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May 2015

Stay Active with Arthritis

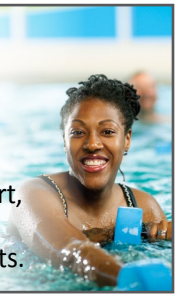
A growing number of Americans contend with the daily challenge of joint pain from arthritis. Needless to say, having achy joints discourages physical activity. But be assured, the right exercise has the potential to offset the progression and life-changing disability of arthritis.

>**If you've been diagnosed with osteoarthritis, exercise tailored to your affected joints can increase your range of motion and reduce stiffness.** Exercise also strengthens your muscles to help cushion pain and improve mobility. For example, your hips will have less work supporting your body weight if your quadriceps and gluteal, hamstring and abdominal muscles are stronger.

>**Start with your health care provider,** who can offer safe, effective guidelines for increasing your activity. Next, consult a physical therapist to teach you specific exercises you can do at home. It's important to understand and closely follow your exercise prescription.

>**Keep it low impact.** Good choices include aerobic exercise, such as walking, gentle yoga and modest muscle-strengthening routines. Aquatic exercise is especially beneficial for people with severe arthritis. It meets many fitness goals by building flexibility and muscle as well as heart and lung capacity.

>**Find activities you enjoy,** and aim for 150 minutes of exercise a week (e.g., 10 minutes 3 times a day, 5 days a week). Then, enjoy the benefits – greater comfort, confidence and ability to cope with those nagging joints.



May is Mental Health Month.

Tune Up Your Self-Esteem

By Eric Endlich, PhD

Your overall opinion of yourself is influenced by both internal and external factors (e.g., thoughts, upbringing, media messages). Having a balanced, accurate self-image can foster happiness and success. To improve yours:

- **Avoid** over-relying on external factors (praise, money) to feel good about yourself.
- **Get** help to eliminate addictions or abusive situations and make healthier choices (hobbies, sports).
- **Avoid** media that depict perfect bodies or degrading content.
- **Identify** situations triggering low self-confidence and make a plan to address them.

➡ Continued on page 4.

best bits

During May's Clean Air Month, get outdoors to enjoy fresh air, exercise and all that nature offers. Take steps for the environment: Instead of driving, walk or bike. Carpool or take the bus – enjoy time to socialize while saving gas money and reducing air pollution.

■ **How does exercise boost energy?** Scientists believe exercise stimulates mitochondria inside your cells to help convert blood glucose into energy, and the more you exercise the more mitochondria you produce. **Note:** If you're new to regular physical activity, start with moderate-intensity exercise, such as walking.

■ **Good posture = less fatigue, backache and neck pain.** It's so easy to slouch and forget to sit or walk upright. Teach your body what good posture feels like: Stand with your back against a wall with head, shoulders and bottom touching the wall. Good posture aligns your spine and trims your tummy bulge. **Note:** As you practice this position and train your body, it may feel awkward and uncomfortable at first.

■ **Protect your skin. May is Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month.** Always use a sunscreen with a 30 SPF when you are exposed to the sun's rays, even through a window or on cloudy days.

"The best diet is the one you don't know you're on."
– Brian Wansink

This Edition

➡ QuikRisk™ Assessment: Hearing
➡ Medical Testing @ Home
➡ Update: Trans Fats
➡ Green Beans with Sunflower Seeds

QuikRisk™ Assessment: Hearing

We live in a noisy world. Exposure to loud noise puts people of all ages at risk for noise-induced hearing loss. The primary cause of hearing loss is frequent exposure to loud noise. ***The good news:*** Most noise-induced hearing loss is preventable.

How's your hearing? Check the symptoms that apply to you:

- ❑ I often have trouble hearing over a phone.
- ❑ I hear better through one ear than the other when on a phone.
- ❑ I often strain to understand conversation.
- ❑ I often need people to repeat speech.
- ❑ Sounds often seem distorted or muffled.
- ❑ People complain that I turn the TV volume up too high.
- ❑ I have pain or ringing in my ears.

If you checked ***yes*** to more than 2 statements above, or suspect you may have hearing loss, see your health care provider. You may need an evaluation to rule out correctable causes, or a hearing test.

