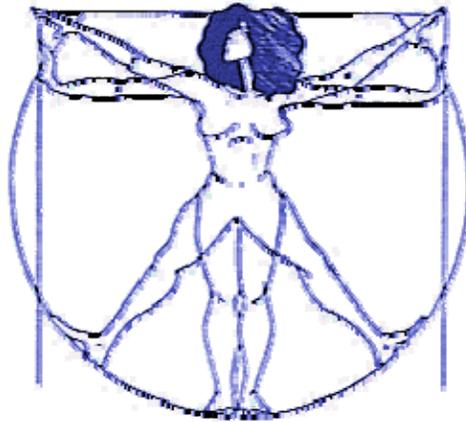


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2001 Articles

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BODY LANGUAGE-by Linda Buch

“Do water aerobics help if you want to lose weight? I have heard that it takes longer to get fit in water because the water counters the calorie-burning heat.”

Somewhere along the “lane” (as in ‘whisper-down-the’) the message about working out in water got a bit garbled. Swimming is one of the greatest exercises you can do for yourself because it enables you to move your limbs through complete ranges of motion while being supported by water. This reduces the jarring and pounding on the joints often experienced by runners and walkers. The problem with swimming is that you need a pool. Not only do you need a pool, but you need to be skilled enough in the strokes so that you can get your heart rate going. A leisurely pace up and down the pool is great for stretching and flexibility but swimming for conditioning takes some discipline. This being said, consider a study done in 1993 by Howard Wainer, a statistician at the Educational Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey. He found that “swimmers burn 25% more calories than runners”. Since swimming involves all of the major muscle groups--legs, chest, back, shoulders, arms, and abdominals--swimming is actually a *superior* way to build muscle and burn fat.

If doing laps in the pool does not interest you, give WATER AEROBICS a try. This one of the best ways to get a great workout without stressing the joints, jarring the spine or sweating out your T-shirts. Water creates resistance in all directions. The harder you push, the more resistance you feel. Simply *walking* in water strengthens the legs and abdominal muscles so imagine the benefits you will get in a class where you push, pull, twist and “jog” in a gravity-free environment! All populations can benefit from this medium--disabled, injured, exercise beginners, elite athletes, young, old--and have a great time exercising. Another great bonus is that you do not have to be a strong swimmer or even know *how* to swim to participate in most of the classes since a vast majority of them are conducted while standing in the shallow end. You can have fun, stay cool, and feel fabulous. Most Health Clubs, YMCS’s and Recreation Centers offer classes so don’t be shy! Call now and give it a try.

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BODY LANGUAGE by Linda J. Buch

“Is it OK to eat Luna Bars or similar products as meal substitutes? Are these products actually better for you than conventional candy bars? Why?”

Food on the run is big business but too often when money talks, good sense walks. The convenient, compact meal-in-a-bar market is lucrative for the marketeer (Nestlé owns PowerBar, Kraft bought Balance Bar, and Rexall Sundown owns Met-Rx) and enticing for the convenience-starved consumer. Before you decide to buy a case of some brownie-flavored pocket-sized repast, CAVEAT EMPTOR! There is no way that a two ounce, 200 to 250 calorie bar will meet all of your nutritional needs. Real food rich in nutritionally dense complex carbohydrates (fruits/vegetable/grains/beans), lean protein and fat primarily from unsaturated sources are always preferred food sources for maximum nutritional benefit.

This being said, let's Get Real--we often do not have the time or the access to eat properly. Convenience becomes a higher priority when we are rushed, stressed and starving. If the choice is buying a high fat/high sugar chocolate bar out of the candy machine, whipping through a fast food joint, or pulling a “meal replacement” bar out of your brief case, go for the bar. Any of the bars with a complex carbohydrate/protein/fiber combination are preferable to a greasy burger and fries or a high fat/sugar candy bar. However, learn to read the labels to see what you are getting. Many of the so called “energy” bars are as full of sugar as a Hershey bar. Too often the fat is either from palm oil (one of the most saturated fats on the planet) or from trans-fatty acids due to a process called “hydrogenation”. Some of the bars promise “energy” (a marketing term for “calories” since calories ARE energy), others say they are “meal substitutes” because they have a protein component. Companies are even designing bars especially for women (“soy” is the latest buzzword for all products female); other bars claim to improve your memory because they contain ginkgo biloba. Soy is a great source of protein for women but the amount in a small bar will not protect you from cancer or stop your hot flashes; ginkgo biloba has been praised as a memory booster but the appropriate amount for actual memory improvement is probably not in one bar. A far more serious problem with “neutraceutical” herbs is the hazard posed when mixed with pharmaceuticals. Ginkgo Biloba is an herbal blood thinner. Someone on prescription blood thinners could be seriously hurt by consuming foods containing this herb.

In the December, 2000 issue of the Nutrition Action Healthletter, Bonnie Liebman, Director of Nutrition for the Center for Science in the Public Interest (publisher of the aforementioned periodical) reminds us that the word “energy” on the label only means that the bar contains calories. Eating the bar will not make you more energetic. She also points out that only whole foods contain the necessary phytochemicals and other nutritional nuances required for optimum health. No two to three ounce bar can accomplish that feat. I suggest that you use good sense with anything that claims to “replace” actual food. Keep them around for Emergency Use Only to keep the hunger, and the junk food, at bay.

BODY LANGUAGE by Linda Buch

“Is it better to do eight to twelve repetitions with a ten-pound dumbbell, or 25 with an eight-pound one, if my goal is converting fat to muscle and sculpting the muscle so that it shows?”

I surmise from your question that you are interested in creating a shapely, somewhat muscular physique and want to use free weights to accomplish this. The only way any personal trainer can design a program for your particular goals is to meet with you and do a complete initial assessment: age, height, weight, lean mass/body fat ratio, genetics, general health, work-out frequency and exercise history are among the many factors taken into account before a program can be designed. As for converting “fat into muscle”, unless the universe has been taken over by Disney, or until we are all equipped with Star Trek Tricorders which do amazing things with a sweep of the hand, “fat” will stay fat (but can be reduced in size) and “muscle” will stay muscle (but can be increased in size.) I must also mention here that **THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS “SPOT” REDUCING.** Bodies are changed, sculpted, and made healthier through *consistent* exercise and, a healthy diet with the appropriate number of calories, not by doing a bazillion repetitions of an exercise at a problem area.

The most common misconception among women is that lifting heavy weights will make you look like Arnold in drag. If this were true, judging by the popularity of strength training among women these days, the world would be rife with Brobdingnagian behemoths, lumbering and flexing their female forms from salon to supermarket. While strength training will result in increased muscle mass, women do not have the testosterone necessary to create that sort of bulk.

The next misconception is that low weight and high repetitions will somehow “sculpt” the body, magically burning off the fat (from boredom, I assume) and replacing the current arms with the lithe, lean limbs of Venus de Milo...if she had limbs, that is. In fact, lower weight and higher repetitions are employed when training for endurance; for increased strength and power, heavier weights and fewer repetitions are performed. In short, unless you are training for an endurance event like sculling or kayaking, very little is accomplished by doing thousands of repetitions with weensy little weights. Not only will you be wasting your time but you will go “starkers” from the boredom.

The most efficient and effective routine for changing your body composition will involve a weight that is heavy enough so that you can do two to three sets of the

exercise at eight to fifteen repetitions before needing a brief rest. A study by noted fitness research director, Wayne Westcott, PhD, showed that “a standard strength training program can increase muscle mass by about three pounds...while losing four pounds of fat”. This increase in muscle boosted the “resting metabolic rate up to seven percent and daily caloric requirements by 15 percent”. In other words, the body actually wanted *more* food, about 370 calories worth, not *less*. This is possible because at rest, a pound of muscle will burn from 35 to 50 calories per day; a pound of fat only burns three calories. Here is another bonus: the enzymes that burn fat are found in *muscle*.

My first body building coach told me “exercise creates muscle; diet exposes it”. So, fear not the muscles gained by lifting heavier weights fewer times! If you are consistent and keep challenging yourself, you will have a strong and healthy body that you can not only be proud of, but also keep around for many decades to come.

BODY LANGUAGE by Linda J. Buch

Are passive exercises like Pilates really helpful for building muscle and losing fat or are they just expensive versions of stretching?

A sure-fire way to tell if Baby Boomers are around is to start talking about stretching. Everyone over age 45 has become achingly aware of what happens to our bodies when they are under exercised, over fed and sporadically stretched. “Stretching” exercises have been learned by most people who go to gyms and/or participate in athletics to keep muscles supple, more flexible, and less prone to injury. As a “Boomer” my brain goes on high alert when I hear of any discipline that will keep muscles strong, promote flexibility, reduce stress, and keep muscles balanced and aligned. But “stretching” per se is not the hot topic these days. Pick up a magazine at the cash register line in the supermarket and we soon find out that there is a whole lot more going on than just back, hip and hamstring stretches to ease us through life. Hot topics these days are **Yoga** and **Pilates**. In my opinion, both should be experienced in some degree by anyone who needs to rehabilitate an ache, pain, or injury; or, who is looking for Something New to help them stay active for a few more decades.

Of the three disciplines mentioned above, *Yoga* is the oldest at over 5,000 years. The first thing you learn in a Yoga class is how to *breath*. This is more revolutionary than you might think. Pay attention to your breathing every now and then--we all tend to breath in the “shallow end” of our lungs, rarely do we take air in deeply. Beginning classes teach body alignment, balance and relaxation. Yoga is being utilized by elementary schools as well as cardiac patients because it has a profound effect on both the physical and emotional wellbeing. For the more athletic among us, there are other Yogic disciplines which will increase strength and endurance.

Pilates became a hot topic in Hollywood when people like Candace Bergin and Lucy Lawless started using it to recover from injuries. Pilates was brought to this country in the 1930's by Josef Pilates, a German-born gymnast who worked in a British internment camp in World War 1. He would help wounded soldiers rehabilitate by hooking up pulleys so they could strengthen their limbs while on their backs. He took this further in America by using his methods to help dancers become stronger, less prone to injury, and more supple. In the last decade, Pilates has taken off like a rocket on an all day latté buzz. “Pilates uses spring-based equipment in all conceivable planes of motion, involving precision, awareness, and the use of breath. It is designed to “strengthen and lengthen muscles from the core

out to the extremities, open up joints, and release tension”, says the brochure from the Phoenix Center for Health Excellence in Cherry Creek. This is no cake walk and definitely *not* “passive”! The work outs are challenging and exhilarating. You will come away feeling invigorated and refreshed.

So, the answer to the question is no, neither of these are glorified stretching but yes, they can be expensive--particularly the Pilates. And, yes, they will help in the unflagging pursuit of muscle over fat. While it is doubtful that HMO's will pay for these classes as a rehabilitation tool, I do recommend them should “rehabilitation” of aches and pains leftover from “the sixties” be on your “To Do” list for *this* decade.

“I have been working out in a gym for about two months using mainly the machines. While I like the results I have gotten so far, I feel as if I am “stuck”. What should I do?” R. Harper, Denver, CO

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MACHINES AND FREE WEIGHTS

It is not uncommon for muscle “boredom” to set in if you are using machines exclusively for your strength training. If you are ready to expand your horizons, FREE WEIGHTS highlight your next adventure.

Why? Because free weights are to machines what fine dining is to fast food. Burger joints and five-star restaurants both will take care of your hunger but the savory nuances of flavors and selections available in a five-star restaurant are far and away more compelling than what is usually available at a drive-thru burger joint. It is the same with free weights and machines.

Machines are great as a beginning program for people new to strength training and are handy for those times when in a hurry. Each machine usually has a picture on it explaining the operation, proper form, and the muscles exercised. All you ever have to do is adjust the seat and perhaps a grip or lever, pick the weight by moving a key on the weight-stack, and do your repetitions and sets. Move on to another machine for a different muscle group, ad infinitum. “Well, what is wrong with that?”, you ask. Your original question answers that. The very thing that makes machines so gosh darn appealing in the first place is also what creates that “stuck” feeling: they are *machines*, which mean they are designed to make work *easier*. The levers, pulleys and cams help you work through those weak points in a muscles’ range of motion to make it easier to do the repetition. When it is just you, a pair of dumbbells, gravity and your body, you are forced to work through those leverage points on your own. This enhances your strength and allows you to build more muscle.

Dumbbells and barbells allow greater freedom of choice and range of motion. With free weights, for each specific part of the body, there are at least eight to ten *different* exercises. For example, you can change your entire lifting routine simply by altering the angle of a bench or by varying your hand position. This opens up a spectrum of possibilities which many exercisers find satisfying.

By the way, all of the above applies equally to women and men. Using free weights will not turn you into a knuckle-dragging hulk. The basic rule of slightly lower weight in order to do more repetitions will still keep you focused on the

strength and endurance aspects of exercise if you eschew muscle hypertrophy (translation: you “don’t want to get big muscles.”) The portability and versatility of dumbbells and barbells will keep, or rekindle, your interest in strength training.

I strongly recommend that you hire a trainer or attend a class before beginning a free weight program. Understanding proper form and correct usage is the number one priority so that you can train without injury. While there are many fine books available to instruct you on proper usage, there is nothing quite like hands-on observation and guidance by a fitness professional.

BODY LANGUAGE by Linda Buch, August 12, 2001

“Why is WATER important? I find it hard to drink water all day and prefer other beverages like soft drinks and sport drinks.”

“DRINK WATER OR DIE”

It is easy to get into the habit of bypassing water. Soft drinks, coffee, fruit juice, sport drinks, alcoholic beverages and milk are not only popular but also promoted by companies with large advertising budgets. In general, soft drinks and fruit juice have too much sugar; caffeine and alcohol are diuretics; milk has a high concentration of solids in comparison to plain water; sport drinks run in a distinct second place when compared to water but, if it will get you to drink fluids (whereas up until now you haven't been), go for it. (At least, the salt and slight sugar content will get you to keep drinking!) As for making basic water more palatable, try adding lemons and/or limes; toss in some fresh mint leaves; mix in a bit of orange juice.

