



Health & Fitness Newsletter

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.



“Strength Training”

Strength training is not just for body builders and you don't need an expensive gym membership or top of the line equipment to do it. In fact, you can strength train without any equipment at all by doing things like: sit-ups, push-ups, crunches, planks, squats, lunges and many other exercises. These exercises use your own body weight to build strength and tone muscles. However, it is very beneficial to add free weights, dumbbells, barbells, medicine balls and/or resistance bands to your routine to increase the benefits of weight lifting because it adds variety to your routine.

Women, don't worry about getting big and bulky muscles, very few women are able to build muscles like that because we do not have the right amount of hormones (testosterone). On average, everyone burns 4.5 to 7 calories per pound of muscle each day whereas fat burns almost nothing. On Sparkpeople.com I read that “After the age of 30, inactive adults will lose three to five percent of muscle mass per decade.” Strength training will slow muscle loss helping you maintain and even increase lean body mass making you look leaner and burn more calories throughout the day!! Strength training also increases bone density and reduces the risk of Osteoporosis, by stressing and massaging your bones.

Now men, don't get discouraged if you don't bulk up right away. Although your testosterone levels are 20 – 30 times higher than your female counterparts, no one can strength train for a month (or less) and expect to see significant changes. Changes that happen in our bodies start on a cellular level. Our bodies strengthen our nervous system before muscle hypertrophy (increase in size of the muscle cells) can occur. This is a good thing because our entire bodies get stronger right away. In cardiovascular training, the heart (also a muscle) adapts quickly but the same is not true for skeletal muscle. They need longer periods of stress to react and support from nerves to strengthen. So don't give up after a few weeks of training because you don't see your muscles bulge as you flex in front of the mirror. You will begin to see results the more consistent you are.

When it comes to burning fat, we are unable to control where the fat comes from. This is called “Spot Training” and there are a lot of myths about it. An example of this is saying that if you do hundreds of crunches you will reduce the amount of fat on your midsection. Crunches tighten abdominal muscles and strengthen your back but they will not melt the fat off your abs. You still need to eat a low fat diet and include cardio as part of your exercise routine to help get rid of unwanted fat.

A few things to keep in mind when you are strength training are breathing, form and posture. Did you know that bad posture alone can reduce the oxygen and blood flow to your brain by 30%? So stand up straight and keep your abs tight!! People often ask what I mean when I tell them to keep their abs tight. The best way I can describe it is to act like some one is going to punch you in the stomach so you have to brace for the impact. This will engage your core and help protect your spine, hips and lower back.

Another important part of your body to keep in mind while weight training are your joints, especially your knees and elbows. Remember to keep them slightly bent on the majority of weight resistant exercises to avoid hyperextension. When your joints become hyperextend, you put too much stress and pressure on your joints and tendons which are not made to handle the weight.

When it comes to breathing you want to exhale on exertion/when you're fighting gravity. An exercise that helps me remember this is a push up... During the upward motion of a pushup, I breathe out hard and act like my breath is a turbo charge helping me fight gravity. When I lower my body back to the ground, I breathe in as I imagine my breath is helping to lower my body. It also helps to remember that both exhale and exert begin with E. Make sure you fully exhale out to release all the carbon dioxide from your lungs. Never hold your breath! Holding your breath while weight lifting raises your blood pressure, reduces blood flow to your brain, causes blurred vision, passing out, permanent eye damage and even death. If you have to hold your breath to complete a rep, the weight is too heavy and/or there is too much resistance.

Our body regulates itself to remain in a homeostasis (in balance or at rest) state, you need to add more weight, reps or a different exercise as your routine starts to feel easier so your body keeps improving. The stronger our bodies become, the less effort we need to use to move higher amounts of weight. If you keep doing the same routine over and over again you will begin to plateau.

When putting a weight training routine together, make sure you have an exercise for each major muscle groups. These include biceps, triceps, shoulders, chest, abs, back, glutes, hamstrings, quadriceps, and calves. You can choose exercises

Choose the Right Gym for You

When picking a gym, set up a tour during the time you usually exercise, so you can see what it is like at that time.

