

COMPLETELY WELL

July 2017

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Insurance Agency

Summer Safety

It's the height of summer fun season! To keep the fun going, it's important to be safe. Here are some safety tips to keep your summer activities going:

Grilling: Be sure to clean your grill after each use. Once you're done cooking and the grill has cooled, wash the grates thoroughly. Take special care to clean off all charred residue and keep an eye out for loose metal bristles from cleaning brushes. These can occasionally come off the brush and remain on the grill. They then stick to food and end up accidentally eaten! Marinate meat to reduce the carcinogens created by cooking at a very high heat.

Fireworks: Obey the laws in your area. Only use approved fireworks outside with an adult present and away from any house, structure or flammable materials (dry leaves, wood, etc.) Have water available (via bucket or hose) to soak ALL fireworks before disposing, and do not consume alcohol before using fireworks. Always wear eye protection and move as far away as possible from the firework after lighting. The best bet is to leave firework displays to the professionals. For more tips and information on fireworks, contact the National Council of Firework Safety at www.fireworksafety.com.

Heat: When temperatures soar, heatstroke is possible. Stay hydrated and wear light clothing. Stay out of the sun and seek out air conditioned spots during the afternoon when temperatures are in the high 90s or hotter. Children and the elderly are especially susceptible to heatstroke.

Sunburn: Sunscreen is important year-round, but it is especially important during the summer months. Use sunscreen every day to reduce your risk of skin cancer and slow down the signs of premature aging. Cover your skin with light clothing and avoid the midday sun if possible.

Food Poisoning: Picnics are a great summer activity! Be careful, however, to keep foods at the proper temperature to avoid food poisoning. Foods should not be left out for over an hour in extreme heat. Also, wash your hands frequently when touching raw meats and vegetables.

Water Safety: Never swim without a lifeguard present when at a beach or pool. Be cautious of rip currents and obey all beach warnings regarding the safety of swimming in the lake or ocean. Keep an eye on children when near water, and avoid alcohol.



Massage Therapy

Massage has been around for thousands of years, and it continues to be popular today. In fact, massage has gone from being a luxury to an essential part of many people's health regime. There are many types of massage, and each has multiple health benefits.

The most common types of massage include deep tissue massage, Swedish massage, and sports massage:

- Deep tissue massage usually focuses on trigger points or problem areas, using deep strokes that work many layers of tissue at the point of pain or discomfort.
- Swedish massage is a full body massage, using gentle strokes and circles to relax muscles and ease tension.
- Sports massage is focused on muscles used or injured in a specific sport or activity.

While massage may use strong strokes and forceful pressure, it should not hurt.

The benefits of massage are many. Massage soothes sore muscles, can relieve joint pain, and help with sports injuries. It can also help with digestion, headaches, and insomnia. In fact, massage can also help reduce anxiety and the symptoms of depression.

Finding a qualified massage therapist is important. Check with your state to see what licenses are required for massage therapists. Ask your doctor or other medical professional if massage is right for you and for a recommendation. Massage is a great addition to your overall wellness approach.

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Produce of the Month Cherries

Now is the time to get out your favorite cherry recipes, because cherry season is a short-lived pleasure. With sweet cherries in season May – July and sour cherries in season June – August, this is the perfect time to enjoy the delicious health benefits of cherries. Cherries can reduce inflammation associated with many chronic diseases.

The Basics: Sweet cherries – the most common being “bing” – are eaten as a snack, used in desserts and mixed in to yogurts. Sour cherries – also called pie cherries – are rarely eaten raw and are usually cooked to make pie filling, jellies and jams. No matter what type you choose, pick cherries that are firm to the touch and do not have obvious soft spots or bruises. Store unwashed in the refrigerator – sour cherries last longer than sweet cherries. Rinse the fruit when ready to use. Make sure to remove the stone (or pit) if you are planning to cook the cherries.

Try This: Add diced cherries on top of your lunchtime salad with a little goat cheese. Craving a healthy sweet? Add pitted cherries to your favorite muffin recipe or make your own. Check out our favorite recipe on page 6.

The Facts: One cup of cherries (without pits) is about 100 calories.

Juice – Fruit or Foe?

Whether it is a glass in the morning or included in a smoothie, juice is a delicious drink! But is it healthy? Here's what to consider -

- Fruit juice is filled with vitamins and minerals. For example, a small glass of orange juice provides your day's requirement of vitamin C.
- A small glass of juice is equivalent to a serving of fruit, helping you meet your 5-7 servings of fruit/vegetables a day.
- A glass of juice can be a more convenient way to enjoy a serving of fruit.
- **However**, fruit juice doesn't provide the fiber that a piece of fruit does. Fiber is important for digestion and helps you feel full.
- Fruit juice is high in sugar and calories.

So, what's the answer? Is juice fruit or foe? That really depends. A small/moderate amount of juice is probably fine, unless you are diabetic or have been diagnosed with prediabetes. Limiting the amount of juice you drink will help limit sugar and calories. It is also better for your teeth and will help you feel full longer. So, if given the choice, eating the whole fruit is better than drinking a glass of juice.



Exercising with Chronic Pain

Whether it's a diagnosed condition or simply a knee that has always bothered you when you are active, the thought of exercising with chronic pain can be excruciating itself. However, there are many options for individuals who want to keep moving and may desire a more tailored fitness plan to move safely and comfortably.