Water makes up about 60% of your body weight and is 70% of your blood volume. It is to your body what oil is to your car. Water is part of the molecular structure of protein and glucose; it is also an active participant in, and medium for, most of the chemical reactions in your body that work to keep you alive. This is why we can live for about a month without food, but only for *seven days without water*.

How do you tell if you are dehydrated? “Thirst” would seem to be the logical answer. Thirst actually indicates that we are already dehydrated. Fortunately, it is usually an early sign. Other signs include fatigue, lightheadedness, loss of appetite, heat intolerance, and dark urine with a strong odor. This last one is usually the best indicator. If your urine is almost clear, you are properly hydrated. Yellow urine indicates the need for more water.

Physical activity demands that we keep a close eye on our fluid intake. Here are some guide lines from Susan Kleiner, PhD, RD:

Before exercise: Drink one to two cups (8 to 16 ounces) of water (or sport drink) two hours before exercise to make sure you are well hydrated. Drink another 4 to 8 ounces immediately prior to exercise.

During exercise: Drink 4 to 8 ounces every 20 minutes during exercise.

After exercise: Replace any fluid you have lost by weighing yourself. Drink 16 ounces of fluid for every pound of body weight you have lost.

The mere mention of “weight loss” in the previous paragraph allows me to segue into a really important and poorly understood fact that will probably get more people to drink water than even the threat of death by dehydration: WATER IS AN IMPORTANT

PART OF THE WEIGHT LOSS PROCESS. Studies have shown that an increase in water intake can actually reduce fat deposits. Here's why. The kidneys need lots of water to function properly. Without water, the liver takes over. If the liver has to do its job of metabolizing stored fat and also do the kidney's job, it metabolizes less fat. Retaining water? Drink water. Then, and only then, will the stored water be released. Bye bye, bloat! During weight loss, the body has a lot more waste to get rid of-like all of that metabolized fat, for example. Water will help flush it away. Constipated? Drink water for normal bowel function to return.

In summary, if you are fatigued, constipated, retaining water, or stuck on a weight-loss plateau take a look at your water intake. It has zero calories and will keep your bodys' engine running smoothly.

BODY LANGUAGE by Linda Buch, August 19, 2001

"By the time I get home from work, I feel too tired to workout. I know I need exercise. How can I get more exercise without going to a gym?"

K. Taylor, Denver, CO

We are constantly being bombarded by the media, the Surgeon General, Arnold, Oprah, and countless infomercials regarding the importance of exercise. Unfortunately, the common perception regarding exercise is (a) it has to hurt; (b) you have to do it for hours in order for it to "work"; (c) you have to join a gym; (d) you have to buy lots of gadgets and equipment. Fortunately, the answer is (e) "none of the above." In 1996 the Surgeon General issued a report which stated, "The lack of physical activity is detrimental to your health." The report further stated that "Living without exercise is like smoking a pack of cigarettes a day." The Surgeon General went on to recommend that *every American adult should accumulate 30 minutes or more of moderate intensity physical activity over the course of most days of the week.* Before you quit your aerobics class, cancel your gym membership, or fire your trainer, keep in mind that the Surgeon General's recommendations were made to show the American population that, in the area of health improvement, a little will go a long way. 59% of the population is at risk for coronary heart disease simply because they are sedentary. They get up, drive to work, sit at a desk, drive home, sit and eat, then sit and watch TV. This group will experience a 39 percent drop in mortality simply by MOVING 30 minutes per day, most days of the week! This translates to expending a mere 150 more calories per day *most* days of the week (accumulating to a total weekly expenditure of 1,000 calories).

Much to the surprise of the fitness industry, tests and studies revealed that your exercise sessions do not have to take place all at once. The key word in the Surgeon General's report is *ACCUMULATE*. This means that you can do 10 minutes in the morning, five minutes later in the day, another 15 minutes in the evening and still get the health improvement benefits you would get by doing 30 minutes all at once. For those of you who have been feeling guilty about your sedentary life, you can reduce your risk of dying prematurely, dying of heart disease, of developing diabetes, high blood pressure and colon cancer, controlling your weight, and improving

your mental health simply by MOVING. Here are some examples of moderate activity:

- washing and waxing a car or floors (45 minutes)
- gardening (30-45 minutes)
- walking 1-3/4 miles in 35 minutes
- bicycling 5 miles in 30 minutes
- wheeling yourself in a wheelchair for 30-40 minutes
- fast dancing for 30 minutes
- pushing a stroller 1-1/2 miles in 30 minutes
- shoveling snow for 15 minutes

Get the idea? Find an activity that you like which requires you to use your muscles and try to do it most days of the week. Fitness expert Covert Bailey once stated, "The human body is a machine that breaks down from lack of use." Look at your day. Make a decision to add more body movement into that day. Then do it.

Linda Buch, BODY LANGUAGE-August 26, 2001

" I am a fairly active 56-year-old female who is experiencing constant, excruciating knee pain in my left knee. I can no longer play golf, and walking is often painful and makes my knee swell. I was diagnosed with "a probable" lateral meniscus [cartilage] tear and degenerative osteoarthritis. I do water aerobics and do some strengthening exercises with the large band and some weights. Is there anything more I can do?" (Original question abridged for space) Minnie Burke, Lakewood, CO

Knees are among the most unforgiving of our joints (mine have been punishing me for a stupid skiing maneuver since the 1970's). Once damaged, the recovery can be annoyingly tedious. The first thing I would do is to make an appointment with a sports medicine doctor and get a much more thorough diagnosis and prognosis. Get a referral to an orthopedic surgeon who *specializes* in knees. While many doctors who deal with sports injuries have come a long way in the way they treat older female athletes, you may have to get very forceful with your treatment plan and DEMAND cogent information. Once you get a complete diagnosis, get an appointment with a physical therapist *who specializes in athletic injuries*. Again, you may have to be assertively forthcoming with information regarding how much you play golf, walk, and so on. In their defense, medical professionals are overworked these days because of the bizarre changes in the American health care system. Be a REALLY squeaky wheel so that your knee gets the "grease" that it needs! Once you have a thorough understanding of what is happening with your knee, and what your treatment options are, you can start to explore other exercise options.

The good news is that, with the high price of professional athletic talent these days, knee rehabilitation and reconstruction is improving rapidly. Knees that are bone-on-bone, like yours, are not unusual. There is probably a new treatment being tested right at this moment which will give you relief and get you back to golfing. In the meantime, there are some great exercises you can do to help strengthen your legs (be sure these pass muster with your physical therapist). The following are exercises recommended by James M. Fox, M.D., an orthopedic surgeon in Van Nuys, CA ("Injury Proof Knees", *American Health*, November, 1997): 1. Wall sitting. Stand three feet from a wall, lean back into it and slide down the wall until your thighs are parallel to the floor. Hold for about 30 seconds. 2. Outside (abduction) and inside (adduction) leg lifts. "Abduction" is when the leg pushes away from you, "adduction" is when the leg pulls in towards you. 3. Hamstring curls. Pull the heels of your feet towards your butt. Do this standing or prone. Strengthening the muscles at the back of the leg, especially behind the knee, will help with stability and support of your knee. (NOTE: AVOID THE LEG EXTENSION MACHINES! "Quadriceps extensions" make your knee the fulcrum and over-stimulate the quadriceps which are already strong by design. This exercise will harm, not help.) 4. Calf raises. Stand with the balls of your feet on a stair step. lower

and raise your heels. Doing “tippy toes” will help strengthen the muscles behind the knee.

Water aerobics, and water exercise in general, is great for knees. The density of the water creates plenty of muscle-building, low-impact resistance. Another great water workout is to put on some swim fins, grab a kickboard, and slowly kick your way up and down the length of the pool. Bicycling can also be a good way to exercise for those of us with knee issues. It is essential, however, to be *properly fitted* on a good bicycle. If the person selling you a bike isn't measuring your legs, knee angles, etc., with rulers and plumb lines, go somewhere else.

Good luck, Minnie, and GET FEISTY!

HOLIDAY EATING and EXERCISING

“Nothing exceeds like excess,” observed Al Pacino’s character in the movie *Scarface*. When it comes to healthy eating, holidays seem to have a monopoly on post-celebratory condemnation. What we all need is a “get out of jail free card” for all of the guilt we pile on ourselves! It is possible to reconnect with the fun of food and holiday fetes without feeling like we should beach ourselves at the shores of the closest reservoir. Thanks to fitness writer Suzanne Schlosberg and Minneapolis, Minnesota lifestyle coach Kate Larsen for the following ideas and suggestions:

1. *Don't deny yourself or skip meals.* If you watch others enjoying food and drink while nibbling on a rice cake, you will go bonkers and over indulge later. Go ahead and enjoy small portions of all the goodies. Also, it is unwise to skip meals in order to save up for the big feast. This will lead to waistband misery. You are less likely to pig out if you aren't that hungry in the first place. Eat some healthy foods prior to the party.

2. *Move.* No, you don't have to organize a post-feast marathon around the neighborhood; but, throughout the holidays, set yourself up to do more walking. In the mall, walk through and check out all the stores before shopping; take after-dinner walks with your guests; park away from the shopping mall (like you can find a spot up front anyhow!) and walk a few more blocks to the shops; organize walks at lunch with coworkers. Movement gives us a sense of control and helps us maintain some of our conditioning. Walking also provides some stress-control. Post-holiday, when you get back into your normal routine, you won't feel so defeated.

3. *Avoid temptation.* The office is a spider's web of overindulgence during holidays. Anything we don't want in the house, we bring to work! Be sure to take a healthier alternative to work so that high-calorie snack breaks are minimized.

4. *Take smaller portions, eat slowly, and stop when satisfied.* Try smaller helpings of a variety of foods. Try some foods that are unfamiliar so that you will concentrate on flavor rather than just wolfing it all down in one gulp. Enjoy conversation while eating to slow things down, like speaking a complete sentence between bites. Finally, when you are full, stop. This is not as easy as it sounds, but if you eat half of what is on your plate and take a short break, you may be surprised to find you don't want any more food.

5. *Go easy on the alcohol.* Alcohol stimulates the appetite and numbs your reserve. Alcohol is metabolized in the liver. Once the liver is engaged, blood sugar drops which stimulates hunger.

6. *Get your sleep.* Shopping, travel, social engagements, family stress...too often all of this exhaustion comes across as a need for energy (calories) when what is really needed is REST.

7. *Celebrate the holiday spirit.* Pay more attention to relationships with friends and family than to food. Stay involved in social interactions and conversations so that mindless munching doesn't become the focal point.

8. *Don't strive for perfection.* Instead of trying to maintain the pre-holiday health routine, stay FLEXIBLE. Plan on being 80% healthy instead of 100%. In other words, maintain a consistency with your normally healthy eating and exercise habits, just don't make yourself crazy trying to adhere to standards that cause too much stress. Give yourself permission to have fun and to enjoy these annual indulgences without beating yourself up in the process.

After the holidays, you should be able to look back and reflect on the FUN. Did you enjoy or just survive? Enjoyment is far more important. We can always get back on a healthy eating and exercise schedule. Time spent feeling guilty and miserable is lost forever.

More on Secondhand Smoke/Dancing

Denver Post reader, "J.C." started an information avalanche with the question (November 18, 2001) on where to go for smoke-free dancing. True to form, many of our wonderful readers took the time to write to let me know that I had missed a few options. Rather than just share their suggestions with one person, I thought we could all benefit from their generously proffered information.

Before getting into the information on dance locations, I thought it would be prudent to mention the probability that many of us are actually ALLERGIC to tobacco smoke. "Richard B." of Broomfield pointed out that the symptoms experienced by J.C. were similar to those he experiences when around even minute amounts of tobacco smoke. He shares his reactions, "inflamed sinuses and breathing passages, sinus headaches, and eyes that feel like sand," as being very similar to the raspy voice and coughing experienced by J.C. The population most critically affected by secondhand smoke, however, are children. According to Dr. Dean Ornish (author of many books including *Dr. Dean Ornish's Program for Reversing Heart Disease*), "Children suffer respiratory and ear problems such as decreased lung performance, chronic coughing and wheezing, bronchitis, pneumonia, fluid in the middle ear, allergies and asthma. Smoking both increases the risk of developing asthma in children and causes more frequent and severe asthma attacks." He also notes that nicotine can remain in breast milk for up to FIVE HOURS, which often causes irritability in the child, and, "may even increase the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)."

I am hoping that this information will encourage all smoking parents to not only quit, but also to hire nonsmoking baby-sitters before you head out to do some smoke-free dancing (I bet you were all wondering how I was going to segue from smoke-allergies and children's health to dancing, weren't you?)

Several people mentioned that The Little Bear in Evergreen (28075 Highway 74, 303-674-9991) is smoke-free every Friday night. In downtown Denver, The Mercury Cafe (2199 California, 303-294-9281) is also smoke-free. Colorado Friends of Old Time Music and Dance (who encourage us to "dance as if no one is watching") sponsors a number of smoke-free dances along the front range. More information for this group can be found at: www.cfootmad.org.

"George" from Boulder informs us that "The People's Republic of Boulder is totally smokeless for dining or dancing." In addition, the "Boulder Broker (30th and Baseline, 303-449-1752) hosts evenings of dancing with specialty nights of swing and Latin dancing with lessons beforehand."

“Dave,” also of Boulder, wants the Gay community to know that the Boulder County Dance Club “was established specifically to provide a smoke-free venue for members of the same sex to dance to a variety of social dance steps like swing, Latin, 2-step, etc.” More information on this group can be found at:
<http://home.earthlink.net/~blldrdance>.

Dancing is a great way to relieve stress, get exercise, and lift the spirit. So, let’s go to the hop! And, let’s do it without hacking up a lung.

LINDA BUCH - BODY LANGUAGE - DECEMBER 16, 2001

COPING WITH STRESS

I deal with a lot of stress at work which affects my down time at home as well as my sleep. Also, I cannot seem to lose weight. Any suggestions?

