

There are FIVE VERY IMPORTANT THINGS that you should be doing following each and every workout: cooling down, stretching, drinking water, refueling, and resting. A simple five-minute cool down is sufficient to prevent the pooling of blood in your extremities, which can otherwise make you dizzy and increase your risk of fainting. Once your heart rate is slow and steady, stretching your muscles and joints while they're still warm helps to prevent tight muscles and stiff joints and improves your flexibility. Drinking plenty of water is important before, during and after your workout, so don't forget to water-proof your exercise. Refueling after exercise is the key to improving strength and fitness, but burning off a lot of calories isn't a valid excuse for eating a double cheeseburger. Instead, fuel up within 30 minutes after exercise by eating a carb-rich snack combined with some lean protein, such as eating an orange and one serving of low-fat yogurt. And finally, to prevent any plateaus, don't forget to include rest days in your fitness plan. You should always give your body 24 hours of rest in between doing specific exercises, like spacing out your weight-lifting days by doing cardio on the days in between. By following these five workout recovery guidelines, you'll ensure that you make the most of your time spent in the gym. (*LifeScript*)

DID YOU KNOW that olive oil, a healthy oil for your heart, might also benefit your stomach? Microbiologists at the University Hospital of Valme in Seville, Spain, combined virgin olive oil with *H. pylori* -- the bug that causes ulcers and some types of stomach cancer -- in a test tube of stomach-like acid. The oil knocked out eight different strains of the powerful bacteria, three of which even antibiotics couldn't defeat. Researchers credit olive oil's high level of polyphenols, compounds that have strong antibacterial properties. (*Prevention*)

Good news! The bran cereal you eat every morning may protect you from what scientists now think may be a leading risk factor for heart disease. C-reactive protein (CRP) is a sign of inflamed tissues, and high blood levels of CRP may signify that the vessel-blocking process called atherosclerosis is underway in your arteries. Research from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that eating lots of foods high in total fiber (soluble and insoluble combined) reduces your CRP levels, possibly lowering your heart attack risk as well. (*Prevention*)