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BODY + MIND

FALL 2017

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Mobility matters to living well

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Cook your way to better health

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CHOP, STIR AND SAUTEE YOUR WAY TO BETTER

5 ways cooking can improve your overall health

BY BEV BENNETT
CTW FEATURES

Once mealtime is no longer shared with your children or based on work schedules, you may be eager to stand in a restaurant line instead of at your kitchen stove.

Why should you cook when you no longer have to set a good example for young children at the table?

The question should be: Why not?

Home cooking can promote a better diet and so much more, say nutrition and health experts.

Here are five ways it contributes to your health.

1. IMPROVES NUTRITION

The balanced meals you made for the family may not seem necessary now.

"As people become empty nesters, they may become lax with their eating habits," says Angel C. Planells, MS, registered

dietitian nutritionist and spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

That shouldn't be the case.

"It's pretty well documented in research that cooking at home is better for your health than eating out," says Dr. Dana King, professor and chair of the West Virginia University School of Medicine's Department of Family Medicine, Morgantown.

Of course you have to make the right choices.

But you have more control over portion size and ingredients, according to Dr. King. "The potential for healthy eating is much greater," he says.

2. PROVIDES PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Walking from your car to the supermarket door and then into the house to unload groceries counts as a physical activity.

Even cooking — chopping vegetables or stirring food on the stovetop — may have a

positive effect.

"No doubt that the biggest benefit comes from getting people who do nothing to do something (getting up off the couch)," writes Stuart M. Phillips, Ph.D., Canada Research Chair Professor, Department of Kinesiology, McMaster University.

"Anything that leads to energy expenditure over and above sitting would do it," writes Phillips in an email interview.

Any movement one does is actually physical activity, Phillips writes.

But it is not the same as planned, structured, repetitive and intentional movement intended to improve or maintain physical fitness, he writes.

How about squats while you're tending the soup?

3. STIMULATES THE BRAIN

Getting involved in mentally stimulating activities such as craft activities, even late in life, may protect against new-onset mild cognitive impairment,

according to a recent study in JAMA Neurology.

Although cooking wasn't one of the crafts studied, it is associated with cognitive health, according to Dr. Yonas Geda, psychiatrist and behavioral neurologist at Mayo Clinic's Arizona campus and senior author of the study.

"Cooking involves planning, sequencing, judgment [prefrontal functions]," writes Dr. Geda in an email interview.

As a creative endeavor, it "stimulates the mind, nourishes the body and builds a healthy attitude," says Russell de Souza, ScD, registered dietitian and nutrition epidemiologist, McMaster University.

Forgetting the culinary basics may be a sign of mental deterioration.

"In dementia, one of the early signs is decline and eventually complete inability to cook," writes Dr. Geda.

4. CREATES OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL INTERACTION

The same JAMA neurology study lists social activities as brain protective.

"We have observed that social activities in old age are associated with decreased risk of cognitive decline," Dr. Geda writes.

Invite friends over for a home-cooked meal.

Sign up for a cooking class.

"It can be educational, social and fun," says Planells, Seattle, Wash.

5. ENCOURAGES MINDFULNESS

Paying attention to what you're experiencing in the current moment may help block stressful distractions. As you engage all your senses in the task at hand, you may experience a calming effect.

You can take a yoga class, meditate or perform your usual kitchen tasks, focusing on the process.

While stirring a stew, inhale the aroma, notice the way colors become deeper and the broth thicker as the ingredients cook and savor the moment.

"I think one thing people are missing in cooking is the enjoyment and mental/spiritual aspect of preparing something nutritious. It's hard to quantify, but part of why cooking is good for you," writes Phillips.

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BY JESSE DARLAND
CTW FEATURES

Studies have shown that eating a vegetarian diet can improve your health, but for many people, cutting out meat completely from their diets isn't something they're prepared to do.

But there's good news. There are many ways to incorporate even occasional vegetarian foods into your diet, so that you can reap some of the heart and health benefits without quitting, well, cold turkey.

"Research shows that if you eat a plant-based diet, you get a lot of health benefits. Probably heart disease is the one we think of the most," says Sharon Palmer, a registered dietitian with 16 years of health care experience and author of "Plant-Powered for Life" (The Experiment, 2014). "It's easy to figure that out. You're eating a plant-based diet and you're eating less saturated fat."

