

COMPLETELY WELL

June 2017

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Insurance Agency

Exploring the Great Outdoors

The summer months are great for heading to the pool or the beach, but it is also a great time to explore the outdoors on a hiking trail. Hiking is a low-impact way to get your cardio, lowering blood pressure and reducing the risk of heart disease. Hiking is great exercise, but its benefits go beyond physical fitness.

Hiking is great for your mood. Research published by the National Institute of Health reports that hiking helps to reduce depression. The combination of time spent in "green space" and physical movement work together to improve mood. Hiking trails allows for a disconnect from technology and daily stress, and the need to focus on the trail in front of you grounds you in the present moment. Staying active also helps to maintain cognitive function, improving memory and reducing the risk of dementia.

Communities that build and maintain hiking trails tend to have cleaner air and a concern for the environment. If you are looking for a trail near you, check your state's park system. Most will have websites that allow you to look for a trail close to home.

If you are ready to hit the trails, keep these tips in mind.

- Hike on a clearly marked trail, and don't stray off the path.
- Go with someone else, or make sure that a responsible person knows your exact trail plan and what time you planned on hiking.
- Bring plenty of water and a snack if your hike is a long one.
- Charge your phone before hiking, and carry a first aid kit, sunscreen, and bug spray.





Men's Health

June is National Men's Health Month. The goal of the month is to make men aware of preventable health problems and encourage early screening and treatment for boys and men. Women make twice as many visits to their doctor as men, and that doesn't include any pregnancy-related visits. Men need to be encouraged to build a relationship with their health providers, one of partners in wellness, making regular appointments and following through on recommended screenings.

It is important to get regular checkups from your physician. Not comfortable with your physician? Ask others for recommendations. Finding a doctor you trust and are comfortable with is important. Pay attention to any warning signs and see your doctor immediately to identify any potential problem and begin treatment if necessary. Warning signs include any change in bowel or bladder habits, changes in moles, a nagging cough, recurring chest pain, any indication of numbness in the limbs, unexplained weight loss or fatigue, erectile dysfunction or persistent depression. These may be signs of a more serious problem and should be checked out right away.

So, what specifically should a man do to help feel their best and prevent disease in between doctor's visits? Check out the recommendations on the next page.

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Produce of the Month Green Beans

Green beans, string beans ...whatever you grew up calling them, they are a beloved American side dish. Available year round but considered at their peak in the summer and early fall, green beans contain antioxidants that are heart healthy and may support bone health.

The Basics: Green beans are best bought fresh and should have good color and no noticeable bruises. Store unwashed beans in the refrigerator until ready to use. When ready, wash the green beans and trim the ends. You may steam the green beans or boil them until they have a vibrant green color and have softened a little. (Green beans should have a "bite" to them and not be mushy in order to preserve their nutrition content.) Serve them warm with a meal or cold as a snack or in a salad.

Try This: Traditionally, green beans are served with a little olive oil or butter and salt and pepper. For something different, sauté garlic in olive oil, adding cooked beans for the final minute. Add salt and pepper and remove from heat. Dress with lime juice and lime zest and sprinkle with chopped almonds or hazelnuts. Chopped green beans, sweet potatoes, and chicken make a great one pot meal when cooked with a little garlic, onion, salt and pepper.

The Facts: A cup of green beans has about 45 calories and is an excellent source of vitamins K and C. They are a very good source of vitamin A, folate, potassium and fiber.

Farmer's Markets

With the warmer weather, many towns and municipalities have Farmer's Markets. These markets feature primarily local produce, sold by the local farmers. Not only is the produce freshly picked and in season, the farmer can often provide information to you about how to choose your produce as well as recommendations for how to prepare it.

The benefits of local produce are many. First, freshly picked produce is frequently the tastiest, allowed to ripen in the field. Also, buying local helps to protect the environment, reducing the pollution caused by transporting food greater distances to process or to grocery dispensaries. In addition, many of the local growers can provide you with specific information about how their crops are grown. You may also find quality organic produce at your local market.

Not sure where your nearest Farmer's Market is? Contact your local city government or check out their website. If that doesn't help, the U. S. Department of Agriculture has a directory on its website.

Go to <https://www.ams.usda.gov/local-food-directories/farmersmarkets>

This summer, check out a Farmer's Market near you and make it a weekend ritual with family or friends!



Men's Health

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Tips for feeling your best and preventing illness:

- Maintain a healthy weight by eating right and getting 30 minutes of exercise at least 5 days a week.
- Focus on making each bite a nutritious bite. To feel your best and to prevent illness, eat a diet of vegetables, fruits, healthy fats, whole grains and quality protein.
- Drink plenty of water and limit alcohol consumption.
- Wear a sunscreen without oxybenzone and vitamin A when spending time outdoors.
- Don't smoke.
- Manage your stress by setting aside time to spend with family, friends, and hobbies.
- Aim for 7-8 hours of sleep each night.
- Always wear a seatbelt and avoid distractions while driving.

Men, make a commitment to taking control of your health. Practice healthy behaviors and see your doctor regularly. Pretending something isn't important doesn't make it so. Sharing with your doctor your family history and your concerns is essential. Women, let the men in your life know how important their health is to you. By taking good care of themselves, men will be healthier and our families will be better for it.

Backyard Gym

For many of us, the idea of working out at home sounds better than heading to a gym.

