

STARS & STRIPES TEAM NEWS



February 2024



Pre-Season Meetings

These pre-season meetings will be held at Stars & Stripes. The focus of the meeting will include all necessary information regarding all aspects of competitions and how to have a successful season!

RESCHEDULED DATE:

Level 3 (Parents only)

Thursday, March 7th @7:15pm

Held at Stars & Stripes

BETSY BOOTCAMP: Monthly Nutrition

Each month the team newsletter contains nutritional tips, recipes and valuable information from sports nutritionist Betsy McNally Laouar – the best part, all of the information is specific to gymnasts!

The gymnasts super food of the month: dark chocolate. Dark chocolate has rich antioxidants that help in oxidative stress recovery. With all of its antioxidants and minerals, dark chocolate is a great tool in your snack bag when it comes to inflammation and sore muscles and joints.

WORD OF THE MONTH:

COMPASSION

THE EMOTION WE FEEL WHEN OTHERS ARE SUFFERING THAT MAKES US WANT TO HELP THEM. WHEN WE FEEL COMPASSION, OUR HEART RESPONDS TO OTHERS WHO ARE DEALING WITH MISFORTUNE OR PAIN IN A WAY THAT MOTIVATES US TO HELP ALLEVIATE THEIR SUFFERING.

PRACTICE CHANGES:

FEBRUARY

- Level 5 NO PRACTICE February 8th
- Level 7 Practice 2:15-4:15 February 8th
- Level 4-7 NO PRACTICE February 8th

MARCH

- Level 5-7 Practice 2:00-5:00 Friday, March 15th (Clarkston 1/2 day)

Follow us on Facebook

It is strongly encourage that you follow us on Facebook by joining the Stars & Stripes Competitive team group page. This page is updated with important information such as practice changes, closures, meet information and other reminders. Pictures and videos of practice and events are also posted. It a great way to stay in the loop!

Grand Rapids Classic

February 9-11, 2024

Xcel Platinum

Friday, February 9, 2024
Blue Bridge Gym
Session 1 - Flight B
Check-in @ 7:45am
Warm-up/ stretch @ 8:00am
Competition Begins @ 8:25am

Level 5

Friday, February 9, 2024
Blue Bridge Gym
Session 1 - Flight A
Check-in @ 7:45am
Warm-up/ stretch @ 8:00am
Competition Begins @ 8:25am

Level 4

Saturday, February 10, 2024
Blue Bridge Gym
Session 4 - Flight B
Check-in @ 7:45am
Warm-up/ stretch @ 8:00am
Competition Begins @ 8:25am

Xcel Silver

Saturday, February 10, 2024
Blue Bridge Gym
Session 5 - Flight B
Check-in @ 12:00pm
Warm-up/ stretch @ 12:30pm
Competition Begins @ 12:55pm

Level 7

Saturday, February 10, 2024
Blue Bridge Gym
Session 6 - Flight A
Check-in @ 4:30pm
Warm-up/ stretch @ 5:00pm
Competition Begins @ 5:25pm

Xcel Gold

Sunday, February 11, 2024
Blue Bridge Gym
Session 7 - Flight A
Check-in @ 7:45am
Warm-up/ stretch @ 8:00am
Competition Begins @ 8:25am

Location

MSA Sports Spot
3701 32nd St SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49512

Elevate the Stage - Toledo

Level 4

Saturday, February 17th

Gym B Session: B04

Check-In @ 7:45am

Warm-up/ stretch @ 8:00am

Competition Begins @ 8:20am

Awards @ 11:00am

Level 7

Saturday, February 17th

Gym A Session: A07

Check-In @ 6:00pm

Warm-up/ stretch @ 6:15pm

Competition Begins @ 6:35pm

Awards @ 9:35pm

Level 5

Sunday, February 18th

Gym A Session: A09

Check-In @ 11:05am

Warm-up/ stretch @ 11:20am

Competition Begins @ 11:40am

Awards @ 2:05pm

Location:

Glass City Center
401 Jefferson Ave
Toledo, OH 43604

Entry Fee:
TBD



Xcel Platinum

Friday, February 23rd
Check in: 5:45pm
Open Stretch: 6:15pm
March in: 6:35pm
Awards: 9:30pm

Xcel Silver

Saturday, February 24th
Check in: 11:15am
Open Stretch: 11:45am
March in: 12:05pm
Awards: 3:05pm

Level 7

Saturday, February 24th
Check in: 2:55pm
Open Stretch: 3:25pm
March in: 3:45pm
Awards: 6:15pm

