

# Completely Well

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In this issue: “Shifting Gears,” Components of Fitness, “Think You Hate Vegetables?” Less is More: Skip the Hype, Ask the Trainer, and lemons



Insurance Agency

## Lifestyle Shifting Gears

Whether it is a change of season, a change of job or a change of routine - we are required to adjust and adapt to change and “shift gears” every now and then. For some, this is an easy and even welcome thing to do. For others, making these changes is difficult, and even a cause for anxiety. Here are some ways to make change not only easier but also help you better reach your goals.

**Attitude:** They say it’s all in the attitude. Well, when it comes to dealing with change, attitude does play an important part. Resistance to change blocks the ways that the change can be positive. It decreases creativity and keeps you focused on what has been, not what can be. Focus on the positive and possibilities.

**Preparation:** Many changes require us to prepare. We get our long sleeves out to prepare for cold weather, and get the kids to bed a little earlier when school is about to start. As the sunlight decreases in the fall, adding more light in the home is good preparation. Freezing your favorite summer berries is another way to prepare for the

change in season. Figure out ways that you can prepare for an upcoming change to make it easier.

**Flexibility:** Whatever change is required, it is important to remain flexible. See what is working and what needs to be adjusted. If a change in work schedule has disrupted your usual morning workout time, try exercising right after work and avoid after dinner fatigue. If taking a night class has made healthy dinners more challenging, cook on the weekends and freeze what you need for the week.

Whether you have chosen to make a change or a change is required of you, see what opportunities it offers, prepare if you can and be flexible.

### *No time? Think again!*

Think you don’t have time to exercise, get that job done at home, or make plans with friends? Try some of these tricks to get more time out of your day!

1. Eliminate clutter and stay organized. Much of our wasted time is trying to find something or making sure we have everything we need to get out the door, work on a project, or complete a task. Staying organized and getting rid of the things that distract us can help.
2. Put a strict limit on social media use, surfing the Internet, and non-work related chats. While breaks in our workday can actually increase productivity, limiting disruptions is essential to getting back time in your day. Limit TV time at home and take a walk instead.
3. Set your alarm 15 -30 minutes earlier AND consider also going to bed 15-30 minutes earlier. Most studies show that the majority of us are more productive in the morning.

With more done during the day, you should find more time to enjoy your time at home!

## Preventive Little Things that Make a Big Difference

You may be surprised to find out that some easy changes in your day to day routine can significantly improve your physical and mental health. Check these out!

1. **Change your toothbrush every 3 months and after getting over the flu or a virus.** Your toothbrush can harbor bacteria and the bristles do wear out. Mark the date on your calendar so you don't forget!
2. **Leave your shoes at the door.** Shoes can pick up dust, dirt, pesticides, and more, and it is best to not track the outside throughout your home.
3. **Keep a pitcher of cold water in the fridge.** In order to drink more water – and avoid soda and excess juices – keep a pitcher of water in your refrigerator. Not only will you have cold water available to you, but you can also flavor it with slices of citrus for a summertime drink you can enjoy throughout the fall and winter.
4. **Take the long way to wherever!** You've heard it before: park in the farthest parking spot and take the stairs in order to get more exercise. These are great ideas, but you can also take the long way wherever you are going. Take the long way to the copy machine or conference room. Take the long way to a particular aisle in the grocery store by walking the perimeter (where most of the fresh foods are anyway). Challenge yourself with finding the "long cut" versus the "short cut."
5. **Pack a lunch to take to work.** We know that you can save calories, fat, and sodium by packing your lunch rather than eating out. It's also easier on your wallet!
6. **Create a budget and stick with it.** Financial stress is hard on your



- relationships and your health. Put your budget on paper and stick to it! If you have a lot of debt, create a plan for paying it off as quickly as possible.
7. **Read a book.** Reading not only can relax you but is also a great way to find out more about people, places, or things you are interested in. Additionally, reading is great "brain exercise," something we need to do throughout our lives.
  8. **Gently stretch every day.** We lose flexibility as we age, increasing our risk of injury. Gently stretching every day – as in yoga, tai chi, or simple stretches – can help retain range of motion and balance.
  9. **Write it down.** There are many benefits to writing, whether it is a list or a journal. Writing a grocery list can help you stay on budget and avoid those unhealthy, impulse purchase items. Writing down what you need to get done can help reduce stress. Writing in a journal is a proven way to de-stress and to work toward personal goals.
  10. **Connect with others.** Spending time with family and friends as well as volunteering your time to important causes is known to be a heart healthy activity! Volunteering is associated with a reduced risk for depression, increased well-being, and a 22% reduction in mortality rate.

## Nutrition Think you hate vegetables?

If you bypass the fresh produce department, steer clear of frozen beans and peas, and think the color green is best left for money – take heart. You can learn to like (love?) vegetables – at least many of them – and work toward getting the recommended 5-9 servings per day.

First, start by staying in the mainstream. Choose a common vegetable – string bean or green pea – and add it to something you already enjoy. For example, add your vegetables to your favorite marinara sauce or on your favorite pizza. Pre-cook or par boil if necessary and chop your vegetable into bite size pieces. Smaller pieces absorb more of the flavors you already like. You can also add flavors you like to the vegetables. For example, add some lemon juice to grilled zucchini or sauté some minced garlic with asparagus. Adding these flavors can help your palate get used to them.

Second, check out different cooking methods. Cooking affects vegetables in different ways. For example, boiling a vegetable can lead to a mushy mess. If boiling is preferred, keep an eye on the vegetable so it still has some “bite” to it. Grilling can add great flavor, but you need to be careful of too much char.

