

the art of growing young

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MAY/JUNE 2007

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Good Health is a Lifelong Process

While watching television several nights ago, I noticed quite a few commercials offering fad diet products. Many of them made outrageous statements claiming to help you instantly shed quite a few pounds.

Seeing these commercials reminded me that we are often bombarded with unrealistic ideals and false promises. It's difficult, while constantly being assaulted by such advertisements, to remember that true good health doesn't come overnight. I want to remind everyone that genuine health is an ongoing, lifelong process.

There is so much truth in the saying "If it looks too good to be true, it probably is." Always remember that there is no one food, no one exercise, and no one pill that will magically make you healthy. Of course, I wish that were true! It would make life much easier. But the fact of the matter is, it isn't that simple. So instead of looking for a miracle cure, we should be focusing on living healthy, happy lives. Total health comes from eating a diet rich in fresh fruits and vegetables, drinking pure water, staying both mentally and physically active and of course, remaining focused on the positive aspects of life.

It's easy to get wrapped up in the glamorous look of movie and television stars, but you must be yourself. You are special and beautiful in your own way. You are an individual participating in creation. Be happy. Enjoy yourself. Let me remind you that health should be measured by how well you feel and by how happy you are, not by comparing yourself to unrealistic stereotypes. After all, total well-being encompasses not just the body but the mind and spirit as well.

Remember: "Life is a journey, not a destination." Meaning that it is wonderful to have goals to reach, but realize that once you are there—once you have lost those last few pounds, once you have gained the stamina to run that race, once you fit into those pants again—the challenge is not over. You must continue your healthy practices or you will see your goals slip away.

The art of growing young is a lifelong process. It is the art of making good decisions, eating healthily, forging positive new relationships and of living the best life possible. It is truly a journey, but one on which you will have good company, as many of our friends embark on it too. And it is a journey that brings its own challenges and reaps its own rewards... every single day.

Dwight L. McKee M.D.

—Dwight L. McKee, M.D.





Following Your Positive Feelings:

A Guide to Living a Healthier, Happier Life

The subconscious mind is a powerful but double-edged tool—capable of helping us achieve our greatest aspirations or sabotaging even our simplest goals. By learning to recognize and avoid destructive emotions while following positive feelings, we can live a happier, more productive life because, simply put, what you focus on with thought plus emotion is what eventually shows up in your life.

If you dwell on the negative, you will find that your life begins to contain more negative experiences. But if you focus on the positive, you will find that your life becomes much more joyful. To experience this, you must first learn to recognize different feelings.

Start each day focusing on positive things. For a few minutes every morning, before you're even out of bed, take a mental inventory of your feelings. Note whether your feelings seem to be anchored in the negative or positive realm. Then picture yourself having a good day, focusing on the positive feelings that will come with that good day rather than dwelling on any negative feelings you may find.

If, when you're taking your emotional inventory, you discover that you feel grumpy, mad or upset, take

a few seconds to experience those negative feelings. Acknowledge them for what they are—what you don't want—and then move on to what you do want.

Don't just picture yourself solving problems. That will shift your focus toward thinking negatively, and negative thoughts can sabotage your goals. Instead, visualize what your life will be like and how you will feel after the problem is fixed. This is the beginning stage of retraining your brain to think a certain way, focusing on positive feelings and outcomes.

It's also important to notice how you feel throughout the day. Get into the habit of paying attention to your feelings. It's not something we generally do moment by moment. When you begin to take notice of your feelings

throughout the day, you will start to find hidden joys that you didn't know existed. Are you having negative thoughts that produce negative feelings or positive thoughts that produce positive feelings? You have thousands of thoughts every day, and it is almost impossible to keep up with them. But you only have

*Are you having
negative thoughts
that produce negative
feelings or positive
thoughts that produce
positive feelings?*

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The latest in nutritional news



According to the federal government's National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey III, a study by the University of Iowa and the University of Michigan Health System suggests that adults living with children under the age of 17 consume more fat than adults not living with children.

The study, which appeared in the online edition of the *Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine*, involved 6,600 adults (ages 17 to 65) who answered detailed questionnaires about food intake and how frequently they eat high-fat foods. It found that participants living with children consume an additional 4.9 grams of fat daily—including 1.7 grams of saturated fat, which is linked to heart disease. This extra fat amounts to one additional standard slice of pepperoni pizza every day, or almost one entire pizza per week! The data showed that adults with children in the home tend to eat more “convenience” foods, and frequently eat more high-fat foods such as pizza, cheese, ice cream, cakes, cookies, bacon, sausage, processed meats, salty snacks and peanuts. Of course, this research doesn't prove positively that having children in the household will increase adult fat intake.

The analysis does suggest, however, that adults with children in the home may have different eating habits because of time pressures and other constraints. The study implies that families should seek ways to fit healthy foods into their busy lives, and that healthy changes in eating habits should focus on the entire household.

Go ahead—go bananas! Rich in vitamin B6, a good source of fiber, vitamin C and magnesium, and one of the best sources of potassium, bananas are good for your heart as well as your brain, say researchers. Several studies have found that potassium-rich foods such as bananas can help prevent high blood pressure and protect against atherosclerosis. A study published in *Archives of Internal Medicine* confirms that eating high-fiber foods like bananas can help ward off heart disease, and early research suggests that the high levels of vitamin B6 in bananas may also help protect against Parkinson's disease.

