

Healthy U @ Work



April 2019

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 **Franciscan**
WORKING Well

Humor Helps

See a funny movie lately? Hear a good joke? If you have, you not only enjoyed a good laugh, you may have improved your health! Research shows us that humor elevates your mood, effectively reduces stress, and benefits your physical health.

Laughter promotes relaxation. A study that examined muscle relaxation training in response to humor found that people did a better job relaxing their muscles after watching cartoons than they did after viewing a beautiful landscape. And while we associate relaxation with stress reduction, relaxation is also important to those who suffer from migraines, chronic pain, and high blood pressure.

Humor also makes a difference in your body's chemistry. Laughter seems to reduce stress hormones and can increase the cells and antibodies that build up your immune system. The research into humor and immunity indicates that those who find humor in everyday life, share humor with colleagues and friends, and use humor as a coping mechanism during stressful times generally maintain a healthier immune system and are less susceptible to illness and infection.

Humor is an important tool for improving our health - along with a good diet, exercise and a healthy lifestyle. Allow yourself the time to enjoy humor. Read a novel, go to the movies, share a joke with your family - whatever it is that you find funny and enjoyable. These moments will help reduce stress and can make your immune system stronger.

Did you know?

There is an exercise trend called Laughter Yoga (or Laughing Yoga). From India, it combines traditional yoga poses and breathing activities with laughter exercises. Laughter is known to increase endorphins and reduce the stress hormone cortisol. Search for Laughter Yoga near you and give it a try!

*Laughter
is the
Best
Medicine*





Distracted Driving

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), traffic fatalities rose between 2014 and 2016 an average of 7%. Since 2016 we have seen a small decrease (by about 2%) which may be a result of recent laws regarding cell phone usage while operating a vehicle as well as more public awareness of the problem. Out of 50 states, 47 states currently ban texting while driving and 16 states prohibit hand-held cell phones while driving.

Distracted driving includes any behaviors that take your attention away from the road. Any distraction behind the wheel — cell phone use, loud music, eating, etc. — puts the life of the driver, his or her passengers, and everyone else on the road in danger. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), not paying attention is the most significant factor in most crashes. In fact, a recent study by the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute found that 80% of all crashes occurred within 3 seconds of some sort of driver distraction. Driving while drowsy is another serious concern that causes thousands of accidents each year. Whether tired or distracted, it's important to understand the dangers of inattentive driving and work to change it.

Save your phone calls for when you're not in the driver's seat. The most common source of distraction is cell phone use. According to the NHTSA, drivers that use a cell phone are four times more likely to be injured in a car accident.

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Produce of the Month Bananas

The ubiquitous banana, breakfast staple and kid's snack, is an easy-to-eat health goldmine! With a distinctive flavor, bananas are a high fiber, potassium rich food, known to be heart healthy and easy on the digestive system.

The Basics: Most bananas are the sweet variety- the traditional yellow skinned version in every grocery store. There are also plantain bananas which are starchier and are cooked and served as a vegetable. Bananas are picked while still green and continue to ripen. Choose bananas that are not bruised or have noticeable soft spots. Select greener bananas if you plan on using them later in the week. If you plan on eating the banana within the next day or so, choose one with a bright yellow color. Store bananas at room temperature. Putting a banana in the refrigerator will stop it from ripening. If you choose to refrigerate your bananas, know that the skin will turn brown but it doesn't affect the fruit. It is best to peel and prepare the bananas just before eating since the banana will turn slightly brown and soften the longer it is exposed to the air.

Try This: Peel bananas and store them in the freezer to add to creamy fruit smoothies. Mash ripe bananas with a fork and use as a substitute for oil in your favorite baking recipes. For a healthier dessert option: melt chocolate chips with a little butter (4 tablespoons butter to a 32-ounce bag chocolate chips). Dip whole bananas in the chocolate and freeze!

The Facts: A medium banana has about 100 calories, and is a good source of fiber, vitamin B6, vitamin C and potassium.

Gardening

With the first days of spring here, it's a great time to plant a vegetable garden that can help you enjoy plant-based nutrition for your health! Gardens can start small, even in a pot, and the activity of growing and caring for a plant can improve your mood as well as encourage better eating habits. In fact, including children in caring for the garden will entice them to try their veggies.

