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Staying on the right track

Fitness experts stress healthy lifestyle to keep exercisers from slacking off

By ANNETTE JONES
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Stephanie Rock, a 36-year-old Center Grove area resident, began working out at Baxter YMCA in January to get back in shape after the birth of her daughter two months earlier.

Rock hadn't exercised for four years, since the birth of her son. With a full-time job at Eli Lilly and Co., she felt like she didn't have time to focus on fitness, she said.

But now it's time to get "back in the swing of things and get rid of the baby fat," she said.

This time, with the help of a full-time nanny, fitting in an hour of exercise after work will be easier.

Rock started her exercise regimen during the biggest sign-up month of the year for fitness centers, health clubs and weight-loss programs. For many participants, New Year's resolutions are their motivation.

Unfortunately, the number of people working out around the country will start tapering off in mid-March and April, says BreAnn Burns, wellness coordinator at Baxter YMCA.

Nationwide about half of exercise participants will drop out in the first three to six months,

according to the Healthy Weight Journal and health experts at Brown University School of Medicine.

Wellness directors and fitness trainers are trying to curb that trend by stressing a healthy lifestyle that includes nutrition as well as exercise to their clients.

Losing weight is 80 percent diet and 20 percent exercise, Burns said. However, exercise speeds up metabolism rate, which causes faster weight loss.

Patti Walker didn't want to lose weight when she started working out with Terry Harper, a personal trainer at the Franklin Parks and Recreation Department's fitness center. Her goal was to stay fit so she could play the drums and walk her dogs.

"I wanted to be as healthy as I can be," said the 61-year-old Franklin resident.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends 30 minutes or more of moderate physical activity most days of the week. More intense and longer workout periods can bring about greater health benefits, however.

The key is making a commitment for regular exercise that you are most likely to maintain, health experts say.

"You can't come in three times a week and expect to lose weight," Harper said, although every little bit helps, she added.

Joe Binder, 49, of Franklin takes his daily workout seriously. When his annual checkup showed his cholesterol was high, his doctor told him to start exercising and change his diet. He hasn't missed a day since he started the first week of January.

A truck driver for the IndyCar series, he said he may have to slow down during racing season.

Sandi Wood, 47, of Franklin was encouraged when she lost five pounds the first week after she started an exercise program.

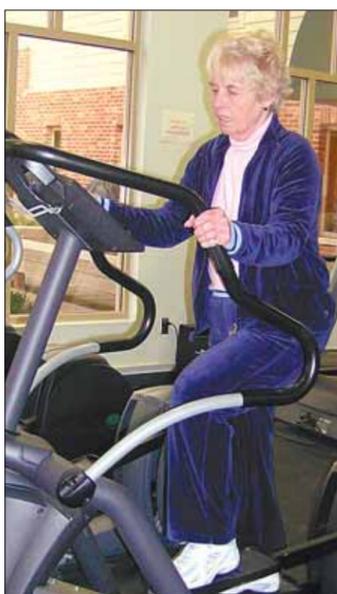
"My doctor told me to quit smoking and lose weight," said Wood, who weighed 200 pounds when she started exercising. She works out daily at Franklin's fitness center after leaving work at the nearby Indiana Masonic Home.

Daily exercise becomes part of your lifestyle, Harper said.

"People need to challenge themselves," she said. "If you do 10 (repetitions) and you aren't tired, you need to do more. People are stronger than they think."



STAFF PHOTO BY SCOTT ROBERSON/sroberson@thejournalnet.com



STAFF PHOTO BY ANNETTE JONES/ajones@thejournalnet.com

Above: Stephanie Rock of the Center Grove area does weight training at Baxter YMCA on the southside. She started working out again in January after a four-year lull. **Left:** Patti Walker of Franklin stays in shape under the tutelage of a personal trainer at the Franklin parks department's fitness center.

Combo best way to go

Mix different types of exercise

A balanced fitness program requires a combination of strength and cardiovascular exercise.

To start a program, get a health assessment and educated how to use exercise equipment to avoid soreness and injury.

Try five days of cardiovascular exercise interspersed with three days of weight training every other day.

A 10- to 15-minute warm-up on an exercise bike, elliptical machine or treadmill is the best way to begin an hourlong workout.

SOURCE: Terry Harper, personal trainer, Franklin Parks and Recreation Department

TO YOUR HEALTH

Daily Journal staff report

Knee, hip pain topic of free seminar

A free seminar about coping with knee and hip pain is scheduled for 2 p.m. Thursday at the St. Francis Joint and Spine Center on the second floor at St. Francis Hospital Beech Grove, 1600 Albany St.

Topics include knee or hip pain, how to prevent and/or relieve pain and the latest treatments, including medications, nutrition and exercise.

An optional tour of the new St. Francis Joint and Spine Center includes the Joint Camp, a rehabilitation and recovery program for joint replacement patients.

