

APRIL
2008

Smarter Bodies

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Editor Jim Rabic

The Official Newsletter of Smart Bodies Personal Fitness Center

OLYMPICS

Saturday May 3, 2008



TUG OF WAR

1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

at Marlon Middle School



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FREE FILE OF THE MONTH

Improve Your Windows Desktop Search with Windows Search 4.0 Preview

Windows only: Microsoft has released a new version of their Windows Search tool out into the wild—an update to the desktop search tool that comes baked into Vista. Aside from promises of having squashed most reported bugs from the original and improving search times by about 33%, the Windows Search 4.0 Preview also includes support for XP. That's right, XP users, one of the best things that Microsoft did when they made Vista is now available for your XP desktop as well. Of course, if you haven't already found a competent desktop search app on XP (like Google Desktop, for example) while Microsoft has been taking its sweet time, chances are you may not really need one to begin with. On the other hand, if the promises of the 4.0 Preview sound worth a shot, head over to Microsoft and grab the free download.

<http://support.microsoft.com/kb/940157>

Quote of the Month



The truest wisdom is a resolute determination.

Napoleon Bonaparte

Heart Health Perks for New Drinkers? Middle-Aged Teetotalers Who Start Moderate Drinking May Get a Heart Benefit, but Caution Urged

Middle-aged people who start drinking moderate amounts of alcohol, especially wine, may trim their risk of having a heart attack, stroke, or other cardiovascular event.

That news comes from researchers at the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston, S.C. But they aren't telling teetotalers to start drinking.

"Caution is clearly warranted," the study states, because although moderate drinking may help the heart, alcohol has other risks.

Dana E. King, MD, MS, and colleagues studied four years of data on nearly 7,700 adults aged 45-64.

Most participants -- 93.6% -- were teetotalers. But 6% had recently started moderate drinking and the remaining 0.4% had recently begun drinking heavily. It's not clear why they started drinking.

During the study, 680 patients died of cardiovascular disease, had a heart attack or stroke, were diagnosed with coronary heart disease, or had a coronary heart procedure.

Those patients included 6.9% of the new drinkers and 10.7% of the persistent nondrinkers, King tells WebMD via email.

After considering age, physical activity, diabetes, cholesterol, blood pressure, smoking, and BMI (body mass index), new drinkers were 38% less likely to develop fatal or nonfatal cardiovascular problems or to get coronary heart procedures.

Wine stood out. New drinkers who said they only drank wine were 68% less likely than nondrinkers to suffer fatal or nonfatal heart disease, compared to those who didn't start drinking.

Moderate drinking wasn't linked to any change, for better or worse, in the overall death rate; the benefits were only seen in heart health.

"A substantial cardiovascular benefit from adopting moderate alcohol drinking in middle age appears to be supported by the current study," King's team writes, adding that "any such benefit must be weighed against the known ill consequences of alcohol consumption."

The study may have been too short to show whether cancer deaths rose among new drinkers, King's team notes.



SMART RUNNING

Ready to Run?

You see them pounding the pavement at lunch or after work, sweating away the cares of the world. They make it look so easy, as if nothing could be more natural than running for miles or minutes on end.

But the last time you tried it, all you received were blisters and shin splints for your troubles.

Sound familiar? Running (or jogging, which some see as simply a slower form of running) is one of the most effective, time-efficient workouts around, but if you, well, get off on the wrong foot, it's hard to stay motivated and easy to get discouraged.

But starting -- and sticking with -- a running program doesn't have to be difficult. It's simply a matter of doing the right things at the right time.

Step by step

First things first: check with your doctor to be sure that running is the right activity for you. Individuals who should probably bypass running in favor of walking include those with orthopedic or heart problems, or those who are more than 20 percent overweight.

Nothing can derail a running program faster than sore feet. Though they often carry a hefty price tag, good-fitting running shoes can help prevent shin splints, blisters and sore muscles. Aside from comfortable clothing, little else is required.

Once you're suited up, simply head out your front door or take a drive to a nearby park. Asphalt or dirt surfaces are preferable to concrete; be sure that where you run is safe and well lit.

Jog your memory

As a child, you probably didn't think about how you ran. You just did it. Your muscles took over while your brain concentrated on more important things, like hopscotch or baseball cards.

But as you've grown older, your muscles may have forgotten how to run effortlessly. To help jog both your and your muscles' memories, here are a few tips:

Keep your head level, avoid bouncing and lean forward slightly from the ankles, not the waist.

Keep your shoulders down and relaxed.

Strike the ground first with your heel, then roll to the ball of the foot, pushing off from the toes.

