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**LIFE Lessons Newsletters**

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Some think of a sport, like football, while others think of the physical education class they had in high school. Still others think of “working out” such as going for a brisk walk, lifting weights, or visiting a gym. On the other hand, how many people think of mowing the lawn, cleaning the house, weeding the vegetable garden or feeding the hogs?

All these activities are exercise. But how can that be—how can weeding the garden and working out at the gym both be exercise? While many folks do not think of it this way, “exercise” includes many more activities than just working out. In fact, a better term than “exercise” is “physical activity.” Both exercise and physical activity mean that you are moving your body. However, many people associate exercise with unpleasant things—perhaps being hot, tired, and sweaty after doing something you did not especially want to do—but do not feel that way when they hear the word “activity.”

What does exercise mean to you?

How much physical activity do I need?

Almost 100 million Americans do not get enough physical activity. This number is very large, representing about one-third of the United States. This is avoidable, since it is not that hard to get enough physical activity.

A simple, but very helpful, way to increase your activity is to try to incorporate brief bouts of physical activity into your daily life. The goal is to spend about 30 minutes a day doing some sort of activity. It doesn’t need to be 30 minutes all at once; several shorter sessions of activity work almost as well. Some examples are parking at the far end of the parking lot and walking into the store, taking the stairs instead of the elevator and, when watching TV, doing some stretches during the commercials. These simple lifestyle changes can go a long way toward helping you to becoming more active—and becoming healthier.

Why should I be physically active?

Physical activity (or exercise) can help you stay healthy or become healthier. That’s what weeding the garden and going to the gym both have in common. Of course, they are two very different types of physical activity but, in their own way, each is a good thing for you to do. How can these activities help to make you healthier? Both help reduce your risk of chronic disease.

A hundred years ago, infectious diseases such as pneumonia, influenza and tuberculosis were major contributors to deaths in the United States. The development of antibiotics and better health care dramatically reduced the number of deaths associated with infectious diseases. Consequently, more people die today from chronic diseases than from infectious diseases. For example, heart disease, cancer, and stroke account for more than half of all deaths in the United States today.

What does lifestyle have to do with it?

A large majority of these deaths are preventable with simple changes in lifestyle. In fact, four lifestyle habits are responsible for much of the illness, suffering, and early deaths seen today. These habits are:

• Physical inactivity
• Poor nutrition
• Tobacco use (of any kind)
• Excessive consumption of alcohol
Choosing what and how much to put on your dinner plate is like putting a puzzle together. Individual puzzle pieces make a picture when put together. To create a picture-perfect plate and stay healthy, you need to use pieces from each food group. Eating a varied diet helps us get the nutrients we need to protect against chronic diseases, stay active, and maintain mental alertness.

Each puzzle piece varies in shape and size. To create a healthy plate, cover half of it with fruits and vegetables, one-quarter with lean protein, and the other quarter with whole-grains.

Each puzzle piece contains a different part of the picture. A puzzle would not be very attractive if it was all the same color. And our diets would be boring if we ate the same thing every day. Eating a variety of foods from all the food groups ensures that you are getting the nutrients your body needs. For example, dark green, leafy vegetables are good sources of iron that prevents anemia. Orange and yellow vegetables, like carrots or sweet potatoes, are filled with vitamin A that helps maintain eyesight. Choosing lean protein like fish, chicken, and dried beans provides vitamin B12 that keeps our brain healthy. For healthy intestines, choose whole-grain cereals, crackers, rice, or pasta.

Nutrient Analysis (per serving): 204 calories, 12.6g total fat, 5.7g saturated fat, 186.7mg cholesterol, 422.4 mg sodium, 9.9g total carbohydrates, 1.5g fiber, 13.3g protein.

Source: http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/recipes/its-meal-strata

A “healthy plate” makes a healthier YOU!

Prepared by: Kara Strand, Warren Franke, PhD, FACSM and Sarah L. Francis PhD, RD.

