

Lisa Taylor 826-9584
BE Health Articles

BE Healthy September 2008

BE Smart, Eat Healthy

Your garden bounty is coming to fruition. You've used organic fertilizers and your crop is the best it has been in years. You hold a vine-ripened tomato in your hand, wipe it off on your jeans, and take a big bite – ahhh yes!

Wouldn't it be refreshing to have that same great taste in February? Home canning has skipped a couple generations, but it is making a comeback, as consumers are more concerned about how their food is grown, its impact on their long-term health, and the inflating cost of fresh produce. Whether you grow your own produce or frequent the farmer's market, you have the ability to capture nature's essence in a jar.

Can I really do this?

If you can answer, "yes" to the following questions, you should consider giving canning a try:

- Do you love fresh ingredients?
- Does creating great tasting food for family and friends all year round provide a sense of pride?
- Are you interested in knowing exactly what is in your food?

Canning is not difficult and there are many books and web sites that offer step-by-step help thoroughly detailing timing, supplies, produce to use, and recipes to try. We've listed some of these sites at the end for your convenience.

Where to begin

There are two types of canning approved by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Water-bath canning and pressure canning each provide a safe method to preserve your produce.

Water-Bath Canning

This method calls for the jars to be completely submerged for a specific period of time to allow the internal jar temperature to reach 212 degrees.

Pressure Canning

This method encloses the jars in a large kettle that produces steam in a locked compartment. Jars reach a desired 240 degrees under a specific pressure method that is measured in pounds.

If you have old recipes from grandma that use different methods like the oven method, open-kettle method, dishwasher method, or the aspirin method; you might want to keep those recipes for nostalgia's sake, but rely on the above methods for creating healthy, usable, and safe products.

Start with the Best

Successful, tasty canning begins with using the best produce you can find. If you don't have a garden, use your local farmers' market to purchase your produce. Keep in mind that proper planning will be important because you will need to start the canning process quickly after the produce is harvested (six to 12 hours) to preserve the nutritional value and flavor in your canned products.

Sensational Taste – Well Worth the Effort

While canning isn't particularly difficult, it does take a fair amount of time and planning on your part. The benefit will be realized on a blustery winter day when you open a jar of salsa and the fragrance of summer fills the room – then, you'll be glad you made the effort.

Here Are Some Basic Tips

- Start with the freshest, best products available.
- Know the rules and techniques for your canning or preserving method before you start your project.
- Work in short sessions to prevent fatigue and potential mistakes.
- Stay up to date on new or revised guidelines for your preserving method.
- Use the correct processing method and processing time to destroy microorganisms.
- Don't substitute ingredients – improvisation and safe food preparation are not compatible.

Web Site Assistance

Freshperserving.com – Sponsored by Ball products. Site provides printable instructions and educational videos.

Uga.edu/nchfp/how/can_home. National Center for Home Food Preservation site provides a wealth of information for safe food preservation.

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What to Wear?

That can be a decision that paralyzes us every morning. Depending on where you work, go to school, or spend the majority of your day; you have an idea of what is appropriate to wear. Whether you like what is hanging in your closet or not, you make a choice.

What happens when you don't know what to expect? The winter months have many of us signing up for exercise classes through community programs or a local gym. The question you may be asking is: what do I wear to my new group exercise class? Can I wear the same thing for a spin class as I do for yoga or pilates class?

It is important to research and have the right clothing for the right exercise class. If you feel comfortable going in to and during the class, you're more likely to stick with the class. The more classes you attend, the better your health will be...so let's get a handle on what you need!

Spin Class:

This is a biking class that uses stationary bikes and high-powered music to provide an aerobic work out you won't soon forget. Proper clothing for this class included padded bike shorts and a moisture wicking t-shirt (you will swear like crazy). Bike shorts are not the most glamorous piece of clothing you'll ever own, but you'll praise their design at the end of your class. Don't scrimp on your biking shorts. They will be the difference between loving and hating the class. There are specific bike shirts that include pockets in the back to hold your water bottle or locker key. Bike shops and online retailers offer fun lines of biking clothing.

Yoga and Pilates

Your clothing choice for these classes should be comfortable, fitted clothing that allows your body to have a full range of motion with no restrictions. You want to make sure that your clothes keep all your private parts private as you bend, stretch, and reach. Your room will heat up as you begin moving, so choosing a breathable fabric is a bonus. It is important for your instructor to be able to view your form at all times, so you don't want clothing that is too baggy. Yoga and Pilates clothing can be found online, at sporting goods stores, big box retailers, and specialty stores.

Group Fitness Class

Step, Body Pump, Core and Glutes, Zumba, and many other group classes provide an opportunity to pump it, move it, shake it, and strengthen it. In most of these classes you are up and down, side-to-side, front to back, or moving in place. Here you have the most variety for clothing options. Classes are usually held in studios, with a large group of people, and it will get warm. Shorts, and a moisture-wicking tank are your best options.

The Foundation of Your Exercise Clothing

Finding the right bra for every day or for exercising is right up there with buying jeans or a bathing suit. It is tough to find the perfect fit. If you are participating in any sporting activity, take the time to find the right sports bra that will provide comfort and support and eliminate the risk of breast tissue damage from your active lifestyle.

Take these things into consideration when choosing your sports bra.

Define Your Activity

Will you be participating in a high-impact sport like running, tennis, or step-aerobics; or are involved in a low-impact activity like yoga, strength training, or walking? Sport bras are not created equal and you may need more support depending on your activity level.

Know the Fabric

Fabrics today offer amazing options like breathability and moisture wicking. The more things the fabric does, the less irritation you'll experience and the more you'll enjoy your work out.

Research the Design

We are all created differently. The sports bra that your friend says is amazing, may not work for you at all. It is important to try on a variety of styles to determine the best fit for you. Do you need additional comfort in your shoulder for support? Do you need a lower cut under your arms if you're performing repetitive motions to avoid chafing? Do you need to be able to adjust around your ribs or will a single elastic band work? If you are unable to find the right design on your own, go to a specialty store and ask for help.

Finding your style in exercise clothing will have you feeling good and looking good. Get the most out of your next workout by having the style tools you need in place.