



Experience Exercise

Research Update

As we age, we all lose muscle and gain fat, but exercise can help prevent or at least slow this undesirable change. Recently, there has been much research that supports the benefits of regular exercise to prevent chronic diseases and weight gain.

One study that reviewed the current medical literature for research on the health benefits and drawbacks of physical activity found a linear relationship between exercise and good health; the more one exercises, the better their health (up to a point). Specifically, exercise and fitness are linked to the prevention of heart disease, high blood pressure, certain cancers, diabetes, osteoporosis, depression, obesity and premature death. Another study found that middle-aged women who lifted weights twice a week for one hour had only a 7% increase in belly fat over the two-year study period. Think that still sounds like a lot? Consider that the women in the study who didn't lift weights had a 21% increase in belly fat over the same two years.

Depending on your fitness level and level of mobility, light to moderate activity for 30-60 minutes a day is enough to significantly reduce disease risk. That may mean walking to Starbucks in the morning or to a restaurant at lunch. Gardening and shopping count as light activity. If you're sedentary now, just doing anything is better than doing nothing. Sedentary people who start exercising reap the most health benefits, but active people can still increase their health status by taking their activity to the next level in terms of time or intensity.

6 Healthy Habits

Attention Gelson's shoppers! It's time for your six-month check-in. It's June now, and you're half a year out from your January resolution to be healthier. How are you doing? Have any of your new healthy habits taken hold? What have you thrown by the wayside?

As you may recall, my January resolution for you was simply to be healthy, because when you make the healthiest choices, you are more likely to feel good and achieve your optimal weight. I have some ideas about six easy-to-incorporate habits that can improve your health and possibly lead to weight loss. June is a great month for making changes because there's none of the New Year's resolution pressure to associate with your goals. It's never too late to improve your health, so if you haven't already done so, make these healthy habits a part of your life today.

Healthy Habit # 1 Do not skip meals.

Skipping meals messes up your metabolism and prevents weight loss. It also reduces productivity, energy levels and mental clarity. Many people skip breakfast despite my warning against it. They probably think they're cutting calories by skipping the most important meal of the day. News Flash: when you skip breakfast, you more than make up for the calories you cut by eating more calories later on in the day. Breakfast skippers weigh an average of eight pounds more than people who eat a whole-grain cereal for breakfast. A cup of *Kashi* Go Lean Crunch! cereal with a half cup of nonfat milk is all you need and it only has 180 calories. Since a

healthy weight is an important part of being healthy, I implore you to take ten minutes each morning to eat a bowl of whole-grain cereal within an hour of waking up to help jump-start your metabolism and achieve a healthier weight. Be sure to make time for lunch and dinner, too.

Healthy Habit # 2 Enjoy meals with family or friends.



The value of shared meals is easily underestimated in our time-pressed culture of convenience and instant gratification. Sharing meals helps build healthful bonds that are important for social support, personal connections, as well as physical and mental well-being. A recent study found that people who are lonely have systolic blood pressure (the first number) that is 10-30 points higher than people who feel they have a social network and do not feel lonely. Sharing meals with family and friends is relaxing (hopefully), which can help you digest your food better. It also discourages overeating, probably because when you eat alone, you are more likely to occupy yourself with reading or watching television, habits that almost always lead to mindless munching. Children and adolescents also benefit enormously from family meals.

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6 *Healthy Habits* continued...

Family meals promote a healthy weight as well as a higher intake of fruit, vegetables, whole grains and calcium-rich foods and a lower intake of sodas and fried foods. Children who share meals with their families have better language and literacy development and teens are less likely to engage in risky behaviors than kids who eat on their own. Eating a home-prepared meal is more healthful, but eating a family meal away from home still has social, educational and dietary benefits.

