



# Health & Fitness

By: Christine McInnes

*Disclaimer: This newsletter is based on the information I have discovered through my passion of health and fitness. I am not a health professional. Seek the advice of your physician before starting a new diet and/or exercise program.*



## “Celebrating Spring”

March 20<sup>th</sup> marks the first day of spring!! My favorite season of the year!! You can smell the fresh flowers while enjoying a bike ride. You can see the blossoms blooming as you’re rollerblading and feel the warm weather, melting the ice so you don’t slip while out on a run. You can also taste the fresh robust flavors of seasonal fruits and vegetables.

According to Wikipedia, spring is seen as a time of growth, renewal and of new life in terms of plant and animals being born. The term is also used as a metaphor for the beginning of better times. Cultures all around the world celebrates spring with Festivals and other traditions. This year, I am starting a new tradition and I ask that you join me. Every spring we are going to try a new physical activity and add our body/diet to the list of items being cleaned.

If you haven’t seen my blog, you may be wondering what new physical activity I am going to try this spring? I am going to learn and practice standup paddle boarding and I am so excited! Standup paddle boarding is a full body workout that will help strengthen my entire body and increase flexibility in my hips and shoulders. It’ll give me a chance to enjoy the sun and ocean while exercising in a nontraditional way. I am also going to sign up and train for my first sprint triathlon. I have never properly learned how to swim so that will be an adventure in itself. Not only will these activities keep me physically active and fit but when I learn something new I will be working out my brain too which helps fight against diseases like Alzheimer’s.

## Benefits to learning something new

Learning across a wide range of subjects gives us a range of perspectives to call on in our own narrow day-to-day areas of specialization.

Learning helps us more easily and readily adapt to new situations.

A broad knowledge of unfamiliar situations feeds innovation by inspiring us to think creatively and providing examples to follow.

Learning deepens our character and makes us more inspiring to those around us.

Learning makes us more confident.

Learning instills an understanding of the historical, social, and natural processes that impact and limit our lives.

Learning also makes life worth living.

Source: “Learn Something New Every Day”  
By: Dustin Wax

## **Fruits & Vegetables in Season**

*Apricots  
Artichokes  
Arugula  
Asparagus  
Beets  
Cardoons  
Carrots  
Chard  
Cherries  
Fava Beans  
Fennel  
Fiddleheads  
Garlic  
Grapefruit  
Green  
Onions/Scallions  
Greens  
Kiwis  
Kumquats  
Leeks  
Lemons  
Lettuce  
Mint  
Morals  
Navel Oranges  
Parsley  
Pea Greens  
Peas  
Radishes  
Rhubarb  
Spinach  
Spring Onions  
Strawberries  
Sweet Onions  
Turnips*

Now you're probably wondering what you are going to do? What about learning how to play tennis, complete your first 5K road race, join a running club, add strength training to your exercise routine, learn how to ballroom dance, rock climb, surf or take your first hike? Your options are endless!! You may have something that you have always wanted to try but never took the initiative because you never made the time or you were too nervous. Stop making excuses and take the initiative now! Choose something that excites you and that you can't wait to start! Once you decide what you are going to do and if you haven't done so already, go to: mcinnesfitness.weebly.com to share what your new activity is and see what other people are doing. I am excited to see what everyone is doing!

When it comes to spring cleaning don't just focus on your home. Bring that focus to your diet and let your diet cleanse your body. Do this by putting an end to eating empty calories. If it is too hard to cut everything out at once, focus on one thing at a time. A good place to start would be eliminating: soda, candy bars, chips, fried foods, foods high in sodium and I hate to say this one... caffeine. For those of you who know me, know that I have an addiction to coffee, and caffeine free coffee is NOT coffee, as far as I am concerned. It is nothing for me to drink 40 oz of coffee a day. Sure, coffee doesn't have any calories but the cream and sugar we put into it does. Caffeine in high doses negatively affects your central nervous system and can make you become an insomniac.

This spring, I am no longer drinking coffee Monday through Thursday and limiting my intake on the weekends. I am also saying goodbye to items with hydrogenated oils such as potato chips, packaged cakes, crackers, packaged breads and candy bars. Note that some breads and crackers do not have hydrogenated oils and will remain in my diet. It is important to read the labels on the back of packages to know what you're eating and if you are sticking to your plan. You can not believe what you read on the front of packages because companies are able to add whatever they want and they know what sells.

