

Personal Health newsletter

PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR A HEALTHFUL LIFESTYLE

Volume 15, Number 4

Canada Post Publications Mail #40040712

Oct-Nov-Dec 2009

**Helping
you make
your own
decisions
about your
personal
health . . .**



Positive thinking often misunderstood

Thinking positively doesn't mean you ignore your problems. Sadly, much of the criticism about positive thinking is the accusation that "looking through rose coloured glasses" is not realistic and is an unhealthy form of denial.


However, looking at the positive side of things is not denying the negative exists. It's simply putting a different focus on the issue. Instead of fretting about your car being a rusted, backfiring relic, think about how grateful you are that you even have a



car! While you are smiling about that thought, you can make plans to gradually fix the defects of your vehicle.

Yes, it's true it's not healthy to completely ignore the negative. It's okay to get angry and let the emotion take place, instead of bottling it up inside you. Cry if you have to. Then get over it and get on with it . . . quit focussing or worrying on the negative aspects and find something positive about the challenge facing you (by the way, seeing it as a challenge rather than a problem is thinking positively).

Psychologist Daniel G. Amen says positive thinking calms the emotional brain, allowing you to think more clearly and rationally. If you are constantly worrying about every challenge, your highly emotional state won't allow you to think clearly enough to effectively deal with the issue.

The next time someone says your positive thinking is an unhealthy denial of the negative – tell them their negative thinking is an unhealthy denial of the positive! 

Quick weight loss shocks the body

Diets that promise quick weight loss are hard to resist. You lose weight on any popular diet – but because you haven't learned anything about healthy habits, you'll regain the lost weight.

Many popular diets eliminate food groups, instead of teaching moderation. This creates nutritional deficiencies, increases the risk of disease, leaves you dehydrated, and with less lean tissue (muscle).


In addition, losing weight too quickly leaves the body in a state of shock. A sudden shift from operating at a certain weight and on a certain amount of calories, to suddenly functioning on less calories and with less body fat, is a drastic change for your body. It will fight to regain the weight and calorie intake it was familiar with.

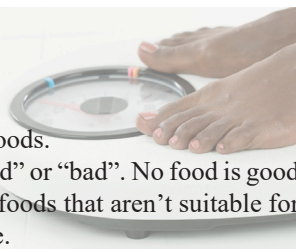
For a lifestyle change to be successful it must be slowly introduced and incorporated. Your body – and your mind – need time to accept the changes. Lose no more than one or two pounds each week and keep your calories at more than 1100 calories daily. This will keep your energy up and you won't feel deprived as you would on a very low calorie diet.

A diet is the time to relearn new, healthier habits. Be patient. Make smaller changes, like omitting baked goods (cakes and

cookies) or cutting back on high fat foods.

Avoid labeling foods as "good" or "bad". No food is good or bad. However, there may be some foods that aren't suitable for you and your health needs at this time.

Healthy eating should consist of readily-available foods you can purchase and prepare yourself. Be cautious with the popular diets that promise more than two pounds of weight loss per week or restrict you to special food products and supplements. You need to relearn old habits, and having someone do all the "thinking" for you won't help you learn and understand your new habits. 



**Inside
this edition . . .**

**Weight loss tips, Interval training,
Banish belly fat for good,
Preventing dementia.**



Weight loss starts in the pantry . . .

Checking your food inventory in your own kitchen is a smart step toward your weight loss goals. It's not a good idea to have the foods handy that may tempt you away from your good eating intentions.

Until you've reached your weight loss goals – or until you've disciplined yourself to eating these foods infrequently and in small quantities, avoid buying foods like chips, sugar-coated cereals, baked goods like cakes and cookies, soda pop and juices containing sugar, white-flour products like breads and crackers, red meats and high fat cheese. For now, only have these items when you eat out at a friend's or at a restaurant (and hopefully you don't eat out too often!)

Your grocery list should contain healthy high-protein sources like plain low-fat yogurt and cottage cheese, hard boiled or poached eggs, lean sliced meats like turkey and chicken breast, and salmon and other fish (canned in water or fresh). Vegetarians can consider soy burgers, legumes, tofu, nuts or nut butter. Have a protein source with every meal (meat and egg servings are the size of your palm or a deck of cards). Protein helps release a hormone called glucagon to help break down stored fat. Protein also contributes to making you feel full and may curb food cravings.

Stock up on lots of colourful vegetables. The deeper and darker the colour, the more antioxidants (disease fighters) and other nutrients the vegetable provides. Vegetables are also low in calories, fat, and high in fibre. Enjoy your vegetables raw or steamed and in unlimited amounts!

Eat whole grains too – about a cupped-hand (1/2c) serving at each meal. Choose brown and wild rice, cooked whole grains like quinoa, amaranth, barley, oats, and wheat, etc. Whole grains provide more fibre (to make you feel full) and lots of nutrients your body needs. If you choose to eat bread, know that bread is actually a highly processed food and no longer a

“whole grain.” But if you choose to eat it, pick those with visible flecks of whole grains dispersed throughout the loaf.

