

MAY: HEALING, REBIRTH, CELEBRATION AND PREPPING FOR WHAT'S TO COME!



Hello gymnasts! The seasons has finally ended and you are in that weird period where you are still in school and waiting for the summer schedule to start. We like to call it the "limbo" month in the gymnastics world. There is a lot going on and it can be kind of distracting. While the flowers are blooming, graduations, end of season banquets and thoughts of summer are on your mind. In actuality, the month of May is all about getting your body healed and solid in preparation for foundational training and new skills! Also for celebrating your season and what is to come for summer training! This month we will focus on continuing to heal muscles, joints and bones in preparation for warmer weather, new skills and harder but more fun and less stress- not to mention the more challenging conditioning coming n June! So let's heal, celebrate and begin to the process of starting a-new!

Grow Functional Herbs in May!

One of the best ways' to start off your spring training is by growing an herb garden. If you don't have a green thumb, that's ok! You will find fresh herbs in abundance in the spring and summer months! In fact, in my book *Gymnachef 2*, Chapter 12, I take you through the steps of growing an herb garden and go over some of my favorites for an athlete! Check out Chapter 12 on How growing and herb garden is a great end of season treat!

But wait, WHY are herbs so good for gymnasts to consume??

First, herbs are packed with antioxidants that help with immunity, bone health, blood flow, and inflammation. They are also plentiful with vitamins and minerals that aide in stronger bone formation, stronger hair and skin bonds and provide antibacterial, antiviral and anti fungal properties. All things a gymnast needs while she practices in a gym environment, right???

Here are my top herbs for gymnasts and WHY:

1. Parsley: Loaded with vitamin K, great for promoting strong bone health and blood flow. Also helps with osteoporosis prevention-important for women specifically and female athletes.

2. Basil: This anti-bacterial herb promotes strong skin and aides in digestion. Has a hefty amount of vitamin K, iron and calcium all essential for strong bones and cardiovascular systems.

3. Cilantro: What gymnast doesn't want more energy? Cilantro helps raise energy levels, and contains tryptophan which helps the body produce serotonin- helping better an athlete's mood. Its properties also promote healthy skin and hair, and its a strong antioxidant!

4. Oregano- Ever heard of people using oil of oregano when trying to prevent sickness? That is because oregano is a powerful antioxidant, antibacterial and antiviral, that also helps with inflammation. In short, its your one-stop-herb for prevention and healing when it comes to sickness and sore muscles!

5. Rosemary: One of the most pungent of herbs, rosemary like oregano is anti -fungal, antiviral, and antibacterial. It helps fight infections and some studies also suggest it helps with hair regrowth!

6. Sage: Another powerhouse of vitamins and antioxidants, sage is an excellent source of vitamins A and C and K. Three very important vitamins that promote eye, heart, bone health as well as strong immunity. All gymnasts want strong bones, hearts, eyes and would like to avoid sickness!

7. Thyme: Perfect for the end of year healing, thyme helps accelerate the healing process and aides in inflammation. In addition its a great natural antiseptic- helping cuts, bruises and scrapes, all things familiar to a gymnast heading into summer training.

8. Chives: Another anti-inflammatory herb, chives also contain fiber for better digestion. Chives are part of the onion family which means they contain powerful anti-fungal and anti-cancer properties! Staying fungus free should be a goal for any gymnast that doesn't like athletes feet or warts, right?



Now that you know about herbs, how can you use them??

The image features several fresh herbs scattered around the text. In the top left, there is a sprig of thyme with small, dark green, oval-shaped leaves. To its right is a bunch of flat-leaf parsley with large, deeply lobed leaves. At the bottom, there are more sprigs of thyme and a larger bunch of flat-leaf parsley. The background is a plain, light-colored surface.

HOW TO USE FRESH *Herbs*

HOW TO USE FRESH HERBS

PARSLEY



There are two common types of parsley - flat and curly. Flat parsley has a more intense flavor but both can be used interchangeably. Parsley is a hearty herb and can be added at any point in the cooking process.

USES: Salads, soups, pestos, garnish

BASIL



Basil has a bright, almost licorice-like flavor that varies in intensity across different varieties. Basil is delicate and is best added at the end of cooking or just before serving.

USES: Pestos, salads, sauces, garnish



HOW TO USE FRESH HERBS

CILANTRO



Also known as coriander, cilantro has a soapy-like flavor that some people find overwhelming. It is a delicate herb often used in Latin and Asian cuisines to add coolness to spicy dishes. The roots may also be used in cooking if washed thoroughly.

USES: Curries, soups, stews, salsas, bean dishes, salads, garnish

OREGANO



Oregano is slightly spicy with citrusy notes and pairs well with cumin in dishes. Marjoram is also a member of the oregano family and has a strong, earthy flavor.

