



Forums User Guide
(DRAFT)

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1 Forums: Overview

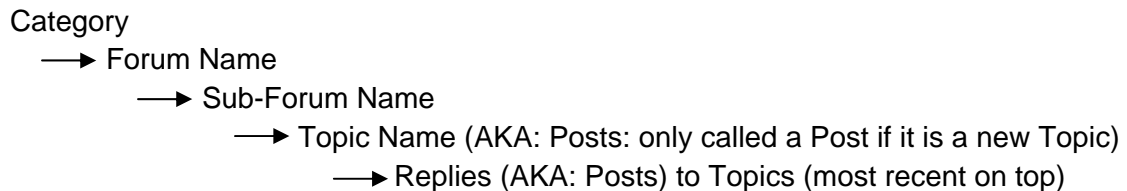
This documentation is intended to give End users a functional and navigational understanding of the Forums Application.

1.1 What are they?

Community Forums is a web application for holding discussions and posting user-generated content. Forums are also commonly referred to as internet / web Forums, message boards, discussion boards, (electronic) discussion groups, discussion Forums, bulletin boards, etc. Forums are also exposed as RSS Feeds.

1.2 Forums Hierarchy

The Forums Application is organized into a formalized hierarchy outlined below:



Categories, Forums, and Sub-Forums are set up by your community administrators. You may add Topics and Replies to Topics that you have access to at any time.

2 Forums Home Page

When first entering the Forums application you will be brought to a landing page where you can view all of your community's Categories, Forums, and Sub-Forums amongst other pertinent information about the application as a whole. A visual representation of the Forums Hierarchy on the Forums Home Page is below:

Nutrition ← CATEGORY			
Forums	Topics	Replies	Last Post
Nutrition Basics ← FORUM This Forum is for anyone who is clueless about nutrition and how to start living a healthy lifestyle. Feel free to post comments or questions about nutrition and how to help others get started! Sub Forums: Nutrition Labels ← SUB-FORUM	12	3	Yesterday @ 8:43 AM In: Medicines By: OceanEleven12
Health Tips ← CATEGORY			
Forums	Topics	Replies	Last Post
Tips and Tricks ← FORUM This Forum allows users to share ideas, tips, and tricks they have learned over the years to live a health lifestyle.	13	6	Yesterday @ 9:21 AM In: OceanEleven11 By: OceanEleven11
Exercise ← CATEGORY			
Forums	Topics	Replies	Last Post
The Importance of Cardio ← FORUM This Forum discusses the basics of why it's important to include cardiovascular movements into your daily exercise routine.	6	3	5/13/2008 12:02 PM In: How often do you work out? By: kylefrank319
For Women Only ← CATEGORY			
Forums	Topics	Replies	Last Post
Got Milk? ← FORUM This Forum discusses small ways women can get more calcium into their diet.	2	3	4/29/2008 7:55 AM In: hey! Im impersonating... By: mwnd_admin

Figure 2 Forums Home Page

2.1 Navigation of Forums Home Page

To view or add Topics or Replies to a Forum simply click on the Forum or Sub-Forum name from the Forums Home Page. You can also choose to narrow down your view on the Home Page by Expanding or Collapsing Categories via clicking the icons below. The next time you log into the community your settings will be remembered.

☒ = Collapse (close)

☒ = Expand (open)

2.2 Topic/Reply Count and Last Post

To the right of the Forum name several pieces of information regarding the Forum are displayed.

Topics	Replies	Last Post
6	3	5/13/2008 12:02 PM In: How often do you work out? By: kylefrank319

Figure 2.2 Topic/Reply Count and Last Post

Topic Count: Total number of Topics related to a specific Forum, and Sub-Forums if any.

Replies Count: Total number of Replies related to a Topic in a specific Forum, and Sub-Forums if any.

Last Post: Displays the Date and Time of the Post as well as the Topic name the Post was generated under and the Username of the Member who authored the Post. If you click on either the Date and Time link or the 'In: Topic Name' link you will be taken directly to the Post. If you click on the Username of the Post author you will be taken to that user's profile in the community.

