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St. Cloud State University

Human Performance Laboratory
Center for Lifestyle Enhancement

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Newsletter

MOTIVATION REMAINS KEY TO SUCCESSFUL EXERCISE PROGRAMS

Most of us know that regular physical activity is an important factor in maintaining good health. For example, we have learned that our muscular system (nearly 40% of our weight) must be used on a regular basis to remain strong and healthy. Disuse atrophy (wasting away) is a certain result of inactivity. For proof, all we need is to examine the musculature of an injured arm or leg that has just been taken from a cast. Its emaciated appearance resulted from inactivity. Not only do the muscles look compromised, they in fact are in a much weakened state. Can you imagine what happens to our abdominal and back muscles as a result of sedentary living? They too become weak and this makes them vulnerable to injury. It's no wonder that back injuries are one of the leading causes of disability in our country.

Healthy muscles are just one of the many benefits we desire from physical activity. Others such as body composition, heart function, cholesterol status, and emotional well being have been widely documented as being enhanced by physical activity. There is no need to go into great detail in reminding you of these benefits because you've been told about them many times in the past. One can hardly pick up a newspaper or turn on the television without hearing some discussion about the need for regular physical activity.

Yet, if everyone knows why they need to exercise, why then do so many have such a difficult time adhering to regular programs in physical activity? Most would agree that the answer involves motivation. For some reason many lack the spark or enthusiasm that is needed for successful fitness programs. I have heard the phrase "the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak" on more than one occasion as an excuse. During those times I bite my tongue, because I want to say wait a minute -- you have got it backwards! The spirit is the problem, because we must depend upon it for the internal motivation that is essential to stick to anything really worth while. So, we need to start working on our spirit or whatever provides the spark of enthusiasm that we lack.

Now you ask, how do I go about working on enthusiasm for exercise? With that question you have stumped the experts because no one is really very sure about how people are motivated. One of the biggest problems we face is how to improve exercise compliance. Too many well interested people begin exercising only to give up a short time later. Studies indicate that nearly 50% of those beginning fitness programs drop out within a few months. This is probably why health clubs demand up front membership payment.

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(Motivation continued)

While this large drop out rate concerns me, it doesn't surprise me. For anyone to be successful with a fitness program, they must work it into their daily living routine. In other words, it must become a part of the living process. We must also remember that many people start and stop fitness programs and then start again. Our policy is not to give up on anyone -- many of us are unable to make fitness work until we are physically and emotionally prepared for it. This may take a while, so we encourage you not to give up on yourself.

In my mind, the single most cause of failing to maintain a fitness program is that we set our goals too high and expect too much of ourselves. We forget that one of the most important principles of training is progression; i.e., starting slowly and gradually progressing to greater levels of exercise. Recent information also questions some of our old thoughts on intensity. Formerly, we encouraged everyone to train between 70-90% of maximal heart rate. New interpretations are suggesting that intensity is not as vital as the actual participation. The important factor is involvement -- not how hard we do it. In my view, this means it's probably more important for us to walk, swim, dance, or garden at a moderate intensity regularly than it is to exercise more vigorously less frequently.

Because many beginning exercisers demand too much of themselves, it places too much strain on them. As a result, the exercise session becomes less than enjoyable. Most of us avoid those activities that cause unpleasant after effects, so we often find ourselves shying away from the cause -- physical activity. Had the activity been less intense, a certain amount of pleasure, even joy, might have been experienced. So, in conclusion, our recommendation would be to slow down and enjoy the process of getting into shape.

THE LAST DATE FOR TESTING THIS SPRING IS MAY 13, 1987. THE LAB WILL BE CLOSED FOR THE SUMMER- TESTING WILL BEGIN IN SEPTEMBER BUT DON'T STOP EXERCISING!!

EXERCISE AT HALENBECK!!!!!

Adult Fitness Program participants who have recently undergone the testing phase and consultation session, as well as those who have taken part in previous years, are welcome to join our Early Morning Exercise Group. We meet at the Halenbeck Hall indoor track at 6:15 A.M. on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. After being instructed in proper warm-up and stretching techniques and in utilizing pulse rates to determine individual "target training zones," participants can continue their exercise programs by walking and/or running on the track, riding the stationary bikes or by swimming laps in the pool.

People are encouraged to participate in more than one activity, as this reduces boredom and contributes to a more well-rounded level of conditioning. Variety is often an important factor in staying motivated in an exercise program, as is exercising with others who are also striving to improve their levels of fitness.

If early morning exercise is not for you, you may like to join our noon aerobics class which meets on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. You may also choose to use the Halenbeck Hall South facilities during open recreation time for your personal fitness program.

If you are interested in participating in one of our programs or need more guidance in reaching personal fitness goals, contact Tees at the Human Performance Lab (255-3105).