Healthy Habit # 3 **Improve your oral hygiene.**

Did you know that the health of your teeth and gums can be a predictor of your overall health? Gum disease is strongly associated with atherosclerosis, the build-up of plaque in the arteries that can lead to heart attacks and strokes. Gum infections are usually chronic and unless the bacteria that causes gum disease is eliminated or controlled, chronic inflammation throughout the body can result. Avoiding chronic inflammation is probably the best way to prevent the chronic diseases that are associated with it: heart disease, diabetes and Alzheimer's. To prevent gum disease, see your dentist at least once a year, brush at least twice a day, floss daily, eat plenty of crunchy foods, especially fruit and vegetables, and keep soft foods to a minimum. By the way, a Japanese study has found that people who brush their teeth after each meal tend to stay slimmer over time than people who brush less often. This

is probably partly due to the end-of-the-meal effect, where brushing your teeth is an unconscious signal that a meal or eating period is over and partly due to that fact that people who brush after meals are more health conscious in general.

Healthy Habit # 4 **Drink water exclusively.**

Water—not soda—makes up 60% of your body weight. It carries nutrients through your body, helps regulate body temperature, prevents dehydration and keeps energy levels and mental clarity at optimum levels. Perhaps most interesting to you is that water can actually help promote weight loss! It can help you burn calories faster, break down fatty tissue in the body and carry out the waste created by fat loss. If you are retaining water, drinking enough water will help reverse bloat and bring you back into fluid balance by diluting the salt concentration of your blood. You may actually eat less when you are well hydrated since water helps your stomach feel fuller. If you're not drinking water, what are you drinking? Soft drinks are the enemy of healthy bones and taut tummies. A Harvard study has found that drinking just one sugar-sweetened soft drink a day increases women's (and probably men's) risk of diabetes by 83%. Don't even think that diet sodas made with processed artificial sweeteners are a better alternative! Diet soda consumption is correlated with poor blood sugar control in people with diabetes as well as overweight in children. I can respect that you may need the boost

that caffeine provides and I recommend a cup of green tea or brewed coffee in the morning for that purpose.

Healthy Habit #5 **Get some sleep already!**

I know you're not sleeping as much as you should be and that's not a healthy habit. Sleeping is just as important as eating well and exercising because that is the time that your body uses to repair itself and renew its resources. Sleep deprivation can cause overweight, possibly by increasing your hunger hormones or by increasing the number of waking hours in which you can eat. Experts haven't quite figured out the cause for the low sleep-high weight connection yet, but they do know there is a link. Aside from weight gain, lack of sleep can also contribute to accidents, poor concentration, inefficiency, mood disorders and weakened immunity. Most people need at least six hours a night, but some people need up to nine. If you're having trouble falling asleep, staying asleep or feel like you haven't slept when you wake up in the morning, you may have something besides lack of sleep going on and you should talk to your doctor. Getting enough sleep may be as simple as turning off the TV earlier (experts do not advise that you watch TV or read in bed) or eating a lighter dinner (fatty and spicy foods can interfere with some people's sleep). If you're not sleeping enough, take a look at your sleep hygiene and figure out what is keeping you from catching all the Z's you need.

Healthy Habit # 6 **Eat more fruit and vegetables.**

How boring of me. I know, I say this every month, but your produce requirements are still the same. If you're not eating vegetables with lunch and dinner, then you're not meeting your requirements. Vegetables and fruit are low in calories and high in vitamins, minerals, phytonutrients and fiber, all of which work together to control weight, blood sugar, blood pressure, cholesterol and inflammation. In a word, they're healthy, and they meet your goal of eating healthfully. Even if you're just concerned with your weight, produce is your best friend because no other food provides similar nutrients in such a low-calorie package. Most people need seven to 13 half-cup servings of produce a day.

If you've already met all of these health goals, then you probably stopped reading this a long time ago. I believe that we all have room for improvements and there are always healthy habits to add to your list. Exercise is one of them, but that may have to come a little later, when you've adopted these healthful habits and have given some thought to what you really want to do for activity (I'm pretty sure that after giving it some thought, you won't say you want to go to the gym). That is a discussion for next month, though. In the meantime, work towards these six habits and add a few of your own to the list. Remember to adopt these habits slowly if you want them to stick and I'll check in with you next month.

