

# Women's Fitness

March 2021

INDIA

OH, BABY!  
Fit Mom Of Four,  
Blogger & Entrepreneur  
**Parul Kakad**

**CHEF SPECIAL:  
SHIPRA KHANNA**

On Her  
Favourite  
Recipes

**BEATING  
EATING  
DISORDER**

with  
Yoga

Three Weeks  
Workout To A  
**LEAN  
FOUNDATION**

**POST HOLI  
SKINCARE**

Care  
Routine







**DIGITAL NOT  
ENOUGH?**

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*Nidhi Agerwal*

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## March Special

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# Editor's Note

Self-love and compassion are key for mental health and well-being, keeping depression and anxiety at bay. We often entail a lot of self-criticism, with that persecutory inner voice constantly telling us how we could've done things better. Solution? First of all, acknowledge that it's bad for you; beating yourself up over every little error gradually chips away at your sense of self-worth and makes you less happy.

To love yourself means to embrace your unique beauty and to celebrate the person you are working to become. Self-love is not a one-size-fits-all formula that fixes self-doubt overnight; rather, it is a tradition of recognizing your value. There are more things to work on to enhance your skills and serve others in need. Its time to make better choices and be Grateful.

The theme for International Women's Day 2021 is "Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world." It's time to Celebrate your achievement.

Proud to be a Woman,  
Namita Nayyar

*We just need to be kinder to ourselves. If we treated ourselves the way we treated our best friend, can you imagine how much better off we would be?*

– Meghan Markle



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# Kanchan Rai On Love & Living

In the backdrop of an enmeshed Indian culture, Delhi-based Kanchan Rai, walks with people through their journey of self-discovery, enabling them to break through the invisible veneers that mask their vulnerabilities.

**K**anchan Rai a Harvard Business School Graduate has a specialized certification in leadership development and authentic leadership development. She is an internationally certified coach from the International Coaching Federation (ICF), the leading global organization that represents the highest quality in professional coaching. She stresses that mind coaches don't change lives; rather, they merely act as a constant reminder and motivator in life.



With an aim to throw the spotlight on mental health, she conceptualized the holistic initiative Let Us Talk Foundation and is the mastermind behind its coaching methodology. Having donned the hat of the founder of Let Us Talk Foundation, she is innately able to connect to various situations and roles, as is made evident by her diverse clientele. Her training in the varied facets of therapy and understanding of the human psyche drove her to create her own techniques to drive mind rejuvenation to an exponential level. Having battled depression herself, Kanchan has spearheaded a movement to spread awareness about mental health. This led to the conceptualization of the Let Us Talk Foundation. The organization is committed to making people across various industry sections emotionally and mentally healthy through its mindfulness workshops.

Women Fitness India got an opportunity to get in touch with Kanchan to talk about her life, passion, work, and much more. Read on.

**You are alumni of Harvard Business School and are established wellbeing and lifestyle coaches. Tell us how your journey began in this field**

Counselling has been my true calling and I have always been focused on a mentor, empower, and provide hope to people. When I look back at my own journey, I am astounded by the challenges I faced and overcame. Having started with limited clients, today I play multiple roles as a therapist, coach, speaker, and a Harvard Business School certified trainer. Currently serving as the Founder of Let Us Talk Foundation, I also wrestle the tag of a specialized certification in leadership development and authentic leadership development.

I have also been credited as an internationally certified coach from the International Coaching Federation (ICF). As someone who has been closely involved in the emotional wellness sector for over a decade, I feel the most exceptional aspect of counseling is that you get an opportunity to learn a lot about yourself. While you engage closely with another human there are certain aspects of yourself that start showing up and this has been encouraging me to pursue therapy all the more.

Most  
Exceptional  
Aspect Of  
Counseling Is  
That You Get An  
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Learn A Lot  
About Yourself.







A woman with long, dark, wavy hair is smiling at the camera. She is wearing a bright pink blazer over a dark brown top and a brown plaid skirt. She is holding a white mug in her right hand. To her left is a large, tufted leather chair. The background is a blurred view of green foliage through a window.

At Let Us Talk,  
We Are On A  
Mission To  
Standardize  
Therapy As A  
Way Of Life.







**You started your foundation “Let Us Talk” to help people through varied emotional turmoil. tell us more about it and the types of coaching you specialize in.**

From the time we started our journey at Let Us Talk, conversations around mental illness have significantly opened up, facilitating us to mindfully heal people. However, we still have a long way to go to make mind well-being a priority, not just for managing the illness, but also to manage social issues and past experiences that tend to impact each one of us. At Let Us Talk, we are on a mission to standardize therapy as a way of life. The organization believes that each one of us deserves to hold on to and celebrate our uniqueness, without disgrace, fear, and without giving in to the call for conformity. The enterprise follows a wide-ranging approach that leans towards human-centered and compassion-based approaches to maintain sound mental health. The organization’s collaborative engagement platforms enable users to dive deep within and resolve fear, hurt, and past resentments.

### **How important do you think is mental fitness along with physical fitness? 5 Early signs of mental illness**

Mental fitness is all about strengthening the neural pathways leading to realistic thoughts. It can help break patterns enabling one to experience positive emotions more regularly than negative ones. The more we feed negative thoughts; the it is more likely for them to occur. This is due to the neuroplasticity of our brains. Science has proven that we humans tend to have a massive capacity to continuously rewire our brains. During this process, the thoughts that induce certain emotions tend to cluster together through neural pathways. This means that every time we let a negative thought to replicate, it will strengthen the neural networks making one feel mentally healthy. Just like ‘workouts’ that refine physical fitness, there are exercises recovering psychological fitness too. Practicing mind-wellbeing exercises like yoga, effective thinking, meditation, and self-control techniques can stimulate mind flexibility, resilience, and composure which are the ingredients of a healthy mind.



### **The five early signs that indicate a mental illness are:**

Mind health issues can comprise a wide range of conditions, including mood disorders, fluctuations in thinking and behaviour patterns. Some instances of psychological ailments include depression, anxiety and eating disorders, schizophrenia and addictive behaviours. Making an attempt to differentiate between normal, expected behaviours and the preliminary signs of mind health problems is challenging. But learning to identify the below -mentioned early signs can help to lessen their severity.

- **CHANGES IN THE SLEEP PATTERNS AND APPETITE:**

Dramatic sleep fluctuation and an increase or decrease in one’s eating patterns

- **MOOD FLUCTUATIONS:**

Rapid shifts in emotions or feeling dejected

- **WITHDRAWAL SIGNS:**

A visible social withdrawal and loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities

- **INCREASED SENSITIVITY:**

Amplified sensitivity to sounds, smells, sights, or touch and the urge to escape over-stimulating situations

- **BEHAVING IN AN UNUSUAL MANNER:**

Display of odd, atypical and peculiar behaviour

Mental illness can make one despondent but knowing the early signs can help restore a healthy mind through a combination of healing therapies. Early intervention can possibly decline the severity of mental illness and in some cases, it may prevent a major emotional disorder altogether.



**Nowadays many people go through health issues like PCOD and hormonal imbalance due to stress and depression. 3 tips on how to deal with the same –**

PCOD is a complex condition which impacts manifold aspects of a person's wellbeing, including mental health. With these conditions, your hormones already tend to work against you, making it difficult to gain control over your anxiety levels. People diagnosed with PCOD may experience lower levels of certain neurotransmitters which are chemicals sending signals throughout the brain and nervous system. Neurotransmitters like serotonin a chemical messenger within the nervous system associated with positive feelings, plays a crucial role in the build-up of depression and anxiety in PCOD patients. Below-mentioned are a few alternative therapies to ease stress related to PCOD:

- Receiving acupuncture can help in improving the depression and anxiety among people with PCOD
- Practicing mindfulness for about 30 minutes in a day along with following healthy lifestyle changes can help calm a stressed mind
- Performing yoga that includes relaxing poses, breathing exercises and meditation may also improve anxiety symptoms in people with PCOD
- In case the mood disorders and emotional turmoil associated with PCOD gets unmanageable, it is recommended to consult a mental health coach to help manage your emotions through mindful practices.

## Shop

**Namyaa** has launched a range of **Natural Menstrual Healthcare Range** meant to tackle a wide variety of menstrual conditions such as PCOD, PCOS, white discharge, delayed and irregular periods under the label 'Namyaa Life Science'. The range currently has three products- 'Namyaa Anartava' for delayed and irregular periods, 'Namyaa Aarthava Kshaya' for PCOD & PCOS, and 'Namyaa ShwetKanika' for white discharge. While the first one is a syrup, the second and third supplements are in tablet form.



**Made with pure, rare, and certified herbal ingredients** such as Aloe Vera, Pippali, Karanja, Krishna-Tila, Kultha, Ashoka, Daruharidra, Guduchi, Jeereka, Lodhra, Sahastravedi, etc., the health supplements are free from any kind of dangerous chemicals. When taken promptly while caring for other precautionary measures, the supplements start regulating the menstrual cycle and showing positive results after one month of use. Priced affordably between INR 450 to 500 for a month-long course, they are available for purchase on Namyaa's website. Availability: <https://namyaa.in/>







## **Mental health symptoms are ignored and considered taboo. Why there is a need to be more vocal about it**

Despite growing awareness, mind health is still on the periphery and therapy is considered to be an afterthought. The occurrence of mental health illnesses has increased in the past few decades with statistics having risen from 11.93% to 12.63% especially among the youth. Considering the increasing numbers of masses falling prey to anxieties and depression indicates that discussing at length about these issues should be more acceptable. By being more vocal about mind illness, we as a society can positively divulge the untrue notions that have been plaguing this topic. Undergoing therapy can be an effective treatment for fixing up emotional problems like depression. A professionally trained therapist can facilitate you in getting to the root of your problems, overcome emotional challenges, and make positive changes in your life. Simply bottling up these thoughts could possibly turn into a bigger issue.

## **Being the cover girl for Women Fitness India, you are a role model for many aspiring women out there, your message for our readers on why women need to be financially independent today**

It does not matter how we define financial freedom but the rewards of accomplishing it are more than just monetary. Above all, the emotional payoff is just as valuable as being financially independent. It can benefit one's state of mind in many ways than one. By surging predictability and creating a greater sense of economic steadiness, financial freedom can aid in getting rid of anxiety situations.

## **What are your future goals related to your foundation "Let us talk"? And how are you managing considering the ongoing pandemic**

In the light of the current pandemic where-in the emotional turmoil is at a high, I look forward to becoming a pillar of revolution enabling people to embrace their authenticity. Through counselling and therapy, the organization aims to create a safe space for individuals to embrace themselves for who they are. Employee counselling being the need-of-the-hour, going ahead, Let Us Talk Foundation plans to penetrate into the corporate world to help organizations in effectively addressing the employee's mental health.

## **During the Pandemic, many people were suffering from depression, boredom, and mental health issues. 5 tips for keeping oneself motivated while working from home**

The unexpected shift to a remote work setup has been demanding for many employees. The sudden absence of physical connection can leave employees feeling they have nowhere to go when they are stressed or nervous. It becomes more stimulating to form a robust support network, which is necessary for good mind – health.