F.I.T. tip

Frequency, Intensity and Time (FIT) are the elements you need to put together an effective beginning running program. The accompanying table offers a program for those who are less fit, but may be adapted for those who have been exercising aerobically for some time.

The best way to halt a running program in its tracks is to do too much too soon. A minimum of 20 to 30 minutes, three days per week (with days off in between) at an intensity of 50 percent to 85 percent of maximum heart rate is the standard recommendation, but may be manipulated to suit individual speed or endurance goals.

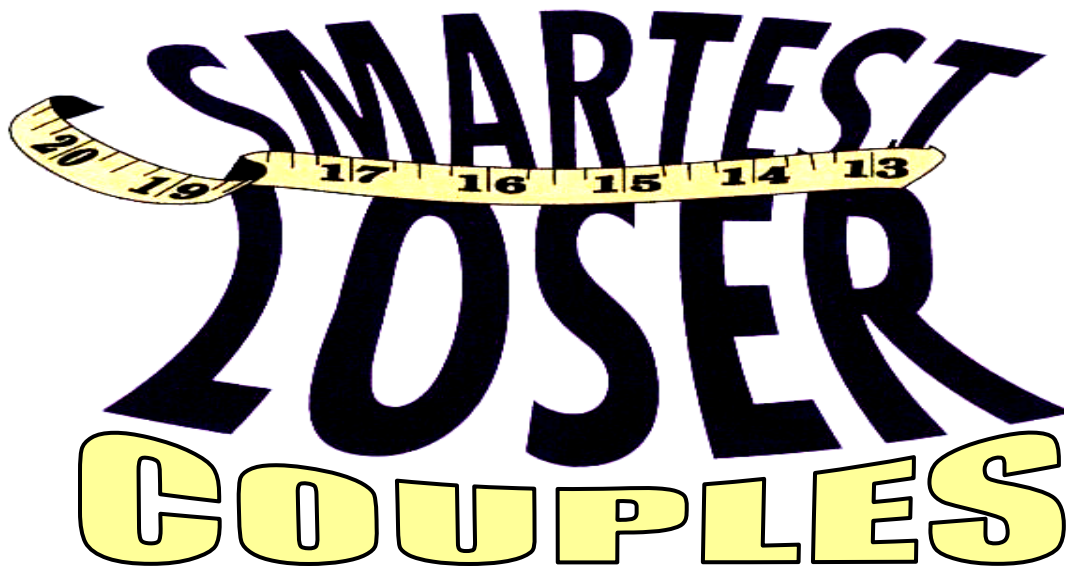
Here are a few more things to keep in mind:

- Take time to warm up before, and cool down after, a run.
- Never increase mileage more than 10 percent per week.
- If anything hurts, take time off until it feels better.
- Follow a strength-training program on alternate days to help reduce upper-body fatigue.
- Like any activity, running isn't for everybody: If you don't enjoy it, don't do it. But if you do, take your time, progress slowly and allow your muscles to adapt to the rigors of running.

Week	Time	Intensity
1	20	Walk
2	22	Walk
3	22	30-60 sec jog 5 min walk
4	24	30-60 sec jog 5 min walk
5	24	30-60 sec jog 4 min walk
6	26	30-60 sec jog 4 min walk
7	26	30-60 sec jog 3 min walk
8	28	30-60 sec jog 3 min walk
9	28	30-60 sec jog 2 min walk
10	30	30-60 sec jog 3 min walk
11	30	Jog 2 min walk 1 minute
12+	30	12+ 30 Gradually progress to continuous jogging

Training basics*

*Individuals who are in good shape may progress at a faster rate by increasing time and intensity simultaneously, while those who are less fit may opt to progress more gradually.



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June 21 at the Ramblewood Country Club

Kid Fitness: Myths about Overweight Children



Genuine concern exists for parents about the weight of their children. We hear a news story every single day about childhood obesity. We hear about what we need to be afraid of and in some cases, what we need to do as parents to protect our children. Today, I want to talk about some of the myths associated with overweight children.

Childhood Obesity Needs a Quick Fix

It would be nice if there were an instant fix to all fitness issues, especially obesity. It would be great if there were a fast answer for us much less our children. It's also important to remember that obesity doesn't have an overnight fix for anyone. Being overweight whether it's 10 pounds or 100 pounds cannot be remedied by a diet in just a few days.

In order to change the numbers on the scale and the effect of obesity on your child or yourself for that matter requires a commitment to life change. It requires eating a healthier diet and to increase levels of physical activity. When our kids are involved, we need to make sure the life changes we are committing to are for the entire family and not just for our kids.

