

Healthy Living Newsletter



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TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR HEALTH VOLUME 5, NUMBER 1

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Aquatic Exercise

Aquatic exercise is a low-impact activity that takes the pressure off your bones, joints, and muscles. Water offers natural resistance, which helps strengthen your muscles. When you exercise in water that comes up to your neck, your joints are only supporting about ten percent of your body weight. The pressure provided by the water helps stimulate circulation and also provides additional resistance to train against.

Sources: www.mayoclinic.com
& www3.uakron.edu

The Importance of Hydration

The human body comprises 60 percent water. It is therefore no surprise that water is an important part of your daily diet. In fact, while an average adult can survive up to three weeks without food, three days is the maximum a healthy adult can survive without food and water together.

By drinking six to eight glasses of water a day you can help your body function properly as well as staying in top condition.

Keeping hydrated is important for a number of reasons. During the working week it is important to keep drinking water based drinks as your concentration levels can decrease by 13 percent and short-term memory by seven percent if you get dehydrated.

Drinking water helps reduce your appetite and is calorie free so it can help you if you are trying to lose weight. Often a small feeling of

Stretching Techniques

Static Stretching – To use this technique, stretch gently until you feel a mild amount of tension in the muscle, hold it, and then as the muscle relaxes stretch a little further. Breathe slowly as you hold the stretch, do not bounce, and relax all other muscle groups so that you focus on the muscle you are trying to stretch.

Proprioceptive Neuromuscular Facilitation (PNF) – This is where you contract the muscle against resistance (usually another person) so that you create an isometric contraction (tension but no movement). The contraction is held for about five seconds and then released.

Source: www.medicinenet.com

Stretching Safely

Stretching should never cause pain, especially joint pain. If it does, you are stretching too far and you need to reduce the stretch so that it does not hurt. Mild discomfort or a mild pulling sensation is normal. Never “bounce” into a stretch; make slow, steady movements instead. Jerking into position can cause muscles to tighten, possibly resulting in injury. Avoid “locking” your joints into place when you straighten them during stretches. Your arms and legs should be straight when you stretch them. You should always have a very small amount of bending in your joints while stretching.

Source: www.mediinenet.com

Get Your Kids Moving!

Every parent wants to do the right thing. A recent survey found that 80 percent of parents of kids age six to eleven feel they are responsible for their kids’ weight and physical fitness. The following are tips to help get kids moving:

- **Pull the Plug** – The stranglehold that TV, video games and the Internet have on kids can seem unbreakable. Parents need to set limits for screen time and make physical activity mandatory. Elevate fitness to a priority.
- **Walk This Way** – There is no better way to begin a fitness program than by walking. You already do it, so just do more of it. No matter where kids live there are opportunities to walk.
- **Stay Flexible** – A regular routine can be a boon for discipline, but do not be too strict. Perfect attendance is not the goal. Get kids to do their best to stay active on busy days, but also schedule longer activities for days when they have more time.
- **Game Your Play** – Fitness is easier when it is fun, and you do not have to limit yourself to traditional sports.
- **Make it a Contest** – Challenge friends and family members to see who can do the most jumping jacks or push-ups, who can dribble a basketball the fastest or who can hop 100 yards on one leg. Start slow but build up, and be creative: use a pedometer to track steps and miles, and see who can be first to “climb” Mount Everest and “walk” across the state.
- **Mighty Milers** – Running is a great way for kids to boost their confidence while getting fit. Running can be a great social experience too.

hunger can actually be thirst and having a glass of water can stop these hunger pangs. *Source: www.prlog.org*

Stress Reduction Techniques

1. **Autogenic Training:** This technique is based upon passive concentration and awareness of body sensations. Through repetition of so-called autogenic "formulas" one focuses upon different sensations, such as warmth or heaviness, in different regions of the body.
2. **Biofeedback:** Is a method of learning to achieve relaxation, control stress responses, or modify the body's reactions through the use of monitoring equipment that provides information from the body which would normally not be available.
3. **Meditation:** Ranging from practices associated with specific religions or beliefs to methods focusing purely on physical relaxation, meditation is one of the most popular techniques to achieve physical and mental relaxation.
4. **Progressive Muscle Relaxation:** This method was developed in the 1930s in which muscle groups are tightened and then relaxed in succession.
5. **Qigong:** This is an ancient Chinese health-care system that combines physical training (such as isometrics, isotonic, and aerobic conditioning) with Eastern philosophy and relaxation techniques. Some forms are practiced while standing, sitting, or lying down; others involve structured movements or massage.
6. **Tai chi:** It is a Chinese martial art. It has been termed as a kind of "meditation in motion" and is characterized by soft, flowing movements that stress precision and force.
7. **Yoga:** There are many forms of yoga, an ancient Indian form of exercise based upon the premise that the body and breathing are connected with the mind. The practice of yoga is thought to be over 5,000 years old. One goal of yoga is to restore balance and harmony to the body and emotions through numerous postural and breathing exercises.

Source: www.medicinenet.com

- **Spin Your Wheels** – Forget the car. Get kids rolling on bikes, scooters, rollerblades or skate boards. A new set of wheels can be the perfect way to lure kids off the couch.

Source: www.time.com

What is Stress?

Stress may be considered as any physical, chemical, or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental unrest and that may be a factor in disease causation. Physical and chemical factors that cause stress include trauma, infections, toxins, and injuries of any sort. Emotional causes of stress are numerous and varied. While many people associate the term "stress" with psychological stress, scientists and physicians use the term to denote any force that impairs the stability and balance of bodily functions.

If stress disrupts body balance and function, then is all stress bad? A mild degree of stress and tension can sometimes be beneficial. For example, feeling mildly stressed when carrying out a project or assignment often compels one to do a good job, focus better, and work energetically.

Exercising can produce a temporary stress on some body functions, but its health benefits are indisputable. It is only when stress is overwhelming or poorly managed, that its negative effects appear.

Source: www.medicinenet.com

Better Sleep Tips

- Create a bedtime routine that is relaxing.
- Create a room that is dark, quiet, comfortable and cool.
- Evaluate your mattress and pillow to ensure proper comfort and support. If your mattress is five to seven years old, it may be time for a new one.
- Keep work materials, computers and televisions out of the bedroom.
- Exercise regularly. Complete workouts at least two hours before bedtime.
- Avoid eating, alcohol, nicotine and caffeine close to bedtime. *Source: www.bettersleep.org*

Breakfast Benefits

Studies examining eating habits suggest that the regular consumption of breakfast can:

- Improve performance on memory related tasks
- Minimize impulsive snacking and overeating at other meals
- Increase the intake of essential nutrients that are rarely replenished by other meals of the day.
- Decrease insulin resistance (a condition that increases the risk of type 2 diabetes and heart disease)

Source: www.intelihealth.com

Wellness Self Check Strength and Fitness Assessment

1. Did you perform any flexibility exercises prior to work?
2. Did you perform any strength exercises prior to work today?
3. Did you complete a cardio-respiratory workout at least three times in the last seven days?
4. Are your cardio-respiratory workouts at least 30 minutes long each time?

Source: UPSWELLNESSGUIDE