2.3 Forum Key

There are several different types of Forums available. The key for these Forum types is below:

 = A Moderated Forum

 = A Moderated Forum with New Posts

Depending on the type of Moderation of this Forum your new Topics and Posts may be queued for a Moderator to review before they are made visible to the community. Another type of Moderation that may exist is that all Topics and Posts appear immediately, but Forum Moderators can delete or edit any Topics or Posts you have added to the Forum.

 = A Normal Forum


 = A Normal Forum with New Posts

 = A Closed Forum

Closed Forums still allow you to click on the forum to view the Topics and Posts within the Forum, but you will not have the ability to add new Topics or Posts.

2.4 RSS Feeds

If you have an RSS reader you can utilize the Forums RSS feed option by clicking on the icon below.

 = Allows you to add this feed to your RSS reader. Any new Topics added to this Forum will appear in your reader at that time.

2.5 Forum Settings

The forum settings link at the top right hand corner of the Forums landing page controls your individual settings in the Forums application. These settings apply to your Forums experience only and will not affect other users' Forums experience.

2.6 Recent Posts

The Recent Posts link at the top right hand corner of the screen allows you to view the most Recent Posting history in the Forum Application. By clicking on the Recent Posts link several options will be presented to you.

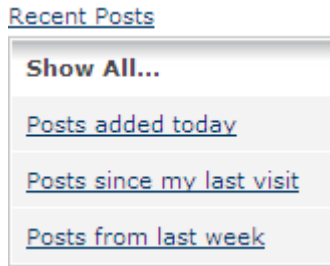


Figure 2.6 Recent Posts

Posts added today: By clicking this link you will be brought to a page that lists out the Topics posted today. The options to click on the Topic, Forum, or Username of the Author of the Topic are also available on this screen.

Posts since my last visit: By clicking this link you will be brought to a page that lists out the Topics posted since the last time you logged into the community. The options to click on the Topic, Forum, or Username of the Author of the Topic are also available on this screen.

Posts from last week: By clicking on this link you will be brought to a page that lists out the Topics posted the week prior. The options to click on the Topic, Forum, or Username of the Author of the Topic are also available on this screen.

2.7 Popular Topics

The Popular Topics link at the top right hand corner of the screen allows you to view the most popular topics in your community's Forum application. By clicking on the popular Topics link several options will be presented to you.



Figure 2.7 Recent Topics

Hot Topics (1+ replies (the number of replies will vary per community)): By clicking this link you will be brought to a page that lists out the 'Hot Topics' in your Forums application.

In the figure above you will see that Topics in this community are deemed 'Hot' after just one reply is contributed. The number of replies to designate a 'Hot' rating is set by your community administrator. The options to click on the Topic, Forum, or Username of the Author of the Topic are also available on this screen.

Rated Topics (4+ Stars): By clicking on this link you will be brought to a page that lists out all the Topics in your Forums application that have a 4 or more star rating. The options to view these Topics' ratings, click on the Topic, Forum, or Username of the Author of the Topic are also available on this screen.

2.8 Search

The Forums Search option allows you to search by keyword in the Forums application. The keyword search will span across all Forum Topics containing that keyword. If a Topic is found containing the keyword you will be brought to a screen and given the options to click on the Topic, Forum, or Username of the Author of the Topic. Once you click on the Topic you will see your keyword highlighted in the Topic entry anywhere it appears.

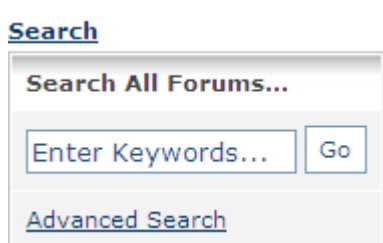


Figure 2.8 Forums Search

2.8.1 Advanced Search

The Forums Advanced Search link gives you many more search options such as Keyword, Phrase, Username, Date Range Searches, and Forum specific Searches to name a few.

Figure 2.8.1 Advanced Search

3 How to Participate in a Forum

As mentioned in [Section 2.1](#) to view or add Topics or Replies to a Forum simply click on the Forum or Sub-Forum name from the Landing Page.

3.1 Navigating Forum Pages

In the examples below we will click on the Nutrition Basics Forum from the Forums Landing Page. This Forum also contains a Sub-Forum called Nutrition Labels.

