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VOL. 24, NO. 9

“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”

SEPTEMBER 2004

RESEARCHERS FIND A LINK BETWEEN

Sleep & cancer

If you think a chronic lack of sleep just gives you a bad case of the afternoon yawns, think again.

How well you sleep can affect the balance of certain hormones in your body.

And if these hormones are chronically out of balance, it could decrease your body's ability to fight off cancer.

There are two possible ways this could happen, say researchers.

1. Melatonin — an antioxidant that mops up damaging free radicals — is produced by the brain during sleep. If you aren't getting

enough sleep, you may not be producing enough melatonin. The result: A cell's DNA may be more prone to cancer-causing mutations.

2. Cortisol — a hormone that regulates immune system activity — normally reaches peak levels at dawn and then declines throughout the day. If your sleep-wake cycle (circadian rhythm) is thrown off, your cortisol production may be out of kilter as well. This, in turn, can hinder your immune system's ability to fight off “bad guys” like infection and cancer.

Source: Brain, Behavior and Immunity, Vol. 17, Pg. 321

Can you exercise with a cold?

Is it okay to exercise if you have a cold?

Follow this rule of thumb.

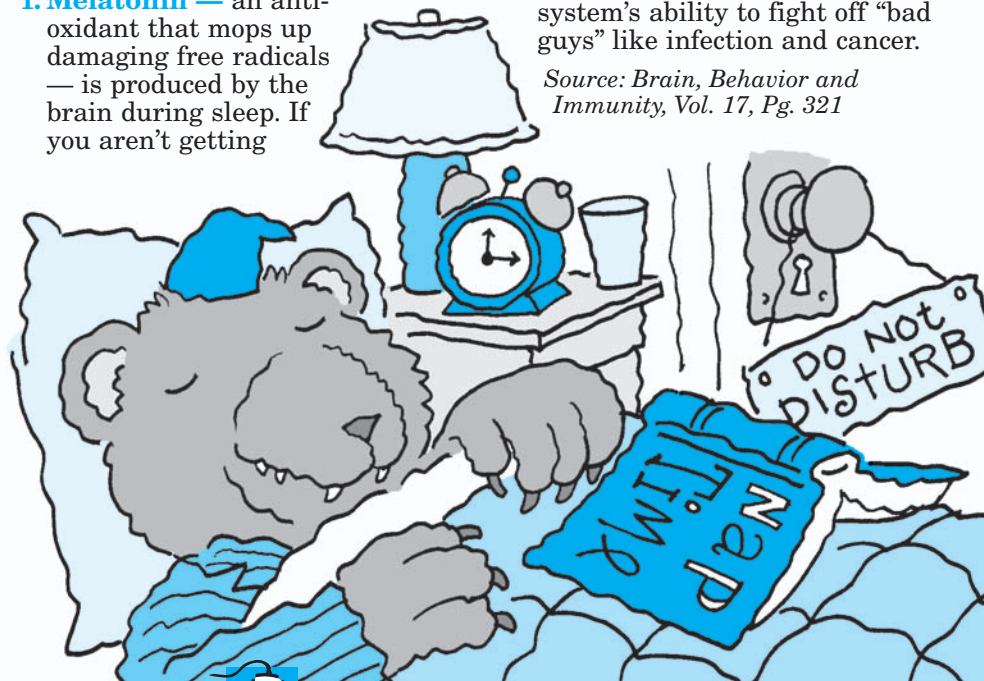
If your symptoms are from the neck up — runny nose, watery eyes, mild sore throat — you can give it a try. If you're a runner, though, you might want to cut your mileage in half.

But if you have a deep cough, or general achiness (which usually means a fever), you need to rest.

Source: American Running Association

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Indulge — without the guilt

You're trying to lose weight, and chocolate, ice cream, pizza, and fried chicken — your favorites — are on your forbidden foods list.

Sounds like a good plan, right?

Maybe not.

Here's why: Deprivation can set you up for cravings that will sabotage your best-laid diet plans.

A better idea, say many experts, is to "be good" most of the time, but to indulge yourself with a "sinful" favorite every now and then.

Here are some creative ways to do this without feeling guilty — or wrecking your diet.

- **Eat healthful foods 80% of the time**, and indulge yourself 20% of the time. Some people eat well all week, then eat whatever they want (within reason, of course) one day on the weekend.
- **Pair your less-healthy indulgence** with more nutritious foods. For example, have your



French fries, but eat them with a veggie burger (no bun) and a green salad.