Funded by: The Rural Health and Safety Education Competitive Program of the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, grant number 2010-03643.
What does “being fit” mean?
If someone is very strong, does that mean he is fit? If someone is able to run a marathon, is she fit? In both cases, the answer is “sort of.” That is because the word “fit” means many different things. There are actually five components to fitness:

1. Muscular strength
2. Muscular endurance
3. Cardiovascular endurance
4. Flexibility
5. Body fatness

So, someone who is very strong but overweight is fit in one way (muscular strength) but not fit in another way (body fatness). Likewise, someone who is lean but quite weak is fit in one way but not in another. Consequently, if someone wanted to really be fit, that person would have to be able to do well in all five components.

Why is “being fit” important?
Each component of fitness is associated with a higher quality of life. For example, being strong makes it easier to do things like open a stubborn jar or pick up a heavy bag of groceries. Likewise, having some muscular endurance means that repetitive chores, such as raking leaves, are not quite as difficult as they might otherwise be. Cardiovascular endurance is helpful when you have to be “on the move” for an extended period of time, such as when you take your children or grandchildren to the park to play. Flexibility may come in handy when tying your shoes or bending over to pick up something from the floor. Finally, not having too much body fatness may make it easier for you to get around. So, having a good all-around level of fitness makes life a bit easier (and perhaps more fun!)

Moreover, there are health benefits to each component of fitness. Getting stronger helps you to reduce your risk of osteoporosis, since the stresses placed on your bones when you exercise help them to stay stronger too. Improving your cardiovascular endurance by, say, walking helps to reduce your risk for chronic diseases like heart disease, stroke, diabetes, high blood pressure, and obesity. Improving flexibility is one way to reduce back pain, which afflicts almost 85% of us at least once in our lives. Finally, having a normal level of body fatness is also associated with declines in all the risk factors. Of course, another major chronic disease, obesity, is what occurs when this does not happen. Unfortunately, at least 1/3 of Americans are obese.

So, even if you do not care about being fit but you do care about staying healthy, it is in your best interests to try to work on all five components of fitness!
Creating a Colorful Plate

The vibrancy of bright blues, radiant reds, and gorgeous greens is hard to resist. By filling at least half of your plate with colorful fruits and vegetables, you are sure to have the variety of nutrients you need to stay mentally and physically healthy—not to mention a very eye-appealing plate!

Dish up a creative, colorful plate using these colors as a guide:

**Red:** Grapefruit, watermelon, and tomatoes help reduce the risk of several cancers, while strawberries, cherries, and red grapes help keep your heart healthy and help slow mental and physical declines.

**Orange and Yellow:** These colors are loaded with vitamin A, which help maintain eye health, reduce risk of cancers, and improve immune function. This group of colors includes carrots, squash, and sweet potatoes.

**Green:** Fruits and vegetables such as celery, peas, spinach, green peppers, kiwi, and honeydew are packed with nutrients that can help reduce the risk of macular degeneration, the leading cause of blindness in older adults, and protect against certain cancers.

**Blue and Purple:** The pigments found in blueberries, figs, plums, and prunes contain powerful antioxidants, which help protect our cells from damage. These pigments have also been found to reduce the risk of cancers, stroke, and heart disease.

**White:** Although not as bright as other fruits and vegetables, onions, bananas, cauliflower, and turnips may help lower cholesterol levels and reduce blood pressure.

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**Strawbosia Parfait**

(3 servings -1/2 cup each)

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 1 cup sliced strawberries
- 1/2 banana, sliced
- 1/2 orange, peeled and sliced (or 4 oz. can mandarin orange segments)
- 1/2 cup cubed pineapple, fresh or canned
- 1/2 cup (4 oz. carton) non-fat vanilla or lemon yogurt
- 2 tablespoons Grape Nuts
- 3 mint sprigs (optional)

**DIRECTIONS:**

1. In a bowl, mix strawberries, banana, orange and pineapple. Pour orange juice over fruit and toss. Refrigerate until chilled.
2. To prepare parfaits: Divide one half of the fruit mixture equally into 3 parfait glasses. Top with heaping tablespoon of yogurt. Add remaining fruit divided equally; top with remaining yogurt. Sprinkle each parfait with Grape Nuts. Garnish each parfait with a mint sprig.