WELL THY TIPS

STRETCHING: AN EXERCISE FOR ALL SEASONS

Stretching provides relief from muscle tension and stiffness. It allows us to remain flexible and maintain a full range of movement in performing our daily tasks. A stretching routine should be incorporated into our daily exercise programs.

When you're ready to stretch, do it the right way. The old bouncing stretches actually tighten and strain muscles. In contrast "static" stretches gradually loosen muscles without straining them. Perform each stretch in a slow gentle motion to produce a slight tension in the muscle. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds, relax, and then repeat several times. A daily stretching routine only requires a short time out of your day while the benefits will last a lifetime.

LAUGHTER AND LONGEVITY.....

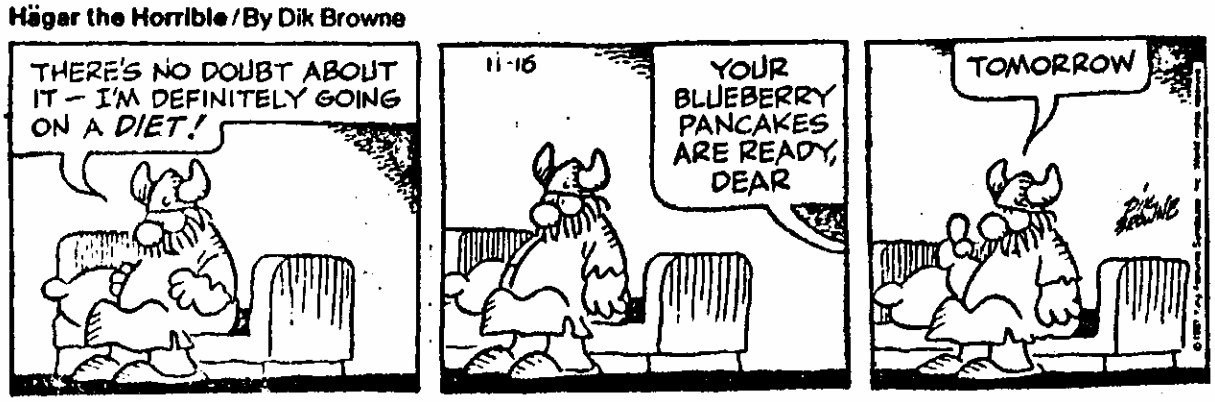
Laughter has been called "inner jogging". That's because it is a real workout, causing the muscles of the abdomen, chest and shoulders to contract and temporarily raising the heart rate, respiration rate and blood pressure. Afterwards, muscles are more relaxed than before, and heart rate and blood pressure dip below normal. Laughing also stimulates the production of endorphins, the body's natural pain-relieving enzymes, which may cause what is called "runners high"--and may similarly cause "laughers high".

Recent research has found that laughter can be as good in reducing stress as are complex biofeedback programs. Yet laughter requires no special training, equipment or laboratory atmosphere. All you need is a funny bone!

THE SUN: GOOD OR BAD???

The sun can relieve tension and stress
-can increase body's resistance to infections
-can help the whole body heal scars, relax muscles and joints, and dry up acne
-can burn
-can cause premature skin aging
-can increase chances of skin cancer

The sun has many healing characteristics but also many harmful effects. Enjoy the sun but take precautions--use sunscreens faithfully.



MEET OUR GRADUATE STUDENTS .....

We are very pleased to introduce the following graduate students who enrolled in the Exercise Physiology/Special Studies master's degree program this fall quarter. They are assisting with the fitness testing and consultations conducted at the Human Performance Laboratory.

John Brandstetter is a 1985 graduate of SCSU. He earned a B.S. degree in biology with emphasis in physiology. He has coached for the St. Cloud Area Swim Club and is currently the swim coach at the College of St. Benedict. John hopes to work in a cardiac rehabilitation program or some phase of sports medicine. Some of his interests include swimming, biking, hunting, fishing and also working with computers.

Mary Beth Miller attended the College of St. Benedict and graduated with a B.A. degree in natural science in 1986. She plans to work as an exercise physiologist with a cardiac rehabilitation program.

Mary enjoys cooking, jogging, bike riding and reading classical novels. Tees Mosenthal earned a B.A. degree in sociology and Spanish in 1976. She has worked as a ski instructor and real estate salesperson in Vail, Colorado. After earning her M.S. in exercise physiology, she plans to direct a wellness program or corporate fitness center. She and her husband Todd, a chiropractor, may open their own wellness center. Tees enjoys reading, traveling, skiing, running and biking.

Bonnie Majerus has a B.A. degree in biology from Mankato State. In 1973 she became certified in medical technology. Bonnie is also employed at Cambridge Memorial Hospital. She plans to seek a position in the health care field such as in cardiac rehabilitation or research. Bonnie enjoys biking, cross country skiing and following her kids in their sports activities.