But can you exercise effectively at home? You absolutely can! Here are some ideas:

- Take a break and head outside! Enjoy the warm weather by finding a safe route to walk, jog, run, or bike. Get in your car, or utilize a route-mapping application, to find an appropriate distance in your neighborhood or community. Lace up your sneakers and invite a friend or two to make it a social event!
- Try moving your yoga mat (or a clean towel) outside. Yoga beginner? There are many options online that you can stream directly to your phone or tablet.
- Do you have any 20-liter plastic water cooler bottles or gallon jugs with handles, soup cans, or other heavy items around the house? They can make great free weights! If they are empty, fill them with sand or water until it is hard to lift more than about 10 times. Check out some online workouts that use hand weights.
- If you have a swing set in the backyard, you can use the existing structure, or add a piece, for pullups. Place the bar closer to the ground to begin, starting with inclined pullups, or find a higher spot to do suspended pullups. Depending on the construction of the swing set, you can also use it for standing push-ups or planks! Picnic tables, hand rails, and other sturdy surfaces can be used too! There are many ways to utilize playground equipment and parks for a quick and creative workout.
- Most community pools have lap lanes and/or times for swimming laps. This can be great exercise and low impact on your body, especially if you have any injuries. Check out special community aquatics classes if solo swimming isn't your thing.
- A good old-fashioned punching bag can be hung from a variety of outdoor structures, or even in the garage. Paired with some great gloves to protect your hands, boxing is an excellent cardio workout that builds muscle.

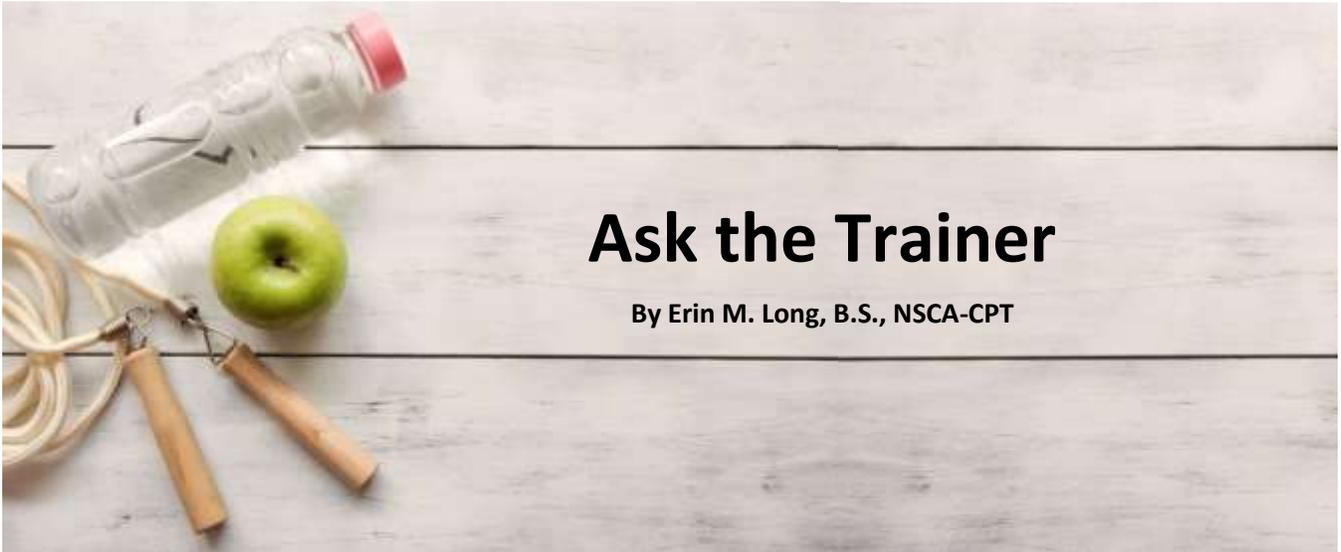


Whether you choose to exercise at home or at the gym, regular movement is key to good health.

Make a plan and use these summer months to improve your fitness!

Did You Know?

Being active during the day relieves stress, refocuses the mind, and helps you sleep better at night.



Ask the Trainer

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

Q: Hi Erin! My question for you is actually about my dad. He is in his late 80's and is struggling to get around. I can see his strength and balance getting worse all of the time. I'm nervous to have him go places by himself for fear that he may fall and hurt himself. Is there anything that he can do at his age to improve these issues? Any advice would be appreciated!

-Cynthia M.

A: Hi Cynthia! Thank you for reaching out to me. As we age, we lose muscle and balance from inactivity. Our current culture encourages us to sit more and do less on our own, especially as we age. And while it is normal to reduce activity to a certain extent, we do not have to lose our ability to move safely. I have worked with numerous individuals, both men and women, over 80 years old, and up to 95 years old. Muscle memory can come back to these individuals. Think of the saying "If you don't use it, you'll lose it." This is completely true; at some point in their lives they were stronger, more active, and had better balance. It's a matter of working up to this again. If he hasn't been active in a long time, I would recommend sending him to a physical therapist or a certified personal trainer who has experience working with this population of clientele. I love working with this age group; I am currently working with a 92-year-old man who had just finished with a physical therapist, and his insurance didn't cover that anymore. He wanted to work on his balance, but most of all, he wanted to gain back strength. The improvements he has made in the last month are amazing. He walks into my studio taller and with a little more pep in his step. Many of the things I do with him are chair-based exercises, but I do have him stand for short periods of time to work on his balance. Encourage your dad to do simple things as well: have him get up every hour and walk around the house for a few minutes or use a light set of weights or bands to do some exercises at home once he knows what to do. One of the things I have realized with my 92-year-old client is that it is also about getting him out of the house and socializing. If your dad is stuck in the house all day by himself, having to go meet with someone for assistance could be a great thing for him in more ways than just physical. I hope this information helps. If you need suggestions on places to look in your area, please let me know! I'd be more than happy to help.

Take Care,

Erin M Long

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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1-800-772-8043

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