The below mentioned tips can help in creating a better mental well-being to sustain productivity and motivation in the virtual office:

- To overcome the work-from-home stress, employees should consider making a few practical fluctuations to the hybrid workplace. Taking a ten-minute break between virtual meetings is very helpful in such circumstances. Implementing meeting-free days once in a month can also aid in reducing the mental pressure of being constantly online. Apart from that, arranging for a smaller scale meeting with the core team can help recover mind health, by helping employees to have their contributions personally acknowledged
- To maintain a work-life balance it is recommended that employees should keep a steady schedule, with planned screen breaks
- To avoid being isolated, it is also important for employers to take time out for regular one-on-one catch-ups with team members
- Lastly, one must ensure that they are balancing their days with a nourishing diet, regular workouts, and are catching up on ample sleep. To attain mindful productivity, it is completely fine to put on the brakes of relaxation that can lend you to achieving your goals

# Undergoing Therapy Can Be An Effective Treatment For Fixing Up Emotional Problems Like Depression.

**Social media is both Boon and bane: many people get affected by trolls and negative comments they receive on social media. your thoughts on the same**

While digitalization has exposed the nation to a broad avenue of opportunities, one cannot side-line its undesirable impact on the user's mind. The social media usage mostly tends to be prejudiced by viral trends, trolls and negative comments which influences one's mind in many ways than one. This has given rise to a condition called reactive depression. This is a state of depression that is triggered by the way one reacts to stressful events. The nature of online content like messages of hate, vulgar pictures and rumor's can have far-reaching consequences on the victim's mind. Especially for children, it is advisable for parents to create stringent limitations for technology usage in their homes. If you suspect that your child has been indulging in depressing talks, you must look into the matter to check what has been bothering him/her. If things go unmanageable, it is always advisable to seek guidance from a therapist.

**Share an incident from your personal experience where serious damage was faced due to ignorance**

I started prioritizing mental health due to the loss of a close family member. Losing a loved one can trigger intense feelings of grief and for me, this translated into depression. Although I was on medication to treat my state of mind, there was an absence of a reliable source with who I could share my dilemma. In the midst of dealing with this personal loss, I decided to fly overseas to pursue a course in authentic leadership. The course helped me realize the importance of being vocal about one's mental health and with it followed the need to create more awareness about this space. Hence I conceptualized the Let Us Talk Foundation to enable the people with a reliable source to let their emotions flow out.







### **According to you, foods for optimum mental health**

Our brain and nervous system rely on nutrition to build new cells and tissues. To boost our mental health, the body needs a variety of carbohydrates, proteins and minerals. Hence, to foster exception mind health, one's diet must comprise of brain protective foods like fruits and vegetables along with edibles rich in omega-3 fatty acids, dark green leafy vegetables, legumes and nuts to name a few. Various studies indicate a 40 to 60 percent drop in cases of depression is when one eats the right foods.

*Mentioned below are foods that help in boosting the brain cells and relieve stress that must be incorporated in one's diet:*

**Sunflower seeds:** A rich source of vitamin E, this fat-soluble vitamin is essential for a healthy mental health. A low intake of this nutrient is linked with altered mood and depression. These are also rich in other stress-reducing nutrients, like copper, zinc and magnesium.

**Broccoli:** An intake of this cruciferous vegetable can help to lower your risk of mental health disorders like depression, particularly in women. Being rich in sulforaphane, a sulphur compound that has neuroprotective properties intake of this nutrient may offer calming and antidepressant effects.

**Chickpeas:** These are rich sources of L-tryptophan, required by our bodies to produce mood-regulating neurotransmitters. Having a diet rich in plant proteins like chickpeas may help improve mental-health performance.

Showing mindfulness to how you feel when you eat is one of the foremost steps to ensure if you are eating a well-balanced meal. Documenting what, where and when you eat on a food journal is an exceptional way towards mindful eating. ■

## WORKOUT

# Three Week Workout To A Lean Foundation



**F**ebruary is the month when weight loss and fitness resolutions begin to die. February 7 is known as the “fitness cliff,” because that’s the day that most people just completely give up on their fitness resolutions. Workout need to be a consistant for success.

### **Don't Worry here we have for you a 3-week or 21 days challenge program to a lean Foundation:**

Each week, you'll do 5 workouts (none of them last more than about half an hour!):

- Two total-body toning routines
- Two fat-blasting interval workouts
- Two easy recovery sessions

### Monday

8 Cardio- Swimming, Running, Jogging, Cycling- 30-45 min/4 day a week

### Tuesday

8 Murph  
8 100 pull ups  
8 200 pushups  
8 300 squats  
8 1 km run.

(Note: beginner intermediate level can assisted pull ups or modified pushups)



## Wednesday

Off day/ Cardio of choice

## Thursday (2x a week)

On – 20 sec, Rest – 10 sec |  
Rounds – 2 | Time spend –  
3 mins

- 8 Seal stretch
- 8 Sit reach lateral stretch.
- 8 Hip flexor (Right)
- 8 Hip flexor (Left)
- 8 Wrist stretch (Right)
- 8 Wrist stretch (Left)

Main zone | Rounds – 1 | Work – 45sec |  
Rest – 15sec | Total time – 10 mins

- 8 2 Jabs + 4 Front push kicks
- 8 Pushups to Shoulder taps
- 8 Hip extension to toe tap
- 8 Burpees
- 8 Hip lift to Plank
- 8 Squats jumps
- 8 Sit back bear to alternate knee drive
- 8 Squat to knee drive
- 8 Crab opposite knee to elbow taps
- 8 Judo roll to stand and reach

Core section | Rounds – 2 |  
Work – 40sec | Rest – 20sec |  
Time – 8mins

- 8 Full crunch
- 8 Leg raises
- 8 Mountain climber
- 8 Superman

Link for the movements –  
[youtube.com/watch?v=nt2ji-BLta8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nt2ji-BLta8)

## Friday (2x a week)

Equipment – Mat, Foam Roller, Medium  
Resistance Loop Band

- 8 Lateral Work on roller
- 8 Lateral lift bottom leg & hand
- 8 Lateral lift Point both leg
- 8 Lateral Arm Circles
- 8 Clams – Open & Close, pulses.
- 8 Clams heels lifted
- 8 Clams heels lifted knees extend & back
- 8 Back Bridge
- 8 Back Bridge pulses
- 8 Back Bridge open & Close
- 8 Back Frog Bridge
- 8 Stretch Cat & Cow

## Saturday

- 8 Murph
- 8 100 pull ups
- 8 200 pushups
- 8 300 squats
- 8 1 km run

(Note beginner intermediate level can  
assisted pull ups or modified pushups)

By: Praveen & Maheek Nair





## HEALTH TIP

Women are more prone to depression and anxiety than men due to various biological and social factors. However, not many people (both men and women) understand the difference between sadness and depression. Clinical depression is real and it can happen to anybody. Talk to a doctor if you notice the following signs in yourself or a loved one - irritability, a general loss of interest, hopelessness, weight loss, persistent fatigue, digestive issues and general aches in the body, suicidal thoughts, sleep disturbances and an inability to focus.





# 6 Folate-rich Recipes TO PREVENT Birth Defects

Folate is essential for healthy red blood cells as well as normal growth and development, making it a crucial nutrient during pregnancy.

**T**here are many milestones in a woman's life, and pregnancy is one of the most important ones. While the thought of carrying life around for 9 months is amazing in itself, what makes this time more exciting is the thought of finally meeting your little one!

Since you're carrying and growing a very special person inside your body, it's also up to you to nourish the baby adequately. The best way to do this is to avoid all kinds of harmful foods and to eat a balanced diet rich in all the macro nutrients and micro nutrients essential for healthy growth of the fetus. The most important nutrient during this stage is Folic acid or folate.

### What is Folate?

Folate or Vitamin B9, is a water soluble vitamin. It's synthetic form is referred to as folic acid. Folate is important to produce DNA and new healthy cells. Folate is essential for healthy red blood cells as well as normal growth and development, making it a crucial nutrient during pregnancy. Folate is one of the 13 essential vitamins and cannot be synthesized by the body, due to which it should be obtained from diet or supplements.

Every person requires a certain amount of folate every day, even without being pregnant. However, during pregnancy the demands of the body increase, which is why pregnant women need more folate. Not having enough folate in the body in the early stages of pregnancy can cause several birth defects.





### Why Folate Deficiency Should be Avoided?

Folate deficiency can cause serious abnormalities in newborns, especially neural tube defects. The neural tube is what forms the baby's brain and spine in the early days of pregnancy. If this tube doesn't close properly, it causes neural tube defects, also known as NTDs.

**Spina Bifida** – This is one of the most common neural tube defects, where the spinal column doesn't close properly. This often causes nerve damage including paralysis.

**Anencephaly** – In anencephaly, parts of the baby's brain and skull don't develop completely or correctly. Most babies with anencephaly are stillborn or die soon after birth.

**Chiari malformation** – This is a condition where the brain tissue extends into the spinal canal.

**Congenital Heart Defects** – The American Heart Association states that congenital heart defects occur due to poor or incomplete development of the heart. The baby's chances of survival depend upon the severity of the heart condition.

**Cleft Lip and Cleft Palate** – These defects occur when the mouth and the lip are not completely merged together. These are relatively minor defects that can be corrected through surgery.

Some studies show that having sufficient folate can also prevent premature births.

### Folate Requirement in Pregnancy

- The Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for folate for all adults is 400 mcg.
- Pregnant women require 600 mcg
- Lactating mothers need 500 mcg of folate.

Those who've already had a baby with NTD or those with other medical conditions like kidney disease or liver disease may require more folate.

**The biggest requirement of folate is during the first weeks of pregnancy**, when a woman may not even realize she's pregnant. Ideally, all women of reproductive age should take folate since by the time a woman realizes she's pregnant, the baby could have already had a neural tube defect.

### Food Sources

You can get folate either from a supplement as folic acid, or from foods that are rich in folate. There are a variety of naturally folate-rich foods out there – dried beans, legumes, lentils, dark green leafy vegetables, broccoli, peanuts, sunflower seeds, wheat germ, seafood, eggs, oranges, papaya, mango, sweet corn and others.



## 1 Kiwi Broccoli Banana Smoothie

### Ingredients:

- 1 banana • 2-3 florets of steamed broccoli
- 4-5 almonds • 1 Kiwi, washed, peeled and sliced
- ¼ cup oats • Water as required

### Instructions:

Blend all the ingredients to get a lump free smoothie. Serve immediately.

### Benefits:

The star ingredient here is broccoli, a cruciferous vegetable that is bursting with folate. One cup of raw broccoli contains 57 mcg of folate, while one cup of cooked broccoli containing a whopping 168 mcg of folate. Besides these, broccoli is also rich in manganese and Vitamins A, C and K along with beneficial plant compounds and loads of indoluble fiber.