We're All Big-Boned, So It's Okay if My Kid is Big too

Speaking as one of those big-boned individuals, it's important to throw this rationalization out the window. It's not the bones on your child that we're worried about, it's the body mass index. If they are a big kid and their BMI is below 25, you're not going to need to worry about their weight issues.

If their BMI exceeds that number then they are overweight. Consult with your pediatrician if you are concerned about the BMI. There are some conditions that can affect weight including the thyroid - a pediatric visit can help to eliminate those or identify them as an issue for your child.

My Kid is Lazy, That's Why They Are Overweight

Okay parents, this is a hard one - but it's not our kid's fault - it's ours. We are the parents, we do not abdicate responsibility for their flaws and just take credit for their successes. Too often we look at someone who is overweight and we just say it's because they are lazy or self-indulgent or lack self-control. Our kids eat what we give them. Our kids do what we tell them to do. If we don't care that they are playing video games all day and eating Twinkies for breakfast - then there is going to be a problem for them.

You don't get to turn your child away because you don't like their weight. You don't get to say it's all their fault. You are the adult in the situation and you have the power to effect change in it. Learn what healthy choices are and make those healthy choices for yourself as well as your child. Support them, love them and be there for them and don't abandon them because of a faulty choice you made.



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Recipe of the Month

Low Carb, Low Fat Baked Cheese Cake

Ingredients:

non-stick cooking spray
4 eggs, separated, plus 2 egg whites
sugar substitute equal to 3/4 cup sugar, divided
1 teaspoon lemon juice, divided
dash of salt
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3 cups 3% soft white cheese, or light cream cheese or ricotta cheese, drained
1/2 teaspoon grated lemon rind
2 tablespoons vanilla-flavored, low-carb soy protein powder
Topping:
1/2 cup low-fat sour cream
sugar substitute equal to 2 tablespoons sugar
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract



Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Line the bottom of a 9-inch springform pan with baking paper. Spray just a bit with non-stick cooking spray.
2. Separate the eggs. Beat egg whites with salt, half of the sugar substitute and half of the lemon juice, until stiff. Beat the egg yolks with the remaining sugar substitute until thick. With the mixer on a low-medium setting, beat in the vanilla, cheese, lemon juice and rind, and protein powder until incorporated. Gently fold into the beaten egg whites.
3. Bake for 10 minutes at 400 degrees F; then turn the oven down to 300 degrees F and bake for another 40 minutes. When the top of the cake is set, turn off the oven and keep the oven door closed. Allow to cool for another hour in the oven. Remove and continue to cool on a wire rack.
4. Combine topping ingredients. Spread on top of the cheesecake and bake for 5 minutes at 450 degrees F.

Variation:

Fruit: Decorate with fresh strawberries and kiwi or any fruit of choice.

Nut: Add 1/4 cup roasted slivered almonds or chopped hazelnuts and 1/4 teaspoon almond extract (optional) to cake. Sprinkle 1/4 cup coarsely chopped almonds on the topping.

Nutritional Information:

Per Serving--

Calories: 80

Carbohydrate: 3.2g

Saturated Fat: 2g

Exercise and Depression



Can exercise really improve my mood?

Yes. Just taking a brisk walk three times a week may help you recover faster from depression, reduce its severity, and even ward off the blues in the first place. Hundreds of studies have found that exercise can help relieve physical and emotional symptoms in clinically depressed people. Others have found that people who work out regularly, whether they're young or old, tend to have better self-esteem and fewer physical and mental health problems.

In one study, college students who did aerobic exercise for five weeks recovered faster and more fully from stressful life events than those who practiced relaxation techniques. In fact, a Duke University Medical Center study of 156 clinically depressed patients found exercise to be more effective at easing depression over the long term than the antidepressant medication Zoloft. In this clinical trial, patients in the exercise group took three supervised classes per week in which they used a treadmill or stationary bicycle at 70 to 85 percent of their maximum heart rate for 30 minutes, according to a report published in *Psychosomatic Medicine*.

How does exercise help relieve depression?

Just focusing your mind and body on a rhythmic activity can help relieve anxiety. Exercise is a great stress-buster, too, not only because it relieves muscle tension but also because it gets your heart rate up. The combination makes you more relaxed and alert and, therefore, better able to deal with your problems. Plus, it feels a lot better to take out your frustrations on the StairMaster than on your spouse or co-workers.

If depression has disrupted your sleep or appetite, burning a few extra calories helps get your body back in sync and boosts your energy level if you're dragging. It may take your mind off your problems, too. Of course, getting stronger and staying in shape makes you feel better about yourself by enhancing your sense of competence and control over your life. And knowing that you can indulge in that ice cream sundae occasionally without worrying about how it will look on your hips is nice, too.

