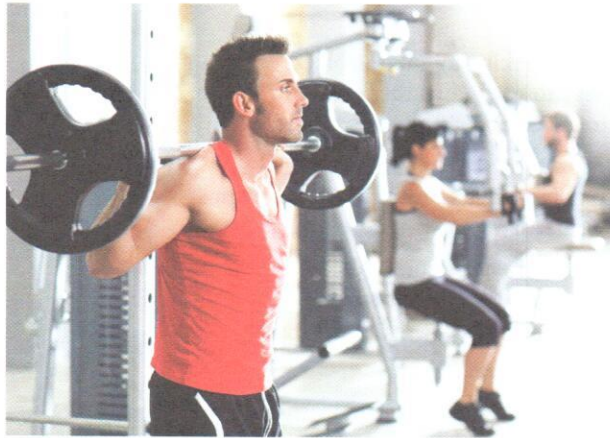


THE TOP HEALTH®

The Health Promotion and Wellness Newsletter.

MAY 2014



Muscle Power for Every Body

Muscles help us do almost everything – from protecting the joints and bones to helping us smile. Everyone can benefit from added muscle power, regardless of age or fitness. Strength training options include: free weights, machine workouts, elastic bands, calisthenics and water-resistance exercise.

If you're overweight, older or don't like rigorous exercise, 2 to 3 brief workouts a week is a proven start toward better fitness. Muscle workouts can quickly build strength – and with it, the motivation to stay active.

In addition to building muscle and reducing body fat, regular strength training can significantly improve:

- Blood glucose
- Resting blood pressure
- Blood lipid profile
- Gastrointestinal function
- Bone mineral density

And can help treat:

- COPD function (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
- Low back pain
- Arthritis
- Depression
- Metabolic syndrome (risk factors that raise risk for heart disease and other conditions)

Even if you have chronic health conditions, don't let muscle workouts intimidate you. Get your provider's help to create a routine based on your fitness level.



"An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest." – Benjamin Franklin

Women Staying Well

At every age, good health care is a woman's best friend.

Review these smart strategies for taking charge of your health.

Prevention is your primary goal.

We can often avoid the most serious health problems, including heart attack, diabetes, cancer and arthritis, by knowing their risk factors, signs and means of early detection.

Worried about stress or weight gain? Think about how these conditions might be affecting your health. Awareness is the first step to change.



Get started now – during Women's Health Week, May 11 to 17.

>> Continued on the other side.



Help for Low Back Pain

It's easy to hurt your back when you lift, reach or overdo activities, especially if your muscles are weak. Fortunately, we know a lot about relieving most back pain.

Typically, low back pain will ease up in a few days or weeks.

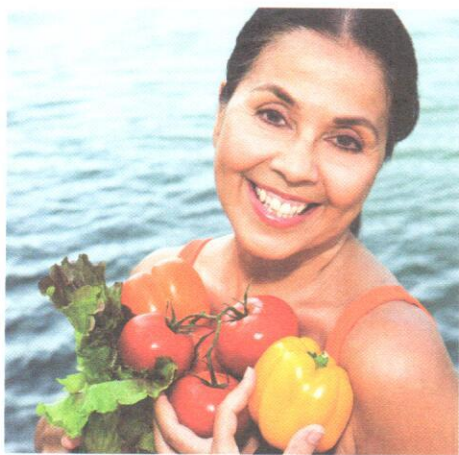
Rest no more than 1 or 2 days and then stay moderately active. It's a myth that you need to rest for a long time (unless your health care provider tells you to because you have a serious condition, such as loss of bowel or bladder control or fever).

Use ice and non-prescription pain relievers to reduce inflammation. Treatment for low back pain may involve easy stretching and strengthening exercises, or physical therapy.

These back-friendly habits can help reduce strain and everyday backache:

- Maintain good posture, especially while sitting. No slouching.
- Sit less. Get up and move about frequently.
- Do low-impact cardio exercise to improve circulation and strength.
- Use an exercise ball to help strengthen your core.
- Lose excess weight, especially abdominal fat.
- Let your strong leg muscles power the effort of lifting.

See your provider if you have persistent back pain. Discuss lifestyle changes and exercise needs – and find relief.



Get Ready for Summer Produce

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Use summertime's plentiful vegetables and fruit as inspiration to add more color to your plate. Here's how:

Go green. Include green vegetables daily for their stellar nutrient content. Stir-fry leafy greens – kale, spinach, arugula, collards, Swiss chard – in garlic and olive oil, or use them for salads.