Xcel Gold

Sunday, February 25th
Check in: 7:45am
Open Stretch: 8:00am
March in: 8:20am
Awards: 10:40am

Level 4 and 5

Sunday, February 25th
Check in: 5:20pm
Open Stretch: 5:50pm
March in: 6:10pm
Awards: 9:30pm

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Location:

Lansing Center

333 E Michigan Ave,
Lansing, MI 48933

Admissions:

Adult (16+) \$25
Child & Senior (65+) \$15
5 & Under Free

*Wristbands are good for ALL
Sessions ALL weekend.
[CASH ONLY]

COMPASSION

FEBRUARY 2024



POWERFUL WORDS

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

PARENTS PERCH

Young students: "When you feel bad, sad or mad, I want to help you feel better!"

Older students/teens/adults: The emotion we feel when others are suffering that makes us want to help them.

- Week 1** Empathy as part of compassion: How do we know how others feel?
- Week 2** Helping others: How can we help people who are in pain or suffering?
- Week 3** Helping others: How can we help animals and our Earth?
- Week 4** Having compassion for ourselves: How can we be kind to ourselves?

Dear Family,

This month we will discuss the powerful word, compassion.

Compassion, in Latin, means "co-suffering" or "suffering together." When we feel compassion, our heart responds to others who are dealing with misfortune or pain in a way that motivates us to help alleviate their suffering. Many throughout our communities and country are suffering from financial stress, loneliness, or illness. They need compassion, understanding and support.

Child Development Specialist, Dr. Robyn Silverman, reminds us that "Compassion puts 'action' into empathy." Organizational psychologist, Adam Grant, goes on to make this helpful distinction:

- * Sympathy: I'm sorry you're in pain
- * Empathy: I feel your pain
- * Compassion: I'll do whatever I can to alleviate your pain

We can ask ourselves; How can we bring comfort to them? How can we offer a helping hand?

In Dr. Robyn Silverman's weekly podcast, *How to Talk to Kids about Anything*, Dr. Robyn interviewed best-selling author and expert, Dr. Michele Borba, on empathy and compassion. Dr. Borba and Dr. Robyn talk about several studies that have shown that empathy and compassion can be cultivated if we provide children with opportunities to show it. We also must model it for them so they can emulate it, practice it and develop it.

While we must learn to have compassion for others, we also must learn to have compassion for ourselves. We live in a world that can be overly competitive or harsh. It can be easy to tear ourselves down, criticize ourselves or refrain from resting and recharging when we know we need to do so. When we have compassion for ourselves, we accept that we make mistakes, we are human and we are still valuable and worthy of love.

Studies reveal that having compassion can keep you alive longer! Those who had helped

friends or family members had reduced mortality rates even during stressful times. Compassion also has the power to keep us calm, reduce anxiety and accept our feelings more readily. Those who help are getting great benefits from compassion- even if they are not on the receiving end!

This month we will talk all about compassion for others as well as cultivating compassion in ourselves. Ask your children; how do you show compassion and how would you like to be remembered?

We thank you for your support. You are pivotal in helping to make our school one of the best personal development centers in the world.

Best Regards,
—Your Motivated and Dedicated Instructors

UPCOMING POWERFUL WORDS

MARCH
APRIL
MAY

RESPONSIBILITY
TENACITY
COMPOSURE

WELCOME TO BETSY'S LOVING KITCHEN!

FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER



Letter from Betsy

DON'T FORGET TO LOVE YOURSELF THROUGH FUNCTIONAL FOODS THIS SEASON

Happy February! Hopefully you are in the middle of your competitive season and you are applying all of the Functional food tips I have been giving you this season! If things aren't going as planned, remember, this is a long season and every meet counts. Look for all of the great steps you have moved forward this year...perhaps a new floor routine with new skills? A personal best score? More energy and endurance during your competitions? We all have something to learn from our competitive experiences so remember to always balance out any negative experiences with positives! And of course, remember that during the Valentine's Day holiday to not only show love for others but for YOURSELF and YOUR BODY, It is the only body you have, so take care of it, and take care of YOU by feeding your body plenty of fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, legumes, GREEN foods, protein and lots of water! Keep pushing, you got this!



Beets: The beautiful red root powerfully packed with minerals for bone health!

This powerful red root/vegetable is loaded with "betalain" which is an antioxidant that helps calm inflammation on a cellular level. It is also loaded with potassium and magnesium both crucial for muscle, joint and bone health. The powerful, dense, rich, staining, red color is very telling of its power on the cells of the body! Slice up a beet and place it over a kale or spinach salad with a little goat cheese, cucumbers and your favorite lean meat. Or add it to your favorite kale shake! See the beet healthy hummus and salad recipes in the Valentine's Meal Pack!

