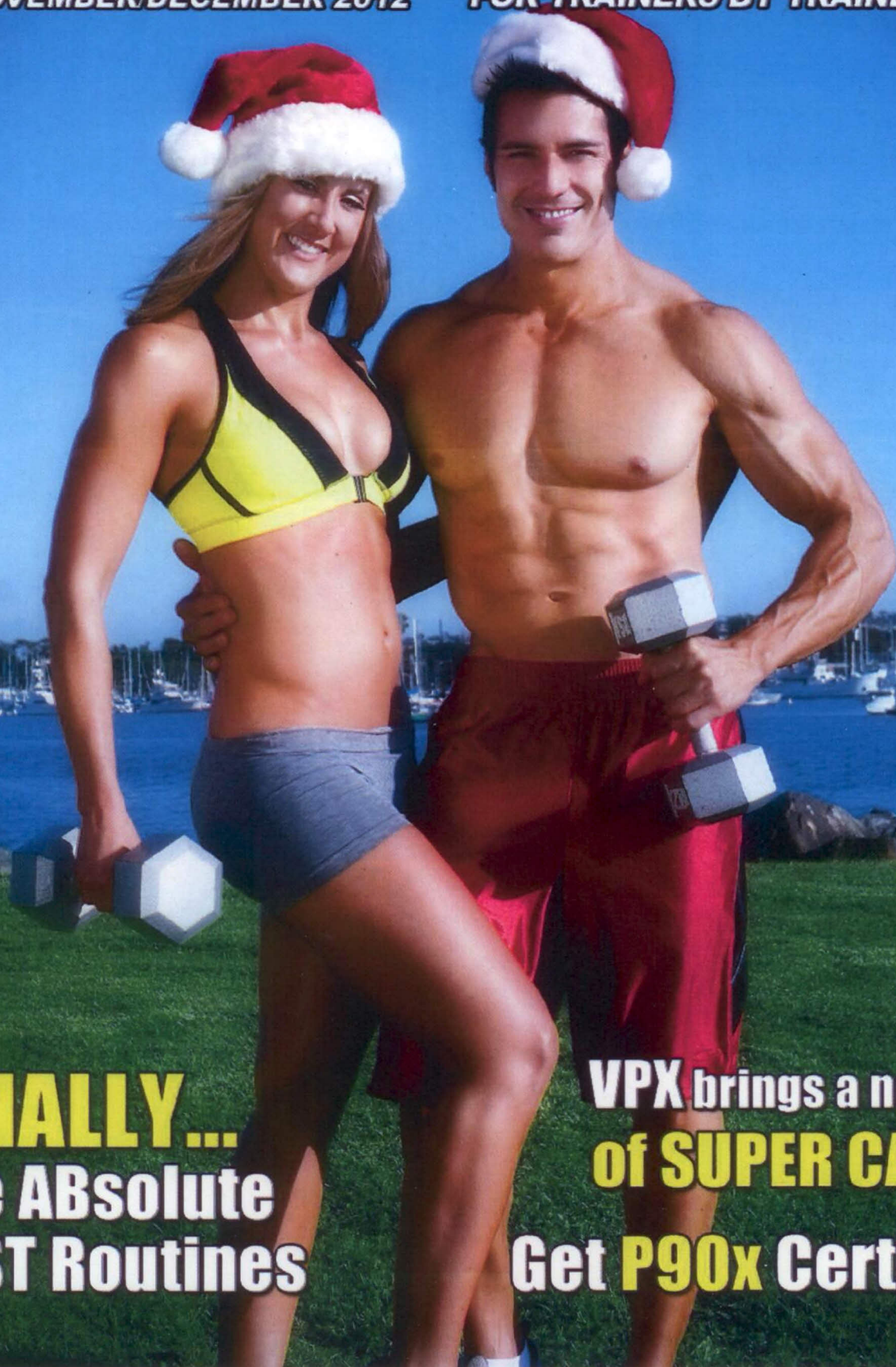


FITNESS TRAINER

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TAMING THE INFLAMMATORY RESPONSE

10 COOLING FOODS



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Inflammation is an essential part of the body's healing system. Without it, injuries would fester and simple infections could be deadly. However, too much of a good thing can be dangerous.