**Nutrient Analysis (per serving):** 110 calories, 0g total fat, 0g saturated fat, 0mg cholesterol, 60mg sodium, 26g total carbohydrate, 3g fiber, 3g protein.

Source: National Center for Chronic Disease

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**A “healthy plate” makes a healthier YOU!**

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Prepared by: Kara Strand, Warren Franke, PhD, FACSM and Sarah L. Francis PhD, RD.

Funded by: The Rural Health and Safety Education Competitive Program of the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, grant number 2010-03843.
Should I lift weights?

Is it important to be physically strong?

Regardless of someone’s age, being stronger has a number of benefits to improve your everyday life. For example, it is easier to do chores, like bringing the groceries in from the car or getting out of a chair, if you are stronger. But strength training goes beyond this – it can have a profound effect on physical and mental health. Even people with health concerns can benefit from an activity program that includes lifting weights.

Considerable research has shown that, when done correctly, lifting weights can help reduce the pain of arthritis. It can also help people recover from a heart attack; improve blood sugar control in people with Type II diabetes; improve mood in people with mild depression; improve sleep quality; help reduce bone loss in older women; and improve balance to reduce the risk of falls. For many people, this last reason may be the most important. Becoming stronger can help reduce the risk of falling while at home, becoming injured, and having to move into a nursing home. Therefore, it is important that everyone, regardless of their age, do some strength training exercises.

Is there anything I need to do before starting a strength training program?

Before you begin any new activity, it’s always a good idea to check with your health care provider. This is especially true if you have any of the following:

- a cold, flu, or infection accompanied by fever
- significantly more tiredness than usual
- a swollen or painful muscle or joint
- any new or undiagnosed symptom
- chest pain, or irregular, rapid, or fluttery heartbeat
- shortness of breath
- a hernia, with symptoms
- advice from your health care provider not to exert yourself for a given period of time due to illness, surgery, etc.

I’m cleared for strength training, so what do I do next?

Once you have been given the go-ahead, the next step is to make an appointment with yourself. Set aside a specific time to do your strength training on two or three non-consecutive days a week (like Monday, Wednesday, and Friday). By writing it on your calendar, just like a doctor’s appointment, you are more likely to “make the appointment” and stick with the program.

After that, think about the equipment you will need. For most of the exercises, you will either move your body or move a weight. So, besides comfortable clothes and shoes, you’ll need a stable, sturdy chair without arms and some weights. You may already have the chair, perhaps in your kitchen or dining room, and while dumbbells would be ideal, you could use items you already have like books, full cans of soup or milk cartons with water in them. How much weight is enough? Start out with a minimum of weight (about 1 or 2 pounds) so you do not get hurt. The weights of some common household items are listed below.

1 can of soup = 1/2 pound
80 quarters = 1 pound
150 pennies = 1 pound
1 gallon of water = 8 pounds

Finally, what should you do? We will review the actual exercises in the next newsletter. Until then, continue to work on being physically active (which was discussed in the previous newsletter).

The “Whole” Story
MyPyramid recommends six ounces of grains a day, and half of those need to be whole-grains. Filling one-fourth of your dinner plate with whole-grains will help you meet that goal. The term “whole-grain” means the grain has the entire grain kernel—the bran, endosperm, and germ. Together, these parts of the kernel provide essential vitamins, fiber, and other nutrients we need to stay healthy. Whole-grains provide your body with the energy it needs to stay active during the day as well as help reduce the risk of heart disease, diabetes, and certain cancers. The fiber in the whole-grains also helps keep you regular. Eating whole-grains will help you reach the recommended intake of 20-30 grams of fiber per day.

