

Keeping your health and wellbeing in the know

MyHealthTALK

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Courtesy of Asset Health

Four Veggies

You Never Knew You'd *Get Along* With



Peas

Not a veggie lover? It could be one big misunderstanding. With a little love and guidance in the kitchen, these four commonly standoffish veggies can add vim and vigor to your meal – and you may actually like them! The experts say it's all in the preparation. Here's a look at some widely disliked veggies and the best way to cook them for enjoyment.

Why they're good for you

Just one cup of raw peas offers 50 grams of fiber! Even when they're cooked, they still bring 16 grams of fiber per cup to the table.

Why some people aren't fond of them

Being force-fed peas as a youngster may lead some to turn up their nose to this veggie in adulthood, but others just don't enjoy the mushiness of peas on their plate.

Best cooking method

"Peas boiled very fast are going to have a nice snap to them," says Tanya Zuckerbrot, RD, which makes the blanching method a top technique for this veggie. Blanching involves dunking the vegetable in cold water for 30 seconds after boiling for three minutes. Overcooked peas turn a darker, more olive green color, so check out the cooking times suggested by the National Center for Home Food Preservation for maintaining freshness.

Broccoli

Why it's good for you

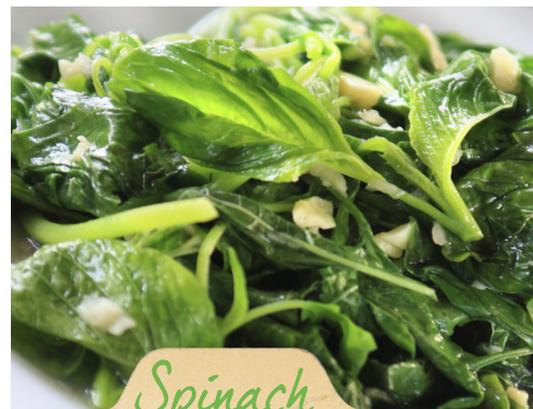
Broccoli is brimming with vitamin C and fiber. An added bonus – there are only 33 calories in a full cup of it!

Why some people aren't fond of it

Many aren't fond of broccoli's taste when raw, and too often, overcooking broccoli leaves it mushy and unappetizing.

Best cooking method

Blanching broccoli is your best bet at preserving taste and crunchiness, which is sure to make you think twice about your vendetta against this cruciferous vegetable. This method also helps to preserve the nutritional value of broccoli (or whatever vegetable you blanch).



Spinach

Why it's good for you

This seven-calories-per-cup veggie is brimming with lutein, folate, potassium and fiber, which all boost heart health.

Why some people aren't fond of it

Even Popeye's adoration for spinach isn't enough to persuade eaters to add this leafy green to their plate. Whether it's the semi-bitterness of it raw or mushiness when it's cooked, people fall off the spinach bandwagon all too often.

Best cooking method

If you're going to throw together a spinach salad, add fruit and olive oil to cut some of the bitterness. Cooking spinach? Cynthia Sass, MPH, RD, suggests sautéing it in oil and adding garlic and bell peppers.





"6 Veggies You Only Think You Don't Like," Rachel Swalin, abcnews.com, July 20, 2014.
"Enjoy Thanksgiving Sprouts Without the Stink," NPR Staff, npr.com, Nov. 16, 2012.

Brussels sprouts

Why it's good for you

Brussels sprouts are baby cabbages, which are full of cancer-preventing phytonutrients and fiber. Not to mention, they only have 38 calories per cup.

Why some people aren't fond of it

They release lots of hydrogen sulfide gas when cooked. In other words, they can be a little stinky!

Best cooking method

Roasting Brussels sprouts is sure to pique your taste buds. Slice Brussels sprouts in half, toss them with olive oil and an herb of choice, and bake them at 400 degrees Fahrenheit. Cooking times may vary based on preferred crispness.

IMPROVE WORKDAY

You get rolling on a new project at work and before you know it, it's been two hours since you've moved – your shoulders ache and you're hunched over your computer. Or, maybe you've been on your feet all afternoon and by the end of the day, your back pain is spreading like wildfire.

Next time you find yourself stiff from poor posture, give the Alexander Technique a try.

Hollywood stars, Broadway performers, dancers and athletes are coached on the Alexander Technique as a way to improve posture and performance.

But it's certainly not a trick saved for the pros. You can use the Alexander Technique to adjust your posture during the workday and alleviate pain or prevent future aches.

Here are some tips that Bill Connington, an acting lecturer at the Yale School of Drama, shares on how to improve posture during daily life:

POSTURE

THE ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE



PAY ATTENTION TO WHAT YOUR BODY IS DOING:

Catch yourself in the act, Connington says, or realize when your body is tense. Analyze by asking "What am I doing?" If you sit at a computer, do you pull your body toward your monitor? What position are your shoulders in when you are typing? How about your head and neck? What is your breathing like?

KEEP DOING WHAT YOU'RE DOING:

The technique is not designed to distract you from work. Keep doing what you are doing, but simultaneously remind yourself that you *do* in fact want to improve your posture. This mental reminder is a key to changing a habit, Connington says.

MAKE PHYSICAL ADJUSTMENTS:

Take a few seconds to adjust *how* you are doing what you are doing. Imagine your head is a light balloon to ease tension. Allow your torso to lengthen and your shoulders to widen. Don't forget to breathe more deeply, too, as this will relax your body. If you do catch yourself hunched over again, try leaning more from the hips, rather than from the back, he suggests.

The Alexander Technique can be helpful in all areas of life, not just while you're at work. Next time you are in an argument, notice how your body changes. Your muscles may tense up or you may catch yourself holding your breath as you enter fight or flight mode.

"You can take just a few moments to change what you're doing, as you're doing it," Connington said.

"Actors Swear By This Mindful Movement Practice. Here's How You Can Benefit From It, Too," Amanda Chan, huffingtonpost.com, July 8, 2014.

"Randomised Controlled Trial of Alexander Technique Lessons, Exercise, and Massage (ATEAM) for Chronic and Recurrent Back Pain," Paul Little and several authors, bmj.com, July 15, 2014.