## 2 Hearty Minestrone Soup

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup of Whole Wheat Pasta (Uncooked) ● 1 medium sized Onion, finely chopped ● 4 cloves of garlic, finely minced ● 1 cup of finely chopped Celery (about 4 stalks) ● 1 cup of Carrots, cut into thin rounds (about 3 medium sized ones) ● 1 cups of sliced Green Beans (about 100 grams) ● 1 cup of cooked Red Kidney Beans (Rajma) ● 1 can of Stewed Tomatoes or 2 large tomatoes, blanched in boiling water, skinned and diced ● 4 cups of vegetable broth or water ● 1 teaspoon of dried Oregano ● 1 teaspoon of dried Basil ● 2 tablespoon f Olive Oil ● Salt and pepper to taste ● Grated Parmesan Cheese ● Fresh Coriander leaves or Italian Basil

### Instructions:

- If not using can of stewed tomatoes, blanch the tomatoes in boiling water for two to three minutes and then immediately plunge them in cold water. The skin will get wrinkly. Remove the skin and roughly dice them. Keep aside.
- In a large stock pot, add the olive oil over medium high heat. Add the minced garlic and finely chopped onion and celery. Sauté till the onion and celery are soft and fragrant.
- Next, add the carrot and green bean slices and sauté them for a couple of minutes.
- Now add the cooked kidney beans (rajma), stewed tomatoes (or the blanched and diced tomatoes), dried oregano, dried basil, salt and pepper and mix well.

- Add the vegetable broth or water and bring it to a boil.
- Add the uncooked pasta and reduce the heat to medium. Cook uncovered, stirring frequently, till the pasta is cooked. About 7 to 8 minutes.
- Taste it and add more salt if required. If most of the liquid is absorbed in cooking the pasta, add more water or broth to make the soup to the desired consistency.
- Add fresh herbs like coriander leaves or Italian basil for a fresh burst of flavors. Serve hot with a sprinkle of grated parmesan cheese.

### Benefits:

Combining whole wheat pasta with dried beans makes this a super recipe for pregnancy. Whole wheat contains wheat germ which is rich in folate, with 28 grams containing over 78 mcg of folate. It is also very rich in dietary fiber, essential for healthy digestion and smooth bowel movements.





### 3 Egg Salad

#### Ingredients:

- 2 boiled eggs • 1 small potato, boiled (optional)
- 1 small red onion, finely chopped
- 1 tomato, finely chopped • Small bunch of fresh Coriander • Juice of 1 lemon • ¼ teaspoon freshly crushed black pepper • Salt to taste (optional)

#### Instructions:

- In a bowl mix together boiled potato chunks, chopped onions, chopped tomatoes. Add boiled egg pieces and toss lightly.
- Season the salad with salt (if using), freshly crushed black pepper powder and lemon juice.
- Toss lightly. Garnish with finely chopped fresh coriander leaves and serve.

#### Benefits:

Eggs are little powerhouses of nutrition, especially when it comes to naturally occurring folate. One large egg contains 22 mcg of folate, along with loads of other nutrients like selenium, riboflavin and Vitamin B12. Eggs are also an excellent source of protein, another pregnancy nutrient.

### 4 No Bake Energy Balls

#### Ingredients:

- 1 cup roasted Oats • ½ cup roasted chopped peanuts • ¼ cup chopped almonds • ¼ cup raisins • ¼ cup homemade dates syrup • ⅓ cup desiccated coconut • 1 tablespoon unsweetened cocoa powder

#### Instructions:

- Take all dry ingredients in a mixing bowl. Mix well. • Add dates syrup and blend well. • Refrigerate the mix for about an hour. • Pinch out portions from the mix and roll into round shape balls using palms.
- Keep the energy balls in air tight container.

#### Benefits:

This recipe contains peanuts and almonds, both good sources of folate. Half a cup of peanuts provides a whopping 175 mcg of folate, while the same amount of almonds provides 31 mcg of folate. What's more, nuts are packed with protein and fiber, along with various essential minerals and Vitamins the pregnant body needs.





## 5 Sprouted Moth Beans Frankie

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup sprouted moth beans ● 1 onion finely chopped ● 1 tomato finely chopped ● 2-3 cloves of garlic ● 1 teaspoon oil ● ¼ teaspoon cumin seeds ● ¼ teaspoon turmeric powder ● ½ teaspoon garam masala (optional)
- Salt to taste ● Small bunch of fresh coriander, finely chopped

### Instructions:

- Rinse and soak the moth beans (matki) in enough water for 6-8 hours. Drain. Now tie the soaked beans in a kitchen towel and keep in a dark and warm place (preferably in a casserole or in a microwave oven) for around 6-8 hours. The moth beans will sprout.
- Heat oil in a non stick pan. Add cumin seeds. Once the seeds crackle add the chopped garlic followed by finely chopped onion. Stir fry until the onions become soft.
- Now add chopped tomatoes. Stir fry till they get mushy. Now add turmeric powder followed by garam masala.
- Mix well. Toss in the sprouted moth beans. Stir fry for 1-2 minutes.
- Season with salt and cook, covered, for another 5-7 minutes on a low flame. Once the beans are soft and can be mashed between fingers, turn off the flame.
- Garnish with finely chopped fresh coriander. You can add ½ teaspoon of lemon juice if preferred. Wrap a few tablespoons of the beans in a chapathi or paratha, sprinkle some grated cheese on top and roll it while still hot.

### Benefits:

Legumes which include dried beans and lentils are among the best food sources of folate. Just half a cup carries a humongous 180 mcg of folate, along with potassium, iron and magnesium. They're also a great vegetarian source of protein and also contain a good amount of dietary fiber.



# 6 Spinach Phulka

## Ingredients:

● 1 cup whole wheat flour ● 1 small bunch of Spinach leaves ( around 10-12 palak leaves ) ● ½ teaspoon roasted cumin powder ● Few drops of oil while kneading the dough ● Salt to taste

## Instructions:

- Heat 2 cups of water in a sauce pan. When it begins to boil , add washed spinach leaves to it and cook for 1-2 minutes. Put off the flame. Allow the leaves to be in hot water for few seconds,
- In another vessel fill 2 cups ice cold water or normal water with ice cubes in it . Dip the blanched spinach leaves into this cold water. This steps ensures the lush green color of spinach leaves is restored.
- After a minute or so drain the spinach leaves and transfer to a grinder jar. Pulse to get a puree.
- In another bowl take whole wheat flour. Add salt and roasted cumin powder to it. Mix. To this add the spinach puree and knead into a soft dough. You may add little water if required while kneading the dough.
- Cover the dough and set it aside for 10 minutes .
- Now knead the dough again and divide it into 5 equal parts.
- Roll out each dough ball into a round shape using rolling pin.
- Pan roast the phulka until light brown colored spots appear on both sides. Alternatively you may cook one side on the skillet and then bake the other side of the phulka on open flame.
- Make all the phulka in similar way.
- Brush the phulkas with ghee and serve while warm.



## Benefits:

One of the best ways to include folate in your diet is through dark leafy greens like spinach. Just half a cup of cooked greens contains 100 mcg of folate. Spinach is also loaded with phytochemicals like lutein and beta carotene, Vitamins A, K as well as a good amount of fiber.

Too much folate is not recommended, but it is almost impossible to get toxic levels of folate simply from eating folate-rich foods. Besides these tips, make sure to contact your doctor as soon as you realize you are pregnant. Avoid harmful foods as well as intoxicating substances like alcohol.

With a good diet right from the beginning, you can have a healthy pregnancy that ends with a normal, healthy baby! ■

By: Dr Hemapriya, mylittlemoppet\_



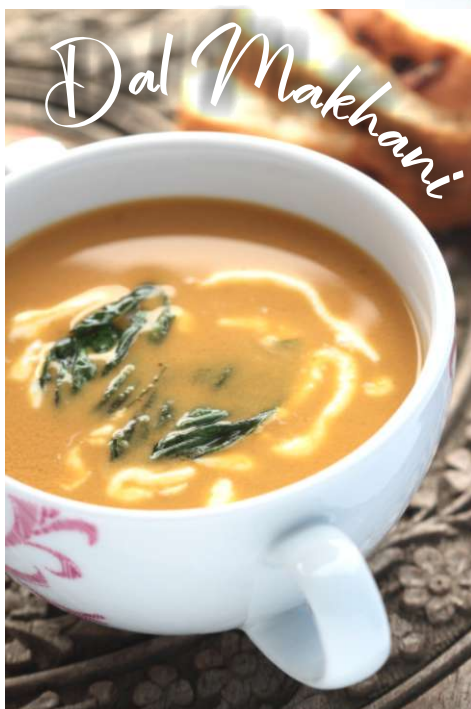
Chef Special

# Shipra Khanna's 5 Favourite Recipes

Chef Shipra Khanna, won the MasterChef India title in the second season [2012] which went on to transform her life and career.

Recently she won, 'Mahatma Gandhi Leadership Award' at the British Parliament In LONDON, in 2019 for propagating Indian cuisine across the globe!

Here she shares top 4 favourite Recipes, plus the winning recipe from the Masterchef Finale, that lead to the win.



### INGREDIENTS

#### To Pressure Cook

- 3/4 cup urad dal sabut ● 1 teaspoon salt ● 3 cups water

#### Masala for the Dal

- 1 tablespoon ghee ● 3 tablespoons butter ● 1 medium white onion finely grated ● 2 tbsp ginger garlic paste ● 1 cup tomato puree ● 1/2 teaspoon kashmiri red chili powder ● 1/4 teaspoon garam masala ● 1/2 teaspoon salt or to taste ● 1/4 cup cream

### METHOD

- Wash and rinse urad dal and rajma in a large bowl.
- Soak in 3 cups water overnight.
- In the morning, drain the water in which the dal and rajma was soaked.
- Transfer the dal and rajma to a pressure cooker with 1 teaspoon salt.
- Add water.
- Pressure cook on medium low heat for 30 minutes



- Let the pressure release naturally.
  - The dal should be completely cooked and you should be able to mash them with your fingers.
  - Then turn on the heat to lowest heat and let the dal simmer while you make the masala.
- To Make the Masala*
- In a large pan, heat 2 tablespoons butter and 1 tablespoon ghee on medium heat.
  - Once the butter melts and is hot, add the finely grated onion.
  - Cook the onion for around 5 minutes or until it turns light golden brown.
  - Keep stirring it continuously so that it doesn't burn and keep heat on medium.
  - Add the ginger garlic paste and cook for a minute until the raw smell goes away.
  - Add the tomato puree and mix.
  - Cook for 2 minutes or until the puree mixes well with masala and oil starts oozing out from the sides.
  - Add in the boiled dal and mix.
  - Add garam masala, kashmiri red chilli powder and salt. Mix to combine.
  - Add 1/2 cup water, stir and set heat to low.
  - Let it simmer on low heat covered for around 20 minutes.
  - Stir often every now and then or else dal will stick to the bottom of the pot.
  - Then add water to adjust consistency .
  - Stir in the cream and cook further for a minute!
  - Garnish dal makhani with more cream and serve with a spoon of butter.

# Gucchi Biryani

## INGREDIENTS:

- Rice – 2 cups
- morels/Gucchi – 15 large

## For the Filling:

- Cashewnuts – 2 tsp, chopped
- Raisins – 2 tsp, chopped
- Ginger – 1 tsp, chopped
- Cumin Seeds – 1/2 tsp

## For the Curry:

- Oil – 1/2 cup
- Garam Masala – 2 tsp,
- Onion Paste – 1 cup
- Cashewnut Paste – 2 tbsp
- Ginger Garlic Paste – 2 tbsp
- Turmeric Powder – 1/2 tsp
- Yellow Chilli Powder – 1 tsp
- Salt to Taste

## Method:

- Clean the Gucchi and keep aside.
- For the filling, mix together all the ingredients and fill the Gucci with the prepared filling.
- For the curry, heat oil in a pan.
- Add the garam masala and saute till it crackles.
- Add onion paste and cook till it leaves water.
- Stir in all the other ingredients and cook for a few minutes.
- Remove and keep aside.
- Boil rice in sufficient water till three quarters done.
- Drain and keep aside.
- In a pot, spread alternate layers of rice, mushrooms and the prepared curry.
- Cover and cook on very low heat till the rice is done and the mushrooms are tender.
- Remove from heat.
- Serve hot.