Gymnast Super foods of the month:

Dark Chocolate- In the Name of Love!

Why is dark chocolate the perfect snack for a gymnast?

Recovery through Antioxidants: Gymnastics takes a toll on the body, muscles, joints and ligaments as well as organs (heart, lungs, cardio system). The rich antioxidants in dark chocolate will help in oxidative stress recovery.

Improved Heart Health: Ever hear of flavonoids? They are rich compounds found in abundance in dark chocolate and have even linked to healthier heart and cardio function!

Energizes For Better Training: Dark chocolate contains a smidge of caffeine which means its a great mid workout snack or mid competition munchie!

Magnesium For Muscles: One of the most important mineral to any athlete is magnesium which is important for muscle function and staves off cramping. Once again, great for a mid competition snack break (drink water to avoid dehydration as well!)

Inflammation Fighter: Bye bye sorenes. With all of it's antioxidants and minerals, dark chocolate is a great tool in your snack bag when it comes to inflammation and sore muscles and joints post workout!





Happy Valentine's Day Sweet and Savory Snacks and Meals

Betsy Bootcamp LOVES Valentine's Day and is happy to bring you this collection of healthy, FUN, satisfying sweet and savory recipes includes creations that are not only Valentine's Day-friendly but are also good for your heart!



Happy FUNCTIONAL February



I'm so glad you're here.

It's February which means we are in the thick of the season! Whether you are having a great season or not, we want to continue to put functional meals into our bodies! It's important to also have treats to balance out your season!! Eating functionally is also FUN, I hope you enjoy these fun, sweet and savory, fun-loving and FUNCTIONAL recipes!



Betsy

Betsy Bootcamp
www.betsymcnally.com

Betsy's Sweet and Savory Recipes

SWEET

- Dark Chocolate-Covered Strawberries
- Betsy's Valentines Dark Chocolate Truffles
- Gymnast Fun-lovin Fudge Smoothie
- Easy Pointed To-fu Chocolate Mousse
- Double Back- Berry Chia Jam

SAVORY

- Energizing Beet and Vegetable Salad
- Beet-Healthy Hummus
- Roasted Red Pepper and Tomato Soup



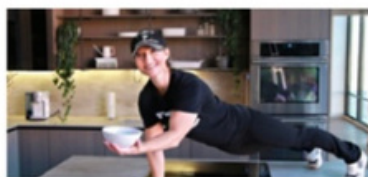
Dark Chocolate Covered Strawberries

Serves 4

Prep: 5 mins. | Total: 15 mins.

Ingredients

- 12 strawberries, large, washed, and dried
- 1/4 cup dark chocolate chips
- 1 1/2 tsp coconut oil



Prep

1. Wash and dry strawberries.
2. Line baking sheet with parchment paper.

Make

1. Stir chocolate chips and coconut oil in a saucepan over low heat until completely melted and smooth.
2. Place liquified chocolate in a small bowl and dip strawberries in the sauce.
3. Sprinkle on additional toppings as desired - see notes.
4. Place strawberries on a parchment paper lined baking sheet and place in refrigerator until hardened.
5. Feel free to sprinkle with toppings such as coconut and finely chopped nuts.
6. Serve within 4 hours as strawberries will begin to sweat and chocolate will separate from fruit.



Betsy's Valentine's Dark Chocolate Truffles

Serves 20

Prep: 15 mins. | Total: 3 hrs.

Ingredients

- 1 3/4 cups dark chocolate chips
- 1 cup coconut cream
- 1/4 cup cocoa powder, unsweetened
- 1/4 cup coconut flakes, finely shredded, unsweetened



Prep

1. Place cocoa powder and coconut flakes into separate, small bowls.

Make

1. Add chocolate chips to a glass mixing bowl.
2. In a small saucepan, heat coconut cream until it just simmers. Pour over chocolate chips and stir until chips are completely melted.
3. Cover and place in refrigerator for at least 3 hours.
4. Using a small ice cream scoop, drop the mixture into either cocoa powder or coconut and gently use your hands to form a ball. Do not over-handle as chocolate will begin to melt again.
5. Place truffles on a parchment-lined plate and return to refrigerator until ready to serve.

