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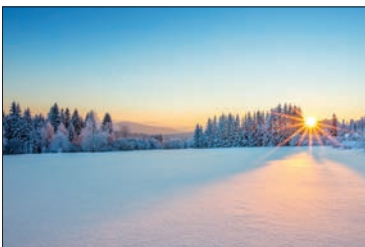
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Winter Sunrise in Douglas County



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Strong Enough for the Chaos

by Jamyn Wilson

*Jamyn is a mother
of four children
and Upbeat Barre
instructor at the Parker
Recreation Center*



I didn't start exercising to get my body "back." I started because I needed myself back.

After having my third baby, postpartum depression didn't arrive loudly. It crept in quietly – through exhaustion, foggy head space and a version of myself I didn't recognize. I felt distant from the mom and wife I wanted to be, or rather, I needed to be. I love my family deeply, but I didn't feel like I was fully there. I knew something had to change, but the idea of intense workouts or strict diets and routines felt overwhelming.

Then I found Upbeat Barre.

Upbeat, music-filled, low impact barre classes became a lifeline. Not because they were easy – but because they were joyful. For an hour, I could move, sweat, and breathe freely, without pressure, without kids hanging on my legs, in a room full of others, maybe more similar to me than I think. I didn't need to be perfect. I just had to show up. That small act of showing up turned into momentum. Momentum turned into confidence. And confidence slowly pulled me out of the fog.

Exercise didn't "fix" everything – but it gave me something powerful: a way to reconnect with my body and my mind.

Over time, my "why" shifted. I wasn't working out for a number on the scale or a mirror reflection. I was working out for my kids.

I exercise so I can jump on the trampoline without getting winded, or yes, peeing my pants. Or so I can scoop up my heavy toddler and place him in his high bunk bed, or so I can carry laundry baskets upon laundry baskets that never seem to end up and down the stairs, so we can play tag, go on walks, hold my baby on my hip and not think twice about it. My health journey isn't only for me, it's for them.

I train for real life – the messy, loud, beautiful chaos of motherhood.

Being strong means being present. It means saying yes more often. Yes to piggyback rides, yes to dance parties in the kitchen, yes to kickball at the park, yes to being the "fun mom" who isn't watching from the sidelines.

I've learned that health doesn't have to be extreme or all-consuming. It can look like consistent movement you actually enjoy. It can look like choosing strength over exhaustion. It can look like taking care of yourself so you can take care of others better.

Motherhood asks so much of our bodies. Choosing to move – whether it's barre, lifting, walking, yoga, stretching – isn't selfish. It's an act of love. Love for ourselves, and love for the little people who depend on us.

For 2026, I may not always feel put-together. But I feel capable. And strong enough for the chaos.

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Doctor Morrison's Prescription for a Healthier 2026

As a physician, my perspective on health goals transcends quick fixes and temporary resolutions. We are entering 2026 armed with more data and a deeper understanding of chronic disease prevention than ever before. My prescription for the coming year is rooted in the philosophy that longevity and vitality are built on consistent, proactive lifestyle choices, not just reacting to illness.



Pillar 1:

Embrace Proactive Metrics, Not Just Symptoms

Your health journey in 2026 should start with a comprehensive personal assessment. I urge you to move beyond simply tracking weight. We need to focus on **biomarkers**—measurable indicators of biological processes—that predict future health risks.

- **Know Your Core Numbers:** Beyond annual physicals, track your key metrics quarterly. This includes not just your **Blood Pressure** and **BMI/Weight**, but also your **Fasting Glucose** and **HbA1c** (a measure of average blood sugar over three months), and a detailed **Lipid Panel** (LDL, HDL, Triglycerides).
- **Prioritize Muscle Mass:** Emerging research increasingly highlights muscle as a metabolic health marker. Make a goal to engage in **resistance or strength training** at least two to three times a week. This is foundational for metabolic resilience, bone density, and fall prevention as you age.
- **Screening is Your Shield:** Be compliant with age-appropriate cancer screenings, such as **mammograms**, **colonoscopies (starting at age 45 or as recommended)**, and **lung cancer screenings** for high-risk smokers. Early detection remains our most potent weapon against these diseases.