Elevated homocysteine levels have been linked with increased risk of heart disease and Parkinson's disease. A recent study of 5,000 smokers over nearly ten years evaluated the association between reduced homocysteine levels in the blood and dietary intake of folate, vitamin B12 and vitamin B6 (cofactors in homocysteine metabolism). The study found that smokers with higher vitamin B6 intake had a significantly decreased risk of developing Parkinson's disease compared to smokers with the least amount of the vitamin in their diet. No association with dietary folate and vitamin B12 was observed. Researchers concluded that dietary vitamin B6 may lower the risk of Parkinson's disease, possibly through mechanisms unrelated to homocysteine metabolism. So go ahead and eat your bananas—they can do a body good.

Feeling a little stressed? A daily cup of tea—black tea that is—could help you recover faster from the anxieties of everyday life. A new study by researchers at University College London shows that black tea affects stress hormone levels in the body. The study evaluated seventy-five young males, all regular tea drinkers, who were divided into two groups and monitored for six weeks. Both groups gave up their regular tea, coffee and other caffeinated beverages for the duration of the study. One group was given a fruit-flavored, caffeinated tea mixture with all the ingredients of black tea; the other group was given a caffeinated placebo identical in taste but without the active tea ingredients.

Cortisol levels, blood pressure and platelet activation were measured while both groups were subjected to challenging tasks and stressful situations. All of the men had a similar response to stress. However, within one hour of the stressful event, participants who drank the black tea mixture were found to have lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol in their blood than those who drank the placebo. Ingredients in tea—such as catechins, polyphenols, flavonoids and amino acids—seem to affect the brain's neurotransmitters, so while the tea does not appear to actually reduce the stress we feel, it does appear to reduce hormone levels after a stressful event. Whatever the reason, it seems to be a good pick-me-up when the pressure is on.

A photograph of a person's back and waist, wearing a shirt with horizontal stripes in green, red, and orange. A large, semi-transparent ruler and clock face are overlaid on the upper left portion of the image. The ruler is vertical, and the clock face shows numbers like 30 and 7.

Waist-to-Hip Ratio

EXPLAINED

For years, the standard for measuring body mass has been to use the body mass index (BMI). Though easy to calculate through use of a simple chart, the BMI offers no room for variables such as percentage of lean body mass or physical fitness level.

Because muscle is much denser than fat, body builders could be considered grossly overweight by the body mass index. Conversely, lean long-distance runners could be classified as underweight due to their extremely toned bodies.

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One of the best features
of the waist-to-hip ratio
is that it is so easy
to calculate.

Originally the BMI was not intended to be used as a tool for diagnosing obesity. Instead, it was created more for statistical purposes, to track and measure body composition across populations. For those purposes, it works well. However, many people, including physicians, now do rely on BMI to calculate overweight and obesity. Using BMI to test for obesity can be misleading for many people. Consequently, cardiovascular risk assessments are not always accurate.

A Mayo Clinic analysis of 40 different studies revealed that BMI is not a consistent predictor of heart disease risk. An unrelated British study helped to confirm these results by concluding that waist-to-hip ratio provides a better device for detecting midbody fat, which is incredibly unhealthy for the cardiovascular system. Numerous studies have shown that people who have higher concentrations of fat around their waist or midsection have a higher risk of developing heart disease. Due to this revelation and to the limitations of the BMI, a new method for diagnosing obesity was developed: the waist-to-hip ratio.

What is a waist-to-hip ratio and how do I measure it? The waist-to-hip ratio, waist-hip ratio or sometimes waist proportion ratio is exactly what it sounds like: a measurement of the difference in body circumference around the waist and the hips. And it's simple to measure.

One of the best features of the waist-to-hip ratio is that it is so easy to calculate. It requires taking just two measurements of your body and some simple math. For men, measure the body's waist circumference at the level of the navel and again at the largest circumference around the hips. Women should measure their waist circumference at the level of minimal abdominal width and at the largest circumference around the hips. Both should then simply divide the waist measurement by the hip measurement. The result is your waist-to-hip ratio. For accurate results, make sure your measurement tape is horizontal to the floor and is not depressing the skin but is tight against the body.

In general, the larger the number, the greater the risk of developing weight-related health problems. Ideas on exactly what constitutes a healthy waist-to-



Another nice feature of the waist-to-hip ratio is that it is easy to track when trying to lose weight.



hip ratio vary slightly. However, on average for women, a waist-to-hip ratio of 0.80 and below is considered healthy, 0.81–0.85 poses a moderate risk and a waist-to-hip ratio above 0.85 constitutes a high risk. For men, 0.95 and below is considered healthy, 0.96–1.0 poses a moderate risk and a waist-to-hip ratio above 1.0 constitutes a high risk. If you have calculated your waist-to-hip ratio and believe you may be at risk for developing weight-related health problems, or if you are having trouble calculating your waist-to-hip ratio, you should speak with a doctor.

Another nice feature of the waist-to-hip ratio is that it is easy to track when trying to lose weight. Gauging fat loss by watching your weight fluctuate on a scale can be misleading because often muscle is gained simultaneously as fat is lost if an individual has become more physically active. As muscle is denser than fat, this can make it appear as though you are not losing weight or, worse, that you're actually gaining weight—something all dieters dread. Tracking your waist-to-hip ratio instead of weight eliminates this problem.

Forget comparing apples and oranges. How about

apples and pears? Most of us know about the two major body types: apples and pears. An apple body shape, or downward triangle, is characterized by a higher percentage of fat distributed in the midsection of the body. Of the two, this is generally considered to be associated with greater health risks. Apples generally have higher waist-to-hip ratios.