When it comes to cleaning your diet it isn't just about eliminating items and cutting back, it is also about adding items that will nourish and cleanse. I just started reading "The American Detox Diet" which shows you how to use your foods to detox. It is not about going on an extreme detox diet such as the Master Cleanse (also known as the Lemonade Diet). It's about using wholesome foods as a

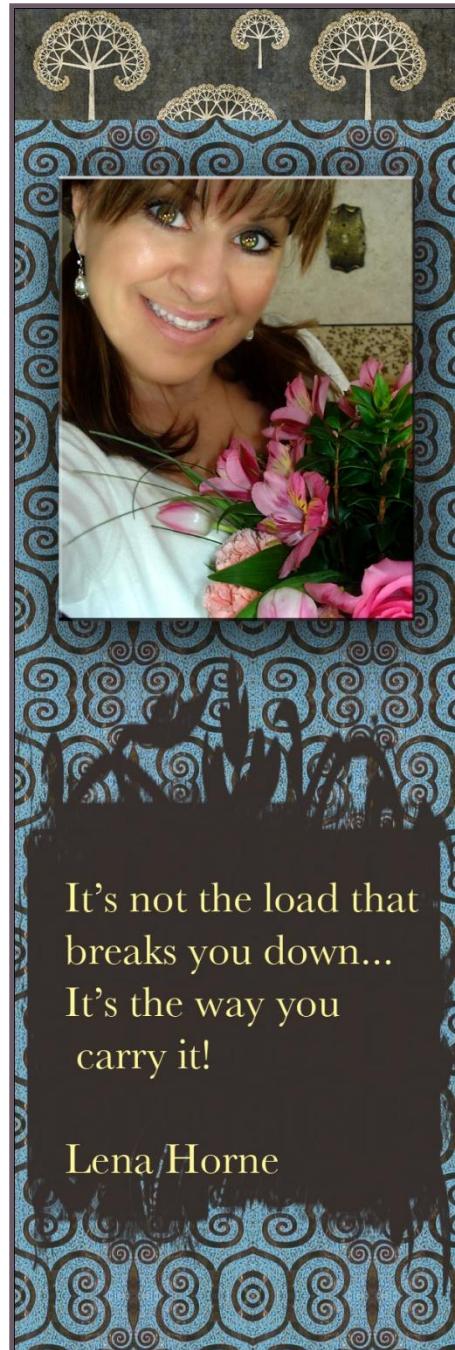
staple to our everyday diet and being on a diet we can live on that will naturally heal and cleanse our bodies. Spring is a great time to start introducing new fruits and vegetables to your diet. Take a look at the side bar, on page 2, to see what is in season this time of year. We are so used to being able to eat many fruits and vegetables any time of the year but if you choose items that are in season, you will notice they are less expensive and have more flavor.

Think of spring as a second chance to your New Year's Resolutions. On average, researchers discovered that people lose interest in their new year's resolutions a few weeks after making them. This year and every year from here on out, make your spring tradition last and have fun with it! Give your mind, body and soul the new beginning it deserves and the new beginning that nature calls for. Spring is a celebration of life... your life.

### **"Thin doesn't mean Fit"**

If it wasn't for Dawna Labrecque, I probably wouldn't have gotten into running marathons. Dawna is very intelligent, motivating and creative. She has educated herself in the field of exercise and nutrition not only to protect herself but to motivate others as well.

Dawna and I met when we worked together at Shaw's Supermarket in 1998. We would talk about running and fitness but it wasn't until we worked together at Ocean Communities Federal Credit Union in 2004 that we started running together. We had the same work schedule so it made it easy to meet after work and on the week-ends. I remember when we first started running, she would talk about the Boston Marathon and how much work the training was and that she would never train for a marathon again. We slowly built our mileage to 25 – 40 miles a week. When we were running, we talked about everything and when we weren't running, we were talking about running. I'll never forget when she came up to me and said, "You know, with all this running we are doing, it is almost like we are training for a marathon... maybe we should sign up for one." I thought she was nuts but at the same time I was excited. She researched different events and found the Mount Desert Island Marathon in Bar Harbor, Maine. Before I knew it, we were registered, taking our running more seriously and gradually increasing our long runs. Dawna was an amazing trainer and motivator. Unfortunately, life doesn't always work



It's not the load that  
breaks you down...  
It's the way you  
carry it!

Lena Horne

**One of the many unique  
bookmarks created by  
Dawna (more found her on  
Facebook page)**

the way we plan, and she got a really bad ulcer preventing her from running the event.

She used to own a gym that had 1500 members, so she was more than qualified to train me. She managed a staff of 13 trainers and offered weight lifting, calisthenics and aerobic classes every hour. She would give her members what she calls a Personal Exercise Prescription to help them work their problem areas while protecting or preventing injuries.

