on top of the tomato slices and garnish with chives.

PISTACHIO ENERGY BALLS

Recipe is from Food Network Magazine. Makes 12-15 balls.

Ingredients

- 1 heaping cup shelled raw pistachios
 - 1 1/2 teaspoons vegetable oil
 - Salt
 - 1/3 cup rolled oats
 - 1/3 cup finely chopped pitted dates, about 4-6 dates
 - 1/4 cup sweetened shredded coconut
 - 1/4 cup honey
- Directions**
1. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.

Spread the pistachios in a baking sheet and bake until lightly toasted, about 8-10 minutes. Transfer to a food processor and pulse until finely chopped. Remove and set aside about 2 tablespoons of pistachios for coating.

2. To the food processor, add the oil and a big pinch of salt. Process, scraping down the sides as needed, until the pistachios are creamy and smooth. This should take about 10 minutes.

3. Scrape the pistachio mixture into a medium bowl. Add the oats, dates, coconut and honey. Beat with a mixer on medium-high speed until combined.

4. Roll the mixture into 3/4- to 1-inch balls. Roll in the reserved, chopped pistachios. Set on a plate and refrigerate until firm, about 30 minutes.

Stay on Trend in the Gym

Seemingly since the beginning of time itself, people have jumped on the bandwagon of the latest fitness craze.

Remember Jazzercise? Tae-Bo? Those programs still have their adherents, but there are new exercise trends on the landscape.

BARRE

This is a ballet-based workout that incorporates elements of Pilates and yoga. Using a ballet barre and light weights, practitioners perform small, isometric exercises in sets of high repetitions to strengthen and tone muscles. Barre workouts typically focus on building lean muscle mass and improving muscle endurance. They most often target the legs and glutes, but many classes incorporate arm and core work as well.

3-2-8

The 3-2-8 method combines three days of strength training, two days of low-impact workouts and 8,000 steps per day. Another variation has two strength-training days and three days of low-impact workouts along with the 8,000 steps per day. Most 3-2-8 sessions are less than an hour long.

12-3-30

This involves low-impact walking on a treadmill. To begin, set the incline to 12 and



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the speed to 3 mph, then walk for 30 minutes. The goal is to work your body but remain at a rate from which it can easily recover. Walking instead of running or jogging may also be easier on the joints.

75-HARD/SOFT

The 75-Hard program is an

intense diet and exercise program designed to build mental toughness, discipline and resilience. It consists of six things you do every day for 75 days. They are:

- Completing 45-minute workouts. One must be outside.
- Sticking to a diet with no

cheating. You pick the diet.

- Reading 10 pages of a self-help or educational book.
- Drinking a gallon of water.
- Taking a progress picture.

That can be hard for a lot of people. That's where 75-Soft comes in. For 75 days on this regimen, you must:

- Incorporate healthy foods

into your diet. Drink alcohol only on social occasions.

- Complete one 45-minute workout every day, with one day a week for active recovery.

- Drink three liters of water per day.

- Read 10 pages of any book per day.

What Are Electrolytes?

Electrolytes are minerals in the blood and other body fluids that can carry an electric charge to help maintain balance, nerve and muscle function, proper heart rhythm and more.

People lose electrolytes when they sweat, and they must be replaced by drinking fluids that contain electrolytes. That's not water, which is electrolyte-free, unless otherwise stated on the label.

COMMON ELECTROLYTES

Electrolytes can be acids, bases or salts. Common electrolytes include calcium, chloride, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium and sodium. Electrolytes are essential for maintaining proper fluid levels in the body and for the optimal performance of several bodily functions, including digestion and cardiac function.

HOW CAN I GET ELECTROLYTES?

You can start by staying hydrated and eating a balanced diet with fruits and vegetables to help replenish electrolytes naturally. If you've been sweating excessively, such as working outside or other intense physical activity, choose electrolyte-rich beverages or supplements to make



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sure your body is getting enough.

TESTING FOR ELECTROLYTE LEVELS

Lab tests, such as a basic metabolic panel, can identify whether you have appropriate levels of electrolytes. A blood urea nitrogen (BUN) test indicates how well your kidneys are functioning and may suggest dehydration. A metabolic panel will include the balance

of fluids and other electrolytes, including sodium, potassium and more.

A comprehensive metabolic panel looks at the same thing, but also calcium levels, albumin levels, total blood protein levels, bilirubin levels and levels of aspartate aminotransferase (AST) and alanine aminotransferase (ALT), enzymes that are connected to liver function.