Figure 3.1 Nutrition Basics Forum as seen from the Landing Page

By clicking on the Nutrition Basics Forum you are brought to a page that displays the Sub-Forum (Nutrition Labels) and the Topics pertaining to the Nutrition Basics Forum are listed below. If you would like to see the Topics pertaining to the Nutrition Labels Sub-Forum then would simply click on the Nutrition Labels link here or from the Forums Landing Page.

The screenshot shows a forum interface with several key elements:

- Breadcrumb Trail:** Home » Nutrition » Nutrition Basics
- Forum Description:** Nutrition Basics. Please refrain from using abbreviated terms in this Forum. Since this Forum is designed for 'beginners' not everyone will understand abbreviated content. Thank you and enjoy!
- Forum Name:** Nutrition Basics
- Sub-Forum Name:** Nutrition Labels. This Forum helps explain what different Nutrition Labels mean and what is most important to pay attention to on these labels.
- Topic List:**

Title	Started By	Replies	Views	Last Post
Exercise	tester20	0	1	Yesterday @ 7:45 AM Last Post By: tester20
Calories vs Fat Grams Calories vs Fat Grams	kylefrank319	0	15	4/10/2008 4:16 PM Last Post By: kylefrank319
The Food Pyramid The Food Pyramid	kylefrank319	0	10	4/10/2008 4:16 PM Last Post By: kylefrank319
- Sort Options:** sort by: last post date, in: DESC Order, from: the beginning, Go

Figure 3.1.1 Page Display after clicking on a Forum from the Landing Page

To read a specific Topic simply click on the Topic name. To add a new Topic or Poll click on the Add Topic or Add poll buttons.

3.2 Sorting and Viewing Options

At the bottom of the Forum screen there are 3 drop-down menus. The combination of each of these drop-down menus designates the order by which the Topics within the Forum will be sorted and displayed. Options such as sorting by Topic Title, Topic Rating, and Has Attachments in Ascending or Descending order and within a number of days ranging back to the last 90 days are available in these drop downs. Simply selecting each option and clicking 'Go' will sort the Topics in the order you have specified.

The image shows a close-up of the sorting controls at the bottom of the forum page. It consists of three dropdown menus and a 'Go' button. The first dropdown is set to 'last post date', the second to 'DESC Order', and the third to 'the beginning'.

Figure 3.2 Topic Sort Options

Forum Jump: At the bottom of the Forum page you will see a drop-down menu prefilled with the name of the Forum you are currently viewing. If you would like to view another Forum you can drop down to that Forum (or Sub-Forum) name. This offers you an option to quickly move from Forum to Forum without having to go back to the Forums home page to get there.



Figure 3.2.1 Forum Jump

3.3 Topic and Poll Key

There are several different types of Topics and Polls available. The key for these types is below:

 = **A Topic with New Replies**

 = **A Normal Topic**

 = **A Hot topic with New Replies:**

A Topic is designated 'Hot' after a certain amount of replies. This amount is pre-set by the community administrator.

 = **A Hot Topic**

 = **Poll with new Replies**

 = **A Normal Poll**

 = **A Closed Topic**

Closed Topics (and any replies to Closed Topics) can still be viewed by users. However, new Replies cannot be added to Closed Topics.

 = **A Moved Topic**

This icon designates a Topic that, at one time, existed in another Forum and was moved by a community administrator to this Forum.

3.4 Breadcrumb Trail

The Breadcrumb Trail at the top of the screen follows you through the Forums application to show you what page you are currently viewing as well as where you've been in the application. You have the option to click on any past pages to back out of the Trail you have followed or even go so far as to go back to the Forums Home Page if you wish.



Figure 3.2 Example of Breadcrumb Trail

3.5 Topic/Poll Information

Several pieces of information are displayed on the individual Forums pages about the Topics and Polls belonging to the Forums.

Started By: Username of the community member who created the Topic or Poll. By clicking on the member's Username you will be brought to that member's profile page in the community.

Replies: Number of Replies (Posts) made to this Topic.

Views: Number of times the Topic or Poll has been viewed by users.

