

the healthy swimmer



Nicola Stratford

Healthy Sweets

What's the difference between a sweet potato and a yam? Both are flowering plants, and both produce edible tubers. But even though they share similarities, sweet potatoes and yams are not related botanically.

Yams grow on a tropical vine related to the lily plant, and can grow to be more than 7 feet long. The naturally sweet tuber is popular in Latin America and the Caribbean, and is available in hundreds of varieties. Sweet potatoes belong to the morning glory family.

Yams often are sweeter in flavor and have higher moisture content. They have brown or

black skin that resembles tree bark, and off-white, red or purple flesh. The skin of sweet potatoes can range from white to yellow, red, purple or brown, while the flesh ranges from white to yellow, orange or orange-red.

Both are low in fat and high in vitamins and minerals. A 1-cup serving of sweet potatoes contains approximately 114 calories—63 fewer than the same size portion of yams. Sweet potatoes also contain high levels of vitamin A, while yams are higher in vitamin C and potassium.

Sweet potatoes and yams are available year-round, but are best when in season, from October through December. <<<

reader recipe

There are many ways to enjoy a sweet potato or yam, but baking is the easiest, healthiest method of preparation.

Baked Sweet Potatoes

- _____ 4 **sweet potatoes or yams, each approximately the same size**
- _____ 1/2 c **whipped butter (optional)**
- _____ 3 T **sugar (optional)**
- _____ 1 t **cinnamon (optional)**

Preheat oven to 400°F. Wash and scrub the sweet potatoes, and arrange on oven baking rack. Bake for 45 to 75 minutes, depending on the size of the sweet potatoes. When they are done, the outside will have darkened and the inside will be soft. Serve as is, or topped with whipped butter and cinnamon sugar. <<<

Serves 4. Calories per serving: < 200 (no topping); calories from fat per serving: < 2 (no topping).

>>> DO YOU HAVE A RECIPE OUR READERS WOULD ENJOY?

Send it to editor@usms.org, or mail to: Reader Recipe, c/o Bill Volckening, 1220 NW 119th Place, Portland, OR 97229.

READERS ASK: Is Spicy Food Healthy?

Q: Is hot and spicy food more or less healthy than the same food without seasoning?

A: Masters swimmer and registered dietitian Linda Kees says spicy food can be a good thing. "In addition to making your food more exciting, colorful and flavorful, dried or fresh hot chili peppers have many health benefits," says Kees, who swims with the Sawtooth Masters in Boise, Idaho. "Chilis contain a phytochemical called capsaicin, which provides the notorious heat and pain you may feel after consumption. The hotter the chili, the higher the level of capsaicin."

Chilis are high in antioxidants including vitamin C and beta-carotene. According to Kees, recent research has found that capsaicin may benefit diabetics by decreasing the body's need for insulin. It is thought to work as a cholesterol-reducing agent, and the release of endorphins when ingested may help those with chronic pain. Topical capsaicin rubs are available to help alleviate pain, and studies show promise in the fight against prostate and lung cancer.

"As we age, we tend to lose some of our tastebuds and actually start to prefer stronger flavored foods such as chili peppers, garlic and ginger. That explains why you may not have enjoyed those foods as much when you were younger," says Kees. "Although chilis can be an irritant for some, as long as you tolerate them well I recommend regular consumption in small amounts." <<<

>>> Do you have a question for our experts? Send it to editor@usms.org, or mail to: Readers Ask, c/o Bill Volckening, 1220 NW 119th Place, Portland, OR 97229.



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Choosing the Right Massage

During the past decade, massage therapy has grown in popularity among athletes, particularly swimmers. Elite swimmers incorporate various styles of massage therapy into their training, race preparation and recovery. To the average consumer, the mind-boggling variety ranges from the traditional to the adventurous.

How does a swimmer decide which type of massage is right for him or her? One useful resource is www.massagetherapy.com, a public education Web site from the Associated Bodywork and Massage Professionals. The site offers several informative articles, an online referral service to locate a qualified practitioner, and a huge glossary featuring the various types of massage and bodywork.

When choosing a massage, literally consider how in-depth to go. Swedish Massage Therapy, the most common type of massage therapy in the United States, is performed on the surface layers of the skin and generally is very gentle and relaxing. It is a good choice for first-timers. To reach the deeper layers of muscle and connective tissue, deep-tissue massage is a favorite choice. For the more adventurous, hot stone massage and aromatherapy boost relaxation with elements of heat and smell. <<<

>>> To learn more about massage therapy and local therapists, go to www.massagetherapy.com.



Katarzyna Mateka

Hot Drinks for Cold Athletes

Clif Bar recently introduced two new hot drinks for cold athletes. The new CLIF SHOT® hot drinks come in two flavors—Hot Apple Cider Electrolyte Replacement Drink, and Hot Chocolate Protein-Enhanced Recovery Drink.

“Each year, when the snow begins to fall, I transition from cyclist and runner to skier and mountaineer,” says Gary Erickson, owner and founder of Clif Bar Inc. “The challenge is that when I’m out carving or climbing—and chilled to the bone—the last thing I want is a cold drink. Hot tea and coffee are appealing, but neither offers the carbs, electrolytes or protein to keep me going.”

CLIF SHOT® Electrolyte is designed to deliver fluids to the body at an optimal rate, as the athlete sweats the fluids out. Electrolyte is designed to quench thirst while subtly priming the athlete’s thirst mechanism.



That way, the athlete can keep drinking and stay hydrated. CLIF SHOT® Recovery is a good choice for starting recovery with a beverage.

Clif Bar Inc. bridges the temperature gap through the performance-enhancing nutrition of CLIF SHOT® Electrolyte and Recovery drinks by offering these new classic hot drink flavors. Just add hot water and enjoy. <<<

>>> For more information about CLIF SHOT® hot drinks, visit the Clif Bar Web site at www.clifbar.com.

The information in this department is not intended as a substitute for professional or medical advice. It is not intended to provide medical advice on personal health matters.

For personal medical advice, consult your healthcare provider. If you are concerned about a particular medical condition or injury, see your healthcare provider for evaluation and care.

Updated Physical Activity Guidelines Released

According to a recent journal report from the American Heart Association, all healthy adults ages 18 to 65 years need moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity for at least 30 minutes on five days each week, or vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity for at least 20 minutes on three days each week. The AHA and the American College of Sports Medicine released the

updated physical activity guidelines in August.

The preventive recommendation specifies how adults, by engaging in regular physical activity, can promote and maintain health, and reduce risk of chronic disease and premature death. A companion recommendation is specifically applied to adults ages 65 and older, and adults ages 50-64 with chronic conditions or physical functional limitations (e.g., arthritis) that affect move-

ment ability or physical fitness.

The new recommendations are updates and clarifications of the 1995 recommendations from the ACSM and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on the types and amounts of physical activity needed by healthy adults to improve and maintain health. The intent is to provide a more comprehensive and explicit public health recommendation for adults based upon available evi-

dence of the health benefits of physical activity.

The core recommendation remains fundamentally unchanged despite more than 10 years since it was issued. Specifically, the new report is a review of the original evidence, and it considers key issues not fully clarified in the original recommendation. <<<

>>> For more information or additional details on the physical activity guidelines, visit www.americanheart.org/fitness.