May is Better Hearing and Speech Month.

best bites

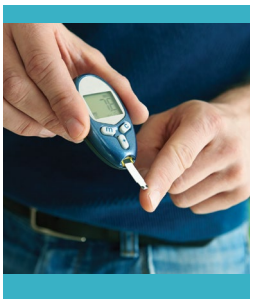
Tip of the Month: More Fruits and Vegetables

If you want to add more vegetables and fruit to your plate, the key is to get more in your grocery cart. Imagine a line divides your cart in half. Fill at least half of the cart with vegetables and fruit, and the remaining portion with the rest of your groceries. – *Cara Rosenbloom, RD*

Medical Testing @ Home

Major advances in medical testing technology have given us a growing number of tests we can use without leaving home. They are convenient, quick, confidential and usually available over the counter. Home tests help:

1. Screen for and detect silent health conditions (without symptoms) such as unhealthy cholesterol or hepatitis.
2. Diagnose conditions (with symptoms) such as a urinary tract infection.
3. Test for pregnancy.
4. Monitor existing conditions such as blood pressure and glucose levels or sleep disorders, to ensure control or detect a need for treatment changes.
5. Collect specimens such as blood, stool or urine samples for laboratory analysis.



Most tests are simple to perform. But they do not necessarily match the quality of laboratory testing. For example, at-home cholesterol tests may check for total cholesterol, but not provide a breakdown between LDL (harmful) and HDL (beneficial) cholesterol.

A concern with home tests is the ability to interpret their results, particularly tests that provide complex findings such as PSA levels or thyroid numbers. It's best to evaluate your results with your health care provider's help.

Grapefruit and Rx: *What You Need to Know*

body matters

By Doug Morrison, MD

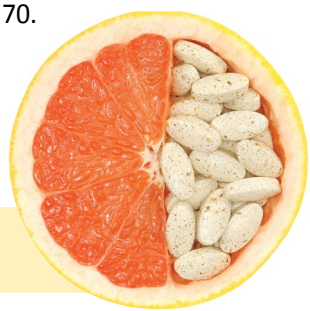
If you take prescription medications, ask before you eat. Get your health care provider's OK before eating grapefruit or drinking grapefruit juice. Grapefruit in any form (whole, fresh or frozen juice) can influence the effectiveness of many prescription medications.

The intended effect of a medication can be greatly increased or decreased if grapefruit is ingested. It potentially can cause a serious medical reaction. The list of affected medications has grown since the effect was discovered in 2008.

Interactions with medications can last up to 3 days after consuming as few as 7 ounces of grapefruit. Chemicals in grapefruit called **furanocoumarins** interfere with the normal breakdown of certain medications. This can cause a possible drug overdose or reduced drug effectiveness.

The risk of side effects is also greater. These include heart rhythm problems, kidney failure, muscle breakdown, difficulty breathing and blood clots. Grapefruit interference with medication is highly individualized. It affects some people more than others, but it is potentially more serious after age 70.

Grapefruit is not the only culprit. Grapefruit relatives such as **pomelo** (shaddock, pamplemousse) and **tangelo** (honeybell) also contain furanocoumarins. **Seville** (sour, blood) oranges and limes can have a similar effect.



You can also discuss potential interactions with your pharmacist.

Bike Helmets: 6 Steps to a Proper Fit

A bicycle crash can happen anytime and anywhere. That's why it's so important to wear a bike helmet with a certification seal from ASTM, Snell or ANSI. However, it's not enough to just wear it; you need to make sure it's adjusted to fit properly so it protects you. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration offers these **6 steps to ensure a proper fit:**

1. **Size it.** Try the helmet on and make sure it fits snuggly and doesn't rock from side to side. Use sizing cushions inside the helmet to ensure a proper fit.
2. **Position it.** The helmet should sit level on your head and low on your forehead – 1 or 2 finger-widths above your eyebrow.
3. **Adjust it.** Center the left buckle under the chin and pull straps to lengthen or shorten them. Then adjust the side straps by adjusting the slider on both straps to form a V shape under, and slightly in front of, the ears.
4. **Buckle it.** Buckle your chinstrap and tighten the strap until it is snug, so that no more than 1 or 2 fingers fit under the strap.
5. **Check it.** To make sure it fits correctly, use this test: Open your mouth wide; the helmet should pull down on the head. It should not rock back and forth more than 2 fingers above your brow or into your eyes. Tighten the straps until the helmet fits properly as described above.
6. **Secure it.** Roll the rubber band down to the buckle. All four straps must go through the rubber band and be close to the buckle to prevent the buckle from slipping.

Note: Replace any helmet that has been in a crash or damaged in any way.

Update: Trans Fats

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

As early as 1988, medical literature linked trans fat (partially hydrogenated oil, or PHO) to heart disease. This artificially made fat raises bad cholesterol, lowers good cholesterol, and increases the risk for heart disease.