People considered to have a pear, or bell, body shape have more fat located in their hips, thighs, and buttocks. Pears often also have lower waist-to-hip ratios. It's now widely recognized by the medical community that people who store fat in their abdominal area are at a much higher risk of developing cardiovascular disease than those who don't. The size of a person's waist alone can help predict risk of certain diseases. A waist size greater than 40 inches for men and 35 inches for women increases the risk for most weight-related illnesses.

Tracking your waist-to-hip ratio instead of weight loss will coincide with watching your body figure change. It's easy to measure and easy to track. But best of all, it's more accurate than relying on BMI or scales. ■

CURCUMINOIDS



Herbalists, homeopaths and other natural and holistic healers have recommended herbs and spices since long before what we now call modern medicine was even developed. In recent years, many of these herbs and spices have gained medical credence as scientists have begun to unlock their secrets and understand how they work.

One such spice that has been used medicinally for ages is the aromatic spice turmeric (sometimes spelled tumeric).

Scientists now know that turmeric contains curcuminoids—a group of powerful phytonutrients that contain antioxidants belonging to a family known as polyphenols. Turmeric contains several curcuminoids, the most common being curcumin, which is responsible for giving the spice its distinctive yellow coloring. Curcumin's colorful properties have also given it a place as a food additive used for coloring. Natural Yellow 3 (from turmeric) can be found in a wide range of foods including mustard, cheeses and corn chips.



Curry is often listed as a spice containing curcuminoids, but this is only partially correct, as curry is not a single spice, but rather a blend made from several aromatic spices,

the most abundant of which is usually curcuminoid-rich turmeric. However, because turmeric is a prime ingredient, curry does have the same yellow coloring and health benefits as turmeric.


The vast majority, if not all, of curries contain turmeric. But commercial curries may not contain high levels of turmeric, as it is more cost-effective for manufacturers to substitute less expensive spices. The best curries, both in respect to phytonutrient levels and taste, are homemade.

Indians have long known of the benefits found in turmeric, and followers of Ayurvedic medicine often utilize turmeric and curries containing turmeric. Ayurvedic and other natural medicine systems have used turmeric to a great extent with largely positive results. This has led mainstream science to take a critical look at curcuminoids, with many important research findings that show great potential for these dietary compounds in supporting health of the brain, joints, heart and circulation.

Many culinary herbs and spices have positive impacts on our health, but few offer such a wide range of benefits as curcumin, making turmeric and yellow curries especially appealing—not to mention delicious. ■

fitness



A photograph of two runners, a woman in an orange singlet and a man in a blue singlet, crossing a yellow finish line tape on a paved road. The background is blurred, showing spectators and greenery.

In order for the body to reach optimum levels of physical fitness, we must supply it with all of the essential vitamins and minerals it needs. Eating a healthy diet will help to ensure the body is getting everything it requires to perform its many functions. Unfortunately, most people don't always get these important nutrients in their diets because of poor eating habits, the consumption of larger amounts of refined foods and declining nutrient values in commercially grown foods today. Therefore, it may be necessary to supplement.

Dietary supplements are meant to complement a healthy diet by adding vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients that may be lacking in the foods we eat. The list of available supplements is as long as the list of nutrients, micronutrients, vitamins, minerals and everything else that the human body needs to thrive that should be contained in the foods we eat.

Reactive oxygen species (free radicals) are a normal by-product of a healthy metabolism that uses oxygen to burn the food we take in as fuel or store as fat. The popular vitamins A, C, and E—as well as many other antioxidants, such as OPCs (free radical scavengers)—protect our cells from oxidative stress. However, strenuous physical

activity that comes with many forms of exercise can temporarily increase the body's oxygen intake by

Oxygen provides our cells with the energy they need to perform various tasks. This becomes especially important during periods of intense physical activity, when cells need even more oxygen.

more than 10 percent, creating a dangerous boost in oxygen-free radicals throughout the body. To counteract this surge, more antioxidants may be needed for at least a period of time during and after exercise. Supplying the body with these extra antioxidants from foods or supplements can help protect it from the increased number of free radicals during exercise and prevent oxidative damage to cells.

Every cell in the human body needs oxygen to live. Oxygen provides our cells with the energy they need to perform various tasks. This becomes

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women's health

PROPER POSTURE

We've all been told by our mothers to quit slouching and sit up straight, and it appears that once again, Mother was right. Research has shown that bad posture could quite possibly be the most common cause of chronic back pain. All those times Mom told you to sit up straight, she was trying to help you avoid a life of pain and discomfort.

Throughout the day we have a tendency to slump and slouch, lift objects improperly, repeat the same uncomfortable movements over and over again and just

plain abuse our backs. Fortunately, no matter what your job is or where you work, there are things that can be done to improve your posture throughout the day.

Of course, one of the easiest ways to avoid bad posture is to ditch those sexy and good-looking high heels. Wearing high-heeled shoes can often lead to improper posture. It can cause the spine to curve inward, which leads to lordosis. Commonly called swayback or saddleback, this condition is one of

many postures that can lead to chronic back pain.

There are many ways that you can lessen the strain on your back. For instance, while doing office work and other jobs that require prolonged sitting throughout the day, use a wedge cushion with your chair. The cushions are inexpensive and effective, and can save you from the pain of chronic backaches. It's also good to take frequent "back breaks." Stand up, stretch, walk around the office and get a drink—the point is to give your back a rest by changing positions.