One ounce of whole-grain is...
- 1 slice of 100% whole-grain bread
- 1 cup of 100% whole-grain cereal
- 1/2 cup of oatmeal, cooked
- 1/2 cup cooked whole-grain pasta, brown or wild rice, or other grain
- 3 cups popped popcorn
- 5 whole-grain crackers

Try these fun and easy ways to increase your whole-grain intake.
- Choose whole-grain bread more often than white bread
- When making pasta or rice, substitute half with whole wheat pasta or brown rice
- Add whole-grains to mixed dishes, such as barley in vegetable soup or stews

Banana Bread Oatmeal (2 servings)

INGREDIENTS:
1 cup fat-free milk
1 tablespoon firmly packed brown sugar
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
Pinch of ground nutmeg (to taste)
2/3 cups oatmeal (quick or old fashioned, uncooked)
1 mashed ripe banana
2/3 tablespoons coarsely chopped toasted pecans
Plain or vanilla nonfat yogurt (optional)
Banana slices (optional)
Pecan halves (optional)

DIRECTIONS:
1. In medium saucepan, bring milk, sugar, salt and spices to gentle boil (watch carefully); stir in oats. Return to boil; reduce heat to medium. Cook 1 minute for quick oats, 5 minutes for old fashioned oats or until most of liquid is absorbed, stirring occasionally.
2. Remove oatmeal from heat. Stir in mashed bananas and pecans. Spoon oatmeal into two cereal bowls. Top with yogurt, sliced bananas and pecan halves, if desired.

Nutrient Analysis (per serving): 220 calories, 3.5g total fat, 0.5g saturated fat, 5mg cholesterol, 55mg sodium, 40g total carbohydrates, 4g fiber, 8g protein. Source: http://www.quakeroats.com/cooking-and-recipes/content/recipes.aspx

Quick Tip:
1 slice of whole wheat bread has as much fiber in as 8 slices of white bread!

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How to Lift Weights

How to start a strength training routine
Strength training is important and should be done two or three times weekly (on non-consecutive days). Try these four exercises following these safety tips:

1. Warm up your muscles for 5 minutes (e.g., walk inside or outside).
2. Complete sets of 8-15 repetitions, followed by about 2 minutes of rest. Listen to your body. If 8 is too difficult do less; 15 too easy, do more.
3. Move the weight smoothly, not “jerkily.”
4. Do not lock your elbows, knees or other joints in a straightened position.

If you want more information and have access to the Internet, a great resource is http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/downloads/growing_stronger.pdf.

What exercises can I do at home?

**Squats**
1. Stand directly in front of a chair with your feet slightly more than shoulder width apart. Extend your arms so that they are parallel to the ground.
2. Place your weight more on your heels than on the balls of your feet. Bend your knees as you lower your buttocks toward the chair in a slow, controlled motion, while you count to four.
3. Pause. Slowly rise back up to a standing position as you count to two. Keep your knees over your ankles and your back straight. To prevent the chair from moving when you stand, place it against a wall or door.

**Easier option:** Use your hands to push off the chair or sit on pillows so you do not squat as deeply.

**Challenging option:** Place your hands in your lap so you have to use just your legs to stand up.

**Wall Push-ups**
1. Use a wall that is clear of any objects. Stand a little farther than arm’s length from the wall. Face the wall, lean your body forward and place your palms flat against the wall at about shoulder height and shoulder width apart.
2. Bend your elbows and slowly lower your upper body toward the wall as you count to four. Keep your feet planted.
3. Pause. Slowly push yourself back until your arms are straight as you count to four. Make sure you do not lock your elbows.

**Easier option:** Place your feet closer to the wall. **Challenging option:** Place your feet farther from the wall.

**Finger Marches**
1. Stand or sit forward in a chair with your feet on the floor. Your feet should be shoulder-width apart.
2. Pretend there is a wall just in front of you that curves over your head. “Touch” the wall and then slowly walk your fingers up the wall and follow the “curve” over your head. Hold your arms overhead while wiggling your fingers for about 10 seconds. Then slowly walk them back down.