Pillar 2:

The Lifestyle Trio: Movement, Sleep, and Nutrition

The vast majority of chronic conditions are driven by lifestyle factors. My goal for you is not perfection, but **consistency** in three critical areas:

- **Functional Movement:** Aim for a balance of **Zone 2 Cardio** (low-intensity exercise where you can hold a conversation) for cardiovascular fitness and fat burning, coupled with the aforementioned **Strength Training**. Think of movement as medicine, not punishment. Incorporate "exercise snacking"—short, frequent bursts of movement—throughout your day to combat sedentary behavior.
- **Sleep Optimization:** Sleep is when the body and brain perform essential cellular repair and memory consolidation. Your goal for 2026 is to treat sleep as non-negotiable. Establish a strict, **tech-free nighttime routine**, aim for **7-9 hours of quality sleep**, and utilize sunlight timing (getting outside early) to help reset your natural **circadian rhythm**.
- **"Bioharmony" Nutrition:** Focus on a diet rich in **whole, unprocessed foods**, with an emphasis on **nutrient density** and **anti-inflammatory** components. Prioritize high-quality protein to support muscle maintenance, and feed your **gut microbiome** with diverse fibers and fermented foods. Personalize your eating window to align with your schedule and metabolic needs.



Pillar 3:

Cultivating Emotional and Nervous System Resilience

The mind-body connection is undeniable. Chronic, unmanaged stress is a systemic inflammatory trigger that increases the risk for virtually all chronic diseases.

- **Regulate Your Nervous System:** Instead of just "managing" stress, focus on **nervous system regulation**. Explore practices like **mindfulness**, **deep diaphragmatic breathwork (such as 4-7-8 breathing)**, or **somatic movement** to shift your body out of a constant "fight-or-flight" state.
- **Foster Connection:** Loneliness is a public health epidemic. Make a deliberate effort to strengthen your **social ties**—join a community, schedule regular time with loved ones, and engage in activities that bring a sense of belonging. Social well-being is a core pillar of health.

For 2026, my professional advice is to be your own chief health officer. Partner with your healthcare team, gather your data, and make small, incremental, and **sustainable** changes in these pillars. This shift from passive recipient of care to **proactive steward of your well-being** is the single most important step you can take.

Wishing all of you a healthy and happy 2026!

Dr. Steve Morrison
20 Mile Urgent Care & Family Medicine



Destination: Transformation

How private gyms can help you
achieve your New Year's Resolutions

BY PATRICK NOLAN, Owner of Pivotal Sports Performance

It's January. That means a lot of people are making their New Year's resolutions, which frequently revolve around health, fitness goals, and behavioral changes. According to new research conducted by OnePoll, it takes just 32 days for the average American to break their resolution, and 68% report giving up before that. The biggest reason for breaking resolutions is lack of self-discipline.

Inclusive, niche gyms have been on the rise since the pandemic. Big gyms have had trouble re-opening due to stringent restrictions, while smaller gyms can be nimble and get creative with workouts and training their clients. This has led to a lot of people making the switch to smaller gyms.

Private facilities offer a sense of community over big gyms. As members at a private facility slowly get to know one another, they start to form a new family, sharing a bond in those training sessions around similar goals. These goals can be to lose weight, get faster, or prepare for an upcoming season/event. The power of community has a huge influence at our facility, Pivotal Sports Performance. We see timid middle-school athletes to busy adults signed up for one time a week, switch to two or three times a week because they want to get more involved in the "community."

With private facilities forming these communities, the result is accountability! When you start training with the same group of people on a weekly basis, a natural sense of accountability starts to form as they become part of your team. You do not want to let them down. Even when you are tired, busy etc., you end up finding a way to make sure you do not miss your workout because you do not want to let down your "workout family."