Some current research suggests exercise can actually change your brain chemistry. One recent study found that a good workout can boost your level of serotonin, a brain chemical that is linked to mood. Intense exercise can also stimulate the production of endorphins, natural painkillers that can sometimes make you feel euphoric. A 2005 Yale University study found that exercise increases neurogenesis--the growth of neuronal brain cells--and stymies the effects of aging and depression. While researchers aren't sure if that's enough to lift you out of depression, the evidence is encouraging.

There are social benefits to exercising that can help improve your mood as well. Joining a club or meeting friends to walk or work out with can help lift the sense of isolation you can develop when you're depressed.

How long will it take to feel better?

People suffering from major depression have experienced a boost in emotional well-being and energy from as little as a single 30-minute workout, according to a small study published in the journal *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*. But for the best results, the exercise program should last at least two months, according to the Harvard Mental Health Newsletter.

Does the exercise have to be vigorous?

No, any kind will help. In a study published in 2005, researchers tested the effects of a three-month exercise program on people with mild to moderate depression. They divided 80 participants into five groups, with one of them exercising vigorously three days a week and another five days a week; two groups doing "low-dose" exercise three and five days a week, and another (the control group) doing only stretching.

Symptoms of depression dropped in all five groups, but they did take the biggest tumble in the rigorous exercise program, falling by an average of 47 percent. That means that the program of vigorous exercise was about as effective as antidepressant medication and cognitive therapy, the two main treatments for depression.

What kind of exercise is best for improving my mood?

There's no evidence that any one kind of exercise is best. Most studies have looked at running or other aerobic activities. But studies that have also compared the effects of low-intensity activities, such as walking, and nonaerobic workouts, such as weight training, have found that these types of exercise are equally effective in reducing anxiety and depression. You don't even have to achieve an improvement in strength or cardiovascular fitness to reap the emotional benefits.

How can I make myself exercise when I can barely get out of bed?

It may seem impossible to make the effort to exercise on your own. If you are severely depressed, talk to your doctor first about psychotherapy or medication, or both. After you start to feel a little better, you might look for a structured group exercise program built around activities that you've enjoyed in the past.

Joining a walking group is often a good option because you can be at any fitness level and you don't need any training or special equipment. And just getting outside, especially in good weather, can be therapeutic in itself. Start by walking five to ten minutes a day, and work your way up to 30 or 45 minutes. You may need to keep at it for several weeks before noticing an improvement in your mood, but try to make it a habit you don't want to give up. It might help to think of this as acquiring a new lifestyle for health that you intend to maintain for the rest of your life. So pace yourself. Studies show that people see the greatest effects after four months of regular exercise.

Remember, exercise isn't a substitute for other kinds of treatments for depression, such as medication or therapy, but it's a good complementary activity to add to your regimen. If you have a medical condition or are out of shape, talk with your doctor about the best sort of exercise for you.

Calculating Correct Heart Rate Zones

How do I determine my target heart rate?



The general formula for the average person is $220 - \text{age} \times 60\%$ and $\times 90\%$ of HRmax. For example, a 30 year old would calculate his target zone using the above formula: $220 - 30 = 190$.

$190 \times 0.60 = 114$ and $190 \times 0.90 = 171$. This individual would try to keep his heart rate between 114 (low end) and 171 (high end) beats per minute.

The Karvonen Formula calculates your heart rate reserve range. To calculate it, take your pulse for one minute on three successive mornings upon waking up. (We will be using the case of a 30 year old male whose resting pulse was 69, 70 and 71 for an average of 70 over the 3 days.)

Calculate target heart rate by subtracting your age from 220

$(220 - 30 = 190)$.

Subtract your average resting heart rate from target heart rate

$(190 - 70 = 120)$.

The lower boundary of the percentage range is 50% of this plus your resting heart rate $[(120 \times 0.5) + 70 = 130]$. The higher boundary is 85% plus your RHR $[(120 \times 0.85) + 70 = 172]$. Using the Karvonen Formula for percentage of heart rate reserve, this 30 year old man should be working between 130 and 172 BPM.

The above two formulas are only guidelines, as some people may be 30 beats above their predicted maximum heart rate. Again on the other end of the scale some people can be 20 beats below, and will find it impossible to reach their so-called target zone.

The best way, if you are interested, is to ask a qualified person who will monitor both you and your heart under exercise, and from this establish what your target zones should be.

It is important to note that the deviation in both the age specific formula and the Karvonen formula is due to the estimation of HRmax. If you have an actual HRmax from a graded exercise test, it will be more accurate.

