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Newsletter 2 ★ 2017

Sitting is the New Smoking

Most of us live and work in a sedentary culture and studies show that sitting too much is taking a huge toll on our health.

Dr. James Levine, director of the Mayo Clinic-Arizona State University Obesity Solutions Initiative, has been studying the adverse effects of a sedentary lifestyle for years and sums up his findings this way. "Sitting is more dangerous than smoking, kills more people than HIV and is more treacherous than parachuting. We are sitting ourselves to death."

Many other researchers agree with Dr. Levine, and continue to find evidence that prolonged sitting increases the risk of developing serious illnesses that include heart disease, various types of cancer, and Type 2 diabetes. In addition, the effects of long-term sitting persist even if you follow other healthful habits.

It appears that the impact of movement, even leisurely movement, is profound. In addition to burning more calories when you move, the muscle activity needed for standing and other movement seems to trigger the process where the body breaks down fats and sugars. When you sit, these processes stall and your health risks increase.

Take a moment to analyze your typical day. How much time to you spend sitting? Think about time spent at the computer, watching TV, and driving or riding in a vehicle. Also consider time you sit while enjoying hobbies, such as sewing, knitting, crafting, woodworking, watching a ballgame or reading.

So, how can we sit less and move more? Start by simply standing, rather than sitting, whenever you can, and do as many tasks as you can while you walk. Here are some tips:

» Stand while you talk on the phone, eat lunch or when reading the mail.

» Stand during webinars and conference calls.

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- Use a standing desk for office work and other desk activities.
- Put the remote control next to the TV instead of next to you and stand up during commercial breaks.
- Walk to visit a neighbor instead of calling them.
- Take meetings out of the conference room — talk while you walk.
- Move the printer away from your desk so you need to stand or walk to retrieve copies.
- For every 30 minutes you sit, stand for 5 minutes. Set an alarm to remind you, or at the very minimum move every 60 minutes.
- Use the restroom on another floor of your office building or home, and take the stairs.
- Stand often while you watch a live sports event – get up and cheer for your team!

Mini Challenge - Take a Stand!

This week, stand and/or move every hour in your waking day. Find some type of trigger to remind you or set an alarm to nudge you throughout the day.

When you stand, do some type of stretch. One stretch you should do every day is a hip flexor stretch. This can be done from a half-sitting position as shown in this video. It is also a stretch you can do while you work as many office chairs are great for this. Stand in front of your chair, like you are about to sit down. Turn ninety-degrees to the right. Put your right knee on the seat of your chair while standing on your left leg. Keep your posture straight and tall. Put the top of your right foot up on the arm of the chair for a good stretch, which you should feel in the front of your right hip. Hold for 15 seconds. Switch legs when you are done.

Dealing with Muscle Soreness

It is perfectly normal to feel sore after exercise, however, aches and pains should be minor. The gradually increasing soreness you often feel 24 to 48 hours later is called delayed onset muscle soreness (DOMS) and is a natural outcome of any physical activity.

Your muscles should burn a little when walking, and you should feel a bit sore a few days after doing strengthening exercises. You know you've done too much if soreness prevents you from performing daily activities or if excessive soreness lasts three days or more after exercise. Here are some tips to promote recovery after exercise.

Hydrate. Water is the best way to hydrate during and after exercise. The easiest way to tell if you are dehydrated is by the color of your urine. It should be light yellow or clear within a couple of hours after exercise. If it is dark yellow, you need more hydration.

Fuel. After exercise, have a snack that contains carbohydrates and protein. Good choices include yogurt and almonds, peanut butter with a banana, rice cakes, or whole-wheat pretzels. Eating the right foods after exercise will improve your energy level and help with recovery.

Circulation. A light activity, such as an easy bike ride, light stretching, or slower walking, will stimulate blood flow and help you cool down after activity.

Compression. A massage or use of a foam roller can help move inflammatory fluids out of muscles and help with sore or tight spots from worked muscles.

Rest. Normal muscle soreness will peak about 48 hours after exercise, and should be much better by the third day. This is why a rest day between strengthening exercises is recommended.

If you want to do strengthening on consecutive days, alternate upper body exercise one day and lower body the next. Just don't work the same muscle group two days in a row.

One Pan Magic Meals

Got a sheet pan in your kitchen? One pan wonder meals are popular right now and the basic sheet pan is like a blank canvas to create easy, tasty and nutritious meals in your oven – with little clean up to do afterwards. While there are many recipes online, you can easily create your own. The formula is simple: sheet pan + a protein + vegetables + oil and seasonings = a tasty meal!

The sheet pan is a rimmed baking sheet and has low sides that help air circulate over and around the food. For easiest clean up, line the pan with foil. Any pan with low sides will work and you can mix veggies with oil and seasoning right on the pan.