When you are being held accountable, it can force you to stay on track longer and stay consistent. When you reach consistency, you form behavioral changes that lead to healthier habits throughout your life—not just in the gym. Therefore, the consistency makes it easier to last longer than 32 days and keep those New Year's resolutions going for the long haul! So not only does showing up to workouts help you get closer to your fitness goals, but your actions outside the gym start to change. The way you shop at the grocery store, the restaurants you go to, the choices you make when you are out, are among a long list of other behavior changes that form into new habits when you stay consistent and diligent. We love to see behavioral changes when our clients at Pivotal send us pictures of their breakfast or them doing extra work outside of the gym walls.



And when you form these new habits and stay consistent with your workouts, the ultimate prize occurs: **RESULTS!** Social media and false advertisements will talk about all types of results that can happen in two weeks with supplements or fad diets. It is not true, nor is it going to help long term health goals. So, if you truly want to stick to your New Year's resolution, finding a small gym and becoming part of their community is going to hold you accountable and create consistency leading into long term **RESULTS!** We would love to see you at Pivotal Sports Performance and become part of our community! We have training options for every age and level!



THE GUIDE

THE BEST PLACES TO DINE IN DOUGLAS COUNTY

In the interest of providing the 50 best dining options in Douglas County, we must be able to personally recommend each listing. The guide is subject to change. If you have a suggestion for inclusion on the list, email us at contribute@tuellers.com.

KEY

Based on a typical dinner for one person, excluding drinks, tax or tip.

\$ Under \$15
\$\$ \$15-\$25
\$\$\$ Over \$25
(EC) Editors Choice
(N) New

ASIAN FUSION

DANCING NOODLE

A small, family owned, dine-in and take-out restaurant that serves authentic homestyle Thai food.

10841 S. Crossroads Dr., Suite 10, Parker
303-805-3880 \$\$

INDOCHINE

A local go-to for quality home-style cuisine. This Parker fixture is known for a fresh, creative menu.

19751 E Mainstreet, Parker
720-851-8559 \$\$

ITO SUSHI ASIAN BISTRO

Asian fusion restaurant known for quality ingredients and fresh fish daily.

2240 Mercantile St #100, Castle Rock
720-749-6777 \$\$ (N)

JOHN HOLLY'S

Chinese and Thai dishes that are nothing less than the culinary equivalent of an exotic adventure.

9232 Park Meadows Dr, Lone Tree
303-768-9088 \$\$



PEGASUS

A local favorite for breakfast and lunch, Pegasus has something for everyone. They have served an eclectic menu in a comfortable setting for the past 31 years. While you're there, go see the giant riverboat roulette wheel behind the bar!

JUNZ

A favorite sushi place in town with a unique blend of Japanese and French at its very best.

11211 S. Dransfeldt Rd., Parker
720-851-1005 \$\$

BAKERY/DESSERTS

LA PETITE CREPERIE

The locals favorite spot to grab made-to-order crepes. Sweet or savory, you can't go wrong. Proudly serving farm to table fresh.

19751 Mainstreet, Parker
720-638-9722 \$ (EC)

PARIS BAGUETTE

Popular Korean chain that brings expertly crafted baked goods through a warm and welcoming bakery cafe' experience that delivers joy to everyone.

18374 Cottonwood Dr., Parker
720-500-5555 \$ (N)

POULETTE BAKESHOP

New artisan bakers taking Parker by storm. Order early, they sell out every day!

19585 Hess Road, Parker
303-955-5647 \$ (N)

BARBEQUE

BIG JIMS

Don't be fooled by this being a food truck; if you like southern BBQ, this is your place. **Corner of Parker Rd and Longs Way, Parker** \$\$\$

GQUE BBQ

Award-winning food. Try the wood-smoked ribs, brisket, pork, or garlic potatoes.

8433 Park Meadows Center Dr., Suite 143B, Lone Tree
303-729-2506 \$\$

HICKORY HOUSE

The Parker tradition. Known for their baby back ribs, but don't miss the pulled pork and barbeque chicken.

