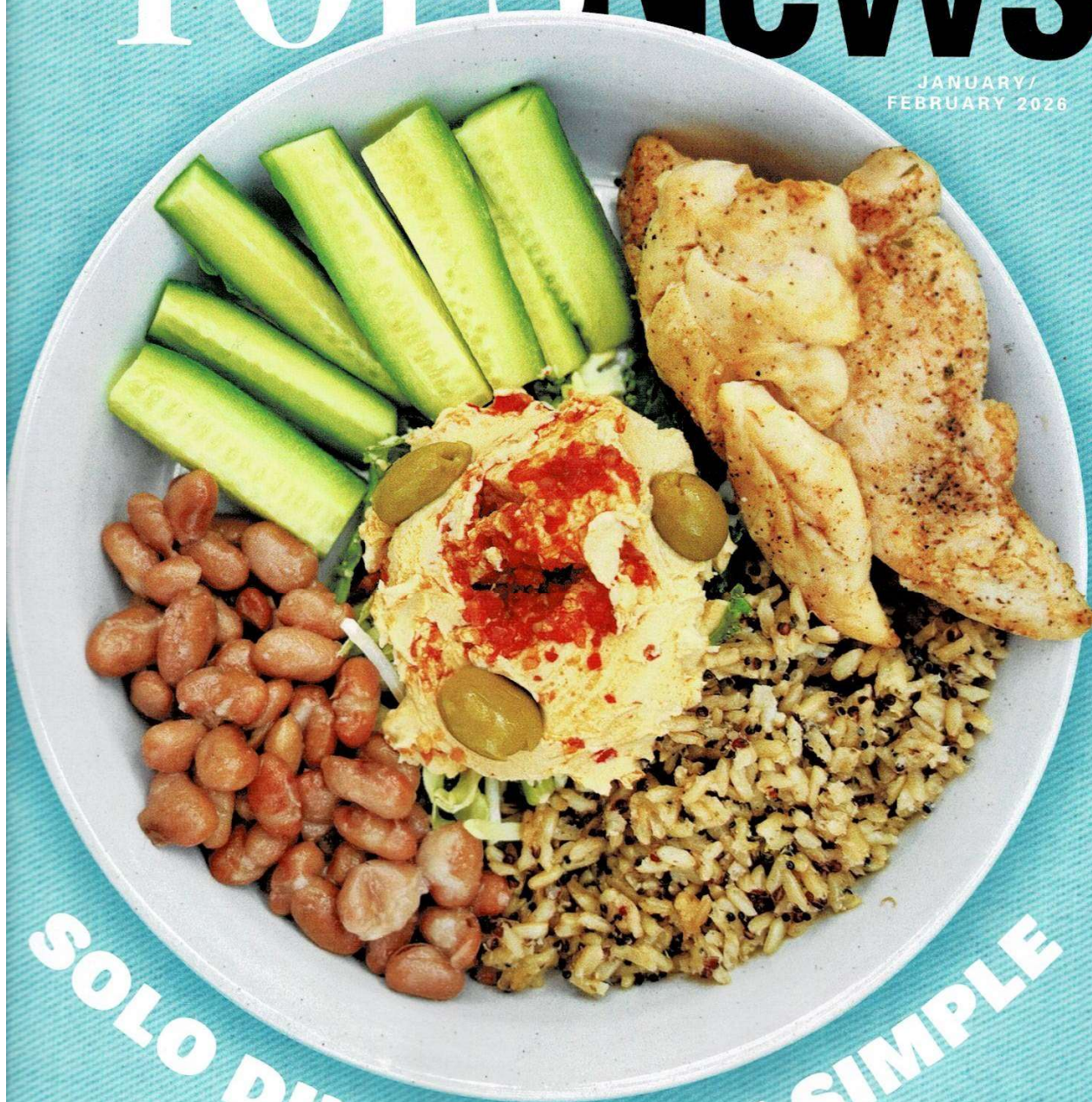


TAKE  
OFF  
POUNDS  
SENSIBLY<sup>SM</sup>

# TOPS<sup>®</sup> News

Real People. Real Weight Loss.<sup>®</sup>

JANUARY/  
FEBRUARY 2026



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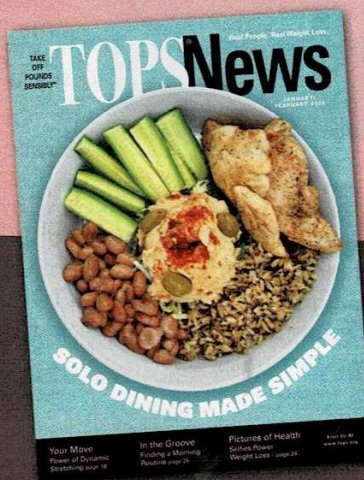
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PHOTO BY RACHEL WERNER, TOPS® STAFF



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# *DON'T be a QUITTER!*

Prepping for  
a Healthy  
'En-Counter'  
in the New Year

By Joe "Kirsch" Curcio, TOPS online member

**S**o here we are—well past "Auld Lang Syne" and vague reminiscence of Guy Lombardo and the Royal Canadians live from the Waldorf Astoria and Times Square in New York City. I now sit here in Brooklyn not far from there pondering the thought that the only ball drop that lingers now might just be the countdown to Quitters Day.