Sue D., Denver

Stress. The word itself sounds like steam from a pressure-cooker. Unfortunately, stress seems to be a way of life--we are coping with stress from war, national loss, a weakened economy, T-REX, and now the holidays. Research shows that the ability to recognize and cope with stress can lighten your mood and save your life.

We have a prehistoric mechanism hard-wired into our human physiology to protect us from danger. This is commonly called the "fight or flight response" which causes hormones like adrenaline (epinephrine) and corticosteroids (cortisol) to be secreted from the adrenal glands located at the top of each kidney. The physical response is an increase in heart rate and blood pressure, dilation of the eyes to let in more light and improve vision, and the dumping of sugar and fat into the blood stream to provide easily accessible energy for the muscles. By design, our chances of survival are increased because the ability to run, climb, or fight back is improved by these evanescent physical enhancements. If this adrenal release happens in an office, however, it is generally unacceptable to dash across desks, leapfrog cubicles, or punch out coworkers. Instead, without a release, the hormones just roar around in the blood stream. Over time, Carol Simontacchi, CCN, MS, explains, "The adrenal glands become overworked and the cortisol release becomes lowered or blunted."

Researchers (Rosmond, et al. 2000, *International Journal of Obesity*, 24, 416-22) found that "men [and I think we can assume, women] with a blunted pattern of cortisol secretion response were more likely to have increased body fat around the waist, higher blood pressure, and, blood sugar imbalances." In other words, the risk for coronary heart and artery disease, obesity, and, diabetes is increased. It has also been found that chronic stress reduces the body's ability to fight off viruses, increases gastrointestinal disorders, and can even mess with your short-term memory (now you have an excuse when you can't find the car keys)! Sleep disorders were also high on the list of maladies.

Exercise to the rescue. Stanford University researchers found that subjects who exercised four times a week (walking, biking, swimming, and/or strength training) for 30-40 minutes fell asleep in half their normal time and managed to sleep an hour longer. Other studies done at Duke University by psychologist Anastasia Georgiades found that those who exercised not only dropped their blood pressure but also had less of a rise in heart rate and blood pressure when put under stress. Numerous other studies have shown that exercise has a calming effect on mood, enhances self-esteem, and even

“reprograms the brain for optimism instead of pessimism” (Brownell, K. *International Journal of Obesity*, 1995). Other benefits include less anxiety, more energy, and improved alertness.

Diet can also be a deleterious component of the stress cycle. Food is necessarily and properly used as part of a healthy life and as a centerpiece of joyous celebration. It can be misused as a refuge from problems and as a balm for jangled nerves. Too often, we eat unconsciously for a break from the day and go for whatever is available in the lunch room or vending machines. We can thank Mother Nature (why do mothers get the blame for everything?) for this. Serotonin is a brain chemical that our body uses as a tranquilizer. Stress creates a craving for quick carbohydrates. Carbohydrates encourage the production of serotonin. This is why we reach for the cookie instead of the carrot stick.

This is OK once in a while, but as a lifestyle, can lead to serious problems with obesity and all of the related diseases therein. Diets composed of lean meats, whole grains, fruits, and vegetables--balanced calorically with our daily activity levels--is the ideal to strive for. Since this is easier said than done, scheduling a session or two with a Registered Dietitian will help you learn more about how to eat properly and cope at the same time.

Relaxation techniques, like meditation and deep breathing are also extremely helpful. Disciplines like yoga and tai chi can be a good combination of exercise, relaxation, and meditation.

“Stressed” is just “desserts” spelled backwards. Exercise regularly and you can have your (small piece of) cake and eat it, too.

LINDA BUCH - BODY LANGUAGE - DECEMBER 23, 2001

SCIATICA STRATEGIES

"What are some strategies to "cure" sciatic problems and to provide preventive maintenance?"

Marian K., Denver

(Terrie Heinrich Rizzo, MAS, coordinator of health education programs for the Stanford University Health Improvement Program, is the primary source of information for this article):

The sciatic nerve cord is the body's largest bundle of nerves which branches out from three vertebra in the lumbar region of the lower back. Since it runs beneath the buttocks and down the legs, inflammation or compression *at any point* can cause pain all the way from the lower back to the feet, or in just a few spots, or in a spot along the way. It is the radiating pain down the butt and legs that distinguishes sciatica from plain old low back pain. Diagnosis by an orthopedic professional is highly recommended before you proceed with any physical activities.

Poor muscle conditioning, poor posture, excess weight, tight hamstrings (sometimes caused by sitting too long), and over-useage of the hip muscles are often culpable for sciatica. If you are a golfer or a tennis player, the twisting-while-flexing motion inherent in these sports can also cause sciatic inflammation. Men often develop sciatica because they carry (and, therefore, often sit on) a wallet in their back pocket. Osteoporosis, spinal stenosis, pregnancy and degenerative disks must also be considered as culprits. Another common complaint is called "periformis syndrome," where the periformis muscle-which lies under the gluteal muscle, and is involved in hip extension and leg movements away from the body-becomes tight or swollen from an injury (like an all out "butt flop" while learning how to snowboard!).

What to do? The 1994 Clinical Practices Guidelines panel of the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research recommends the following:

1. Use pain as your guide. Control discomfort with over-the-counter pain medications which contain acetaminophen, ibuprofen, or aspirin as recommended on the bottle.
2. Gentle stretching can relieve pain. The best book, in my opinion, for information about what to do for sciatica is *STRETCHING*, by Bob Anderson.
3. Rest, but not for more than two days. According to Robert Gamburd, M.D., an orthopedic physician at Sports, Orthopedic and Rehabilitation in Menlo Park, CA, "Two days of rest is the point of diminishing returns. Beyond that, deconditioning issues become important."
4. Check posture and alignment throughout all your daily activities.

5. Begin walking for exercise as soon as possible. Avoid high-impact exercises and stop exercising if doing so creates sharp, shooting pain or numbness.
6. Work into strengthening exercises for the abdominal and back area gradually.

Preventing sciatica involves *stretching* the muscles involved with spine and leg flexibility (those of the hips, butt, hamstrings, and lower back), and *strengthening* the core muscles of the back, lower back and abdominal area (particularly the obliques and transverse muscles) which also assist in maintaining good posture. Some other suggestions are to learn how to lift properly, push instead of pull (whenever possible), and control your weight.

A lot of problems can be avoided simply by taking inventory of the things you use every day and checking them for wear; specifically, your mattress and your shoes. If your mattress dates back to the Reagan Administration, it is time to go shopping! While you are at it, pick up a new pair of workout shoes. They are generally only good for four to six months of regular use before breaking down, at which point the “breaking down” can travel to your back, since most of the shoe’s support is gone.

It is always wise to get a proper medical diagnosis before self-treating. Check with your regular physician for a referral to an orthopedic specialist or physiatrist (call 312-464-9700 for information on this specialty). Many people find relief through chiropractic manipulation and acupuncture. A few sessions with a physical therapist would also be helpful.

YOU SAY YOU WANT A RESOLUTION?

We all breathe a sigh of relief when the New Year has finally arrived. *Now, absolutely and once and for all, I resolve on all that I hold dearly--AND I REALLY MEAN IT THIS TIME-- I swear that I WILL eat right and exercise this year. No more kidding around!* Books are purchased, videos are cued up, gyms are joined, diets are designed, and for about three weeks, NOTHING gets in the way of this resolve. And then it happens. Fragments of our inchoate resolutions for the “new, healthier life” fall away due to a busy schedule. Then Girl Scouts show up with cookies; Valentines candy appears; that gym membership card ends up in a desk drawer instead of the wallet; videos gather dust; and books become drink coasters. How can we keep this from happening *again* for 2002? Some key components of change and habit must be examined first.

1. ACCEPT THAT, just like gasoline, *CALORIES ARE ENERGY*. The better the nutritional quality of that “energy”, the better your “engine” will run. Most of us are more particular about the quality of the energy (gas) we put into our cars than the energy (calories) we put into our bodies. SOLUTION: Examine your eating habits for one week. Write them down *as you are eating them* and see where the problems occur. Are you eating too little for breakfast? Skipping lunch? Just filling the hole in your appetite with whatever is handy? One pound = 3,500 calories. Eliminate 250 calories per day of something nutritionally less advantageous, and you are on your way to losing as much as a pound a week. By consuming more fruits, vegetables, grains and beans, lean meats, and fish, your body will be more in balance nutritionally. Also, DRINK WATER! You need about 64 ounces a day to stay properly hydrated.

2. ACCEPT THAT NEWTON WAS RIGHT. “A body in motion tends to stay in motion; a body at rest tends to stay at rest”. Instead of making a major financial commitment to home equipment or gym fees, start by altering you schedule at home. Are you into a TV-watching routine that keeps you sedentary all night long? No problem. Do not sit during the commercials; instead, *move*. Do push-ups, crunches, and lunges. Walk in place. Build on momentum which is created by momentum (a body in motion staying in motion). If you decide to join a gym, go one step further and hire a *certified* fitness trainer to help you move in the right direction.

3. ACCEPT THAT SOME DAYS ARE MORE SUCCESSFUL THAN OTHERS. Why scrap an otherwise great day because of a minor slip-up? So what if someone in the office had a birthday and you had a piece of cake? There are no *bad* foods. Portions matter and choices make the difference. Take a smaller piece than you would normally. *Enjoy* it with a big glass of water. Congratulate yourself on your restraint and stay on track. Denial leads to resentment which creates failure. Life is too short to avoid birthday cake.

4. KEEP ON TRUCKIN'. If the President of the United States can find time to exercise, you can too. Look for ways to add more walking into your day. Park on the other side of the lot instead of by the door. Take stairs instead of elevators. Pick up a pedometer, clip it on, and aim for 10,000 steps per day. This could mean an additional caloric expenditure of 250-350 calories. Think KINETIC. Build lots of movement into your basic day. It all adds up to energy expenditure which burns calories.

5. FIND SOMETHING FUN. There is more to life than treadmills and step classes. The definition of insanity is "*doing the same things over and over, expecting different results*". If every January you have joined some class which bored you to tears, why do that again? Try snowshoeing, learn to samba, take a martial arts class or water aerobics, do *anything* but the same old stuff you have always done in the past.

It takes about 21 days to change a habit and about four to six weeks to make it a lifestyle change. This means that by the time the swimsuit edition of *SPORTS ILLUSTRATED* shows up on the stands, you will feel better about yourself and be on a healthier lifestyle track instead of in the same old rut.

Linda Buch-BODY LANGUAGE- July 8, 2001

What basic equipment do I need to workout at home?

"I have joined gyms in the past but always fizzle out on my attendance, and, I get tired of spending the money to join. What can I do at home for strength and cardiovascular training without spending a lot of money?"

Sandy Adams, Denver, CO

Nothing gives clarity to the adage, "The road to hell is paved with good intentions," like a gym membership. While it is empowering and exciting to join a facility where you can enjoy numerous activities, classes and a plethora of workout equipment, the caveat is that, in order to acquire the benefits, you have to actually *show up*. At first, this may seem easy. You get into a routine of attendance and partake of all of the amenities. It is smooth sailing. You are looking good, feeling good, and your confidence high. Then it happens: work, family, rotten weather, the flu, vacation, perhaps an injury of some sort, and it all falls apart. Some sort of inertia sets in and the next thing you know, the gym membership becomes just another deduction in your checkbook. For those readers out there for whom this is a familiar and recurring pattern, a better option might be to set up a home exercise area. The "home gym" can occupy a corner of a room or an entire floor. A few select pieces will give you everything you need for cardiovascular, strength, and flexibility.

I have touted the utilitarian versatility of the Fit Ball® in previous articles. Every home should have one. The Ball can be used as a chair, as a weightlifting bench, and, as a tool for cardiovascular exercise, stretching, flexibility, posture, and balance. The local distributor (no, I am not on their payroll!) is Ball Dynamics in Longmont: 1-800-752-2255. Balls can also be purchased at other stores around town, such as The Better Back Store, and at most fitness equipment establishments.

Another handy item is a Reebok Step. While this is used primarily for the "Step" class, it is also handy in the home as a step for working legs (lunges, step-ups, etc.) and as a weightlifting bench. I have mentioned "weightlifting" twice now so it is time for the clever segue into the discussion of *weights*. Your options include the inexpensive hexagon metal dumbbells to the slightly pricier (but prettier and more comfortable) foam or vinyl coated ones. You will need an assortment of poundages: probably pairs of 3#, 5#, 8#, 10#, 12#, 15#, and, maybe, even higher, depending on your goals and abilities. The disadvantage here is that you have to keep all of these weights in a pile somewhere ("What happened to the other 5# weight?") which can be a drag depending on your personal clutter-tolerance. Another way to go is with an ingenious system developed by Intellbell, Inc. (1-800-446-5215, or, www.powerblock.com) called a "Sport Block". This ingenious piece of equipment takes up about twelve square inches and contains weights from 3#-21# (Think of those cute

little Russian nesting dolls on steroids and you will get the idea). This will cost a bit more but there is no clutter! Another option, if you don't like free weights, are "resistance bands". these are also available at most sports equipment stores.

Cardiovascular equipment is extremely personal and depends largely upon what you like to *do*. Choices abound: treadmills; elliptical crosstrainers; stairsteppers; computer-enhanced bicycles; rowing machines; take your pick. To get the most out of your choice, get the absolute best quality that you can afford with the best warranty. Also, be sure you have a trial period from the vendor to see if the equipment suits you. The last challenge? Avoiding a workout now that your gym is under your own roof! Do yourself a favor and set aside time for YOU and your equipment, either with a favorite TV show or with your favorite rockin' music.

Linda Buch-Body Language-July 15, 2001

DO YOU BELIEVE IN MAGIC?