# Siddu Himchaly



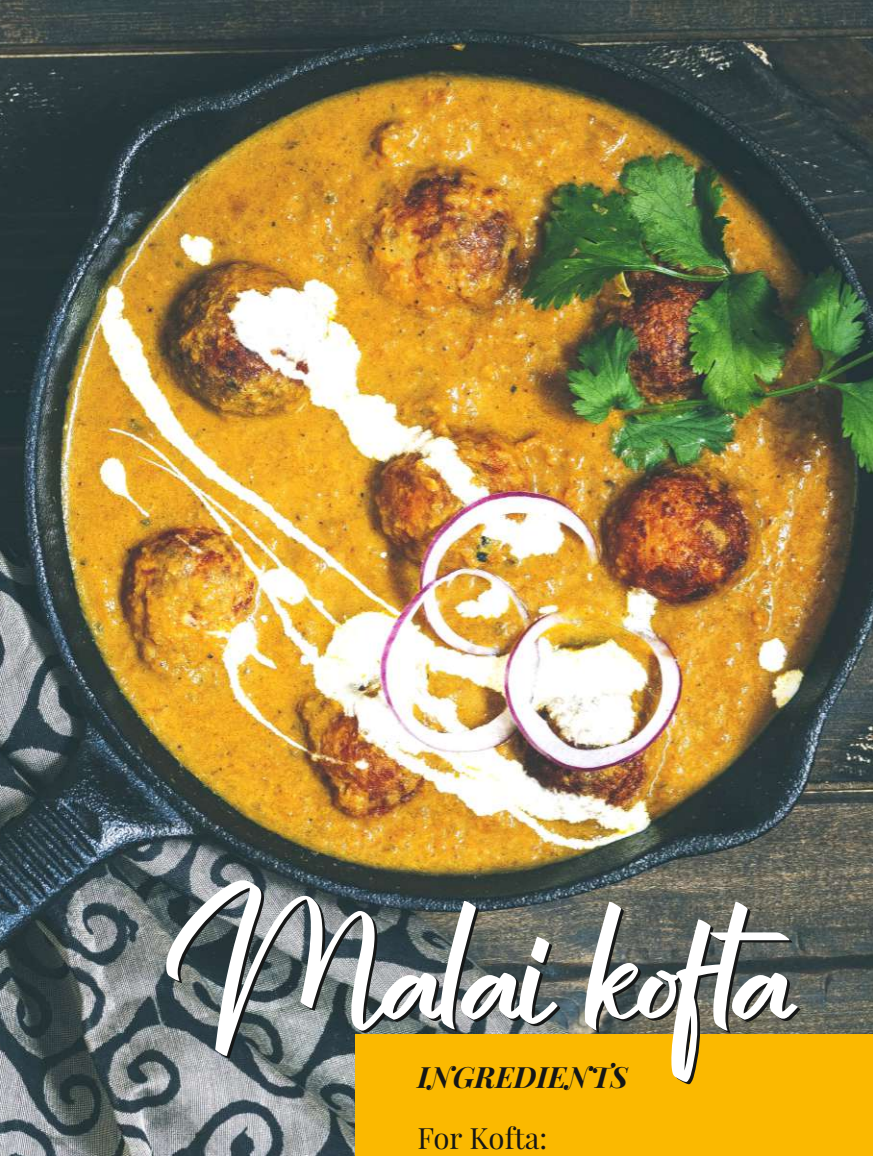
## INGREDIENTS

- 2 cup – Wheat flour
- 1 tsp – Active dry yeast
- ½ tsp and ½ tsp – Salt
- 2 tsp – Ghee
- 10 walnuts crushed
- 1tbsp poppy seeds
- ½ tsp- Red chilli powder
- 1 inch – Ginger, grated
- 2 – Green chilli, chopped
- ¼ tsp – Turmeric powder
- ½ pinch- Asafoetida
- 1 tsp – Coriander powder
- Coriander leaves, finely chopped

## METHOD

- Take flour in a big bowl and add little ghee to it. To this, add yeast and some salt.
- Pour lukewarm water into the bowl and knead the dough. Make sure the dough is soft.
- Once the dough is ready, rest it for about two hours.
- Grind the poppy seeds coarsely.
- Add salt to it, followed by red chilli powder, ginger and green chilli.
- Add turmeric powder, asafoetida, walnuts ,coriander powder and some coriander leaves.
- Mix the ingredients thoroughly. Set aside.
- Divide the dough into small pieces.
- Fold it into a round shape with your hands.
- Now roll one such piece of dough into a circular shape, making sure you keep it thick.
- Add some of the stuffing on the dough.
- Fold the dough from the top to cover the stuffing, forming a half moon.
- Press the edges or you can also fold them. Repeat with rest of the dough.
- In a pan, add 2-2.5 cups of water.
- Bring the water to boil.
- Grease a Chinese bamboo steamer with some ghee or oil.
- Now place the strainer pan carefully on top of the pan with water.
- Place the siddus on the strainer pan.
- Cover the pan and steam the siddus for 18-20 minutes on medium to high flame.
- After 20 minutes, remove the strainer pan from the stove and allow the siddus to cool for a while. Serve.





# Malai kofta

## INGREDIENTS

### For Kofta:

- 3 potato / aloo, boiled & mashed
- ¾ cup paneer / cottage cheese, grated
- 1 chilli, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp coriander, finely chopped
- ¼ tsp cumin powder
- ½ tsp salt
- 2 tbsp raisins
- 2 tbsp cashew / kaju, chopped
- 2 tbsp maida / plain flour
- Oil, for frying

### For Onion Tomato Puree:

- 2 tbsp oil
- 1 onion, sliced
- 1 tsp ginger garlic paste
- 2 tomato, sliced
- 2 tbsp cashew / kaju

### For Curry:

- 1 tbsp butter
- 2 tbsp oil
- 1 tsp cumin / jeera
- 2 pod cardamom
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 inch cinnamon
- 2 clove
- 1 tsp kashmiri red chilli powder
- ½ tsp turmeric
- ¾ tsp coriander powder
- ¼ tsp cumin powder
- 1 tsp salt
- ¼ cup cream / malai
- ½ cup water
- 1 tsp kasuri methi, crushed
- ¼ tsp garam masala

## Method

### For Kofta:

- Firstly, in a large mixing bowl take 3 potato and ¾ cup paneer.
- Now add 1 chilli, 2 tbsp coriander, ¼ tsp cumin powder and ½ tsp salt.
- Add 2 tbsp raisins and 2 tbsp cashew to have crunchy bite in kofta.
- Mix well making sure all the spices are well combined
- Now add 2 tbsp maida and mix well forming a soft dough. maida helps to absorb moisture and bind the mixture well.
- Prepare a small ball sized kofta by greasing hand with oil.
- Deep fry on medium hot oil.
- Stir occasionally, making sure the koftas are cooked uniformly.
- Fry until the kofta turn golden brown and crisp.
- Drain off the koftas and keep aside.

### For Curry :

- Firstly, in a pan heat 2 tbsp oil and saute 1 onion, 1 tsp ginger garlic paste.
- Saute until onions changes colour slightly. Further add 2 tomato and saute slightly.
- Now add 2 tbsp cashew and continue to saute until tomatoes soften completely. Cool completely and transfer to a blender. Blend to smooth paste adding water if required.
- Now filter the mixture to get rid of skin and seeds. Filter until silky smooth onion-tomato puree is attained. keep aside.
- In a large kadai heat 1 tbsp butter and 2 tbsp oil.
- Saute 1 tsp cumin, 2 pod cardamom, 1 bay leaf, 1 inch cinnamon, 2 clove until it turns aromatic.
- Further keeping the flame on low, add 1 tsp chilli powder, ½ tsp turmeric, ¾ tsp coriander powder and ¼ tsp cumin powder.
- Saute until the spices turn aromatic.
- Further add in the prepared onion tomato puree, 1 tsp salt and mix well.
- Cover and cook until the mixture starts to thicken and oil separates from sides.
- Now add ¼ cup cream and mix on low flame until it's well combined. further, add ½ cup water and mix well adjusting consistency as required.
- Get the curry to a boil, add 1 tsp kasuri methi and ¼ tsp garam masala. mix well.
- Finally, pour the curry over kofta and malai kofta is ready to enjoy.



# Bahara Nasheen

(Amritsari Smoked Salmon)

## Ingredients:

### For the Marinade

● 1 piece Salmon (cut into a rectangular fillet) ● To taste Salt ● ½ tsp Red Chilli powder ● ½ tsp Garlic paste ● ½ tsp Ginger paste ● 1 nos. Lemon (juice extracted) ● 1 tbsp Oil ● ¼ tsp Ajwain

### For the Creamed Potatoes

● 1 cup Fresh Cream ● To taste Salt ● 1 tbsp Kasuri Methi (lightly roasted) ● 4 cloves Garlic (crushed) ● 1 tbsp Butter ● 2 nos. Potatoes (peeled & sliced) ● ½ cup Processed Cheese (grated) ● ½ cup Parmesan Cheese (grated) ● 1/3 cup Breadcrumbs

### For Smoking

● 1 piece Charcoal ● 2 cloves Garlic (crushed) ● 2 tbsp Oil ● For the Crust ● 2 tbsp Parmesan Cheese (grated) ● 1 tbsp Parsley (finely chopped) ● 2 tbsp Breadcrumbs

### For the Vegetables

● 1 nos. Green Zucchini (cut into triangles & blanched) ● 1 nos. Yellow Zucchini (cut into triangles & blanched) ● 1 tbsp Butter ● To taste Salt ● To taste Black Pepper powder ● For the Beurre Blanc sauce ● 1 tbsp Butter ● 1 nos. Onion (sliced) ● 1 clove Garlic (crushed) ● 1 cup Fish Stock ● ½ cup White Wine ● 2 tbsp Butter (chilled) ● A few strands Saffron (lightly roasted) ● 2 tbsp Pine Nuts (toasted & finely chopped) ● 2 tbsp Fresh Cream

### For the Oven-dried Tomatoes

● 2 nos. Tomatoes (quartered) ● 1 tbsp Oil ● To taste Salt ● To taste Black Pepper powder

### For Garnish

● 1 nos. Red Capsicum (julienned & soaked in ice water) ● 1 nos. Yellow Capsicum (julienned & soaked in ice water) ● 1 nos. Green Capsicum (julienned & soaked in ice water)



## Method:

● In a mixing bowl, combine salmon with marinade ingredients and keep aside to marinate.

● In another mixing bowl, whisk together the cream, salt, kasoori methi and garlic. Grease a baking tray/casserole with butter. Preheat an oven to 200°C.

● In the greased baking tray/casserole, arrange half the potato slices in an even layer. Spoon half the cream mixture over this and sprinkle over with half the processed cheese and half the parmesan cheese. Top with remaining potatoes and cream mixture. Combine the remaining processed and parmesan cheese with breadcrumbs and sprinkle over the top. Bake in the preheated oven till done.

