

Moda Wellbeing Newsletter

Seasonal recipes, resources and tips to build
Happier, healthier, workplaces



Mindset Matters: Boost Your Brain

Each January brings a big push to get physically active—gym memberships, fitness routines, and renewed motivation. While we focus on strengthening our bodies, it's just as important to *workout* another essential muscle: the brain. Just like the rest of your body, your brain thrives when you challenge it, fuel it well, and give it time to reset.

Work Out Your Brain (No Gym Membership Needed!): Think of brain health like muscle health: use it or lose it. Incorporating small bursts of mental activity into your routine can help improve memory, focus, and cognitive resilience. Ideas:

- **Card/board games** and puzzles keep your mind sharp by improving strategy, recall, and problem-solving.
- **Take a class or try a Moda workshop!** Learning new things helps build new neural pathways, strengthens memory and encourages critical thinking.
- **Screen-free time**—give your mind a break from constant notifications and scrolling. Unplugged moments improve focus and mental clarity.

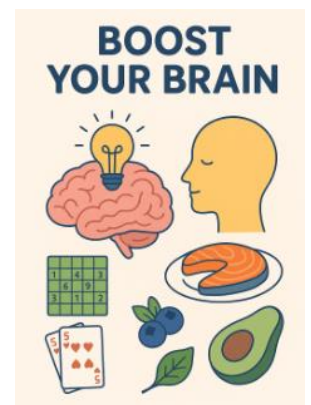
Feed Your Brain Health: What you eat plays a major role in how well your brain functions.

Add more of these to your plate:

- **Omega-3s (fatty fish, nuts, seeds)** are essential for brain cell structure and communication.
- **Leafy greens** such as spinach, kale, and chard, packed with folate and antioxidants that help protect against cognitive decline.
- **Berries** contain flavonoids shown to improve memory and support healthy aging.
- **Whole grains**, like oats or quinoa, deliver steady energy to help maintain focus throughout the day.

Caring for your brain doesn't require big changes. A daily puzzle, a few minutes away from your screen, and a plate full of colorful, nutrient-rich foods can go a long way in supporting long-term cognitive health. Your brain is a powerful organ—help it thrive!

Resources: [Brain Exercises: 13 Ways to Boost Memory, Focus, and Mental Skills](#)



Health Coaching Hub: Sustaining Change in the New Year

With a new year, often comes a refreshed energy towards life, our goals, and change. Whether it is deciding that we want to get more physically active, practice more mindfulness work, or expanding on our diet to better support our health needs, the start of every new year seems to bring forth a renewed energy and momentum towards change. In this article we will be looking at how to specifically embrace change, and some tips and tricks for sustaining that same change as time goes on and we get further away from the start of a new year.

Change can be a scary and difficult thing; however, it can also be rewarding and empowering. By its very definition, change means we are doing or experiencing something different, which is generally out of our comfort zone. Coaching can be a great space to work on getting comfortable with the uncomfortable and working towards the change you want to see in yourself! Here are some tips and questions we ask during Health Coaching sessions that might help to change a perspective on change by embracing it more than we once had.

Embracing Change:

- Ask yourself WHY this change could be a good thing for your life, or your health, or how this change ties to what you value in life
- Challenge yourself to identify the meaningful benefits of this change
- Hone in on the feeling of excitement and empowerment that making a positive change for yourself can bring
- Mentally place yourself in a position of already having made this change and truly feel what that success can bring you
- Remind yourself that you are worthy and deserving of this change, and even though it may be challenging at times, acknowledge your own bravery to take this challenge on

Now that we have some strategies towards embracing change, let's look at some ways to sustain change and carry forward that momentum for lasting, integrated changes.

Sustaining Change:

- Know that the key to lasting change is consistency, and if things start to feel a bit stagnant, focus on the WHY behind your actions (Why is this change important to you in the first place?)
- Highlight the little wins within yourself! Sometimes we feel as if we are not making progress, but big changes and dramatic shifts are made up of tons of little victories over time (think meeting your daily step goal, or making a meal at home instead of going out)
- Try to find the little examples of progress that show up on a regular basis rather than big sweeping markers (clothes fitting differently, more natural energy, less mental stress)
- Remember that with change comes growth. Even if you are one step outside of your comfort zone, that is still one step of/towards the growth you wanted to see from yourself!
- Give yourself credit! Change is hard, and sometimes it can feel like if we don't implement a change perfectly, then it was not worth doing at all. Highlight the effort you have put in for yourself and always remember PROGRESS beats perfection every time (because perfection doesn't exist anyways!)

Utilizing these tools can help you approach change with more clarity and confidence in your own skills and abilities!