An e-mail was forwarded to me last week titled, "I Love You and I Don't Want You To Die!!!!!" Wow! What was the Psychic Friends Network up to now? The joke was on me because it was a "come on" for a new diet product called Berry Trim Plus. This 'I love you...don't die' message was, supposedly, taped to Richard Simmons' car. It motivated him to lose weight and become the most famous guy in gym shorts and tank top. While the author of this e-mail is correct in stating that "being overweight will kill you in one way or another," she unfortunately digresses into claiming to have found a "miracle product." According to the author of this e-mail, the "strongest fat burning substance in existence," is found in the "brindall berry", which grows only in Asia and Southern India. The "magical" properties of the brindell berry can "only be found in a product called Berry Trim Plus."

I went to www.google.com, typed in Berry Trim Plus and got pages of hits to chose from. At the top of the list was the HEALTH CARE REALITY CHECK WEBSITE. There I found a complete fact sheet on this product which stated, among other things, that "the Georgia Council Against Health Fraud and the National Council Against Health Fraud have received numerous complaints that the product is ineffective and that Health Labs of North America (its manufacturer) does not honor its money back guarantee." In addition to several more disparaging references (like the D.A. in a county in California planning to take legal action), this site also gives detailed information on all of the ingredients. Yikes! Add laundry soap and it will also clean your house.

According to my on-line investigation, and a lengthy conversation with Registered Dietitian, Kim Gollick, we know that a "berry" (assuming that this one really does exist) contains beta carotene and vitamin C. Everything that this pill is supposed to do--such as reduce blood pressure and improve metabolic function--is done by any organic substance containing beta carotene and vitamin C. In other words, a carrot and an orange will do the same thing. All of the other ingredients (too numerous to mention here) rely on anecdotal information and the wishful musings of dietary mountebanks.

There are numerous dangers with these dietary enticements which promise "fast", "rapid" and "easy" weight loss. Many contain herbs which do nothing more than make you feel jittery, thus creating the illusion of having more energy. Many of these substances, like caffeine, mahuang (ephedra), guarana, and ginseng fall into this category. Since none of these substances contain *calories* (our bodies' only source for **Energy**) all you are doing is stimulating the nervous system. Many make claims about "magic" weight loss properties that "melt away fat". There are enough Red Flags in these sorts of claims to torment all of the bulls running Pamplona. Neither grapefruit

nor brindall berry contain anything, in and of themselves, which will magically and miraculously change your body's composition. Some of the additives are downright deadly. A great example of this are ephedra alkaloids which are touted as "fat-burning" substances. Ephedra has also been found to cause serious problems like hypertension, cardiac arrest, and stroke. Articles on other substances, like pyruvic primer, chromium picolinate, hydroxycitric acid, and so forth, are written all the time in health and fitness magazines. Before rushing out to buy and try, be sure of the authors' credentials and of the science behind any claims.

The aggravating thing about these companies and their products is that they play on the hopes of millions of obese people who are desperate to lose body fat. The statistics for obesity in our country are stupefying. At least 50% of American adults are obese. Over 40% of our five-to-eight year old children already have at least one risk factor for heart disease. Couple these statistics with the Hollywood "gotta be thin to win" attitude and we create gullibility and desperation in monstrous proportions. A pill just sounds so darn easy. "No one can defy the Law of Thermodynamics," says Registered Dietitian, Kim Gollick. "Your body is like a checking account which records every calorie in and every calorie out. The only way to change your metabolism is to change your body composition. In other words, an increase in muscle mass will increase metabolism and vice versa." A pill won't do it. Diet and exercise will. Remind yourself, before you succumb to what sounds like a magical answer to a weight problem, that if it sounds too good to be true, it undoubtedly is. Caveat EMPTOR!!

(A special thank you to Kim Gollick, R.D. for her generous assistance.)

Linda Buch-BODY LANGUAGE-July 1, 2001

Picking a Gym and a Trainer

"I am a fifty-something female with the usual aches and pains that creep up on us-bad back, tennis elbow, and so forth. I want to learn how to build muscle but do not know how to get past the intimidating atmosphere of a gym, let alone pick a personal trainer to help me once I am through the door. Any suggestions?" Marianne Kendregan, Denver, CO

First, there is the cacophonous clanging of weights and machines; then there is the overwhelming swirl of hard-bodied, "ripped", "cut", buff, tight-bunned people (who seem so cool, hip, and aware) all working out with perfect form and focused discipline in their thongs, spandex and muscle tanks. For some reason, this is what folks *think* they see the first time they gaze fearfully into the workout area. Fear not, I say! The above description would describe a Hollywood movie set but would be relatively uncommon anywhere else. For many clubs today, "Baby Boomers" are the base demographic. This means YOU. This also means that most of the people in the gym will be dealing with the same "aches and pains" with which you are dealing. Once you are consoled by that fact, the next step is to figure out what you want from a fitness facility and, more importantly, whether or not it is geographically situated in your general stream of living so that you will actually GO. Will you be using it before work? During lunch? On the way home from work? Only on weekends? Are you interested in lots of variety, or are you primarily going to go for one or two specific things, like swimming and weightlifting? Do you want the very latest in cardiovascular equipment or are you looking for classes? What is your budget? Once you have sorted through this maze of options, go to your telephone directory and find the facilities that are convenient and start calling. Set up an appointment for a guided tour and see for yourself how each gym feels to you. Be sure to schedule the tour for the time you are going to use the gym so you can get an accurate read on what awaits you. Once you find the place that feel right, ask for a trial membership. Most facilities will, for a nominal fee, allow you to check out their gym for a week or two. If you like it, *go for it!*

A Personal Fitness Trainer (Exercise Specialist), is your best initial investment after joining a facility, especially if you have a lot of trepidation and confusion about what to do once you are in the workout area. A trainer can drastically reduce your learning curve when it comes to all of the options the gym offers: "How do these machines work? How do I use dumbbells and barbells? How much weight? How many repetitions and how many sets? Which are the best exercises for hips/butt/arms? How do I workout around my (fill in the blank) injury?" A trainer will teach you proper form and organize your workout so that you don't waste time getting where you want to go. Cost is always a concern. Many gyms offer special short-term packages which will get you going without your having to sell the ranch. Finding the right trainer may involve a little effort on your part because you want to work with someone whose

personality and experience gels with your issues. Look through the biographies on file with the gym manager and see whose credentials (certification, experience, specialties) suit your purpose. When you have made the leap on all of this, take a deep breath, relax, and have fun!

LINDA BUCH-BODY LANGUAGE-DENVER POST, JULY 22, 2001

"My mother is a 70+ year old woman with repeated ailments, aches, pains, frequent colds, muscles that are easily strained and low energy. In spite of two shoulder surgeries, she still has terrible shoulder pain. Also, she thinks that exercise is not necessary because her blood pressure is low and she is not like other women who are obese and on Oxygen tanks. Can you enlighten her on the value of exercise?"

Sheeba Reilly, Littleton

A client of mine has a pillow on his couch which is lovingly embroidered, "SCREW THE GOLDEN YEARS." Unfortunately, for many seniors who feel that it is too late for them to benefit from a fitness program, this becomes an intractable state of mind and body. The good news is that NOTHING reverses the vagaries of aging--the aching joints, bone loss, inability to live independently, depression, low energy, frail immune system, and so forth--like vitamin "X," ... EXERCISE. According to exercise specialist, Len Kravitz, Ph.D., the leading cause of fatal injuries in people over 75 is *falling*. "Falls can be reduced dramatically through participation in exercise programs that improve balance and mobility," explains Dr. Kravitz. Increasing muscular strength is also key because increased strength "improves gait, bodily control, and helps individuals function independently." It all boils down to whether or not you want to age gracefully or age abruptly.

It is a fact that people who stay physically active throughout their lives feel more vigorous, energetic, alert and confident. But what about the person who has never exercised? Are they doomed to just wither away? Not according to the research. Author and Tufts University researcher, Miriam Nelson, Ph.D. (*Strong Women Stay Young*, Bantam Books, 1997) studied women aged 35-89 who all lived an inactive existence. She introduced "one year's worth of just two strength training workouts a week" and found that even this minimal amount of exercise "could not only halt the effects of aging, it could reverse them." According to Dr. Nelson, "These women's bodies became 15-20 years more youthful." We are not talking about Schwarznagian bodybuilding routines either. Just one set of ten repetitions with light weights for the quadriceps, hamstrings, biceps, triceps, chest, back and shoulders is plenty to get started. Resistance bands are the cheapest way to get going.

Shoulder injuries, arthritis, insomnia, diabetes, high blood pressure (and low blood pressure), stress, and depression, are often ameliorated with an exercise program. But strength training is just one aspect. Some light stretching every day will help the joints stay flexible and often relieves pain over time. Balance is another major factor for overall senior health and well-being. The heart, blood vessels and lungs benefit from daily walking and/or water activities because when these systems are stronger and healthier, oxygen is delivered throughout the body more easily resulting in more energy. However, the American College of Sports Medicine recommends that a

“moderate intensity aerobic exercise program begin only *after* frail adults have improved their muscle strength, joint stability, and balance.” Check with community centers, YMCA’s, YWCA’s, and retirement centers to find good, well-supervised programs for new exercisers. As always, it is wise to consult with a medical professional before beginning any program of exercise.

Another senior challenge has to do with nutrition. Many seniors get into a dietary rut, eating the same things every day. This sort of nutritional tedium can lead to serious health deficiencies. A group of eight registered dietitians from the Pittsburgh Dietetic Association answered the question, “What should I eat?” (*ACE Fitness Matters*, Vol. 1, #3) The following are their Top Ten: Broccoli; Breakfast; Beans; Grapefruit; Skim Milk; Oatmeal; Round Steak; Salmon; Fig Bars; and Olive Oil. All of these, plus a variety of other related foods rich in fiber and antioxidants, should be worked into the diet every week to insure that all nutritional needs are being met.

Successful aging means living independently as long as possible. It is never too late to live a vibrant life!

Linda Buch-BODY LANGUAGE-July 29, 2001

"I need to know all about exercising when pregnant: What can I do prior to getting pregnant to stay in shape and not harm a potential pregnancy? Once pregnant, what can I do to stay in shape and prepare for the delivery? What can I do postpartum to get back into shape?" S. Platt, Denver, CO

EXERCISE AND PREGNANCY

It sounds like you are already an avid exerciser, which is definitely to your advantage. But even if you are not, the very first thing you must do is have a long chat with your physician. A complete exam before and after becoming pregnant will give your doctor the necessary information regarding any restrictions. Get written permission before starting on any program.

Being physically active during pregnancy is both healthy for you and for your baby. In general, the best exercises are: swimming, yoga, walking and strength training. Believe it or not, most of these types of exercises can be done well into the third trimester. According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG): 1. Regular exercise (three times per week) is preferable to intermittent activity; 2. Exercise in the supine position (like the leg press and bench press), periods of motionless standing, and vigorous exercise should be avoided after the first trimester. Overheating of any kind should be avoided at all costs in all three trimesters, so be sure you have adequate hydration and take lots of breaks; 3. Modify exercise according to how you feel each day but it is considered OK to get the heart rate above 140 beats per minute and to work your abdominal muscles; 4. Stop when fatigued and DO NOT work out to exhaustion; 5. Avoid anything where there is even the potential for abdominal trauma of any kind; 6. Eat more-an additional 300 calories per day or more-if you exercise regularly; 7. Drink water, wear cool clothes, and workout in cool, well ventilated areas; 8. Restart your PRE-pregnancy routines very gradually after delivery (Source: ACOG Technical Bulletin, 1994, reprinted in *IDEA Health and Fitness Source*, Nov./Dec., 2000.)

The pregnant women I have known universally recommended swimming and aquatic exercise programs. Working in the water became especially gratifying in the last four months because the buoyancy felt so good on their backs, legs, and joints. According to Charlotte Norton, DPT, MS, ATC, CSCS, "Water is a medium that accommodates women at any fitness level during any phase of pregnancy." In her article, "Pre/Postnatal Water Exercise" (*IDEA Health and Fitness Source*, April, 1998), she points out that the hydrostatic pressure of the water "helps reduce the lower-leg edema...and increases intravascular (blood vessel) volume." In other words, you will retain less fluid, a real plus when pregnant!

Strong abdominal muscles are a bonus prior to delivery. Not only will strong “abs” help you push the baby out, but will also help you maintain good posture and a stable torso. The “pelvic tilt” can be performed throughout the pregnancy because, as you become large, this simple technique can be performed on all fours or while standing against a wall.

Postnatal exercise should be resumed very gradually. Your body has been through changes at every possible level so be patient after the birth of your child and follow your doctor’s advice! Here are some resources for you in the meantime: American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, (800) 673-8444 for pamphlets; Kathy Smith’s Pregnancy Workout video; Fit for Two: The Official YMCA Prenatal Exercise Guide book.

I wish you and your family the very best!

LINDA BUCH-BODY LANGUAGE - JUNE 24, 2001

"At what time of the day should I plan my last meal?" Tonya Sargent, Westminster, CO

"It's always something," as Gilda Radnor's "Saturday Night Live" character, *Roseanne Roseannadanna*, would say. The time of day that we actually *consume* food, (that wonderful time after we have figured out the calories, avoided saturated fats, and checked the glycemic index) is very important if we want to be lean instead of Sumo-esque. No one knows more about how to gain lots of body fat than these guys and they do it primarily by employing a technique called "meal patterning." What Sumo wrestlers do, according to Mary Roach, contributing editor of Health Magazine, ("The World's Biggest Weight Experts", March/April, 1993) is the following: (1). *Skip Breakfast*. By depriving their bodies of food after eight hours of sleep, their metabolic rates stay real low. (2). *Exercise on an empty stomach*. If their bodies have no food, their metabolic thermostats are turned down even lower to conserve fuel. (3). *After eating, take a nap*. The Sumo secret for gaining weight is that, after eating, they sleep for at least four hours. (4). *Eat late in the day*. Going to bed with full stomachs means that their bodies must respond to the huge flood of nutrients with a rush of insulin, forcing their bodies to store some of it in the cells as fat instead of in the muscles and organs as nutrients. 5. *Always eat with others in a social atmosphere*. According to leading researchers, a meal eaten with others can be at least "44% larger and with 30% more calories and fat." In short, eating a lot of food late in the day and going to bed on a full stomach is the way to gain a lot of body fat.