**Easier option:** Hold your arms overhead for 5 seconds. **Challenging option:** Hold your arms overhead for 20 seconds.

**Toe Stands**
1. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart near your sturdy chair. Toes are pointing straight ahead. Use the chair for support.
2. Slowly push up as far as you can onto the balls of your feet as you count to four. Hold this position for four seconds.
3. Slowly lower your heels back to the floor as you count to four.

**Easier option:** Count to two seconds rather than four seconds. **Challenging option:** Put a small book or board under your toes, or use only one leg rather than both.

Protein Possibilities

Filling one-fourth of your dinner plate with a lean protein is important for maintaining muscle, healing cuts and bruises, and fighting off illnesses. Lean protein is also an excellent source of vitamin B12, which helps support brain health. There are many lean proteins to choose from, including lean cuts of beef, pork, poultry, beans, and nuts. Canned tuna, eggs, and beans are inexpensive sources of protein. Beans and nuts are also rich in other nutrients such as fiber and healthy fats that may help keep you regular, lower blood cholesterol levels, and lower the risk of heart disease. In addition to protein on your plate, drinking a glass of low- or fat-free milk provides protein and calcium.

How do all these protein possibilities compare?

Protein needs for healthy, older adults is as follows: Women-about 46 grams protein daily; Men-about 56 grams protein daily. A serving of meat, pork, poultry, or fish is three ounces (size of a deck of cards); one ounce equals a serving for nuts. Use this table as a guide to help you meet this goal.

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<th>PROTEIN CONTENT (G)</th>
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<td>Beef (3 oz.)</td>
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<td>Peanut Butter (2 tablespoons)</td>
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<td>Large egg (the protein is in the egg white)</td>
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<td>Peanuts (1 oz.)</td>
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<td>Milk (1 cup)</td>
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Funded by: The Rural Health and Safety Education Competitive Program of the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, grant number 2010-03643.

RECIPE CONTAINS THESE FOOD GROUPS
Lean Protein, Fruit, & Vegetables

Tuna Delight
(2 servings)

INGREDIENTS:
4 oz. solid white tuna in water (drained)
1 tablespoon mayonnaise (light or low-fat)
1 small onion
1/2 cup tomato
1/3 cup cucumber
1/2 medium Granny Smith apple
1/8 cup chopped green chili (optional)
1/2 tablespoon pepper

DIRECTIONS:
1. Mix tuna with light mayonnaise.
2. Cube onion, tomato, cucumber, and apple and add into tuna mix.
3. Cut green chili into fine pieces.
4. Add chilis and pepper to tuna mixture to taste.

This is a very tasty version of traditional tuna salad. You can make it lower in calories and fat by using fat-free mayonnaise. Spread the salad on whole wheat bread or crackers and enjoy!

Nutrient Analysis (per serving): 190 calories, 5g fat, 39mg cholesterol, 392mg sodium, 14g total carbohydrate, 3g fiber, 22g protein.
Healthy Aging for Everyone

Americans are aging. It is expected that by 2030, about 20 percent of the population will be age 65 or older. When you think about age, a number often comes to mind. Instead of focusing on a number, focus on the quality of life while getting older.

Quality of life has a different meaning for everyone. For the LIFE Program, we think of quality of life as being able to continue with activities that make us happy and that our health (physical, mental, and emotional) is good. We often use the term “successful aging” to help explain quality of life. Successful aging means that a person has a lower risk of disease or disability, is able to maintain mental and physical health, and is engaged with life.

Being physically active, joining in activities requiring mental focus (like card games), and being social can all help us age successfully.

Staying well can help achieve and maintain a higher quality of life while growing older.


The Secret to the Fountain of Youth

Despite what you may have heard, you can teach an “old dog” new tricks.