10335 S Parker Rd, Parker
303-805-9742 \$\$

OLD WEST BBQ

A hidden gem with family-friendly pricing. Don't miss out on their breakfast burritos. **107 Wolfensberger Rd., Castle Rock**
303-660-6340 \$

BREW PUB

20 MILE TAP HOUSE

Best known for their burgers and wings. Make sure to catch Trivia Tuesdays. **12543 N Hwy 83, Parker**
303-841-6782 \$\$

GREAT DIVIDE BREWERY & ROADHOUSE

Destination locale with an informal ambiance offering hearty comfort classics **215 Wilcox St Suite G, Castle Rock**
303-955-5788 \$\$ - \$\$\$ (N)

ROCKYARD BREWING CO.

Douglas County's longest running brew pub. Steaks, burgers, pizza and soup! **880 Castleton Rd, Castle Rock**
303-814-9273 \$\$

TAILGATE TAVERN & GRILL

Your neighborhood tavern for breakfast, lunch or dinner. Sports bar with live music not to miss on the weekends. **19552 E. Mainstreet, Parker** 303-841-7179 \$\$

THE LIBRARY CO. BAR & KITCHEN

Offering great food & amazing drinks in a relaxed and warm atmosphere. Clear and simple menu options. **3911 Ambrosia St., Suite 101, Castle Rock** 720-389-5986 \$\$

ITALIAN

CRANELLI'S

Comfort Italian food in a rustic, cozy, casual family-oriented format. **10047 Park Meadows Dr., Lone Tree** 303-799-3661 \$\$

DANIELLE'S SCRATCH KITCHEN

Stylish, energetic eatery offering elevated Italian fare with an emphasis on great customer service. **872 Happy Canyon Rd. Suite 100, Castle Rock** 303-524-9788 \$\$\$

PORTOFINO

Authentic Italian eatery featuring pizza, pasta, calzones and heros. The local "go-to" for fresh Italian. **10920 S Parker Rd, Parker** 303-841-9900 \$\$

SCILEPPI'S

A modern Italian restaurant focused on family recipes and premium ingredients. **210 Third St., Castle Rock** 303-688-9000 \$\$

VIA BACI

Neapolitan pizzas join modern Italian fare at this casual eatery featuring a full bar & patio. **10005 Commons St, Lone Tree** 303-790-0828 \$\$

MEXICAN

ADRIANNA'S

Intimate Mexican eatery for authentic cuisine in a relaxed ambiance. Great for parties. **7272 E Hwy 86, Franktown** 303-663-7800 \$\$

CASA MARIACHI

Unassuming local joint serving up straight-forward Mexican plates. **9771 S Parker Rd, Parker** 720-842-5105 \$\$

LA LOMA

Upscale-rustic atmosphere known for traditional Mexican meals. **6361 Promenade Pkw, Castle Rock** 303-632-9900 \$\$ (N)

LAS POTRANCES

Casual Mexican restaurant full of real Mexican culture, Mexican Food, Fresh Drinks, and Friendly Hospitality. **19600 Solar Cir, Parker** 303-840-0325 \$\$ (N)

LOS DOS POTRILLOS

Elegant family-owned eatery. There's a combo dish to please everyone. **6370 Promenade Pkwy., Castle Rock** 720-769-5474 \$\$

LOS VOLCANES

Don't miss the Carnitas! And bring your appetite for the large portions. **10471 S. Parker Rd., Parker** 303-841-0160 \$\$

NEW AMERICAN

CASTLE CAFE

Set in a former 1890s hotel. Plating hearty American fare like pan-fried chicken & burgers. **403 Wilcox St, Castle Rock** 303-814-2233 \$\$

VALERIE'S BREWHOUSE

Uniquely fun sports bar with a creative menu of brats and dogs. **971 Park St., Castle Rock** 303-660-2399 \$

CRAVE

A favorite gourmet burger joint. Imaginative menu with amazing handcrafted shakes. **3982 Limelight Ave, Castle Rock** 303-814-2829 \$\$

DOUG'S DAY DINER

American breakfast cafe where everything is made from scratch. **18595 Mainstreet, Parker** 720-476-7162 \$\$

MANNA

A casual sit-down destination with a menu that reflects Colorado's growing season. **2350 Meadows Blvd., Castle Rock** 720-455-3664 \$