Dr. James Hill, an obesity researcher at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center here in Denver, explains that, "With a pattern of eating a few large meals, the system actually gets to expect that, and so it gears up more toward being able to quickly put it into storage." In 1972, another famous researcher, Franz Halberg of 'circadian rhythm' fame, performed an experiment in which each of his subjects ate one 2,000 calorie meal at breakfast for a full week. The next week, these same people ate one 2,000 calorie meal 12 hours later at dinner. Most of the subjects lost weight on the breakfast pattern and gained weight on the dinner pattern. We can learn a lot from this:

- 1.) Eat lots of small meals. "Fuel inject" your body with about 250-300 calories every two to three hours so you can better utilize the fuel, storing it in the muscles and organs as glucose instead of fat.
- 2.) Don't skip breakfast. Your metabolism slows while sleeping. FOOD IS FUEL. The body needs fuel to boost the metabolism.
- 3.) NEVER starve yourself. Weight Watchers teaches people to "stay ahead of the hunger." Starvation actually *slows down* metabolism.
- 4.) Eat your bigger meals early in the day. Give yourself THREE HOURS BETWEEN FOOD AND BED. Eat larger breakfasts and lunches with smaller snacks the rest of the day to keep your metabolism from slowing down.

5.) Don't exercise on an empty stomach. If your body could speak it would say, "Are you crazy? First you don't give me any fuel and then you expect me to run on a treadmill!"

6.) Be aware when dining with family and friends. It is hard to "eat, drink, and be merry" and be vigilant at the same time but vigilant you must be!

It is important, therefore, to take inventory of your own patterns once or twice a year against the criteria listed above. The Sumo wrestlers are professionals who train specifically for their particular physique. As the clichéd disclaimer goes, "Don't try this at home."

LINDA BUCH-BODY LANGUAGE JUNE 17, 2001

"I am 64 and have been lifting weight for about six years and walk six miles three days a week. Does it matter if I do one set of 12-15 repetitions or do I need to do three sets? I find that if I do more than two sets, I get a real bad spasm in my upper back and neck and in the lower back."

Marilyn Fleming, Berthoud, CO

FEWER SETS ARE OK-BE SURE YOUR FORM IS CORRECT!

Wow! You are obviously a dauntless dynamo, Marilyn! Before I answer your question about how many sets per exercise are necessary I need to look at some red flags on the pain you are experiencing. Lifting weights builds muscle, reduces body fat, increases energy, lowers blood pressure, increases bone density, and can even reduce the pain of arthritis. **IF** you have been cleared by your physician to lift weights, then continue strength training; BUT check into hiring a personal trainer-who has experience with senior exercisers-to examine your particular routine. (To find a trainer in your area, call the American Council on Exercise, 1-800-825-3636.) It is possible that your form needs to be adjusted and/or that some exercises need to be changed to others that are less stressful on joints, neck, and back.

An experienced exercise professional can organize a workout program for you that will balance the strength between all of your disparate muscle groups. Too often we humans will just do the exercises we like to do, leaving the less popular areas of our bodies for "next time." Pain is the usual result.

How is your posture? Pain will undoubtedly occur if you are not holding yourself properly while lifting. Also, when you walk, are you carrying yourself erect, shoulders level, head neutral, knees a bit soft, abdominal muscles firm, etc.? Or are you leaning forward with your shoulders hunched, back round, and chest muscles squeezed? Good posture can relieve a world of pain!

As to your original question, how many actual sets do you need to do for strength training, research has revealed some interesting new information. According to a new study from the University of Florida, the gains between those who did three sets per exercise over those who did one set was a whopping TWO PER CENT. The caveat on doing one set instead of three is that form and intensity are crucial. In other words, this is not a 'license to kill' form and effort, only *time*. According to Joseph Quatrochi, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Human Performance, Sport and Leisure Studies at the Metropolitan State College of Denver, fewer sets is a good plan for those with tight schedules. He also adds, "for those who achieve a training plateau, adding additional sets may prove helpful." (Attention readers of this column who work with personal trainers: keep this last addendum in mind before you shove this column under the nose of your poor, hard-working trainer and beg to do less!) Remember that the group in

this study who just did 'one set' had the researchers with them at all times monitoring their workouts and designing their programs.

In short, it is OK to "just do it" for fewer sets, but make sure you "just do it" absolutely RIGHT in order to avoid pain and create gain.

Linda Buch-Body Language-June 3, 2001

“Can you explain “target heart rate” when exercising? What is the effect of going above the target rate? Does recovery time figure in?”

Dennis J. Cooper, Olympia, WA

The heart muscle is an amazing piece of machinery and, like most machines, the older it gets the less demand we can put upon it. Since you want to acquire certain health benefits from your efforts, it is important to know just how much you should push yourself in order to get maximum benefit.

Theoretically, the hearts' maximum beats per minute for the *average* person is 220. The simplest way to calculate your maximum heart rate is to subtract your age from 220. Believe it or not, gender and level of training does not factor into this calculation, only age. Covert Bailey explains this phenomenon in his book, Smart Exercise (Houghton Mifflin, 1994): “Age doesn't change its speed of contraction, but it does change the speed of relaxing. Relaxing a muscle takes longer as we get older. The heart, being a muscle, takes longer to prepare itself for the next contraction.”

The recommended training rate for the average person is 80% of your maximum heart rate. So, if you are 50 years old: $220-50=170 \times 80\%=136$ beats per minute would be your ideal training heart rate. If you train at a slightly higher or lower rate than this, do not worry. At least a third of us do not fit the average.

How can you tell your heart rate? The easiest and cheapest way is to *take your pulse* for six seconds and add a zero to that number. The superior and more expensive way is to *invest in a heart rate monitor* (costs range from \$40 to \$150.00). If you do not have a watch or a monitor, use “*The Borg Scale for Perceived Exertion*”. “Perceived exertion” means you have to pay attention, on a scale of one to twenty, to how you are *feeling*. “ONE” on the Borg scale is the equivalent of staring at the TV while watching Animal Planet, and “20” is like being filmed by Animal Planet while you try to outrun a cheetah that is chasing you across the Serengeti. Most exercisers, therefore, would perceive that 13 to 15 on this scale would feel just right. Again, you should strive to exercise in the 75-80% range of what you PERCEIVE is your maximum. Another indicator of too much exertion is when you are so breathless that you cannot say a whole string of words such as, “Will somebody please rescue me from this cheetah!”

Your hearts' recovery rate will indicate how fit your heart muscle really is.

The faster your heart recovers, the fitter your heart muscle. Try this the next time you are doing your cardiovascular workout (here we go with the math again): take your pulse about 20-25 minutes into your workout (again, the easiest way is to count for six seconds, add a zero). Wait one minute and take your pulse again. Subtract the two numbers and drop the zeros. The closer you are to “six” the better. As an example, If

you are training at a pulse rate of 140, you stop for one minute and your pulse is 100, $140-100=40$ or "four". This is pretty good! If you are training at 140 and after a minute your heart rate is 120 ($140-120=20$, or "two") this means your heart is relatively "untrained" so keep on 'truckin'! Fear not, the heart muscle LOVES exercise and will continue to get stronger and, therefore, recover more quickly, as you progress and persevere with your exercise program.

“How does a 40-something office worker manage to get in shape to resume rock climbing? What exercises do I need to do? Where can I practice climbing if I’m worried about being mocked by younger hardbodies?”

“Hard Rock” or “Rock Hard?”

My first experience with rock or mountain climbing was at age nine watching Disney’s “Third Man on the Mountain” starring Michael Rennie and James (“Book ‘em, Danno”) Mac Arthur. I was equally enthralled by “The Eiger Sanction” with Clint Eastwood and “Cliffhanger” with Sylvester Stalone. However, none of these movies made me want to climb up the side of anything more precipitous than the stairs at IMAX...to watch “Everest.” This being said, I did some research for you and got advice from some very skilled folks out there who are as intrepid as you are.

Since you used the word “resume,” I will assume that you have some experience with the sport. Most people suppose that rock climbers need massively enormous deltoids and legs of steel. While these characteristics are great assets, what rock climbers need most of all are agility and the ability to do many tasks at once in several different directions. According to Ron Candelaria, owner of Colorado Athletic Training School, rock climbers “need to do 10,000 movements at once...coordinating arm movements with leg movements.” He also recommends focusing on good aerobic capacity. In an interview with Alli Rainey, (“*Break out of the Mold*”, *Rocky Mountain Sports*, October, 1998), he suggested “running, biking, or gymnastics” as effective for rock climbing conditioning. “Working out on gymnastics bars and focusing on whole body movement for such exercises is more effective than using weights,” he contends. Candelaria believes that “working on the antagonistic muscle groups that don’t get used as much in climbing can help climbers retain muscle balance and prevent injury.” In other words, don’t forget your posterior deltoids, hamstrings and lower back. Since Mr. Candelaria has coached a gymnast to the Olympics and a rock climber to four world titles, who can argue with his advice? I would like to add that stretching and flexibility are very important for any athlete, as is core conditioning. Learning how to use and work out on a Fitball® would prove very beneficial.

In the February 1, 2001 issue of *Climbing Magazine* I found similar advice. The author of an article titled “Just Doing It” says that the old cliché, “*the best training for a sport is doing the sport*,” holds true. The unusual recommendation in this article: CARPENTRY! “Carpentry teaches a wicked swing, and makes a person fit. The best off-the-couch climbers I’ve known were carpenters.” He/she also recommended aerobic fitness: “skiing, running, hiking, and cycling, especially on hills, will help you with your...climbing.”

Where to climb when just getting back into it? Check out ROCK & MOUNTAIN CLIMBING INSTRUCTION in the Qwest Yellow Pages. There are at least ten

businesses to help you get back into your passion of yore. As for the mockery of younger hard bodies, "Old Age and Treachery Will Always Prevail Over Youth and Skill." Keep your hammer at the ready....

GAINING AND MAINTAINING WEIGHT: A PROBLEM FOR SOME PEOPLE

“I am a fifty-something woman who has trouble GAINING weight. Is there a bodybuilding or gym regimen that would help? Also, when I am stressed out, I have no appetite.”

I can almost see the thousands of eyeballs rolling and hear the sotto voce mutterings: “How can this be a problem?” ; or, “She should count her blessings!” With the Hollywood trend towards a diet of air (filtered, of course-you never know about the caloric content of smog) in order to maintain a svelte 14 ounce lollypop-esque figure, information from the media and other outlets are sparse on the subject of weight GAIN.

The first thing anyone must do when experiencing sudden, rapid weight- loss from stress, with a subsequent loss of appetite, is to get a complete and thorough checkup from an Internist. This should include a full blood screening as well as a complete gastrointestinal examination. There are a few autoimmune, hormonal, digestive, and metabolic disorders (like thyroid disease, Crohn’s disease, diabetes and colitis) that should be ruled out by a medical professional. Depression can also lead to severe weight loss. Your physician would be the best person to talk to about this as there are tests available to determine appropriate medication to bring your brain chemistry back into balance. There is also plenty of evidence that depression can be associated with missing nutrients in the diet. A couple of years ago the National Institutes of Health reported that “omega-3 fatty acids found in salmon and other oily cold-water fish may improve symptoms of depression and other psychiatric disorders.”

Barring organic or psychological problems, weight *gain* must be approached with the same systematic planning required of weight *loss*. Strategic snacking is a good place to start. A “400 calorie milk shake at mid morning and a 700 calorie sandwich and shake between lunch and dinner can help promote a weight gain rate of 1-1/2 to 2 pounds a week,” suggest Eleanor Whitney and Eve Hamilton, authors of *Understanding Nutrition* (West Publishing Company, 1987). Another tactic recommended by Whitney and Hamilton is to choose foods that have the highest concentration of calories that can be eaten in small volumes to avoid becoming full too fast. This would include nuts, avocados, meats, breads, and starchy vegetables. They also suggest that, while a person who is focused on weight loss is “taught to eat slowly and fill up on bulky foods at the beginning of the meal, the person who wants to gain weight must do the opposite: eat faster and eat the higher calorie items first.”

As far as exercise is concerned, anything that gives you joy is what you should do. Lifting weights will increase muscle mass which, at age 50+, is extremely beneficial for bones as well as general health. Since muscle burns about 50 calories per pound, your appetite could be stimulated and increase accordingly. Also, strength training tends to

elevate the mood and improve the overall sense of well being. So, bon appetite and bon chance!

Linda Buch-Body Language (May 27, 2001)

“I am a 46 year old woman who used to exercise a lot including aerobic and weight training. Since moving to a town without a handy exercise facility, I have been walking 45 minutes/day and do floor exercises (crunches, pushups and back stretches.) Occasionally I have pain in my hips. Are there any home exercises I can do to relieve this pain?”

You are to be commended heartily for not allowing a change of scene and venue to dissuade you from staying with a healthy exercise program. I will bet there are people who live across the street from exercise facilities who cannot get to them! (You know who you are....)

