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**5 FASCINATING FACTS About Fall**

**THE END OF SUMMER DOESN'T HAVE TO SIGNAL AN END TO FUN.** How about sweater weather, Halloween parties, and football season? The list goes on and on.

In fact, fall might be the most interesting season of them all. Here are five facts you probably didn't know about the season.

**1. IT WAS ORIGINALLY CALLED "HARVEST."** In a world that was far more agricultural, the season was defined by the harvesting of crops. It's also a reference to the harvest moon, which was essential to farmers during the season.

**2. FALL BABIES TEND TO BE IMPRESSIVE.** Not only does the world's most common birthday, October 5th, land in fall, but those babies have built an impressive resume. The British Department for Education found that they tend to do better in school, and also tend to live longer.

**3. WEIGHT GAIN IS MOST COMMON IN THE FALL.** It's not only the Halloween candy or Thanksgiving turkey. Researchers believe it's primarily caused by lower levels of vitamin D. As the days shorten and temperatures drop, we tend to get less sun. It's another reason to be careful about diet and exercise this season.

**4. AUTUMN IS GOOD FOR THE ECONOMY.** "Leaf peeping," which is a slang term for fall foliage tourism, is more than just a funny name. It's also a \$3 billion industry in New England alone.

**5. PEOPLE FALL IN LOVE MORE IN THE FALL.** Men and women's testosterone levels tend to spike in the autumn, which makes women even more attractive to men. A data study on Facebook also found that more people change their relationship status from "single" to "in a relationship" during the fall than any other season.



**Last month,** I mentioned that my dad and I took a "college tour" road trip the summer before my senior year of high school, a road trip that had been orchestrated by my awesome school guidance counselor. It's a trip that neither my father nor I will ever forget — for many reasons!

The first is obvious. As I talked about last time, we visited 12 schools up and down the eastern seaboard in five days. To call it a "whirlwind tour" doesn't really do it justice. We did a lot of school visits. We did a lot of driving. But we certainly didn't do a lot of sleeping. I'm glad I was on that trip with my dad — who's one of the coolest people I know — because his level head and calm demeanor made it all possible.

Of course, that doesn't mean he didn't push me a little bit, especially when it came to driving. Although I was 17 and had my learner's permit, I hadn't been exactly eager to get my driver's license. Most of my friends back in Puerto Rico had their licenses, and they even had cars, so I usually had a ride wherever I needed to go. Dad didn't let me drive in the big cities in the States, but he did have me do a lot of suburb and highway driving. "Keep up with traffic," he'd say, and so I would ... until he looked over and realized we were doing 90 mph.

In my defense, that's how fast traffic was going on I-95. I also hadn't quite figured out that if you wanted to drive at a slow, sane speed, you had to be in the right lanes.

To add to the excitement, this was back in the mid/late-'90s. We didn't have GPS or anything in this rental car, and online direction services like MapQuest were barely starting to become available. We did this trip old school. I'd be moving along in the left lane, and Dad would yell, "That's our exit!" Then I'd veer across three lanes of traffic and get off the highway. I quickly learned not to do that, but not before almost giving him a heart attack at least once.

Another great memory from the trip is being stuck on the side of the road in Virginia, just outside of D.C. We were cruising along, and then the car just shut off and coasted to a stop. Dad, who'd maintained his cool the whole time, started to get a little frustrated with the rental car company. "How could they give us a car that doesn't work?!" he asked.

It took us a few minutes to realize the car wasn't broken. It was out of gas. Fortunately, a nice Arlington County cop stopped, gave us a ride to the gas station, and then gave us another ride back to our car. It was an interesting way to end an interesting road trip, but it's a trip I wouldn't trade for the world. My dad and I had the best time, and although it was stressful at the time, we also really enjoyed each other's company. Parents and kids should spend time together like that once in a while, and I'm certainly glad that we had the chance.

*Melina Pérez Halpern*

# KEEP YOUR TRICK-OR-TREATERS Safe This Halloween

## You may wonder if trick-or-treating is safe, especially when stories of poisoned Halloween candy circulate every year.

These terrifying tales have all been hoaxes, but beyond needlessly frightening parents, these urban legends take attention away from the real danger kids face while trick-or-treating. Safe Kids Worldwide reports that children are twice as likely to be struck by a car on Halloween than any other day of the year. Here's what you need to remember before sending your little witches and knights out trick-or-treating.

**Light Up the Night** Brightly colored costumes will help your child be more visible in the dark. That said, if your ghouls and goblins have their hearts set on being a real creature of the night, flashlights, glow-in-the-dark bracelets, and reflective tape attached to candy bags can help trick-or-treaters remain visible to drivers.

**Dress for Comfort** The cold might not bother Elsa, but your trick-or-treater may not be ready to sing after the sun sets and the temperature drops. Have them wear jackets and gloves as needed and insist on shoes they can walk in. If your little princess is absolutely in love with her high heels, have her wear the pretty, uncomfortable shoes for pictures at the door, then switch into comfy sneakers before hitting the sidewalks.

**Keep Your Eyes on the Prize** Masks can really bring a costume together, but they can also make it hard for young eyes to see where they're going. Before trick-or-treaters head out to collect that sweet candy, swap out masks with face paint. It might take a few practice runs, but face paint can be just as cool. Make sure to test for allergic reactions first.

## Know the Rules of the Road

It is important for trick-or-treaters of all ages to know how to behave safely as they walk down the sidewalks. They should always look both ways before crossing the street, never run out between parked cars, and make sure oncoming traffic is completely stopped before they step out into the road. Kids under the age of 12 should be accompanied by an adult, and older children should stick with their friends and never trick or treat alone.