Another common cause of back pain is bad posture in your car. To avoid pain from driving, remember to not hunch over the steering wheel. Sit back in your

goes for any activity that is low to the ground. Even while doing seemingly simple tasks such as vacuuming under beds, gardening and all other activities that require bending, kneel down or squat instead.

These are all good ideas, but to be truly effective, they need to become second nature. Until good habits are developed, more attention must be paid to your posture throughout the day.

For those who are serious about improving their posture but are not sure if they can do it alone, the Alexander Technique may be worth investigating. Through one-on-one coaching, self-monitoring and practice, the Alexander Technique allows practitioners

Fortunately, no matter what your job is or where you work, there are things that can be done to improve your posture throughout the day.



seat with your head against the headrest, and grip the wheel loosely while sitting up "straight." In addition, the overstuffed wallets that many men carry in their back pockets should be taken out while driving.

You can even help work on your posture in your sleep. In bed, sleep on your side with a pillow under your head just high enough to keep your spine aligned, and put another pillow between your knees to maintain comfortable alignment of your pelvis with your back.

We have all heard that we should lift with our legs and knees, not with our backs. But too often we ignore that rule. Never bend over to lift a heavy object. Always bend down at the knees and keep your back straight, and contract your stomach muscles when you lift, which helps unload the back muscles even more. Also, ask for help when lifting heavy objects. The technique

to naturally move and pose easily and efficiently. The idea is that by monitoring yourself and making adjustments to the way you move, you will be able to rid yourself of bad posture in all aspects of life.

Other exercises that help foster good posture are clinical pilates, tai chi, hatha yoga, gymnastics and weight training exercises. It is always a good idea to consult a certified trainer or physical therapist before beginning any of these activities. These all strengthen abdominal and back muscles while promoting good posture—the two keys to helping prevent chronic back pain.

The next time you notice yourself slumped over or slouching down in your chair, take some advice from your mother and sit up straight. Your spine will thank you for it. ■



SEVEN
STRE

STRESS-BUSTING TIPS

to Help you Relax

*If we're not careful,
day-to-day stresses
can build up and
wreak havoc in our
lives. That's why it's
important to make time to unwind
and relax on a routine basis. When
stress starts to wear you down,
here are a few tips that will help
you mellow out in no time.*

Create a Quiet Place

Find a quiet room, corner, nook or any spot where you can escape everything for a few minutes every day. Remove as many stimuli as possible from the area, meaning no television, computers, telephones or other distractions. The idea is to create an atmosphere that promotes calmness and solitude for you—just for you. You may also even wish to try burning fragrant, calming incense. Soothing music playing softly from a small CD player can also help. Decorate the area with items that will help you relax. Fresh flowers, religious symbols according to your preference, soft cushions and pictures of loved ones can all aid in your relaxation.

This area should be for meditating, praying, breathing exercises, self-reflection and other relaxing activities only. Never work, talk on the phone or engage in otherwise distracting or stressful activities in your special quiet place. Try to spend a few minutes every day relaxing there. Eventually you will become trained to automatically begin relaxing when you enter this area.

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have a television in your bedroom, get rid of it. Your brain should see the bedroom as a place for rest, not entertainment.

Exercise

Intense physical activity is excellent for stress busting. After vigorous exercise you will have burned away the stress of the day and will be more able to unwind and relax. Yoga and tai chi are exceptionally good for this as they both foster feelings of relaxation as they work your body. But all forms of exercise are beneficial.

Walking, running, biking, playing sports, anything—physical activity releases

endorphins and other feel-good chemicals. This makes unwinding after a day that includes a workout easier than unwinding after a day without a workout. Regular exercise also helps in establishing healthy sleeping patterns.

Mental Exercise

Getting enough regular physical exercise but still having trouble turning off your mind? It might be time to try some mental exercises. Practice meditation or deep breathing exercises to help escape the daily grind and unwind. Many people find visualizing themselves in a quiet, peaceful setting for even just a few minutes to be very beneficial when trying to relax. Slowing your breathing down to one breath every 30 seconds for about five minutes has powerful calming and relaxing effects, and can even relieve tension headaches.

Another mental exercise to help unwind is biofeedback. Biofeedback is the technique of mentally controlling unconscious and involuntary bodily processes such as heartbeat, blood pressure or brain waves. By learning to pay attention to your own body, you can actually learn to mentally relax your muscles and slow your heartbeat in order to enter a more relaxed state.

Sex

If you're having trouble unwinding after a hard day at the office, you may want to try heading to the bedroom for a stress-busting workout. Having meaningful sex has numerous benefits, mental and physical. A study performed at Queen's University in Belfast found that men who had sex regularly outlived those who didn't. One reason for this phenomenon may be due to the incredible stress relief that occurs during sex. And, of course, this is equally important for women. Sex releases endorphins and other feel-good chemicals that help alleviate stress.

Sleep

Simply getting a good night's sleep can do wonders to help relieve built-up stress. Unfortunately, our all-too-often busy lives prevent us from regularly getting enough sleep.

If you're having trouble sleeping, you may need to retrain your brain. There are only two activities that should be done in your bed: sleep and sex. If these are the only things that ever occur while you are in your bed, your brain will eventually recognize this and respond accordingly. It will automatically begin to prepare itself for sleep as soon as you lay down. If you

Treat Yourself and Get Away

When the stresses of daily life become too much, it may seem impossible to unwind. When this happens, it may be time to treat yourself to something special. Take an afternoon off to visit a spa or make plans for a mini-weekend vacation.

