

# Completely Well



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# Know Your Numbers: Blood Type

A blood type is a classification of blood based on the presence or absence of specific antigens and antibodies. Blood types are inherited from your biological parents. The antigens on the surface of red blood cells play a crucial role in determining compatibility for blood transfusions, organ transplants, and pregnancy.

There are four main blood types, determined by the presence or absence of specific antigens on the surface of red blood cells. These types are part of the ABO blood group system and include Type A, Type B, Type AB, and Type O.

**People who have Type AB blood are universal recipients and those with Type O are universal donors.**

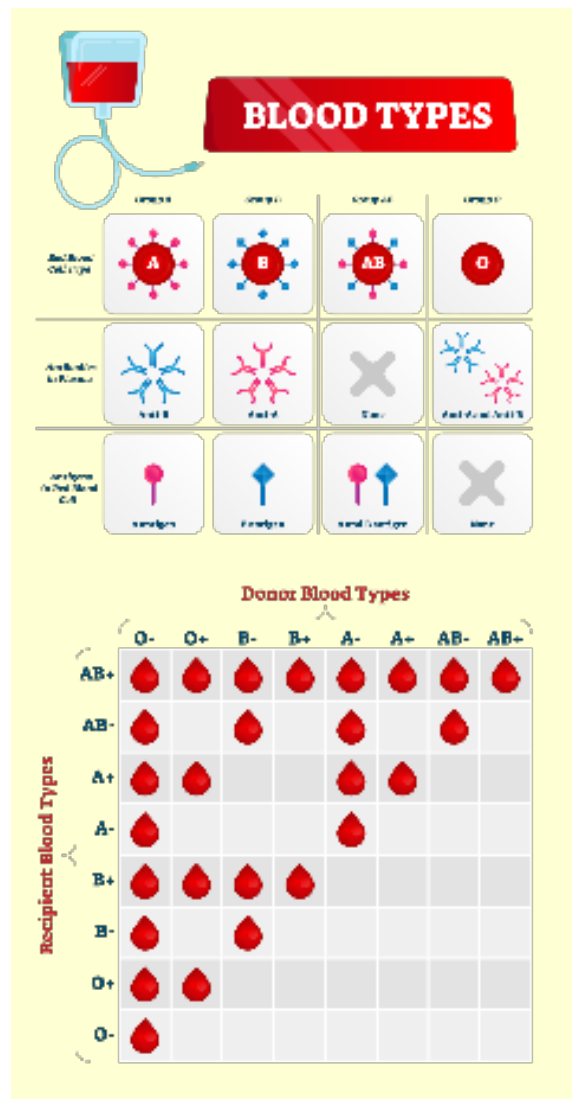
The Rh factor (Rhesus factor) further classifies blood types as either positive (+) or negative (-). So, each blood type also has a positive or negative designation.

## Know your blood type:

- In case of an emergency where you need a blood transfusion, knowing your blood type ensures that you receive compatible blood. Receiving incompatible blood can cause serious and potentially life-threatening reactions. This may be particularly important when you travel to places that have limited medical facilities.
- Certain medical procedures, surgeries, and treatments may require blood transfusions. Knowing your blood type helps healthcare providers prepare the appropriate blood products.
- During pregnancy, knowing the blood type of both the mother and the father is important to manage and prevent Rh incompatibility, which can lead to hemolytic disease of the newborn.
- If you donate blood, knowing your blood type can help blood banks manage their supplies and ensure they have a diverse and sufficient inventory of all blood types.

Some studies suggest that blood type may be linked to certain health risks and conditions. For instance, people with certain blood types may have a higher or lower risk for conditions like heart disease or blood clots.

Overall, knowing your blood type is a small but crucial piece of personal medical information that can have significant implications for your health and safety.



# Body Weight Workouts vs. Workouts With Weights

Many fitness enthusiasts find that a combination of calisthenics and weight training offers the best of both worlds.

*Calisthenics is defined as a workout that uses a person's body weight with little or no exercise/weight equipment. Examples of calisthenics: pushups, squats, crunches, planks, burpees, pullups, and lunges.*

## Advantages of Calisthenics:

- Bodyweight exercises require minimal to no equipment, making them accessible and cost-effective. You can perform them anywhere—at home, in a park, or while traveling.
- Calisthenics exercises often mimic natural movement patterns, improving functional strength and coordination that can translate well to daily activities and sports. These exercises can help to improve your balance.
- Many calisthenics exercises, such as push-ups, pull-ups, and squats, inherently incorporate a range of motion that enhances flexibility and mobility.
- Calisthenics tend to be gentler on the joints compared to heavy lifting, reducing the risk of joint-related injuries.

## Advantages of Weight Training:

- Weight training allows for precise control over resistance, enabling progressive overload, which is essential for building muscle and strength efficiently.
- Weight training is highly effective for muscle hypertrophy (growth) due to the ability to target specific muscle groups with isolation exercises.
- Lifting weights is particularly beneficial for increasing bone density, which can reduce the risk of osteoporosis and fractures.
- Gyms offer a wide range of machines and free weights, providing variety and the ability to target muscles in different ways.
- Weight training programs can be easily structured and tracked, making it straightforward to set and achieve specific fitness goals.

Calisthenics and weight training each offer distinct advantages that can complement each other and create a balanced fitness routine. Choosing between them often depends on an individual's fitness goals, preferences, and circumstances.



# Your Year-End Wellness Assessment

With the holiday season in full swing, many of us start thinking about the new year and reflect on the past one. It's a great time to perform a "wellness assessment," focusing on four key areas: preventive health, nutrition, fitness, and lifestyle.

