

# JIMSJOURNAL.NET - YOUR HOME NEWS

NEWS FROM YOUR REAL ESTATE CONSULTANT FOR LIFE

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## Stay Cool, Look Rested

Dear Friend],

We're deep into summer now—and July always feels like a mix of sunshine, sizzle, and nonstop plans. Whether you're heading to cookouts, watching fireworks, or just trying to keep cool without running the A/C nonstop, this month's newsletter has you covered.

Inside, you'll find a refreshing blend of helpful tips, curious finds, and just-for-fun reads to bring a little ease and inspiration to your summer days.

So pour yourself something icy, find a shady spot, and take a few minutes to enjoy.

And as always, if you or someone you know is thinking about buying or selling a home this summer, I'd love to help make it smooth, smart, and even a little fun.

Stay cool,

Jim Urban

### The Night America Lit Up

July 4 marks the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776, but did you know the first Independence Day celebration occurred a year later, on July 4, 1777?

That first celebration, in Philadelphia, featured something most Americans had never seen before: fireworks.

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According to *The Pennsylvania Evening Post*, the city put on “a grand exhibition of fireworks which began and concluded with thirteen rockets,” which was a nod to the original 13 colonies.

The day was also filled with bonfires, bell ringing and public toasts, all meant to lift spirits and unite people during the hardships of the Revolutionary War.

So why fireworks? The founding fathers were fans of pageantry. In fact, John Adams wrote to his wife, Abigail, that independence should be celebrated with “Pomp and Parade ... bonfires and illuminations from one end of this continent to the other.”

Although fireworks had been invented centuries earlier in Asia, they were the perfect way to inspire awe and to symbolize a bold, young nation stepping into its place on the world stage.

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## Summer = Fresh Flowers

Fresh flowers can lift a space instantly, especially during summer when blooms are at their peak.

Sunflowers bring warmth and energy, thrive in natural light and last up to a week.

Zinnias and dahlias are heat-loving showstoppers that add vibrant color and structure to any room.

Lavender or eucalyptus bundles are low maintenance, are fragrant, dry beautifully and stay fresh for weeks.

And if you want an effortlessly elegant vibe, then hydrangeas are classic, but keep them hydrated because they're thirsty.



# Smoky Plant-Based BBQ "Chicken" Dip

This recipe has no meat, no dairy and no regrets, only cozy BBQ vibes, melty goodness and big flavor.

## Ingredients:

1 can young jackfruit in brine (not syrup), drained and shredded

½ cup BBQ sauce (your fave, ideally low sugar)

½ cup dairy-free cream cheese

½ cup unsweetened plain dairy-free yogurt or sour cream

¼ cup nutritional yeast (adds that cheesy flavor)

½ tsp smoked paprika

½ tsp garlic powder

Salt and pepper to taste

Optional: a handful of chopped green onions or cilantro on top

## Instructions

Preheat oven to 375°F.

Sauté the shredded jackfruit in a pan with a little oil until it starts to brown. Add BBQ sauce and cook down for 5–7 minutes.

In a mixing bowl, stir together the cream cheese, yogurt, nutritional yeast and seasonings. Fold in the BBQ jackfruit.

Spread into a baking dish and bake for 20–25 minutes until bubbly and slightly golden on top.

Make it ahead: This dip reheats like a dream. Just bake it at the party or pop it in the microwave in your friend's kitchen.

Top with green onions or cilantro, if you want, and serve warm with tortilla chips, celery sticks or grilled bread.



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## FREE NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTION!

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## THE ICE BATH CRAZE: SCIENCE OR JUST COLD HYPE?



Cold plunges are everywhere — on TikTok, in boutique gyms and maybe even your neighbor's backyard. Advocates say they improve mood, cut inflammation and boost metabolism. But what does the research say?

A 2024 review by Stanford's Longevity Project confirms that cold-water immersion can increase dopamine levels by up to 250 percent, which can potentially improve your mood and energy. Cold exposure also seems to reduce muscle soreness and trigger an anti-inflammatory response, which might help with recovery.

But cold plunges aren't magic. According to Health.com, the benefits vary depending on water temperature, time of exposure and personal health factors. People with cardiovascular issues should avoid cold plunging without medical guidance, because the shock can raise blood pressure or trigger irregular heart rhythms.