Consider these 8 important criteria:

Location:

Often, a gym located somewhere between your home and office is best.

Hours:

Whether you workout early in the morning or late at night, make sure the hours fit your schedule, or you'll be paying for something you can't access.

Members:

Will you be comfortable exercising around the current members? On your tour, does the gym seem overly crowded?

Staff:

Are they qualified to guide you through your fitness routine? If you need a trainer, what are their rates?

Cleanliness:

Make sure that towels are available to wipe off the equipment after each use. Peek into the locker rooms and showers, especially if you'll be using these often.

Equipment:

Are there enough of the "popular" machines to go around, or do members have to wait in line to use them? Be cautious of out-of-order machines; this might be indicative of a poorly maintained gym.

Classes:

Make sure that the classes you want to take are offered at the times you can attend, and find out if you need to show up early to reserve a spot or pay an additional fee for the classes.

Fees:

Many gyms have a sign-up fee, but these are often waived during certain promotions. Ultimately, does a gym fit into your budget?

Source: Spark People

that target more than one muscle group at a time. Don't just work your glamour muscles (upper front part of the body – abs, chest and arms) this can cause muscle imbalance, postural problems and an unsymmetrical look.

It is important to warm up before your routine and you can do this with a few minutes of cardio or a light set of your exercises before going heavier. Once warmed up, do 2-3 sets of each exercise. It is recommended that you weight train at least 2-3 times a week and train every other day to allow your muscles time to rest and repair themselves. Muscles grow during rest and not during the actual training itself.

Know that if you are beginning a weight training routine, increasing your weight or doing a new routine, you may notice a day after your workout your muscles begin to hurt. This is Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness (DOMS) not lactic acid build up which is the burn you feel during a workout and up to an hour after. Many people get the two confused. If you experience DOMS, you may want to take a couple of days off to recover. The more you workout, the less it'll hurt because your body becomes more efficient in repairing itself and using metabolic waste (lactic acid) as energy.

It is important to get your entire family involved in a weight training program so you can all live a healthier, enjoyable life together. When it comes to younger children, you don't want them weight lifting. They are able to weight train by taking part in activities such as: throwing and hitting a ball, jumping rope, playing Frisbee and climbing trees or jungle gyms. Once they become older, they can join organized sports. For safety reasons, if you have small children you will want to make sure your weight training equipment is put away when they are not in use.

Strength training helps in everyday life by increasing the stability and strength in your joints, bones and muscles. Not only does it make you stronger but it makes your body more efficient, decreases recovery time, builds endurance, improves coordination and overall balance. Not to mention it makes you look younger, feel better and have more confidence. So if you are not on a weight training regimen yet... begin now! If you have been weight training all along... keep up the good work and think about introducing a new exercise into your routine to keep it fresh. For demonstrations, descriptions and videos on different weight training exercises check out Sparkpeople.com.

“Jack of All Sports”

This month's athlete is my competitive husband, Keith McInnes. He is very athletic and loves sports as a whole, whether he is competing himself or cheering someone along the way. To keep it fun and interesting, he does a wide range of athletic activities and events as part of his training. If it wasn't for his support, encouragement, sense of adventure, motivation and always figuratively “throwing down the gauntlet”, I would not be the person I am today.

He uses competition as a way of motivation and enjoys writing “beat wifey” on every race bib he wore during a race where he came in ahead of me. Although he loves to challenge others, he challenges his own records even more to see if he can achieve a personal best. When I asked him what sports he enjoys most he said, “I don't really have



Keith 1989
Alfred Maine - Babe Ruth
Baseball

any one particular sport that I enjoy most. I have always enjoyed a variety of activities, and tend to concentrate on one for a few months, then move on to another for a few months. As long as it gets me outside and active, then it's enjoyable to me. There are a few sports that I have been fanatic about over the years like baseball, basketball, snowboarding and golf.” He also enjoys hiking, mountain biking, disc golf, softball, tennis, bowling, racquetball, rollerblading, ice skating, boot camp, weight lifting, kayaking, paddle boarding, running... the list goes on and on.