- **If your favorite goodie is dark chocolate**, savor a small piece after a healthy meal. If you eat it as a snack by itself, you're more likely to overindulge.

- **If you're going to splurge**, make sure it's what you really want — and that it's what will satisfy your craving.

Don't have a low-fat, low-calorie fudgesicle, for example, when what you really want is the decadence of rocky road ice cream.

- **If you know you're going to indulge** in a treat later on that day, head to the gym and put in an extra half-hour of calorie-burning exercise.
- **Buy your favorite treats** in small packages — just so you won't be tempted to eat more than you should.

EATING-WELL RECIPE

Roasted red pepper hummus

- 8 oz. roasted red peppers (from water-packed jar)
- 1 can (15 oz.) chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 1 can (15 oz.) white beans, rinsed and drained
- ¼ cup sesame paste (tahini)
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

In a food processor, combine all ingredients except salt and pepper. Process until smooth. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve with toasted wedges of whole-wheat pita bread or whole-grain crackers.

SERVES 16. Per serving (¼ cup): 87 calories, 3 g fat, 4 g protein, 13 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber, 325 mg sodium.

Source: American Institute for Cancer Research

Wow...

On average, Americans now consume 3,800 calories each day.

This is roughly twice what we need to meet basic nutritional requirements.

Source: *Holistic Primary Care, Vol. 5, No. 1*



Vitamin questions & answers

Q: Why take vitamin supplements if you're a healthy eater?

A: Supplements are good insurance. Many nutrition experts believe that you cannot get all the essential nutrients you need — especially antioxidants — from food.

A lot of food is grown in soil that doesn't have a good balance of nutrients. And if the soil doesn't have them, they're not going to be in the food. Plus, the produce you buy loses some of its nutrients between harvest and the time you actually eat it.

Q: Is there any one nutrient or supplement that is a must?

A: If you were only going to take one supplement, some combination of antioxidants would be it.

You could take a multivitamin/mineral supplement that contains basic antioxidants like vitamins A, C, and E. Or take a multi supplement plus a separate antioxidant supplement.

Q: What's the most common "supplement mistake" people make?

A: Taking vitamins or other nutrients they don't need. Try a supplement for several months, and then ask yourself if you're feeling any better. This takes careful, systematic discipline (possibly with the help of a nutrition professional).

Q: What time of day is best to take supplements?

A: It depends on the nutrient. It's a good idea to take multivitamins after breakfast and dinner to make sure you have nutrients circulating in your system almost continuously.

It's probably best to take calcium and magnesium before bed (there's evidence that the body absorbs it better at night).

And you should probably take other therapeutic nutrients between meals or 30 to 60 minutes before eating, so food won't interfere with their absorption.

Source: Elson Haas, MD, medical director, Preventive Medical Center of Marin, Calif.

A calming breath

Next time your stress hormones start to surge, try this calm-inducing breathing exercise.

1. **Close your eyes** and cover your right nostril with your right thumb. Exhale all the air from your lungs through your left nostril, and then inhale through the same nostril for four counts.
2. **Keep your right nostril closed** with your thumb and use your right ring finger to close your left nostril; hold for four counts. Lift your thumb and exhale slowly through your right nostril for eight counts.
3. **Inhale through your right nostril** for four counts and use your thumb to close your right nostril for four counts. Lift your ring finger.
4. **Repeat five times.**