Our registered dietitian has a Masters in Public Health. However, she is not a doctor and her nutritional recommendations are general in nature and not tailored to specific health problems. Talk to your physician or other qualified health care practitioners concerning particular health issues or before beginning any nutritional program.

Iron: Do you need to pump it?

Iron is a funny mineral. It seems like men get too much of it in their diets and women of child-bearing age don't get enough. Iron is an important nutrient for everyone, but your age, sex and activity level determine how much you really need (see chart below).

Iron is what we in the nutrition world call a trace mineral, meaning you only need a little bit of it, yet iron deficiency is a widespread problem all over the world. More women have iron deficiency than men due to monthly blood loss during child-bearing years, which is the reason for their increased iron needs. In men, iron overload is twice as prevalent as iron deficiency, but toxicity is usually due to a genetic disorder called hemochromatosis, the most common genetic disorder in the US (affecting about 1.5 million people). Taking excess supplementary iron can cause toxicity as well. Iron overload can damage the liver, heart and other organs, eventually leading to diabetes, liver disease, heart failure and arthritis.

Iron deficiency and iron deficiency anemia, on the other hand, affects up to 10% of Americans, and is usually due to inadequate dietary iron combined

Iron Requirements

Age	Milligrams (mg)/day
1-3	7
4-8	10
9-13	8
Males	
14-18	11
19-70+	8
Females	
14-18	15
19-50	18
51-70	8
Pregnant	27

with blood loss or a fast rate of growth, as in pregnancy or in growing children. Therefore, those most at risk are children, menstruating women, pregnant women, dieters and athletes, especially long-distance runners and high-impact endurance athletes. Symptoms of anemia (widely known as "tired blood") include feeling deeply tired, weak and short of breath. A weakened immune system is also common. In infants, children and adolescents, iron deficiency can affect brain development and impair learning capacity. Iron is in every cell in our bodies. It is the part of hemoglobin that binds oxygen and carries it from your lungs to your muscles, which explains why you would feel tired and weak if you were iron deficient: Iron deficiency = oxygen deficiency. Hemoglobin also carries iron to your bone marrow to produce new red blood cells. Anemia takes a long time to develop and, along the way, a person will experience more extreme levels of deficiency. Anemia is treated with iron supplements prescribed by a doctor, while a deficiency may just be corrected with dietary

Good Sources of Iron

Food	Iron (mg)/serving	Calories
Canned clams	23 mg/3 oz.	125
Tofu, firm	7 mg/1/2 c.	90
Pumpkin seeds	4.5 mg/1 oz.	150
Blackstrap molasses	3.5 mg/1 Tbsp.	50
Lentils, cooked	3.5 mg/1/2 c.	110
White kidney beans, cooked	3.5 mg/1/2 c.	125
Beef sirloin	3 mg/3 oz.	170
Fortified breakfast cereals	3-18 mg/1 oz.	Variable
Red kidney beans	2.5 mg/1/2 c.	110
Shrimp, boiled	2.5 mg/3 oz.	85
Extra lean ground sirloin	2 mg/3 oz.	150
Artichoke, cooked	1.5 mg/1 item	60
Edamame, shelled	1.5 mg/1/2 c.	100
Barley, cooked	1 mg/1/2 c.	95
Most nuts	1 mg/1 oz.	170
Chicken, skinless	1 mg/3 oz.	150

changes. Never self-treat your iron deficiency or anemia; see a doctor for proper treatment.

Eating a varied and balanced diet is one of the most important things you can do to prevent deficiencies of all nutrients, but with iron, there are some important dietary tricks that you should know to help you make the most of what you're eating. Iron is not readily absorbed and used by our bodies; only 2 to 35% of the iron you eat is absorbed by your body. The following are some tips for getting the most iron from your foods:

- Eat vitamin C with your iron-rich foods because iron can't be absorbed without it.
- Eat animal iron sources with plant iron sources (see table).
- Drink coffee, tea and wine between meals instead of with meals because their tannins bind to iron.
- Don't have a calcium-rich meal with an iron-rich meal, and don't take a calcium supplement with an iron-rich meal because they compete with each other for binding sites.
- The chart on this page lists foods that are very good sources of iron, but keep in mind that whole grains, dried fruit and vegetables all contain some iron.