If your health care

professional suspects a more specific electrolyte imbalance, there are other tests. An aldosterone blood test looks for a specific hormone produced by the kidneys. The results can indicate certain electrolyte problems. Aldosterone 24-hour urine tests use several urine samples collected during a 24-hour period. The anion gap blood test compares the levels of specific electrolytes to see whether there's a difference

between the measured levels of positive charge and negative charge electrolytes.

Chloride blood and urine tests look for the amount of chloride. In the case of a urine test, that could involve samples over a 24-hour period. The blood osmolality test measures the amount of certain substances in the body and may be used when the patient is dehydrated, overhydrated or when poisoning is suspected.

Keep Your Activewear Clean

Getting to the gym is one thing, finishing your workout another, and staying fresh and clean yet another.

With the right technique, you can keep your gym clothes smelling sweet.

SEPARATE GYM CLOTHES

Don't just chuck your sweaty gym clothes into the hamper. The longer they sit, the worse they're going to smell. Separate the gym clothes into their own basket so those odors don't transfer to other clothes.

Then, check the tag for the manufacturer's care recommendations. Tags use several symbols to indicate proper care. A wash tub indicates the garment can be washed while a hand in a wash tub means it should be hand washed. A number inside the wash tub indicates the maximum water temperature (this may be in Celsius and will be important later). A square with a circle inside means tumble drying is allowed and a square with dots inside the circle indicates a maximum drying temperature. One dot means low, two dots mean medium and three dots mean high temperatures are OK. A square with an X means tumble drying is not allowed.

TIME TO WASH

Start by turning gym clothes inside out. That can help the water and detergent get to all



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that sweat and bacteria. It also keeps the outside of your clothes looking sharp.

Next, switch your washer to cold water. It seems counter-intuitive; hot water is usually what we use to get of stinky bacteria. But many gym clothes are made from synthetic fabrics, which can't handle the heat. Washing

them in hot water can do more harm than good. A cold-water wash keeps your clothes looking their best and uses less energy.

Use a gentle wash cycle. Gym clothes are often stretchy fabrics and aggressive cleaning cycles can damage that elasticity and make them saggy. For the detergent,

choose an enzyme-based laundry detergent to break down the sweat and oils in the clothes. Then, add half a cup of baking soda to the wash cycle. Baking soda is a natural deodorizer and it won't damage gym clothes' fancy fabrics.

DRYING IT OUT

Don't chuck those gym

clothes in the dryer. Remember heat damages a lot of activewear fabrics. Instead, hang them up to air dry. That takes longer, but it keeps them looking good and avoids shrinking. If you do use the dryer, avoid using dryer sheets or fabric softener. They can leave a coating that clogs moisture-wicking fabrics.



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Get a Stronger Core

Core strength means strengthening specific muscle groups around the trunk of your body.

Look for exercises that include abdominal muscles, back muscles and the muscles around the pelvis. Here are some good core exercises from the Mayo Clinic.

ABDOMINAL CRUNCHES

Lie on your back and place your feet on a wall. The knees and hips should be bent at 90-degree angles. Tighten your abdominal muscles and raise your head and

shoulders off the floor. To avoid straining your neck, cross your arms on your chest. Don't lock them behind your head. Hold for three deep breaths. Return to the start position and repeat 12-15 times.

BRIDGES

This exercise may also be called a back bridge or a glute bridge. Lie on your back with your knees bent. Keep the back in a neutral position, not arched and not pressed into the floor. Try not to tilt your hips and tighten the abdominal muscles. Raise your hips off the floor until they form a line with your knees and

shoulders. Hold for three deep breaths. Return to the start position and repeat 12-15 times.

SINGLE-LEG ABDOMINAL PRESS

Lie on your back with knees bent. Keep the back in a neutral position and avoid tilting your hips. Tighten the abdominal muscles and raise the right leg off the floor so that the knee and hip are bent at 90-degree angles. Rest your right hand on top of the right knee. Push your hand against your knee while using the abdominal muscles to push your knee toward your hand. Keep your arm straight and hold for three deep breaths.

Repeat 12-15 times for each side.

QUADRUPED

This exercise is commonly called bird dogs. Start on your hands and knees. Place your hands directly below your shoulders and your knees directly below your hips. Line up your head and neck with your back and tighten the abdominal muscles. Raise your right arm off the floor and reach ahead. At the same time, raise your right leg and hold it straight behind you. Hold for three deep breaths. Lower the right arm and leg and repeat the process on the left side. Repeat 12-15 times.