Caramelizing vegetables is a great way to bring out their natural sweetness. This is done by cooking them with oil – as in a sauté pan or by drizzling with oil before roasting – at medium/high heat. Onions, carrots, and Brussels sprouts are common vegetables that are caramelized.

Lastly, keep trying. Tastes can be changed, even as we age, and being open to trying a vegetable is important. Once you find a vegetable or two that you like, ask your grocer or someone at your local farmer’s market for suggestions based on what you like already. And if you taste a vegetable dish you like, don’t hesitate to ask the restaurant, friend, or co-worker who made it for more information!

Vegetables – along with grains and fruits – should be the foundation of our daily diet. Forget the bad memories you may have of vegetables. Vegetables can be sweet, savory, nutty – and most of all – delicious!

### **Produce of the Month: Lemons**

Sour, fragrant, and juicy – lemons are a great source of vitamin C and can be used in both sweet and savory dishes. Lemons are available throughout the year, while Meyer lemons (a sweeter lemon, more similar to an orange/lemon combination) will be in peak season beginning in November.

**The Basics:** Choose lemons that are heavy for their size and have no bruises, soft spots, or other signs of rot or mold. Lemons that you will use within 7 days can be kept on a counter. Otherwise, you can store them in the refrigerator for up to a month. When ready to use, wash the skin and prepare accordingly.

**Try This:** Lemon works well on poultry and fish as well as most vegetables and grain. Consider marinating meat with a lemon, brown mustard, and olive oil mix. Add lemon zest (the yellow outer peel that contains essential oil) to pastas, rice, and vegetables. Lemon juice can be added to most vanilla based baking recipes, such as sugar cookies, vanilla frosting, or vanilla cupcakes. Add slices of lemon to water for a refreshing drink. Meyer lemons are a great addition to many dessert recipes.

**The Facts:** A cup of lemon segments (with juice) is approximately 50 calories.



### Components of Fitness



#### **Less Is More: Avoid the Hype**

Weight loss methods have sky rocketed into a 20 billion dollar industry, according to ABC news. This includes book sales, workout videos, gym equipment and fad diets. “Fad Diets” claim to help you lose weight fast. These diets often require you to purchase a product, such as powders, shakes, juice or juicers, and brand name items that eat into your budget. Meal replacement shakes can cost anywhere from \$6-\$15 for a pack of six and containers of protein powder will run you at least \$25 if not \$50 or more.

Cost aside, “Fad Diets” are controversial. Dramatic weight loss is not healthy for your body and will be very hard to maintain over time. Also, eliminating an entire food group, unless medically advised, can lead to cravings and binging.

Instead, focus on controlling your portions from all the food groups and consuming enough calories to keep your body fueled from start to finish. Get out and move each and every day. Exercise 3-5 days a week and go for light walks on your off days.

Adopting a healthy lifestyle full of fruits, vegetables, lean protein, whole grains, and plenty of exercise is the best way to lose weight and keep it off for good as well as keeping cash in your wallet.

Marie McFadden, CHES

#### **Got It Covered?**

The following 4 fitness categories should be a part of your weekly workout routine

#### **Cardiovascular**

By definition, cardiovascular fitness is the ability of the body to take in and use oxygen. To accomplish this, you exercise large muscles (legs and arms), which raises your heart and breathing rate, which then pumps oxygen throughout your body to the muscles and organs. Cardiovascular fitness is necessary for heart health. It is also important for achieving and maintaining a healthy weight. Examples of cardiovascular exercise include running, moderate to fast walking, swimming, biking and dancing.

#### **Strength Training**

Strength training involves lifting or resisting weight (free weights, weight machine or body weight) in order to increase strength and muscle definition. Strength training is an important part of achieving and maintaining a healthy weight. It is also important for improving bone health. Strength training exercises include lifting free weights, using resistance bands, working out on weight machines and doing push-ups, pull-ups, squats and lunges.

#### **Flexibility**

Flexibility refers to your ability to move your joints through an entire range of motion. Though flexibility can decrease as we age, you can improve flexibility through regular stretching. Stretch a warm muscle gently, and hold for 20-60 seconds. Stretching a cold muscle can lead to an injury.

#### **Balance**

Not often thought of as an element of fitness, balance is key to muscle control and preventing injury. To balance effectively, core muscles need to be engaged. Exercises that improve balance include yoga, ballet, Pilates, using a balance ball or BOSU Balance Trainer.





## Ask the Trainer

**Question:** I work out on a regular basis and can get pretty sore. I've heard that hot and cold compresses can help with this but I'm not sure when to use each. Could you explain which one should be used and when?

**Answer:** This is a great question and can be very confusing for many individuals. People mistakenly use ice when they should be using heat and vice versa. If you have sore, aching muscles or joints you should always use heat unless the area has any inflammation or swelling. If there is any, even the slightest amount, of inflammation or swelling you most likely should be using ice. If you are icing an extremity such as your arm or leg make sure you are elevating that area.

Whether you are heating or icing an area you do not want to keep the compress you are using on for more than 20 minutes at a time. You can usually do this every few hours depending on the injury or issue you are dealing with. Since you are talking about soreness after working out, here is my recommendation on how to use heat and ice. If you are sore prior to a workout put some heat on the area for 10-20 minutes and then do some light stretching. Soreness comes from breaking down and tearing your muscle fibers. By applying heat before working out or being active for the day, it will help relax and loosen the muscles. If after the workout you are still sore and feel some inflammation in the area, then I would put ice of the area. Ice is really used for an injury to a joint or a muscle, not so much for muscle soreness.

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### Want to know more?

Contact TCU Insurance for information on wellness programs. We can help you reduce healthcare costs and improve employee well being.



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