● For smoking, heat the charcoal on a flame till red hot and place in a small bowl. Place the bowl in the centre of the bowl containing marinated fish. Put the crushed garlic on the coal, spoon over with a few drops of oil and when coal smokes, immediately cover the bowl and keep aside for 10 minutes.

● Heat remaining oil in a frying pan and pan-sear the marinated smoked fish, turning regularly till half done. Remove from flame and keep aside.

● In a small bowl, combine the parmesan with parsley and breadcrumbs for crust. Dab the pan-seared fish with this mixture, place on a greased baking tray and bake in the

same oven for 3 minutes till crust becomes crisp and golden. When done, remove and keep aside.

● Heat butter in a frying pan, add blanched green and yellow zucchini with salt and pepper and sauté on a high flame till zucchini is hot. Remove from flame and keep aside.

● Heat 1 tbsp butter in a frying pan, add onions and garlic and sauté till onion turns translucent. Add in fish stock and white wine and boil the mixture till it reduces to half.

● When sauce reduces to half, remove from flame, add chilled butter and stir till butter dissolves and sauce becomes thick and creamy. Also mix in saffron, pine nuts and cream and keep aside.

● In a mixing bowl, combine quartered tomatoes with oil, salt and pepper. Spread out on a greased baking tray and bake in the same oven for 5 to 7 minutes till tomatoes have dried a bit. When done, remove from oven and peel off the skin.

● To serve, spoon some creamed potatoes in the centre of a round dinner plate. Place a few pieces of oven-dried tomatoes on it and top with a piece of fish. Mix the red, yellow and green capsicum juliennes and place some on top of the fish. Pour the sauce into a Chinese soup spoon and place next to the fish. Spoon the tossed zucchini on the other side and serve hot.



# 10 *Crispy Snacks* for Anytime Munching

## Manoli Mehta

**P**otato chips, pretzels, and other salty crispy snacks are unhealthy, and they can even get boring after awhile.

Whether you're trying to substitute healthier options in your diet, or looking to cut them out completely, there are plenty of easy to prepare snacks that will satisfy your need for something crunchy or crispy.

Try these as an accompaniment to a sandwich or just as a late night snack. You'll be surprised as your craving for junk food slowly goes away!



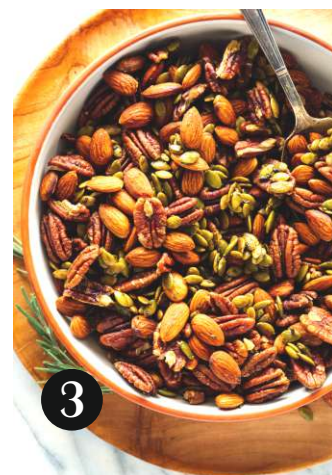
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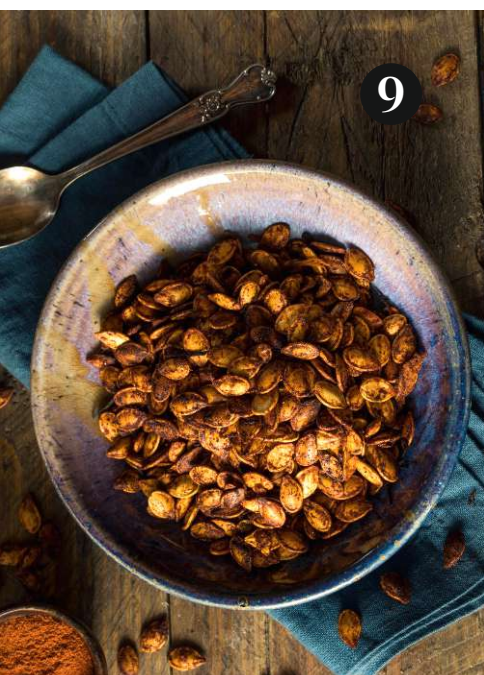
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9



8



10

1. Roasted chickpeas
2. Kale chips
3. Roasted nuts
4. Sweet potato chips
5. Baked tortilla chips
6. Popcorn
7. Baked carrot chips
8. Whole wheat pita chips with hummus
9. Roasted pumpkin seeds
10. Air-fried Eggplant chips

Snacks are an important part of your diet. They can fuel the body, boost energy and help you exercise better. And if you snack healthy, with foods that keep you full for a long time, it can also keep you from overeating at mealtime.

The next time you crave something crunchy try out something from the list above and you'll be surprised at how fast it becomes a new favourite snack! ■





## PREGNANCY TIP

Maintain a heart-healthy diet during & after pregnancy as rheumatoid arthritis puts one at a greater risk of heart disease. Eat plenty of fresh vegetables, fruits, and whole grains. When you do eat fats, opt for healthier choices such as monounsaturated fats found in olive oil and canola oil, fish and nuts like walnuts and almonds. Limit less-healthy fats found in meats and fried and processed foods.



# Post Holi Skincare Routine

The festival of Holi in India is one of the much-awaited days in a year. Though the vaccine for Covid-19 is out, the best measure towards its prevention as specified by WHO is good hygiene, particularly hand hygiene & avoiding crowded places.

Celebrating Holi, moderation with caution is the key word.



# Skin Care Ritual to Follow

After playing Holi and having a fun time with all under the sun, these skin care rituals are a must.

## Exfoliate Your Skin

Clean your face and body thoroughly after playing Holi. Use a natural scrub which is not harsh on the skin and remove all the stains from your body. Be gentle as your skin has already had a tough day. Investing in a tan-removal scrub is a good idea, as your skin has been exposed to the harmful UV rays for quite some time. Rinse with cold water and pat dry.

🧴 **For oily skin:** Grind dried up orange peel and red lentils (masoor dal) into powder and add lemon juice and rose water to it to make a fine paste. Rub the mixture on your face gently and wash off with water.

🥑 **As for dry skin,** you need a pack that removes the stains plus moisturizes your skin. Try a moisturising face pack by mashing 1 ripe banana and adding milk and honey in equal proportion to it. Apply on face and let it dry. Rinse with cold water and moisturise.

🧴 **For combination skin,** try a face pack that targets both issues. While aloe vera is a natural moisturiser and good for oily skin, lemon has cleansing properties that gets every last bit of colour off from face. Blend aloe vera extract with some lemon juice to make a smooth paste. Apply on face and neck and wash after 10-15 minutes.

## Soothen your Skin

Post-Holi skin care should focus on soothing your irritated skin. The best and most organic way to do so is by applying aloe vera gel all over your face and body. Keep it on for some time, sit back and relax. If you do not want to use aloe vera then a cooling cucumber mask is also an ideal choice.

## Rejuvenate your skin

The goodness of rose water is something we all are aware of. It not only helps in refreshing the skin but deeply penetrates into the skin and give you a natural pinkish glow. This post-Holi skin care ritual is a must-do. Apply rose water with the help of a cotton pad or spray it directly on your face. Keep it for 15-20 minutes then rinse with icy cold water.

## Things to Remember While You Play Holi 2021

- 🚫 Avoid large Holi gatherings
- 👨‍👩‍👧‍👦 Play Holi in a closed family group and ensure no one displays symptoms of cough, cold or flu
- 🚫 Play with dry colours and not water
- 🧼 Practice frequent washing of hands
- 🥗 Ensure you have foods that boost your immune system
- 👮‍♂️ Ensure that you have a face mask on, before stepping out.

Have a Safe Holi 2021. ■



## MARCH SPECIAL



Photo Credits: Shot by : Shruti Tejwan

HMU : Chandni Dawar & Meenal

Styled by : neha maru

Outfits : Punk house of couture by Parul and Khushboo





# OH, BABY!

## Fit Mom Of Four, Blogger & Entrepreneur Parul Kakad

It literally takes a village to raise the kids, but what about raising a village itself. Mumbai blogger Parul Kakad seems to have knocked that one right out of the park, something that did not come easy to this mum of four. She talks about the highs and lows of her motherhood journey.

**S**he recently started blogging and runs a page called Mumbai Mummy on Instagram and Facebook. And have recently realized how much she has to say and talk about my motherhood journey.

Parul's journey through 9 pregnancies and 5 miscarriages has taught her a lot as a mom and now she would love to spread and talk about anything and everything a mom can go through, with her experiences.

Women Fitness team catches up with her in a candid conversation about her journey, fitness, diet, beauty in a candid conversation!

**You are a well-known mommy and lifestyle blogger today? Tell us how did the journey begin for you and what inclined you towards starting a blog for moms.**

Honestly, it's taken me four kids to even begin writing about my journey. I always wanted to but wondered if I should, since there tons of mommy bloggers, How do I even stand a chance to make a difference?

I was going through a lot internally but never had the courage to talk about it. Until online platforms became open about discussing mental health, fitness, miscarriages. Everything that I was going through simultaneously

This is when I realised that there's so much, I need to talk about, and share. At first, I started responding to women via my Instagram DMs, who had gone through similar things as me and realised I'm not alone in this journey. There are tons of women who are going through so many of these things and suffering silently.

I wanted to give a voice to that and tell them, motherhood is much more beautiful than all these issues we go through, that we can overcome. There is always a light at the end of that tunnel, and in order to shine, you sometimes have to go through darkness.

I call it **"your own personal revolution"**.



**Motherhood is itself a full-time job, being a mother of 4 kids, introduce us to a day in your life**

It's only a full-time job if you're paid for it. You become a mother out of choice not compulsion. Every woman has a right to what she wants in her life. All she has to do is have a voice of her own. Apart from what I just said. There isn't a typical day in our lives. But I am a sucker for routine. At least for bedtime and meals.

A good night's rest and food on time just makes for happy and satisfied children.

With this pandemic year, I've learnt so much more about kids and their temperament. That made me realise how much structure you need to have in a day. E-schooling has driven me nuts, but I guess we've all figured our way around that too.

At my house there's a "no gadget rule" post school from Monday to Friday. No iPads, phones or television.

It freaks me out to see them so tech savvy and plugged in all the time. And as a result, exposed to the real world at such a young age. But there's only that much we can control when it comes to what they consume. So, I've tried to limit it.

So, a typical Monday to Friday routine would be waking up by 7.30am getting the kids up for e-schooling. I generally stay available to help them and check my own emails, phone calls and plan the rest of my day.

I leave for work after their done from school and come back just in time for dinner around 7:00pm. Afternoons they play with a few neighbourhood friends, read, paint, or anything that they feel like doing – offline.

We have dinner around 7.30 pm and then either play board games, listen and dance to music, read stories or watch a movie. This is mostly family bonding time, for all of us. Me, my hubby, and the kids. Then it's off to bed by 9.30 pm max. With bedtime prayers where we thank God for something non-materialistic that's moved





## You Need Some Form Of Physical Activity At Least Once A Day No Matter What You Look Like. It's Important For Your Mind, Body And Soul.

us that day. Or something that they've been grateful for. I recommend this one routine to all parents to encourage their kids to do, a gratitude list will go a long way in making them aware of what they have. Post this is "me time" where I probably hang with close friends or watch a movie. Or if I'm having one of those crazy work weeks, then my day ends around 1:00 am.

