



Health & Safety

February is *American Heart Month*

Take a selfie for your health?

Imagine taking a selfie and using it for your health. New technology may allow for just such a use.

A recent study tested a smartphone-based technology that takes a short video of your face and then provides a blood pressure reading.

According to Harvard Health, researchers took two-minute videos of 1,328 Chinese and Canadian adults. Using an iPhone equipped with transdermal optical imaging, the software measures blood pressure by detecting blood flow changes in a person's face.

When compared to readings taken using a traditional blood pressure cuff, the video blood pressure readings were about 95 percent accurate.

Researchers made the videos in a controlled environment with good lighting, so it's unclear how the technology will perform in the real world. Additionally, although the study volunteers had a variety of skin tones, none had extremely fair or extremely dark skin, and most had normal blood pressure.

Snowblower injuries continue

It only takes one big snow storm and Emergency Room doctors know they will see an uptick in one kind of injury: finger amputations.

Snowblowers, those useful devices that can clear a driveway quickly, can also cause hand injuries and finger amputations when used improperly.

According to the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System, there were 27,826 hand injuries treated in emergency rooms associated with snow blowers from 2009 to 2017. More than 20 percent of the injuries were finger amputations.

Happily, according to a 2019 study in the American Journal of Emergency Medicine, injuries have declined. In part because of better machine safety designs and consumer awareness.

The key idea to preventing injuries seems obvious to everyone, even the injured: Don't stick your hand in the blades to clear a clog.

Yet, people still do exactly that and injuries still happen.

In nearly all cases of serious injury, the snowblower operators thought the blades were stopped and they reached into the snow chute to clear the clog.

The truth is even if the machine is off and the clutch released, some blowers may have torque remaining that will cause blades to turn if the clog is released. In other machines, blades may continue to spin even after disengagement.

Another cause: Not realizing that the blades are so close to the snow output chute, according to the CDC.

Awareness is the key to safety.

The snow chute is never safe to clear with hands, even if it seems the blades are stopped and even if the blower is powered off.

Always use a tool, such as a broom handle, to clear the chute.

There is a slight concern that, in drifts of snow, operators might become at least slightly intoxicated from carbon monoxide.

A good rule to remember is that snow blowers, while much better for clearing snow than shoveling, can also cause you to overheat and over-work your heart.

It is best to make several light passes while it's snowing instead of waiting for the snow to end.

Always wear safety glasses.

Never wear loose scarves or clothing that could be caught up in blades.

Advances in heart health

In recognition of American Heart Month, here are some cardiovascular research developments to keep an eye on in 2020, courtesy of Harvard Health Publishing:

* Digital stethoscopes. Featuring specialized microphones and sensors that filter, buffer, and amplify sounds from the heart, digital stethoscopes then convert the sounds to a digital signal sent wirelessly to a smartphone. There, the patterns can be visualized and further analyzed.

* Safer anti-clotting treatments. A chip the size of a postage stamp contains miniature channels, valves, processors, and pumps that enable precise manipulation of different fluids. The chip can screen hundreds of compounds in a few hours and was developed by Australian scientists who aim to identify better and safer anti-clotting treatments.

* New ways to lower cholesterol. An experimental injectable drug called Inclisiran requires just two injections a year (rather than others that are monthly) and may cut LDL -- the "bad" cholesterol -- in half. Another new drug called bempedoic acid, taken in pill form, can lower LDL by about 25 percent in people who can't tolerate high doses of statins.

* Cuffless blood pressure monitor. The Biobeat device uses a small skin patch to measure light absorbed or reflected by blood vessels; paired with a special

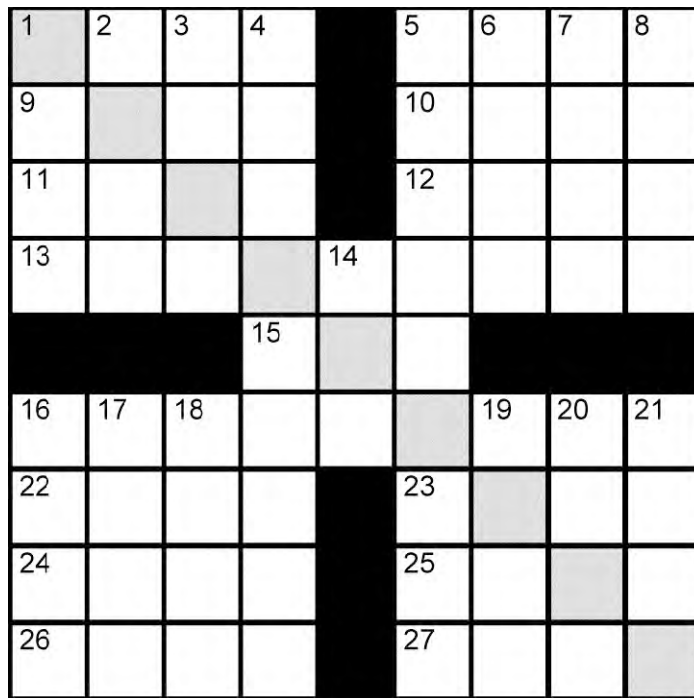
Fruit of an Evergreen

Across

1. Chipper
5. Hubbubs
9. Pinocchio, at times
10. Kind of dancer
11. Coastal raptor
12. Like some tea
13. Greece/Turkey separator
15. TV watchdog org.
16. Ominous omen
22. Tech support caller
23. Reverse
24. Enthusiasm
25. Marsh plant
26. Cuts off
27. Change for a twenty

Down

1. Entreaty
2. Cork's country
3. Telephoned
4. Some rain forest flora
5. Where Henry V triumphed
6. Rx writers
7. Curved molding
8. Fizzy drink
14. Do something
16. Petrol
17. Nobel Peace Prize city
18. Harvest
19. "Trick" joint
20. Genesis garden
21. Silent assents



[Click Here to Get a Peek At the Answers](#)

The headline is a clue to the answer in the diagonal.

smartwatch, it continuously measures a person's heart rate and oxygen level in addition to blood pressure. The patch is placed on the upper torso and lasts for 10 days.