Hip pain is probably the most common complaint after knee and back pain so you are among friends (*whining* friends, but friends none the less.) “Pain” is often a product of a muscle imbalance. Since you were used to doing a variety of exercises (also known as “cross-training”) you were giving your entire body a good, comprehensive, balanced workout (equal time to your muscles anterior and posterior) on a regular basis. Now that you are primarily engaged in walking, it is very likely that the anterior muscles, like the quadriceps on the front of the thigh, are getting more of a workout than the muscles posterior, especially your hamstrings (the back of the thigh from below the butt to the top of where the knee bends), gluteus medius (on the side of the butt from the hip to the top of the outer leg), and gluteus minimus (a small muscle located just in front of the gluteus medius.) In short, they are miffed over your apparent “inattention” and have begun the grievance process. Fortunately, you have plenty of options which will make these muscles (and you) feel good again. To keep it simple, here is a list of simple and inexpensive items to purchase as well as some suggested exercises:

- A.** Pick up a copy of **Commercial Break: The Complete Couch Potato’s Guide to Fitness**, by Linda Buch (Ta Da!) and Seth Anne Snider-Copley. Our book contains a lot of exercises for the butt and hips that can easily be done in the home (Tattered Cover, 1-800-833-9327.)
- B.** Order a **Fitball®** from Ball Dynamics in Longmont (1-800-752-2255.) This is probably the best piece of exercise equipment anyone can buy and it is only about \$30.00. The ball is used for posture, balance, strength, flexibility, and even cardiovascular exercise. Ball Dynamics will advise you regarding any books or videos you may need to get started (and they sell *Commercial Break: The Complete Couch Potato’s Guide to Fitness*, also!).
- C.** Buy a copy of **Stretching**, by Bob Anderson. Every stretch you will ever need is in this book.

Enough shopping. Here are the exercises to focus on for immediate pain relief:

1. "Glute" and hip exercises are a must. Before going on your walk, do about 20 leg lifts/ "kicks" (either standing or reclining) to the side and to the rear.

2. Do squats and lunges twice a week. Correct form is imperative and space here is limited. The books and materials suggested above (or look in your local library) provide all of the information you will need for these exercises as well as for the leg "kicks" mentioned above.

3. Try your best to get back into some sort of cross-training by swimming, cycling and hiking some hills for a change of terrain.

If this does not help you after a week to ten days of consistent attention, see a medical professional (Physical Therapist, Kinesiotherapist, athletic trainer or someone who specializes in orthopedics) for more specific diagnosis and treatment. Be creative and have fun!

“What is the recommended minimum amount of cardiovascular exercise that a person should have daily?”

I know that everyone wants a special “magic number” as an answer but the truth has *less* to do with time and more to do with the fitness level from where you are starting. Another factor is your overall objective for exercise (other than for general health and wellness) such as an event or activity that calls for a greater commitment than just looking great in swimsuits, shorts and tank tops. First a quick review. The term “cardiovascular” refers to the heart and blood vessels as a unified body system. Since the heart is a muscle, it needs to be exercised just like any other muscle in order to stay strong and robust. The side effect of working the heart is that your blood vessels throughout your body (lungs, limbs, and so forth) become stronger and more efficient.

If you are currently a “couch potato,” Surgeon General C. Everett Koop became your New Best Friend when he published Physical Activity and Health. A Report of the Surgeon General in July, 1996. After a decade of study, he was able to state that: “Every American should ACCUMULATE 30 minutes or more of moderate intensity physical activity over the course of *most* days of the week.” The Surgeon General equated *not exercising* with smoking a pack of cigarettes a day; so, up off the lounge chairs, folks! The key word is “accumulate.” This means that, if you are just starting an exercise program (keep your doctor apprised of what you are up to!), you can do little bouts throughout the day--ten minutes here, 15 minutes there, a five or ten minute walk after dinner--and become healthier for it.

For those of you who are already into the habit of exercise and are, perhaps, feeling “stuck,” all that may be necessary is a shake up of the old routine. Try a new activity such as kickboxing, spinning, fencing, power walking, salsa dancing, rollerblading, etc. Another technique is to change the intensity level of your current activity. The brain wants the body to run efficiently to *conserve* fat and other energy resources and, therefore, adapts your metabolic rate to any activity that becomes *too* routine. Creative change is in order. Runners/walkers/bikers can do more hills; add periods of intense effort (one to three minutes) interspersed with the normal pace (this is particularly useful for those who have limited time to exercise); add time to your program, five to ten minutes here and there. Another idea is to use a *heart-rate monitor* so you can efficiently observe your ACTUAL heart rate. This device will tell you if you are working as hard as you think you are (Check out, “Heart-rate monitor keeps exercise efficient,” by Claire Martin, *Denver Post*, April 15, 2001, for more information).

What is important is to MOVE. Put exercise into the same category as brushing your teeth. Do it every day and your whole body will have a healthy “smile”!

Linda Buch-BODY LANGUAGE- November 11,2001

MUSCLING IN ON HOUSEWORK

“Is there a way to incorporate movements into my housework routine that can result in more toned muscles? I’m interested in more than just extra calories burned.” Christene, Denver

Muscle is living tissue that requires anywhere from 35 to 50 calories per pound per day in order to live. Fat, on the other hand, is just stored energy which can be sustained by only THREE calories per day. This means that a fitter person with more muscle will burn more calories at rest than a sedentary person. Why is this? Because muscle contains powerful, furnace-like “engines” called mitochondria. These “engines” produce ATP (adenosine triphosphate), the bodies quick energy molecules, as well as specialized oxidative enzymes which burn fat. The more you stimulate your muscles through strength training exercises, the more muscle you build. The more muscle you build, the more fuel-burning furnaces (mitochondria) your body creates. This is why WHAT YOU WEIGHT IS FAR LESS IMPORTANT THAN YOUR BODIES’ RATIO OF MUSCLE TO FAT. Muscle weighs more than fat, but is more compact. A fit person can weigh the same as an unfit person yet wear clothing several sizes smaller.

A sedentary person will lose a half-pound of muscle per year after age 20. Someone who adopts a sedentary lifestyle at age 20, for example, will lose about 15 pounds of lean muscle by the time they are 50. Even if this person eats the same number of calories per day at age 50 as they did at age 20, and weighs the same as they did 30 years ago, they will be fatter and, therefore at risk for all of the disabilities associated with the aging process: heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and osteoporosis.

Building more muscle is not just about losing fat. The life long benefits are extraordinary. The “muscle equation” goes like this: a sedentary, over-weight body x weight-bearing activities = stronger bones + more muscle + more confidence and self-esteem + better balance + more energy - body fat - bad cholesterol = a happier and healthier you. As little as two or three 20-to-30 minute workouts a week will help you lose inches and feel firmer and stronger. Ideally, you should do something for yourself everyday.

The following are great exercises that are easy to do in the home. No equipment is necessary. Just take a break from cleaning every fifteen minutes or so and do each of these exercises for for a minute or two:

Knee pushups (page 58)

Lunges (page 62)

Crunches (page 52)

Plie´ or “sumo” squats (page 81)

BODY LANGUAGE-LINDA BUCH-NOVEMBER 4, 2001

NEVER TOO OLD TO SKI BETTER

"As a female, middle-aged skier, I find that my agility is less than it used to be. My foot quickness was never great, and now is almost non-existent. I can make the big turns, but the quick, "short swing," and mogul turns are a struggle. What exercises would you recommend?"
Mary K., Arvada CO

As someone who learned to ski in Vermont I often marvel at skiers here in Colorado-how do you manage to execute your turns without the benefit of ice and gravel? Getting ready physically for skiing (even on our amazing Colorado snow) is necessary in order to have an enjoyable ski experience (i.e., one that entails more than two continuous runs with minimum number of face-plants and butt-prints along the way.) Cross-training year-round, including a variety of activities like bicycling, rollerblading, hiking, walking, swimming, strength training, and assorted work with posture and balance, is a good idea in order to keep your legs in tune for winter fall-line fun. Since it is already November, it is time to assess your current physical condition and pay attention to those areas where you may have some gaps.

The three primary components to a good ski training program include cardiovascular conditioning, strength training, and agility training (also known as "plyometrics".) It is a good idea to build one upon the other in order to both prevent injury and to enhance your time on the slopes.

Your cardiovascular conditioning needs to be ongoing year-round just for general health and wellness. If this has not been the case for you, begin slowly by doing some rollerblading, walking or hiking four times a week for at least 30 minutes. After about three weeks, start to add some *interval* training: short burst of speed sustained for 30 seconds to a minute per five minutes of your regular walking pace. Walking/hiking on irregular surfaces, like trails in the foothills and parks, will help you get conditioned for the irregular surfaces found on ski slopes.

Strength training is important because the stronger you are, and the more conditioned your muscles, the longer you can stay out on the slopes. Since you are a downhill skier, you need to work on leg and butt strength in order to stay comfortably in the semi-squat position, to absorb the impact of the bumps, and to have confidence in your turns. Good exercises for the legs are barbell squats, wall squats (holding for a minute or longer), and sumo squats (with legs wide and holding a dumbbell.) Lunges are great for the gluteus muscles. If you can get to a gym, use the leg press machines, hamstring machines and (barring any knee problems) the leg extension machines. For the back, do pulldowns and back extensions. Dumbbell presses are great for the chest and shoulders, but if you do not own any dumbbells, pushups are fabulous for chest, back,

and shoulder strengthening. Tricep pushdowns and bicep curls are excellent for the arms while crunches are essential for abdominal strength. One or two sessions with a personal trainer will assure proper form and understanding of these exercises.

Agility training seems to be the missing component since you say you have trouble with quick turns. Balance and coordination can be improved by working with a Fitball® and with wobble boards. Other exercises that would help you are “squat jumps”: squat to parallel and try to jump as high as you can. Drop back down into a squat and do it again. A good step aerobics class would also be beneficial because of the constant changing of feet position as you do “dance” steps over a stable step platform. On your own, you can do a “box-shuffle.” This requires a stable box about nine inches high. Start with one foot on the box and one on the floor. Push up with both legs and switch your feet in mid air. Land with the opposite foot and repeat. Another great agility exercise mimics skiing a bit: lay a jump rope down on the ground lengthwise. Pretend you are skiing as you jump back and forth down the length of the rope landing in the feet together, semi-squat position each time.

Add some stretching to all of this and you should be shredding those moguls in no time!

Linda Buch-BODY LANGUAGE-November 18, 2001

SMOKE-FREE EXERCISE

"I love to dance. I get a great aerobic workout with 2-3 hours of fast and furious 2-stepping, swing, salsa, etc. It's great for maintaining my weight and staying limber. In order to find dance partners who can match my level of exertion, I have to go out to Denver's dance bars which are filled with smokers. After dancing for 2-3 hours, I hack and cough to clear my lungs and my voice is raspy for a whole day afterwards. By exercising aerobically in this environment, am I doing more harm than good? What is happening to my lungs? What are our public health agencies doing about this? JC, Denver

Since going out socially while wearing a SCUBA tank is probably on the "Glamour Don't ®" list, your options may involve an occasional change of venue and even some creative feistiness. You sound like someone who is up to the task!

Your health is definitely jeopardized by inhaling second-hand smoke for hours at a time. Not only are your heart rate and blood pressure adversely affected, but your blood is also in jeopardy of absorbing elevated levels of carbon monoxide. If that isn't scary enough, the smoke that emanates from the burning end of a cigarette is filled with copious amounts of dangerous chemicals and, in fact, contains MORE tar and nicotine than the smoke that the actual smoker inhales. Secondhand smoke irritates the eyes and nose, can give you a headache, makes you dizzy or nauseous, makes asthma worse, and increases your risk of respiratory infections, like colds, bronchitis and pneumonia. Death from second-hand smoke is the third leading killer in the nation!

The laws in Colorado governing tobacco usage generally vary from county-to-county. While smoking is prohibited statewide in "elevators, museums, galleries, and libraries of any establishment doing business with the general public," and, while most counties regulate smoking in restaurants, dance clubs and bars are still wild and woolly when it comes to this weed.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, only 22.5% of Colorado adults over the age of 18 are smokers. This means that 77.5% of Colorado adults do NOT smoke. I am going to bet that there are a lot of people in that 77.5% who would go out dancing and clubbing if the atmosphere were not so toxic. Why, then, do bar owners allow their places to remain Palaces of Puffery? According to a new study from Texas A&M University, "It takes more alcohol to get drunk when you are inhaling cigarette smoke than when you aren't." Wei-Jung Chen, Ph.D., co-author of the study, found that, "Nicotine extends the amount of time alcohol stays in the stomachs of test subjects, delaying its metabolism into the bloodstream." Of course, people who smoke and drink also have higher instances of heart and liver problems, so don't feel too excluded.

Finding venues where you can dance for fun without noisome, noxious nicotine contamination was challenging but not impossible. "Pete" at G.A.S.P. (Group to Alleviate Smoking Pollution) suggested "Let's Dance Denver" on South Havana, and, the "Arthur Murray Dance Studios" situated throughout the Metro area. "Let's Dance," which offers lessons in a variety of dance genres, have nonsmoking "party nights" on the first and third Friday of the month that are open to the public. Their specialty is "Swing" so you may also want to check out their Rocky Mountain Swing Club in Arvada. Arthur Murray teaches all kinds of dancing and offers, to their clients, nonsmoking parties monthly. A perusal of the Colorado Free University catalog led me to "Latin Dance FX & Fitness" at 28th and Speer which teaches all sorts of Latin dancing classes, some of which are designed to be cardiovascular workouts. They may soon be starting "party nights" where you could go and dance in a more informal and nonsmoking atmosphere.

All of this notwithstanding, nothing gets attention like a squeaky wheel. Start voicing your complaints (politely and firmly along with a suggestion or two) to the managers of your favorite dance clubs. Perhaps, if there are enough complaints, the owners of the clubs might be willing to announce "no smoking nights" on specific days throughout the month (example: every third Friday for one club; every second Saturday at another, and so forth).

I hope some of these options sound like fun to you. I also hope that your current stomping grounds pay heed to your concerns so that you do not have to posit your displeasure by voting with your feet.