Another important factor is that various equipment will generate different results, i.e. running and cycling

If you don't have a (Heart Rate Monitor), the Borg scale of perceived exertion is another way of determining how hard you are working.

Using your own subjective Rate of Perceived Exertion (RPE) on a scale of 6-20 or a scale of 0-10, you determine how hard you *feel* you are working. As a simple guide, if you can't talk, then you're working hard, and likely to be close to your anaerobic level, if you're able to say a few words, then you're likely to be at your upper end of your aerobic level, whereas if you can have a comfortable conversation, then you're not really working that hard.

Aim to be working within your aerobic zone for as long as you can to help with weight management programs and getting your fitness level up, combining the last few minutes of your workout with an increase in effort to help improve your fitness level. Always make sure that any effort increase is within your own fitness capability.

Original Scale	Revised Scale
6	0 - Nothing at all
7 - Very, very light	0.5 - Very, very weak
8	1 - Very weak
9 - Very light	2 - Weak
10	3 - Moderate
11 - Fairly light	4 - Somewhat strong
12	5 - Strong
13 - Somewhat hard	6
14	7 - Very strong
15 - Hard	8
16	9 - Very, very strong
17 - Very hard	10 - * Maximal
18	-
19 - Very, very hard	-
20 - * Maximal	-

Corporate Sponsors Needed



The Smart Bodies Olympics is looking for businesses to sponsor our attempt to help raise money and awareness for a Community Youth Program and Multiple Sclerosis. If your business may be interested, please see Bristol Jenkins for more information.



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APRIL SCHEDULE

APRIL 13
11:00 AM

April 27
11:00 AM

**ENLIST @ FRONT DESK
24 HOUR CX POLICY
COST: ONE SESSION**



SMART CYCLING

How will I benefit from bicycling?

For starters, you'll tone your calves, thighs, and hips while burning 350 to 700 calories an hour. Cycling boosts your aerobic capacity, too -- new cyclists see up to a 20 percent increase during the first four months. That means your heart will deliver oxygen to muscles more efficiently, taking the effort out of climbing stairs and carrying groceries. You'll also reduce your risk of colon cancer and lower your cholesterol level and blood pressure. And bicycling is one of the few aerobic exercises that's easy to incorporate into a full day. On a bike, you can run errands or commute to work.

How should I choose a bicycle?

Your best bet is a city bike or hybrid, and don't let bike shop employees tell you differently. Halfway between a mountain bike and a road bike, a city bike is designed for use around town. As their names imply, the other bikes are intended for dirt tracks in mountains or the open road. They fall woefully short when asked to perform everyday duty.

Make sure you get a comfy seat, and look for handlebars that allow you to maintain an upright position (you should lean forward slightly, but not so much that you can't let go of the bars without falling forward). Having fenders, a rack, and a basket will encourage you to use the bike for chores as well as exercise.

You can get a rough idea of whether a bike fits by straddling the frame and making sure your crotch clears the top bar by a couple of inches. Adjust the seat height so that your knee bends slightly when the pedal is at the lowest point. If your hips rock from side to side when you pedal, it's too high. The salesperson should be very helpful in guiding you to the right bike and setting it up to suit you; if not, go someplace else.

Toe clips, metal cages that help keep your feet in contact with the pedal, can save your knees by allowing you to lift up as well as push down when you're turning the cranks. It'll take a couple of outings to get used to the clips, but

after that you won't feel comfortable riding without them. Eventually, if you want to extend your pastime into doing long weekend rides, you may want to get clipless pedals, which call for cycling shoes that snap into place.

Whatever you do, don't leave the store without buying a helmet: Wearing one reduces the risk of serious head injury by more than 85 percent.

What's a good cycling technique?

Fluidity is key in cycling. Keep your upper body still and concentrate on your pedal stroke as a full circle; don't just stomp down as each foot comes forward. Stay in a gear that allows you to spin the pedals at about 70 to 80 revolutions a minute. To get a feel for this, try counting "one potato, two potato, three potato"; your right foot should reach the bottom of the stroke as you say the number. It may seem too fast at first, but you'll quickly adjust. This cadence will get you through valleys and over hills efficiently, and it will help prevent stressed joints and strained muscles.

If you remember to shift down anytime your cadence slows, you'll do fine. "Cycling is a sport of elegance, subtlety, and finesse," says cycling pro James McCullagh in his book *Cycling for Health, Fitness and Well-Being*. "Only the foolhardy pick high gears to show how tough they are."

How do I get started?