USES: Marinades, rice dishes, dressings, meat and fish dishes, bean and tofu dishes



HOW TO USE FRESH HERBS

ROSEMARY



Rosemary is a hearty, woody herb that has a long growing season and is easy to dry. Because of its unmistakably strong flavor, rosemary should be used sparingly and pairs best with animal proteins

USES: Marinades, meat and fish dishes, herb blends

SAGE



Sage is a hearty herb with an earthy flavor. It is most often associated with winter holiday meals but can be used year-round.

USES: Meats, roasted vegetables, beans, herb blends



HOW TO USE FRESH HERBS

THYME



Thyme is a hearty herb that does well in a variety of dishes. You can add sprigs to soups and sauce to infuse with flavor then remove the woody stem.

USES: Soups, stews, meat and fish dishes, herb blends

CHIVES



Chives have a mild onion flavor without the pungency of conventional onions. Use in place of onion in any dish or add as a garnish for additional flavor.

USES: Sauces, condiments, fish dishes, herb blends



BETSY'S MAY FOOD AND RECIPE OF THE MONTH: THE RED BEET!

The red beet is in season in May and its also a well know athlete superfood. First, the beet can be eaten steamed (for no longer than 15 minutes or they will lose their power) roasted or pickled (my favorite) No matter how you eat your beets, the key is knowing how amazing they are, especially because they are filled with a powerful phytonutrient called Betalains- this is what gives the beet its rich color.

The beet is packed with B vitamins including potassium, magnesium and iron, along with silica (helps the body utilize calcium) If you don't already know, B vitamins help with energy, recovery, blood pressure and stamina. In short, for an athlete that wants better recovery, more endurance and energy and less inflammation, the beet is your friend. Try juicing, roasting, pickling and adding them anyway you can to your diet. Here is a recipe I created, I hope you like it!

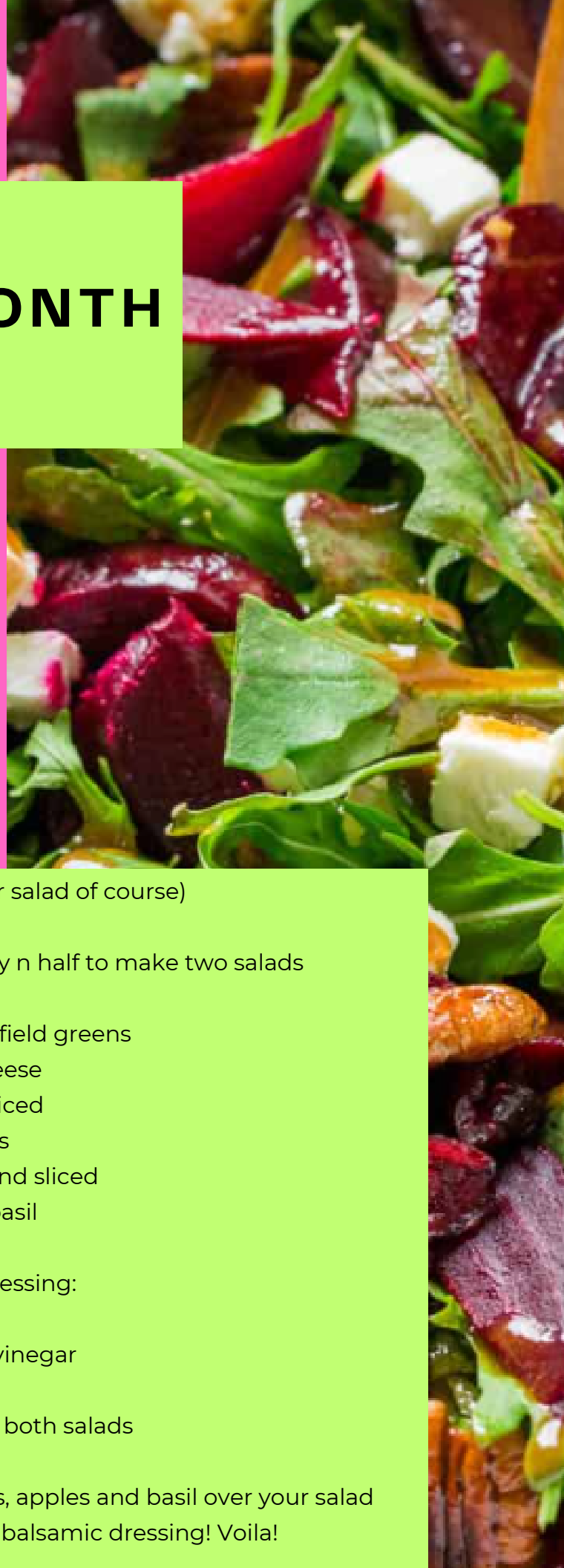




RECIPE OF THE MONTH



ARUGULA, BEET, APPLE AND GOAT CHEESE SALAD WITH FRESH BASIL, WALNUTS AND AND BALSAMIC DRESSING



Serves 2 hungry gymnasts (Appetizer salad of course)

