

## *In this Issue*

**Pg. 2**

-Important HumanaVitality Updates

**Pg. 3**

-Why Tai Chi?

**Pg. 4**

-Healthy, Easy Recipe

## Why Tai Chi?

While the Chinese practice of tai chi did begin as a martial art and was intended as a means of self-defense, today, it is known for its slow, rhythmic pace, meditative movements and various health benefits.

[Continued on page 3](#)

“ Stress is caused by being ‘here’ but wanting to be ‘there.’ ”  
– Eckhart Tolle

## Three Healthy Ways to Relieve Stress

### **Speak Kindly to Yourself**

Positive self-talk is a highly underrated yet highly effective way to deal with stress. Rather than getting down on yourself for making mistakes and, well, being human, flip the positive switch on, even with the smaller details in life that may seem unimportant. When you wake up in the morning, for example, rather than criticizing yourself in front of the mirror, pick out a feature that makes you laugh (bedhead, crazy PJs, etc.). Planting that small seed of happiness early on makes it easier to stay focused on the positive throughout the day.

### **Take Deep Breaths**

There are various ways to unwind after a stressful day, and a large majority of them involve deep breathing (think yoga, meditation, and tai chi). It does take practice to develop a breathing technique but you don't have to join a class to reap the benefits. Set aside five to 10 minutes each day or whenever you're feeling stressed to sit quietly and imagine yourself in your "happy place." Make sure to close your eyes and focus on breathing slowly and deeply.

### **Engage in Feel-Good Activities**

Stress has a nasty habit of making us feel bad. It makes sense then that when you feel bad, you should do something that makes you feel good. Start by setting aside 15 minutes each day to do something you enjoy. Whether it's knitting a scarf, playing an instrument, doing a crossword puzzle, calling a friend, or taking a walk, do anything you can think of to boost your mood and leave stress behind.



## Check out these Changes on the HumanaVitality App

### Milestones on the HumanaVitality App:

**Sleep Diary Milestone:** Currently 5 Vitality Points are awarded for every night you sleep 7 or more hours. This is being changed. You will now get 25 Vitality Points for each week in which you sleep 7 or more hours five or more times in the week. This Milestone will have a cap of six times per year (a max total of 150 Vitality Points). If you currently have a Sleep Diary Milestone set, the daily point structure will not change until that Milestone expires and you set a new one. For the duration of the existing sleep diary, you will still get the 5 Vitality Points per night. Please note, every night you log your sleep you will notice a 0 point event on your Vitality statement. This is necessary in order for HumanaVitality to count 5 successful nights in one week.

Vitality points members earned for Sleep Milestones prior to the change won't count toward the new 150 max limit for the year. That annual maximum only applies for Sleep Milestones moving forward

### Weekly Log Milestones:

The Milestone to track food and weight was originally one Milestone, but now has been split into two separate Milestones to either track food or weight.

### Health Coaching:

**Coaching tab:** The current menu option of "Call a Coach" on the Vitality app will be changing to "Coaching." When the Coaching tab is selected, you will be able to view a two-minute video that explains what coaching is in addition to the current option to call a coach.

## ATTENTION:

The deadline to reach Silver Status and keep your Wellness Credit is AUGUST 31, 2016

Don't miss out on the wellness credit for the 2017 medical plan year! **Credits will drop on November 30, 2016 if Silver Vitality Status is not obtained.**

**The deadline to reach "Silver Status" and receive or maintain your wellness credit for the 2017 medical plan year is August 31, 2016.**

- Employees Only \$10 per pay period
- Employees + Spouse \$15 per pay period
- Employees + Children \$15 per pay period
- Employees + Family \$20 per pay period

HumanaVitality recommends the following three steps to help you achieve Silver Vitality Status:

- 1) Complete the Health Assessment
- 2) Schedule a Vitality Check®
- 3) Activate a personal goal.

For additional resources visit:  
<http://www.pcsb.org/vitality>

# Why Tai Chi?

Discover the benefits of going with the flow

When the majority of us Westerners think about martial arts, our thoughts inevitably turn to what we've seen on TV and in the movies. Perhaps you have visions of Chuck Norris, The Karate Kid or Bruce Lee taking on the bad guys with a series of aggressive (yet controlled) kicks and arm chops. But you may be surprised to learn that some forms of martial arts do not involve the fast-paced fighting techniques we tend to see most in our culture.

Enter tai chi.

The ancient Chinese practice of tai chi did begin as a martial art and was intended as a means of self-defense. But somewhere along the way, tai chi went one way while its more aggressive kin went another. Today, tai chi is known for its slow, rhythmic pace, meditative movements and various health benefits.