LINDA BUCH-BODY LANGUAGE-NOVEMBER 25, 2001

EXERCISE AND DIABETES

SEDENTARY DEATH SYNDROME is the latest terminology for metabolic diseases which occur due to lifestyle choices. "SeDs", as it is known in the medical community, was coined by Frank W. Booth, Ph.D., an exercise researcher at the University of Missouri at Columbia, in response to the comfortably corpulent image evoked by the more familiar "couch potato" term. A major consequence of a sedentary lifestyle is Type 2 diabetes, formerly known as Adult Onset Diabetes. Over 80% of the diagnoses for diabetes are "Type 2". Up until the 1970's, this disease was seen primarily in older adults who were inactive due to infirmity. Today this disease is at epidemic proportions, having TRIPLED in 30 years. In fact, over 14 million Americans have been diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes. Twenty percent of the diabetes cases diagnosed in children is Type 2, something unheard of ten years ago. Virtually ALL of these cases are caused by **obesity**

Medically, we are considered "obese" if we are 30% or more above the midpoint of our weight range on a standard height-weight table (The exception to this scale are those who have well developed muscularity).

Biologically, humans need glucose for fuel, which is transported around the body via the blood stream. The pancreas produces a hormone known as insulin, which is excreted when we eat. It is the *insulin* which moves the glucose into the cells by binding with special "receptors" on target muscle and fat cells. Glucose enters the cells by way of the insulin and is, therefore, removed from the blood stream. When glucose is not removed from the bloodstream by this mechanism, the kidneys end up filtering it out, which is why kidney disease is often a by-product of diabetes.

The formal name for Type 2 diabetes is Noninsulin-dependent Diabetes Mellitus (NIDDM). Individuals diagnosed with this type are "insulin resistant". In other words, they have a plethora of insulin but a dearth of "receptors". What reduces the number of receptors? **OBESITY**. The good news is that Type 2 diabetes is usually a *disease of CHOICE*. In other words, you can make new lifestyle choices such as exercising more while eating a healthier diet-and control the disease. As little as ten pounds' reduction in body fat can mean the difference between a life of dependency on shots and pills or a life free from all of that annoying medical management.

If you have been diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes, you absolutely **MUST** consult with a physician before diving head long into an exercise program.

Certain conditions can actually worsen your condition. For example, if your blood glucose level is too high, exercise can worsen blood sugar control. The type and intensity of your program will also be determined by blood pressure, indications of

heart disease (common with Type 2 diabetics), whether or not you are experiencing pain in your feet, or are having problem with your eyes.

Since Type 2 diabetes is often the result of a sedentary lifestyle, it is important to start gradually and engage in low-impact and non-weight-bearing activities such as walking (short bouts), swimming or bicycling. High impact aerobics, jogging, bouncing and other jarring activities are not recommended because of possible damage to the eyes and feet.

Diet is the other area that must be closely examined and monitored. Fatty, sugary foods such as muffins, cinnamon rolls, bagels, candy, ice cream, white bread, potatoes, white rice, fried foods, foods high in saturated and partially hydrogenated fat and the like may need to be drastically reduced from the diet. In their place, opt for whole grains, white meats, fish, fresh fruit, vegetables, and other foods low in saturated and trans fats. Working with a registered dietitian will be essential so that you can learn how to maintain a good balance for your bloodstream without feeling deprived and punished.

We can turn the tide on this epidemic by moving more and eating less. This may not be easy, but it really is that simple.

Linda Buch-BODY LANGUAGE- 10/7/01

"I am a middle-aged, active woman who has worked out nearly all of my life. I was diagnosed six-months ago with hip bursitis and was encouraged to do two special stretches to relieve the pain. The pain doesn't seem to go away. What kinds of activities can I do to relieve it and to avoid inflaming it? Golfing and sitting make it worse; step aerobics and weight lifting are neutral; yoga makes it feel better." Linda, Westminster

According to the "Merck Manual of Medical Information, Home Edition," (Merck Research Laboratories, 1997), bursitis is "the painful inflammation of a bursa." What's a 'bursa'? It is a flat sac containing very little fluid "located at sites of friction, especially where tendons or muscle pass over bone." Think of a bursa as a single square of bubble wrap placed by nature as a buffer in areas of frequent usage. Your bursitis means that the bursa in your hip (a frequent area for this affliction along with shoulders, elbows, knees, toes, fingers, and heels) is inflamed and has probably filled with fluid, making it very sore to the touch and to movement. It sounds like you are a physically active person, so it is very likely that this occurred from an injury, or repeated injury, during sport. Since proper hip rotation is critical for golf, I suspect that is the culprit. It is highly likely that this injury has occurred because of either a muscle imbalance between the muscles in the gluteus and low-back areas, or, because of improper weight-shifting during the swing.

According to the Merck Manual, attacks of bursitis can last a few days to a few weeks. Since you have been dealing with this for a while, your pain may be chronic; therefore, you may want to get some additional testing done. Specifically, go to your doctor and see if she/he could take a bit of the fluid out of the inflamed bursa with a needle (ouch!) to see if there is an infection, gout, or calcium deposits. Some corticosteroids may be recommended to reduce the inflammation and give you relief from pain. If it is infected, antibiotics may be called for.

In the meantime, muscle atrophy, due to exercise avoidance from the pain, is something you want to avoid. If step aerobics, weight lifting, and yoga cause no pain and/or make it feel better, then stick with these activities and lay off the golf until you get a clean bill of hip health. Other sports that might work for you are swimming and bicycling. Neither of these sports involve the torso twisting and hip rotation inherent in golf, which means you will keep your muscle tone and aerobic conditioning without aggravating the bursitis. It is extremely important that you condition all of the muscle groups of the body (leg, gluteus, back, chest, shoulder, arm, forearm, and abdominal muscles) so that when you return to golfing, you are more in balance. Working out on a Fitball® (particularly exercises known as the hip lift and hip rotation) and/or taking a Pilates class would be excellent because the exercises on these types of equipment are ideal for strengthening and balancing the muscle groups.

Once the inflammation does go down, a few sessions with a golf pro to check your swing before going back out on the links would definitely be in order. A good pro (and, perhaps, a visit with a physical therapist who Knows Golf) should be able to help you pinpoint and correct the genesis of your bursitis.

Good luck and I hope this helps you get back up to “par”!

BODY LANGUAGE-October 14,2001-Linda Buch

"I was diagnosed with Chronic Fatigue Immune Dysfunction and Fibromyalgia Syndromes in 1999. I walk every day but it is becoming more and more difficult. I used to be able to walk 45-60 minutes at 4.5-5 MPH. Now I struggle to walk 15 minutes at 3 MPH. How can I try to maintain/improve my present level of functioning with the limitations of energy and pain?"
Linda McCulloch, Colorado Springs

I applaud your tremendous will, Linda. It is hard enough for most of us to work in exercise every day even without the pain and fatigue associated with chronic fatigue and Fibromyalgia syndromes, and you are at it daily, enduring tremendous challenges with every step!

Fibromyalgia syndrome (FS) makes you feel as if you have the flu *all the time*. Fatigue and widespread pain in the skeletal muscles and connective tissue are the most common complaints, with numbness, impaired balance, depression, anxiety, and sleep disorders high on the list as well. Authors Starland and Copland (*Fibromyalgia and Chronic Myofascial Pain Syndrome: A Survival Manual, New Harbinger Publications,1996*) refer to FS as the "Irritable Everything Syndrome." Of the 10 million people suffering from FS in the USA, 90% are women. According to Gwen Hyatt, MS and author of many articles on the subject, "Certain factors have been shown to aggravate the frequency and severity of symptoms. These factors include cold or humid weather, non restorative sleep, physical or mental fatigue, excessive physical activity, physical inactivity, excess noise or light, anxiety and stress." The frustration for those with FS is the obvious "Catch 22": you have pain all over so you can't sleep. This makes you physically and mentally tired. You know exercise makes you feel better eventually but when you do exercise, you are often in more pain. Not exercising is just as painful. Since anything you do is painful, you get depressed and anxious. All of this combined makes it hard to sleep, and around you go again.

Research has turned up some new ideas for sufferers of FS. Similar recommendations were made for chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS). First, while walking is highly recommended, moderating the intensity and frequency of your walks is probably called for. Since your walks are down to about 15 minutes and are causing you continuous pain, it might be time to branch out into some other activities. Proper body alignment is often a problem for FS sufferers. Activities which enhance posture and involve a lot of stretching and other range of motion activities-such as yoga, tai chi, pilates-are helpful. Another great way to exercise, if you can find a pool with warm enough water, is "aqua aerobics." The buoyancy and massaging action of the water can be soothing as well as physically productive. Bicycling, either with a standard or a recumbent bike, and strength training twice a week can also be productive. If you decide to try strength training, start with VERY light weights and give yourself at least three days between sessions.

It would probably help to take a hot shower, bath or use some other method (electric blanket or heating pad) to warm yourself prior to any exercise activity. This may decrease your pain and make exercising easier. Before exercising, take 15 minutes to warm up and stretch before attempting anything too vigorous, and stretch again afterwards. Gwen Hyatt also suggests that, instead of doing one long bout of exercise, that you might feel better doing several shorter bouts throughout the day. She also suggests "shorter, less intense" sessions when you are having a "bad" day and cautions against overextending yourself on "good" days.

Exercise is extremely important for FS and CFS sufferers. I hope these suggestions are helpful to you.

BODY LANGUAGE-October 21, 2001-Linda Buch

Breast cancer and exercise

October is a big month for breast cancer awareness. Even CRABBY ROAD says, "Get your mammogram. It's flat out necessary." This is the month when a funny e-mail makes the rounds called, "How to Prepare for Your Mammogram", which suggests freezing metal bookends and smashing your breasts between them as hard as you can (repeat three times daily); locate a pasta maker and crank your breasts through it (repeat three times daily); and, lie down in the garage, place a breast behind the tire of a car while someone backs over it (hold for five seconds, repeat at least once for each breast.) Laughing about this lifesaving procedure "is a good thing," as Martha Stewart often says, as long as we stay focused on the necessity of doing what we must do to stay ahead of a potential killer. I laughed until I cried when I got the "preparation instructions" from a friend of mine but it reminded me to pick up the phone and make that necessary annual appointment (yes, I am past the age of 40).

In 1997, a lot of attention was given to a Norwegian study of 25,624 women which was published in the prestigious *New England Journal of Medicine*. This study compared sedentary women with women who exercised at least four hours a week. The investigators in Norway found that the group who exercised had a 37 percent lower risk of developing breast cancer. The leading hypothesis focused on the fact that exercise can reduce the amount of estrogen produced by the ovaries, which is thought to be a factor in the development of breast cancer. This theory is still being investigated.

According to The American Cancer Society, there are many factors which can lead to breast cancer: increasing age; family history; early menarche; late menopause; having children after 30; not having children at all; gene mutations; prolonged exposure to post menopausal estrogen; high dietary fat intake; smoking; and obesity. We cannot do much about the first seven but we can do a whole lot about the last three: smoking, fat intake and obesity.

It is a fact that increasing exercise, stopping smoking, reducing dietary fat intake, and losing body fat can drastically reduce your chances of getting breast cancer. Let's start with smoking: get a clue. This is a lethal habit. Find a way to quit and dedicate your very life to succeeding. The strength and power of a nicotine addiction is pernicious (It has been shown that nicotine can be even more powerful than heroin.) BUT people who want to quit, manage to do so every day. You can, too.

Reducing dietary fat has been touted as a major factor in reducing a woman's risk of getting breast cancer. The Women's Health Institute has been "tracking 50,000 women aged 50 to 79 nationwide since 1995 to find out if reducing fat to 20 percent, while increasing the servings of fruit and vegetables to at least five per day, will prevent

breast cancer" (Sharon Cohen, *Living Fit*, April 1997). The study does not end until 2005 but anecdotal evidence suggests a strong link between a diet high in fat and cancer all cancers. *HEALTH* magazines' Peter Jaret listed the "Top Ten Anti-Cancer Foods" in their November/December issue, 1999: strawberries, tomatoes, oranges, garlic, tea, whole wheat, carrots, cabbage, spinach, and beans (*not* "refried!"). These foods are all high in the phytochemicals and anti-oxidents which combat those nasty free-radicals often linked to an increase in cancer. "As our environment becomes more polluted," cites Heather Isley, Vice President of Nutritional Education for Vitamin Cottage, "we need to eat more of these types of foods to help our bodies combat some of the environmental factors that have been connected to cancer."

The other great side effect of eating right is weight-loss, a factor touted in the battle to keep breast cancer at bay. Obesity shows up on the list of the top two killers in America: heart disease and cancer. What goes hand-in-hand with fighting obesity? Exercise. Consistent, daily exercise. There is no way around it. Anyone who wants to improve their odds on living a healthy life needs to eat right and exercise. Could you get breast cancer anyway? Possibly. But, you will have the physical and mental resources to fight back and, with early detection (GO GET YOUR MAMMOGRAM!!!), you can win.

BODY LANGUAGE-OCTOBER 7, 2001

FUNCTIONING WITH BACK PAIN

"I'm a 59 year old woman with degenerative disc disease, bulging disc (all @L 3 & 4) and mild spinal stenosis. How can I get fit without hurting myself? Wendy Davis, Denver, CO

Back pain. Sometimes I think we all would have been better off remaining quadrupeds! Our evolution to bipedalism has put a lot of people into the doctor's office with very serious complaints just like yours. Since 80 percent of the adult population will experience some sort of back pain sometime in their lives, statistically you are in good company. Fortunately, this also means that there are lots of options for you.

Your primary objective is to improve your structural integrity so that pain can be reduced and surgery avoided. According to Norman Marcus, MD with the New York Pain Treatment Program, the role of the muscles is overlooked as both contributors to back pain, and as the path to relief. Sedentary lifestyle, weight gain, and muscle imbalances brought on by poorly thought out exercise programs, tension, or the vagaries of the work day can all make some muscle groups too strong, allowing other muscle groups to become weak. For example, if someone sits at a desk for long periods of time, the muscles at the front of the hips will become shorter. The opposite muscle group at the lower back must, therefore, become longer to compensate. Shortened muscles become too strong at the expense of the opposing muscle group which becomes too weak. It is a nasty little game of "see-saw" and is often the root cause of major aggravation. When an area that is weak is allowed to stay that way, pain and degeneration is often the unfortunate result.

