



IN THIS ISSUE: *Circadian Rhythm* • *Healthy Creamed Spinach* • *MOVE MORE* • *Frosty Humor*

Biological Clock **AND** Circadian Rhythm



You've probably heard that your body has its own biological clock, but have you ever given much thought as to how important this clock is? Indeed, your biological clock helps you feel alert during the day, hungry at mealtimes, and sleepy at night. Moreover, keeping your body's daily cycles, or circadian rhythms, in sync is important for your health.

A circadian rhythm is a roughly 24-hour cycle in the physiological processes of living beings, including humans, plants and animals. They affect almost every part of your physiology in one way or another. Circadian rhythms are big influencers in the body. Learning how these rhythms are generated is critical for understanding health.

DAILY RHYTHMS

Our natural daily rhythms are synchronized with the sun. A "master clock" in the brain receives direct input from the eyes and coordinates all the biological clocks in the body.

During the day, it sends signals to other brain regions to make hormones that will help keep you awake, boost your heart rate, and give you energy. In the evening, when less light enters your eyes, it triggers production of a hormone called melatonin. Melatonin makes you feel drowsy and helps you stay asleep.

Your biological clock's "settings" are determined by specific genes. These settings can affect body temperature, blood pressure, activity level, inflammation (your body's protective response to injury or infection), fertility, mood, and brain functions. Even the timing of health-related events can be related to your biological clock. For instance, heart attacks are more likely to occur early in the morning, when the level of a hormone called cortisol starts its daily rise.

Circadian rhythms can influence eating habits, digestion, and metabolism (how our body uses and stores energy), too. Researchers have found that eating

later in the day, closer to when melatonin is released, can disrupt the body's natural rhythms. This can lead to increased body fat and weight gain, which are often associated with obesity, heart disease, and diabetes.

DID YOU KNOW?

Smartphones—like laptops, tablets, and televisions—emit blue light, a type of light that the brain interprets as daylight. It suppresses melatonin (the hormone that affects circadian rhythm) and can make it even tougher to fall asleep if used before bedtime.

Here are some ways you can help keep your body's clock in sync:

- Spend time outdoors, away from artificial light.
- Exercise daily, but not within two hours of bedtime.
- Avoid heavy meals two to three hours before bedtime.
- Avoid caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol late in the day.
- Stick to a regular sleep schedule every day of the week same bedtime, same wake-up time.
- Limit the use of electronics with bright screens before bedtime.
- Sleep in a dark, quiet, and comfortable place.

<https://welcoa.org>

You have power over your mind—not outside events. Realize this, and you will find strength.

~Marcus Aurelius

WELLSAID.

CONTINUED

Healthy Creamed Spinach

Cream spinach is a quintessential comfort food and this recipe comes with all the pleasure and no guilt.

Ingredients:

- 1 (16 oz.) package of frozen chopped spinach
- 1 TBSP extra virgin olive oil
- 1 medium to large yellow onion, diced
- 1/2 cup plain non-fat or low-fat Greek-style yogurt
- 1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 1/4 tsp nutmeg

Directions:

- >> Thaw spinach to room temperature; squeeze out excess water and place aside in a bowl.
- >> Sauté the onions in olive oil until soft.
- >> Add spinach and remaining ingredients to skillet and stir over low heat until cheese has melted and it develops a creamy consistency
- >> Serve and ENJOY!

<https://drannwellness.com>



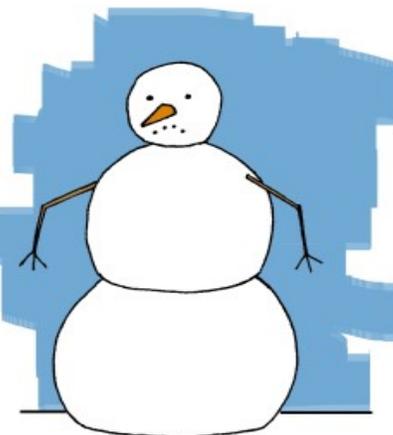
Challenge Yourself: *MOVE MORE this March: Add 10 minutes of movement (anything goes) everyday this month. That's an extra 310 minutes!*

MOVE MORE in March

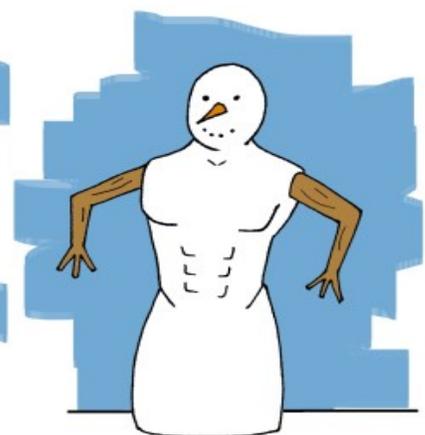
10 minute ideas:

- ⇒ Get outside: walk, run, hike, etc.
- ⇒ Climb a few flights of stairs
- ⇒ Ride a bike (indoors or out)
- ⇒ Shoot hoops with the kids, throw a ball or frisbee with your dog, etc.
- ⇒ 10-minute abs, legs, arms, cardio—your pick! (Google for routines)
- ⇒ Turn up the tunes and DANCE!
- ⇒ STRETCH

BEFORE



AFTER



After a high-calorie season, Frosty spent January and February in the gym.



Contact Us!
CGI Wellness Team
wellness@cgibusinesssolutions.com
T: 866.841.4600
F: 603.622.4618



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