For Moda Health Members

Eligible Moda Health members have access to one-on-one condition management health coaching at no cost. To enroll or be contacted by a health coach to learn more, please fill out this form: [Disease Management Health Coaching Interest Form](#).

Health coaching helps you identify realistic, impactful actions that support your health and wellbeing— like those listed above – and make a plan to turn goals into reality. Deciding you want to drink more water, eat more fruits and veggies, or spend more time outside is one thing, but making it happen is another. That's where health coaching comes in: we help you put the pieces together, anticipate barriers, brainstorm solutions, and guide you toward achieving your goals, so you don't just survive this season, you thrive! **Contact us for more information!** Call 800-913-4957 Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Pacific time, or email healthcoachteam@modahealth.com.

Better Bites: Pasta e Fagioli Soup

Pasta e Fagiolo is a classic Italian comfort soup made with pasta, beans, lean protein, and vegetables. It is hearty without being heavy and offers a great balance of fiber, protein, and nutrients to keep you full, grounded, and warm through the winter months. Recipe makes 6 servings.

Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp olive oil, divided
- 1 lb lean ground beef
- 1 ½ cups chopped yellow onion
- 1 cup diced carrots
- 1 cup diced celery
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 (8 oz) cans tomato sauce
- 2 14.5 oz cans low-sodium chicken broth
- ½ cup water,
- 1 (15 oz) can diced tomatoes
- 2 tsp granulated sugar
- 1 ½ tsp dried basil
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- ¾ tsp dried thyme
- ½ tsp dried marjoram
- 1 cup dry ditalini pasta
- 1 (15 oz) can dark red kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 (15 oz) can great northern beans, drained and rinsed
- Finely shredded Romano or Parmesan cheese, for serving
- 3 Tbsp minced fresh parsley



Instructions:

Heat olive oil in a large pot and brown the ground beef, then set aside. Sauté onion, celery, and carrots until tender, add garlic, and cook briefly. Stir in broth, tomato sauce, canned tomatoes, water, sugar, and herbs. Return the beef to the pot, season, and simmer until vegetables are soft. Cook pasta separately until al dente and drain. Add pasta and drained beans to the soup, heat through, then stir in parsley and top with cheese if desired.

Tip: Keep pasta separate if storing leftovers to prevent it from getting mushy.

Recipe & Image: [Pasta Fagioli Soup - Cooking Classy](#)

Beyond the Bite: Winter Simmer Pot

This winter simmer pot blends oranges, apples, cinnamon, rosemary, and cloves to naturally freshen the air and promote a soothing, uplifting environment. Let it simmer, slow down for a moment, and enjoy a breath of warmth during the colder months.

Ingredients:

- 1 medium orange
- 1 medium apple
- 2-3 pieces cinnamon
- 2-3 sprigs rosemary
- ½ tsp cloves
- ¼ tsp vanilla extract

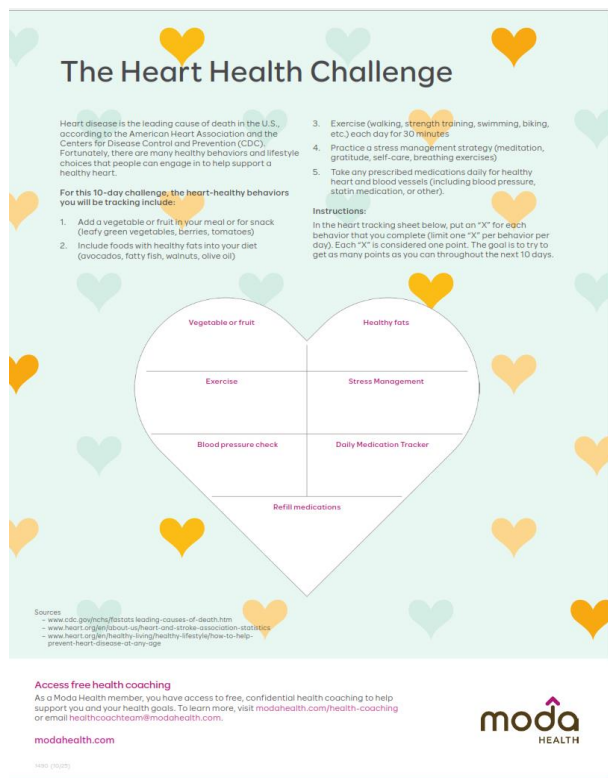
Instructions:

1. Bring pot of water to a boil
2. While water heats up, slice oranges and apples. You will add 2-3 slices of orange and 3-4 slices of apple to the water once boiling
3. Once the water boils, add your ingredients to the pot. Turn down to simmer
4. You can leave on the stovetop simmering for hours, however, be sure to check on it every hour or so and add water as needed



Recipe & Image: [Winter Simmer Pot](#)

Let's Learn! Resource Spotlight



The Heart Health Challenge

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S., according to the American Heart Association and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Fortunately, there are many healthy behaviors and lifestyle choices that people can engage in to help support a healthy heart.