- Notes:**
- Coconut cream is different from coconut milk - it has a higher fat content necessary to make the truffles solid
 - Dark chocolate is typically dairy-free but please check the ingredient label to be certain [look for 70%+ cocoa]
 - A variety of coatings work well here - our other favorites: peanut butter powder and finely crushed nuts

Gymnast-Fun-lovin Fudge Smoothie

Serves 2

Prep: 10 mins. | Total: 4 hours

Ingredients

- 1 cup coconut milk, canned
- 1 cup Zucchini, chopped and frozen
- 1/4 cup cocoa powder, unsweetened
- 2 Medjool dates, pitted and chopped
- 1 Tbs almond butter
- salt, pinch
- 1/2 cup water (or more as needed)



Prep

1. Chop and freeze zucchini [freeze for at least 4 hours]

Make

1. Add all ingredients to a blender and process until smooth and creamy. Add more water as needed to process.



Double-Back-Berry Chia Jam

Serves 6

Prep: 15 mins. | Total: 20 mins.

Ingredients

- 1 cup raspberries, frozen or fresh
- 1 cup blueberries, wild, frozen
- 1 lemon, juiced (2 tablespoon)
- 2 Tbs maple syrup
- 2 Tbs chia seeds



Prep

1. Wash raspberries if using fresh.

Make

1. Add berries to the saucepan with lemon juice and simmer over medium heat until the fruit breaks down. Mash with a fork to break it apart.
2. Remove from heat and stir in maple syrup and chia seeds.
3. Let stand for 10 minutes to thicken. If you want a thicker consistency, stir in more seeds a teaspoon at a time.
4. Transfer to a jar to cool.
5. Store in refrigerator for up to two weeks.



Easy Pointed To-fu Chocolate Mousse

Serves 4

Prep: 15 mins. | Total: 2 hrs.

Ingredients

- 5 oz dark chocolate, chopped
- 2 Tbs maple syrup
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1 cup silken tofu
- 1 Tbs water



Prep

1. Melt the chocolate in a bowl over a double boiler. Remove the pan from the heat as soon as the chocolate has melted - be very careful not to burn it.

Make

1. In a blender combine the maple syrup, vanilla extract, silken tofu, water, and melted chocolate. Blend until thoroughly combined.
2. Divide equally between 4 - 1/2 cup ramekins or mason jars. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours.
3. Top with fruit of choice just before serving.

Energizing Beet and Vegetable Salad

Serves 6

Prep: 20 mins. | Total: 1 hr.

Ingredients

- 1 medium butternut squash, peeled, seeded and diced into 1/2 inch pieces
- 2 carrots, peeled and diced into 1/2 inch pieces
- 2 parsnips, peeled and diced into 1/2 inch pieces
- 3 small beets, peeled and diced into 1/2 inch pieces
- 2 Tbs olive oil
- 1 tsp thyme, dried
- 1 tsp rosemary, dried
- 1 1/2 cup lentils, canned, drained and rinsed
- 2 cloves garlic, smashed and peeled
- 1/4 cup parsley, chopped
- 6 scallions, chopped
- salt & black pepper to taste



Prep

1. Chop onion and press garlic.
2. Chop cauliflower into florets.

Dressing

- 1/4 cup sherry vinegar
- 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- salt, to taste

Make

1. Place squash, carrots, parsnips, and beets in a large bowl. Toss with two tablespoons of olive oil salt, thyme, and rosemary.
2. Roast until vegetables are just fork tender, about 30-40 mins.
3. Meanwhile, drain and rinse canned lentils. Add to a large bowl with the garlic, salt, and pepper.
4. Add dressing ingredients to a Mason jar and shake to incorporate.
5. Add roasted vegetables and toss with enough dressing to coat.
6. Garnish with fresh parsley and scallions.

Beet- Healthy Hummus

Serves 6

Prep: 15 mins. | Total: 25 mins.

Ingredients

- 2 beets, pre-cooked
- 1 (15 oz.) can white beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 (15 oz.) can garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed
- 1/2 cup tahini
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 Tbs olive oil
- 2 lemons, squeezed (for 1/2 cup juice)
- 1 1/2 tsp cumin, ground
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 red bell peppers, sliced into sticks or green
- 1 cucumber, cut into sticks
- 2 carrots, peeled and cut into strips



Prep

1. Peel and chop garlic.
2. Juice lemon.
3. Cut vegetables.

Make

1. Place all ingredients into a food processor or process until smooth.
2. For an interesting display, place hummus in glass jars or cups and push in veggies.



Cozy Red Pepper and Tomato Soup

Serves 8

Prep: 15 mins. | Total: 30 mins.