**You mentioned that your fitness journey began after you were diagnosed with cervical spondylitis. what fitness regime do you follow? Also often mothers are unable to focus on fitness after having kids. 5 Tips for Mom-to-be and mom with a newborn**

About 6 years ago I had a spondylitis attack where my entire right arm was dysfunctional. I couldn't even pick up a piece of paper. I wasn't allowed to pick my kids for months and my third child was only 9 months old. For a mother to be unable to lift her child is so traumatic, I can't even begin to explain it.

I had to be taken into surgery in an emergency and then I had 6 months of physio and started basic training and was introduced to yoga and got myself a professional trainer. My post-partum journey was tough, but it was a step ahead for me in terms of what fitness truly is.

People would tell me why, "do you need to go to the gym when you're so thin?". This is a BIG misconception that people have. You need some form of physical activity at least once a day no matter what you look like. It's important for your mind, body and soul.



**Diet routine you followed to shed your post-natal weight? 5 energy foods you & Do your kids enjoy eating?**

To get rid of my post-pregnancy weight, I followed a strict diet which included low-calorie meals along with regular exercise. I also consumed One life Apple Cider Vinegar in the morning daily, along with Onelife Garcilean tablets which is a natural weight loss supplement. This worked wonders for me. Both these products helped me get back to my pre-pregnancy weight in a healthy way.

Also, fenugreek in all forms. From consuming it raw to tablets. I increased my milk supply for breastfeeding and it also simultaneously helped me shed all the weight.

As for my kids and super foods I've pretty much been a strict mom when it's come to meals. For breakfast and lunch, I decide a full meal menu, dinner I let them have their choice. All my kids love their veggies and I think we have a balanced diet.

Photo Credits: Shot by : Shruti Tejawani

HMU : Chandni Dawar & Meenal

Styled by : neha maru

Outfits : Punk house of couture by Parul and Khushboo





Photo Credits: Shot by : Shruti Tejwani  
HMU : parul kakad  
Husband: Hiren kakad  
Kids : Arman, Kanisha, Jiyana and Naishsha





Photo Credits:  
shot by : Shruti Teiwani.  
Styled by Neha maru.  
Make up : pooja gwalani.  
Hair. Kamal

**You went through a series of miscarriages, which can be a challenging time. How did you keep up your mental health and deal with social pressure? 5 tips for women who have undergone the same.**

Now this is something that I still somewhere deep-down think about a lot of the times. I remember some of the dates as well. I've had traumatising miscarriages; some I didn't even know about till I went to the hospital. I've had 9 pregnancies in all, with 5 miscarriages. I've silently dealt with each one of them without talking to anyone about. Till I realised that the world needs to know and talk and discuss a mom's mental health for her own sanity.

I did go through some major lows when I miscarried each time and went into a shell and dealt with it on my own. I stopped talking to family and friends till I felt like I was back on my feet.

The worst low I hit was when I went through postpartum and only got diagnosed months later. It took me almost 8 months to come out of it after my fourth child. I never imagined in my wildest dreams that I'd be at my lowest then. Everything was wrong, the only thing going right was the support I had from my four children. As attached I was to all of them, I still felt disconnected, because my mind wasn't right.

It took a lot of yoga, pranayama meditation and counselling to get myself back on my feet.

The last year has been completely revolutionary for me. I feel like sunshine today and have never felt happier in my life.



**Many times during/post pregnancy women go through protein and vitamin deficiency. what protein supplements you take also your most trusted brand for the same**

Photo Credits:  
shot by : Shruti Tejawani.  
Styled by Neha maru.  
Make up : pooja gwalani.  
Hair. Kamal

I have always used Onelife products and trusted the brand for around 3 years or so. It has a range of products from multivitamins to beauty essentials. They were the answer to all my nutritional requirements during and post pregnancy. I start my day with their organic virgin coconut oil, it has multiple benefits, it provides support to my immune system, dental health and overall well-being, it is also good for my skin.

Then I go on to take supplements like Omega 3-6-9, Vita C, HSN Forte and Collagen.

These supplements together bridge the gap of any vitamin deficiencies and protein requirements. Along with this I also stay active and fit by including Yoga in my daily routine.

Onelife Multi-woman and HSN Forte are the multivitamin supplements that I consume on a daily basis to fulfill my nutritional requirements. Hydrolyzed Marine Collagen is an excellent anti-aging supplement, Omega 369 is a Vegan source of essential omega 3 fatty acids. It is known to help in heart, skin, and joint health. VitaC is an excellent Immunity booster enriched with Vitamin C. Along with all of this, I do regular exercise and yoga to stay active and fit, especially now during COVID times.





As mentioned you could not breastfeed your third child. how did you manage that. Advice for breastfeeding women you would like to share. Support & the assistance you used.

Not being able to breastfeed my third child was having to deal with babies in a whole new way. I was so used to breastfeeding and the pattern and the logistics behind it that I had to study and approach this in a whole new way. Only to realise when I see all my kids grown up that moms shouldn't be too hard on themselves. It's ok to formula feed and/or breastfeed.

The different kinds of formulas we get in the market nowadays are way better than what we got before. Although breastfeeding may feel much more convenient, there are no issues with sanitizing bottles, the water being too hot or too cold and I could just instantly feed the baby without dealing with any pressure.

Being the cover girl for Women Fitness India, you are an inspiration for all mothers out there. Share why motherhood is one of the most exceptional parts of a woman's life.

Being a mother just fills you with unconditional love. When you birth a child, you give birth to a new you. You learn to value things that are important. You look at life differently. Your basic instinct for a child is just magical. I remember with each growing baby I could tell by the look on their faces or a little shriek or cry what they were going through. I tell every mother that there will be a lot of people constantly giving you advice about raising your child. It may be friends, mothers, mothers-in-law, etc. But trust me, what you feel and know about your child no one else can.

Listen To Everything People Have To Say, But Only You As A Mother Will Know What To Do For Your Baby.

Because a mother will never wish ill for her own flesh and blood and maternal instinct has a huge role to play.



Belly-pouch is one thing that continues to bother women after childbirth. 5 lifestyle modifications called upon to manage that.

Yes! I see a lot of moms who just let loose after childbirth and say, *"I'm just focusing on the baby". Why? You need to focus on yourself too.* Indulging in eating wrong food just damages your body over the long run. Unless you have serious health issues then it's understandable. But looking after your health is equally important as looking after the

baby. Starting mild exercises post birth, eating right and staying active – it's all a circle Of life.

After my fourth. I had to undergo a surgery called "divarication of the recti" it's where the stomach muscles separate in pregnancy. And I only realised these a year later.

Not a lot of women are aware. But there are special exercises and workout modules for this which help retract and shape the muscles properly. Core work outs with such issues don't really help if you have this.







- ## A message for WF fans and your followers for New Year & Holi 2021?

Expect nothing from anyone but yourself. Only you can make yourself complete. You may be married, single or in a relationship. But you're only answerable to yourself.

**Besides being a blogger and content creator, you recently started your own clothing line? Share more about the same. Your advice for women who wish to work after becoming a mom.**



love yourself don't expect anyone else to!

Photo Credits: Shot by : Shruti Tejwani  
 HMU : parul kakad  
 Husband: Hiren kakad  
 Kids : Arman, Kanisha, Jiyana and Naishsha

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mom or a working mom. Encouraging your children to stand up on their own is important. And I think I've learnt a lot seeing my parents doing this. And without the encouragement from my hero aka husband hiren kakad. This line of clothing would have been left on my bucket list. PunK has made me happier. It's bling. It's fun. It's celebratory.

**My advice to women who wish to work...**

Follow your heart. You have one life to do whatever you can. If you fall stand back up and walk ahead and don't look back. Learn from every little lesson in life. Age like fine wine. Do your best. Put your energy, heart and soul. And whatever you do. Believe in it. If you don't believe in your own work. Nobody else will!

**What plans and precautions you would be taking with your family for holi 2021 approaching during pandemic?**

Well this pandemic has honestly changed everyone's life. Some in good. Some in bad unfortunately. But I guess we're all coming out of this a little more sensible than we were.

So follow basic precautions. This Holi. Play safe. Do your own little thing at home. If you have little kids. Have a colourless holi. And keep it small.

Photo Credits:

Shot by : Shruti Tejawani

HMU : Chandni Dawar & Meenal

Styled by : neha maru

Outfits : Punk house of couture by Parul and Khushboo





# #CHOOSETOCHALLENGE

The campaign theme for International Women's Day 2021 is "Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world." Women Fitness celebrates the tremendous efforts put in by women and girls around the world in shaping a more equal future and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Happy Women's Day.





# Beating Eating Disorder with Yoga

Yoga is the ancient Indian science that was given to us 5000 years ago and seems like we all are rediscovering it's benefits all over again. While yoga has been told to have many benefits, there is a little debate on whether yoga can help in combating Eating Disorders like Anorexia, Bulimia, Binge eating etc.

**W**hile yoga can help decrease anxiety and calm a person down it is also observed that sometimes people with eating disorders are attracted to yoga for its Intensive asanas and weight loss benefits.

**It's important to choose milder and more focused yoga practice for people who are suffering from eating disorders.**

The yoga they practice should teach them to appreciate their bodies and reduce anxiety and stress. Focus on breath and mindfulness will help them calm down and teach self-acceptance.

## Asanas to help you Manage and Overcome Eating Disorder

Start with gentle or restorative yoga flow and try and feel that entire connection of mind with body.

### Tadasana Or Mountain Pose

Stand upright on the ground, with the heels touching each other and feet slightly apart. Keep your chin up and stay for 5 minutes. You can also raise your hands in namaste for a few breaths. Repeat 3 times.

**Benefits-** It teaches you to stay still and learn balance which in turns calms you down. It also improves gut health.



### Nostril Breathing

A few minutes of **Left Nostril breathing** sit cross legged or in vajrasana and close your eyes. Close your right nostril with your thumb. Breathe in and out, long and deep through your left nostril only. Do this for 31 minutes. You need to do this for 90 days to truly change your patterns. Go nice and slow.

**Benefits-** This activates the left hemisphere of the brain to combat that impulse to overeat that is originating from the right hemisphere





### Bhujangasana (Cobra Pose)

Lie flat on your stomach and place your head on the ground. Keep both your hands on either side of your shoulders. Slowly, put pressure on your palms and lift your body up. The torso is lifted whereas the body from pelvic is on the floor. Hold this posture for about 15-30 seconds and exhale as you return to the starting position. Repeat 3 times.

**Benefits:** The cobra pose cures digestive disorders like constipation and flatulence. It also improves mental calmness and gradually helps in treating sudden food cravings.



### Dhanurasana (Bow Pose)

Lie flat on your stomach and raise both the legs and torso backwards. Now hold both your feet with your hands. Stay for 8-10 counts and keep breathing normally. Repeat 5 times

**Benefits :** The bow pose can help boost digestion, treat constipation.



### Halasana (Plow Pose)

Lie on your back and raise both legs up, now fold from the waist and try and touch your toes to the floor. If your toes don't touch the floor you can keep a stool or a pillow under it. Hold this posture for 10-15 seconds, relax for a minute and repeat for 3 times.

**Benefits :** This is one of the best asanas to help provide relief from an eating disorder. It also resolves digestive issues and enhances appetite.





### Crab Pose

Lie on your back now bend the knees keeping the feet hip width apart. Keep the arms behind your hips with the fingers pointed towards your feet. Inhale and lift the hips up towards the ceiling.