Plan short routes of ten to 15 miles on quiet roads -- around a park, say, or on two-lane highways outside of town. Try to cycle at least three times a week, but don't think of your rides as workouts so much as sightseeing (the exercise will take care of itself). Limit your time on the bike to less than an hour, and avoid big hills for the first few months. The best way to insure your bike ends up collecting dust in the garage is to tackle more than you can reasonably handle.

When you're more comfortable on the bike, consider adding five or ten miles to your routes; also, try using your bike for trips to the store or even commuting. Riding will start to feel like second nature, and you'll find that staying in shape becomes nearly effortless.



SMART GOLF TIPS AND TRICKS

Stroke the Golf Ball, Don't Hit It

If you are looking to have a strong, powerful swing and not a misguided hack, stroke, rather than hit the ball. The difference can be seen when examining a short putt, when it is easy to stroke the ball. Hitting is not an option for a short putt, which makes it the easiest shot in golf. No desire to hit the ball allows a stroking, swinging motion. Perfect this technique for short-distance shots and you will find increasing accuracy and distance with your long shots as well.

Tips for Better Golf Bunker Play

Here are some things to keep in mind to better your bunker play:

- 1) Keep an open stance
- 2) Ball should be positioned ahead of center of lead foot
- 3) Feet dug into sand to anchor; toes are deeper than heels
- 4) Choke down on grip to adjust for buried feet
- 5) Take grip with club face open
- 6) Swing club back to a position that has the lead arm parallel with the ground with the wrists fully cocked
- 7) Hit 2 inches behind the ball
- 8) Accelerate through the shot
- 9) Practice is critical

Good Balance is Vital

Good balance is vital to the success of a great golf shot. You need to balance yourself what I call 25/25/25/25. 25% on your heels, 25% on your toes, 25% on your back foot and 25% on your front foot. Without having balance throughout the swing you will lack consistency, which is so

important in becoming a good player.

Golf Stance

Poor alignment is the single most destructive area for players of all levels. There are two main elements to be considered when lining up a golf shot. First and foremost is the target line (the line that the golf club is actually on. Secondly -- the stance line, also known as the body line. Both are important, but the stance line must always be determined first by the target line if the stance line is to have any true meaning.

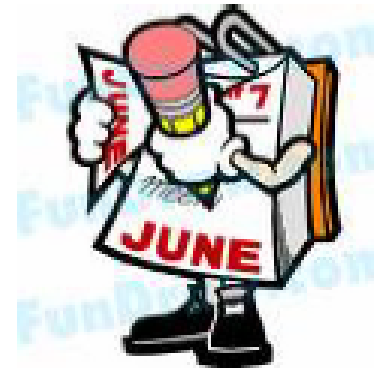
Making a smoother stroke when you putt

When you putt the ball, your stroke should look much like the pendulum of a clock swinging back and forth. You can learn this stroke in your own home by following these easy steps. 1. Lay a quarter on the floor. 2. Take a piece of string 12 inches long and lay it on the floor on the line of your putter stroke. 3. Address the quarter with your putter just like you were going to putt. 4. Working with a range of 6 inches back and 6 inches forward, swing your putting back and forward very slowly along with string. **Practice this continuous motion keeping the putting line straight.**

How to Putt Like a Pro

Putting makes up about 35-40% of your final score. If you usually shoot around 90, you likely average 34-36 putts a game. A Golf Pro on the P.G.A. usually takes 26-30 putts a round. To improve your putting, try this : Line up some coins in the form of a 4 inch wide pathway straight to the hole, 2ft. from the hole. You are putting through a 2 ft. long "tunnel", so to speak. Now, try and sink 9/10 putts from 2 ft. through this coin pathway, but, don't touch any. That is your goal - do not touch the coins. You'll soon find yourself sinking all of these putts on the practice green, and on the course too, building your confidence, and lowering

Save the Date



SATURDAY June 21

Smart Bodies

Client Appreciation Party
At Ramblewood Country Club

The Winners will be announced for the

All
are
Welcome!



All
are
Welcome!

Basic Cardio Advice and Guidelines



Many people do some form of aerobic exercise. Some get results, and some don't. One article can't possibly begin to explore all the depth of this huge topic, but here are some key factors to keep in mind when you do cardio.

1. It must be sustained for at least 20 minutes. This doesn't mean that 20 minutes of easy pedaling on a stationary bike qualifies as adequate cardio exercise. It simply means that with enough vigor, 20 minutes can create a cardiovascular training effect. Actually, even 10 minutes, if done rigorously enough, will create a training effect.

2. Never use lack of time as an excuse to avoid some cardio training. If all you have is 10 minutes, then do 10 minutes. If you don't think such a small timeframe is worth it, then try jumping rope for 10 minutes nonstop. Or jog in place with high knees for 10 minutes. This will get your heart rate up.