It could be as simple as enjoying a frozen yogurt or as elaborate as taking a tropical cruise. Short trips away from your daily reality can help you to forget about the stress of your daily life and allow you to unwind in a totally new and relaxing atmosphere.

Visiting a masseuse for a special relaxing massage or indulging in a luxurious mud bath can be just the thing to help you let go and unwind.

Eat Right

Can the proper diet actually help you unwind? It sure can. Eating a healthy diet and supplementing the vitamins and minerals you don't get in the foods you eat will help keep you fit and healthy. Antioxidants to help protect you, vitamins to keep you feeling healthy, probiotics to help ensure healthy digestion and the thousands of other benefits from eating right all add up.

Staying healthy helps counteract the effects of stress. Fighting the flu and colds before they start helps avoid the stress due to illness.

Chronic stress can lead to serious health problems. Learning to unwind at the end of the day will help keep you healthy and happy. These are just a few suggestions for finding the time and the means to unwind after a hectic day. Find the ones that work for you and enjoy the experience. ■

TTO Pure Gold B A R S O A P

This exclusive, French-milled luxury bar is much more than just a soap. Containing all the beneficial properties of natural tea tree oil, the TTO-Pure Gold Hand & Body Bar cleanses away dirt and odor!

TTO-Pure Gold is tough on dirt and perspiration, yet gentle on the skin. Its clean, fresh scent makes it perfect for all members of the family, but the rich lather and wonderful citrus aroma create such a unique bathing experience that you just might want to keep it all to yourself.



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BALANCING YOUR Blood Sugar



One of the many activities that your body is constantly performing without you ever realizing it is the regulation of your blood sugar levels. The term blood sugar refers to the amount of glucose in the blood. Most people will never know that this is happening, but it's an important process because glucose, which our bodies extract from carbohydrates, is a major source of energy for cells, yet levels that get out of control can contribute to a number of health considerations.

In a healthy adult, the body is exceptionally well suited to regulate glucose, and levels of it in the blood fluctuate only slightly throughout the day. Blood sugar is generally lowest in the morning, before breakfast, and peaks within a few hours after eating meals.

For some people, problems arise when the body loses its ability to regulate blood sugar levels. Too much or too little glucose in your blood can result in one or more of several imbalances. When levels of blood sugar become too low, a condition called hypoglycemia occurs—there is simply not enough glucose in the bloodstream for the person to remain alert, energetic and healthy. When this happens, most people experience a subtle drop in cognitive function—the ability to remain aware of what is happening in their lives and to concentrate. Headache, fatigue, nausea, shakiness and sweating are all typical symptoms of blood sugar levels that are too low.

In the other direction, hyperglycemia, or high blood sugar, occurs when there is an excess of glucose in the blood. High blood sugar is often characterized

by such symptoms as blurry vision and fatigue—and many of the same symptoms as those of low blood sugar, believe it or not. Chronic hyperglycemia can result in unintentional weight loss, poor wound healing and recurring infections. Hyperglycemia itself is a textbook symptom of what is probably the most well-known blood sugar-related disease—diabetes.

Many of the symptoms of diabetes are the same as those of hyperglycemia. Other symptoms are more severe in diabetes and can lead to conditions such as blindness and, if left uncontrolled, eventually even death.

People with diabetes or people who find themselves sensitive to blood sugar changes may need to take special care to help regulate their blood glucose levels. According to the world-renowned Mayo Clinic, the most effective way to control blood sugar levels is to maintain a healthy eating plan. This includes three basic factors—establishing a regular meal routine, choosing healthy food and maintaining a physically active lifestyle.

The first is fairly easy. Eat at regular intervals throughout the day, every day. When you are trying to establish an eating pattern, it's often a good idea to keep a supply of readily available foods that can be used as snacks, because occasionally complications arise, such as traffic jams, accidents or burned meals.

Choosing the proper foods can be a challenge, and it's often a good idea to consult a nutritionally knowledgeable health care practitioner or dietitian. At first it may seem overwhelming, but eventually comparing labels and calculating what you need will become second nature. To control blood sugar levels, the body needs to consume foods that release a slow, steady supply of glucose. Sugary foods are exceptionally bad as they have the opposite effect. They rapidly release a large amount of sugar (glucose) into the blood stream causing a rapid spike and then a sudden drop,

often to a level lower than before the food was eaten.

One thing to remember is that sugar free does not mean carbohydrate free. Cutting the amount of refined sugar in your diet, though a healthy choice, will not curb out-of-control blood sugar by itself. All carbohydrates are important considerations.

When carbohydrates (whether sugar or starch) are digested, they are broken down into simple sugars, which provide the body with energy. They all contribute to blood sugar levels. How high and how fast this affects blood glucose levels depends on the type of carbohydrate.

Complex carbohydrates are generally a healthier choice than simple carbohydrates because they are metabolized more slowly, meaning they provide a steadier and slower supply of glucose. The “glycemic index” rating for various carbohydrate-containing foods is one method to rate foods as to how quickly these foods are turned into simple carbohydrates (sugars). A higher glycemic index rating means the food being evaluated is digested and absorbed rapidly into the blood stream.

High-fiber foods such as legumes, whole fruits, and such unrefined grains as brown rice and whole wheat have lower glycemic index ratings than do candies, juices, potatoes and refined grains such as those used in white bread, white rice products and many cereals.