The body also needs *some* fat, so healthy fats should be on your grocery list too: like nuts, seeds, olives, and avocados. Tip: Instead of margarine on your bread, spread avocado. Store in a small lidded container in the fridge. Scoop out what you need with a knife. You can also store olive oil in a wide-mouthed container in the fridge. The oil congeals (thickens) and you can spread it easily on your toast. If your olive oil won't thicken in the fridge, store it first in the freezer. After it congeals, you can then keep it in the fridge for an easy-spreading margarine replacement. Olive oil provides many nutrients and is a source of monounsaturated fat, a fat which, ironically, researchers *suspect* may aid in fat loss. Be moderate with your fat servings: a few teaspoons of oil, a tablespoon of avocado, or a small handful of nuts and seeds at each meal.

Don't forget fresh fruit (3-4 daily), legumes, and root vegetables (alternate with whole grains) are also nutritious, low-fat and high-fibre foods to help you reach your weight goals.



Rx Laughter

I've done benefits for *all* religions. I'd hate to blow the hereafter on a technicality.

— *Bob Hope*

I asked my wife where she wanted to go for our anniversary. “Somewhere I haven't been in a long time,” she said. So I suggested the kitchen. — *Red Skelton*.



Don't be a food fanatic . . .

Acai berries, soy beans, and mangosteen juice are just a few of the many food items marketed as *good for you*. And they *are* good for you, but don't become fanatical about consuming them in large amounts. There is no one perfect food! Eat a variety of all foods to be sure you are getting all the necessary nutrients you need to stay healthy and alive!

PERSONAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER

is published four times yearly by Effective Visual Enterprises **EVE** Available by e-mail only.

EDITOR/PUBLISHER — EVE LEES.

Mailing address: Personal Health Newsletter, #25 - 1725 Southmere Crescent, Surrey BC V4A 7A7

Phone 604-531-8643. E-mail evelees@telus.net Web site: www.artnews-healthnews.com

Subscriptions: \$15.00 per year, \$26.00 two years. GST is not charged.

The goal of Personal Health is to provide useful tools to educate and to enhance the quality of life. The information in Personal Health Newsletter is not intended to replace therapeutic, nutritional or medical advice: Consult an appropriate professional.

© Personal Health Newsletter, 2009. All material appearing in Personal Health Newsletter is protected by copyright.

The Publisher's consent must be obtained for use of any article or illustration.



Interval training . . .

Interval training is an exercise method that can promise more results in less time. Interval training involves short periods of 'going all out' alternated with brief periods of gentler activity. Spacing short bursts of intensity throughout a 30-minute workout increases the calorie usage as well as increasing the effects on the body – more so than doing the entire 30-minute workout at a low-to moderate intensity.

The simplest way to interval train is to change only one variable at a time. For example, you can choose to increase resistance only, increase your speed or just increase the incline on the treadmill. No matter what you do, you'll temporarily make your muscles work harder, increase your oxygen demand, and raise your heart rate. Followed by a short period of lower intensity, your body recuperates and repairs for the next brief burst of high intensity. This alternating technique of applying progressive resistance is the key to improving your level of fitness.

A general recommendation for the length of your periods of high intensity and periods of low intensity is to maintain high intensity exercise for 30 seconds to one minute. For every one minute of intensity you should allow 1-2 minutes of recovery. For example, if you push yourself hard for 30 seconds on the exercise bike, you should then decrease the resistance (or slow your speed) for one minute or more. There is no need to be exact with the times; approximations are fine. More important is doing it regularly throughout the workout (doing it just once won't be as effective!).

How intense and how easy the intervals should be will differ with each individual and their fitness level. You can check your exercise heart rate (it should be no more than 85% of your maximum exercise heart rate) or just go by perceived exertion. Push yourself just hard enough to increase your breathing and heart rate at least a little more than resting levels – then decrease the intensity enough to allow yourself to catch your breath (and your heart rate to slow considerably) before the next hard burst.

Here are a few variables you can alter in your exercise program, to help design your own interval training method:

Speed. Going faster will no doubt increase the intensity of your workout, but be cautious with it. It can cause injury for

those who are unconditioned. An example is doing short sprints throughout your brisk walk.

Incline. Best used on cardiovascular equipment, as it's difficult to control outdoors. Changing the incline will change the stress on the muscles and incorporates other muscles. Both will make the heart work harder. If you exercise on a running track with stadium seating, perhaps you can alternate stair climbing with your walk/jog.

Resistance. You can increase the resistance on machines, free weights or wear a weight vest while doing other activities. Increase the resistance on your exercise bike or change gears on your road bike to add more challenge.

Duration. You can lengthen the duration of your burst of high intensity. Or you can decrease the duration of your period of lower intensity.