The key with sheet pan meals is to trim or cut each ingredient to the appropriate size so everything cooks at the same speed. Vegetables that take longer to cook should be sliced thinly. Make sure ingredients are spaced nicely, so don't overcrowd the pan. Overcrowding creates steam and keeps food from browning. We want food to brown because it improves flavor.

Proteins that work well include boneless chicken breasts, thighs and drumsticks, pork chops, salmon and other fish, kielbasa and smaller cuts of beef. Less tender cuts of meat don't work as well.

Make sure you season well. Use oil, salt and pepper, and other spices and herbs. Seasoning mixtures and sauces also provide flavor. Sprinkle fresh herbs and citrus juices at the end.

Stagger entry times of ingredients if necessary. Potatoes may take longer to cook than other vegetables and some proteins, so let them cook for 10 – 15 minutes first, then add other ingredients. Shrimp and fish also cook quickly, so let vegetables cook a bit first before adding seafood. Tender vegetables should be added later as well.

Sheet Pan Balsamic Shrimp and Vegetables

Makes 4 servings

Ingredients:

2 medium zucchini
1 medium bell pepper, any color
1 cup cherry or grape tomatoes
1 medium red onion, cut into 1-inch chunks
2 cups mushrooms, halved
1 cup asparagus, cut into 2-inch pieces
¼ cup plus 1 tablespoon olive oil
3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar, divided
1 ½ lbs shrimp, peeled and deveined
½ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
¼ cup roughly chopped basil leaves
Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Place one oven rack in the center of the oven, and the other 4 inches from the top heat. Spray a sheet pan with cooking spray or line with aluminum foil. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
2. Combine the vegetables in a large bowl. In a small bowl, combine ¼ cup of olive oil, 2 tablespoons vinegar, and the lemon juice. Add this mixture to the vegetables and toss to coat. Spread on prepared sheet pan and season with pepper.
3. Roast the vegetables on the center rack until they are softened, about 20-25 minutes, then remove from oven.
4. While the vegetables are cooking, place the shrimp in a large bowl and add ¼ teaspoon salt, the remaining 1 tablespoon of olive oil, the remaining 1 tablespoon of vinegar, and the Worcestershire sauce. Toss gently and let the shrimp marinade while the vegetables cook.
5. After removing vegetables from the oven, turn the oven to broil. Scatter the shrimp and the marinade over the vegetables in a single layer. Broil on the upper rack in the oven until the shrimp are cooked, about 5 minutes. Scatter the basil over the finished dish and serve with brown rice, orzo pasta or couscous.

Nutrition Information per serving:
Calories 320; Fat 19g; Carbohydrates 12g; Protein 26g; Fiber 3g; Sodium 960mg.

Think Green When You Clean By Making Your Own Cleansers

If this warm spring weather has motivated you to do some cleaning…or maybe at least think about doing some cleaning, here are some recipes for making your own "green" homemade cleansers. These cleansers can be less expensive and less harsh than commercial products.

Before you start mixing ingredients, follow these tips:

✓ Put the solution into a clean spray bottle or another clean container with a tight seal. Avoid using recycled food or beverage containers.
✓ Clearly label all containers with the date and the name of the product.
✓ Mix cleaning solutions in a well-ventilated area.
✓ Mix a small amount and use it before making a new batch.

If you use "natural" ingredients, such as vinegar, table salt, or lemon juice, remember that they are also chemicals and must be used safely. Do not mix chemicals unless you KNOW it is safe! The classic example of a **toxic** mixture is chlorine bleach and ammonia, which creates a **toxic** gas.

Three Easy-to-Make General Purpose Cleansers:

1) Mix 1/2 cup white vinegar with 1 cup water.
2) Mix 1 tablespoon washing soda or Borax with 2 cups warm water.
3) Mix 1 tablespoon ammonia, 1 tablespoon liquid detergent and 2 cups water.

Club Soda is a great emergency "spotter." Keep club soda on hand to clean spills on carpet and clothing. Act quickly to keep the spot from becoming a stain. Pour the club soda on the stain and blot with an old rag. If you're at a restaurant and spill food or a beverage on your clothes, ask for club soda to take care of the stain immediately.

A Disinfectant to Kill Germs:

- Mix one tablespoon chlorine bleach with 1 gallon of water.

Prevent Major Cleaning Problems and Odors:

- Keep a jar of baking soda in odor-producing areas, such as the refrigerator or freezer, and sprinkle some in the trash compactor and garbage cans.

Toilet Bowl Cleaner:

- **Baking soda ** Soap **Vinegar **Sponge
  Use a non-chlorinated scouring powder or baking soda and soap to clean the toilet bowl thoroughly and often.

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