Eating foods rich in fiber and complex carbohydrates, high-quality protein and high-quality fats (such as omega-3 fatty acids and monounsaturated oils, as found in nuts and olives) while avoiding sugary and refined foods and maintaining a physically active lifestyle can help to control your blood sugar levels, especially if care is taken to eat at regular intervals throughout the day. And healthy blood sugar levels mean a steady, even supply of high energy and well-being, day after day. ■



children's health



A child raised in an active family will have a better chance of staying active and healthy throughout his or her entire life. According to Move for Health, a World Health Organization initiative, games involving physical activity not only work to improve and maintain a child's physical health, but also bolster confidence, allow self-expression and provide critical social interaction and integration.

It's important for the heads of the family to lead by example, because the "Do as I say, not as I do" methodology seldom works. Always remember that our children are watching us, learning to live how we live. Show them that active lives are fun lives.

Keep the focus off exercising. It's not about how many sit-ups children can do; it's about how much fun they are having while they run around playing tag or



how much they enjoy a bike ride with the family.

It's essential to choose activities that your child finds fun. Dragging a child who hates to swim to the local pool every day will work against the goal. It won't be long before the child begins to associate exercise with negative experiences. Instead, find out what your child likes to do and encourage the child to engage in those particular activities.

Just remember that even your child's favorite activities can get old after a time. To avoid burnout and boredom, engage in a wide range of physical activities with him or her. New experiences can be a large part of the enjoyment. From skiing trips to simply dancing in the living room, the list of family activities that encourage physical activity is nearly endless. Camping trips are a wonderful way for the family to bond while getting in some much-needed physical activity. A trip to the local nature center or park for a hike through the woods is also a good idea.

To keep your family active, incorporate physical activities into all aspects of life. Celebrations of all kinds can be made fun and physically active. Birthdays can be celebrated with trips to the pool or skating rink. Other ideas include walking to the video store or riding bikes to the restaurant when you eat out.

Truly promoting an active family may also mean making a few changes around the house. Take the television sets out of your bedrooms, yours and your children's. Limit time children spend on such sedentary activities as watching television, using the computer and playing video games. Encourage them to play outside, and as often as possible, join them—that makes a huge difference.

If just knowing that you are cementing healthy lifestyle choices into your child's mind is not enough reason, making sure your family is an active one has benefits for you, too. Family activities help you to bond with your children and let the family grow closer. Not to mention the good they will do your body as well.

Never forget, there is a difference between exercising and having an active lifestyle. Active lifestyles are fun; they should never make a child feel that he or she is doing a chore or being punished.

For the most part, children in an active family can get all the exercise they need from running around with friends, riding bikes, climbing trees and the innumerable other activities that they engage in. When choosing activities for your family, always remember that active families equal healthy kids for life. ■

WALKING: NATURE'S NATURAL EXERCISE

Thousands of years ago there was no real need to exercise. The routines of daily life provided humans with more than enough physical activity to keep them healthy. Men who were nomadic hunters would walk for hundreds of miles following their food source, and farmers would toil endlessly in the fields doing everything by hand. Whether it was chopping wood for heat, repairing their homes or any other of the endless daily activities, everything was done by hand, and it all helped to keep people fit.



In addition to the rigors of daily life, the primary means of transportation was bipedal locomotion—walking. And it provided humans with plenty of exercise. Unfortunately, this is no longer the case. We have developed countless other ways of traveling: cars, trucks, mopeds, trains, planes, motorboats... the infamous Segway. This shift in how we travel, along with many dietary changes, is affecting our health like never before. Nearly all the daily tasks that once helped to provide our bodies with a workout are all but extinct. Most of us no longer stalk through the woods hunting for our own food. Instead we pull up to the nearest drive-through window. The invention of telephones, computers and modern tools has completely transformed the developed world.

To counteract these lifestyle changes, we must now find regular time in our busy lives for physical activity. Some people go to the gym; some play sports; some join classes. The list is limitless. But walking, one of the most simple and basic forms of moving, is also one of the most effective forms of exercise.

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Tips for reaching your 10,000-step goal:

- Park farther away from buildings.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Walk to the video store when renting/returning movies.
- Don't take shortcuts through buildings or empty parking lots.
- Walk during your lunch hour.

senior health

Falls, Fractures & Safety



Let's face it, the statistics of fractures due to falling among the elderly are scary, to say the least, and the list of risk factors is frighteningly long. Even just the fear of falling is enough to keep some people from living normal, active lives. However, this does not have to be the case. All it takes to greatly reduce your risk of injury is making a few simple changes in your lifestyle.



Every year in the United Kingdom alone about 310,000 fractures occur in the elderly. It's been estimated that more than a third of all people over the age of 65 fall each year. Some of these falls are minor, but others are not. Hip fractures can be especially devastating, causing severe health issues, and they contribute to the greatest number of fall-related deaths.

As we age, bone density, muscle mass and balance all tend to deteriorate. These things all contribute to the comparatively high rate of bone fractures in the elderly. But by working to preserve our strength and flexibility, we can preserve our health, our well-being and even our independence.

Staying active is one of the most important steps that can be taken to preserve senior health. Inactive elderly people with a high risk for becoming disabled can greatly improve their physical abilities with a structured exercise program, according to researchers at the Yale School of Medicine.

Many elderly people lessen their physical activities because they are afraid of injuring themselves. Unfortunately, less physical activity can increase the risk of injury, which prompts them to become even less physically active. The key is to break the cycle by staying active. The more active you are now, the more independent you will be in years to come.

