Your Brain is Hungry for Exercise

There is more and more research that supports the idea that exercise not only keeps your heart, lungs and muscles in tip top shape, but also helps your brain function better. Yes, your brain. It seems it’s not enough just to do the NY Times crossword puzzles.

Our brain relies on glucose (blood sugar) and—more recently discovered—glycogen (carbohydrate), as its energy sources. Glycogen, it turns out, is very important to our brain health. Glycogen provides needed energy to the brain during exercise and a lot is used up. Scientists experimented with rats to determine glycogen stores in the brain related to exercise. One group of rats ran on a treadmill once and was fed afterward. Their brains sucked everything up and their glycogen levels rose to higher-than-before exercise levels and stayed that way for 24 hours. Another group of rats ran over four weeks and it was discovered that their glycogen levels soared and stayed there. It became their new norm.

Interestingly, it was the hippocampus and frontal cortex parts of the brain that did the most overcompensation. And these parts are related to our cognitive functions of learning and memory.

What does this mean for us? It seems like it’s a good idea to eat some carbs after a workout. So get on a regular exercise program, put a banana in your gym bag and enjoy it after your workout.

May is Arthritis Awareness Month

My husband recently came home from his annual physical and said he was healthy, but that Arthur had finally come to visit him. I knew exactly what he meant.

Osteoarthritis (OA) is the more common form of arthritis and affects some 27 million Americans, mostly those over age 65. OA occurs when the cartilage surrounding bones in joints wears down. You might have pain related to bone or cartilage fragments floating in joint fluid.

Symptoms of OA vary depending on which joint is affected and how severely. The most common joints affected are the low back, hips, knees and feet. Stiffness is the most prevalent symptom, especially first thing in the morning.

Osteoarthritis is not an auto-immune disease like rheumatoid arthritis. Instead, genetics, lifestyle and mechanical wear are responsible. Some people inherit a gene making them more susceptible. But lifestyle has a large impact. Being overweight or a smoker are two risk factors for developing OA. And repetitive movements over a long period can contribute. Talk to your doctor if you suspect you have arthritis. Many live a completely normal life with it.

NOTE: Due to the Memorial holiday, there will be no Lifetime Fitness session on Monday, May 25.
Gearing Up for Golf

Golf is not considered a particularly strenuous form of exercise, but it is still important for you to make sure your body is properly prepared before you hit the course. Follow these easy-to-do exercises and your game is sure to be better.

1. Chair Rotations—improves spinal flexibility and strength. Attach a rubber exercise band to a door jamb at chest height. Sit on a chair with right side facing door and grasp band. Slowly rotate away from door with arms stretched in front of you. Do 12 repetitions. Then repeat with chair turned in other direction. Try to do 2–3 sets.

2. Windshield Wipers—for ankle flexibility. Sit on chair with feet flat on ground. Rotate both feet to right and hold 15 seconds. Slowly rotate to left and hold 15 seconds. Repeat several times.

3. Bridge Pose—helps stabilize spine. Lie on ground with knees bent and feet flat on ground, and arms along side with palms pressing into ground. Raise hips off ground and hold 15 seconds. Repeat 10 times. Variation: turn toes inward.

4. Plank pose—strengthens core muscles. Lie face down on floor. Raise yourself off the ground on your toes and forearms and tighten your glutes and abs. Hold 20 seconds and repeat a few times.

5. Back Loosener—improves back flexibility. Take one of your golf clubs and put it behind your neck. Grasp ends of club with hands. Slowly rotate in one direction and hold 20 seconds. Slowly rotate to other side and hold. Repeat 5 times.

As with any exercise, it’s important to warm up. Spend 10–15 minutes strolling the course gradually increasing your speed. Start your golf game slowly as a warm up continuation. And remember to cool down with some nice stretches after your game.

Tips on Making Your Bed with Arthur

Follow some of these tips if you have arthritis.

- Don’t bother tucking the top sheet under the mattress. Just smooth it out and throw the comforter over the sheet.
- But if you like a tucked sheet, use a long-handled wooden spoon to push the sheet under the mattress.
- Add markers for an even fit. To get bed sheets and blankets to hang evenly on both sides without having to walk back and forth to judge the distance, mark the center of the sheet at the top, middle and bottom with a light-colored indelible marker or an iron-on decal. When making the bed, simply line up the marks for an even fit from side to side and top to bottom.
- Eliminate the top sheet. Reducing the layers on your bed will help lessen the load by decreasing the number of times needed to stretch, pull and straighten.
- Combine covers. If you use a top sheet and blanket, sew Velcro patches onto each layer so they can be attached during chilly months and separated during warm weather. Small loops sewn on the outer blanket can also help you pull up the combined covers.

Source: www.arthritis.org

Help Us Meet Our Goal (Again!)