Grief counseling

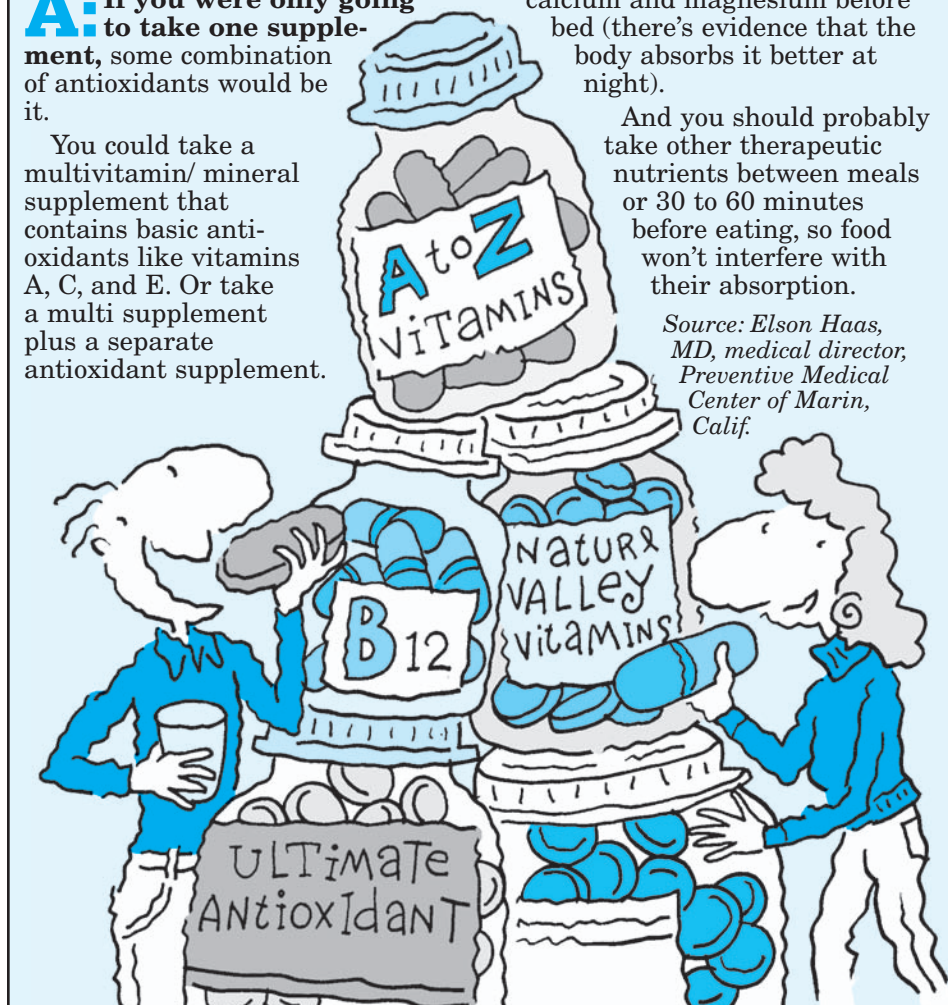
Contrary to popular belief, participating in a bereavement support group or getting more formal grief therapy doesn't seem to benefit the majority of people who have lost a loved one.

For most people, symptoms of a "normal grief reaction" gradually subside over six to 18 months — whether there's any type of therapy or not.

Only when grieving is intense and prolonged — and associated with depression or interfering with normal everyday living — is there a need for grief therapy, experts say.

Treating this group of people is important, because unresolved grief can have serious health consequences, including high blood pressure, stroke, heart attack, and even suicide.

Source: Report on Bereavement and Grief Research, Center for the Advancement of Health



fiber & heart disease

♥ For every 10 grams of fruit and cereal fiber you eat daily, you reduce your risk of a heart attack in the next six to 10 years by 14%. You also cut your risk of dying from coronary heart disease by 27%.

While vegetables are essential to good health, their fiber content did not appear to influence heart health in this study.

Experts recommend that we eat from 25 to 35 grams of fiber every day. Examples of high-fiber fruits and grains:

All-Bran cereal (½ cup)

10 grams of fiber

Dried figs (5)

9 grams of fiber

Raspberries (1 cup)

8 grams of fiber

Pear (1 medium)

4 grams of fiber

Avocado (½ California)

4 grams of fiber

Oatmeal, old-fashioned

(½ cup dry)

4 grams of fiber

Apple (1 small)

3 grams of fiber

Strawberries (1 cup)

3 grams of fiber

Dried plums (3)

2 grams of fiber

Whole-wheat bread

(1 slice)

2 grams of fiber

Note: It's always a good idea to increase your fiber intake gradually and to drink plenty of water throughout the day. This will help ease any intestinal discomfort that sometimes plagues people when they first start eating more fiber.

Source: *Archives of Internal Medicine*, Vol. 164, Pg. 370

olive oil & blood pressure

♥ In one study, people with high blood pressure who ate a grain- and vegetable-rich Mediterranean diet that included three to four teaspoons of extra-virgin olive oil each day were able to reduce their blood pressure medications, on average, by 48%. A few were even able to stop their medications.

People who ate the same diet, but added sunflower oil instead of the olive oil, were able to reduce their medication dosage by only about 4%.

Researchers believe extra-virgin olive oil's benefits come from the antioxidant polyphenols it contains.

These antioxidants help promote the relaxation of blood vessels. They also prevent oxidation of "bad" LDL cholesterol that can lead to artery-narrowing plaque deposits.

Source: *Archives of Internal Medicine*, Vol. 160, Pg. 837

pain relievers

♥ Of the more than 175 million Americans who take nonprescription pain relievers like ibuprofen and naproxen, 44% say they exceed the recommended dose.