When Dawna was a teenager and into her 20's she struggled with her weight and wanting to be thin. When she got married at age 21, she was 73 pounds, wore size 0 pants and had a waist size that was in the teens. She would hardly eat and when she did, she would take laxatives and exercise non-stop. Her mom helped her realize she needed help by commenting about her weight and letting her know that she was on a path to anorexia. Fitness, in a way, has been an obsession for Dawna and that will never end. It is an everyday battle that she faces because her mind wants to go back to her old habits but with her knowledge she is able to fight against the urge. A big part to a disease like anorexia is that it is in the mind and you need to fight the depression that comes with it.

Her advice to anyone in this path is one we can all learn from "Believe in yourself and accept yourself the way you are. Think of your health in the long term, not short term. Ask yourself; what I do today, will it affect my life tomorrow? There is no such thing as a quick fix without a price." Her favorite quote is "Tomorrow is always fresh with no mistakes in it" from Anne of Green Gables.

Dawna has side effects from her eating habits that she will have to live with for the rest of her life. She now has Hyperglycemia and needs to be very careful with what she eats. Her body keeps developing food allergies and her GI track has been damaged, so her body is not able to digest certain foods. She started seeing a holistic doctor who has helped her and changed her life by developing a diet her body is able to process. She is on a gluten free high protein diet and normally has no sugar. She avoids coffee, soda and doesn't consume anything that is artificial and knows that she needs to eat more fruits and vegetables.

Her biggest athletic accomplishment was training for and completing the Boston Marathon while raising awareness for Multiple Sclerosis. A marathon in itself is hard enough but Dawna did it on a broken foot while her friend Allyne Watson did it with Multiple Sclerosis. The night before the event Dawna and Allyne, who had always



**Dawna and her grandson Emerson**



**Dawna and her grandson Owen**



**Dawna's creative eye - taken from the back of her husband's Harley**

wanted to run Boston, were on their way to a Runner's World party and in the excitement of the event Dawna fell off a curb, twisting and breaking her foot. Knowing the struggles with discomfort, pain and exhaustion that Allyne had to deal with while training and the struggles she faced during the marathon from Multiple Sclerosis, Dawna told herself if she can push through the pain, I will too. They finished in a great time of 5 hours and 33 minutes. When I asked her what stuck out in her mind the most about the marathon, she had me laughing with her reply. It was the shock from seeing people defecating out in the open and having no shame. For those of you who have not done a marathon, know that this is not something that everyone witnesses, Dawna was just at the wrong place at the wrong time... multiple times.

Her exercise routine consists of a half hour on a recumbent bike, Pilates and trampoline workouts. She doesn't run as much as she used to and has a desire to get back into a running regimen to help keep her weight off and her bones strong.

Towards the end of our interview, I asked Dawna if there was anything she would like to add and she said "Yes and you better make sure you include this in your newsletter! It is funny that years ago, I inspired the person writing this article, to run and now she sits there inspiring me. What goes around comes around. I would remember when I would tell you how long we are going to run and hear you say 'But I can't do that'. I would just say, 'Yes, you can. All you need to do is put one foot in front of the other. Now, let's go!' And you would do it."

Dawna will forever remain a big part of my life and we created many wonderful memories during our hours of running and working together. Speaking of creating memories... Dawna is an amazing photographer and can help you photograph many of your lasting memories. Check her business page on Facebook "Photography by Dawn" and her website, [www.photographybydawn.zenflio.com](http://www.photographybydawn.zenflio.com).

**\*\*Recipe of the Month\*\***

**Walnut Lentil Salad**

Source: "The Great American Detox Diet"

1 ½ cups cooked brown lentils, cooled and drained  
¼ cup sliced green onions, green part only  
1 cup packed thinly sliced baby spinach  
8 sun-dried tomatoes, packed in oil, drained and chopped (1/4 cup)  
¼ cup walnut  
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil  
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar  
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard  
1 teaspoon chopped fresh rosemary  
1 clove garlic, crushed  
½ teaspoon salt  
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

In a large mixing bowl combine the lentils, green onions, spinach, tomatoes and walnuts. Mix well and set aside. In a small mixing bowl, combine the oil, vinegar, mustard, rosemary, garlic salt and pepper and whisk together. Pour over lentil salad and mix well. Allow the salad to set at room temperature for 30 minutes, stirring a few times before serving.

For more information or comments  
feel free to e-mail me.

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