But a vegetarian or part-time vegetarian diet doesn't just cut bad things from your diet. By eating more plants and other beneficial foods, according to Reed Mangels, a registered dietitian and nutrition adviser to the Vegetarian Resource Group. "You're getting more fiber, which has health benefits. More fruits and vegetables means more vitamin C and vitamin A and other vitamins," she says.

Palmer says, "It's a double whammy. You're reducing the intake of things that are harmful, and you're increasing the intake of things that are good for us."

Many Americans already are aware of these benefits, and are taking them to heart — sometimes, anyway. According to a 2008 study commissioned by the Vegetarian Resource Group, about one-third of non-

vegetarians eat plant-based meals at least some of the time.

That might be because of popular trends like "Meatless Mondays," where people

commit to skipping meat altogether one day a week. "A lot of people go shopping on the weekends, and research shows that a lot of people start the week trying out their best behavior," Palmer

says. So take advantage of that by starting the week off with a heart-healthy plan.

Going meatless doesn't mean that you're going to skip out on filling foods. "It's not a matter of taking the meat off the plate and eating a larger portion of



THE HEART BENEFITS OF (PART-TIME) VEGETARIAN LIVING

salad," Mangels says. Instead, look for ways to substitute plant-based proteins like beans or even packaged meat substitutes.

Palmer recommends taking your favorites meals and make them plant based. "If your family has Taco Tuesday, make it vegetarian," she says. "That's one of the easiest things to make plant based. Just skip the meat and use black beans."

Some traditionally ethnic dishes, like Asian or Mexican foods, really lend themselves to

being vegetarian. "Chili and cornbread is another easy thing to make vegetarian," Palmer adds.

Another popular strategy is to do a calendar-based challenge, such as a two-week vegetarian challenge or a one-month vegetarian challenge. "If you really prepare yourself and take a challenge, a lot of people are amazed," Palmer says. She suggests measuring your cholesterol levels, blood pressure and weight before and after the challenge to see how even a short-term vegetarian diet can affect you.

Changing our thinking about meat can also help. While in the U.S., meat is usually thought of as the center of the table around which vegetable-based dishes orbit, this isn't true in many other cultures. Instead, meat is often seen as a condiment used to season primarily plant-based foods.

"So for instance instead of having a hamburger, have a veggie burger, and then if you want to have pork and beans on the side, you have a little bit of pork with a lot of beans," Mangels says. "You've cut down on the meat, and you've got some really great sources of fiber."

Palmer has found that older Americans are increasingly interested in part-time or full-time vegetarianism because of the potential health benefits. "They're in the stage of their life where they want to live a long, vibrant life. They don't want to be on medication or have high blood pressure," she says. "They're on a full vegetarian or vegan

diet because they're trying to improve their blood pressure and avoid chronic disease. People really want to have a high quality life and they're willing to make changes."



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Black Bean, Cilantro and Avocado Quesadillas

Recipe courtesy of Sharon Palmer
Active preparation time: 17 minutes
Total preparation time: 30 minutes
Makes 4 servings (1 quesadilla each)

INGREDIENTS

One 15-ounce can black beans, no salt added, rinsed and drained, liquid reserved (or 1¾ cups cooked)
1 medium tomato, diced
½ small chile pepper (e.g., jalapeño, Anaheim), finely diced
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1 medium garlic clove, minced
¼ cup finely diced fresh cilantro
2 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil
Eight 6-inch corn tortillas
¼ cup plant-based shredded cheese, optional
1 medium avocado, peeled and cut into thin slices
Plant-based sour cream, optional

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a small mixing bowl, mash the beans with a potato masher or fork,

adding 1 to 2 tablespoons of the reserved bean liquid to make a thick, lumpy mixture.

2. Add the tomato, chile pepper, lemon juice, garlic and cilantro to the beans and mix well.

3. Heat 1 teaspoon of the olive oil in a large skillet.

4. Spread ½ cup of the bean mixture onto two tortillas smoothly. Place them in the skillet, bean side up. Sprinkle each with 1 tablespoon of cheese, if desired. Top with another tortilla. Cook the quesadillas over medium heat for about 4 minutes, until the bottom side is browned. Turn over carefully and cook the other side for about 4 minutes, until browned.

5. Remove the quesadilla from the skillet and garnish with avocado slices and plant-based sour cream, if desired. Repeat the process again to make 4 quesadillas.