This habit exposes people to potentially serious side effects, including an increased risk of stomach irritation and bleeding.

These over-the-counter medications are largely safe when taken according to directions.

Source: *National Consumers' League survey of 4,263 adults*

The information in this publication is meant to complement the advice of your health-care providers, not to replace it.

Before making any major changes in your medications, diet, or exercise, talk to your doctor.

Articles written by outside contributors have not been reviewed by the Hope Health Medical Advisory Board.

pain in the workplace

♥ Pain is a very common — and disabling — condition in the workplace.

Headache pain tops the list, followed by back pain, arthritis pain, and other musculoskeletal pain.

Workers with pain lose an average of 4.6 hours of productive time each work week.

The annual cost for these common pain conditions among workers is about \$61.2 billion per year.

Source: *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Vol. 290, Pg. 2443

estrogen & stroke

♥ Researchers have concluded that taking estrogen by itself after menopause:

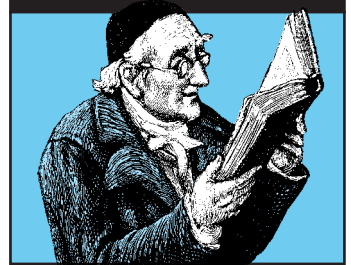
- May very slightly increase the risk of stroke (by an additional eight women per 10,000).
- Decreases the risk of hip fracture.
- Does not appear to affect the risk of heart disease (neither increases nor decreases it).
- Does not appear to increase the risk of heart attack or breast cancer.

The 11,000 women in this study were taking Premarin.

Earlier, another arm of this same study found that women who take Premarin and synthetic progesterone together are at higher risk for heart attack, stroke, and some cancers.

Source: *National Institutes of Health*

FROM LEADING PUBLICATIONS AND AUTHORITIES...



sunlight & pain

♥ It's long been known that bright light can put many people in a good mood.

That's because natural sunlight (or special light bulbs that simulate it) triggers the release of "feel-good" brain chemicals like serotonin.

Now researchers say sunlight may be able to reduce pain as well.

In a recent study, surgery patients in hospital rooms with lots of natural light took less pain medication than those in dimmer rooms.

Source: *Research presented at the American Psychosomatic Society meeting (March 2004)*

steroids & bones

♥ Taking systemic steroid medications can sometimes lead to weakened bones.

But do inhaled steroids — both oral and nasal — have the same effect as systemic steroid medications?

New research shows that long-term use of both inhaled and nasal steroids in the elderly (in the usual recommended doses) is not linked with bone fractures.

Source: *Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine*, Vol. 169, Pg. 83

...you can use!

weight & breast cancer

♥ Women who gain 21 to 30 pounds after the age of 18 are about 40% more likely to get breast cancer than women who gain five pounds or less.

And women who gain more than 70 pounds have twice the risk of breast cancer as women who gain five pounds or less.

This lends further support to the idea that body fat may increase cancer risk, because fat tissue makes estrogen. The higher your estrogen levels, the higher your cancer risk.

Source: *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers and Prevention*, Vol. 13, Pg. 220

allergies

♥ Children who've had fevers as babies are less likely to suffer allergies later on.

Half of the children who experienced *no* fever during their first year had an allergy to something by age 7. That percentage dropped to 31% for the children who'd had two or more fevers.

Researchers say this finding lends support to the "hygiene hypothesis," which proposes that unless children's immune systems fight infections early on, they can go into overdrive later and cause allergic reactions.

Source: *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*, Vol. 113, Pg. 291

how much sleep?

♥ How much sleep does an adult need each night?

Researchers are now saying that seven hours seems to be just fine, maybe even ideal.

Of course, the ideal amount of sleep can vary from person to person, for reasons that are not fully understood.

If you feel rested when you wake up, and don't feel overly sleepy in the afternoon, then you are probably getting the right amount of sleep for you.

Source: *Sleep*, Vol. 27, Pg. 51

save your sight

♥ Eating too many unhealthy fats may speed up the progression of age-related macular degeneration (ARMD), say researchers.

In a study of 261 people 60 and older:

- Those who ate the most total fat (about 70 grams a day) were nearly three times as likely to progress to advanced ARMD as those eating about 24 grams of fat a day.
- Those with the highest intake of trans fats (found in many store-bought baked goods and deep-fried foods) had twice the ARMD risk of those getting only about a half gram of this fat a day.
- Those eating the most animal fat had double the ARMD progression as those eating the least.
- But not all fats are bad for your eyes. Those eating one or more servings of nuts per week lowered their risk of ARMD progression by about 40%. A higher fish intake was also linked to a lower risk.