In 2006, trans fat information became mandatory on nutrition labels, and some states banned trans fats at restaurants and bakeries. By 2010, research showed that food manufacturers were replacing trans fat with healthier fats, and the CDC found a 58% decline in trans fat in blood samples of Americans between 2000 and 2009.

Ban trans fat? In 2013, the FDA submitted an opinion that PHO is no longer **generally recognized as safe** (GRAS). Without GRAS status, it will mean food companies cannot use PHO as an ingredient, so there will be less of it in the food supply. While the deadline for a decision was March 8, 2014, no answer has been given yet.

Meanwhile, trans fat is still in the food supply and remains damaging to heart health. Reduce your intake by:

- ✔ Avoiding foods that contain partially hydrogenated oil or shortening.
- ✔ Reading Nutrition Facts and choosing foods that list trans fat as 0 g.
- ✔ Cutting back on fast foods or asking about the oil they are prepared with.

Why take these steps?

The CDC estimates that reducing trans fat in the food supply can prevent 7,000 deaths from heart disease and 20,000 heart attacks each year.

EASY | RECIPE
From Personal Best®

Green Beans with Sunflower Seeds

4 cups **green beans**, trimmed
1 tbsp extra virgin **olive oil**
1 clove **garlic**, minced
2 tbsp raw **sunflower seeds**
⅛ tsp **salt**
⅛ tsp **pepper**
1 tbsp fresh **lemon juice**
2 tbsp fresh **parsley**, chopped

1. Steam green beans for 5 minutes, until tender crisp.
2. In a large skillet over medium heat, add oil and garlic. Add sunflower seeds and stir until toasted, about 4-5 minutes.
3. Add steamed green beans, salt, pepper and lemon juice. Stir-fry until coated, about 2 minutes.
4. Transfer to serving bowl and top with fresh parsley.

Makes 6 servings. Per serving:
73 calories | 2.4g protein | 5g total fat | 0.6g saturated fat | 2.1g mono fat | 2g poly fat | 0mg cholesterol | 7g carbohydrate | 0.2g sugar | 3g fiber | 51mg sodium

Stay in Touch

Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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Get the Most Out of Webinars

You're at a webinar – and talking on the phone, organizing your to-do list, or eating your lunch at the same time. Webinars can be a useful source of information and a valuable productivity tool. Put your lunch away, and get more out of webinars with these strategies:

1. **Take notes.** Even though the material is being presented on your screen and you may even be able to access it later, take your own notes as the webinar progresses. This will help you stay focused, synthesize the information, and remember it better later.
2. **Stay focused.** Attending a webinar can be an easy excuse to keep half an eye on your screen while doing something else at the same time. Give the training your undivided attention, and avoid multitasking. Perhaps set a goal at the webinar's outset for what you hope to gain from it to help you stay on task.
3. **Participate.** Most webinars today allow you to ask questions, make comments, raise issues, and even have discussions with other attendees. Use the technology well, and participate fully. This will help make the webinar more relevant to you, and can also provide a networking and information sharing opportunity.

Tune Up Your Self-Esteem

➡ Continued from page 1.

- **Engage** in activities that reflect your values and improve your skills.
- **Identify** and correct distorted thoughts. Limit excessive self-blame ("his bad mood is my fault").
- **Try** to accept your flaws and feelings, and learn from your mistakes.
- **Identify** your strengths. Ask a trusted friend if you can't think of many.
- **Notice** what your inner (and often illogical) critic is saying to you and respond with rational comebacks.
- **Avoid** reacting to situations with self-defeating, impulsive reactions. Stop, think and then respond in a more effective way.
- **Acknowledge** the positive things you do every day, no matter how small.

Final thought: Know that you are worthy of happiness and respect.

expert advice

– Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP

Q: Heat illness remedies?

A: In hot weather, profuse sweating and inadequate water and salt intake can lead to heat-related illnesses. Mild heat cramps can progress to heat exhaustion or even life-threatening heatstroke. The signs of heat exhaustion include nausea, dizziness, rapid heartbeat, low blood pressure and cool, moist skin.

For mild heat exhaustion, these home remedies may help:

- Move into a cool place out of direct sunlight.
- Lie down and elevate the feet and legs.
- Remove unnecessary clothing.
- Drink cool beverages without caffeine or alcohol.
- Cool down with cool compresses, sponge baths or a fan.
- Apply ice packs to the groin, neck and armpits, but do not bathe in ice water.
- Call **9-1-1** if the condition worsens, or fainting, confusion, seizures or a 104˚F fever or higher occurs. These symptoms may signify heatstroke – a medical emergency.

Heat Safety Awareness Day is May 22.