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Activate Your New Year

Winter is here. The temperatures have dropped and the darkness seems to occupy most of the hours of the day (not really, but it sure feels like it!). If you are anything like me this is the time of the year that I begin to lose motivation when it comes to eating healthy and being active. Let's make this year different. This is the year that you achieve your health goals! I'm going to give you five tips to help you.

1. **Find a friend to help you with your goals.** You have probably heard this before but I'm going to tell you again because it's so important. Find a friend to exercise with. Set a schedule and stick to it! Be an accountable exercise partner and show up even when exercise is the last thing you want to do. Think carefully about who might be a good exercise partner. Can you think of somebody that will push you beyond what you would push yourself? Will this person have a similar schedule to you that it will be easy to find a schedule to meet to exercise? An exercise partner is important because when you exercise by yourself and you fail to complete your exercise you are the only one that noticed. However, when you have a partner that is relying on you to show up, you now have somebody else that will notice if you skip an exercise. Accountability is crucial!
2. **Start small and work your way up.** Don't start with the hardest workout you could pick. You will likely give it up quickly. Start with a less difficult exercise and add in more difficult things as you continue to exercise.
3. **Find a style of workout that you truly enjoy.** It may take a little

trial and error to figure this out. When I started my fitness journey I was bound and determined to be a runner. However, whenever I ran the only thing I was thinking about was when I would be done. I decided that running is just not going to be my thing. Instead, I tried other styles of workouts and found one that works for me and now I look forward to working out! Try yoga, try strength training, try pilates, try Zumba, try circuit training, try biking, try lots of things. Find something that works for you!

4. **What motivates you?** Answering this question will be key to success in your exercise goals. Setting goals is the first step and finding a reward is the second. What will you work towards? Will you reward yourself with a new item such a new shoes? Will you reward yourself with a small food treat (caution on this one)? Will you reward yourself with a fun trip? For example, if I exercise 10 times this month I will put \$10 towards a fund for a new pair of running shoes. Have something you are working towards.
5. **Share recipes with friends.** Finding new recipes that are healthy and delicious can be a lot of fun! Until you put in a ton of work getting the ingredients and spending the time to make a new healthy recipe only to find out that it's awful. How frustrating! Solution: team up with some friends and find recipes that are healthy and look yummy. Split the recipes and each make a dish and report back on how it went. This way you can save the risk of having a bunch of recipes that do not work out.

Written by Kaila Stencil, FoodWise Educator

Kaila's Cooking Corner

Family favorite recipes with a twist of healthy!

Mac and Cheese without the guilt. I can't think of anything better! Try out this Butternut Squash Mac and Cheese and your taste buds (and waistline) will be thanking you.

Butternut Squash Mac and Cheese

Prep Time: 10 minutes
Cook Time: 20 minutes
Servings: 6



Ingredients

- 1 lb elbow noodles (or pasta of your choice)
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- 1/2 cup diced yellow onion
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 cups cubed butternut squash
- 4 cups broth (I used vegetable, can use any kind you prefer)
- 1 cup Horizon Organic Milk (I used 2%)
- 1 and 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground mustard
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 cups sharp cheddar cheese (the sharp is a nice contrast to the squash and gives a bolder flavor)

Instructions

1. Bring a pot of water to boil and boil the noodles until softened. Drain and set aside.
2. In a large pot add the olive oil, heat over medium heat. Add in the diced onion and garlic. Heat until the onion is just softened.
3. Add in the butternut squash, broth, Horizon Organic Milk, and seasoning.
4. Bring to a boil and simmer for about 20 minutes, until the squash is softened and able to be easily mashed.
5. Using an immersion blender, or transferring the mixture to a blender or [food processor](#) (affiliate link), blend the squash mixture until it is smooth and creamy.
6. Stir in the cheese until melted. Add the pasta and stir to coat the noodles.
7. Serve and enjoy while warm! Can add fresh herbs on top for an extra bit of flavor. Parsley, thyme, or sage are all wonderful.

Recipe from: <https://houseofyumm.com/butternut-squash-mac-and-cheese/>

Check Out These Free Apps to Help You Reach Your Fitness Goals

Workout Trainer

Workout Trainer ([Android](#), [iOS](#)) offers users thousands of free workouts complete with timed step-by-step audio and video instructions to help you get into shape.



Fitbit Coach

Fitbit Coach ([Android](#), [iOS](#)) functions as your personal digital training coach, adapting exercise routines to match your physical capability, as well as your daily activity tracked with the Fitbit fitness tracker. The app provides guided video workouts, with varied routines, step-by-step guidance, and accompanying workout playlists to provide music that complements your workout.



Freeletics

Freeletics Bodyweight ([Android](#), [iOS](#)) provides you with hundreds of workout routines covering a variety of muscle groups and fitness levels, all designed to use only your body weight as your exercise equipment. Audio and video guides provide step-by-step sequences for your workouts.



7 Minute Workout for Kids

Help your kids build an active fitness habit early with the [7 Minute Workout for Kids](#) app, which provides a good run-through of the 7-minute workout style of exercises, using nothing more than your kid's own body weight.



SworKit

Rather than focus on set exercise routines, SworKit ([Android](#), [iOS](#)) has users create targeted workout routines. Select whether you want to build strength, do yoga, practice cardio, stretch, pilates or build a custom routine, as well as a duration of your workout, and SworKit builds you a routine of randomized exercises that fit your exercise goals.