Chronic low-grade inflammation is intimately involved in all stages of atherosclerosis, the process that leads to cholesterol-clogged arteries. This means that inflammation sets the stage for heart attacks, most strokes, peripheral artery disease and even vascular dementia, a common cause of memory loss, according to the Harvard Medical School Family Health Guide. Chronic inflammation almost always lurks beneath the surface of diabetes and excess weight. Additionally, inflammation can be at the root of other diseases, like arthritis, gout, diverticulitis, Crohn's disease, bronchitis, shingles and even psoriasis.


What is inflammation?

It is the body's defense against bacteria, viruses and other foreign invaders. Inside the body, inflammation helps remove debris and repair damaged tissue. What can you do to minimize excess inflammation? In addition to nutritional efforts, you can avoid cigarette smoke (including secondhand smoke), minimize your exposure to environmental pollutants, exercise, watch your weight (where have we heard this advice before?) and take care of your teeth. But what you eat may fan the internal inflammatory fires.

Here are some suggestions for simple dietary choices you can make to reduce inflammation:

- 1 Stick with monounsaturated oils, like olive oil, which has potential anti-inflammatory properties.** Increase your consumption of fish, especially those high in omega-3 fats, like salmon (wild is better than farmed, but any is better than none), mackerel, sardines and albacore tuna.

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2 **Stay away from refined foods.** Yet another reason (to add to the many that we all know) is that the spike of blood sugar that accompanies a meal or snack of highly refined carbohydrates increases levels of inflammatory messengers called cytokines. Eating whole grains smooth out the after-meal rise in blood sugar and insulin, and dampens cytokine production.

3 **Go crazy for nuts.** Walnuts, almonds, peanuts and other nuts and seeds add favorable fatty acids and are a tasty way to ease inflammation.



4 **Chocolate lovers rejoice!** In laboratory studies, cocoa and dark chocolate slow the production of signaling molecules involved in inflammation. Of course, you need to be mindful of the sugar and fat content of your chocolate choices; stick with extra dark chocolate, as it has less of both.

5 **One more reason to enjoy a serving of wine daily:** It seems to lower levels of C-reactive protein (CRP), a powerful signal of inflammation. Too much alcohol has the opposite effect on CRP, though. A single glass serving is considered four ounces of wine.

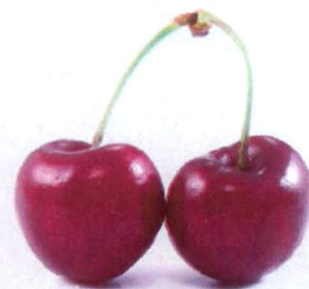


6 **Eat plenty of dark leafy greens and bright red and orange fruits and vegetables.** Vitamin C and other antioxidants, such as beta-carotene, help dampen inflammation. So do cruciferous vegetables (*the sulfur helps the body to make its own high-powered antioxidants*).



7 **A study in the April 2006 Journal of Nutrition showed that eating cherries daily can significantly reduce inflammation.**

They contain anthocyanins, which may be beneficial for a range of inflammatory-related conditions, including rheumatoid arthritis.





8

Spice it up with turmeric. Turmeric contains a powerful, natural anti-inflammatory compound called curcumin, and is recommended by Dr. Andrew Weil (a leading national expert on herbs) for inflammatory disorders, including arthritis, tendonitis and autoimmune conditions.

9

Let's hear it for ginger! Modern scientific research has revealed that ginger possesses numerous therapeutic properties including antioxidant effects, an ability to inhibit the formation of inflammatory compounds and direct anti-inflammatory effects.



10

Drink green tea Green tea is made from unfermented leaves and reportedly contains the highest concentration of powerful antioxidants called polyphenols. Antioxidants such as polyphenols in green tea can neutralize free radicals and may reduce or even help prevent some of the damage they cause. Research indicates that green tea may benefit arthritis by reducing inflammation and slowing cartilage breakdown.



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Editor's Note:

Jackie Keller is the Founding Director of NutriFit, LLC, Los Angeles' premiere healthy food company. Jackie is a Board Certified Professional Wellness Coach, Nutrition Educator and Le Cordon Bleu-trained culinary expert. She is also the author of *Body After Baby: The Simple 30-Day Plan to Lose Your Baby Weight Fast* (Avery/Penguin Group; May 2007), and *Cooking, Eating & Living Well*, a cookbook and guide to nutrition-related lifestyle change. Jackie holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Southern California, and received her culinary training from Le Cordon Bleu in Paris, France. For more information on Jackie Keller and NutriFit, please visit www.jackiekeller.com or www.nutrifitonline.com.