Source: *Archives of Ophthalmology*, Vol. 121, Pg. 1728

iron & diabetes

♥ Women who store too much iron in their bodies may be at increased risk for type 2 diabetes.

Out of a group of 1,414 women, 698 developed diabetes during 10 years of follow-up. These women had the highest levels of iron in their bodies.

Iron levels were still a predictor of diabetes even after adjusting for known diabetes risk factors such as family history and obesity.

But more research is needed to verify these findings, say researchers.

Source: *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Vol. 291, Pg. 711

How's your cholesterol IQ?

1. What are ideal blood cholesterol levels?

- a. Anything below 240 mg/dL.
- b. An HDL above 40; an LDL below 130; and a total cholesterol level below 240.
- c. It doesn't matter as long as your LDL is below 130.

2. To move your cholesterol numbers into healthy ranges, you need to:

- a. Limit animal fats. Eat more heart-healthy fats like olive and canola oils. Avoid foods made with hydrogenated vegetable oils (trans fats).
- b. Exercise more, and lose weight if you are overweight.
- c. Eat more fiber (fruits, vegetables, whole grains).
- d. All of the above.

3. High in dietary cholesterol, eggs are:

- a. OK for most people, because dietary cholesterol does not usually raise blood cholesterol nearly as much as saturated and trans fats.
- b. OK for everyone. Eggs are a healthy food.
- c. Not a good idea for anyone.

4. Triglycerides are:

- a. A blood fat that, if too high, can also increase your risk of heart disease.
- b. Too high if they are over 150 mg/dL.
- c. Easily lowered with a healthy diet and exercise.
- d. All of the above.

ANSWERS: 1.(b) 2.(d) 3.(a) 4.(d)

Source: *National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute*

Surly teen?

As a parent, you've no doubt dealt with a surly teen at one time or another (or will, to be sure).

Why is surliness and back-talk such a universally predictable behavior among teens the nation over?

Psychologist Mary Lamia explains: Teens live in a pressure cooker. They feel they're always being evaluated by peers, teachers, coaches, and parents. "Would you like being evaluated every moment of your day?" asks Dr. Lamia.

She also explains that this surliness is actually vulnerability. "Surliness is like a fence that teens put up to protect themselves. If parents saw this as a protective fence, maybe they wouldn't try to break it down, but instead would try to find a gate to walk through."

10

NO MATTER YOUR AGE...

ways pets keep you healthier

- 1. Pets encourage babies** to interact and play.
- 2. They help young children** develop empathy. Kids who help take care of animals are better at reading and understanding others' feelings and motivations.
- 3. Pets give parents the opportunity** to teach kids responsibility for someone other than themselves.
- 4. Petting a dog or cat** can help reduce blood pressure, slow heart rate, and steady breathing.
- 5. Having a pet** can improve your chances of survival after a heart attack.
- 6. They know when it's time** to go for a walk, and they won't take no for an answer.
- 7. Bonding with a pet** can stimulate brain chemicals that improve mood and enhance feelings of happiness, satisfaction, nurturing, and even love.
- 8. Pets make it safe** for you to express emotions. Whatever you're feeling, you can express it around your pet, and there will be no judgment or criticism.
- 9. They provide a routine** that helps people with chronic medical conditions keep moving, eat regularly, and exercise every day.
- 10. Pets promote self-esteem** and independence for senior citizens, as well as a chance to meet other people.

Source: *The Healing Power of Pets*, by Dr. Marty Becker (Hyperion, 2002)



Medical problems linked to obesity

- Birth defects
- Breast cancer
- Cancer of the esophagus
- Colorectal cancer
- Renal cell cancer
- Cardiovascular disease
- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Daytime sleepiness
- Deep vein thrombosis (blood clots)
- Diabetes (type 2)
- Gallbladder disease
- Gout
- Heart disorders
- High blood pressure
- Impaired immune response
- Impaired lung function
- Infections following wounds
- Infertility
- Kidney disease
- Liver disease
- Low back pain
- Obstetric and gynecologic complications
- Osteoarthritis
- Pain
- Pancreatitis
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Sleep apnea
- Stroke
- Surgical complications
- Urinary stress incontinence

Source: *Food Fight*, by Kelly D. Brownell, PhD (McGraw-Hill)