Variation: You may substitute canned pinto beans or white beans for the black beans, or use 1¾ cups cooked beans or lentils (any variety). If you don't like cilantro, you may substitute parsley.



Per Serving: 302 calories, 9 g protein, 47 g carbohydrate, 12 g fat, 2 g saturated fat, 12 g fiber, 4 g sugar, 282 mg sodium

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LIVE LONG AND PROSPER

Mobility matters when it comes to aging gracefully and adding years to your life

BY JESSE DARLAND
CTW FEATURES

Staying active as we age is especially important for the leading edge of the Baby Boomer generation as they now enter their 70s. For Boomers (and even those in Generation X), staying active as they get older is important if they want to enjoy as many of the golden years as possible.

Even the simple matter of how fast a person walks can become an indicator of their overall health and, consequently, their life expectancy. According to a 2011 study published in JAMA (Journal of the American Medical Association), how fast a person walks is tied to their life expectancy.

But there's another reason that mobility

matters. "Mobility is important for helping people stay independent as they age," says Dr. Deborah Barnes. She is a research health science specialist and the San Francisco VA Medical Center and professor at University of California, San Francisco.

A loss of mobility can make it more difficult to perform basic daily activities without help. "Someone who has difficulty standing up from sitting, for example, may also have difficulty getting to and using the toilet by themselves," she says. This loss of independence can lead to depression, declining health, and may ultimately lead to an earlier placement in a nursing home or another institutional facility.

So staying mobile may help older adults stay in their homes

longer, enjoy daily activities longer, and be able to take care of themselves for a much longer period of time.

For many of us, a call to maintain mobility would equal a call to exercise. But Barnes explains that, just as the body changes as we age, our ideas

about exercise should change as well. Younger Americans exercise to develop strength and endurance, and older Americans can exercise for those reasons as well. But according to the National Institute on Aging's Go4Life campaign, older adults need to

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focus on exercising for balance and flexibility as well.

"The key is to keep moving and to practice the movements that are most needed for daily function, like standing up and walking around," Barnes says.

It's typically the fear of falling that causes some older adults to start moving less, Barnes says. Things that increase the risk of falling include poor balance, vision problems, medication side effects, and environmental hazards. As a result, "one in three older adults falls each year," she says. That includes more than 2 million who need to go the emergency room because an injury resulting from a fall, according to the National Institutes of Health.

"There are lots of programs that have been developed to reduce the risk of falls in older adults," she says. "These include specific exercise programs as well as home modification programs."

Here are a few of the exercises recommended by the Go4Life campaign to maintain balance:

- Practicing standing on one foot
- Walking heel-to-toe
- Performing a "balance walk" with arms outstretched

The campaign also recommends other exercises to strengthen the legs and lower body. These can be performed standing and leaning against a sturdy chair, while wearing ankle weights if possible.

- Back leg raise
- Side leg raise
- Toe stand
- Knee curl

All of these exercises, and others, can be found on the Go4Life website (go4life.nia.nih.gov).

"Lower body strengthening exercises are good for maintaining mobility and balance," Barnes says.

She also recommends things like Tai Chi, which can be helpful at any age.

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HEALTHY LIVING

Lifestyle Changes to Add Years to Your Life

Want to increase your life expectancy? Follow these easy-to-implement tips from Dr. Victor Hirth, chief, division of geriatrics at University of South Carolina School of Medicine and Dr. Daniel Matlock, a geriatrician and associate professor of medicine at University of Colorado's School of Medicine. — *Marla Miller*

1. Watch your waistline
2. Load up on fruits and vegetables
3. Move throughout the day
4. Limit alcohol
5. Get your preventative screenings
6. Take a multivitamin and fish oil
7. Floss regularly
8. Maintain social and family connections
9. Cultivate daily "om" through yoga, meditation or prayer
10. Play brain games, read, take a class
11. Sleep 7-8 hours a night and take a nap when you can
12. Have sex
13. Get a hobby
14. Take regular vacations
15. Think more good thoughts
16. Drink enough water regularly
17. Breathe deeply daily
18. Walk regularly and connect with nature
19. Grow and cook your own food
20. Stop doing work you hate

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MAKING FRIENDS AFTER 50

From cooking classes to walking dogs, experts share tips for meeting people and staying fit

BY JESSE DARLAND
CTW FEATURES

One key component of keeping an aging brain healthy is maintaining an active and stimulating social life. For many adults of retirement age, it's been some time since they've had to put themselves "out there" socially.