Keith remembers being on a basketball team as early as age 7 and played all through school. Baseball was also a large part of his youth, starting at 9 years old. When he was younger, he played sports to have fun and hang out with his friends. He never had to worry about his weight as a young man but as he has gotten older, his metabolism has slowed and his objective to staying active shifted to being healthy and maintaining his weight, although he is still active for the pure joy of it. His current athletic goal is to get his six-pack back, maintain a healthy weight, build more muscle and run another half marathon.

When I asked him about his biggest physical accomplishment, he was torn between two events because they were both physically taxing and completing them were very rewarding. One was hiking Mt. Katahdin (the highest elevation in Maine) in September of 2008, where he had to overcome his fear of heights while scaling across the famous 1.1 mile-long Knife’s Edge. Hiking this mountain was an all day affair from getting up at 3:30 in the morning, to his first step onto the trail and his final steps to the car. The hike itself was 5.5 miles up, 1.1 miles across Knife’s Edge and another 5.5 miles back down.

His second greatest accomplishment was running the A1A Half Marathon in Fort Lauderdale in 2008 where he ran 13.1 miles in less than 2.5 hours. He ran every single mile and had to reach into his inner strength to find energy to physically and mentally push himself, especially the last mile when he felt like he could not go on any further but kept pushing until he crossed the finish line. The biggest road race he had run before this event was a 5K (3.1 miles).



Keith and I at the top of Mt. Katahdin - 5,267 ft
September 2008



Playing a round of golf at Red Reef Golf Course in Boca Raton, FL



Mountain biking at Quiet Waters Park, Deerfield Beach, FL

I asked Keith if he is the healthiest he has ever been but he couldn't say for sure. He has felt good for a number of years. He quit smoking in 2003 and since then he has maintained an active and healthy lifestyle, with the exception of our x-country trip in 2006. During this trip we lived off of convenient food for a couple of months and he gained 20 lbs. He said, "Our trip was the heaviest ever for me. There is a huge difference in how I feel at 205 pounds verses 185 pounds. When you are a healthier weight, your body is much more efficient and you just feel better all around. You sleep better, you're a happier person and you enjoy a higher quality of life."

For more info go to:
www.mcinnfitness.weebly.com
or
<http://www.facebook.com/pages/McInnes-Fitness/137086976362110>

Keith is an on again, off again vegetarian and when he eats meat it is primarily organic, local and free range. He'll treat himself to a steak once in a long while when we go out to eat but not very often (maybe once a year). When I asked him to describe his diet, he said "I am not one to count calories or starve myself, but I do try to limit sodium and saturated fats. My diet is fairly erratic and I'm sure I should eat more fruits and vegetables; at least that's what my wife tells me. I eat a good amount of protein because I have been strength training."

Keith is a great supporter to me, our family and friends. My athletic adventures would not have been the same without his support. Some of our goals with health and nutrition could not be more different but we make it work and find a meeting ground where we are still able to support each other in living a healthy active life. His advice on finding a good support partner is, "Don't necessarily look for someone that enjoys all the same things you do. There is something positive to be said about a friend, spouse or family member that enjoys different activities than you, and can peak your interest in something new. This way you can push each other to try new things and experience new sports. And of course support each other". He ends by saying, "Fitness is something that will drastically improve your quality of life in every way. So get out there! Try new things! Find something you like! And have fun with it!"

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

Mixed Bean Pate

14 oz canned mixed beans drained	1 tbsp chopped fresh cilantro
2 tbsp olive oil	2 scallions chopped
Juice of a lemon	Salt and pepper
2 garlic cloves, crushed	Shredded scallion to garnish

Rinse the beans thoroughly under running cold water and drain well.

Transfer the beans to a food processor or blender and process until smooth. Alternatively, place the beans in a bowl and mash with a fork or potato masher.

Add the oil, lemon juice, garlic, cilantro, and scallions and process until fairly smooth. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Transfer the pate to a serving bowl and let chill in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes. Garnish with shredded scallions and serve with pita bread, toast or crackers.

Source: "What's Cooking - Vegetarian" by: Jenny Stacey