Ingredients: Note: divide the ingredients equally n half to make two salads

6 cups of Arugula and or mixed field greens
1/4 cup of fresh goat cheese
1 cup of pickled beets, sliced
1 cup of walnut pieces
1 granny smith apple cored and sliced
2 tablespoons of fresh basil

Brain boosting balsamic dressing:

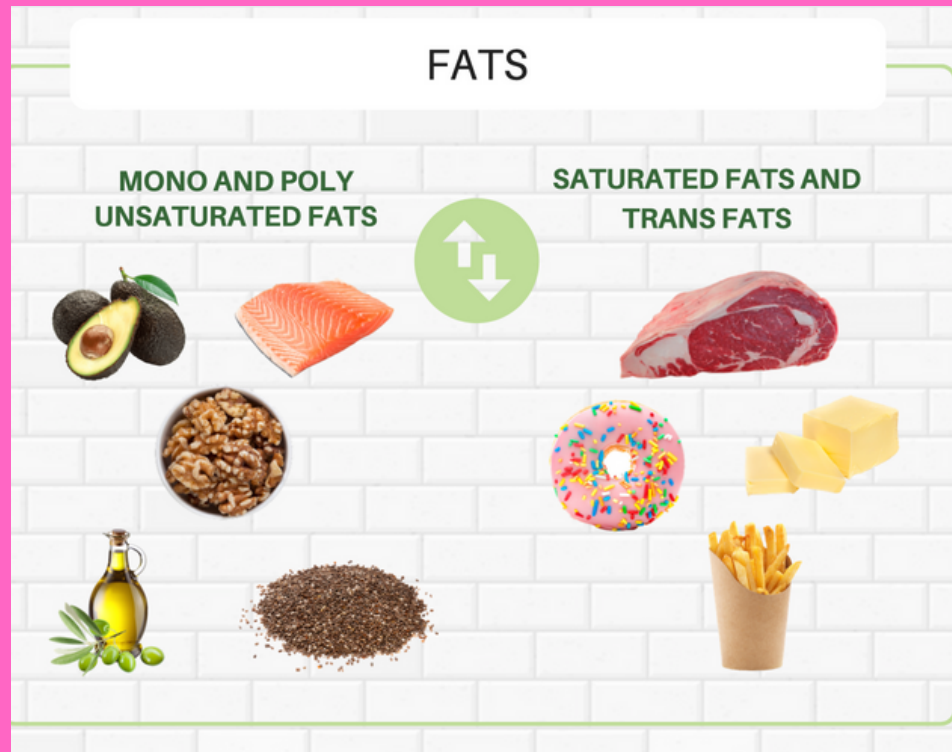
1/4 cup olive oil
2 tablespoons of balsamic vinegar
1 tbs honey

Whisk together and drizzle over both salads

Grab a plate and pile your beets, goat cheese, walnuts, apples and basil over your salad greens. Top with the delicious brain boosting balsamic dressing! Voila!

Your mind is in LIMBO: How to keep your brain on the fifth event during the month of May!

As I stated in the intro, May is a tough month to stay focused. So much going on from end of school parties, exams, graduations, end of season banquets. Its easy to fall of track and let your good habits go to the wayside. Here are some tips on keeping nutrition as your FIFTH even heading into May!



1. Continue to pack your food. Spring time is a delightful time for fresh salads, colorful foods and herbs. Be more open with your palate and diversify with all of the fresh spring goodness! Check out the recipe of the month in this newsletter!
2. Snack on seasonal fruits such as blackberries, strawberries, blueberries, cherries, nectarines, plums and raspberries. Create fun fruit salads with these combinations for snacking during practice. Again, keep things interesting with the new options in spring fruits and veggies!
3. Remember your mind is the strongest muscle in your body! Continue to fuel your brain with powerful healthy, anti-inflammatory fats and stay away from trans-fats that promote cloudy brain and unfocused thoughts. Instead of fries and hamburgers or donuts think avocados, salmon, walnuts and olive oil! PS- have fun too! Betsy Bootcamp isn't the food police!
4. In addition to healthy fats be sure to include lots of blueberries and purple foods such as eggplant, purple cauliflower, plums, beets and radishes, Studies have shown that purple foods not only promote brain health and focus, but contain a powerful anti-cancer antioxidant called anocyanin! Keep your brain focused and memory strong with lots of purple!



Message from Betsy: Celebrate and look forward to big skills and big conditioning!

Ok, I know, it's May and you are pretty pumped about the summer! First, great job working in the fifth event! I see you making better choices and seeing the connection between what you eat and how you are feeling! But now is not the time to stop! Take the information from this month's newsletter and apply it! Eat your brain boosting foods, try some of the fresh herbs and continue to eat foods that help with recovery and building your brain and body for greatness! I know you can do it! Great things are coming for you! Live the fifth!