"When we're working, many of us don't allow as much time for building friendships with others," says Marianne Oehser, a retirement and relationship coach in Naples, Florida, and founder of Retire and Be Happy. She says the most common adult friendship is one between two couples, which is different than nurturing a one-on-one relationship.

Oehser says that most working adults depend on their jobs to provide them with opportunities to socialize. After retirement, those automatic connections disappear. "We always think that we're going to stay in touch, but that doesn't always happen," she says.

Oehser says that worrying about not being able to make friends is a common concern among retired adults. Many have also moved to a new city or state, which can make social isolation even more acute. "So that means that people have to actively look for and build friendships which isn't always helpful when you're in a new community," Oehser says.

Virginia Berger, founder of The Baby Boomer Retirement Coach in San Diego, often explains to her clients that there are five benefits that work provides: socialization, financial gain, purpose, status and time management.

Even in the case of retired adults who

continue to work part time — a recent Merrill Lynch study found 72 percent of people over age 50 want to continue working in some fashion — many find that these missing benefits become needs that retirees have to fill on their own.

Berger recommends that her clients think back to their interests and seek out like-minded groups of people. "For example, I was very involved in choral music when I was in high school, and I haven't done it since," she says. "So when I retired it was on the top of my list."

So here are five ways to make friends after 50 recommended by the experts.

1. TAKE CLASSES

Classes let you increase your skills and meet people at the same time. They're especially good for people who love to learn, Berger says. She recommends finding something like the OASIS program in her native San Diego.

The program offers low-cost classes for adults over 50 that cover everything from philosophy to exercise. Many community colleges or other education centers across the country offer similar free or discounted courses.

2. VOLUNTEER

Serving others lets retired adults both find a purpose and meet people at the same time. Oehser explains that she once had a client who had retired, divorced and moved across the country. She didn't have a social network and felt very alone.

"She started volunteering for a homeless shelter at a community around here," she says. "Not only did that have a huge impact on her whole

happiness quotient, but she met this group of people that she's become close friends with. It was a wonderful success for her."

Berger recalls a similar experience with a client who found a purpose for his retirement and met others at the same time. He really enjoyed working with dogs, so he decided to spend time volunteering with the Humane Society. "Choosing the right volunteer activity can be your life's purpose," she says.

Berger recommends visiting VolunteerMatch.com, an online service that matches people's strengths and skills with volunteer-driven organizations that need them.

3. JOIN CLUBS OR COMMON INTERESTS

Oehser often urges her clients to join clubs, whether it's something like a book club or common interest club. "Women are far more likely to do that than men," she says. "Many men say 'I'm not doing it.'"

But the results can pay off. If you're not sure what's available in your area, take a look at online resources like Meetup.com, which lists opportunities geared to different interest groups.

4. EXERCISE

Whether it's joining a gym or going to yoga classes, finding a group of people to exercise with regularly will lead to other social interactions and deeper relationships.

Berger knows that this is true in her own life. She joined a yoga class for an opportunity to exercise, but the group became something more and continued to spend time together. "I now belong to a book group that's mostly made up of people who were in that yoga class," she says.

5. SOCIAL MEDIA

A 2015 Pew Research Center report revealed that the fastest growing age cohort joining social media is those 65 and older.

"As grandparents often that's the only way we get to follow our grandchildren who might be across the country, so I think more and more retirees are going on Facebook," Berger says.

Her clients tell her that they wind up finding a larger community online. "I've heard from my clients that they went online and found people from their past that they've lost touch with," she says.

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Energy efficiency improves our quality of life

With an emphasis on energy efficiency — everything from our vehicles to our light bulbs, Americans are seeing a decline in the amount of energy used and as a result, a decline in the amount of our income going to energy companies.

Platte-Clay Electric Co-op, for example, has seen a decrease in the monthly energy used, a drop from an average of 1428 kWh per month in 2010 to 1317 per month in 2017. That, plus a drop in the price-per-kilowatt in 2016 has helped save on energy costs.

The reduction in energy consumption comes from consumers being aware of the importance of making small lifestyle changes, such as turning off the lights when leaving a room, using a set-back thermostat and dressing for the weather — wearing warmer clothes, socks and sweaters in the winter — rather than turning up the heat.

Both CFL and LED lights have made a huge difference in energy consumption, as both use only a fraction of the energy that the old, and now no longer produced incandescent lights use.