Registration: 783-8578

IU cancer center offers mentoring for students

High school and undergraduate students planning cancer research careers can get hands-on experience during the summer working with physicians and researchers at the Indiana University Cancer Center.

The IU Cancer Center Summer Research Program runs from June 5 to Aug. 4.

Students are assigned mentors affiliated with the center. Participant selection is based on interest in biomedical or behavioral science, grades and personal interviews.

Applications are available through the center's Web site at www.cancer.iu.edu.

The deadline for submitting applications is March 1. Applicants will be notified by April 1.

High school students applying must have completed at least their junior year and have maintained a grade point average of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale.

Undergraduates applying for the program must have completed 24 hours of college credit, be majoring in a biomedical or behavioral science and have maintained a grade point average of 3.2.

Information: Gwendolyn L. Johnson, iuccsrp@iupui.edu

Doctor to speak with Parkinson's disease group

Parkinson's and Caregivers Support Group of Indiana will meet from 2 to 4 p.m. March 5 at Crestwood Village South, 8801 Madison Ave., Building 1, Indianapolis.

Dermatologist Thomas Cortese will speak.

Information: Hilda Miller, 783-3642 or Hilda035@comcast.net

Hospital volunteer jobs open to teens, adults

St. Francis Hospital & Health Centers is looking for volunteers.

Volunteers are needed to greet patients and visitors, escort visitors, transport patients between departments, visit with patients, serve as receptionists and deliver mail and flowers.

Positions are available at the Heart Center at the Indianapolis campus and the Joint and Spine Center at the Beech Grove campus.

Volunteers must be at least 14 years old.

Information: Indianapolis, 865-5192; Beech Grove, 783-8192

Group offers support to cancer patients

Cancer Support Group meets from 6 to 8 p.m. the first and third Wednesday of each month at St. Francis Home Health, 438 S. Emerson Ave., Greenwood.

The group is led by a licensed therapist.

Information: 257-1505

Items to be donated to young hospital patients

February is Pooh Bears for Molly Month.

Johnson County Health Foundation and the family of the late Molly Gibson ask the community to donate Winnie the Pooh items that will be given to child and teen patients at Johnson Memorial Hospital in Franklin.

New Winnie the Pooh items may be dropped off at the following locations: Franklin Community High School, Franklin elementary schools, Franklin Cultural Arts and Recreation Center, Johnson Memorial Hospital information desk, Style Dance Academy and Triton Elementary School.

Information: 736-2671

Lifestyle has more impact than age on weight-loss abilities

Build muscles, drink water to speed up metabolism

By EUGENIE JONES
SCRIPPS HOWARD NEWS SERVICE

Baby boomers and their children are the latest generations to learn first-hand that metabolism slows with age.

But before chalking failed weight-loss efforts up to something beyond your control, try these suggestions to help give your body's metabolic rate the boost it needs.

Don't starve yourself

The longer the break in-between meals, the more your metabolism slows.

Rather than skipping meals and making your body burn calories more slowly, eat small, frequent meals (every two to three hours) over the course of each day.

Stay within your calorie needs

If the goal is to boost your metabolism



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Drink more water to aid weight loss. Staying hydrated helps keeps bodily systems like metabolism running at full steam.

so that you can burn more calories and keep your weight down, don't shoot yourself in the foot by overeating.

Too many calories, regardless of the source, will end up being stored as fat. Calorie intake should also be adjusted to reflect the decreased activity levels that typically come with getting older.

Even though our activity level typically slows down with age, typically what doesn't slow is how much we eat. As a result we eat more than needed and force our bodies to store the excess as fat.

The bottom line in both these scenarios is to keep your food intake balanced with your activity level, and to exercise aerobically four to five times per week, 30 to 60 minutes, to burn off any existing excess body fat.

Build muscle tissue

Did you know that after reaching age 25, the average inactive person loses 2.5 pounds of muscle tissue each year?

We can counter that loss through exercise and hold on to our active muscle tissue while controlling our fat tissue, which is inactive.

Because muscle tissue is active, it is burning calories to sustain itself even when you're asleep, keeping your metabolic rate busy.

You don't have to strive to be a body builder in order to achieve this benefit.

Minimally performing resistance exercises for each muscle group, twice a week on non-consecutive days will help you develop and keep the muscles you have while keeping your metabolic rate active.

Drink water

Since the majority of bodily function takes place in water, a lack of it can really slow bodily systems. A lack of hydration also can divert liver function toward handling water retention and away from its vital duty of burning fat.

Counter this tendency by keeping yourself hydrated and by making sure to especially replenish the water you lose during exercise.

None of these suggestions are magic bullets, but in combination they are tried and true. Add time and effort, and the handicap of a slowing metabolism won't stop you from reaching your weight-loss and fitness goals.

Eugenie Jones is a wellness specialist.