Basic Home Maintenance Course

Starts November 2nd

Are there repairs around your home that need to be done but you lack the knowledge and skill to do them yourself? The Basic Home Maintenance Course will give you those skills. This series of five two hour classes will be held from 5:30pm - 7:30pm, on Monday and Thursday evenings, November 2, 5, 9, 12 & 16. Some of the topics to be covered are: saving on your heating and cooling bills, basic plumbing repairs, interior and exterior maintenance, landscaping and lawn care, indoor air quality, common household pest, etc. The course will be held at the Extension Center, 94 Coxe Avenue in Asheville. The registration fee of $20 includes all materials. Preregistration is necessary by calling 255-5522.

Appliance Tax Holiday

Are you thinking of renovating your kitchen or just updating a few appliances? If so, you may want to take advantage of the sales tax holiday for certain Energy Star qualified products coming November 6 - 8, 2009.

According to the Department of Revenue, “An Energy Star qualified product is 'a product that meets the energy efficient guidelines set by the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the United States Department of Energy and is authorized to carry the Energy Star label'. Clothes washers, freezers, refrigerators, central air conditioners, room air conditioners, air-source heat pumps, geothermal heat pumps, ceiling fans, dehumidifiers, and programmable thermostats will be exempt from State and local sales and use tax when purchased during the sale tax holiday period. There is no threshold, as is the case with items sold during the August sales tax holiday for clothing, school supplies, computers, etc." For more information, see:

http://www.dornc.com/taxes/sales/energystar_holiday.html

For more information on federal tax credits for Energy Star appliances

http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=tax_credits.tx_index#s1
Eighteen Tips to Cut Home Energy Costs

1. Check heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) filters monthly and replace at least every three months. For maximum efficiency, have a professional check your system annually.

2. Vacuum ductwork and make sure airflow to vents is unobstructed.


4. Turn off lights when not needed and keep light covers clean for maximum brightness.

5. Add insulators behind electrical outlets and light switch plates.

6. When incandescent bulbs burn out, replace with compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) - they use less energy, depending on wattage, and last years longer.

7. Warm air rises, so use ceiling fans for circulation and reverse direction seasonally.

8. Lower your water heater thermostat to 120°F.

9. Install a water heater jacket or blanket to reflect heat back into the water heater.

10. Insulate exposed water pipes to prevent standby heat loss.

11. To cut water heating costs, wash laundry in cold water and adjust water levels to match the load size.

12. Take baths instead of showers or take shorter showers.

13. Install low flow shower heads, faucet aerators, and high efficiency toilets.

14. Do not leave water running while washing hands, shaving, or washing dishes.

15. Repair leaky taps and faucets.

16. Leave south-facing window coverings open in winter and closed in summer.

17. Limit standby power by unplugging chargers, computer equipment, power conversion packs, and electronics with LED display.

18. Be aware that any base unit communicating with a portable unit is drawing power, such as cordless phones, two-way radios, etc.

New Trends in Color

As we begin to spend more time indoors after our busy summer, we often feel the need for change within our home. Just changing a room’s color can give the boost necessary to make us more content to spend the longer nights indoors. Like clothes change styles annually, so does the color trends for our homes. If you have difficulty narrowing your color choices, maybe reviewing what is currently the trend may help.

To create a warm space for the bedroom, breakfast area or home office, the Good Morning palette consists of hues that are fresh, clean and comfortable. The colors include: Honey-like hues such as tan or pale gold, coral, yellow and mineral grey.

The inspiration for the Good Night palette comes from above-the ceiling. Why sleep beneath a lackluster white canopy? Wrap any space with constant color by painting the ceiling in a tint, tone or shade of the wall color or add a softer touch by paring pastel hues. From pastels to deep-tones, Good Night hues, as you might expect, are especially useful in bedrooms and baths or to “warm-up” a family space. The colors are: Pastel hues, particularly pale blue or shell pink for ceilings, midnight blue, eggplant, and wine.

The Good Bye palette reflects an assortment of simplistic hues that work across a variety of spaces creating a welcoming first impression and suitable backdrop for any living area. Whether you’re saying good-bye to one home or hello to another, this classic palette is suitable for all areas and is an especially good choice for foyers, kitchens and family living spaces. The colors are: Khaki pared with crisp white, mid-toned blues, off-white, sandy tan and black.

The important thing to remember, is after all is said and done, your choice of color remains a personal choice for a personal space.

Source: Paint Quality Institute
The Buncombe County Extension and Community Association (ECA) has scheduled several upcoming craft classes in partnership with the Buncombe County Cooperative Extension Center (BCCEC). Classes are open to individuals throughout Buncombe County. All classes will be held at the Buncombe County Cooperative Extension Center and require preregistration by calling our office at 255-5522.

**Chrismons, October 22nd and 29th, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm**  
Chrismons are Christian symbols and each one has its own connotation. They are often used to decorate Christmas trees during Advent and Christmas. Each Chrismon is made with Japanese gold and white pearl beads woven with 28 gage gold wire. Participants will need to bring a small terry towel, small needle-nose pliers or nail clip for cutting wire and scissors. The registration fee of $8.00 includes all materials.