3. But people actually do have a lot more than 10 minutes. If you make cardio a priority, you'll find 30 or more minutes to slip it into your schedule every day.

4. Wear appropriate footwear with good arch supports.

5. If the idea of aerobics or cardio seems boring, then participate in a group fitness class or join a hiking group.

The following count as cardio exercise: Brisk walking on level courses; slow walking up hills; any kind of jogging; cardio classes such as step, low impact, high impact, dance and kickboxing; tennis, basketball, cross-country skiing, inline skating, cycling, and use of any kind of cardio equipment found at your local gym.

My advice is not to obsess about heart rate, even if you're on equipment that has a heart rate monitor. A reading from a machine may not be accurate. Unless you are under doctor's orders to monitor heart rate, you should instead pay attention to how you feel throughout the session. Take the talk test. If you can easily carry on a conversation, you're not working hard enough. Going through the motions is not enough to incite improvement in your body's immune system, generate growth of denser capillaries, or cut your cancer and type 2 diabetes risk.

It's okay to be out of breath. The human body was designed to exert itself. So if you use a stationary bike, really pump away! It's okay to break a sweat. It's okay to get "pooped out" after only 10 minutes. At that point, pedal easily for a

few minutes to recover, then go at it again. This training principle can be applied to all cardio venues. You can also find the pace at which, if sustained for longer than 10 minutes, gets you winded and feeling worked.

If conversation is difficult, then you are training hard enough to spark improvement in health and fitness, which includes fat loss. Give yourself a numerical rating as well, on a scale of 1 to 10, when it comes to effort. A rating of 1 means the level of exertion required to lie in a recliner, eat ice cream and watch TV. A level 10 means how you'd feel if you just tried to outrun a train. So when you do any kind of cardio, be it treadmill, stair stepper, aerobics class or neighborhood walk, be sure that your perceived level of exertion rating for sustained work is about 5-7.

If you're new to cardio exercise, you may want to go at a lighter exertion, but again, pay attention to how your body feels. If you feel sick or ill in some way, cease the activity and drink water. The ill feeling is almost always caused by insufficient nutrition preceding the workout, plus inadequate water intake. If you feel like a muscle pull or strain is imminent, stop the activity and rest for a few days.

Do not feel guilty if you spend one hour a day doing cardio. The human machine was not designed to sit in an office all day, nor sit for hours and hours every week in front of a TV or computer. Think of how much time you spend in your life in a seated, inert position: talking on the phone, balancing the checkbook, opening mail and reading the newspaper, eating, socializing, reading, etc., not to mention all the time you may be sitting on the job.

So don't feel like a fanatic if you commit to one hour a day of cardiovascular exercise. This will help offset all the time you spend sitting.

Now, if you're on your feet all day at the workplace, never count this as your cardio exercise! If your feet are killing you at the end of the day, this reflects poor footwear, rather than any kind of workout. Five thousands footsteps at work do not necessarily translate into training that improves cardio respiratory function.

You must get your heart rate up. Aerobic exercise should force you to breathe harder. You must impose a demand on your body that forces its cardio respiratory system to adapt. When the body is forced to adapt, it requires more energy than usual. It will get some of this energy from stored body fat. A body that's forced to adapt will become more fit and resilient.

If you're already doing cardio but with minimal results, then step up the pace and/or change the mode. If you've been walking all this time, maybe it's time to add some jogging segments or join a step aerobics class. If you've been running all this time, then add some hills or replace a few running workouts with revolving staircase sessions. Variety is key.

Why our brains are programmed to eat doughnut



Homer Simpson can't resist doughnuts and it's all because our brains are

programmed that way, according to new research. Scientists have

discovered that it is not just Homer Simpson who finds it impossible to keep his hands off doughnuts.

Apparently our brains are programmed to leap into action when presented with the sugary treats.

A study found that when hungry volunteers were shown a picture of a Krispy Kreme doughnut or a screwdriver, the sugary snack sent the brain into overdrive.

The same response did not occur after participants had stuffed themselves with up to eight of them.

Researchers at Northwestern University in Chicago carried out functional magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) brain scans while volunteers were shown the pictures.

After the eating binge, neither image

generated much of a reaction.

But after volunteers had fasted for eight hours, two distinct parts of the brain "lit up" at the sight of the doughnuts.

The first was the limbic brain, an ancestral part of the brain present in all animals from frogs to humans.

"That part of the brain is able to detect what is motivationally significant," said Dr Marsel Mesulam, senior author of the research published on line in the journal *Cerebral Cortex*.

"It says, not only am I hungry, but here is food."