Quality of life has a different meaning for everyone.
Growing and developing don’t just happen when we’re young. Our brains continue to grow throughout our lives.

What’s the secret?
We must continue to use and challenge our brains so that new brain cells will grow. We can do this by continuing to participate in activities we enjoy.

Here are a few ideas:
• Work on puzzles (crosswords, word finds, Sudoku, jigsaw puzzles)
• Play trivia games
• Read books, magazines, and newspapers
• Join or start a book club with friends
• Learn to play an instrument
• Try new recipes
• Volunteer in the community
• Visit museums
• Attend lectures and educational programs
• Travel to places near and far

TAKE FIVE: Helpful Resources & Word Puzzle

Here are two websites that provide information about how to make sure your golden years are happy and healthy. If you don’t have a computer at home, call your local library. Often, libraries will have computers available for the public to use. If you don’t know how to use a computer, your librarian will be able to help you get started. Other good places to seek information about aging are your local Agency on Aging or Department on Aging.

- National Institutes of Health: This user friendly website focuses on a variety of topics regarding older adults’ health. http://health.nih.gov/category/SeniorsHealth

These websites offer interactive computer games that are meant to challenge your brain:
- http://games.aarp.org/
- http://www.sharpbrains.com/teasers/

A great way to exercise our brains is to complete puzzles. Try solving this one about how to age successfully.

Find these words:
- EXERCISE
- FRIENDS
- LONGEVITY
- MEMORY
- PUZZLES
- WELLNESS

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Healthy Aging for Everyone

What Did I Come in Here for Again?

Does it seem like you are asking yourself that question more often? Most of us experience some changes in our memory as we get older, as well as how quickly we can process new information. This is a natural part of aging. These changes can be made worse by medications, depression, lack of sleep, and an inadequate diet. It is important to talk to your healthcare provider about any changes you have in memory or your thought process. These could be signs of a more serious condition like dementia. Talk with your healthcare provider if you are:

• Having difficulties with judgment (e.g., problems making decisions, bad financial decisions, problems with thinking)
• Less interested in hobbies or activities you once enjoyed
• Repeating yourself (e.g., asking the same questions, telling the same stories, or making the same statements)
• Regularly forgetting what day, month, or year it is
• Having trouble handling your finances (e.g., balancing checkbook, filing your income taxes, remembering to pay your bills on time)
• Forgetting your appointments
• Having daily problems with your thinking or your memory


Tips for Improving Memory

Just because your age can affect your memory doesn’t mean it has to. You can improve your memory by exercising your brain daily, and staying physically and mentally healthy.

1. Boost Your Brain Power
   • **Practice makes perfect**
     Have you ever repeated a phone number over and over to yourself? Rehearsing or practicing information is a great strategy to improve your memory. If you learn best by listening, recite information you want to remember. If you learn best by seeing, visualize the information to help you remember. Continue to rehearse information on a regular basis to help you remember it longer.
     • **Make your own mental shortcuts**
       Mnemonics are memory shortcuts you can create. For example, have you heard of Roy G. Biv? This is not a famous person, but a mental shortcut to help remember the colors of the spectrum: Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, and Violet (ROYGBIV).

(continued on back page)
Tips for Improving Memory: Continued

(Tips: continued)
Try to think of rhymes and poems for things you need to remember. Be creative! The only rule is to make the mental shortcut something meaningful to you. You can tie information you want to remember to names as well as songs, poems, sentences, and visual images.

- **Here's a familiar trick:**
  30 days hath September,
  April, June, and November.
  All the rest have 31
  Except February my dear son.
  It has 28 and that is fine
  But in Leap Year it has 29.