Last Post: Displays the Date, Time, and Username of the User who last Replied to or Posted the Topic in the Forum.

Started By	Replies	Views	Last Post
tester20	0	1	Yesterday @ 7:45 AM Last Post By: tester20
kylefrank319	0	15	4/10/2008 4:16 PM Last Post By: kylefrank319
kylefrank319	0	10	4/10/2008 4:16 PM Last Post By: kylefrank319

Figure 3.5 Topic/Poll Information

3.6 Search Forum

The Search Forum link allows you to execute a Keyword Search pertaining to the particular Forum you are in. The application will search this Forum's Topics, Replies, and Polls for the keyword entered. The Advanced Search link from this area will take you to

the same Advanced Search screen as described in [Section 2.8.1](#). You can also search the Forum at the bottom of the page as well by typing your keyword into the 'Search this Forum' Box and clicking 'Go'.

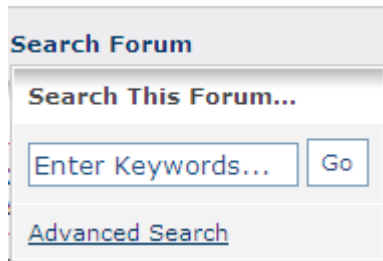


Figure 3.6 Search Forum



Figure 3.6.1 Alternative Search Box

3.7 Forum Options

The Forum Options link provides you with 3 options.

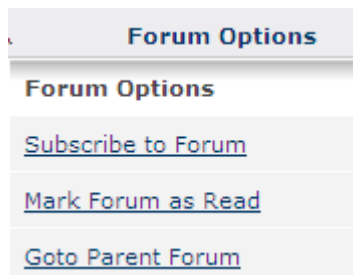




Figure 3.7 Forum Options

Subscribe to Forum: By clicking this link you will be brought a screen that will offer 2 subscription options:

1. No Email Notification (just add to list). This option will only add this Forum to your Subscriptions list in the Forum Settings screen. This allows for a quick and easy way to jump to specific Forums without having to follow a Breadcrumb Trail each time.
2. Immediate Notification of new Posts by email. This option will email you any time a new Topic or Post has been added to the Forum.

Mark as Read: You can mark the Topics you have read by placing a checkmark in the box(es) to the right of each Topic. Once you have checked off the Topics you have read you can click the 'Mark as Read' link here and the  icon next to the Topic Name will change to an  icon instead. This functionality is much like many email systems and is a way for you to organize which Topics you have read and which ones you haven't.

Go To Parent Forum: This link is mostly used for Sub-Forums. If you are viewing a Sub-Forum and would like to view its Parent Forum click this link and you will be brought to a screen that displays only that Forum's name, Description, and Sub-Forums (if any)

as seen below. In our example above ([Section 3.1](#)) Nutrition labels is the Sub-Forum and Nutrition Basics is the Parent.