## What is tai chi and how can it help?

Tai chi involves a series of low-impact, slow-motion exercises that you perform on your own or in a group. While there are many different styles, all of them involve relaxed, graceful movements guided by the breath. Tai chi offers many health benefits through its practice. The Chinese believe it can delay aging, increase flexibility, strengthen muscles/tendons and help with the treatment of many chronic conditions (e.g., heart disease, high blood pressure, arthritis, depression, cancer, and more).

## Where does the philosophy come from?

The mind-body approach that tai chi follows is rooted in the Chinese philosophy surrounding Qi, and yin and yang. Qi is said to be the energy force that flows throughout the body while yin and yang are opposing forces that keep our Qi, and therefore our bodies, in harmony. Tai chi purportedly helps Qi flow properly through the body by balancing out the yin and the yang.

## How is tai chi different from other exercises?

When we think of exercise, most of us imagine ourselves sweating it out on a cardio machine, running tirelessly around the track or partaking in a group fitness class, all of which involve some type of impact. When you practice tai chi, you'll notice that all of the movements are circular and never forced. Your muscles are always relaxed and



your joints are never fully extended or bent (which means your connective tissues are not stretched). Oftentimes, tai chi is recommended for improving balance in older adults and people recovering from surgery.

## Can I really get a workout?

Although tai chi is slow and gentle and doesn't leave you breathless, it addresses the key components of fitness — muscle strength, flexibility, balance, and, to a lesser degree, aerobic conditioning. You may not be walking out the door dripping sweat but you will have worked to strengthen your muscles and release tensions throughout the body that may be affecting other areas of your life.

## Types of tai chi

In tai chi, “forms” are sets of movements. Short forms may include a dozen or fewer movements while long forms may include hundreds. Different styles require smaller or larger movements. A short form with smaller, slower movements is usually recommended at the beginning, especially if you're older or not in good condition.

For more information and to locate a class near you, visit:

<http://www.americantaichi.org/>

Sources

[http://www.health.harvard.edu/newsletters/Harvard\\_Womens\\_Health\\_Watch/2009/May/The-health-benefits-of-tai-chi](http://www.health.harvard.edu/newsletters/Harvard_Womens_Health_Watch/2009/May/The-health-benefits-of-tai-chi)

<http://nccam.nih.gov/health/taichi/introduction.htm>



## Healthy, Easy Recipe



# Lentil Soup

### Ingredients:

2 tablespoons olive oil  
 2 medium carrots, diced  
 2 medium celery stalks, chopped  
 1 small yellow onion, chopped  
 2 cloves garlic, minced  
 1 teaspoon dried oregano  
 1 teaspoon dried basil  
 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper  
 2 cups dry lentils  
 1 14 1/2 ounce can crushed tomatoes  
 2 cups vegetable broth 6 1/2 cups water

### Directions:

1. In a large soup pot, heat oil over medium heat. Add carrots, celery, and onions; cook and stir until the onion is tender.
2. Stir in garlic, oregano, basil, and pepper. Cook for 2 minutes.
3. Stir in lentils and tomatoes, then add the vegetable broth and water. Cover and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for at least 1 hour or until lentils are tender.
4. Store leftovers in the refrigerator and reheat on the stove or in the microwave.

Source: <http://wecan.nhlbi.nih.gov>

**Yield** 11 servings, **Serving Size** 1 cup, **Calories** 151, **Total Fat** 3g, **Saturated Fat** 0g, **Cholesterol** 0mg, **Sodium** 248 mg, **Total Fiber** 7g, **Protein** 9g, **Carbohydrates** 24g, **Potassium** 503 mg

## Contact us, we'd love to hear from you!



For questions related to the Employee Wellness Program, contact your Employee Wellness Coordinator:

**Kara Hager**, Phone: 727-588-6031, Email: [hagerk@pcsb.org](mailto:hagerk@pcsb.org)

For questions related to Humana health insurance programs, contact your Humana on-site personnel:

**Janet Lang**, PCS Account Advisor, Phone: 727-588-6367, Email: [pcs.langj@pcsb.org](mailto:pcs.langj@pcsb.org)

**Heather Keegan, RN**, PCS Patient Advocate  
 Phone: 727-588-6137, Email: [pcs.Keeganh@pcsb.org](mailto:pcs.Keeganh@pcsb.org)

**Jessica O'Connell, RN**, PCS HumanaVitality Wellness Nurse  
 Phone: 727-588-6134, Email: [pcs.oconnellj@pcsb.org](mailto:pcs.oconnellj@pcsb.org)

## Share your story!



Have you been successful in meeting a wellness goal because of a PCS Wellness Program? Have a recipe you'd like to share or topic you'd like to see in an upcoming issue? We'd love to hear about it! Please contact Kara Hager, Employee Wellness Coordinator, at [hagerk@pcsb.org](mailto:hagerk@pcsb.org).