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two kinds of feelings (emotions): positive and negative. By simply paying attention to those feelings, you can tell whether you are having predominantly positive or negative thoughts.

For example, let's say you are trying to lose weight and happen to be eating at a buffet for dinner. You choose a salad loaded with fresh vegetables, a piece of chicken and rice pilaf. You're feeling good about your dinner choices, so you go back for dessert. You pass up a plate of fresh fruit and choose a big slice of chocolate cake. How do you feel after you eat the cake? Probably not as good as you did before. But because you've been monitoring your feelings, the next time you are in this situation you will react differently and modify your actions according to your feelings. This is not to suggest you can never eat a big slice of chocolate cake without feeling bad; just remember that everything in moderation can be good. Maybe a small slice of cake will leave you feeling fine.

Paying attention to how you feel is the first step in finding the hidden joys in your life. Once you've gotten in touch with your emotions, it's time to start reacting to them. When you find yourself thinking negatively, stop yourself. For example, you look out the window and see that it is raining. Your first reaction may be to think, "What a dreary, depressing day. I hate it when it rains." And maybe you truly do hate the rain. However, focusing on what you want in your life is what you are trying to achieve. Instead, think about the flowers that will bloom because of the rain. Think about the crops that will grow because of the rain. Think about the amazing wonder of water—hydrogen and oxygen—and how it supports every aspect of life on this planet.

Of course we all experience negative feelings; that is just part of being human. We all have bad experiences and respond accordingly. Following your positive feelings is not about putting on a fake smile and blocking out all bad thoughts and feelings. It's about shifting your focus. By learning to recognize your negative emotions, you can better focus on positive things. By following these positive feelings we can live happier, more constructive lives. Always remember that you attract into your life what you focus on with your thoughts and emotions—whether you want it or not. ■

especially important during periods of intense physical activity, when cells need even more oxygen. One way to help ensure that they get it is to help keep blood vessels open. The amino acid L-arginine produces nitric oxide (NO) in the body. Blood vessels use NO to stay open, or dilated, so blood can easily and efficiently transport oxygen and nutrients to all parts of the body. This becomes especially important during periods of intense physical activity. L-arginine also supports the natural release of growth hormone from the pituitary gland in response to exercise, which in turn supports development of muscle tissue.

Muscle burns calories that are often stored as body fat, and protein helps to build muscle. Protein-rich diets, combined with strength training help foster muscle growth, which in turn helps to burn extra body fat. Body builders and others interested in physical fitness often supplement their diets by consuming protein shakes before and after workouts. Anyone wishing to slim down or maintain an already healthy body should include plenty of protein in their diet. Protein shakes are an excellent way to do this.

Vitamin D plays an important role in keeping bones healthy and strong. Without it, bones can become brittle, leading to a fear of fractures that can eliminate many physical activities. Some foods are fortified with vitamin D, but like other important vitamins, if your diet does not supply the body with sufficient amounts, it may be necessary to add this important vitamin in the form of supplements.

Giving our bodies what they need to perform is crucial for everyone, but it is especially so for those who are the most physically active. Many of the more strenuous forms of physical activity—biking, running, skiing—can be hard on the body's joints. Glucosamine, a supplement that many people are familiar with, helps maintain joint function, flexibility and range of motion.

Supplementing the diet can help give the body the special boost it needs during exercise or when it just isn't possible to get everything the body needs from the foods available. Anyone can benefit from supplementing their diet—from the casual walker to the marathon runner, the weekend warrior to the professional athlete. ■

EPA PLUS

EPA Plus contains precious Omega-3 fatty acids (shortened to EPA and DHA), and is a quick, convenient way of including these valuable fats in the diet. Omega-3 fatty acids are considered essential fatty acids, which means that they are essential to human health but cannot be manufactured by the body. EPA Plus can play an important role in supporting overall health and form an essential part of a healthy diet.*



♦ These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.

*Food supplements should not be used as a substitute for a diversified diet.



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men's health

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Studies have shown that a consistent exercise regimen of nothing more than walking can do everything from burning fat and lowering the risk of developing coronary diseases to helping prevent dementia and maintain late-life cognitive function. It may not be fancy, it may not be glamorous, but it's easy and effective—so effective that many countries are adopting the 10,000-steps-a-day program. Ten thousand is the number of steps that, when taken every day, has been widely recognized to help keep you fit and healthy while preventing many diseases.

At first, 10,000 may sound like a lot. But the beauty of these programs is that 10,000 is the total number of steps accumulated throughout the day. If you keep track during the day, you don't have to make time every night to walk 10,000 steps.

To avoid the massive distraction of having to count every single step throughout your day, pick up a pedometer at your local sporting goods store. Just be leery of extremely low-priced pedometers. *Consumer Reports* has found that the least expensive pedometers are less accurate and may count bumps and jiggles as steps. Pedometers are often restricted to being worn only on the waist. However, they can be used rain or shine, indoors or out.

Another method for tracking your walking is to use a speed-and-distance device that uses Global Positioning System satellites to track your movement. Although there are fewer restrictions on how and where they can be worn, these devices cost considerably more and can only be used outdoors under a clear sky.

Of course, one of the benefits of walking is that you don't have to purchase anything to do it. Just count out the steps once and you'll have a 10,000-step route that you can take whenever you need to.