Thinking of trying it?

- Start small: Try a cold shower for 30 seconds and build from there.
- Aim for consistency over extremes.
- Always listen to your body—shivering isn't a badge of honor.

### Tiny Tricks To Look Like You Slept 8 Hours

- Splash your face with cold water or use chilled eye patches. Doing this instantly reduces puffiness and awakens you.
- Stand up straight. Good posture signals energy, even if you're faking it.
- Moisturize your face (and lips). Dull, dry skin is a dead giveaway.
- Style one thing intentionally. Whether it's your hair, an outfit or an accessory, looking pulled together tricks the brain and everyone else.
- Smile or laugh once, and even fake it. Smiling boosts circulation and awakens your whole face.





## SEVEN BUDGET-FRIENDLY WAYS TO KEEP YOUR HOME COOLER

Summer is showing off this year — and so is your AC bill. Before you crank it up again, try these quick, efficient ways to cool your space naturally:

1. Keep curtains closed during peak sun hours, especially on south- and west-facing windows.
2. Switch your sheets to breathable cotton or linen.
3. Reverse your ceiling fan so it spins counterclockwise. (Yep, that's the summer setting.)
4. DIY a cross-breeze by cracking windows on opposite sides of the house.
5. Replace incandescent bulbs, which give off a surprising amount of heat.
6. Cool your pulse points with a damp cloth or a chilled water bottle.
7. Declutter surfaces: Less stuff equals better airflow and a more-breathable vibe.

Little changes can make a big difference. Your future self (and utility bill) will thank you.

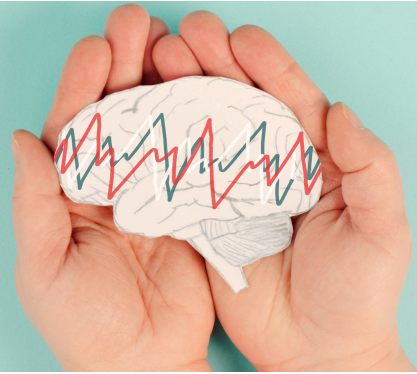
### Small Changes That Can Boost Your Home Value This Summer

Are you thinking about selling, or do you want to love your space more? These simple upgrades can make a big visual impact without breaking the bank:

- **Paint the front door.** A fresh coat — especially in a bold, welcoming color— adds instant curb appeal.
- **Upgrade cabinet hardware.** Swapping knobs and pulls in the kitchen or bathroom is an easy facelift.
- **Add outdoor lighting.** String lights or solar path lights make your yard feel polished and ready for summer nights.
- **Mulch and tidy the yard.** Clean lines and fresh landscaping go a long way in first impressions.
- **Replace worn-out caulk or grout.** Although a small detail, clean lines in kitchens and bathrooms make a home feel more cared-for.
- **Power wash exterior surfaces.** Cleaning driveways, siding, and walkways instantly brightens your home's appearance.



## DOPAMINE “RESETS”: DOES YOUR BRAIN ACTUALLY NEED ONE?



During the last few years, “dopamine detoxing” has become a buzzword in wellness circles. The idea? Take a break from overstimulating activities — such as scrolling social media, watching TV, snacking or chatting — to “reset” your brain’s reward system.

But what does neuroscience say?

Dopamine isn’t just a “pleasure chemical”; it’s a motivation neurotransmitter that helps your brain learn what’s worth pursuing. It spikes when you anticipate rewards but not necessarily when you receive them. According to *Harvard Health*, the idea of “fasting” from dopamine misunderstands how it works. You can’t truly “reset” your dopamine levels, just by turning a phone off and on.

That said, there is real value in taking breaks from overstimulation. Constant novelty — such as notifications, videos and algorithm-curated content — trains your brain to expect fast rewards, which can alter your attention span and baseline mood.

So what’s the takeaway?

Although you don’t need a full detox, giving your brain space to be bored, to focus deeply and to experience slower forms of pleasure — such as taking a long walk or journaling — can retrain your reward system, and science backs that.

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**— ANNE LAMOTT**





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Jim Urban  
Urban Companies Real Estate  
225 Union Blvd Suite 150  
Lakewood, CO 80228

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