To maximize nutrition, include a variety of color in your garden. In a small garden measuring 4x8, you can grow zucchini, tomatoes, green beans, eggplant, and a variety of herbs (including basil, rosemary, and oregano). The red tomato contains vitamins A, C, K, and B6, and the purple eggplant is a good source of vitamin B1, B6, potassium, and fiber. The green zucchini is a good source of vitamin C, fiber, manganese, and folate. Green beans are an excellent source of vitamin A and fiber. Have extra room? Try some orange carrots or yellow squash!

When planning your garden, be sure to give plants the room they need to spread their roots and get adequate sun and water. If you don't have a backyard, there are a variety of plants that can be grown in a pot on a porch or even in a sunny window. The key is to choose a container that is deep enough for the roots. Be sure to find a spot that gets at least 6 hours of sun a day. Gardening in a pot offers you a fun way to combine plants; for example, a pot that combines tomato, onion, and cilantro makes a great "Salsa Pot." And don't worry if you only plant one or two plants. One tomato plant yields an average of eight pounds of tomato, and the average yield of a green bean plant is 120 pods per one plant!

Growing a garden – or even 1 plant – can help you and your family eat more vegetables. In fact, adults who garden eat nearly 1½ times more fruits and vegetables a day. Growing your own food is a low-cost hobby and with all the benefits and savings at the grocery store, it's a good time to give gardening a try!



Pro Tip:

Start your seeds indoors 6-8 weeks before the last spring frost date to get your garden off to a healthy start!

Should I Be Carb Loading?

If you are training for a marathon or triathlon in 2019, you may already know something about carb loading. Carb loading provides energy for endurance fitness events, especially those of high intensity.

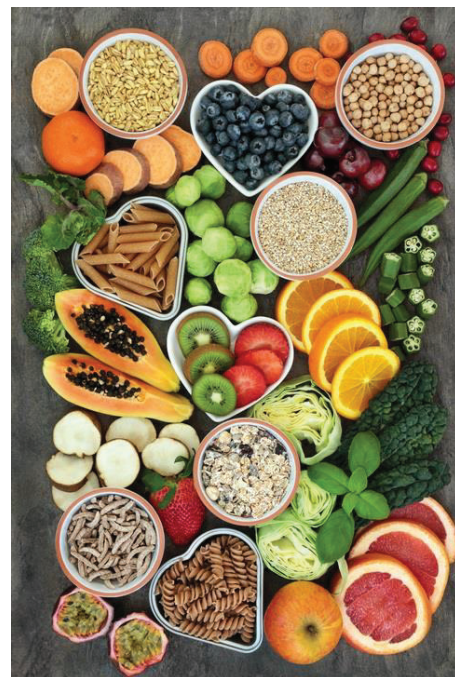
How does carb loading work?

In the day or two before a big event, it is recommended to reduce fat intake and increase carbohydrate intake to an average of 4 grams per pound of body weight. This helps provide endurance athletes with the energy they need to sustain intense activity over a long period of time. During any exercise, the first energy source burned is the glucose found in the bloodstream and stored glycogen. These offer “fast” energy and carb loading helps increase the amount of glucose and glycogen available. Once this source has been used, the body will start to burn fat, converting it to usable energy.

Who should consider carb loading?

If you are a serious athlete who participates in endurance events lasting longer than 120 minutes, carb loading may increase your energy and improves your performance. But what about the average athlete? Or someone who works out regularly? Carb loading is not recommended for everyday physical activity. Carb loading for a normal workout is likely to reduce body fat burned during your exercise.

For most people, eating a moderate amount of carbohydrates, especially those high in fiber, is the right choice in the hour or two before a workout. Try an apple with peanut butter or plain Greek yogurt with berries and slivered almonds. Other healthy sources of complex carbohydrates include beans, grains like oats and quinoa, potatoes, squash, peas, and corn. Simple carbohydrates are found mainly in fruits and milk. Keep in mind that consuming too many carbohydrates is not recommended for anyone who has diabetes or issues with blood sugars or digestive issues. Consult your medical professional to discuss what would be best for you.



Distracted Driving

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And don't think that a hands-free device is any safer. New research from the University of Utah shows that talking on a handheld or hands-free cell phone created the same level of distraction and the same delayed reaction time as someone driving with an alcohol level of .08% (which is the legal limit). In many cases, those talking on a cell phone performed worse than those who were intoxicated. It appears that having a conversation (no matter if holding the phone or not) is enough of a distraction by itself. The brain focuses on the language and loses focus on the road. So, what about talking with someone in the car? It's not as much of a distraction because the person in the car with you reacts to the same conditions you do and can adjust to your need to concentrate more completely.

