

Back to the Grind

HEALTH TIPS FROM THE POSSE
BY MARK RACKAY

I love the way everyone makes New Year's resolutions. They are made with good intentions in most cases, but somehow, they are always destined to fail. January brings out that "New Year, new me" thing in some people. Seems everyone will be making resolutions for the year and some of those resolutions might survive until January 3rd. I shall endeavor to not be amongst them.

My wife of many years has all kinds of resolutions for me. Most are ridiculous, like spending less money on outdoor equipment or fewer hunting trips. All those ideas are good for a laugh but have no chance of success. I see no reason for her to come up with these absurd ideas, other than to disturb domestic harmony, but I listen attentively and pretend to cooperate, all in the interest of marital bliss. I promised to come up with something and get back to her, sometime before Easter.

What I really need to do is stop overeating and get back to normal, but the first plate of leftover Christmas cookies would break the resolution. My wife does her best to help me stay on track, but I always defile myself. I can eat cookies like Nabisco wants the empty box back.

During the holiday season, stretching all the way back to Thanksgiving, all good intentions of trying to keep your healthy diet on track is a lot easier said than done, especially when everyone is throwing those "fresh from the oven" feasts in front of you.

A good place to begin is to just get back to common sense eating. Start by knocking off the sweet stuff. Research shows that sugar intake can be addictive and can lead to an unhealthy cycle of cravings and binges. All of those big holiday meals end with something sweet. Leaving the leftover cookies and pie in plain view, for an addict like me, is just asking for trouble. Get rid of the sweets and eliminate ALL deserts for the next couple of weeks. While the cravings decrease, your body will begin to prefer the natural sweet foods, like a piece of fruit.

Your stomach enlarges based on the

amount of food you consume. This elasticity of the stomach is why the morning after you ate a huge dinner you wake up starving. Your stomach can adapt over time to accommodate overeating, but that is not what we seek here. I know I certainly don't need that kind of help.

Eating less will make your stomach "shrink" so that you feel fuller on smaller amounts of food. This does not happen overnight, but stick with it, and in a few days, you will feel the difference. By doing this, you can subtract hundreds of calories from your daily intake and not feel so hungry. Practice pushing away from the table, maybe letting yourself be "just a little bit hungry."

Over the holiday season, my general workout routine seems to go out the window, and it gets worse the closer we get to the holiday. The last thing any of us really want to do is workout Christmas Eve, so we replace it with an Olympic style overeating event instead. Reality needs to come into play here, and you need to get back to exercising. After a time off from working out, I like to come back with the cardio first. Running, elliptical and bike riding are all good cardio exercises to help burn off some extra calories.

This is also a good time to up your protein intake. Medical research shows that proteins are harder for your body to digest, which leads to less of an insulin spike. Protein containing foods are bulkier and lead to a feeling of fullness compared to carbohydrates. Start your day with a high protein breakfast and you should find you are less hungry come lunchtime.

Low fat protein sources are the healthiest. Stay away from the processed food sources and look to chicken, salmon, yogurts and turkey breasts. If you concentrate on high protein for all your meals, you will cut down on overeating that happens when you just don't feel full. In fact, it is best to always stay away from all the processed foods all the time.

One more area we should address is that of adult beverages. The holidays are all about imbibing with friends, but it is time to get back on track and put the brown bottle back in the closet. Alcoholic beverages are full of sugar and fat. We drink without considering all the added



calories. Time to put away the rum filled eggnog and get back to copious amounts of H₂O. Skipping the drinks alone can make a big difference in your daily calorie intake. Another reason to avoid the before dinner cocktail is that alcohol can often spike your appetite, causing you to eat more. Best to return to the water.

Don't beat yourself up. Perhaps stay away from the bathroom scale and just get back to eating and exercising normally for a few weeks before you check in with Mr. Scale. Getting down on yourself is not the way to start out the New Year. We all know it is part of the holiday season to eat like a sanitary landfill, all those special family recipes like stuffing, pies, and of course, cookies. Being busy with the holidays and skipping the workouts is all part of the season. Accept that and move

forward.

