

# Wellness Wednesday



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## Here Are A Few Things To Feel Optimistic About Right Now

From vaccine advancement to cleaner air, these positives are worth focusing on amid this coronavirus pandemic.

It's easy to get sucked into a vortex of bad news right now, since the vast majority of headlines are calling attention to all that's going wrong in the world.

There's no denying the pandemic is tough on our physical and mental health, that people are dealing with all types of loss, and the overall situation is pretty dire and bleak. But we can recognize and respect that while also noting that not everything is completely miserable and awful. Amid the chaos, there are a number of silver linings worth acknowledging.

Our air is getting cleaner. Scientists are innovating at lightning speed and creating new types of tests, drugs and technologies. People around the world are uniting and so much more.

There are quite a few things that can bring some (measured) optimism into our lives right now — you just might have to go digging around for it. **Here are just a few of those positives:**

### Smog is clearing up.

Around the world, major cities that are usually dampened by chalky clouds of dust and pollution are now getting some major relief. A new report found there's been nearly a 17% decline in global carbon dioxide emissions since last year, potentially the largest drop in pollution ever recorded.

The biggest winner here is India, where air quality is notoriously terrible — during the lock-downs, pollution in the region has dropped to a 20-year low. Back in the U.S., we're seeing clearer air, too.

Los Angeles, a city that's been battling a smog crisis for years, is consistently seeing crispy, clear blue skies. The Twin Cities have seen a drop in pollution amid the stay-at-home orders — pollution in **Minneapolis is down by 15%**, and **nearby areas are seeing up to 35% less pollution** typically caused by car traffic and industrial activity. **Detroit has seen a 30% drop in smog**, Ohio residents are breathing fresher air, and same goes with the string of cities in the Southwest.



## Crisis is breeding innovation — and lots of it.

There's also a stunning amount of innovation going on right now. There's a big problem that needs to be solved — the coronavirus — and the great thinkers of the world are hard at work coming up with solutions to treat, contain and prevent COVID-19.

Onyema Ogbuagu, a Yale Medicine infectious disease doctor, said there are over 250 trials currently looking at various drugs and treatments for COVID-19. There are new technologies that can sanitize personal protective equipment and medical equipment for reuse. Old drugs are being repurposed; new drugs are being developed.

"I think it's amazing to see how much innovation is going on," Ogbuagu said.

And it's all happening at a record speed; crisis prompts ingenuity. These new discoveries won't just help us recover in the short-term, but they'll transform our lives for years to come.

## Collaboration transcends borders.

All that innovation wouldn't be possible without the massive amount of collaboration and info-sharing between countries and regions right now.

Science has historically been an extremely competitive sport, and researchers typically like to hoard info and take all the credit for their work. But during this time, scientists around the world are sharing their findings so, together, the world can take out COVID-19.

"[The pandemic] has ushered in an unprecedented era of cooperation and innovation from the private and public sector and medical community towards achieving common goals," Ogbuagu said.

"This level of collaboration has transcended country borders and regions and galvanized the research community", he added. "The world is united in a way we've never really seen before."

## Live entertainment is, in a way, more accessible.



Concerts, comedy shows, orchestras — attending such events are usually super pricey and involve a whole lot of planning and coordination. Lately, creators and artists are performing live online for free.

You can pretty much tune in to a performance every night of the week if you plan it right. You can start the week with Grace Potter or Metallica, wind down each night with a live stream from the Metropolitan Opera, spend Thursdays with Radiohead, and end the week with Ben Folds and Major Lazer. Here's to hoping couch concerts are still a thing every so often on the other side of the pandemic.

## **You have a chance to reconnect with friends and family from afar.**

Since we're prohibited from doing many of the activities we love with the people we live close to, people are Zooming, FaceTiming, chatting and even letter-writing with friends and family from afar.

Though social distancing and stay-at-home orders are by no means easy, they've given us the opportunity to reach out and connect with people we might not have the opportunity to see regularly.

"Crisis has an interesting way of giving us permission to reach out to those closest to us for support reinforcing positive relationships," said Collin Reiff, a psychiatrist with NYU Langone Health.

## **You can pick up new and old hobbies**

Mental health experts say hobbies do wonders for our mental health and well-being, but it can be tough to find the time to take on new hobbies in the normal hustle bustle of life.