Alternate exercises. Do your weight-training workout non-stop by alternating an upper body exercise with a lower body exercise. This allows rest for the lower body, while working the upper body and vice versa. During your walk or run, you can alternate short periods of shuffling sideways, raising your knees higher, or run backwards (be cautious with that!) ~~MM~~

Avoid skipping meals

If you skip meals, your metabolism (rate of internal activity) slows, so you become less efficient at burning calories. Avoid skipping meals, especially breakfast! Eat at least every three to four hours. For more health information from The Dietitians of Canada, visit www.dietitians.ca ~~MM~~



Personal Health newsletter

offers basic health and fitness information for all ages. The editor is a journalist and former newspaper editor and has been a fitness professional since 1983.

Personal Health Newsletter strives to provide credible, unbiased and well-researched information, helping its readers make their own decisions about their personal health.

Available by e-mail only.

Don't miss an issue: Subscribe today!

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

One year subscription \$15 _____ Two years \$26 _____

GST is not charged. Please include payment with this order form.

**PERSONAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER
SURREY BC**

Oct 09

**No Longer
publishing**

Preventing dementia . . .

Dementia is a progressive decline in mental abilities and changes in personality and behaviour. An estimated 420,000 Canadians over 65 years have Alzheimer Disease or a related dementia. Here are some suggestions to keep your brain and your body functioning properly;

Feed your brain. Include in your diet omega 3 fatty acids (commonly found in fish), protein, fruits and vegetables for antioxidants, and whole grains for a rich source of the B vitamins. Be sure you are getting a complex source of carbohydrates (not processed, refined carbohydrates!). Avoid trans fats. Healthier fat sources include moderate amounts of nuts and seeds.

Watch the alcohol. While some studies show alcohol may have a protective effect on the heart, many studies show alcohol negatively affects your brain cells. A Johns Hopkins Institute study on participants ages 60 and over, found just two drink of wine each week significantly shrank grey brain matter. This affected the memory and cognitive skills of the participants. Our grey brain matter houses the hippocampus, which is our memory centre. Shrinking the grey brain matter will certainly affect your memory. Choose to avoid or cut down on your alcoholic beverages (and exercise instead of drink to keep your heart healthy!).

Exercise your mind. Learn a new skill or language. Work on crossword puzzles, take an art class, or learn how to dance – these all challenge and maintain your brain's functions.

Exercise your body, too. Physical exercise improves circulation, coordination and helps prevent disorders like heart disease, stroke and diabetes, which increase the risk of developing dementia.

Socialize. Keep your mind stimulated by staying in touch with friends, volunteering, traveling, or spending time with others doing leisure activities.

Sleep. Lack of sleep negatively affects brain health.

Control stress. Stress hormones can damage and even kill brain cells, affecting your ability to learn and remember. Try practicing yoga, take up meditating, or just spend time talking to a good listener to help you confront and deal with stressful issues.

Protect your head. Head injuries, even seemingly minor ones, can increase the risk for dementia. Wear the proper protective headgear for your sport or activity and use seat belts to prevent head injury.

Change bad habits. Use of narcotics, misuse of prescription drugs, smoking, and drinking all affect cognitive functions.

Family history. If there's history of dementia in your family, that's even more reason to be proactive with brain health. ~~400~~



Banish belly fat for good

Getting rid of extra fat around the waistline is a concern shared by many – even for those who aren't overweight. But the solution isn't as easy as using a contraption that promises rock-hard abs in five minutes a day for only \$19.95. You need to make some changes in your lifestyle habits.

Doing abdominal (ab) exercises or using that \$19.95 gizmo won't get rid of the waistline flab because you can't spot reduce the fat. Fat comes off (and goes on) in genetically determined areas. However, unlike fat, a muscle can be isolated and strengthened, which is exactly what you are doing when you do crunches or use an exercise device for the abs. You can develop rock hard abs but you won't see them until you whittle away at the fat above them.

The quickest way to get rid of waistline fat is to eat right and do non-stop aerobic activities like stationary cycling, dancing, or brisk walking, etc. Here's how to do it:

1. Cut back on processed, refined foods – especially the refined sugars and carbohydrates. This isn't real food and our bodies can have a difficult time digesting and processing this human-designed stuff. It's likely most of this processed food will be stored as fat, because the body just doesn't know what to do with it – especially in the large amounts most

of us consume (there's a fast food place on every corner and cookies are always easy to find). Stick to the stuff nature designed, which our bodies are more familiar with: fresh fruits, fresh vegetables and root vegetables, legumes, whole grains and low fat meat and dairy foods that haven't been processed.

These foods are also generally lower in fat and higher in fiber; useful tools for avoiding fat storage. If you need help with diet, talk to a Registered Dietician.

2. Eat slowly. Chew your food well. Belly fat can often be confused with the gastrointestinal discomfort of bloating from undigested food. Also, undigested food is more easily stored as fat as opposed to food that's properly broken down. Slow down and enjoy your meals. Chew each mouthful until it becomes a

watery pulp.

3. Include both abdominal exercises and moderate aerobic activities in your exercise program. And try to exercise on a regular basis.

4. If you are new to exercise or really don't know much about it, consult a fitness professional to help design your exercise program. It's possible the exercises or activity you've chosen may not be effective for your particular needs and goals. ~~400~~