**Benefits-** Crab Pose helps strengthens endocrine and respiratory systems.



### Garland Pose Or Malasana

is nothing but sitting in a deep squat or Indian squat. Make you're your feet are not parallel but facing away. Keep your hands in Namaste.

**Benefits-** It removes tension from lower back, improves digestion and concentration.

### Locust Pose or Shalabhasana

Lie on your belly. Rest your chin on the ground, arms by your sides, then lift up your chin, and hands in the air, parallel to the body. Keep squeezing your glutes and core and keep lifting your legs and chest up as much as possible. Look forward without creating any tension in your neck.

**Benefits-** It Strengthens lower back, spine and abdominal muscles.



Please try these asanas. Remember the first step to healing is self-acceptance. If you are suffering from any kind of Eating Disorder, start slow and slowly you will see changes.

Namaste.

By- Prerna Sinha, Maaofallblogs



## WEIGHT LOSS

# INSPIRING BODY Transformation: 6 Indian Celebrities

Seeking healthy body transformation calls for smart eating, a well crafted workout schedule, small goals and never ever giving up. Being plus-sized is beautiful in its own way, but the focus needs to shift towards making healthier food and lifestyle choices.



**W**omen Fitness is here with input on 6 top actors who achieved desirable weightloss. They hold one thing in common, the fact that a regular workout routine accompanied with yoga, and following a regular diet pattern is the secret behind a healthy weight loss & a lean physique.



### ZAREEN KHAN

The celebrity actress with her determination, balanced diet and a trainer's routine lost considerable weight to achieve desirable body transformation. She believes that right exercise and diet is the secret to a perfect body.

In one of her interviews, she discussed her hard workout regime and how she has managed to develop the strong willpower to overcome food cravings.



*The secret to her graceful body lies in:*

- Daily walk.
- Cardio workouts like jogging, swimming and spinning.
- Weight Training 3-4 times a week.
- Pilates for at least an hour.
- 60 min yoga practice.
- Loud on, do not to skip meals and go dieting. Take small meals every 2 hour which helps in increasing the metabolic rate of the body. She takes a high protein diet which contains heaps of vegetables and juices. Drinks a ton of water each day.
- Keep Sweets and fried foods to minimum.



# BIFF *with* marie claire ASIA STAR AWARDS 2019 CHANEL



## BHUMI PEDNEKAR

The Dum Laga Ke Haisha actress won a million hearts with her inspirational transformation journey. She has lost considerable weight following a smart routine and listening to her body signals.



- Walk daily as its the best therapy. She also runs works on machines, does functional training & swimming.
- An avid lover of dance, Bhumi believes dance serves as a great way to do cardio, and is an incredible way to tone up if someone wants to infuse a fun element into their otherwise monotonous workout routine.
- Eat multigrain roti and rajgira.
- Take Aloe Vera detox drink every day.
- Green Tea and Kale juice are all-time the best.
- Vegetable smoothie for added nourishment.

Bhumi's Detox Water Recipe: 1 litre water + 3 cucumber + few mint leaves + 4 lemon. Refrigerate few hours to get detox water.



## SONAKSHI SINHA

Sonakshi Sinha lost a considerable 30 kg with these set of rules.



- Proper healthy diet + vigorous exercise to burn fat.
- Cardio exercises like cycling and swimming for at least an hour.
- Hot Yoga.
- Spinning for flexibility.
- Never Skip meals. Takes small meals every two or two a half hours.
- She holds the key that is, have patience in your transformation journey.

Sonakshi's Mantra

"Pluck out and remove things that trouble you in life without giving it a second thought."





## SONAM KAPOOR

Actress Sonam Kapoor, popular for her dressing sense and fashion statement shares battle with PCOD & her inspiring weight-loss story. She has undergone an incredible change that every woman now wants to have a slim and gorgeous body like her.



The secret of her shredded body lies in:

- Power Yoga and Artistic Yoga: stepping stone to weight loss.
- Dance exercise 2-3 times a week.
- Cardio exercises like swimming for approx 30 minutes every day.
- Playing squash on weekends.
- No dieting. Eat small snacks every 2 hours. Her personal favourites is brown rice and tofu. Prefers to eat simple home-cooked food like roti, daal, sabzi.
- Drinks a lot of water and stays hydrated by drinks like coconut water throughout the day.

She admits "In all fairness, it was my mother who helped me get rid of my excess weight."



## PARINEETI CHOPRA

A self-proclaimed food lover lost her waist size 38 to 30 to attain a toned physique. Her secret lies in the fact that,



- She starts her day by jogging for an hour.
- Meditates followed with One hour of yoga asanas.
- Treadmill run.
- Dance & Horse Riding.
- Cardio, in form of swimming.
- Parineeti is also excelled in Kerala Martial Arts, Kalaripayattu.
- Follows a flexible diet & never fails to sweat it out at the gym to burn off those extra calories.
- Has dinner at least 2 hours before hitting the bed





## ALIA BHATT

Actress Alia bhatt lost 16 kg in 3 months. From her personal experience she has come to understand the importance of a good diet. She follows a strict fitness schedule which is a mixture of cardio, weight training, dance and Yoga exercises. Her workout routine reportedly mainly consists of weight training, altitude training, beach running, swimming, kickboxing, and functional and circuit training. The actor visits the gym thrice or four times a week.

*Catch a glimpse of her routine,*

- Cardio for 40-45 min every day.
- Yoga asanas that include Ashtanga Yoga: The actor practises different types of yoga exercises in her daily fitness routine to stay healthy and fit. Including chakrasana, bhujangasana, surya namaskar, pranayama, and meditation.
- Cardio is a must every day for 40 minutes in form of Running on Treadmill
- Weight Training includes Pushups, lateral pull-downs, biceps curls, triceps push down, crunches, back extensions, lunges and squats.
- Dancing exercises include Ballet and Kathak.
- Kick starts her day with some herbal tea or coffee, without sugar.
- A complete supporter of healthy breakfast. Her breakfast plate is full of anti-oxidant rich foods and usually has seasonal fruits like acai berries, papayas. Later, she likes to have something filling like a bowl of poha or egg sandwich.
- Eats small, frequent meals (6-7) throughout the day.

**To Sum up:**

Say NO to  
Dieting. Gift  
yourself a  
Healthy Body.





## WEIGHT LOSS

If you want to lose weight then avoid carbs before a workout. Good fats like nuts, bananas and chocolate give us the energy to work out. After a workout protein is definitely the first thing one should incorporate.





## SUN SIGNS

# Sun Signs & February

Unpack information about your zodiac sign for the Month of February



### Pisces

When Venus enters Aquarius on February 1, she encourages you to embrace your individuality, especially when it comes to money and matters of the heart. You don't always have a ton of confidence in these areas, but when you let your unique personality shine, you'll be surprised by how capable you actually are.

When Mars sextiles your ruler Neptune on the thirteenth, romance is in the air. Are you with your ideal partner? If you are, spoil them rotten. If you're not, do you have an idea of what they look like or what their personality is like? Your dreams and visions are incredibly helpful tools now, Pisces. Don't ignore signs that will lead you to happiness.

The sun leaves quirky air sign Aquarius and partners with your gentle, introverted sign on February 18, giving you a month of quiet introspection and alone time. Use your free time to curl up with a good book, bake some bread, give yourself a pedicure, or take ridiculously long bubble baths. Give yourself permission to stop taking care of others long enough to pamper yourself.

Venus enters your peaceful sign on the twenty-fifth, so you'll do just about anything to avoid confrontation of any kind. When it comes to love and money, you might have to address some issues, but for the next three weeks you prefer to look at the positives instead of the negatives.



### Aries

The sun is in individualistic Aquarius as February begins, which is an energy that encourages you to be exactly who you are, quirks and all. If someone doesn't like all of your little idiosyncrasies, then they don't have to hang out with you. Period!

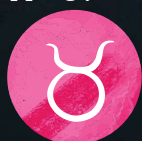
Loving Venus joins aloof Aquarius on February 1, so your relationships might feel a shift in physical or emotional closeness for the coming weeks. It isn't that you don't care about your loved ones, but you want space to explore the world on your own. You're more than happy to talk about your experiences after the fact, but for the time being you rather like the thought of flying solo.

You have a short temper when Mercury squares your ruler Mars on the tenth, and you might jump to conclusions before you've heard the whole story. Why are you so quick to make assumptions, Aries? This won't be the first time your temper has gotten you into trouble, but in the future you might want to work on thinking more about what you say



before you say it.

The sun leaves outgoing Aquarius for shy, gentle Pisces on February 18, leaving you more subdued and quieter than usual. As the last sign of the zodiac, the Pisces energy puts you in a reflective mood, and thinking about what has transpired in the past month can be cathartic. If you feel the need to do better, nothing is stopping you.



## Taurus

The sun is already partnered with outgoing Aquarius when your ruler Venus partners with the Water Bearer on February 1. Is it time to set aside your conservative, traditional ways and have more eccentric experiences? Get out of your comfort zone and have some fun, Taurus! When it comes to love and money, it's time to change up the game.

The sixth finds money maven Venus conjoining ambitious Saturn, so your opportunities to pad your bank account should be plentiful. There is no opportunity too small for you to consider. If you're starting a business or selling things online, expect slow, steady growth.

The brilliant and powerful sun enters gentle Pisces on February 18, making you more compassionate and empathetic. With everything that's going on in the world, we could all use a little more love in our lives. Reach out to offer a helping hand to someone who's struggling. At the end of the day, what you do for others makes you feel way better than what you do only for yourself.

Beautiful Venus enters creative, dreamy Pisces on the twenty-fifth, giving love a soft, romantic vibe. Set the mood for your partner or crush with soft lighting and a killer playlist, and make sure you look irresistible. Appealing to someone's senses now is the best way to seduce them.



## Gemini

The sun is in fellow air sign Aquarius, putting some very interesting ideas into your head. There aren't too many things you won't consider now, and you love to spend your downtime experimenting and coming up with innovative new products and concepts. You get along best with other air signs who are willing to play the "what if" game with you.

Making major decisions during the Mercury-Mars square on February 10 isn't the best idea because you tend to jump to incorrect conclusions and make wrong assumptions now. It's possible that most of your mistakes can be corrected if you slow down and pay more attention to what you're doing rather than what you want to be doing ten minutes from now.

A Mercury-Jupiter conjunction on the fourteenth puts you in a happier frame of mind, and this is one of your luckiest days of the month. Which areas of your life can benefit the most from good fortune smiling on them? Focus your attention on those.

A Virgo full moon on February 27 shows you how much work there is to do, but it also infuses you with the energy to get the job done, or should we say "jobs"? Try not to get overwhelmed with the

sheer volume of what's on your to-do list. You can accomplish it all with a positive attitude (and maybe a few more cups of coffee than usual).



## Cancer

When Venus pairs up with friendly Aquarius right away on February 1, there can be a lot of mixed emotions swirling around friendships. Have you been thinking about taking a platonic relationship in another direction? This experimental energy encourages you to try new things.

A new moon in Aquarius on the eleventh also encourages experimentation, but this time the focus is more on making connections with the world and finding your place among associations, organizations, and so on. Your chance of being accepted into new groups now is high.