Starting November 1 of 2014, we continue our campaign with the goal again to raise at least $5000 by October 31, 2015. If you give $50 or more, you will receive a hot and cold beverage tumbler with Lifetime Fitness printed on it. It includes a lid for hot drinks and a lid and straw for cold ones. Those who donate $25–$49 will receive a mini-backpack. Multiple donations are welcome, however a single gift will be given. The Lifetime Fitness program has been providing quality exercise instruction that’s safe, effective and fun for senior adults (although everyone is welcome) at Briarwood Mall for many years now. And while the program is free to participate, we do rely on donations to cover costs such as instructor wages and smaller operating expenses. Your donations are the only source of funding for Lifetime Fitness. Even as little as fifty cents per session helps us keep the program running. There is a drop-box for on the spot donations. Every little bit helps and is much appreciated!
May is National Mediterranean Diet Month

The Mediterranean Diet is not really a “diet.” It is a way of eating that mimics what those of the southern Mediterranean area eat. In the 1960s, research showed that longevity in that region was one of the highest in the world and rates of chronic disease were the lowest. In 1993, the Mediterranean Diet was introduced as a proven healthy way to eat and live. As you can see from the pyramid guidelines below, fruits, grains and vegetables make up the majority of one’s plate. In addition to healthy eating, important components of the Mediterranean Diet include eating with others, daily exercise and fostering a deep appreciation for the pleasures of eating healthy and delicious foods.

**Arugula Salad with Cucumbers, Feta & Mint**

Adding bread to a salad of greens and tomatoes is popular in the Mediterranean. Here it’s paired with cucumbers, radishes, and olives, in a tasty mix that delivers lots of satisfying crunch.

**Ingredients:**
- 4 to 6 fresh mint leaves, coarsely chopped
- About 6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- About 1 ½ tablespoons red wine vinegar
- Salt to taste
- 1 ½ ounces plain cracker or crisp bread
- About 3 cups arugula
- 1 small firm cucumber, peeled and thinly sliced
- 4 small radishes, trimmed and thinly sliced
- ¾ cup drained, crumbled feta cheese
- Freshly cracked black pepper to taste
- 12 small black olives, such as Nicoise, Ligurian or Black Elitses

Combine the mint, olive oil, and vinegar in a bowl, whisk to form a smooth dressing, and season to taste with salt. Break the cracker bread into bite-sized pieces and put it in a wide salad bowl. Add about one-third of the dressing. Add the arugula and toss.

Add the cucumber and radishes, drizzle on the remaining dressing, and fold gently but thoroughly to evenly coat well. Add the feta, season with pepper, and gently fold to distribute. Taste, and add more olive oil and vinegar if the salad seems dry.

Serve garnished with the olives.
Source: www.oldwayspt.org

**Hummus Variations**

Try some of these variations to a favorite snack food.

- Toast some pinenuts in a dry skillet until brown. Stir them with some lemon juice, chopped parsley, garlic and extra virgin olive oil into hummus.
- Chop sun-dried tomatoes and mix with chopped basil, lemon juice, and olive oil before stirring into hummus.
- For a spicy version, chop some chipotle peppers and mix with cilantro and lime juice and add to hummus.
- Parsley, mint, basil, dill, cilantro—any or all will do. Add to roughly chopped jarred artichoke hearts and stir into hummus.

Source: www.seriouseats.com
LIFETIME FITNESS
SERVING THE ANN ARBOR COMMUNITY

For years, the University of Michigan’s School of Kinesiology has sponsored Lifetime Fitness through its U-Move Fitness program.

Although tailored with the senior adult in mind, classes are open to all adults.

- Pregnant and post-partum women
- The beginner exerciser
- Parents who have just dropped their children off at school
- Friends wanting to spend time together

Classes meet on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays (Zumba day) and Fridays from 9:00–10:00 am in the Macy’s court of the Briarwood Mall located at the corner of State Street and Eisenhower Parkway in Ann Arbor. Remember: When Ann Arbor Public Schools are closed due to bad weather, Lifetime Fitness is canceled.

Classes are FREE; but please check in with the instructor if you are coming for the first time to complete a registration form. Just come as you are and enjoy a carefully structured class that includes a warm-up, pre-aerobic stretch, sitting and standing aerobics, strength exercises, a cool down and final stretch.

U-Move Fitness takes great pride in proving this invaluable community service. While there is no charge for classes, your contributions help offset the cost of instructor training and wages, sound equipment, music, and other equipment. Your donations also qualify for state and federal tax credits.

A donation form is below for your convenience. Please send to:

U-Move Fitness
401 Washtenaw Avenue
3064 Central Campus Recreation Building
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-2214

Or if you prefer, you may use the drop box at class for on-the-spot donations.

Thank you to the following for their recent donations:

Melissa Hubbard, Clara Politis, Joan Podell, Janet Rennell, Eleanor Shaw, Judith Wilhelme, Amol Sidhu, Anita McDermott

To support the continued excellence of Lifetime Fitness, I/we pledge the sum of

$25 (Silver Level)  $50 (Gold Level)  $100  $150  $250  $500  Other $_______

Method of donation (circle one)

Check  Credit Card

Please make checks payable to University of Michigan

Please charge my gift to (circle one): Visa  MasterCard  Discover  American Express

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