And more good news is that the LED bulbs will last for years, not months. They're perfect for putting in outdoor fixtures to provide more light for safety while using little energy, as the CFLs didn't like the cold.

Keeping on a practical note, the energy-efficient Marathon water heaters come with a lifetime warranty: with a plastic shell, they simply don't rust, plus they're lightweight and come in a variety of sizes.

Here's something else to warm up our homes: an energy audit to identify problem areas. The co-op charges \$50 for the members-only program and will rebate up to \$500 for energy efficiency improvements. (Area energy auditors can provide a similar service; Angie's List, Groupon and Google can help.) Platte-Clay's energy auditor usually finds numerous opportunities to caulk and seal around windows and doors to keep the cold winter air outside, and adding insulation is helpful year around.

One thing we find in our homes as the temperature drops is cold spots. Perhaps the warm air vent is a long ways from the furnace and by the time the warm air gets to that room, it isn't very warm.

Although the electric cooperative isn't high on space heaters — they create a lot of energy demand and if not monitored carefully, can cause fires — the co-op does sell the Convectair units. The convection units provide a slow, gentle warmth that gradually heats up cold spaces. The units come in a variety of sizes and can be permanently mounted. For those who are interested in a touch of luxury, there is the wall-mounted unit with towel warmers.

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For information, visit the co-op's website, www.pcec.coop or stop by either office, 15055 Bethel Rd., Platte City, just east of I-29 or in Kearney, 1000 W. State Route 92, just west of I-35, or call the office, 628-3121.

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A TEAM APPROACH TO HEARING LOSS AND DIZZINESS DISORDERS

Two of the most common health problems older adults face related to the inner ear are hearing loss, and dizziness and balance disorders.

Hearing loss affects approximately one-third of U.S. citizens between the ages of 65 and 74, and nearly half of the over-75 population.

Dizziness and balance disorders often contribute to falls, the No. 1 cause of injuries and deaths from injuries for older Americans.

To address both problems, Associated Audiologists uses a team approach at our Northland Clinic.

Katie Petrosky, Au.D., FAAA, is an audiologist specializing in diagnosing hearing loss and in prescribing and fitting the most advanced digital hearing aid technology available. She uses state-of-the-art real-ear technology to verify that each hearing aid she fits is working in accordance with recommended prescriptions for proper hearing and safety.

Dr. Petrosky earned her doctorate of audiology degree from the Washington University St. Louis School of Medicine and received her bachelor's degree from St. Olaf

College, Northfield, Minn.

Danielle Dorner, Au.D., FAAA, is an audiologist who specializes in diagnosing and treating dizziness and balance disorders. Dr. Dorner uses the most sophisticated technology available in the greater Kansas City area to diagnose and treat dizziness and balance disorders, including video head impulse testing (vHIT). This valuable technology is used to accurately diagnose dizziness, vertigo and disequilibrium.

Dr. Dorner earned her doctorate of audiology degree from Northern Illinois University and her bachelor's degree from Augustana College, Rock Island, Ill.

Both audiologists performed their clinical externships with Associated Audiologists. They are fellows of the American Academy of Audiology, and are members of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association and the Kansas Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

To schedule an appointment with Dr. Petrosky or Dr. Dorner, call 816-442-7831. We work with most insurance plans and would be happy to verify your coverage.

For more information about Associated Audiologists, visit www.hearingyourbest.com.

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2 NON-MEDITATIVE WAYS TO CLEAR YOUR MIND

In today's world, it's difficult to find peace.
Here's how to make your mind
a clearer, happier place.



BY CRAIG GUILLLOT
CTW FEATURES

In the age of around-the-clock news coverage, social media and digitally connected lifestyles tied to mobile devices, it's harder than ever to clear the mind. While it's not always possible to eliminate the trappings of the modern world, experts say there are things people can do to reduce mental clutter and think more clearly.

Here are three effective ways to help clear your mind:

1. REDUCE DIGITAL DISTRACTIONS

Digital devices and media are now one of the largest contributors of mental clutter. Psychologist Larry Rosen says in

an article for Harvard Business Review that many people now have fears related to separation from technology.

Rosen recommends using behavioral principles such as dedicated time periods and alarms to wean oneself from digital devices and forms of digital media. Start with a one-minute period every 15 minutes then work towards increasing the time between "check ins" to reduce your habit and dependency. "Repeat this process until you are comfortable increasing your off-grid time to an hour or several hours," Rosen says.