Walking is nature's original exercise. It's natural, easy and oh so healthy. It doesn't take time or even much effort. Just a little bit of commitment and determination. Just remember to walk to your destination whenever possible, and your heart will thank you for it. ■

senior health

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Whether you choose aerobic activity, strength training or both, it's never too late to start getting fit and active. It only takes moderate levels of activity; even just walking regularly is enough to lessen the risk of fracturing a bone. Water walking can be a great way to start getting exercise. The resistance of walking through water builds muscle mass while buoyancy prevents joint stress, pain, falls and fractures. Just find a swimming pool, and walk “laps” or in circles in chest-deep water. Start with just ten minutes if you have been sedentary for some time, and gradually increase the time. This is one of the safest and most comfortable ways to exercise, especially for people recovering from a back injury or for people with painful hips, knees or ankles. Tai chi and yoga are both low-impact activities that will also strengthen muscles while promoting balance.

Actually, any form of regular physical activity will go a long way in helping to ward off falls and fractures, but eating right is also important. It's best to start building your “bone bank” at an early age by including in your diet plenty of vitamin D; calcium; magnesium; and trace minerals such as zinc, copper, manganese and boron. But it's never too late to start eating right. Strengthening bones by including in the diet plenty of vitamin D and proper minerals can help prevent some fractures. Eating a healthy diet can also help prevent many diseases, which in turn will keep the body strong and promote mobility.

It's also important to stay mentally active. Another reason for increased falls in the elderly is slowed reaction time. Crossword and sudoku puzzles, brain teasers, trivia, board games and reading are all examples of activities that can flex your brain and help keep your reaction times fast.

Other lifestyle changes that can be made around the house to increase safety and reduce the risk of falls are adding secure railings to stairs and showers, providing ample lighting in every room (especially at night), making sure that such wires as power cords and phone cords are tucked safely out of the way, getting rid of loose rugs and putting carpeting on stairways.

By simply taking care of our bodies with regular physical activity, eating right and staying mentally active we can greatly reduce the risk of falling as we age. Living without fear of falling allows us to have healthier, more active, productive lives long into our golden years. ■

More omega-3 fatty acids, less sun exposure...

Everyone talks about the health benefits of omega-3 fatty acids. How can I include more of these health boosters in my diet?

Unfortunately, while the average modern diet contains plenty of omega-6 fatty acids (supplied through corn, soybean and other oils in processed foods), we are often not getting enough of the equally or even more important omega-3 oils. Research shows that these important omega-3s are essential to our brain health, and that deficiencies in adults have been linked to various mental and emotional disorders. Omega-3 fatty acids are also beneficial because they reduce the clotting ability of platelets in our blood, which can decrease the incidence of heart attacks and strokes. No Dietary Reference Intake (DRI) has yet been established for omega-3 fats, but the U.S. National Institutes of Health recommends that we consume at least 2% of our daily calories as omega-3 fats. For an average person who consumes about 2000 calories per day, that would amount to at least 4 grams of omega-3 fats. However, many experts don't agree and would suggest that we consume at least 4% of our calories (approx. 8 grams) as omega-3 fats.

It's easy to add more of these important health boosters to our daily food intake. Eating fish and seafood a few times a week—especially mackerel, salmon, scallops, rainbow trout, halibut and sardines—is an easy way to boost omega-3 intake and also get the other nutritional benefits these foods offer. Avoid the very large fish such as King mackerel, swordfish, tilefish and tuna, which accumulate more mercury. You can also boost your intake of omega-3s with fish oil supplements. Fish oil supplements contain very little mercury, as it doesn't come out in the oil, but be sure to use fish oil that has been molecularly distilled so that it is also free of other environmental contaminants such as dioxins and PCBs.

Flaxseeds and walnuts are also a good choice for omega-3 content, though they supply shorter-chain omega-3 fats than those in fish oils and therefore don't fulfill all the same functions. One quarter-cup of flaxseeds contains about 7 grams of omega-3, and a quarter-cup of walnuts about 2.3 grams, so add a nut-seed combination to your salads, baked potatoes or granola. To keep omega-6 and omega-3 in balance, use extra virgin olive oil—which contains omega-9 fats—when a recipe calls for vegetable oil. But be sure not to fry with olive oil—frying damages the unsaturated bonds.

Now that spring and summer are upon us, we like to participate in outdoor activities, but are afraid of the potential health risks that are associated with too much sun exposure. Do we need to worry?

After being cooped up all winter, spring and summer are great times to catch up on some much-needed sunshine. Sunlight can not only improve your mood but your overall health as well. Our bodies actually require the UV-B rays in sunlight to generate vital vitamin D. This important vitamin regulates calcium and phosphate metabolism and boosts the building and preservation of our bones. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), exposing our face, hands and arms to the sun three times per week for about 5 to 15 minutes without sunscreen—depending on skin type, time of day and the region in which a person lives—is adequate to generate enough vitamin D. The clearer the air and the closer you are to the equator, the stronger the UV rays are, so an even shorter time of exposure is sufficient for maximum benefit. Be sure not to burn (or even get pink), and eat a diet rich in antioxidants to avoid skin damage. Wear UV-protective sunglasses whenever you're out in the sun, and make use of shade after you've gotten enough for your vitamin D requirements.



ENERXAN™

EnerXan – a chromium and herb tablet that helps naturally support energy.

EnerXan is a part of the BodySMART Solutions Lifestyle Management Program, which will help you jump start your weight loss and healthy eating plan.

EnerXan includes concentrates from the following: green teas, yerba mate, guarana, damiana, cinnamon, chromium, cocoa, plus the amino acid L-tyrosine.



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