Like I said before, eating a balanced diet should help protect you from an iron deficiency, but knowing these little tricks could help enhance the absorption of what you're already eating.



**Food
of the
Month**

Cherries

Nothing embodies the fabulous flavors of summer like a bowl of fresh, dark, sweet cherries. These little deep purple gems only honor us with their presence for two or three months, so it's best to take advantage of their gifts of health and flavor right now. Cherries are loaded with antioxidants, as you might guess from their almost black color. Anthocyanins, quercetin, ellagic acid and vitamin C all contribute to the health benefits of these tiny plums.

The antioxidant power of cherries is believed to help prevent heart disease and cancer, slow aging, promote sleep and provide pain relief from rheumatoid arthritis. Anthocyanins act as potent antioxidants to inhibit LDL cholesterol oxidation, which in turn helps to prevent heart attacks and strokes. Anthocyanins and quercetin both have anti-inflammatory properties that help reduce inflammation in the joints of arthritis sufferers, in the mucous membranes of allergy sufferers and inside arteries. Quercetin may also reduce the growth and proliferation of cancer cells. Sour cherries contain more anti-inflammatory nutrients than sweet, so rheumatoid arthritis sufferers might consider sour cherries to help relieve pain and inflammation. Ellagic acid seems to help lower

cholesterol and protect against cancer. Cherries also contain melatonin for enhanced sleep, boron for stronger bones, vitamin C, beta-carotene, potassium and fiber.

A 1-cup serving of pitted Bing cherries (21 of the sweet ones) has 90 calories, 3 grams of fiber and 18% of our Daily Value for vitamin C. Sour cherries have fewer calories, since they contain less sugar, and they're packed with vitamins A and C.

Cherry season is short—just June through July or August. They're available from California in early June, and then from Washington later on this month. Gelson's will have your deep-red favorite, Bing, as well as the beautiful and very sweet Rainier, which is large and yellow with a bright red blush. Look for plump, shiny, firm cherries with green stems. Make sure the stems are attached, since the stem scar invites bacteria. Pick the darkest Bing cherries and the brightest Rainier cherries. When you get them home, don't wash them, but arrange them in single layers between sheets of paper towels and wrap them in plastic. To cook with them, first wash them under cold running water, remove the stems, and then use a cherry pitter to pop the pits out. Cherries are fantastic on their own and they also pair well with dark chocolate, poultry and pork.



This month try my recipes for Chicken with Cherry-Black Bean Salsa and Cherry Clouds.

Jessica's June Store Appearances: Diet Upgrades*

Jessica will be offering complimentary diet upgrades and answering your questions about weight loss, food and nutrition.

Westlake Village

Monday June 26, Noon

Pasadena

Monday June 19, Noon

Encino

Tuesday June 20, Noon

Calabasas

Monday June 26, 3:30 pm

Visit Jessica at her new office, now located in the Century City Gelson's!

Silver Lake

Monday June 19, 4:00 pm

Century City

Thursday June 22, Noon

West Hollywood

Tuesday June 27, Noon

*Tell Jessica what you eat and she will suggest upgrades to your eating plan to help improve the healthfulness and balance of your diet.

CALABASAS 818-906-6228	ENCINO 818-906-5780	NEWPORT BEACH 949-644-8660	PASADENA 626-535-0190	SILVER LAKE/LOS FELIZ 323-660-0387	WEST HOLLYWOOD 323-656-5580
CENTURY CITY 310-277-4288	IRVINE 949-551-6093	NORTHRIDGE 818-377-4133	SANTA BARBARA 805-687-5810	TARZANA 818-906-5752	WESTLAKE VILLAGE 805-496-0353
DANA POINT 949-488-8147	MARINA DEL REY 310-306-2952	PACIFIC PALISADES 310-459-4483	SHERMAN OAKS 818-377-4140	VALLEY VILLAGE / NORTH HOLLYWOOD 818-906-5743	MAYFAIR HOLLYWOOD 323-464-7316