Throw in more colors. Expand your taste buds with these fruits and vegetables:

- **Apricots** – When fresh, these relatives to plums give a delicious tart-sweet bite.
- **Heirloom tomatoes** – Succulent and juicy, these colorful red, green and yellow gems pair well with feta cheese and oregano. And they're actually a fruit.
- **Jicama** – Peel the brown skin, slice and eat alongside celery and cucumber with hummus.
- **Peppers** – For a fast rainbow, toss together vitamin C-rich green, red, yellow and orange peppers with olive oil, lime and cilantro. Look for purple peppers, too.
- **Berries** – Farmers' markets have unique in-season berries to try. Look for black currants, bilberries, cape gooseberries and mulberries in addition to traditional blueberries and strawberries.

Fresh produce adds vibrancy, texture and flavor to your meals – plus lots of fiber and few calories.



Smart Moves toolkit is at www.personalbest.com/extras/May14tools.

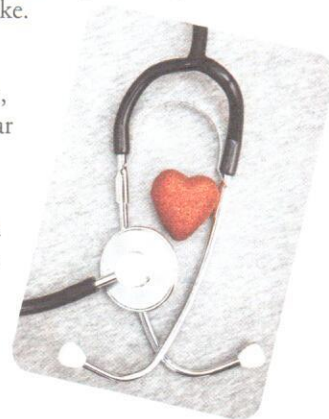
Shape Up Your Blood Vessels

Your heart pumps blood through a vast network of blood vessels called the **circulatory system**. Arteries carry oxygen-rich blood from your heart and lungs to every cell in your body while the veins carry blood back to your heart. Capillaries, the smallest blood vessels, connect and support arteries and veins.

Over time, cholesterol and other fat deposits accumulate on artery walls, harden into plaque and narrow the arteries. Chronic high blood sugar also slowly damages blood vessels. Blocked arteries decrease the supply of blood and oxygen to your body, which can lead to high blood pressure, heart attack and stroke.

To keep blood vessels strong:

- ✓ **Kick tobacco.** Because smoking injures the blood vessels, quitting is the best way to strengthen them. Within 1 year of quitting, your excess risk of heart disease drops 50%.
- ✓ **Control diabetes.** Monitor your blood sugar level frequently. Heart and blood vessel problems are the main causes of sickness and death among people with diabetes.
- ✓ **Check your vital signs.** Blood pressure and cholesterol levels are key indicators of blood vessel health.
- ✓ **Add fruits and vegetables.** Their nutrients, including soluble fiber, are crucial to arterial health.
- ✓ **Exercise daily.** Just 30 minutes of moderate-intensity activity, such as walking, can produce blood flow and oxygen delivery that can significantly improve your arteries.



Sunscreen 101

Every time your skin tans or burns, it is damaged.

As the damage builds, you speed up the aging of your skin and increase your risk for skin cancer.

Using sunscreen is the best way to protect your skin from sun rays. When choosing a sunscreen, knowing some basics will help.

Sunscreens contain filtering substances that reflect or absorb UV rays. Sunscreens generally use both organic and inorganic ingredients for better blocking. Always use a broad-spectrum sunscreen. Broad spectrum blocks UVA and UVB rays.

The FDA recommends using sunscreen with a minimum SPF of 15. Dermatologists favor SPF 30 sunscreens, which provide slightly more protection. Regardless, always apply sunscreen thoroughly and frequently when you're in the sun, especially if you're swimming or sweating. Sunscreens can be labeled "water resistant" if their labels instruct users to reapply after 40 or 80 minutes of swimming or sweating, immediately after towel drying, and at least every 2 hours.

Using sunscreen can reduce your risk of melanoma skin cancer.

Only broad-spectrum sunscreens with an SPF of 15 or higher can claim to reduce skin cancer or prevent early skin damage.



Women Staying Well >> *Continued from other side.*

Stay informed. It's clear we all need to know more about our health issues, including health care. Make time for self-care and routine checkups. Don't put off that Pap test or mammogram or forget your vaccinations.

Start with simple changes and a fresh attitude. Some great choices: Eat plenty of

vegetables, fruits and whole-grain foods. Avoid sweets and alcohol. If you smoke, set a quit date. Learn to enjoy and appreciate your workouts.

Make smart choices. Identify a few goals and how to realistically meet them. *Example:* Take a daily 20-minute walk in exchange for less social networking.

Next Month: Take a Hike