Reiff said he's noticed many people are using their new free time to practice self-care — they're going on walks, crafting, cooking, reading, writing and gardening. People are also revisiting activities they loved as a kid — whether it be playing soccer or making friendship bracelets — as a way to relax and revisit old memories (and, of course, stop thinking about the coronavirus).

## **We are being forced to recalibrate.**

Finally, the pandemic has given us time to check in with ourselves and really prioritize our own well-being. This time is urging us to take care of ourselves. Not only is it important to keep yourself healthy, but other people depend on it now, too.

That goes for slowing down, as well. Our society has been so obsessed with being busy and outdoing one another. But in a global health crisis, that's not totally possible. It's OK if you're not productive right now. Life is on pause. Acknowledge that, and let yourself rest.





# BBQ CHICKEN FOIL PACKETS

241 Calories | *PREP TIME: 10 mins* | *COOK TIME: 1 hr* | *TOTAL TIME: 1 hr 10 mins*  
*YIELD: 4 Servings* | *COURSE: Dinner* | *CUISINE: American*

## INGREDIENTS

- 8 pieces chicken drumsticks and thighs, on the bone, skinned
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 3 cups frozen mixed vegetables
- 1/2 cup your favorite BBQ sauce, divided  
optional chopped fresh parsley for garnish
- 4 pieces Reynolds Wrap® Heavy Duty Aluminum Foil, 12 x 18 inches

These easy 5-ingredient BBQ Chicken Foil Packets can be baked in the oven or made on the grill! An easy meal-in-one and the best part, easy cleanup!

## TIP:

You can prep them ahead and refrigerate until ready to cook. My preferred foil for foil packet meals is Reynolds Wrap® Heavy Duty Aluminum Foil which has a heavier gauge foil, perfect, so you don't have to worry about breaking or tearing, even with heavier foods and it protects food over direct heat.

## Nutrition Information

Serving: 1 packet, Calories: 241 kcal, Carbohydrates: 16.5 g, Protein: 29 g, Fat: 5.5 g, Saturated Fat: 1.5 g, Cholesterol: 1.5 mg, Sodium: 669 mg, Fiber: 2.5 g, Sugar: 14.5 g

Source: Skinnytaste.com



## INSTRUCTIONS



- 1.) Preheat grill to medium-high heat or the oven to 425F.
- 2.) Cut four large 18 x 12-inch pieces of foil and layout on a flat surface.
- 3.) Place 3/4 cup frozen mixed veggies in the center of each piece of foil.
- 4.) Season chicken with salt, garlic powder and paprika. Brush both sides of the chicken with 1/4 cup BBQ sauce and place 2 pieces (1 drumstick, 1 thigh) in the middle of each foil packet.
- 5.) Bring up the long sides of the foil, so the ends meet over the food. Double fold the ends, leaving room for heat to circulate inside. Double fold the two short ends to seal the packet tight, so no steam escapes.

### To Grill the Foil Packets:

- 1.) Place foil packets onto a preheated grill over medium-high heat and grill, covered over indirect heat for 50 to 55 minutes or until chicken is cooked through and chicken reaches an internal temp of 160F when tested with an instant read thermometer.
- 2.) Remove from the grill and carefully open the foil packets.
- 3.) Brush chicken with reserved BBQ sauce and cook uncovered 5 minutes more.
- 4.) Garnish with fresh parsley if desired.

## FEATURED EXERCISE

Grab your dumbbells – let's go to work! 

## Rear Delt Raise

This is the ultimate upper body multitasker—targeting your shoulders, triceps and biceps! Keep your arms raised to shoulder level to really feel the burn.

**Step 1:** Standing with feet hip-width distance apart and a dumbbell in each hand, bring your elbows up to just below shoulder height in front of your chest.

**Step 2:** Open up your arms into a field goal position, stretching them back to activate your shoulder blades.

**Step 3:** Extend your arms overhead and then reverse the move to return to start.

» Suggested reps: 12 reps | 3 sets



Source: <https://popculture.com/healthy-living/news/17-free-weight-exercises-for-toned-arms/#17>

Regular exercise can help you control your weight, reduce your risk of heart disease, and strengthen your bones and muscles. But if it's been awhile since you've exercised and you have health issues or concerns, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor before starting a new exercise routine.

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## The three C's in life:

*Choice, Chance & Change.*

You must the make *Choice*, to take  
the *Chance*, if you want  
anything in life to *Change*.



Meet Ulliance Senior  
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