**Floral Design, November 5th, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm**  
Learn how to decorate a wreath for your front door. You will need a wreath 12, 16, 18 inch or larger and it can be straw, grape vine, fake evergreen, etc. Select a theme for your wreath such as autumn or Christmas. You will need at least 3 feet of ribbon, more if you would like a larger bow or if you want a long streamer. A complete list of materials will be mailed out to you once you have registered. It is always a good idea to bring more items than you think you may need. $5.00 fee

**Holiday Decorations from Recycled Materials, November 18th, 10:00 am - 12:00 noon**  
Would you like to make your own holiday gifts or decorations but are tired of paying a lot of money for supplies at the craft store? Then this is the right workshop for you. You will learn how to make a variety of luminaries, tree ornaments, and sun catchers from recycled materials. Bring scissors, assorted wrapping paper scraps, glue sticks, unwanted CD’s, and a glue gun (if you have one). Start saving lids from frozen juice concentrate or biscuits, unwanted CD’s, small to medium sized clear glass containers (large enough to hold a tea light), large tin cans, and round oatmeal containers. Most crafts are suitable for children. No additional cost.

**Baking Holiday Cookies, December 10th, 10:00 am - 2:00 pm**  
Is your idea of baking holiday cookies the “slice and bake” from the freezer at the grocery store? Would you like to make old fashioned cookies but never dared to try? At this workshop you will learn how to make four basic types of cookies that will allow you to bake just about anything from a recipe book. Come prepared to get into the holiday spirit and have fun. This workshop will take a little more time than the other workshops, so bring a sack lunch (believe me, you get tired of eating cookies fairly quickly). The registration fee is $5.00.

An Extension and Community Association (ECA) Club is made up of women from the same geographical area, women with the same interest, etc. The (BCCEC) would like to start clubs for today’s women, whether they are stay at home moms meeting during the day or working women meeting at night. Each club would have the support of the Buncombe County Extension Center which provides the clubs with researched based information relevant to today’s needs. Interested individuals can join one of our seven existing ECA Clubs that meet monthly throughout Buncombe County or start a new club of their own. For more information, contact Nancy Ostergaard at the North Carolina Cooperative Extension.
“Lighten Up Those Comfort Foods”

Everyone has one. A special dish that brings back fond childhood memories—chicken pies, pinto beans and cornbread, or macaroni and cheese. Comfort foods are usually warm and hearty and give us a warm fuzzy feeling. They actually trigger the brain to release chemicals that elevate your mood. The bad thing about these comfort foods is that they are usually high in calories, sodium, and saturated fat. A few simple “tweaks” can transform these favorites into delicious and nutritious meals for your family.

In making one or two small recipe changes, you can make a big difference in the nutrient content, calories or even add fiber. Make sure to keep flavor, texture and appeal as priority.

Thoroughly read the recipe and review the ingredients, reducing or eliminating some of the more unhealthy ingredients. In most cases you can omit the added salt (sodium), which is used for flavoring. When something needs to be sautéed, use less oil than listed, or even better, use water.

Here are more ideas for healthy changes you can make in your diet:

**TRIM THE VISIBLE FAT** Every tablespoon of fat equals 100 calories, so by simply removing only the visible fat from a large cut of meat could eliminate 800 calories.

**REDUCE OIL OR SUGAR** when baking to the next lowest level of the measuring cup. Reducing oil from ½ cup to ¼ cup saves you about 328 calories and 38 grams from the entire recipe.

**PAY ATTENTION TO CHEESE** as found in casseroles, baked dishes and salads. White cheeses usually have fewer calories than yellow cheeses. Cheddar has about 115 calories per ounce, 2% reduced fat cheddar has 90 calories in an ounce and mozzarella has 70 calories per ounce.

**BOOST NUTRIENTS** by adding extra vegetables to salads, soups and casseroles.

**USE REDUCED FAT OR FAT FREE** ingredients when possible, such as reduced fat broths, sour cream or cream cheese.

**SWITCH TO HEALTHIER INGREDIENTS** such as whole-wheat flour for ½ the white flour called for in baking. Substituting ½ cup whole wheat flour will add 7 more grams of fiber.

**SKIP THE EXTRAS**, such as skipping the extra tablespoon of chocolate chips which will save about 84 calories and 5 grams of fat, etc.

**USE TWO EGG WHITES FOR ONE WHOLE EGG** in a recipe. This will save you about 5 grams of fat, 313 milligrams of cholesterol and 34 calories.

**EXPERIMENT WITH ONE INGREDIENT AT A TIME.** When the makeover works, make notations on your recipe.

Try this modified recipe. (These calculations may vary according to the brand of ingredients you use.)

**EASY CHICKEN PIE**

- 2 cups frozen vegetables—thawed
- 1 cup cooked or canned chicken
- 1 can reduced fat/low sodium cream of chicken soup
  1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
  2. Mix vegetables, chicken and chicken soup in a pie plate or baking dish.
  3. In a separate bowl, mix the baking mix, milk and egg.
  4. Pour over vegetable mixture and bake about 30 minutes or until bubbling hot.