Aquatic classes such as Shallow Water Aerobics, Deep Water Aerobics, Aqua Bootcamp, Hydro or AquaFit, Aqua Zumba, and even Water Walking can have less impact on sensitive joints and are a great place to start when beginning a specialized fitness plan. Deep Water classes can be great for individuals who suffer from intense joint pain, especially when floatation devices are used. Since participants are suspended safely the entire time, there is no landing and shock during the moves. Whether you're nursing a fitness injury and crave an intense Bootcamp-like workout or are new to exercise and desire a formal water walking class, there are many aquatic classes to suit any intensity level while having low impact on the body.



When a class is *low impact*, it means that it will not be as difficult on the joints. With aquatics classes, the medium of the water takes most of the impact out of moves. For classes in a studio on land, if it is described as low impact, the class should not have jumping in it, or provide modifications for moves with jumping. The class also should involve less twisting and quick turns because these moves can be difficult for those with chronic conditions or individuals with low back, hip and knee issues. Classes labeled as low impact should have instructors leading them that are able to modify to suit any concern.

Many of these classes are mistakenly viewed as *low intensity*. When a class is low intensity, it means that it is scaled back to an easier or beginner fitness level. While low impact classes can be lower intensity if all modifications are taken, not all classes that are low impact are low intensity. As with any exercise, the execution of the moves is what makes an exercise more or less intense. An individual can make a move more intense by increasing range of motion; perform the exercise quicker; or use more intense or heavier equipment.



If exercising on your own and knowing when to take modifications still sounds like a nightmare, hiring a personal trainer could be an excellent option to help you gain confidence. A personal trainer will help you understand correct form to prevent further pain and will create a personal workout plan created just for you. Remember to ask for credentials and be honest with your goals and limitations.

Whatever way you choose to move, regular appropriate activity can lower pain over time, making it even easier (and more fun) to move. Find what inspires you to move and get moving!



Ask the Trainer

By Erin M. Long, B.S., NSCA-CPT

Q: Hi Erin! I have recently had abdominal surgery and with the procedure I had done I am no longer allowed to do crunches. I've always been one to incorporate crunches into my workouts to help keep my core strong and am worried now that I am unable to do them that I will become weak and flabby. Do you have any suggestions on how to keep my core strong without crunches? -Tammy M., 54

A: Hello Tammy. Thank you for reaching out about this issue. I have worked with a handful of clients who are no longer able to do crunches due to either surgical issues, hernias, diastasis recti or other issues. No matter what has happened causing you to no longer be able to do crunches there are still many ways to work your core without doing a single crunch.

I want you to keep in mind that our core is our powerhouse, we cannot survive without this area, the skeletal system is built around your core. This means every move you make, each exercise you perform in one way or another will activate your core if done properly and effectively. Many individuals do not realize this, it starts with making sure you engage your core with everything that you do and having proper posture/form. Even when you're not exercising, you can engage and strengthen your core! Whether you are sitting, standing or walking around the house, making sure you are standing up tall and making sure you are tightening those stomach muscles. Now take what I just said and apply it to working out as well, let's say you are performing a squat. Before you lower down into the squat make sure you engage your core and hold that engagement throughout the exercise. Keep that in mind with every exercise you do. You'd be surprised how many individuals really just go through the motions when it comes to exercising and don't focus on the engagement of the muscles of the body.

If you haven't exercised since your surgery or are nervous about starting back please consult your doctor to see what exactly your limitations are for exercise. Like I said I've worked with individuals with different issues, some were still allowed to do planks and certain core exercises that did not involve crunching and some were not even allowed to do those. I would recommend contacting a physical therapist or a certified personal trainer with experience in this area to get started if you still want help.

I hope this gives you encouragement that you do not have to do a single crunch in order to have a strong core!

Take Care,

Erin M Long

Almond Cherry Muffins

Recipe adapted from Pretty. Simple. Sweet. at <http://prettysimplesweet.com/almond-cherry-muffins>

Yields: 5-6 jumbo-size muffins or 12 standard-size muffins

Ingredients

- 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups all-purpose flour (or 1 $\frac{1}{3}$ cups whole wheat flour)
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking soda
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- 1 large egg, slightly beaten
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup honey
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup yogurt
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup canola oil
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon almond extract (optional)
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups cherries, halved and pitted



Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 400° F. Butter 12 muffin cups or line with liner paper.
2. In a large bowl, sift together flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Mix to combine.
3. In a medium bowl, mix egg with yogurt, honey, oil, vanilla, and almond extract. Pour wet ingredients into the dry ingredients and fold with a wooden spoon or rubber spatula just until combined. Do not over mix. The batter should be thick and lumpy. Fold in almonds and cherries gently to prevent staining.
4. Divide mixture between the muffin cups, filling almost fully to the top. Sprinkle with sliced almonds if desired. Bake for 3 minutes, then reduce the oven temperature to 350° F. Continue to bake for an additional 12-17 minutes for standard muffins, or an additional 22-27 minutes for jumbo muffins. If they start to brown too much, cover them loosely with aluminum foil. Muffins are ready when a toothpick inserted into the center of a muffin comes out clean. Cool for 10 minutes, then move to a wire rack to cool completely.
5. Muffins are best the same day they are made, but can be kept at room temperature in airtight container for an additional 1-2 days. Muffins can also be frozen for up to 2 months.

Want to Know More? Contact TCU Insurance Agency for more information on wellness programs and how they can help you reduce healthcare costs and improve employee wellness.



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