PARKER GARAGE

The Parker landmark located right downtown offers a locally-sourced menu. Great service and large portions. **19420 Mainstreet, Parker** 720-389-8105 \$\$ (EC)

PEGASUS

A local favorite for breakfast or lunch. American, Greek or Mexican dishes. **313 Jerry St., Castle Rock** 303-688-6746 \$\$

RORY'S

Comfort food and baked goods at their finest. Don't see it on the menu? Ask for it! **11020 S Pikes Peak Dr., Parker** 720-708-2889 \$\$

SIERRA

High-end, wood-fired kitchen with a warm ambiance, preparing select American dishes. **10680 Cabela Dr., Lone Tree** 303-662-8800 \$\$

TRIBE AT RIVERWALK

Upscale, yet casual dining experience with a one-of-a-kind menu. Don't miss the brunch. **115 Wilcox Street, Castle Rock** 303-362-0904 \$\$\$ (N)

WEST MAIN TAPROOM

A modern and open venue that boasts thoughtful and honest cuisine. A haven for the gluten-free crowd. **18595 Mainstreet, Parker** 720-826-3689 \$\$

PIZZA

ANTONIO'S

A traditional family-style Italian pizza restaurant with a Brooklyn flair. **12947 S Parker Rd., Parker** 720-851-5300 \$

ARTISAN

Delicious Neapolitan-style pizza that makes each dish an individual work of art! And don't forget dessert. **12311 Pine Bluffs Way, Parker** 303-840-0518 \$

COLORADOUGH

A refreshing take on made-from-scratch pizza. So fresh they don't even have a freezer! **17860 Cottonwood Dr., Parker** 303-386-3333 \$\$

LIL' RICCI'S

New York pizzas & other red sauce staples in a low-key setting. Can't miss the garlic knots. **16526 Keystone Blvd, Parker** 303-220-7422 \$\$

PARRY'S

NY-style pizza, wings, & casual Italian eats, in kid-friendly quarters. **5650 Allen Way, Castle Rock** 303-814-8686 \$\$





STEAKHOUSE

DUKE'S

Rustic restaurant featuring beef & seafood dishes, plus a sports tavern with an Irish vibe.

**363 Village Square Lane,
Castle Pines**
303-814-2487 \$\$\$

FOGO DE CHAO

Upscale Brazilian steakhouse with all-you-can-eat meat carved tableside. Guaraná is a must, and try the Creme de Papaya. **8419 Park Meadows Center Dr., Lone Tree**

303-481-4001 \$\$\$ (EC)

PERRY'S

Chops, seafood, wine, & cocktails served in an upscale setting with a lounge & live jazz. **8433 Park Meadows Center Dr., Lone Tree**

303-792-2571 \$\$\$

TEXAS ROADHOUSE

Texas-themed steakhouse with a great menu and wonderful atmosphere.

**11205 S. Parker Rd,
Parker**
303-805-5848 \$\$

TRAPPER'S CHOP HOUSE

Upscale hideaway local favorite featuring their signature Volcanic Hot Rock sear-it-yourself experience.

**19308 Cottonwood Dr.,
Parker**
303-248-2132 \$\$\$

UNIQUE

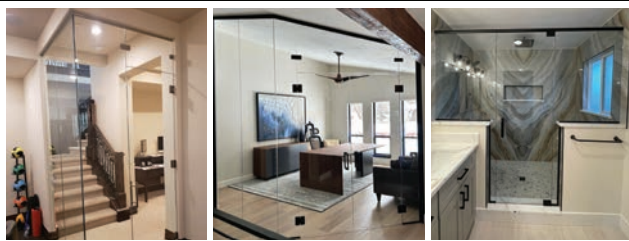
VISTAVINO MODERN

Quaint Tuscan grill made fresh from local fare. Every dish is a winner!

611 Wilcox St., Castle Rock
303-814-2487 \$\$



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Simply visit www.dcsdk12.org/kindergarten to get started. If your child currently attends a DCSD preschool, they will automatically be registered for Kindergarten.

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