- **Here is a mnemonic to help remember how to spell:**
  RHYTHM Rhythm Helps Your Two Hips Move

2. Rest, Eat, Talk
   - **Get plenty of restful sleep**
     Your brain cannot function at its best if your body is tired.
   - **Eat well and regularly**
     Changes in blood sugar levels can affect our thinking as well as how well we can solve problems.
   - **Understand your medications**
     Talk to your healthcare provider and pharmacist about all your prescription and over-the-counter medication (including vitamin, mineral, and herbal supplements). Some medications (alone or in combination) can have an impact on your thinking and problem-solving abilities.

3. Put Yourself First
   - **Be good to yourself**
     When you’re stressed, your brain can’t function at its best. Try counting, deep breathing, or meditation to reduce stress.
   - **Get rid of distractions**
     It is more difficult to think when we are distracted. Turn off the TV when having a conversation. Turn off the car radio to focus on traffic.
   - **Take a breather**
     “Senior moments” are not just for older adults—they happen to people of all ages! When you can’t remember, take a deep breath. Come back to the item later. When you are relaxed, you will be able to think more clearly.


**TAKE FIVE: Making Mental Shortcuts (Mnemonics)**

Using the items below, make up a mnemonic for remembering each piece of information. Try making a mnemonic without changing the order and then a few in which you reorganize the items to fit your mnemonic.

1. **Six Food Groups:** Vegetables, Fruits, Whole Grains, Meats, Dairy, Extras (VFWMDE)

2. **Six Areas of Wellness:** Physical, Emotional, Spiritual, Intellectual, Occupational, and Social (PESIOS)

3. **Five Components of Fitness:** Muscular Strength, Muscular Endurance, Cardiovascular Endurance, Flexibility and Body Fatness (MSMECEFBF)
A Winning Combination

A whole-person approach is very useful in keeping our brains fit throughout life. Physical and mental fitness, good nutrition, and social interaction help keep our brains healthy, especially if we do our best in all of these areas. It’s never too early or too late to practice healthy habits. Engaging in daily physical activity and watching what we eat contribute to good thinking!

Brain-Boosting Foods

Often we think of diet as a way to control our weight, protect our hearts, or to prevent cancer. What we eat also has an impact on our brain. Research shows that what we eat can keep our brain cells healthy. All fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains help us stay healthy. But some foods show more “brain benefit” than others. The next time you are planning a menu try using these “brain friendly” foods:

• Brightly colored fruits and vegetables (broccoli, spinach, blueberries, red grapes)

Combining Exercise with Everyday Activities

Source: The National Institute on Aging: Exercise and Physical Guide Activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Endurance (aerobic) activities:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Dancing</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Yard work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Playing with your grandchildren at a local park</td>
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<tr>
<th>Flexibility (stretching) activities:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Bending over to tie your shoe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Yoga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Shoulder and arm stretches</td>
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</tbody>
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<tr>
<th>Strength training activities:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Practicing with a resistance band</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Carrying groceries or laundry from one floor to the next</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Balance (coordination) activities:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Stair walking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tai Chi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Cold water fish (canned salmon or tuna is fine)
• Nuts (almonds and walnuts)

Physical Exercise Benefits More Than Your Body!

Regardless of your age and fitness level, physical activity is important in improving and maintaining our health. Being physically active also:

• Improves our mood and outlook on life
• Keeps our brain working at its best
• Allows us to continue doing activities we enjoy without depending on others

In order to stay healthy, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends 150 minutes of weekly physical activity (including strength training) for those age 65+. This activity can be completed through traditional programs (e.g. water aerobics, LIFE Program, walking club) as well as daily activities and chores.
TAKE FIVE: Test Your Health Know-How

1. What is the best way to keep our minds strong and healthy?
   A. Think in new ways
   B. Change your routine
   C. Turn off the TV
   D. Surprise your senses
   E. All of the above

2. Which of the following has the highest antioxidant potential?
   A. Strawberries
   B. Prunes
   C. Bread
   D. Raspberries

3. What is a good way to get through a lack of exercise motivation?
   A. Willpower
   B. Watch more TV
   C. Eat out more often
   D. Have strategies in place

ANSWERS:

