

## Healthy Eating, Active Living: Fall into gardening

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Description: Low Fat Pumpkin Bread

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With fall comes many beautiful things from the bright, vibrant colors of autumn to the smells that arrive with the start of holidays. Fall can also bring the nuisance of many fallen leaves and plants that drags us to our yards to clean them up. Yes, many of us think of gardening or yard work as chores that have to be done, but it can be a great way to get active this season.

You can start by mowing the lawn, raking leaves, turning a compost pile, or pulling weeds. By completing some form of yard work, you can achieve a moderate level of cardiovascular exercise and burn up to 300 calories an hour, depending on intensity. By getting out there and gardening on a regular basis, you can help lower your blood pressure, prevent diabetes and osteoporosis, and keep your heart healthy.

The National Institutes of Health recommends gardening three to five times per week for 30 to 45 minutes in order to receive these health benefits. Not only can gardening be good for your physical being, it can be beneficial for your mental health.

Gardening and yard work is a form of physical activity that almost anyone can do. The whole family can get involved with it, and you don't need a gym or special equipment. All you need are the tools sitting in your garage or in your shed. You can complete the same exercises by gardening as you would on a machine. For example, turning a compost pile with a shovel will create the same motion as lifting weights, or raking the lawn can be the equivalent of a rowing machine.

So go grab a rake, hoe, mower, clippers, or shovel and get out in your yard to reap some health benefits this fall. Just remember that gardening and yard work are forms of physical activity, and it is still important to stretch before and after working out in the yard.

Now that you are getting active in your yard, hopefully you will want to get healthy by starting a vegetable garden or a pumpkin patch this fall. Pumpkins are symbols of fall and surround us this time of year as decorations or as jack-o-lanterns. We begin to use pumpkin as a main ingredient in many dishes such as the traditional Thanksgiving pie, or in breads and soups.

The first true pumpkin pie was actually a pudding developed by colonists who cut the top off a pumpkin, removed the seeds, filled the insides with milk, spices, and honey then baked it in hot ashes.

Pumpkin is typically thought of as a vegetable but it is really a squash fruit. Its name originates from the greek word "pepon" which translates to large melon. The bright vibrant orange color of the pumpkin reflects its high beta-carotene content (Vitamin A), which is an antioxidant known to help lower the risk of cancer, and prevent against heart disease. Pumpkins are also a good source for potassium and fiber, and by itself is a low-calorie, fat-free food. One cup of cooked, boiled, and drained pumpkin provides 50 calories and 3 grams of fiber.

This fall, everyone should get active in their yard and get healthy with this great pumpkin recipe. Use it to ring in the fall season and holidays to come.

### Low Fat Pumpkin Bread

- 2 cups unbleached flour
- 1 cup brown sugar, packed
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 15-ounce can of pumpkin
- 1/2 cup skim milk
- 2 egg whites, whipped
- 1/3 cup fat-free sour cream

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Prepare two loaf pans with cooking spray, set aside. Combine flour, brown sugar, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger and cloves in a large mixing bowl. In a separate mixing bowl, combine pumpkin, skim milk, egg whites and sour cream. Combine pumpkin mixture with flour mixture, stirring until just moistened.

Pour batter into prepared pans. Bake 60 minutes.

Recipe makes 18 servings and provides 112 calories, 28 grams carbohydrate, less than one gram of fat, and 116 mg sodium. This recipe was provided by [www.low-fat-recipes.com](http://www.low-fat-recipes.com)

Brittany Lorimer is a registered dietitian. The healthy eating and active living articles will be published regularly and will feature locally-grown crops.

This article was brought to you by Get Moving Kern, a community coalition that was developed to promote wellness of children and adults in Kern County by promoting healthy eating and active living. For more information, visit: [www.Getmovingkern.org](http://www.Getmovingkern.org)