Next the brain's spatial attention network locked onto the doughnuts, deciding they were more important than the screwdrivers.

Dr Aprajita Mohanty, another of the scientists, said: "There's a very complex system in the brain that helps to direct our attention to items in the environment that are relevant to our needs, for example, food when we are hungry but not when we are full."

The research demonstrated how the brain sifts out all sorts of relevant material, not just doughnuts, from a world full of stimuli.

"If you are in a forest and you hear rustling, the context urges you to pay full attention since this could be a sign of danger," said Dr Mesulam.

"If you are in your office, the context makes the identical sound less relevant. A major job of the brain is to match response to context."

Fitness Fallacies - Mistakes We Make



When it comes to working out, there are a number of questions we need the answers for and no, I'm not talking about what fat-burning supplements to add to your diet or what magical miracle pill works this week to help you

achieve your weight loss or fitness goals. No, the questions you need to ask are what are my goals, will this help me achieve my goals and is it safe?

One of my goals here at the fitness blog is to bring you information on how to achieve your goals, help inspire you to meet them and most of all, to keep it safe. So here are some fitness fallacies that you need to keep in mind with regard to setting up your personal fitness program of choice.

- Lifting light weights will give you cut and definition - lifting light weights will help you build strength and endurance, but it's not going to make you look like Mr. Universe. If you're going for the cut and well defined look you need to lift heavy weights with to create overload in the muscles. You may also create a more defined look by reducing your overall body fat.
- Cardio is all you need to lose body fat - While you need to perform cardiovascular exercise to help you burn excess calories, you need to also perform weight training to help maintain your muscle mass - remember, muscles burn far more calories than fat so you need to perform a combination of activities - massive amounts of cardio without

weight training or muscle building activities can strip your muscles as well as your body fat

- Power Lifting can build muscle mass faster than anything else - The average person builds about five pounds of muscle per year on a steady, regular weight training program and power lifting is not going to increase that muscle building any faster
- Eat less and you'll lose fat - okay, you need to remember something about your body, it is biologically programmed to store fat and to hang onto it in case of famine or other natural disaster, so when you reduce what you eat, it's going to increase the fat percentages and hang onto it as long as possible because it wants to survive - reducing the calories consumed is not going to cause you to lose weight, only a combination of calories in versus calories burned is going to help you do that
- Calories are the important factor in any weight loss program - absolutely not, because the types of calories are equally important whether they come from carbs, fats or protein. You need to control your body's insulin levels and keep them balanced
- Women will get huge ugly muscles if they lift heavy weights - No. No. No. Testosterone is one of the key building blocks in huge muscles - women simply don't have the same amounts of testosterone in their bodies to do that. Weight training will give you a hard, lean body and it will help you shed unwanted pounds
- Diets high in protein and low in carbohydrates are the best way to build muscle - Again, this is a fallacy because your body needs protein, carbohydrates and even fat to build muscle and while it's true a person in heavy duty weight training will consume more protein, that is because they have a larger muscle mass to feed

Too Few Calories Can Be a Problem

I hate Catch-22s and when it comes to fitness and weight loss, you find a lot of catch-22s. One of these catch-22s is that while eating less may seem to constitute a result of weight loss - too few calories can actually be a problem for anyone who is looking to shape up or lose weight.

When you cut back on calories too much, your body is biologically programmed to protect itself from various environmental conditions including starvation. So when you don't eat enough, your body goes into starvation mode. When your body does this, it begins hoarding every calorie it can and storing fat because it doesn't want to starve to death.

Your Metabolism Slows Down

Your metabolism will actually begin to slow down in an effort to conserve and your body might even burn muscle long before it burns fat. When this happens, you'll find that work outs become harder, injuries easier to sustain and ultimately, your exhausted all the time and you can't seem to get enough sleep and you might even get sick easier than before.

What you want to do ultimately is to get your calories from lean protein sources and non-starchy veggies. The average

person needs about 1500 calories a day. So if you are eating lean chicken breast, turkey breast and plenty of broccoli, squash, peppers and mushrooms along with a regular regimen of exercise you're going to burn off your fat storage.

You are giving your body the nutrients it needs and keeping it out of fat storage mode and at the same time, you are burning excess energy through exercise. Another good recommendation my doctor gave me was to eliminate the simple sugars after six in the evening. This can help you stabilize insulin levels and keep them from hindering your weight loss progress.

Calorie burning programs that include weight training (remember, muscle burns more fat). When you work out early in the day, your metabolism stays higher - providing you with hours more of calorie burning beyond your workout. So before you decide to starve yourself slender, consider that there are better and healthier options to achieve your goals.