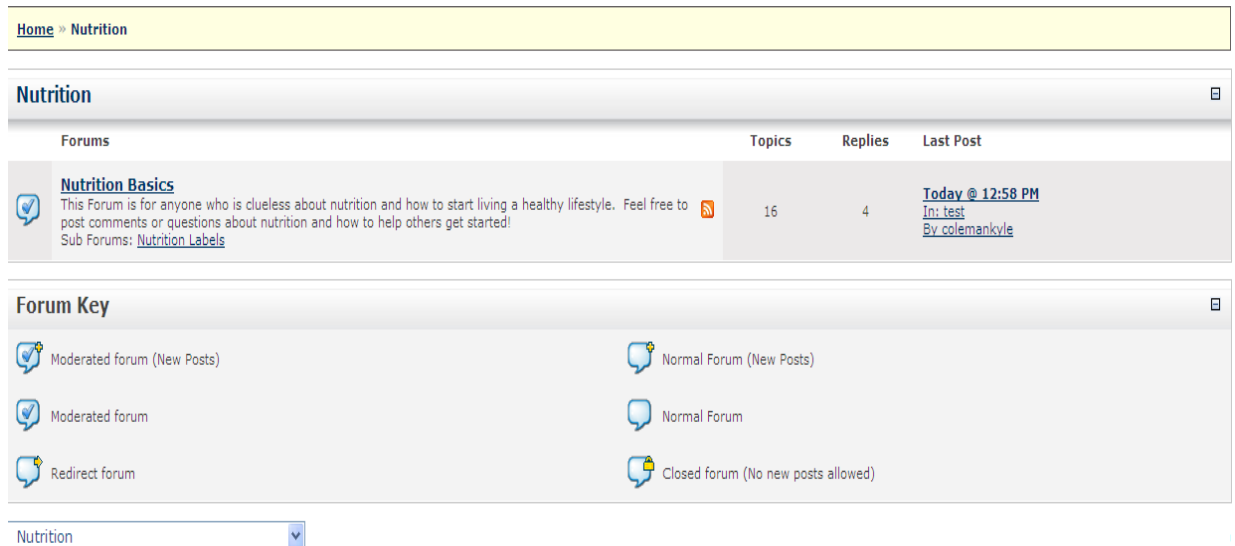


Figure 3.7.1 Parent Forum View

4 Add a New Topic

If you would like to start a new Topic within a Forum simply navigate to the Forum you'd like to add a Topic to and click on the 'Add Topic' button. Designate a Topic Subject and brief Description. The Subject and Description will both appear in the list of Topics for that Forum. Then type your Topic message. This is the text other members will see when they click on your Topic. Several editing options are available such as adding Images, Hyperlinks, changing Font size, color, and styling. If you are familiar with IFCode Shortcuts they are available as well. You also have the option to add Emoticons (i.e. 😄 and 😊) within your message text. These Emoticons are located on the right side of the screen.

Post Options: At the bottom of the screen you will see Post Options with Message Icons and Attachments listed.

Message Icons appear next to your Topic Subject on the Forum Page (see Figure 4). By default no Message Icon will appear unless you choose one here.

Topic Subscription Notification Type allows you to choose what [subscription method](#) you choose for this Topic.

Attachments are permitted up to a certain size limit. Only the file types designated by your community admin will also be permitted.

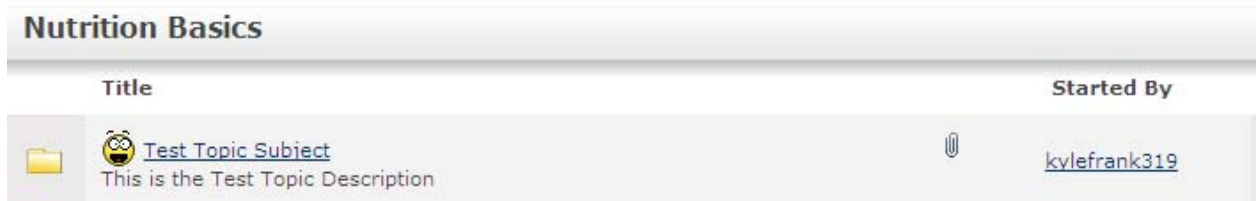


Figure 4 New Topic from Forum Page with Message Icon

4.1 Reply to a Topic

If you see a Topic of interest and you have something to contribute you can Reply to that Topic by clicking on the Topic name in the Forum screen. Once you are there you can click on the 'Add Reply' button and follow the same steps you would take to add a new Topic to the Forum (see [Section 4](#)).

4.2 Quote Topic

If you'd like to quote another User's Reply and paste it into your own click on the Quote Topic button from the Topic screen. Once you do that a new window will be displayed allowing you to add your own text to the Post. Once you have posted the Reply the Quoted text will appear differently than your new text.

