

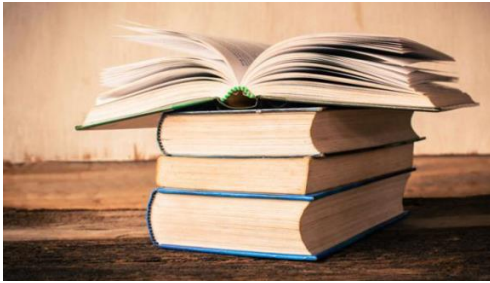


Mind: Back to School-Forward to Health!

Body: Grilled Chicken Barley Bowl

Spirit: Staying Young

Back to School-Forward to Health!



The days are getting shorter, and the back to school ads are filling the airwaves. Fresh starts, new learnings, and yet to be explored challenges are no longer the exclusive domain of the young. More and more, life-long learning is shifting from the 'nice-to-do' to the 'must-continue-to-do' column of our life.

Before you rush to invest in the latest online brain games, you might decide instead to simply take up a new hobby! Could it be that simple? Apparently so.

Dr. Denise Park, a neuroscientist at the University of Texas at Dallas decided to put this to the test.

Dr. Park recruited 200 volunteers and assigned them to 3 different groups. During a 3-month period, each group spent 15 hours per week with assigned activities. They were given memory tests at the beginning and end of the research period.

Group 1 took up new hobbies such as quilting and photography (including use of photoshop.)

Group 2 participated in social events such as watching movies together and reminiscing about past

vacations.

Group 3 worked quietly on their own at home, listening to music or playing simple games or puzzles.

Dr. Park's findings revealed that not all activities are created equal when it comes to cognitive improvement. Yes, social engagement is essential to quality of life and even longevity, but if you want to enhance those brain cells and improve your memory – you'll have to take on new and challenging activities. Moreover, the more challenging the activity, the better the results!

With Dr. Park's study, the group that showed the most significant improvement in memory was Group #1 – the group learning new hobbies with new challenges. Within that group, the photography participants (who also needed to learn new computer skills) showed the greatest gains overall. Furthermore, the improvements were still evident a full year later.

Stimulating brain cells does not have to be repetitive or tedious. Have fun. Explore a new interest, take on a new hobby, acquire new skills, and learn something you didn't know before. Not only will you stretch and grow, you'll remember why you did it!

Rhonda Latreille, MBA, CPCA
Founder & CEO
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Grilled Chicken Barley Bowl



This recipe makes 4 servings, Prep 20 minutes,
Cook 10 minutes

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup (125 mL) pearl or pot barley
- 2 cups (500 mL) baby arugula
- 4 carrots, sliced lengthwise
- 2 red peppers, quartered
- 2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts (about 1 lb/454 g)
- 2 tsp (10 mL) canola oil, divided
- 1 tsp chili powder
- 2 tsp (10 mL) balsamic vinegar

Directions

In a small saucepan, cover barley with water; bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for about 20 minutes or until barley is tender but still chewy. Drain well and toss with arugula; set aside.

Spray carrots and peppers with cooking spray; set aside.

Toss chicken breasts with 1 tsp (5 mL) of the oil and chili powder to coat.

Heat grill to medium high heat and grill carrots, peppers and chicken breasts for about 7 for the vegetables and about 12 minutes for the chicken. Turn occasionally until vegetables are tender and chicken is no longer pink inside. Remove to cutting board.

Slice carrots and peppers; toss with remaining oil and vinegar. Divide barley mixture among 4 bowls and top with vegetables.

Slice chicken and place over top to serve.

Nutritional Info Per Serving (1 of 4) - Calories 280, Protein 26 g, Total fat 6 g, Saturated fat 1 g, Cholesterol 60 mg, Carbohydrates 33 g, Fibre 5 g, Sugars 7 g, Added sugars 0 g, Sodium 120 mg, Potassium 700 mg

Recipe by Emily Richards (PH Ec.) Reprinted with Permission from The Heart and Stroke Foundation.

Spirit



“Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young. The greatest thing in life is to keep your mind young.”

Henry Ford