Rosen also recommends abstaining from viewing digital media for one hour before bedtime and to keep devices out of the bedroom.

He says sleeping with a phone beside the bed can release neurotransmitters that energize the brain instead of promoting rest-inducing melatonin.

2. EXERCISE OR TAKE A WALK IN THE PARK

Many studies have shown that exercise can increase mental clarity and reduce stress and anxiety.

Karen Postal, Ph.D., says that in addition to stimulating new brain cells, exercise also increases BDNF (brain derived neurotrophic factor), which can lead to brain cells binding directly to one another. Aerobic exercise not only raises your heart rate, but also can directly and immediately lead to improved focus and

concentration. Postal says following a half hour of strenuous exercise, the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex works harder to resist distracters.

"Studies also show that immediately following exercise, problem solving, memory and attention improve," Postal says.

Merely walking in the park also can reduce stress and increase mental clarity. Recent research from Stanford University found that walking alone in green, natural spaces can reduce blood flow to the subgenual prefrontal cortex. Study participants who walked in nature reported less brooding, "quieter" brains and improved moods, compared to those who walked in urban settings.

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11

GET PHYSICAL!



Researchers say aerobic fitness as important as pulse and blood pressure

BY CRAIG GUILLOT
CTW FEATURES

While vital signs like temperature, pulse and blood pressure are considered essential measures of health, new research says how quickly you get winded could say even more about your risk of illness or death.

A recent scientific statement from the American Heart Association said there is mounting evidence indicating that low levels of cardio respiratory fitness are associated with a high risk of cardiovascular disease. The AHA said a growing number of studies demonstrate that fitness level is so important, it is "potentially a stronger predictor of mortality than established risk

factors like smoking, hypertension, high cholesterol, and type 2 diabetes." The study's authors recommended that doctors integrate aerobic fitness assessments as part of medical examinations, and that they encourage all patients to exercise.

Aerobic fitness, or cardiovascular fitness, is defined as a measure of how well a body can deliver oxygen to the tissues. It is typically measured by VO2 max, which is an oxygen consumption rate that can range from 35-40 mL/(kg min) for the average male and 27-31 mL/(kg min) for the average female. Because VO2 is dependent upon the function of the heart, lungs and muscles, it is an excellent overall reflection of physiological and health function.

Researchers concluded that

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available science “overwhelmingly supports the use of aerobic fitness as a measure of general and heart health.”

Leonard Kaminsky, statement co-author and director of the Fischer Institute of Health and Well-Being at Ball State University in Muncie, Ind., says while doctors generally understand fitness is important, they don’t take it as seriously as other risk factors.

“Hopefully this scientific statement will be a resource and give them confidence in the

rate, blood pressure and exercise output by prescribing watches, sensors and smart “wearables” to their patients. Data from these devices can be synched with apps like My Fitness Pal to help patients monitor their fitness level and health metrics. New performance apparels also come with sensors that can detect muscle effort, fatigue and blood flow to parts of the body. While patients can use these technologies to track their own progress and offer motivation, they also can help doctors attain more information and get a detailed look at the person’s body.

The findings present further evidence as to why exercise is so important. Erik Lief, director of communications at the American Council of Health and Science, says that exercising the heart and

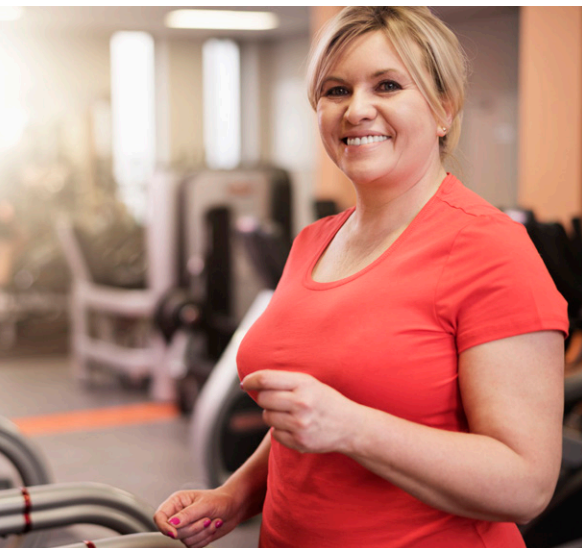
solid evidence base for cardio respiratory fitness as a vital health measure,” Kaminsky says.