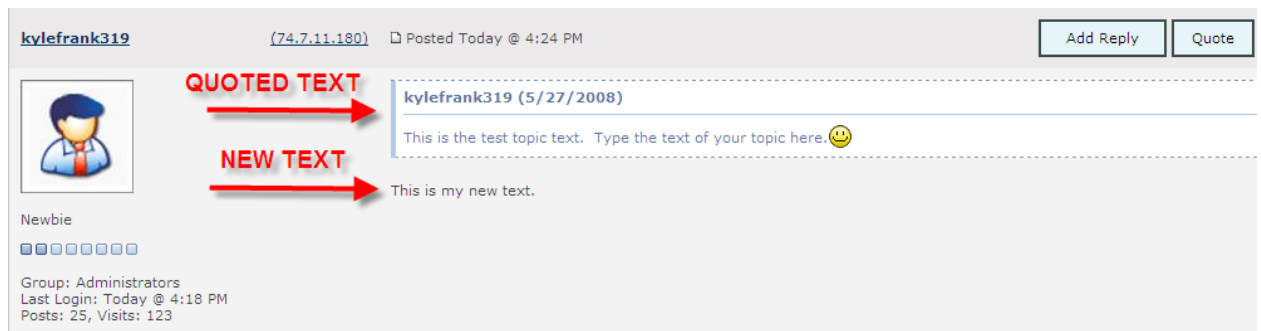


Figure 4.2 Quoted Topic

4.3 Report Post

By clicking on the 'Report!' button from the Topic screen you will be brought to a new screen that will display options to type a message to your Forums administrator(s). This will report suspicious behavior or inappropriate Posts.

4.4 Edit Posts

By clicking on the 'Edit' button from the Topic screen you will be brought to a screen that will allow you to Edit your own Topics and Posts only (unless you have been given permissions to edit other members' Posts by your Forums administrator(s)).

4.5 Delete Posts

By clicking on the 'Delete' button from the Topic screen you will be brought to a screen that will allow you to Delete your own Topics and Posts only (unless you have been given permissions to edit other members' Posts by your Forums administrator(s)).

4.6 Rate Topic

Once you have clicked on a Topic you have the option to Rate it from 1 (Poor) up to 5 (excellent). If a Topic has an average rating of 4 stars or more it will appear in the [Popular Topics](#) section of the Forum application.

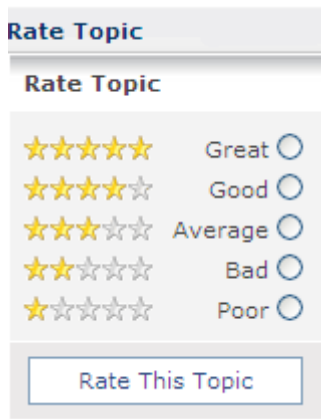


Figure 4.6 Rate Topic

4.7 Display Mode

The Topic Display mode controls how Topics and subsequent Replies are displayed on the screen. There are 3 display options in this drop down menu.

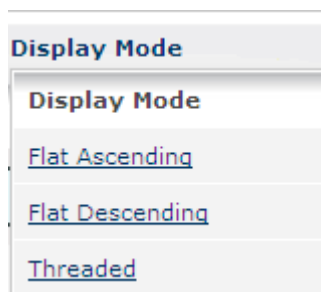





Figure 4.7 Display Mode

Flat Ascending: This option displays Topics and Replies one after another with the most recent Posts on appearing on the bottom of the screen.

Flat Descending: This option displays Topics and Replies one after another with the most recent Posts on appearing on the top of the screen.

Test Topic Subject Rate Topic Display Mode Topic Options



Author	Message	
kylefrank319  Newbie Group: Administrators Last Login: Today @ 2:26 PM Posts: 24, Visits: 120	Posted Yesterday @ 2:57 PM This is the test topic text. Type the text of your topic here. 😊 Edited: Yesterday @ 3:11 PM by kylefrank319 Post Attachments  Got Milk.jpg (0 views, 153.15 KB)	Add Reply Quote Report! Edit Delete
kylefrank319  Newbie Group: Administrators Last Login: Today @ 2:26 PM Posts: 24, Visits: 120	Posted Yesterday @ 3:16 PM Test Reply	Add Reply Quote Report! Edit Delete

Post #3513510 [Top](#)

Figure 4.7.1 Flat View (Ascending or Descending)

Threaded View: This option displays the original Topic on the screen and its Replies appear as subsets of the thread at the bottom of the screen. You have the option to click on the Reply subject to view the Reply or click on the Username of the author to view their Profile.