* Handheld ultrasound. Miniaturized ultrasound devices that fit in a doctor's lab coat pocket are plugged into a smartphone or tablet, providing images that can detect problems with the aorta or the heart valves and also determine the severity of heart failure. Though they won't replace standard echocardiograms, the goal is faster diagnosis and treatment of common heart problems.



"I'm afraid there are some things we can't fix in Photoshop."

Speaking of Safety

Google AI proves itself in breast cancer detection

Google's Artificial Intelligence system is making inroads in medicine, as it has proved the system can detect breast cancer as often as expert radiologists and reduce the number of false positives.

According to the American Cancer Society, radiologists miss 20 percent of breast cancers. Meanwhile, half of all patients get false positives.

Research, published in the journal *Nature*, showed the AI system could reduce the number of false positives by 1.2 percent to 5.7 percent. Machines also cut the number of false negatives by 2.7 percent to 9.4 percent. False negatives incorrectly show no breast cancer.

Tough break: A stiff-arm fall

Football players hit the ground hard, time after time, but they rarely break their arms.

Yet, when the average person falls just once, it's not unusual for him or her to suffer a broken arm. One would wonder: Why is that?

Football players, acrobats and para-troopers know how to fall correctly. They don't resist when they know they are going down. They relax, go limp, and try to roll as they ease themselves down with arms bent. The bent arms are important. If a person hits the ground with arms stiffened, a break is likely because the arms will take the full shock of the fall.

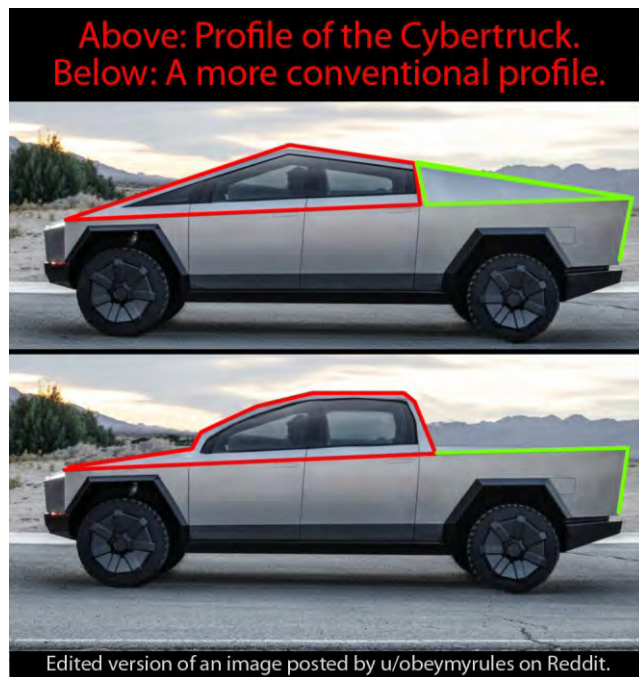
More people working; More flu

The better the economy, the more people working. The more people working, the more flu.

With the unemployment rate at 50 year lows, more people are out in the world and that means more opportunity to spread infectious disease.

In December, the CDC reported widespread flu in 16 states: Alabama, California, Connecticut, Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.

Workers, especially in those occupations with high public contact, should be aware that at the first symptoms of flu, they are contagious. The way to stop the flu: Stay home when sick, don't share.



Forget the windows, why does the Cybertruck look so weird?

Tesla's all-electric, battery powered Cybertruck opened with a stunt: Elon Musk demonstrating its bullet-proof windows. They broke.

But advertising stunts aside, what exactly makes the Cybertruck look so other-worldly?

Partly it is because of pyramidal structure of the top and rear, giving it a sort of alien or vaguely military feel. The truck bed is topped with a cover that rolls up when needed, but when rolled down emphasizes the triangular lines.

According to designer Dheeraj Nanduri, writing in *Medium*, basic truck appearance hasn't actually changed since the first trucks in 1917: Tall cab with long

work bed. The Cybertruck changes the calculations, but will it work as a truck? Yes, but maybe not for tradesmen.

The 6.5 foot truck bed uncovers to reveal a useful hauling space, complete with a pulldown ramp to drive such things as an ATV onto the bed. It has spaces for hooks and ropes.

But, online, some commentary was skeptical that it would be a great working truck that could haul pipes or lumber or accommodate a winch.

Many question whether the battery power would be enough to make the truck hardy in a working situation. Range estimates are 250-500 miles depending on the model. Three models have been proposed.

Presidents Day: Once everyone agreed

Strange to think, but there was one time in the United States of America that everyone pretty much agreed on who should be president.

That was the first and second terms of George Washington -- war hero, patriot -- and the first president of the newly minted United States, elected in 1788 and 1792.

Not that there wasn't a lot of controversy

during those two terms. Indeed, Washington didn't want to run again, given the controversies of his first term and his poor health.

But, he agreed at the urging of leaders throughout the country. It was the only time in presidential history that a candidate for president didn't campaign or even make a formal announcement. Still he won unanimously in the electoral college.

Presidents Day is February 17.



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February 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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9 Academy Awards	10	11	12	13	14 	15
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23	24	25 Mardi Gras	26 Lent begins	27	28	29