The sun leaves Aquarius for emotional fellow water sign Pisces on February 18, at which point you will probably feel like retreating back into your shell and out of the spotlight. There's nothing wrong with being an introvert, but be sure your voice is heard when something important is on the line.

A Virgo full moon on February 27 gives you the opportunity to look at your problems from a logical perspective. Doing things the same way you've always done them has led you here. Are you happy with your current circumstances? If not, change them. Health is a major focus during this lunation.



## Leo

Your ruler sun is partnered with wise and witty Aquarius to start the month, so your ideas and opinions will be highly valued and sought after now. This is a great time to start or join important discussions on how to make the world a better place.

The sun-Mercury conjunction on February 8 brings more mental alertness, and you'll want to interact with like-minded people. It's hard to tell someone's tone via text or e-mail, but if those are the only outlets you have available, use them to your advantage. Emoji are a good way to convey humor.

The sun moves into compassionate Pisces on the eighteenth, helping you be much more empathetic to other people's pain. Is there something you can do to help? Offering someone a shoulder to cry on or a hot meal makes you feel much better than doing nothing at all.

A sun-Uranus sextile on February 25 stimulates your creativity and helps you see things from a new perspective. Flashes of insight come from out of nowhere, making you feel like one of the smartest people in the room. Use your newfound enlightenment to make a difference.



## Virgo

The combination of money-oriented Venus and innovative Aquarius starting on February 1 gives you the freedom to make some bold financial decisions. You're typically a lot more prudent with your money, but when you see a good opportunity in the next

couple weeks, you'll want to jump on it. Risks are rewarded now.

A Mercury-Mars square on the tenth makes negotiations difficult, mainly because you aren't sure of the legal terminology or someone else's motivations. Always get clarity during this aspect, Virgo, or you'll end up paying for it later.

A Mercury-Venus conjunction on February 13 is the perfect time to profess your true feelings, and if you're in a relationship where you haven't said, "I love you" yet, what are you waiting for? Expressing your emotions is never a bad thing. Try it now.

There's a full moon in your practical sign on the twenty-seventh urging you to clean up your life. You can take that literally or figuratively because both ways have validity. Clean out a closet or get out of a toxic friendship. At the end of the day, lightening your cosmic load feels amazing.



## Libra

Your home planet Venus moves out of ambitious Capricorn and into offbeat Aquarius on February 1, giving the start of your month an interesting vibe. As a fellow air sign, you definitely are feeling the urge to make connections with others, but you might choose to do it in an odd way now. If there's something that hasn't been done before, you're first in line to try it.

Be prepared to receive amazing compliments, charming love letters, and other surprising forms of admiration during the Venus-Jupiter conjunction on the eleventh! Your popularity surges now, but you can't figure out why. Don't ask questions, Libra. Just enjoy the attention.

A new moon in freedom-seeking Aquarius, also on February 11, has you paving new paths and blazing new trails. You're a true pioneer now, and you want to boldly go where no one else has gone before. If you're an inventor, this is your time to shine. If you have a notebook full of random ideas, share them now.

Loving Venus enters sympathetic Pisces on the twenty-fifth, encouraging you to help someone who really needs it. There are so many worthy causes, and while you can't get involved in all of them, helping just one person makes a big difference. Someone close to you needs your understanding.



## Scorpio

Can the quirky partnership of Venus and Aquarius starting on February 1 do anything to improve your love life or your money situation? Yes, it actually can, Scorpio, if you're willing to keep an open mind. As a fixed sign, you tend to want to do things your own way, but the smart bet now is to listen to new and different (and yes, even weird) perspectives.

On the tenth, communicative Mercury squares your co-ruler Mars, kind of putting you on edge when you interact with people. Your energy is high and your suspicions even higher, which can create tension and lead to arguments over virtually nothing. Hold off on making important decisions until another time if at all possible.

A Mars-Neptune sextile on February 13 increases your allure (if that's possible) and makes other people want to be near you. You



love this attention, although you probably won't admit it. Luckily, you have a strong sense of what's right and what's wrong, so there's little chance of you taking advantage of any of your worshippers!

A trine between your co-rulers Mars and Pluto on the twenty-fourth ends the month on a highly ambitious note. Your assertive yet nonthreatening approach really helps you accomplish your goals now. Cash in on your leadership skills.



## Sagittarius

The sun is in technologically gifted Aquarius to start the month, which can help you in a lot of different areas, Sag. Download trendy apps, play just-released video games, try a startup streaming service, or upgrade your home computer. The more willing you are to embrace innovation, the more you are rewarded.

You find yourself in the middle of a lucky streak during the conjunction between Venus and your ruler Jupiter on February 11, which can open all kinds of new doors. Try not to question why something is happening and just be thankful that it is. Think you don't deserve all of this incredible luck? Think again.

When the sun enters caring Pisces on the eighteenth, you get a whole month to pay someone back or just pay a good deed forward. This is a very selfless energy, and doing things for other people makes you feel incredibly good. Treating others with compassion and understanding is your main goal now.

The Virgo full moon on February

27 gives you a chance to get things under control in a very literal sense. Clean your house. Organize your office space. Get a better handle on your eating habits and start exercising. A more successful future depends on the changes you make during this lunation.



## Capricorn

Money-focused Venus conjoins your ambitious ruler Saturn on February 6, putting you in a perfect position to seriously kick some butt. You naturally tend to look toward long-term investments more than get-rich-quick schemes, but right now you should jump on any ideas that have promise. You should see your wealth increase at a rate that equals your effort.

An Aquarius new moon on the eleventh puts some out-there ideas into your head, which is unusual for a down-to-earth sign like you. Can you shed your practicality long enough to do something zany and unexpected? You might not get a chance like this again anytime soon.

A Saturn-Uranus square on February 17 is an aspect that only happens once every 14 years, and that's okay with you because this can be a tense time filled with unexpected change. It's probably obvious to you now which parts of your life are working and which aren't, but you might feel powerless to do anything about it. Talk about frustrating!

A Virgo full moon arrives on the twenty-seventh in time to help you put some order back into your life. Even small things like organizing a junk drawer or deleting some of your unused apps can give you that feeling of accomplishment that's been missing.



## Aquarius

The sun is in your airy sign to start the month, giving you the freedom that you crave. Even if you have to check in with someone from time to time—like a boss, parent, or partner—you still appreciate the feeling that you're the only one steering the boat and making major decisions.

A Venus-Uranus square on February 7 brings some tension your way (especially in your love and money sectors), so hopefully you're willing to fully embrace change. Very few things happen when you're standing still, watching the world pass you by. This challenging energy encourages you to be a participant, not a bystander.

A Saturn-Uranus square on the seventeenth can produce some uncomfortable energy, making you glad that this aspect only happens once every 14 years. The changes happening now are ones that are being made for you, which are your least favorite kind. One of your worst nightmares is to have your imagination stifled, which could very well happen now.

The sun leaves your airy sign for the watery depths of Pisces on February 18, putting you far deeper into your feelings than you usually like to go. Although it's nice to have an increased sense of sympathy, you feel kind of uncomfortable expressing any real feelings. Luckily, your daydreams are vivid now and can be used as a good distraction from reality.

Source: [astrology.com/](http://astrology.com/)

# 5 Out-Of-The-Box *Valentine Celebration Ideas*

You don't need a time or date to celebrate love. With arrival of February month & Valentine's day things may look a little different this year.

February is celebrated as Healthy heart awareness month and Valentine's Day special.

**Catch a  
Picture of  
Love Lasts  
Forever**



Head out with your family or loved one with camera in hand and make a collage of family photos goofing around at prominent tourist or romantic sites in your city.





## Volunteer Together

This year, and every year, there are opportunities for you to be involved in helping your local community. Many charities even host special events or fund raisers organized around V-Day. Working with someone you love in support of a good cause is a great way to share your love with the world around you. From environmental clean-ups to shelters for needy families, many charities and causes can benefit from the donation of your time.



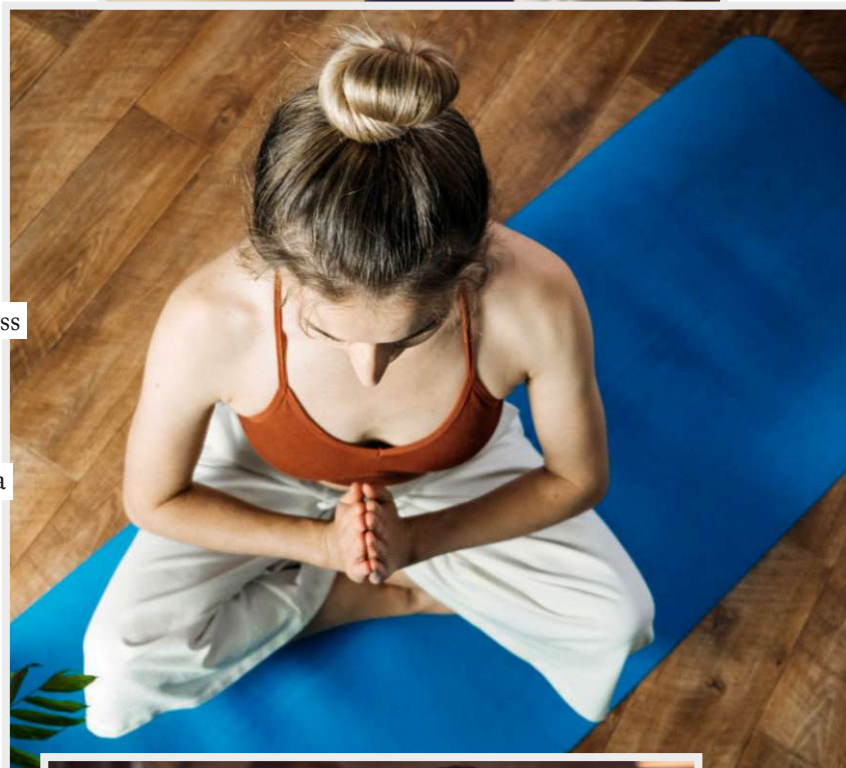
## Virtual Date

If you and your special someone are separated by distance or health limitations, a virtual date can be a special substitute. While a screen can never replace being together physically, you can still enjoy each other. You can laugh and talk, and share the events of life, just as you would if you were together. For a special bonus, you can even order a meal at a favorite restaurant near your special someone and have it delivered right to them. Light a candle, and share a meal this year, no matter how far apart you are.



## Time for Self-Love

Self-love is very important so why not dedicate your Valentine's Day to loving yourself and developing some mental goodness through a meditation class! Yoga is a great activity for those wanting to limber up and calm the mind, so attend a class with your partner, expand your minds and float out on a cloud of zen that hovers high above the Valentines theme.



## Recreate your First Date

Here's an opportunity to go all out: recreate your first date — at home. If you went to a coffee shop, whip up some artisanal coffees. If you went to a romantic restaurant, print the menu and try to make one of the dishes in your kitchen. If you went to the zoo, print pictures of the animals you saw and put them in frames around the living room. Get creative and remember to tell your partner everything you loved about them on that very first day.

It will be a day to remember.



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A woman with long, wavy brown hair is standing against a textured, blue-grey wall. She is wearing a white, long-sleeved, button-down dress with a subtle eyelet pattern. The dress has a V-neckline and a fitted waist. She is also wearing silver, strappy high-heeled sandals. Her hands are clasped in front of her. The overall mood is elegant and professional.

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