Working on posture and correcting imbalances is crucial. A good way to do this is with yoga, pilates, and tai chi. These disciplines sound exotic and esoteric but have become, in fact, rather mainstream. Many YMCA's, health clubs, and public recreation centers offer classes for beginners. Mild strength training and work on a Fitball® can also be helpful. Professionals trained in the Feldenkrais Method (1-800-775-2118) and the Alexander Technique (1-800-473-0620) are other experts who may be helpful in working with chronic back problems that often develop from postural disorders.

Balance training has also been found to be important for back pain sufferers. A recent study conducted by the University of Vienna, Austria (published in *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*, October, 2000) found that "balance training [working on wobble boards three times a day for one month for four minutes at a time] improved back muscle strength to the same degree as strength training." The study also found that balance training "improved postural control more than resistance training."

A good team of professionals to assist you in your recovery is also helpful. Many find relief from chiropractic attention. Physical therapists are highly qualified in all areas of rehabilitation and often work with orthopedic surgeons, should surgery ever become necessary.

Others have found satisfaction by consulting with, and being treated by, a PHYSIATRIST. A “physiatrist,” according to a brochure I received from the Denver offices of Doctors Kleen and Shemesh, is “a physician specializing in physical medicine and rehabilitation.” They are “specially trained to diagnose conditions that cause pain, weakness and numbness.” Physiatrists strive to restore function without surgery and also teach patients how to prevent future injury.

Here are additional general guidelines to reduce back pain from Terrie Heinrich Rizzo, MA, coordinator for health education programs for Stanford University: learn how to lift properly; push-don't pull-whenver possible; watch how you sit; sleep the right way; and, control your weight. I would also recommend that you check your shoes (which only last for about 500 miles before starting to break down, regardless of how spiffy they may still look on the outside), and try to remember when you last flipped your mattress or how old that mattress might be. Poor support when sleeping can wreck your day!

Be persistent. Check out lots of things to find what works for you. Once your confidence in movement returns, you can gradually return to the physical activities you enjoy.

Linda Buch-BODY LANGUAGE-September 9, 2001

Dear Readers: Since this is an interactive column, I occasionally get responses, corrections, and requests for more information after a column has run. So, in celebration of six months of being privileged to write for all of you, here goes:

"I liked your column on swimming but your science is faulty."

Engineer Jim Tegart brought a real head-slapper to my attention. In my April 8, 2001, column on the value of aquatic exercise, I made the egregious statement that "Water, at 14 pounds per square inch, creates resistance in all directions." The only way water would weigh "14 pounds per square inch" is with the addition of AT LEAST 4,000 packets of gelatin mixed with cement...this is not recommended. This little "factoid" is in my notes from a seminar I took ages ago. "14 pounds per square inch" is atmospheric pressure, which has nothing to do with the density and viscosity of water. Water is about 800 times as dense as air. It is water density which creates the resistance, not atmospheric pressure. Every 33 feet, we encounter another "atmosphere," which means the pressure on the body increases by another 14 pounds per square inch. Even if we did "scubaerobics" at that depth, the resistance would be the same as at the surface because the density of the water remains the same. May engineers everywhere forgive me!

"Loved your column on water. I have a pattern of drinking large quantities of water (up to a liter at each meal and nothing in between). Am I harming my kidneys, bladder or other organs with such large quantities at one sitting? Also, since I workout in the evening after dinner, is it harmful not to drink water during or after exercise?" John in Boulder

Since a liter of water is about four cups, it is doubtful that you are harming any organs, aside from exhaustion, as you race back and forth to the bathroom! All kidding aside, conventional wisdom always seeks a moderate balance. Water consumption spread throughout the day, particularly here in our dry climate, would be more beneficial. While it may be more convenient (particularly at 3:00 in the A.M.) to get the necessary *amount* of water in a few sittings, remember that water has many jobs: joint lubrication, maintenance of our body temperature; chemical reactions (electrolyte balance) which allow our cells and muscles to function; and regulation of the body's salt content. By skipping water during and after exercise, you can set yourself up for muscle cramping due to dehydration. If urine is clear or "mellow yellow," you are in balance and your kidneys are happy. If your urine is dark, this indicates dehydration and that your kidneys are working harder to excrete waste. I do know that some folks do not drink water while exercising because it makes them feel ill. Drinking after exercising assumes greater importance in this circumstance.

“[In your column on ‘exercise adds up over the day’]you didn’t mention one of the informal exercise fads of the past few years called ‘the 10,000 steps program’. Rick O., Denver

Yes, I missed an opportunity to plug a decent program used successfully by doctors and trainers everywhere. The plan is to wear a pedometer to see how much walking you get in during the day. Your goal is 10,000 steps, which is equivalent to about five miles. This five miles per day, over a seven day period, adds up to about a pound of fat burned for the averaged sized, middle aged person. This is a great tool to see how much, or how little, you really are moving. After wearing the pedometer for an average week, you will see how much more exercise you need to get to the recommended *minimum* .

Thanks to all of you for writing!

Linda Buch-Body Language-September 2, 2001

"I am going to have abdominal surgery soon. What can I do to get myself in the best shape for this? What about after surgery to get back into shape?" Sue Malone, Castle Rock, CO

Since it sounds like you are already scheduled for surgery, I am hoping that you have had some long discussions with your doctor about what the surgery entails and what sort of recovery period you will be facing. If you are not already an exerciser, it may not be wise to start on an intense, vigorous exercise program right before you are scheduled for a procedure. Instead, it may be better to get in touch with a Certified Physical Therapist to start making plans for your recovery and for a safe, progressive exercise program as a follow-up. If you have four to six weeks of lead time prior to surgery, get started on a program to strengthen your CORE muscles (abdominal and back muscles). The best tool for this is the Fitball®. You can use the Fitball® for crunches; as your bench while strength training; and, by sitting and bouncing on it while watching a TV program, you can even get in an aerobic workout.

Speaking of the cardiovascular system, it is a good idea to get into a consistent program of "huffing and puffing" as far in advance of your scheduled surgery as possible. This will not only put your entire vascular system into better shape, thus allowing oxygen and other essential nutrients more efficient access to your abdominal area, but will also reduce excess body fat. Again, your physician, surgeon and anesthesiologist (if possible) should be apprised of your activities. Some physical pursuits-like swimming, bicycling, and walking-may be preferable to others as far as your particular surgery is concerned.

Another important perioperative area that needs to be addressed is the issue of supplements and herbs. Your doctor **MUST** be given a list of **EVERYTHING** that you take regardless of how innocuous you think it might be. Too many people think that since herbs are "just" plants, and vitamins are "sort of like food," their use is benign when it comes to the effect on a surgical procedure. I urge you to make a list of everything you take in the way of vitamins (even if they look like Fred Flintstone), herbs, prescriptions, over-the-counter medications, sleep aids, diet aids, and so forth. Start making the list about four weeks away from your operation and hand this list to your doctor at least two weeks before surgery. Why? Because many of these items, taken in combination, can have a cumulative effects on important factors like blood clotting. Ginkgo biloba, ginger, garlic, and vitamin E, aspirin, and ibuprofen are all blood thinners which could play havoc with clotting time (acetaminophen is not a blood thinner). Kava kava, if in your system in conjunction with the sedatives used by the anesthesiologist, can cause a deeper sedative effect than desired by the surgeon. Licorice can neutralize antibiotics. Ginseng can cause hypertension, clotting problems, unexpected hypoglycemia, or ECG changes. "Patients today often self-diagnose and

treat themselves after hearing about herbs and over-the-counter (OTC) medications from word of mouth and through the media," writes Cindy Brumley, RN, CNOR, RCST in the November 2000 AORN JOURNAL (Vol. 72, No. 5). "This can mask or complicate serious illnesses and delay treatment. Herbal remedies do not work like prescription or OTC medicines." Wellness guru, Dr. Andrew Weil, concurs by pointing out that, regardless of the limited studies actually done on herbal medicine in medical journals, "herbs are biologically active substances" and should be mentioned to your physicians in advance of surgery (DR. ANDREW WEIL'S SELF HEALING, September, 2001, p. 3).

Take no chances on the success of your surgical experience. Prepare your body and your physician to ensure the best outcome.

(I would like to thank Helen S. Pashley, RN, MS, CNOR, for her assistance in the writing of this article.)

Linda Buch-BODY LANGUAGE- 9/23/01

"Is there a good way to incorporate movements into my housework routine that will help me to improve my muscle tone? Should I use hand and ankle weights while vacuuming and folding laundry? How much of a difference does running the stairs make instead of walking them? I am interested in more than just burning extra calories." Christene, Denver

Fitting in fitness can be daunting regardless of our circumstances. Those who work every day, have children at home, and/or have schedules that are inordinately frenetic, can forget to set aside time for exercise. The Surgeon General's Report of 1996, discussed in a previous article printed in August, revealed that "thirty minutes of moderate activity *accumulated* throughout the day most days of the week" was effective in improving levels of wellness for the deconditioned person and helped to maintain a modicum of wellness for the regular exerciser. The point of the Surgeon General's Report was to show every sedentary American that all was not lost if they could not commit to hours in the gym lifting and kickboxing. For an inactive person, "thirty minutes of moderate activity *accumulated* throughout the day most days of the week" is the minimum necessary to improve general health and wellness. It is hoped that you will build from that to more vigorous, regular activity. For those of you already in the habit of regular exercise, this report was not meant to be a "Get out of Step Class Free" card. If you are already active, don't stop!

Having children at home, working from the home, or just being exhausted from your day when you finally arrive home - each presents its own special sets of barriers to getting in a good, regular workout everyday. Creativity is called for! Before going into what you can do while working around the house, I must first throw up a Big Red Flag on the use of hand weights and ankle weights while doing routine chores. Additional pounds on wrists and ankles add unnecessary stress to elbow and knee joints respectively. Using weights to improve muscle strength, tone, and hypertrophy (size) should always be done in a controlled situation where your attention is focused on the task at hand, not while you are zipping about doing multi-directional tasks like folding laundry, vacuuming, and dusting. Elbow and knee injuries, once acquired, can be tenacious, intractable, and chronically painful.

That being said, there are lots of ways to expend calories and build muscle safely while working in the house. If you have small children, do your weightlifting while they nap. Get a jogging stroller and take your cardiovascular exercise break while the baby sleeps "on the fly." Running up and down the stairs is great, too. If you have older children, go outside together after school and walk, jog, or "wog" alongside them as they bike, skate, or scooter. Not only is this healthy physically but it will also set a good example for your children. For those who have no children at home, and, therefore, nothing to distract you (!!), you'll have to muster a lot of your own personal initiative to make changes in your lifestyle. If you have someone hired to walk the dog during the day,

resolve to exercise the dog yourself in the morning and evening; do some of your workout during the commercials of your “must see” TV shows (check out COMMERCIAL BREAK: THE COMPLETE COUCH POTATO’S GUIDE TO FITNESS by yours truly and Seth Anne Snider-Copley); run/walk steps and stairs; get your bicycle tuned up and take a few spins around the neighborhood (don’t forget your helmet!); walk around the block, adding one lap each week; dig out your favorite music and *DANCE!*

Whatever you choose, do it safely and have FUN.

Linda Buch-BODY LANGUAGE-September 16, 2001

"I am trying to eat well and conscientiously so that I keep my weight under control, which means I eat breakfast, have a morning snack, eat lunch, have an afternoon snack, and then have a light dinner. But because I go to the gym during my lunch hour, timing has become a problem. Eating right before class makes my stomach hurt; if I don't eat, I feel too weak. Is there another way to accomplish both goals?" L.C., Thornton

A working person's life is a lot like a jigsaw puzzle: work, play, sleep, and food all have to fit into the allotted time properly or we go out of balance. Sometimes, the hardest puzzle piece to find is the one that schedules food and exercise. We all know the magic recipe for dropping pounds: eat less and exercise more. Nancy Clark, author of *SPORTS NUTRITION GUIDE BOOK*, compares the body to a car. When you wake up in the morning, your "tank" is out of gas and needs to be "fueled" before you take it on the road. Unlike a car, your body uses up fuel while you sleep because sleep is when repair and restoration takes place. By morning, all of your carbohydrates (blood sugars and muscle glycogen) are all but depleted. It is as if the gas in the tank just evaporates. This is why breakfast is such an important meal; it fills the tank and primes the metabolic pump.

Morning exercisers are often challenged by how to fuel properly so that there is enough energy to workout yet not feel ill in the process. Carbohydrates are the easiest to digest and provide the quickest form of energy. A small fruit smoothie of skim milk, fruit and a bit of yogurt (about 200 calories total) should be adequate. After your workout, a more substantial breakfast, with a good balance of protein, carbohydrate and fat, should be consumed (egg white omelette, oatmeal with milk, etc.).

Since you prefer a noon workout, you will need to make a few adjustments to your breakfast and midmorning snack. Your breakfast needs to be relatively hearty, probably 350 calories or so: whole grain cereal with skim milk and fruit and some juice or similar. About 2 1/2 hours before you workout, consume a snack which combines protein and carbohydrate, like half a baked potato with cottage cheese or something along those lines. The protein, which takes longer to digest, "spares" the carbohydrate. This will keep you from crashing midway through your workout. After your workout, refresh yourself with a yogurt-based fruit smoothie to keep you going to the late afternoon. Ellen Coleman, an exercise physiologist at The Sport Clinic in Riverside, California advises experimentation: "Just take something you'd normally have as part of your meal, and eat it about 2-3 hours before you exercise."

If it sounds like you are eating all day, it is because you are. Regular exercisers have the best of all possible worlds: better health and food (in small, fuel-injected amounts) all day long. Eating six smaller meals throughout the day will keep your blood sugar level and allow you to do all of the activities you like without feeling depleted. As Ellen

Coleman recommends above, a bit of experimentation with your daily caloric intake is probably your best course.

Bon Appetite!

("The Smart Way to Eat and Run," by Michelle Meyer, Health Magazine, May, 2000 was a primary resource for this article).