The report’s authors say physicians should encourage patients to discover their estimated aerobic fitness levels and how they compare to averages. New equations and simple calculations can produce reliable estimates of a person’s fitness level. While some patients, especially those at high risk for heart disease based on other factors, should still undergo treadmill testing, doctors now obtain a rough estimate with just a few keystrokes. Calculators, such as the one at Worldfitnesslevel.org, use inputs like age, weight, waist size, level of exercise and frequency to give the user a “fitness age” and an estimated VO2 max.

In the near future, doctors may be able to gain more insight into things like heart

lungs is essential to an individual’s overall health, and that “those prone to inactivity are at greater risk for life-threatening conditions.” Lief says it also will make the topic more prominent for doctor-patient interactions and that new technologies will make it easier for doctors to more accurately assess patient fitness levels.

Regular exercise can quickly increase fitness levels and can have a big impact on people who are sedentary. The American College of Sports Medicine recommends starting with 2.5 to 5 hours of moderate intensively exercise per week. This can include things like walking, running, cycling, swimming. HIIT (high intensity interval training) workouts are another way to rapidly increase aerobic fitness levels in shorter time periods.



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FALL 2017 INSPIRED BODY + MIND

Exercise results in larger brain size and lowered dementia risk



THIS IS YOUR BRAIN ON EXERCISE

BY LISA IANNUCCI
CTW FEATURES

It's well-known that exercise helps to control your weight and reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and some cancers. It also helps to strengthen your bones and muscles. New research shows that exercise also makes your brain bigger and reduces your risk of developing dementia.

In a recent study, UCLA researchers found that there was an association between low physical activity and a higher risk for dementia in older individuals. Dementia symptoms include impairments in thinking, communicating, and memory, possibly caused by Alzheimer's disease, which is the leading cause of dementia or brain damage due to injury or stroke.

According to the Alzheimer's Association, one in three seniors dies with Alzheimer's or another form of dementia.

Dr. Zaldy Tan, one of the authors of the study, explains that as you get older your brain tends to decrease in volume. "Just like you lose height and bone mass as you get older, your brain also decreases in size," he says. "Nobody knows how it works, but if you exercise there's better blood vessel health and that increases the blood supply to the brain."

The UCLA researchers found that physical activity particularly affected the size of the hippocampus, which is the part of the brain that controls short-term memory. They also found that the protective effect of regular physical activity against dementia was strongest in people age 75 and older.

"While there is no way yet to prevent Alzheimer's, we are learning that there are things we can do now that may help us maintain our brain health as we age," says James A. Hendrix, Ph.D., director, Global Science Initiatives of the Alzheimer's Association. "In fact, there is a growing body of research demonstrating that lifestyle factors, such as diet and exercise, play an important role in reducing risk for cognitive decline and possibly dementia."

The researchers assessed the physical activity of those who were age 60 and older, examining the association between physical activity and risk of any form of dementia.

"There seems to be validity to what many researchers are saying," Hendrix says. "What's good the heart is good for the brain. It makes sense because the brain is the command center of the body and deserves as much attention as the heart and other vital organs."

Exercise may have direct benefits by increasing blood and oxygen flow in the brain.

Because of its known cardiovascular benefits, a medically approved exercise program is a valuable part of any overall wellness plan.

To help explain which lifestyle choices can promote brain and overall health, the Alzheimer's Association and its experts also

developed 10 Ways to Love Your Brain, which include tips that can reduce the risk of cognitive decline.

Visit <http://bit.ly/10wayslovebrain> for more details.

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Park Lawn also offers prearrangement of memorial estates for those who wish to make their final arrangements in advance.

"Pre-need planning is one of the most effective procedures for family when they're not grieving," said Don Brassfield, family services counselor for Park Lawn Funeral Homes.

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Pre-need planning eases the financial stress of final arrangements.

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Brassfield invites anyone who is considering this option to make an appointment to

discuss it.

"Come in and see us," he said. "There is no cost or obligation to share information."

Pre-need planning can be done at any age, but Brassfield said most people who make these arrangements are over 50.

"More folks 50 and older will be more inclined to start thinking about plans for themselves because they are taking care of it for loved ones," he said.

The funeral home also maintains the perpetual-care Glenridge Cemetery and an off-site crematorium.

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