For this 10-day challenge, the heart-healthy behaviors you will be tracking include:

1. Add a vegetable or fruit in your meal or for snack (leafy green vegetables, berries, tomatoes)
2. Include foods with healthy fats into your diet (avocados, fatty fish, walnuts, olive oil)
3. Exercise (walking, strength training, swimming, biking, etc.) each day for 30 minutes
4. Practice a stress management strategy (meditation, gratitude, self-care, breathing exercises)
5. Take any prescribed medications daily for healthy heart and blood vessels (including blood pressure, statin medication, or other)

Instructions:
In the heart tracking sheet below, put an "X" for each behavior that you complete (limit one "X" per behavior per day). Each "X" is considered one point. The goal is to try to get as many points as you can throughout the next 10 days.

The tracking sheet is a heart shape divided into five sections: Vegetable or fruit, Healthy fats, Exercise, Stress Management, and Blood pressure check. A separate section for Refill medications is located below the heart.

Sources:
- www.cdc.gov/ncbhd/factors/leading-causes-of-death.htm
- www.heart.org/en/about-us/heart-and-stroke-association-statistics
- www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-lifestyle/how-to-help-prevent-heart-disease-at-any-age

Access free health coaching
As a Moda Health member, you have access to free, confidential health coaching to help support you and your health goals. To learn more, visit modahealth.com/health-coaching or email healthcoachteam@modahealth.com.

modahealth.com

moda HEALTH

Preventative Care Hub: Knowing Your Care

Know Your Care: Why Asking Questions Matters for Your Health

Healthcare can feel overwhelming, and it's easy to leave an appointment unsure about what was said or what to do next. The truth is, asking questions is one of the most powerful ways to take control of your health and feel confident about your care.

Clear communication leads to better outcomes. Your provider wants to hear from you! When you speak up, your provider can create a plan that truly fits your needs and lifestyle. If something isn't clear, ask for plain language, written instructions, or take a moment to jot down notes. These small steps can make a significant difference in understanding your treatment and feeling prepared.

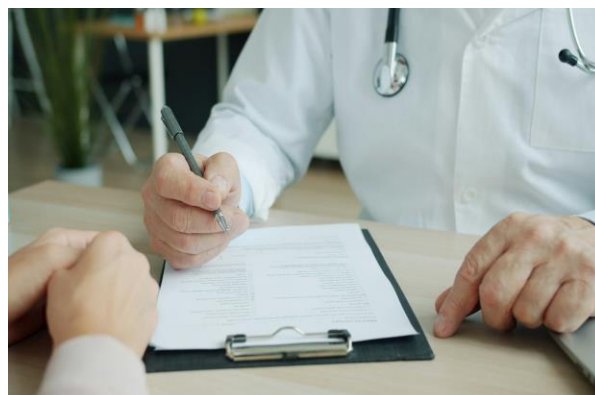
Not sure where to start? Try these five questions:

- **What is the main issue with my health?**
- **What steps should I take next?**
- **What condition(s) am I being treated for?**
- **What medications do I need to take?**
- **How will the medication help me?**

To support these conversations even further, Moda Health will be launching **Know Your Care** brochures in doctors' offices in 2026. These brochures will offer simple tips and reminders to help you ask the right questions and take an active role in your care—so keep an eye out for them at your next appointment.

Better health starts with intentional questions. If you're wondering about something, don't hesitate to ask—your health is worth it.

Click here to learn more about [Empowering Yourself in Today's Healthcare System](#) with a Moda Health Wellness Consultant!



Moda Health Monthly Mini Challenges

Mini Challenges are a great way to encourage a healthier way of living! They're designed to create lasting change through small, simple steps, while also providing a fun activity that fosters friendly competition, teambuilding, and a supportive workplace culture.

- **New Year Bingo Challenge:** Looking for a fun way to reset in the new year? Complete healthy activities across movement, nutrition, sleep, mindset, social & financial to get five in a row and start building small habits that add up. [Click here](#) to access the challenge.
- **NEW Heart Health Challenge:** Celebrate Heart Health Month in February by taking simple steps to support your heart. Focus on eating fruits and vegetables, including healthy fats like avocado, or olive oil, getting 30 minutes of exercise, practicing stress management, and taking prescribed medications. Track your progress by marking an "X" for each healthy habit you complete and see how many points you can earn by the end of the challenge. [Click here](#) to access the challenge.