In the furtherance of marital harmony and bliss, I got back to my wife about what I was going to resolve for the New Year. Apparently, vowing to give up vegetables was not an acceptable resolution. Seems like I have agreed to the advice presented in this column. What a year this is going to be.

Mark Rackay is a columnist for the Montrose Daily Press, Delta County Independent, and several other newspapers, as well as a feature writer for The Nautical Mile, and other saltwater fishing magazines. He is an avid hunter and world class saltwater angler, who travels around the world in search of adventure and serves as a Director and Public Information Officer for the Montrose County Sheriff's Posse. Personal email is elkhunter77@icloud.com For information about the Posse call 970-765-7033 (leave a message) or email info@mcsppi.org

Montrose AARP Tax-aid site to open Feb. 3

The Montrose AARP Tax-aid site will be in operation from Feb. 3 through April 10 at the senior center in the Montrose Pavilion. The site will be preparing 2025 federal and Colorado personal income tax returns on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Reservations are being accepted and should be made by calling 970-252-4889.

The Montrose site has been operating during tax season for more than 20 years. The site offers in-person services. "We are happy to again offer tax preparation three days a week" site coordinator Cheryl said. "It is important that people call for reservations as we do not accept walk-ins."

After making a reservation, people will need to pick up an information packet at the senior center and fill out the intake sheet before arriving at their appointment. The packet provides a list of all the documents and information they need to bring to the appointment. Taxpayers should open and collect all tax documents they receive beginning in early January. These documents include: W-2s and all 1099s for 2025. Review these documents to be sure names, addresses, social security numbers, etc. are correct. Comparing documents received for tax year 2025 with your copy of the 2024 return will help ensure they have all needed documents.

Cheryl added that TABOR refunds based on income are available to full year 2025 Colorado residents through their Colorado income tax returns. Residents will need to file a Colorado state return for 2025 to receive the refund. However, the refund for 2025 will be small compared to what it was for 2024. As an example, a resident tax payer with an adjusted gross income of up to \$54,000 will receive a TABOR refund of no more than \$20.

AARP Foundation Tax-Aide provides tax assistance to anyone, free, with a special focus on taxpayers who are older than 50 or have low to moderate income. Tax-Aide volunteers are trained and IRS-certified every year. More information about the AARP Tax-Aide program is available at taxaide.aarpfoundation.org.

GENERATION WILD, CONTINUED

with administering grant funding for these opportunities.

Ball added the last planning grant funds were spent by the end of 2025, and a few final events included rafting and via ferrata trips that helped families get outside and staff continue outreach efforts regarding what participants want to see from Generation Wild.

Now, they're gearing up to start executing.

On the Horizon

One of the first offerings will be an Outdoor After School Program at Outer Range for 1st to 5th graders.

The program will run Monday through Thursday from 3 to 6 p.m. during the school district's fourth quarter starting March 23. It will be administered by MRD staff, and have

space for around two dozen students.

Ball said the group hasn't solidified details of the curriculum, but it will include a mix of outdoor games and skills, conservation and education components and unstructured play time.

Registration is live on the district's website, and while tuition for the quarter costs \$275, financial aid will be available.

"Our goal is to make sure no one is turned away for lack of ability to pay," he said.

A handful of camping events, for kids and families with varying camping experience, are also planned for later in the spring. And, Friends of Youth and Nature and the Montrose County School District have a few of their own Generation Wild-funded activities coming up,

such as a snowshoeing outing and year-end capstone trip for Black Canyon High School students.

On the administrative end, the coalition is also hiring two grant-funded staff members to help support the MRD and its partners in planning and implementing programming. And, the group has already convened a Community Leadership Council made up of kids, young adults and parents to gain regular input from the people the coalition aims to serve.

"It's a pretty diverse slice of the community," Ball said, adding he's been continually impressed by the work of the local groups and residents throughout this entire process.

"We're very pleased and thankful," he said.



Some of the coalition's first offerings will include school trips, an Outdoor After School Program and camping opportunities for kids and families. (Courtesy Photo/Generation Wild of the Uncompahgre)