Using reduced fat/low sodium soup will save 100 calories, 16.75 grams calories from fat and 1380 grams of sodium. Using reduced fat baking mix will save 60 calories, 54 calories from fat and 450 grams of sodium.

* these reductions are for the whole pie (if you eat ¼ of the pie divide savings amounts by 4 to get amount saved per serving).
** using a brand name is not an intended endorsement of a specific product, only an example.

Source: Cooking with EFNEP
Recipes for Eating Smart and Moving More Cook Book.

Did you know that you can get this newsletter via email?
If you are interested, please contact us either by phone at 828-255-5522 or email at debbie_sparks@ncsu.edu.
Meditation: A Tool for Overall Health

Going into the holiday season we often can feel the effects of stress in our lives. Finding ways to relax can help us reduce the symptoms associated with stress and anxiety. Meditation is one way of combating stress and it can even help with controlling blood pressure, improving back pain, and decreasing anger and fatigue. Meditation trains your mind to decrease restlessness and over abundance of negative thoughts. This training will strengthen your mind’s ability to focus. With training, your mind will be able to deepen attention to the present and stay focused in a positive way rather than worrying about the past or the future.

There are two different types of meditation.

- **Concentrative meditation** is when you sit quietly and comfortably and focus on a particular thought, word, image, sound or your breathing. This can be for five to fifteen minutes in which you gently bring your attention back to this particular focus or contemplation. With practice, you will find that you will relax as the effects of stress decrease. This relaxation can lead to a clearer focus of the present situation.

- **Mindfulness meditation** is when you stay focused on the task at hand. This is the active work to stop worrying about the past and the future. You will have increased awareness, mindfulness, and be able to let negative worries or thoughts pass through. This includes training your mind to keep its attention while still being flexible, balanced and under your control. You then reach an acceptance through interpreting your thoughts without negative worry. This acceptance leads to resiliency that will keep you relaxed in stressful times and focused on positive problem solving and actions. It does not require the necessary quiet, comfortable focus you have with concentrative meditation.

Through either of these meditation techniques, you will end up more relaxed and focused. This increased relaxation results in lower blood pressure, deeper breathing and more oxygen flowing throughout the body and thus improve your overall sense of wellbeing. It also gives you control over your thoughts and can decrease negative thoughts that come with anxiety. For more tips on focusing your mind or developing deep breathing awareness contact our office or email Cathy at: cathy_hohenstein@ncsu.edu.

Make Halloween a Family Event

Over the years, holidays have become more and more commercial. Halloween is the perfect example. We used to dress up as princesses, cowboys, and farmers. Now our children don’t seem happy unless they are specific characters like Cinderella, Woody from Toy Story or Bob the Builder. Try sharing some of your memories of Halloween with your children and the costumes you made, or had, when you were growing up. Make plans to help make costumes. This can save money as well as provide some family time in our busy lives. The time spent putting together a princess, witch, ghost or other costume can be a time to share your childhood Halloween memories and some of your family history. You can even get other family members to join in and help, such as grandparents, aunts and uncles or even family friends. Share pictures from the past and use the time to build family relationships. Children like to see that their parents and family members were young once and had fun. The costumes don’t need to be too fancy or complicated. It is the time spent together that creates the warm family memories that they will keep to share with their children.
Holiday Turkey Tips

Look for us on the Buncombe County TV station this season for tips on cooking a safe holiday turkey. If you can't catch us there, follow these tips, call our office at 255-5522 or use the hotline contacts below.

Safe Thawing Times: Give yourself enough time to safely thaw your frozen turkey in the refrigerator. You need about 24 hours for every 4 to 5 pounds of turkey.

- 4 to 12 pounds - 1 to 3 days
- 12 to 16 pounds - 2 to 4 days
- 16 to 20 pounds - 4 to 5 days
- 20 to 24 pounds - 5 to 6 days

Remember to cook your turkey at 325° to an internal temperature of 165° F.

HOTLINE NUMBERS:

Turkey Talk Line – 1-800-BUTTERBALL (288-8372) or Online Assistance: http://www.butterball.com

November 2nd - 22nd Weekdays - 9:00 am-9:00 pm  Weekends 9:00 am - 7:00 pm
November 23rd - 25th 9:00 am - 7:00 pm  Thanksgiving Day 7:00 am - 7:00 pm
November 27th - December 23rd  Weekdays and Weekends 9:00 am - 7:00 pm
December 24th, 25th (Christmas), and December 28th - 31st 8:00 am - 5:00 pm

USDA Meat & Poultry Hotline – 1-888-674-6854 – You may speak with a food safety specialist from 10:00 am - 4:00 pm on weekdays year round. On Thanksgiving - 8:00 am - 2:00 pm or for Online Assistance: http://www.fsis.usda.gov (general food safety, preparation and handling of meat and poultry products).

Contributors Areas of Responsibility and Expertise

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Family & Consumer Sciences  
- Housing  
- House Furnishings  
- Human Environment and Health  
- Environmental Issues (i.e. solid waste, air quality)  
- Aging Issues  
- Extension & Community Association Liaison

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