



Give the Gift of Health All Year Long

By Kristen Wilson, PT, DPT, GCS Co-owner, Action Potential

"Good health" can mean different things to different people and, depending on the current status of one's life at a particular instance, "good health" can even mean different things to the same person. Most people begin afresh with new resolutions in January, abandoning detrimental health habits for more sustainable ones. And perhaps this new commitment is best served after the temptation of holiday cookies and elaborate feasts has passed. January offers a unique opportunity after the holiday hustle-bustle and over-indulging to celebrate and share health with those you love, committing together to a lifestyle that affords us the opportunity to live longer and fuller lives.

Although the holiday gift-giving season has passed, we will all have opportunities to purchase presents during this upcoming year, for birthdays, anniversaries, thank you's, or a "job well done." Consider sharing one of these five gifts of health with someone you love when that time comes in 2020:

A JOURNAL: According to Huffington Post journalist Thai Nguyen, journaling provides the opportunity to enhance many areas of your health, including boosting your IQ, inspiring creativity, enhancing self-esteem, and evoking mindfulness. A daily practice of journaling creates a discipline of reflection that offers a lasting sense of calm through the remainder of the day. Worried someone will see your intimate thoughts? Consider burning or tearing your journal entries after writing them, serving as a cathartic way to put aside any thoughts that burden your psyche.

A COFFEE MUG: Coffee? Yes, while many gravitate to coffee to satisfy a simplistic caffeine addiction, many do not realize that coffee offers unique health benefits. A recent study in the *European Journal of Neurology* revealed that drinking a cup of coffee daily reduced the risk for Alzheimer's disease by inhibiting plaque formation within the brain. Drinking coffee (especially out of a special mug) also promotes a calm morning or afternoon ritual which is proven to lower stress levels.

A YOGA MAT: Many already appreciate the benefits of this ancient practice, but what most don't realize is that you don't have to be Gumby to benefit from yoga. Yoga promotes enhanced blood flow to the muscles, organs, and brain; it also assists with enhancing balance. YouTube offers many free yoga videos if you aren't able to attend a session at a local facility. And owning your own yoga mat helps commit you to the practice, with an added benefit of not having to perform downward dog on a mat used by someone else's bare feet.

AN ACTIVITY TRACKER: Whether you choose Garmin, Fit Bit, or Apple, it is easier than ever to track your activity level using technology. Looking to improve your physical activity level, lose weight, or hold yourself more accountable to exercise? Wearables allow the user to set goals, participate in competitions, and track progress to ensure that the fitness initiatives set during the good intentions of January are not forgotten as the year progresses.

A GIFT CARD FOR A FITNESS CLASS: What better gift than sharing a hobby you enjoy! Zumba, Spin, Barre, Personal Training: the options for fitness are endless. Research indicates there is a higher compliance with exercise when performed with a friend, so consider gifting a class to your best bud so you can experience the joys of exercise together. If you or someone you love is unable to exercise because of pain, consider an evaluation with your local physical therapist who can help remedy the problem and get you or your friend back to the activity you both enjoy.

Gift giving provides a unique opportunity to show those you love how important they are to you. This year, what better way to express your love than choosing to gift health, the gift that keeps giving the whole year through.



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