Drowsy driving is another real danger. The NHTSA estimates that drowsy driving results in 1,500 deaths and 71,000 injuries every year. A study on driver inattention done by the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute in conjunction with the NHSTA included information on drowsy driving and found that sleepiness increased the risk of a car crash by at least 4 times the normal risk. Late night and early morning are more obvious times for drowsy driving, but midafternoon is another common time when shift workers are especially vulnerable.

To reduce the risk for you, your family, and for those with whom you share the road, avoid all distractions. Know your state's laws regarding cell phone usage and advocate for sensible laws that help to reduce distractions for drivers. Insist that all family members reduce distractions while driving and model responsible driving behaviors for any young drivers in your family. Together we can keep the roads safer and enjoy a happy and save 2019!



Ask the Trainer

By Erin M. Long, B.S., NSCA-CPT

Q: Hi Erin. My question for you deals with my father. He is 75 years old and was diagnosed with Parkinson's a few months ago. He has been pretty active his whole life but the last few years he has been struggling and now we know why. He is still in the early stages of this disease but we have seen some decline in his physical ability. Have you ever worked with anyone dealing with this issue? If so, do you have any recommendations on things for him to do to help with his strength?

Lisa P.

A: Hi Lisa! Thank you for reaching out! I actually have worked with both men and women dealing with Parkinson's. This disease hits everyone differently but I do believe that you can slow down its effects and regain certain functions in the body. I've been working with a man for 3 years now with Parkinson's in his 70's. When he first came to me, he was struggling with several everyday things like getting his pants on by himself and flipping a pancake. After about 3 months of personal training working on his strength and coordination, he started seeing great progress. He could put his pants on and flip a pancake again! I will tell you though that about 8 months ago he broke his hand and had to take some time off. He went about 4 months without seeing me and it set him back. When he came back to see me, it was like starting over so I encourage one to keep moving and staying active. I truly believe the more active you are when dealing with this the better. Look into different facilities in your area to see if there are any trainers who have worked with people with Parkinson's. One-on-one personal training or some sort of group class would be great for him.

One of the other things I do with my client, besides strength training, is boxing or punching. There are many studies that show the enormous benefits of this type of program. One great program out there is called Rock Steady, many places are bringing this program into their communities to help those with Parkinson's. This program is for all ages and abilities and incorporates stretching, biking, running, balance and noncontact boxing. I have sent numerous people to this program and they have seen great results. Before starting an exercise program, Parkinson's patients should talk to their neurologist. I hope this gives you a few ideas to help slow down the progression of your dad's Parkinson's. If you have any further questions or want to chat please reach out to me!

Dedicated to your success,

Erin M Long, B.S., NSCA-CPT

April, 2019 By: Jean Lubeckis, LMHC, LCPC, EAP Therapist

CIVILITY

Incivility is derived from the Latin, “not of a citizen.” Core elements of a healthy democracy include citizens behaving in a respectful and ethical manner. Sadly, we are witness to incivility in 5 major areas: politics, education, the workplace, marketplace and the internet. Most commonly, people have experienced or witnessed road rage and rude or disrespectful behavior while shopping.

- Pew research: 70% of 18-24 year olds experienced internet harassment.
- 26% of women have been stalked on line.
- 75-100% of all workers have experienced incivility from co-workers, supervisors and/or customers in the form of sarcasm, insults, put downs insults, interrupting conversations and the workplace. There is an increase of patients assaulting hospital personnel.
- 2010 survey by Workplace Bullying: 37% of workers reported being bullied at work.
- Whether we witness it or experience it, incivility appears to be a growing problem in America. Worse yet, incivility breeds incivility. People often respond in kind, perpetuating uncivil behavior.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Encouraging and supporting a civil workplace.

Empower yourself using assertive language; educate yourself about Crucial Conversations.

Model civil behavior in all settings, especially with children.

Don't be a victim of responding in kind to uncivil behavior toward you.



Need help with dealing with incivility?

Call 219-662-3730 or 1-800-747-7262

EAP Webinar on “Civility” and “Off Balance Core Moves: A whole New Way to Workout” April 17 at Noon

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*Some amenities may vary by location.

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