Test Topic Subject Rate Topic Display Mode Topic Options

Author	Message	
kylefrank319  Newbie Group: Administrators Last Login: Today @ 2:26 PM Posts: 24, Visits: 120	Posted Yesterday @ 2:57 PM This is the test topic text. Type the text of your topic here. 😊 Edited: Yesterday @ 3:11 PM by kylefrank319 Post Attachments  Got Milk.jpg (0 views, 153.15 KB)	Add Reply Quote Report! Edit Delete

Post #3513510 [Top](#)

[« Prev Topic](#) | [Next Topic »](#)

Threaded View ☰

- Test Topic Subject By [kylefrank319](#) (Yesterday @ 2:57 PM)
- Test Reply By [kylefrank319](#) (Yesterday @ 3:16 PM)
- test By [kylefrank319](#) (Today @ 2:37 PM)

Figure 4.7.2 Threaded View

4.8 Topic Options

There are 4 Topic Options in this drop down menu.

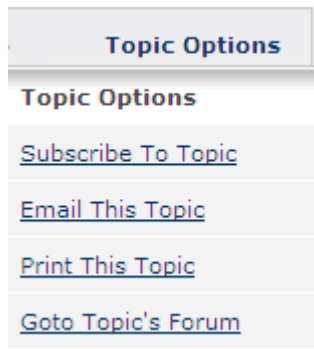


Figure 4.8 Topic Options

Subscribe to Topic: This option takes you to the Topic Subscription screen. The same options apply to Topic subscriptions as do Forum Subscriptions described in [Section 3.7](#).

Email this Topic: By clicking this link you will be taken to a screen to email a link to this Forum Topic to someone. If the recipient of the email is not a member of the community they will be prompted to register after clicking on the Topic link.

Print this Topic: By clicking this link you will print off the Topic and all replies in ascending order.

Go to Topic's Forum: This link will take you to the Forum that this Topic is located in. It's a quick and easy way to jump to the Forum page without utilizing the [Breadcrumb Trail](#) or [Forum Jump](#) options.

5 Add a new Poll

If you have been given the permissions to add a new Poll by your Forums administrator(s) you may follow the steps below to add a new Poll.

From the Forums Home page click on a Forum name then click on the Add Poll button. You will be brought to a screen that looks very similar to the Add Topic/Reply screens. However, the difference is that your Poll answers are required. Each answer must exist on a different line in the Poll Answers box. Once you have submitted your new Poll your users will see the Poll listed amongst the Topics in the Forum. Each answer will be displayed as a Radio Button. Multiple choice answers are not allowed.

Post New Poll

Subject:
Please provide a descriptive subject.
Nutrition Knowledge

Description:
You may provide an optional description to help identify your post.

Poll Question:
Please specify the question you would like to ask for this poll.
How well do you know your Nutrition Basics?

Poll Answers:
Possible answers. Insert one answer per line. Maximum 15 answers.
No HTML or IFCode allowed.

I'm an expert!
I know quite a bit, but I can always learn more.
I can hold my own in a discussion about Nutrition.
I have read about it, but the subject makes me uncomfortable.
What's Nutrition?

Multiple Choice

Message:
Please post the contents of your message in the box opposite.

IFCode Shortcuts
[center]/[center], [b]/[b], [email]/[email], [hr], [url]/[url], [img]/[img], [l]/[l], [p]/[p], [quote]/[quote], [u]/[u]

On a scale of 1-5 how well would you say you know the basics about Nutrition?

Design HTML Larger Area Smaller Area

Post New Poll Preview

Figure 5 Adding a New Poll

Nutrition Knowledge Rate Topic Display Mode Topic Options

How well do you know your Nutrition Basics?

Poll Answers

I'm an expert!

I know quite a bit, but I can always learn more.

I can hold my own in a discussion about Nutrition.


I have read about it, but the subject makes me uncomfortable.

What's Nutrition?

Add Vote Show Results Close Poll (Moderators Only)

Author **Message**

kylefrank319 (74.7.11.180) Posted Today @ 4:49 PM Add Reply Quote Report! Edit Delete

 On a scale of 1-5 how well would you say you know the basics about Nutrition?


Newbie

 Group: Administrators
 Last Login: Today @ 4:43 PM
 Posts: 26, Visits: 124

Figure 5.1 Answering a Poll