ON THE JOB

Back-saving strategies

- **Alternate between sitting and standing.** When sitting, rest your feet flat on the floor, and use a chair with good lower-back support. When standing for long periods, rest one foot on a low stool.
- **When you lift something heavy,** hold it close to your chest, bend your knees (not your back), and reposition your entire body, rather than twisting or reaching as you lift.
- **Split heavy loads into smaller loads.** Get help when something is too heavy or awkward to lift by yourself.
- **To help protect your back** whenever you lie down, use a medium-firm mattress, and lie on your back or side — not on your stomach.
- **When driving,** adjust the seat to keep your knees level with your hips, sit up straight with both hands on the wheel, and use a lumbar support for your lower back.
- **Whenever you do anything** for a long period of time, take frequent rest breaks to change position and stretch.

Source: American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine

BACKPACK TOO HEAVY? Take a load off

Kids, especially, like to carry their “lives” around with them in their backpacks.

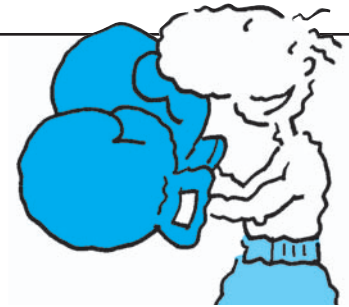
But even if they don't, it doesn't take very many books to weigh them in as a heavyweight.

Super-heavy packs, however, are not a good idea for kids. They could affect growing bones, muscles, and joints.

PACKING POINTERS:

- **Weigh your child** and weigh his pack. At the pack's fullest, it shouldn't be more than 10% of his weight — or more than 5% if he or she's under age 10.
- **Make sure your child wears the pack** with both shoulder straps. Hanging a pack over one shoulder could cause spinal misalignment.
- **Backpacks should ride high** on the back — so that the top is even with the shoulders.
- **Another option** is buying your child a pack with wheels (similar to the popular carry-on luggage) so they can pull it behind them.

Source: American Chiropractic Association's Council on Occupational Health



KEEP ON 'TRUCKIN'

When it comes to exercise, remember that you're not a professional athlete — and fitness is not about perfection and getting an A+.

If you didn't feel like going to the gym today (or if you drove to work instead of walking to the bus stop), don't beat yourself up over it.

Your good intentions are not forever destroyed because of a lapse — or two. Just tell yourself you'll do better tomorrow.

Then pat yourself on the back for all the good things you've done for yourself over the past few months.

DID YOU KNOW...

That five two-minute sessions of stair-climbing throughout the day can give you a workout equal to 36 minutes of walking?

CAN YOU EXERCISE TOO MUCH?

If you go from unfit to moderately fit, you cut your risk of a premature death in half.

When you go from moderately fit to very fit, you drop your risk of dying prematurely by only another 10% to 15%.

In other words, exercising to the extreme does *not* improve your health and longevity very much more than moderate exercise does.

Source: Steven Blaire, MD, president, American College of Sports Medicine



your health matters

this 'n' that

SMOKING DEATHS

More than 430,000 smoking-related deaths occur each year in the U.S.

What smokers are dying from:

Lung cancer	28%
Coronary heart disease	23%
Other	19%
Chronic lung disease	17%
Other cancers	7%
Stroke	6%

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

MEDITATION

People who received eight weeks of meditation training were able to improve their immune function and to stimulate "positive-emotion" areas of the brain more than people who did not meditate.

Source: *Psychosomatic Medicine*, Vol. 65, Pg. 564

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Hurry-up sickness

Being super-impatient doubles the risk for developing high blood pressure, say researchers.

And high blood pressure is a risk factor for heart attack and stroke.

You may have "hurry-up sickness" if you...

- **Feel very upset** when you have to wait for anything.
- **Gobble meals** very quickly.
- **Feel pressured for time** no matter what you're doing.
- **Often feel extremely pressed** for time at the end of the day.

Source: Northwestern University research

body, mind, and soul

“If you haven't got all the things you want, be grateful for the things you don't have that you don't want.”

— Unknown

“Everyone can afford to give away a smile.”

— Unknown

“Just when you think you've graduated from the school of experience, someone thinks up a new course.”

— Mary H. Waldrip

“In each of us there is a little of all of us.”

— Georg Christoph Lichtenberg

“The past always looks better than it was because it isn't here.”

— Finley Peter Dunne

“It's nice to be important, but it's more important to be nice.”

— Unknown

“Sharing what you have is more important than what you have.”

— Albert M. Wells, Jr.



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