

# Eat Right Boston

Nutrition and Wellness Newsletter for Healthy Living



## Happy Fall!

I meet a lot of people and I get asked a lot of questions. I'm busier now than ever and I am guessing it is because Telehealth is available; albeit on a temporary basis but fingers crossed that the politicians will see how important such a service is to patients and vote it in permanently. I also think that people are (finally) beginning to understand the role that nutrition has on keeping one's body and health in tip top shape.

For that reason, in this season's newsletter, I tried to summarize some key points, observations, and answers to the questions I receive—all of which reinforces fundamental, sound advice to help you achieve your desired health goals.



Good luck and happy to see you in cyber space if you need some help!

Sophie



## Motivational Advice on Exercise

- Pick an exercise that you like to do and that you can see yourself doing as you age (walk, run, yoga, Pilates, hike, bike, dance, Tai Chi, tennis).
- Find an exercise buddy. Chances are you are going to have some days you don't feel like exercising, but your buddy can inspire you to walk out the door. And vice versa!
- There are plenty of apps that can guide and motivate you; some apps allow you to compete against others, if that is your (competitive) thing.
- Consider your exercise as a work appointment. You wouldn't blow off an important meeting, would you? People who add exercise to their calendars are more likely to exercise.
- If you can't work a 30-minute or 60-minute workout in your day at one time, break it into two and consider different forms of exercise so you don't get bored.
- Don't push yourself. Start at a reasonable pace to keep you going, while preventing unnecessary injury.
- Muscle mass begins to decline at age 30 if you are not on top of it. Isotonics (i.e. strength training) can keep that loss at bay. 30 minutes of isotonics, 2-3 times a week, can increase muscle strength in just two weeks! This also helps to improve bone strength that will keep you stronger as you age; especially women who are prone to osteoporosis after menopause.
- Invest in good shoes and sneakers before you start an exercise program. Having good support is essential for your hips and knees that can take a hit from an out-of-shape exerciser.



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## Motivational Advice on Exercise (continued)

- As the season changes, so does the time on the clocks for those of us on Daylight Savings Time. This may be a good time to invest in a piece of exercise equipment. A treadmill is bulky, but if you have the room, it's a good piece to consider as it emulates what we are designed to comfortably do best—walk!
- A safe heart rate goal is to aim for 60% of your maximum capacity. A quick way to figure that out is to subtract your age in years from 220. Example: A 60-year old has a (theoretical) maximum heart rate of 160 (220 minus 60). A 30-year old can go as high as 190, so when you are at the gym, stop peeking at the monitor of the person next to you! There's no competition going on between the two of you!
- Electronics make it easier to track heart rates and steps, so if that motivates you then invest in one. Your goal does NOT have to be 10,000 steps the first day the sneakers go on. Just use “steps” as a guide to go a little further the next day.
- Staying engaged while exercising has proven to increase commitment. Research supports that listening to your favorite music or talk radio (ha! I'm dating myself) or podcast (I'm back in the 21st century!) can keep people exercising longer. But be smart about it. If anyone uses the bike paths, at least in the greater Boston area, you know how dangerous they can be to a pedestrian. So maybe walk with one ear bud off to be on the safe side?



## Motivational Advice on Sleep

- We don't prioritize sleep like our ancestors did who were forced to be up at the crack of dawn and in bed at dusk. Today, we rely on artificial lighting to keep us going until all hours of the night. That light disrupts our circadian rhythm—our body's natural alarm clock.
- Allowing natural light in first thing in the morning releases melanopsin, a retinal photoreceptor, that plays a key role in circadian rhythm. Light can modulate sleep. Getting more of it energizes you while less exposure helps you to sleep better.
- Sleep is healing and restorative. It's the time our brain cleans out the day's data and allows our body's cells to repair themselves.
- Sleep allows your body to recover faster from an illness. Think of sleep as preventive medicine!
- Try to practice good sleep hygiene: go to bed at the same time each night and get up at the same time. Your body likes regularity.
- Avoid caffeine and electronics before bed; exercise may also increase energy levels so be aware of how you feel after a workout. Does it help you sleep or keep you up?
- Go to bed when you feel sleepy and spend less time lounging in bed when it's time to get up.
- Sleep debt results when you don't get your full, regular sleep cycle. It refers to how much shut eye you 'owe' your body if you slept too little. Dr Satchin Panda, whose research centers around circadian rhythm, says that getting less than a full night of sleep means you will carry sleep debt into the next day. Catching up on 10-20 minutes of sleep debt keeps your sleep cycle in check; anymore will leave you drowsy the next day. Sleep debt can lead to physical and/or mental fatigue over time.
- Short naps of 15 to 20 minutes may help relieve sleepiness, but shouldn't interfere with the regularity of bedtime and wake time.
- Rest up! A strong circadian rhythm helps to activate the immune system, and we know how important that is right now to stay healthy and avoid this dreadful virus.

## Motivational Advice on Food and Weight



Weight loss is not a simple process.

Keeping weight off long-term is often times harder than taking it off short-term.

Commercial weight loss and fad diet programs don't support realistic compliance levels.

Body shape is determined largely by heredity—accept what you got in the gene pool, but focus on how your body feels and how strong you can make it by feeding it well.

The best way to lose weight is by increasing lean body mass (i.e. muscle.) Building your core muscles (abs) also helps with body posturing.

Subbing all good food for bad food sounds like a good idea but it may be setting you up for failure in the long run. Allow yourself permission to eat “taboo” foods on occasion. If you want some chocolate, save it as a treat for after your meal when you are less likely to overindulge.

Having friends and family on board with healthy eating habits makes for less temptation and better successes.

There's no need to cut all foods out of your diet. You're not dieting, per se. Just changing the way you eat for the long haul.

Start small. Small changes over time are easier to manage.

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