Yep, there's actually Quitters Day on the national calendar. It's ironically sandwiched somewhere between National Chocolate Covered Cherry Day and Strawberry Ice Cream Day in January. It usually falls on the second Friday of the month and it's when most of us abandon our New Year's resolutions, including our promise of weight loss and healthier living.

And although we certainly realize that tank top season is just around the corner—unfortunately so is that new taco truck—and statistically we're destined to fail!

However, to paraphrase a fellow Italian, although not a band leader or from Brooklyn, Yogi Berra, "If ya know ware-ya-goin', you won't end up sum-place else."

He was absolutely right! Being prepared truly is the secret of success. Having an action-oriented goal that requires activities such as organizing, and gathering resources, aka getting prepared is 60% more likely to result in success. So, please slowly back away from that quesadilla-combo, turn off the YouTube video of The Andy Williams Christmas Special from 1969 and let's get ready because, "It ain't over 'till it's over."

## KIRSCH'S KITCHEN

In the Fridge/Freezer			On the Counter
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lettuce</li> <li>• Tomatoes</li> <li>• Peppers</li> <li>• Onion</li> <li>• Garlic</li> <li>• Olives</li> <li>• Celery</li> <li>• Cucumber</li> <li>• Banana peppers</li> <li>• Pickles</li> <li>• Sugar-free Jello</li> <li>• Hummus</li> <li>• Wraps</li> <li>• Beets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• India relish</li> <li>• Broccoli rabe</li> <li>• Escarole and beans</li> <li>• Sauteed broccoli</li> <li>• Refried beans</li> <li>• Blueberries</li> <li>• Strawberries</li> <li>• Frozen banana</li> <li>• Oranges</li> <li>• Apples</li> <li>• Salsa</li> <li>• Low-fat cottage cheese</li> <li>• Protein drink</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Papaya</li> <li>• Pineapple</li> <li>• Lemon/lime</li> <li>• Can't Believe it's Not Butter</li> <li>• Avocado</li> <li>• Parsley</li> <li>• Whipped cream cheese</li> <li>• Whipped frozen topping</li> <li>• Sugar-free flavored coffee creamers</li> <li>• 0% fat plain Greek yogurt</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Almonds</li> <li>• Wasabi peas</li> <li>• Edamame</li> <li>• Nuts</li> <li>• Wontons</li> <li>• Croutons</li> <li>• Trail mix (home mix)</li> <li>• Olive, vegetable oils sprays</li> <li>• PB Powder</li> <li>• Onion, garlic powders</li> <li>• Salt and sugar substitutes</li> <li>• Cinnamon, pumpkin spice</li> <li>• Vanilla and almond extracts</li> <li>• Honey</li> </ul>

### A House Divided

**For me**, my healthy path to “ware-I’m-goin” includes plenty of selfishly reserved refrigerator and countertop space, and a very giving partner. Even after my weight loss of 70 pounds we still have a “bending guideline” in place at our house.

Because my wife continues to move like a gazelle and can still do deep knee bends like Nadia Comaneci, anything located 3-feet or below is completely in her domain, especially when it applies to the inside of the refrigerator. I don’t bend that way, so the more delicious contraband is banished to my unreachable zone way in the back of the bottom shelf of the refrigerator.

Having nothing to do with my financial well-being or status, it’s strictly top-shelf for me... well at least when it comes to where my stuff goes in the fridge. Not only do I keep a pre-cut and well-stocked top shelf fully supplied in the refrigerator, I also have a bit of a monopoly on the countertop.

In my ever-encroaching style I decided to take a few old plastic wonton soup containers and decorate them with contact paper. I also printed nutritional information labels on the covers. Now everything from almonds to wasabi peas, and yep even leftover wonton strips, are an easy reach on the kitchen counter.

### No Failure

**We’ve all had those overeating days**—the kind where, after logging our meals into our tracking apps we were certain that it was going to auto-dial 911 to summon EMS. I even recall when I first set mine up. After entering my weight and other parameters I hit the “create my plan” button. The “loading now” spinner hung there for quite a long time until the app finally displayed:

“Congratulations! The following health profile plan will allow you to achieve your target weight by August 16...2032...” *What?*

Of course, I’m slightly exaggerating, but here I am in 2026 down by 70 pounds!

Failure is simply an opportunity to begin again. There is no failure except no longer trying. Sure, we’re getting older—and now and then we even find ourselves nearly mistakenly saying good morning to some stranger in the bathroom mirror, only to realize that it’s just ourselves.

But growing old is no reason for us to ever celebrate Quitters Day. As a matter of fact, that very same calendar includes National Start-Over Day. It’s all about starting anew, accepting past failures and making positive changes.

As is true with our collective journey and challenges to stay healthy, we must recognize and grow through our temporary setbacks, prepare and refocus on moving forward, and embrace the fact that it truly “Ain’t over ‘till it’s over.”

Joe “Kirsch” Curcio, from Brooklyn, New York, is a former ABC radio and networks employee. Now retired. He is the author of “Ah-Shpet: 101 Words You’ll Need to Survive the Neighborhood” and “The Welcome to Greenpoint Manuscript.” See more from Joe at his website, [www.greenpointmusic.com](http://www.greenpointmusic.com).

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