Trick-or-treating is a wonderful childhood tradition, and it shouldn't end in tragedy. Talk to your kids about the risks and make sure they know why these rules are necessary. When you keep safety in mind, your trick-or-treaters can focus on the best part of Halloween: getting the most candy!

# HOW TO FIGHT

## THE NEGATIVE PHYSICAL EFFECTS OF YOUR DESK JOB

### "We're sitting ourselves to death!"

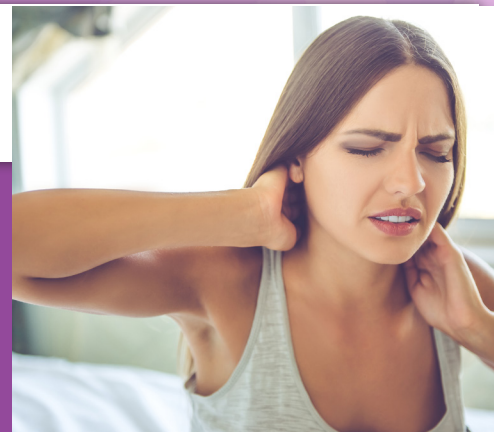
Dr. James Levens of the National Institutes of Health made headlines when he announced, after 15 years of research, that "sitting is the new smoking." Dr. Levine determined sitting for prolonged hours leads to obesity, high blood pressure, and diabetes, and can increase the likelihood of developing certain forms of cancer. To many people, the answer was clear: Just stand up!

Standing desks have become all the rage as office workers everywhere switch from sitting in one place all day to standing in one place all day. And the benefits have been ... almost imperceptible. While you do burn more calories standing than you do sitting, the fact remains you're still not moving. Keeping your body in the same position for hours is what leads to all of those health risks Dr. Levens warns about, whether you sit

or stand. It would be more accurate to say sedentary is the new smoking.

Now, don't think you can erase the damage from being sedentary at work by hitting the gym when you clock out. Research published in the Annals of Internal Medicine found that, among individuals who spend most of their day in a sedentary position, those who engaged in regular physical activity were only 30 percent less likely to die from sedentary-related health problems than those who didn't exercise at all.

So, what are we supposed to do? Seventy percent of Americans have jobs that require them to remain confined to a desk. If switching to a career that keeps you up and moving all day isn't a possibility, how can we cure our sedentary problems? The answer isn't standing; it's moving. Human beings are meant to be up and moving



around! That's why staying still all day hurts us so much. A desk job doesn't have to destroy your health. If you need to send an IM or a brief email, walk over and deliver the message in person instead. Take phone calls while walking around or, better yet, conduct meetings while on a walk outside. Even periodic desk exercises can be beneficial.

Ultimately, it doesn't matter if you sit or stand. Make sure to move around at least once an hour to avoid serious damage to your health.

# WHICH FEARS ARE INSTINCTUAL, and Which Are Learned?

## Where does fear come from?

As the jack-o'-lanterns show their grinning, glowing faces and skeletons, cobwebs, and gravestones adorn yards around the neighborhood, it's a question hanging in many of our minds. When you recoil from the giant mechanical spider suspended above your neighbor's garage, is that fear instinctual, or is it learned?

According to the Association for Psychological Science, there are only two fears we inherit at birth: the fear of falling and the fear of loud sounds.

A 1960 study, conducted by psychologists Gibson and Walk for Cornell University, sought to investigate depth perception in

human and animal species. They suspended a sheet of transparent plexiglass about 4 feet off the ground and covered one half of it with a checkerboard-pattern cloth, creating a simulated cliff. Infants, both human and animal, were then encouraged by their caregivers, usually their mothers, to crawl off the "cliff" onto the clear half of the platform. Both avoided stepping over what they perceived as a sharp drop, and pre-crawling-age infants showed heightened cardiac distress on the "suspended" side.

Coupled with this innate fear of plummeting to the ground is something called the Moro reflex, one of several involuntary reflexes healthy newborn infants have at birth. Often called the "startle reflex," it occurs



when a baby is startled by a loud sound or movement, especially a falling motion. The reflex usually triggers the newborn to lift and spread their arms as if grasping for support, followed by crying. Though the Moro reflex usually disappears at around 5 to 6 months of age, our instinctive aversion to sudden loud noises stays with us throughout our lives.

## PUZZLE YOUR BRAIN BREAK CORNER

### Sudoku Rules:

- Use numbers 1-9 only.
- The full grid is 9x9 cells.
- The full grid is broken into 9 regions, 3x3 cells each.
- Each region can contain only one of each number 1-9.
- Each cell can contain only one number.
- Each row and column should contain only one of each number, 1-9.

7				1				
5		9						
8		9	3	4				
	7	8		3	5			
		8		1	9		2	4
1				2				3
		5						
2								
9		3	4		2			8



# SOFRITO

## Ingredients

- 2 red bell peppers, cored, seeded and roughly chopped
- 1 large Spanish onion, roughly chopped
- 2 cups fresh cilantro, leaves and stems
- 2 cups fresh Italian parsley, leaves and stems
- ½ cup fresh oregano, leaves and stems
- 20 garlic cloves, peeled
- 3 tablespoons distilled white vinegar
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin

## Directions

1. Purée all of the ingredients in the bowl of a food processor fitted with a metal blade until smooth.
2. Bake in a preheated oven at 275 F, for 5 minutes, just to dry it

out a little. Transfer the sofrito into small airtight containers and refrigerate for up to 1 week, or freeze for up to 3 months.

Recipe courtesy of [TheLatinKitchen.com](http://TheLatinKitchen.com).