1. E (All of the above)
   In order to keep our minds healthy we need to exercise them. Remember:
   • **Think in new ways.** Choose activities that make you think in new ways by using your imagination, solving problems, or making connections with information you already know (Ex: crossword puzzles, taking a class, theater).
   • **Change your routine.** Make small changes to your daily routine so you are not doing the same thing over and over (Ex: One week buy your produce at a farmer’s market instead of going to the grocery store).
   • **Turn off the TV.** Watching TV relaxes the mind, it does not exercise it. Instead, pick up a good book, newspaper, or magazine and read.
   • **Surprise your senses.** Try activities that involve your senses in new ways. Cook with new herbs and spices; plant and nurture a garden with herbs and fragrant flowers.

2. D (Raspberries)
   Antioxidants are natural compounds that protect against heart disease and some cancers. All fruits and vegetables provide antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals our bodies need to stay healthy.

3. D (Have strategies in place)
   It’s important to have a plan in place to help us achieve our physical activity goals. Strategies include: ask a friend to be your exercise buddy, attend a regular physical activity program, or hire a certified personal trainer.
Healthy Aging for Everyone

A Little Help from Our Friends
Our last wellness newsletter talked about the role of physical activity and good nutrition in keeping us mentally fit. Remaining social and engaged in our communities as we grow older is also important. Family and friends are key to helping us stay well as we age. Our social partners can help in many ways:

- **Source of Information.** The people we know can be sources of wellness information and ideas.
- **Identifier of Potential Problems.** Family, friends, and neighbors may notice changes in our mental or physical well-being and alert us to potential problems.
- **Cheerleader.** Enlist your own cheering section. Family and friends can provide us support in achieving our wellness goals.

Have you tried to exercise on your own and found it difficult to stick to your program because of bad weather or lack of time? It is easier to reach our goals if others are counting on us. Working together and sharing wellness goals (physical, emotional, and mental) is a great way to get started and stay motivated.

Join activities that target mental, physical, and nutritional needs:
- Take walks together
- Share recipes and cooking duties
- Discuss the daily news
- Challenge each other to a game of cards
- Attend a class or seminar together
- Teach or mentor someone

**Life Is Not All Blue**
Feeling depressed is not a normal part of aging. Think for a moment about how you felt during the past week and answer the questions below:
- How are you sleeping? Do you have a problem falling asleep? Once asleep, do you have problems staying asleep?
- How is your appetite? Do you find that you lose your appetite often?
- How often do you feel hopeless? Do you feel like your life is empty?
- Have you stopped participating in many of your activities or interests?
- Do you have trouble concentrating or remembering things?
- Have you felt hopeless or fearful of the future?

Some of these behaviors are symptoms of depression. Depression occurs more often in older adults than you may think. About 1 in 5 people age 55+ experience depression and anxiety. But just because depression affects a lot of older adults does not make it a normal part of aging. If you have experienced any of these symptoms, talk to your healthcare provider about what has been happening in your life. If it is depression, there are treatments available. Everyone deserves to feel happy and satisfied with life as they age.

**References:**
TAKE FIVE: Try these mind strengthening tasks

1. Say the days of the week backwards, then in alphabetical order.

2. Find the sum of your date of birth, mm/dd/yyyy (Example: 03 + 24 + 1944 = 1972).
   Now do the same with friends’ and relatives’ date of birth.

3. Name two objects for every letter in your complete name. Work up to five objects, trying to use different items each time. (Example: John Doe = jam, jacket; olive, orange; hat, house; etc).

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STAYING WELL CROSSWORD

**ANSWERS:**

1. Vegetables
2. Mnemonics
3. Grains
4. Friends
5. Antioxidant
6. Nuts

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**Down**

1. Part of the largest section of a healthy plate
2. Memory shortcuts
3. Should eat at least six ounces a day
4. Offer support

**Across**

5. Protects against heart disease and some cancers
6. Brain boosting food

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