**Preventive Health:** Did you visit the doctor for a checkup this year? If so, great job! Regular checkups help prevent and detect diseases early. These visits usually include checks on your weight, blood pressure, pulse rate, heart, and lungs, as well as reviews of any medications and appropriate screenings (e.g., blood tests, mammograms, pap smears, colonoscopies). Don't forget about dental checkups, which are also crucial for overall health. If you missed any appointments, consider scheduling them soon.

**Nutrition:** Did you try a new vegetable, switch to lower-fat dairy, or eat more chicken or fish? Maybe you cut back on sugary drinks or low-fiber foods, lost a few pounds, or drank more water. Good nutrition is about making many healthy choices over time. Even small changes, like adding blueberries to cereal or choosing a grilled chicken sandwich, can make a difference. Reflect on the healthy choices you've made and build on them.

**Fitness:** Even if you didn't use your gym membership much, did you stay active? Regular aerobic exercise, like walking or biking, is important for heart and lung health. Aim for at least 30 minutes of exercise, five days a week. Strength training, whether through weights or bodyweight exercises like pushups, helps build muscle. Activities like yoga and stretching improve flexibility. Consider small ways to increase your activity, such as walking more while shopping or stretching during TV commercials.

**Lifestyle:** If you quit smoking this year, congratulations! If not, consider learning more about the benefits of quitting. Maybe you tried to get more sleep, reduce stress, or declutter your space. Reflect on what you've done to reduce stress and increase happiness. These choices benefit both your mental and physical health.

Reflecting on the past year is not about feeling bad for what you haven't done but celebrating your victories and planning small, achievable changes. Enjoy the holidays and look forward to a healthier, happier new year.



# Start Keeping Promises to Yourself

Erin Long, Longevity Fitness, B.S., NSCA-CPT, PN1)

## Ask yourself:

- How many times have you committed to starting or resuming your exercise routine, only to not follow through?
- How many times have you promised yourself to make healthier nutrition choices, but didn't keep that promise?

I have some tough love to share today, inspired by renowned success coach Carrie Wilkerson, who recently spoke at a Mastermind event for fitness business owners. Her message might sting a little, but it's worth sharing because it resonated deeply with me.

**Now ask yourself:** Are you a person of integrity? Do you try to keep promises that you make to other people? Most of us would answer, "Yes, I am" a person of integrity.

Then stop deceiving yourself. Stop letting yourself down. Stop avoiding the responsibilities you know you must undertake when you make promises to yourself!

Coach Carrie emphasized this point: "When you start keeping promises to yourself, the change in your life will be immeasurable."

**Now promise yourself:** No more broken promises. Start doing what you say you're going to do, and everything will change for the better.



Veganuary is a global campaign that encourages people to try veganism for the month of January. It was founded in the UK in 2014 by Matthew Glover and Jane Land. The aim of the campaign is to promote the benefits of a vegan diet for health, the environment, and animal welfare.

Participating in Veganuary is simple:

- If you want to make it official and receive tips and recipes about eating vegan, go to the Veganuary website (<https://veganuary.com/en-us/>) and sign up to take part. By signing up, you'll receive daily emails with recipes, meal plans, tips, and motivational content throughout January.
- Before Veganuary begins, read up on veganism, plan your meals and stock up on vegan-friendly groceries. Focus on whole foods like fruits, vegetables, grains, legumes, nuts, and seeds. Many groceries also carry vegan versions of foods, such as plant-based milk, meat substitutes, and dairy-free cheese.

Note: Make sure that you replace the nutrients that you usually get from animal products with plant products. Get your protein from tofu, nut butter, beans, oats and quinoa. Find Omega-3 fatty acids in avocados, nuts and leafy green vegetables.

- Keep a journal or use an app to track your meals and how you feel throughout the month. This can help you stay motivated and see the benefits of a vegan diet.

Health benefits of veganism include lower blood pressure and cholesterol, a lower risk of type 2 diabetes, and improved digestion. You are also likely to lose weight while eating a vegan diet.

Less than sure that you can maintain a vegan diet for an entire month? Make it a challenge to eat vegan breakfast, snacks and lunch, then go light on the animal products for supper. You might also want to try eating vegan one or two days each week.

# Fresh Cranberry Salsa

Source: <https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/93037/fresh-cranberry-salsa/>

Cranberries are at their peak during October through December. They can be used in both sweet and savory dishes, and are a great source of Vitamin C, fiber and have anti-inflammatory properties. Keep fresh cranberries handy to create last-minute potluck dishes or snacks for unexpected holiday guests. They last for quite a while in your refrigerator if you purchase them fresh.

## Ingredients:

- 1 (12 ounce) bag fresh cranberries
- 6 tablespoons white sugar (or to taste)
- 2 tablespoons brandy-based orange liqueur (or orange juice)
- ½ cucumber - peeled, seeded, and diced
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 4 slices pickled jalapeno pepper, finely chopped

## Directions:

Place the cranberries into a food processor, and pulse until finely chopped. They should still have some texture. Transfer to a serving bowl, and stir in the sugar, orange liqueur (or juice), cucumber, celery and jalapeno. Let sit at room temperature for 15 minutes before serving to blend the flavors.

Serve with tortilla chips, or crackers topped with cream cheese.

Recipe makes: 8 servings. 72 calories per, 0 fat, 0 protein, 17 carbs per serving

## Want to know more?

Connect with New Avenues for more information on wellness programs and how they can help you reduce healthcare costs and improve employee well-being.



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