Robin Paine graduated from Mankato State University in 1986, with a major in athletic training and minors in biology and psychology. She plans to work as an athletic trainer at the college level. She enjoys swimming, sewing and sleeping.

John Stearns earned an undergraduate degree in biology and a minor in psychology from Concordia College in 1986. He plans on working in a hospital, health club, or sports medicine institute. John enjoys music and sport activities.

FUND RAISING

Many of the programs our laboratory sponsors are self supported. The fees that you are assessed during your laboratory visits are used for these programs. Our programs are also supported by your donations. We are again asking for your support through gifts to the SCSU Foundation. Our program is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization and your contribution may be used as a tax deduction. You may send your contribution to SCSU Foundation, St. Cloud State University, Development Office AS 210. Please specify that the donation is for the Adult Fitness Program. Thank you for your continued support.

CMGHP SUPPORTS ADULT FITNESS PROGRAM

Central Minnesota Group Health Plan members who participate in the Adult Fitness Program initial or follow-up fitness evaluations are eligible to receive a $15.00 reimbursement. "This program fits well with our emphasis on preventive health care and healthy living." states CMGHP. We will complete the reimbursement forms for you, but you must inform us if you are a member of CMGHP. If you have any questions concerning this policy, please contact us at the lab.

Health Update

THE BATTLE AGAINST HIGH CHOLESTEROL!!!!

A recent survey released by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute indicated that more people are now aware of the dangers of high cholesterol. What, you may ask, can you do to fight the battle against high cholesterol? Experts suggest the following:

*** Get your cholesterol checked regularly (at least every 5 years), more often if you have a family history of heart disease.**

*** If it's elevated, get it checked again within a few weeks and BE SURE TO ask for HDL and LDL levels. HDL's are the "good guys" and so we want them to be a high percentage of our total cholesterol. LDL's are the "bad guys". Thus, we want to keep them as a low percentage of the total cholesterol.**

*** If it's moderately elevated, reduce your intake of saturated fat and high cholesterol foods. The total amount of saturated fat you eat is the biggest single dietary factor affecting your cholesterol level. Saturated fats are two times more powerful in raising blood cholesterol than are polyunsaturated fats. This means that limiting the amount of saturated fat you eat is even more important than limiting foods containing cholesterol!!**

*** If it's very high, see your doctor for specific recommendations.**

*** Children should have their cholesterol levels checked also, especially if there is a family history of heart disease.**

Some suggestions for decreasing your cholesterol levels are as follows:

1) Participate in regular exercise. Regular aerobic exercise presently appears to be the single most IMPORTANT factor (excluding diet) related to improving the blood cholesterol picture.

2) Decrease the consumption of foods high in saturated fats and cholesterol. Both are found in animal products, so by eating fruits, vegetables, and grains instead of high fat meats and cheeses, eggs, and whole milk, we can reduce our cholesterol intake. Saturated fat is usually hard at room temperature. Examples are butter, lard, hydrogenated margarines, coconut and palm oils.

3) We should increase our intake of Omega 3 fatty acids. They are often referred to as "fish oils" as they are present in salmon, tuna, herring and mackerel, as well as in canola oil. The NEW Puritan oil contains canola oil. These unsaturated fats have been found to lower LDL cholesterol levels. Remember these are the "bad guys!"

4) It is important to increase the amount of monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats in your diet. Monounsaturated fats are found in foods such as peanut butter, peanut oil, olive oil, peanuts, and the NEW Puritan oil. Sunflower, soybean, safflower and corn oils and the margarines containing these oils are high in polyunsaturated fats.

If you have any questions regarding cholesterol or would like to consult our dietitian, please contact us at the Human Performance Lab, 255-3105.

A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

"The greatest potential for improving health lies in what we do and don't do for and to ourselves." Victor Fuchs, *Who Shall Live: Health, Economics, and Social Change*.

IS YOUR HEART AT RISK?

Cholesterol blood levels, risk of heart-disease and what you should do if your level falls in these ranges (numbers are milligrams per deciliter of blood, the standard cholesterol measure):

- **180 or below. Considered as a safe level. Continue eating a prudent diet.**
- **100-200. Slightly elevated risk, roughly 25 percent higher than that of people below 180. Lower your intake of saturated fats and cholesterol-laden foods.**
- **200-220. Risk is as much as double that of people whose level is below 100. Seek dietary advice to lower fats and cholesterol.**
- **220-240. Risk 2 1/2 times that of those below 180. Seek dietary advice to lower fats and cholesterol.**
- **240-260. Risk 3 times that of those below 180. Consult doctor. Radical changes in diet required. Drug treatment may be needed.**
- **260-300. Risk 4 times greater than those below 180. Consult doctor. Radical changes in diet required. Drug therapy highly advisable.**
- **300 & above. Risk 5 times greater than that of people below 180. Consult Doctor. Diet change essential; drug treatment highly advisable.**