Ingredients

- 1 large onion, sweet, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, pressed
- 2 cup cauliflower, florets
- 1 Tbs olive oil
- 4 Tbs nutritional yeast
- 3 Tbs miso paste (we love chickpea miso!)
- 6 cup water
- 1 (28 oz.) can tomatoes, diced, chopped (we love fire-roasted varieties)
- 1 roasted red pepper, jarred, drained
- 4 Tbs cashews, raw



Prep

1. Chop onion and press garlic.
2. Chop cauliflower into florets.

Make

1. Sauté onions and garlic gently in olive oil until soft and fragrant.
2. Add nutritional yeast and stir to coat vegetables.
3. Add miso paste, cauliflower, water, tomatoes, pepper, and cashews.
4. Bring mixture to a boil then reduce heat and simmer for 20 minutes.
5. Remove soup from heat and let stand for 30 minutes to cool a bit.
6. Purée in a blender in batches. Season with salt and pepper to taste.



Happy Valentine's Day

XOXO



What's In Your Competition Lunch Purse?

The Gymnastics Competition Lunch Purse

It's the morning of the competition. You shoot out of bed quickly because you are excited about the day! Breakfast, Leo check, hair, makeup and mental prep, plus the drive to the venue ALL must happen between 6 and 7:30 am in time for 8am warmup and stretch. Oftentimes the morning crunch can be tricky for fueling properly for a competition. In my programs I give athletes many different ways to approach their competition day nutrition, each athlete is different. Some kids need a larger breakfast while others are nervous and can barely get down a piece of toast. That is why the competition snack bag comes in handy! Check out what's in my 2024 version:

1. Dried fruits: mangos, raisins and dates or dried cherries. A quick, natural sugar for a boost of energy.
2. Small Dark Chocolate Bar, 70 % cacao or more. Dark chocolate has antioxidants that help with inflammation, magnesium for brain muscle connection and just a little bit of caffeine to keep your energy up mid-competition!
3. Rice cakes and protein topping! Betsy Bootcamp's go to snack! Grab a few rice cakes and a portable container of protein packed toppings like seed butter (because of allergies) or guacamole, or hummus.
4. Fresh fruit: apples or oranges, bananas, great to keep hydration constant and simple sugars for energy for that mid competition bonk!
5. Pouches of Tuna- Get your protein in, you may smell bad but you will feel good, I love adding a dollop of salsa or greek yogurt for fun into the packet.
6. Dried Chick Peas- legumes are loaded with vitamins like calcium and iron, great for strong bones and blood flow.
7. Whole grain or seeded crackers: Add your salsa, guac or hummus to these energy powerhouses!
8. Pouches of almond/peanut or seed butter: Be aware of anyone who may have allergies around you, squeeze one of these pouches in your mouth or on a cracker for protein, healthy fat and fiber
9. Seeds: pumpkin, sunflower, chia: Seeds are a gymnast go-to for protein and healthy fat. Magnesium dense, they help connect the brain to the muscles! They are easy to grab and eat, just make sure you check your teeth before you smile at the judges :)
10. Fage 2% yogurt with honey. Packed with 17 grams of protein, probiotics and calcium, it's a bone, belly and muscle snack from the gymnast Gods!
11. Honey Packets and Mint : Always great to have on hand in case of an upset tummy. Nerves are a part of this competition game so be prepared!
12. Dried Edamame: Another great legume deriving from the soy bean, Edamame is delicious fresh but go for the dried kind in your competition snacking bag. Protein and fiber for all!
13. Dried Plantains: Simone Biles' favorite snack is the plantain! A mix between a potato and a banana, this complex carb is packed with potassium, magnesium and b vitamins to get your energy rocking!
14. Pistachios- A gymnasts favorite nut! Light and fun to crack open, I recommend shelling them for fast entry into your mouth!
15. Low sodium salmon or turkey jerky: Protein is your friend during sustained bouts of energy to keep muscles engaged and strong. Go for low sodium variations if possible.
16. Red Pepper Slices and Guacamole: Grab a small container and slice up those peppers. Packed with vitamin C and water dense, you can't go wrong with this mid competition snack.
17. Organic String Cheese: On the go cheese is easy, portable way to get vitamin D and calcium!
18. Cherry, beet or orange juice: Great natural sugars to sustain energy, helps with blood flow and inflammation
19. Pretzels and salsa: Easy go-to for quick energy, most everyone has some version of this snack in the cupboard, so bring em along!
20. Chocolate or Vanilla Protein powder and shake: Pick a natural, organic plant based protein if possible, add water, shake and fill up your muscles!

Betsy's Tips: Don't forget your Shaker, Water Bottles, Plastic Utensils and Napkins!